

PLAYING DEAD

Written by

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Based on "Lynch"

THE CW
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ACT ONE

EXT. ROCKLEIGH WOODS SANCTUARY. DAY (D2)

TIGHT ON: A LLAMA. Standing on the edge of a trail. She's enjoying the quiet wilderness of Bergen County, New Jersey, not remotely wondering how she got here, when suddenly:

Zoom! A FORD FOCUS races by!

Vroom! Then a MOTORCYCLE, hot on its tail!

Pffffttt. Then a HEARSE, chugging along. Trying to keep up.

The llama watches the chase with mild interest until it disappears from view. She's about to go back to her business of being a llama, chewing grass, contemplating her escape from the farm, when suddenly --

KAPLOW! A HUGE EXPLOSION! The llama shuffles away. CAMERA holds on the fire, burning in the distance.

MATCH CUT TO:

A different FIERY EXPLOSION. Equally scary. Only this one is in a video game, *World Of Tank Blitz*. It's being played by --

INT. BERGENFIELD HIGH. GIRLS' BATHROOM. MORNING (D1)

-- A kid named, **GEORGE PLUMMER** (16). Sweet, shy, African-American, and currently standing with one hand holding the door shut and the other playing this game on his phone.

CHYRON: 36 HOURS EARLIER.

GEORGE

How's it going over there?

PAN OVER to reveal our hero, **TYLER RICE** (16) standing at the sink counter. Handsome (obviously), confident (but not cocky), the type of guy who is comfortable in any situation. Currently, he's cleaning a TEXTBOOK with a Wet Wipe.

TYLER

Almost ready.

INT. BERGENFIELD HIGH. HALLWAY. SAME TIME (D1)

A PETITE GIRL approaches the bathroom, oblivious to the gaggle of GIRLS huddled nearby. She pushes the door, but it won't budge. Pushes again. Nada. Finally, she KNOCKS.

GEORGE/TYLER (O.S.)
OCCUPIED!

INT. BERGENFIELD HIGH. GIRLS' BATHROOM. MORNING (D1)

Tyler removes a pouch from his backpack and pulls out various SYRINGES and VIALS. He lays them neatly on top of his book and begins loading a syringe full of drugs. And then another one, until he has a neat row of FILLED SYRINGES. Finally, he SWOOPS them all into a nearby shoebox and closes it.

He grabs George's iPhone. Turns the game OFF and the music ON. Something mellow, but hip. 4 AM by 2 Chainz.

TYLER

Let's do this.

George opens the bathroom door with a flourish. A DOZEN GIRLS enter, some jockeying for position.

TYLER (CONT'D)

One at a time, ladies. There's enough for everyone. Twenty bucks a shot - cash, Apple Pay or Venmo. See my accountant, George, about payment.

The first girl, **EMILY**, 17, steps up, holds her phone next to George's phone and we hear BLOOP as money is transferred.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Emily... step into my office.

Tyler gallantly holds the STALL DOOR open so Emily can enter.

INT. BATHROOM STALL. CONTINUOUS

Emily sits on the toilet lid, where Tyler has graciously placed a pillow. He picks up one of the pre-arranged needles.

EMILY

This is so cool. I never knew Botox could actually prevent wrinkles.

TYLER

Oh absolutely. It's all about retraining your facial muscles. I'll send you a link. Now close your eyes and count to five.

Emily does and Tyler MOVES FORWARD with the needle, but before he actually injects it, we REVERSE and it's a new girl named **JOANNA**, 16, and Tyler is pulling the needle back.

JOANNA

Thanks, Tyler.

She kisses Tyler's cheek. He "faux" blushes. He's that good.

INT. BERGENFIELD HIGH. GIRLS' BATHROOM. CONTINUOUS

George is counting cash when **CASSIE GREENBERG** (16), Chinese, cool nerd, definite style, walks in. George brightens.

GEORGE

Hi Cassie. Hey, what'd you get on
that AP Bio quiz?

CASSIE

Twenty out of twenty. Nailed it.

George shakes his head. She's so damn smart. Meanwhile, Tyler walks another GIRL out of "his office" and approaches Cassie.

TYLER

Right this way.

CASSIE

Why? Are you planning to help me go
to the bathroom?

TYLER

Oh, so you're actually here to...

CASSIE

Urinate? Yes. Get injected with
toxins by someone pretending to be
a doctor? No. If I wanted botulism,
I'd eat a bad can of tuna.

TYLER

Well as someone pretending to be a
doctor, I'd advise against that.

CASSIE

Your mom must be so proud of you.

TYLER

I don't have a mom. But thanks for
the painful reminder.

PRINCIPAL TRAVERS (O.S.)

What exactly is going on in here?

Standing next to George is the formidable **PRINCIPAL TRAVERS**. He eyes the SYRINGE in Tyler's hand.

TYLER

Just giving some... flu shots?

Travers rips a piece of paper from a small pad he carries.

PRINCIPAL TRAVERS

Have your father sign this and
return it to my office. Tomorrow.

INT. RICE FUNERAL HOME. BATHROOM. DAY (D1)

JOE RICE (early 30s) looks at himself in the mirror. The towel wrapped around his waist reveals a pale, slightly doughy upper body. He opens his medicine cabinet which offers a window into his personality. The few grooming products are neatly lined, like OCD "neat." He grabs the Propecia and begins his routine:

1) He carefully SQUEEZES out each drop. 2) Then RUBS his temples vigorously. 3) A quick SWIPE of deodorant. 4) An enthusiastic BRUSHING of the teeth. 5) Followed by a fervid FLOSSING. 6) A tongue SCRAPE. 7) Annnnnnd a mouthwash RINSE. When it's all over, he rips off one square of toilet paper and WIPES DOWN the sink. So, yeah. He's a meticulous dude.

INT. RICE FUNERAL HOME. BASEMENT. DAY (D1)

Joe enters the basement wearing his Gap best. A CORPSE lies on his mortician's table, covered by a sheet. He calls out:

JOE
Dinesh?

No answer. He approaches the body and pulls off the sheet, revealing a woman whose face appears to have been run over by a train. Literally, TRAIN TRACKS ON HER FACE. Joe sighs, annoyed.

JOE (CONT'D)
Not funny, Neesh.

And now we hear a CHUCKLE coming from the corner of the room where **DINESH JINDAL** (late 20s) is hiding. More style, more swagger and better abs, Dinesh is a BIG personality.

DINESH
It is funny. You just have no sense of humor.

Joe starts to delicately PEEL off the woman's face, which is when we realize it's not her face! It's a LATEX MASK. A gory, highly professional mask you'd find on a horror movie set.

JOE
How many times do I have to tell you? These masks are not toys. This one took me six weeks to design.

DINESH
It's very good. I think it's my new favorite. No. I take it back. Shark bite face is still my favorite.

JOE
You're fired.

DINESH
I'm your only employee.

True.

JOE
I meant as my friend.

DINESH
I'm your only friend.

Also true.

DINESH (CONT'D)
Relax, would you? I was just trying
to lighten the mood before the big
meeting. You feeling okay? You look
great. You need a Tums?

Dinesh pulls a roll from his pocket and offers it to Joe.
These two are like an old married couple.

JOE
I'm fine.

Dinesh watches Joe continue his meticulous work of SLOWLY
peeling off the mask. It's agonizing how long this takes.

DINESH
You're gonna be late --

JOE
I KNOW!

DINESH
You're not fine.

Joe stops futzing with the mask and heads for the door.

DINESH (CONT'D)
Good luck!

Once Joe is gone, Dinesh continues the work of peeling the
mask off our dead woman's face.

JOE (O.S.)
DON'T TOUCH MY MASK!

Dinesh stops peeling and addresses the dead woman.

DINESH
He's not fine.

EXT. VALLEY BANK. DAY (D1)

A small, locally owned bank in a strip mall. It does not
inspire a lot of confidence.

INT. VALLEY BANK. DAY (D1)

Joe nervously taps his foot under the desk while **ALICE MEYERS** (early 30s), the cute, buttoned-up loan officer reviews his case file on her old-as-shit computer. She cuts to the chase:

ALICE
I'm afraid your loan application
has been denied.

JOE
Wow. That was fast.

Alice notices her SUPERVISOR hovering nearby. She straightens up, doing her best to represent the bank.

ALICE
Mr. Rice, if I may. You've been a
loyal member of our family here at
Valley Bank for over 15 years and --

JOE
17 years.

ALICE
That's over 15 years.

JOE
Two years over. Felt significant.

ALICE
In any case, it has come to our
attention that in all this time,
you've never seemed... happy.

JOE
The bank thinks I'm not happy?

ALICE
In your business. When your dad was
in charge of the funeral home, he
seemed to enjoy the work. You seem
to... accept it. Which isn't to say
you're not doing a good job --

JOE
I'm not doing a good job. Which is
why I need a loan.

ALICE
Which you're not getting.

JOE
Because the bank thinks I'm sad?

ALICE

Because nothing in your past suggests
that you'll be able to pay it back.
Why not look at this as a chance to
begin anew? A fresh start!

JOE

I would love a fresh start.
Unfortunately, I'm a single father
with a son who depends on me.
Single parents don't get fresh
starts, Miss Meyers. Single parents
make do because their children have
no one else to depend on, because
someone either died or abandoned
them. We were abandoned.

ALICE

I'm aware of that, too.

JOE

Although Isabel could be dead.

ALICE

Anything is possible.

JOE

Although evil rarely dies.

Oh boy. Empathetic, Alice drops her "official bank persona."

ALICE

I just think you could do other
things with your life, Joe. Things
that would make you happy.

Joe rises to his feet, done with this conversation.

ALICE (CONT'D)

You're behind on your last three
payments. If you don't fulfill your
obligations to the bank --

JOE

I'll get the money.

ALICE

-- We'll have to foreclose.

Fuck. He turns around and faces her, with true kindness.

JOE

Thanks for your time.

Joe walks out, head held high. Off Alice, feeling awful...

INT. RICE FUNERAL HOME. TYLER'S BEDROOM. EARLY EVENING (D1)

An empty DUFFEL BAG sits open on the floor. Tyler goes through his hamper, smelling clothes to determine which of them are *actually* dirty and which are okay. The okay ones get tossed into the duffel bag. He's reacting to a particularly egregious sock when his cell RINGS. Noting the CALLER ID, he straightens up. He's been waiting for this call.

TYLER
(all business, into phone)
This is Norman Powell.

Um, no it's not.

TYLER (CONT'D)
Thanks for getting back to me so quickly, Carlos. Good news I hope?

He furrows his brow. Apparently not good news.

TYLER (CONT'D)
Unfortunately my dates aren't flexible and that's not the price range we initially discussed...

JOE (O.S.)
Tyler! Dinner!

Shit! Tyler speeds things along, anxious to end the call.

TYLER
Then keep looking. I have a client walking in. We'll talk tomorrow.
(hangs up, then)
COMING!

INT. RICE FUNERAL HOME. KITCHEN. EARLY EVENING (N1)

Tyler walks in as Joe doles out some Chef Boyardee Beefaroni from a saucepan.

JOE
Do you want any salad?

TYLER
Do we have salad?

JOE
We have lettuce.

TYLER
I'm good.

JOE
We might have croutons.

TYLER
Pasta's good.

Joe plops down in his chair and immediately starts eating. Tyler checks his phone. There's no malice between them, but no connection either. Joe makes his usual, minimal effort:

JOE
How was your day?

TYLER
Fine. You?

JOE
Fine.

Okay, so they're not the *Gilmore Boys*.

JOE (CONT'D)
We've got a funeral tomorrow. You want to help with the finishing touches? You did such a nice job on the last one. Which reminds me, have you seen my 32-gauge needle? I can't find it anywhere.

So that's where Tyler gets his needles. And needle SKILLS.

TYLER
I haven't seen it. But I can't tonight anyway. Going to George's. Actually, I should probably dip. I'm not that hungry.

JOE
Home by ten.

And he's gone, his plate of food completely untouched. Off Joe and the sound of a TICKING CLOCK...

INT. RICE FUNERAL HOME. JOE'S WORKSHOP. NIGHT (N1)

Vintage horror movie posters line the walls. Latex masks are everywhere - some collected, some created. An especially valuable one, the Creature from the Black Lagoon, sits in a glass box. We now realize that TICKING CLOCK sound is coming from a TV playing *Rosemary's Baby*.

ROSEMARY
What have you done to it!? What have you done to his eyes?

CAMERA finds Joe fine-tuning his latest creation, the most content we've seen him yet. He "acts" along with the movie:

*CREepy MAN/JOE
He came up from hell and begat a
son of mortal woman!*

Welcome to Joe's happy place.

EXT. GEORGE'S HOUSE. NIGHT (N1)

Tyler stands outside. The door opens and there's **MR. PLUMMER** (40s), who smiles when he sees Tyler.

MR. PLUMMER
Hey Tyler. Hope you're hungry.

TYLER
Starving.

Tyler follows him in. This is his happy place.

INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE. KITCHEN/DINING ROOM. LATER

Kitchen/dining room/living room. Tyler is in a world quite the opposite of his own. It's a noisy, happy house, which is why he loves it here. Tyler and the Plummers are seated around a table, having just finished dinner. George's TWIN siblings, BEAU and LORELAI (10) sit at one end of the table, currently playing on their iPads. **MRS. PLUMMER** (40) and her husband sit at the other end with George and Tyler.

TYLER
Honestly Mrs. Plummer? That was maybe the best spaghetti I've ever had. No joke.

MRS. PLUMMER
Thanks, Tyler. You're always welcome here. Even when you don't lie to me about my cooking.

Mr. Plummer notices the twins on their iPads.

MR. PLUMMER
Did you two somehow forget there are no electronics during dinner?

BEAU
I'm just holding it.

LORELEI
We're technically finished eating.

Meanwhile George slyly shows Tyler a picture on his PHONE of a used green JEEP CHEROKEE.

GEORGE
I checked our bank account and we can officially afford this car. I think we should do it.

*
*
*

TYLER

It's great, but it's our backup,
dude. We've waited this long,
what's a few more months to get the
one we really want?

Tyler takes the phone and SWIPES the picture to a beautiful,
black 2002 LAND ROVER that looks shiny and new.

TYLER (CONT'D)

I mean, look at that. That thing is
sick. And I can get the price down,
I promise. What do you think we
should do, Mr. Plummer?

MR. PLUMMER

You're spending some serious bank
on this car. I think you get the
one you want or you'll regret it.

MRS. PLUMMER

As long as you're sure. This is a
chunk of your savings --

GEORGE

(ugh)

Right. My savings, Mom. We're sure.

Mrs. Plummer throws up her hands; she's not arguing. She and
her husband leave the boys alone. The twins are now in the
background, back on their iPads not paying attention.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

God, she's so annoying. You're
lucky you don't have to deal with
all that "mom" crap.

Tyler says nothing and George feels a pang of guilt.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Sorry. Was that --?

TYLER

It's fine.

GEORGE

But we can talk about your mom now,
right? I mean, you played the card
with Cassie this morning, so --

TYLER

I didn't "play" any "card." I
stated a fact. My mom is gone,
right?

George knows it's a sore spot and backs off. But now he wants
some other information that he's worried about.

GEORGE

So, what's the story with you and Cassie? Are you into her?

TYLER

Into her? I barely know her.

GEORGE

(covering)

Oh, right. Yeah, me too. Barely.

Tyler looks at him oddly, but then Mrs. Plummer re-enters with a carton of ice cream.

MRS. PLUMMER

Anybody want some ice cream?

TYLER

You don't have to ask this guy twice.

Mrs. Plummer starts scooping. As George looks bothered and the twins rush back with glee, Tyler can only smile.

INT. RICE FUNERAL HOME. BASEMENT. THE NEXT MORNING (D2)

Joe walks in and is thrown by the CHILL in the room. He looks up and notices THE WINDOW IS OPEN. That's odd. Nervous, Joe grabs a scalpel and begins to investigate. The door to the supply closet is closed. He approaches the door, turns the handle, then THROWS it open --

INT. RICE FUNERAL HOME. SUPPLY CLOSET. CONTINUOUS

-- Annnnnd it's empty. Joe relaxes. Until he sees a few bottles of formaldehyde lined up in a way that does not please him. He goes to organize the shelf when suddenly, a figure appears behind him, SPINS him around and PINS him against the wall, causing him to drop his scalpel. Joe reacts as if seeing a ghost.

JOE

Isabel?

CAMERA reveals our attacker, **ISABEL REYES**. Wicked, capricious, fearless, clever, and stunning. She smiles at Joe, a twinkle in her eye:

ISABEL

Miss me?

INT. RICE FUNERAL HOME. BASEMENT. MOMENTS LATER (D2)

Joe sits in a chair, speechless and rocked to his core, as Isabel uses his scalpel to dig mud out of the bottom of her fancy boots. The gym bag still strapped across her chest.

ISABEL

This is why you don't spend eight hundred dollars on boots. One night in the woods and they're destroyed.
(then, eyeing him)
You've lost weight.

JOE

It's been fifteen years.

ISABEL

Most people gain weight. I meant it as a compliment.

Isabel smiles. Joe doesn't. Isabel tries a new approach.

ISABEL (CONT'D)

How's Tyler? Is he gorgeous? I bet he's gorgeous.

Joe clenches his fist, fury rising.

ISABEL (CONT'D)

I can tell you're not in a chatty mood, so I'll cut to the chase. There are people who want me dead.

JOE

People other than me?

ISABEL

I need your help, Joe.

Now Joe smiles. Which turns into laughter. Tears rolling down his cheeks kinda laughter. When he's done:

JOE

Phew! Thank you. I needed that.

ISABEL

I can't get into the specifics --

JOE

No, of course not. Specifics have never been your thing. Like, your goodbye note? Very light on detail. What was it again? Oh yeah. "Dear Joe. I'm sorry. Don't hate me." Very concise.

ISABEL

Look, I understand --

JOE

You know what was fun? Putting an ad in the paper. That's the only way to legally divorce a spouse who deserted you. Did you know that? I didn't. Had to write up a little notice for the Bergen County Bugle and let the whole world know that you ran out on your husband and your son. So that was great.

ISABEL

The whole world doesn't read the Bergen County Bugle.

JOE

That's the detail you're choosing to focus on?

Isabel takes a step towards Joe, who instinctively takes a step back, folding his arms across his chest.

ISABEL

They're going to kill me, Joe.

She waits for him to take that in. And then she takes a step towards him again, vulnerable. This time, he doesn't move.

ISABEL (CONT'D)

I know you hate me and you have every right. But you loved me once. You might be the only person who ever did. Not that I deserved it.

We see this affect Joe. Barely. But there's movement.

JOE

Look, even if I wanted to --

ISABEL

I can pay you! I have money.

She UNZIPS the duffel bag and pulls out STACKS OF CASH.

ISABEL (CONT'D)

It's yours. All of it. Five hundred thousand dollars. If you help me.

JOE

Help you how? With what?

ISABEL

Help me fake my death.

Off this bombshell, we...

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. BERGENFIELD HIGH. TRAVERS' OFFICE. MORNING (D2)

Tyler sits, discreetly scrolling through **airbnb.com** on his phone, as Principal Travers paces, chewing him out.

PRINCIPAL TRAVERS

I don't understand what's going on with you these last few weeks. Your teachers say you've been distracted in class, you blew off a college counselor meeting, and let's not even talk about yesterday.

TYLER

Okay.

PRINCIPAL TRAVERS

I mean, what were you thinking?!

TYLER

I thought we weren't talking about it.

(off his look)

Sorry. Look, I've been a little preoccupied. But all that's about to change. I promise.

PRINCIPAL TRAVERS

I'm holding you to that. Okay, class is about to start, so hurry up.

Tyler unzips his backpack, searches for something.

TYLER

Where we doing this?

PRINCIPAL TRAVERS

The couch is fine.

Tyler removes his little Botox pouch from his backpack as Principal Travers sits on the couch, ready for his "fix."

TYLER

Don't worry, this one's on me.

He SQUIRTS MEDICINE from the syringe. Gotta love this kid...

INT. RICE FUNERAL HOME. FRONT DOOR. DAY (D2)

Dinesh is walking in, just as Joe is heading out. He's in such a state, he barely registers Dinesh's presence.

DINESH

Whoa, whoa. Where are you going?
Funeral's in a few hours.

JOE

I just need to get some air.

But Dinesh knows Joe too well. Something is up.

DINESH

What happened?

JOE

Isabel is here.

(before Dinesh can explode)
Don't worry, I locked her in the
supply closet. Just make sure Tyler
doesn't go downstairs when he gets
home. Oh, and maybe do a little
dustbusting? She tracked mud
everywhere because of the woods.

DINESH

Because of the... what?

JOE

The woods. I'll be back.

Joe leaves. Off Dinesh, thoroughly confused. ISABEL IS HERE?

INT. RICE FUNERAL HOME. SUPPLY CLOSET. DAY (D2)

Isabel sits on the floor, brushing her hair and picking out
the occasional stray leaf. Dinesh walks in with the
dustbuster. He shakes his head, disgusted.

DINESH

Unbelievable.

Isabel looks up from her grooming --

ISABEL

Oh. It's you.

-- then resumes her hair brushing.

DINESH

What the hell are you doing here?

ISABEL

I have a better question. What the
hell are you doing here? Don't tell
me you still work for Joe's dad.

As Dinesh dustbusts around her:

DINESH

Daniel had a stroke. Joe took over the business. I run the day to day operations.

ISABEL

I guess that means you didn't get into law school. *Qué pena.*

Clearly, there is no love lost between these two.

DINESH

And I take it things didn't work out between you and Saul?

Isabel FREEZES at the mention of Saul.

ISABEL

What do you know about Saul?

DINESH

(dramatic)

I know everything.

ISABEL

Then you know Saul is dead.

DINESH

Everything except that part.

(off her eye roll)

Whatever. I'm not about to shed any tears for the asshole who stole you from your family.

ISABEL

He didn't steal me. I left.

DINESH

And you're proud of that?

ISABEL

I'm not proud of it. But I own my decisions. I'm not a victim.

DINESH

No. You're just a bitch.

Dinesh starts to leave, but Isabel steps in front of him.

ISABEL

Do you know what it's like to have a baby when you're still just a baby yourself? To live in a house full of dead people with a husband who puts you on a pedestal?

DINESH
So now it's Joe's fault?

ISABEL
It's nobody's fault. Joe and I were never a perfect match.

DINESH
Sure you were. He thought you were too good for him and you agreed.

Isabel shakes her head; Dinesh could not be more wrong, but there's clearly no convincing him otherwise.

ISABEL
I ran away with Saul because he understood me. He knew who I was in a way that Joe refused to accept. And yes, he offered me a bigger life, a better life. We traveled the world, ate in the best restaurants, had sex in Jacuzzis --

DINESH
So unsanitary...

ISABEL
And the people we stole from had more than enough to spare. If he hadn't gotten so greedy --

DINESH
(feigning boredom)
Are you finished yet? I have a funeral to get to.

ISABEL
Does Joe know about Saul?

DINESH
You think I would keep something like that from my best friend?

ISABEL
Maybe. You've kept bigger secrets.

Dinesh darkens. She clearly touched a nerve.

DINESH
You know, I used to feel bad watching Tyler grow up without a mom. But I was wrong. Better to have no mother at all than to endure a thing like you.

Dinesh walks out, LOCKING the door behind him. We see a crack in Isabel's armor before she quickly shakes it off...

EXT. OLD MOVIE THEATER. DAY (D2)

A run-down theater that plays old movies. The kind you find on forgotten main streets.

INT. OLD MOVIE THEATER. DAY (D2)

"*Poltergeist*" plays onscreen. Joe watches, completely numb. All he can do is think about Isabel in his supply room.

ON SCREEN: The CLOWN attacks the little boy! (Jump scare!)

All six people in the theater SCREAM, including Joe. But then Joe keeps screaming. The other people look at him. Eventually Joe stops. That helped. He gets up and walks out.

INT. RICE FUNERAL HOME. SUPPLY CLOSET. DAY (D2)

Isabel is calmly going through the supply shelves, looking for something. She reaches into a box, pulls out a pair of LATEX GLOVES. Snaps them on. Finds another box, removes a large, HYPODERMIC NEEDLE. She then takes a thin tool with a HOOK on the end and walks to the door.

ISABEL

Dinesh? Joe?

Satisfied that no one is outside, she gets to work. Sticks the needle into the lower part of the lock, maneuvering it until it CLICKS into place. Takes the hook and places it INSIDE the lock right above the needle. Inserts and removes it a few times then slowly TURNS THE HOOK TOOL. We hear the deadbolt turn with it. Done! Smiling, she snaps the gloves off, opens the door and walks out...

INT. RICE FUNERAL HOME. FRONT DOOR. DAY (D2)

Dinesh stands at the open front door as FUNERAL GUESTS arrive.

DINESH

Welcome. The viewing and service
will be held just down the hall in
the second room on your right.

A mourner nods, and continues on. As another MOURNER arrives:

DINESH (CONT'D)
Very sorry for your loss.

CAMERA follows this mourner inside. As he walks, he's quietly JOINED BY ISABEL, who walks beside him as if also a mourner. As the mourner heads right, Isabel SNEAKS UPSTAIRS!

Back at the front door, a **CREEPY MOURNER** arrives. This one seems out of place, wearing too much leather and sporting a "bad guy" beard. Dinesh eyes him, suspicious.

DINESH (CONT'D)
Can I help you?

CREEPY MOURNER
Anderson funeral?

DINESH
Of course. Right this way...

Dinesh tries to lead the man into the viewing room, but --

CREEPY MOURNER
I'll find it.

Creepy Mourner walks away. Dinesh starts to follow him, but then Tyler walks in. Shoot! He quickly doubles back.

DINESH
Tyler! Hi! Good day at school?
(before he can answer)
Great, great. Do yourself a favor
and stay away from the basement. We
had an embalming accident and it's a
little unpleasant down there.

TYLER
Yeah, sure, whatever.

More MOURNERS walk in. As Dinesh heads off to greet them, Tyler passes the room where people are gathering for the funeral. He passes another room and stops because he sees:

INT. RICE FUNERAL HOME. DISPLAY ROOM. CONTINUOUS

A YOUNG WOMAN looking around, with her back to the entrance. Displayed here are various caskets, urns, and coffin liners for sale. Tyler clears his throat as he walks in, charming:

TYLER
Can I help you with anything?

The young woman turns around and it's... Cassie! Tyler's shocked, to say the least. So is Cassie for that matter.

TYLER/CASSIE
What are you doing here?

TYLER
I live here.

At first Cassie thinks he's joking, but then she realizes he's serious, and immediately forgets how much he bugs her.

CASSIE
You live here? That is so cool.

TYLER

Thanks. But... why exactly?

CASSIE

I have what some people might call
a morbid fascination with death. I
just call it a fascination.

TYLER

So you just come to random
funerals? Like that old movie?
"When Harry Met Sally"?

CASSIE

"Harold and Maude," and no. This is
actually my aunt's funeral.

TYLER

Oh. I'm sorry.

CASSIE

It's okay. We weren't close.

Tyler looks over at the other salon, where the family is
gathering. It's pretty much all white folks.

TYLER

But your family is...

CASSIE

White?

TYLER

Right. And you are...

CASSIE

Adopted?

TYLER

Right. Which makes me...

TYLER/CASSIE

A moron.

She smiles. Even though she's insulting him, for some reason,
Tyler still finds her charming, and thinks he has a shot.

TYLER

Hey, do you wanna maybe go out
sometime?

CASSIE

Are you actually asking me out on a
date at my aunt's funeral?

TYLER

Well, technically, it hasn't started yet.

CASSIE

I'm flattered... but not enough to say yes.

She heads towards her aunt's funeral. Off Tyler, intrigued...

INT. RICE FUNERAL HOME. TYLER'S BEDROOM. DAY (D2)

TIGHT ON: A photo of Tyler and George pinned to a corkboard.

REVEAL Isabel standing in Tyler's room, taking it all in. As if she could somehow piece together who her son became by what's hanging on his walls. Antique maps - *he must have a yen for travel*. Framed photography - *and he's an artist*. A drum set in the corner- *AND a musician! What doesn't he do?*

She sees a T-shirt hanging on the back of a chair. She can't help herself. SHE SMELLS IT. Annnnnd, it's super gross. (Hello? He's a 16 year old boy. He smells like a foot.)

Isabel feels her eyes beginning to well up with tears. Determined NOT to fall down this emotional rabbit hole, she sits at a desktop computer and starts typing...

INT. RICE FUNERAL HOME. HALLWAY. DAY (D2)

Tyler walks down the hallway and goes upstairs. Holy shit! He's heading right towards his mother!

INT. RICE FUNERAL HOME. BASEMENT. DAY (D2)

Creepy Mourner wanders the basement, clearly looking for something. Or someone. Uh-oh...

INT. RICE FUNERAL HOME. TYLER'S BEDROOM. DAY (D2)

Meanwhile, Isabel has found what she's looking for and hits PRINT. As the printer CHUGS to life --

INT. RICE FUNERAL HOME. STAIRS/UPSTAIRS HALL. DAY (D2)

Tyler makes his way to the top of the stairs and heads down the hall to his room.

INT. RICE FUNERAL HOME. BASEMENT. SUPPLY CLOSET. DAY (D2)

Creepy Mourner guy confirms the supply closet is EMPTY. He leaves, completely missing ISABEL'S HAIRBRUSH which is hiding in plain sight on the floor...

INT. RICE FUNERAL HOME. TYLER'S BEDROOM. DAY (D2)

Isabel takes the paper from the printer, folds it up and puts it in her bag. She stands and sees a PICTURE FRAME next to his bed. She heads over, curious...

INT. RICE FUNERAL HOME. UPSTAIRS HALL. DAY (D2)

Tyler gets to the closed door of his room and is about to open it when his **PHONE RINGS**. He freezes!

INT. RICE FUNERAL HOME. TYLER'S BEDROOM. DAY (D2)

Isabel freezes as well!

INT. RICE FUNERAL HOME. UPSTAIRS HALL. DAY (D2)

Tyler looks at his phone, sees who it is. He looks down the hall to make sure no one is around. Which is when he sees --

CREEPY MOURNER! Halfway up the stairs!

TYLER
Funeral's downstairs, buddy.

CREEPY MOURNER
Bathroom?

TYLER
Also downstairs, to your left.

Creepy Mourner considers pulling out his gun, but there's a houseful of people here. So he heads back downstairs, thwarted. Tyler waits until he's gone, then answers the phone as he opens his bedroom door. In his "older" voice:

TYLER (CONT'D)
This is Norman Powell.

Not again! What is this all about?! Tyler heads into --

INT. RICE FUNERAL HOME. TYLER'S BEDROOM. CONTINUOUS

-- and closes the door behind him. Where the fuck is Isabel?!

TYLER
Thanks for getting back to me so quickly. You spoke to the owner?...
It's an improvement from yesterday, but I still feel like you could go lower if you wanted to, Carlos...

As Tyler walks over to his desktop to check something, CAMERA PANS DOWN to find: ISABEL UNDER THE BED. Tyler's feet are mere inches away from her as she listens to his conversation.

TYLER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I get it. We all need to make a
living. It's just that I have a new
baby. Three months old...

Isabel reacts -- WHAT? Is she a GRANDMOTHER?

TYLER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
And I promised my wife some time
away. We had this rat infestation
in our condo. You ever heard of a
rat king?

Isabel relaxes when she realizes Tyler is pulling a con. She
smiles. He's like a chip off the abandoned mother block.

TYLER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
That's what I'm talking about,
Carlos! So how do I get the keys?...
Great. Okay. Gimme an hour and I'll
get back to you.

Tyler heads out of his room. Isabel sighs, relieved.

INT. RICE FUNERAL HOME. FRONT DOOR. DAY (D2)

Joe is walking IN just as Tyler is walking OUT. They're both
on edge, but trying to hide it as they engage in their usual
non-witty banter.

JOE
Hey. Where are you going?

TYLER
George's. Why are you sweating?

JOE
It's hot out.

Tyler looks outside. It's gray and gloomy.

TYLER
Are you okay?

JOE
I'm fine. You'll be home for dinner?

TYLER
Yeah. See you later.

Tyler leaves. Joe closes the door and heads over to the...

INT. RICE FUNERAL HOME. RECEPTION ROOM. CONTINUOUS

Dinesh stands in the doorway, respectfully watching the
funeral service in progress. Joe walks up behind him as his
phone RINGS. He checks it, then hits IGNORE.

JOE
Sorry I'm late. Any trouble?

DINESH
No trouble. Although I still have no idea what she's doing here.

JOE
Well, I obviously didn't invite her.

A MOURNER turns and gives them both the "stink eye." They stop "whispering" and turn their attention towards the service where a woman named MELANIE (20's) delivers a eulogy.

MELANIE
What can I say about my sister? She was a drug addict. Loved her pills. She especially loved them with alcohol. That one time she got pulled over with my niece in the car? I remember wishing she died that day.

Guests MURMUR. Joe and Dinesh exchange a glance. *Awkward...*

MELANIE (CONT'D)
But she didn't. She got better and worse and better and worse. That's what it is to have an addict in your family. It never ends. Until it does.

We see this land on Joe.

MELANIE (CONT'D)
But that doesn't mean you stop loving them. I'm sorry I didn't do more to help you, Becca. I'm sorry I didn't do everything I could.

Melanie breaks into a painful SOB, as the PRIEST helps her back to her seat. CAMERA stays on Joe, taking it all in.

INT. RICE FUNERAL HOME. TYLER'S BEDROOM. DAY (D2)

Isabel stares at the photo on Tyler's night stand: **Young Isabel holding Tyler as a tiny baby.** She's barely visible in the shot, her face in profile and buried in his newborn skin. But she remembers this moment.

JOE (O.S.)
What the hell are you doing in here?

Isabel spins around to see Joe in the doorway. FURIOUS.

JOE (CONT'D)
Who gave you the RIGHT? What part of you thinks you DESERVE to know my son? MY SON. Not yours.

ISABEL

That's not... I wasn't --

JOE

Did it even occur to you what would happen if Tyler walked in and saw you here? Do you even care what that would do to him?

ISABEL

Of course I care --

JOE

Bullshit! You don't care about anyone but yourself. And you never did. I want you out of my house and away from my son. Now.

ISABEL

Joe --

JOE

GET OUT OF MY HOUSE!

Oh shit. He's snapping. Isabel is surprised by his strength, but she doubles down and stands her ground.

ISABEL

I can't do that.

JOE

(grabbing his phone)

You have five seconds before I call the police. One. Two.

Isabel PULLS A GUN FROM HER JACKET. Joe sighs, deflating.

JOE (CONT'D)

Of course you have a gun.

ISABEL

Put the phone down, Joe.

JOE

So what? You're crazy? Like, actually crazy?

ISABEL

That's right. Which means you better do exactly as I say.

Off Joe, suddenly afraid...

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. RICE FUNERAL HOME. KITCHEN. DAY (D2)

Joe, Isabel and Dinesh sit around the table, a bowl of popcorn in the middle. Dinesh is LIVID, while Joe seems more depressed and accepting of this shitty situation.

JOE
When do we get our phones back?

ISABEL
When we finalize the plan.

DINESH
Your plan that's going to put us all in jail? Guess what? We don't get to have phones in jail! Or soap. Forget it. I'm outta here --

Dinesh RISES. Isabel holds up the gun. Dinesh sits back down.

DINESH (CONT'D)
This is why people hate guns.

Joe quickly tries to put an end to all of this.

JOE
Okay, look. You need a death certificate? I'll pull some strings and get you one in a few days.

ISABEL
Great! I can also go on Amazon and get one in twenty-four hours.

JOE
(defensive)
Only if you're Prime.

ISABEL
These people won't stop because of a piece of paper, Joe. Focus.

She tosses a handful of popcorn into her mouth. Joe CRINGES.

ISABEL (CONT'D)
What?

JOE
Nothing, it's just... you're getting crumbs all over the floor.

ISABEL
See? That tells me you're not focused.

DINESH

We couldn't be more focused. Okay,
so it has to be a public death.
Something that gets in the news.

JOE

How about a drowning?

ISABEL

Guys, I --

DINESH

Drowning is so ugly. All the
bloating.

JOE

What about a heart attack? Or a
gunshot wound? Ooh! I can make one
of those.

ISABEL

Listen, I already --

DINESH

Fake shark bite? We have the mask.

ISABEL

ENOUGH!

Isabel SLAMS the table, startling them both.

ISABEL (CONT'D)

Here's how it's gonna go. First
thing we need to do is have Dinesh
build a bomb.

DINESH

I'm flattered, of course, but I
don't know how to build a bomb.

Isabel pulls out the piece of paper she printed off Tyler's
computer and places it in the middle of the table.

DINESH (CONT'D)

"Six easy steps to build a homemade
bomb." Where did you get this?

ISABEL

Pinterest. My rental car is hidden
out by Rockleigh Woods. We're gonna
drive there, put the bomb inside
and blow it up. There's only one
thing we need.

As the three of them exchange looks...

TIGHT ON: OUR DEAD WOMAN. Still in her coffin.

INT. RICE FUNERAL HOME. RECEPTION ROOM. DAY (D2)

Joe, Dinesh and Isabel stand around THE DEAD BODY.

ISABEL

She's perfect.

JOE

You are not a good human being.

INT. BUS. DAY (D2)

Tyler rides the city bus alone, nervously bouncing his foot. His phone DINGS with a text from George: **Where u at?** Tyler takes a moment, then texts back: **With Dad. New client. Talk later.** Well, clearly none of that is true. Why is Tyler lying to his best friend? We'll soon find out...

INT. RICE FUNERAL HOME. KITCHEN. DAY (D2)

Joe, Isabel and Dinesh are back at the table. Their plan taking shape as Dinesh stress eats popcorn.

JOE

First things first. We have to make sure no one can identify the body.

ISABEL

That's what the bomb is for.

Moving into SEQUENCE, we hear Isabel and Joe's conversation:

INT. RICE FUNERAL HOME. BASEMENT. DAY (D2)

The dead woman is now back on Joe's work table. Joe searches his TOOLKIT, looking for something while Dinesh works on the bomb at a nearby table.

JOE (V.O.)

That won't necessarily take care of the teeth.

Joe pulls out a HAMMER...

JOE (V.O.)

And if there are teeth, dental records will be checked.

Joe then pulls out a CHISEL and quickly starts KNOCKING out her teeth. All business. Isabel watches, impressed.

INT. RICE FUNERAL HOME. KITCHEN. DAY (D2)

Resuming their previous roundtable discussion:

JOE

She should also be wearing at least
some of your clothes.

DINESH

Any opportunity to burn that
sweater is a win.

ISABEL

I love this sweater!

DINESH

Of course you do.

ISABEL

Why does she need my clothes?

INT. RICE FUNERAL HOME. BASEMENT. DAY (D2)

JOE (V.O.)

To add more of your DNA cells to
the crime scene.

Isabel pulls off her sweater, revealing a skimpy tanktop underneath. Joe watches, trying not to notice how beautiful she is. But it's hard. Because she's fucking beautiful.

ISABEL (V.O.)

Clothes have DNA?

JOE (V.O.)

You sweat, don't you? And your hair
is always falling out everywhere.

As Isabel places her sweater on the dead woman, she sees several STRANDS of her long, brown hair. Joe was right.

She turns to look at him, and sees him already looking at her. A moment between them. Something that feels... intimate. Until Dinesh walks through and RUINS it on purpose.

DINESH (V.O.)

Moving on...

INT. RICE FUNERAL HOME. KITCHEN. DAY (D2)

JOE

The cemetery will be waiting for a delivery. We have to get them a casket or it will raise questions.

ISABEL

But won't the casket be empty?

JOE

They won't know that. Once we lock it, it's never opened again.

INT. RICE FUNERAL HOME. BASEMENT. DAY (D2)

Joe stands next to the empty casket, which sits on top of a metal bier. Joe goes about CLOSING and LOCKING the casket.

JOE (V.O.)
We deliver the empty casket to the cemetery. Once it's signed for...

TIGHT ON: A clipboard being signed by a CEMETERY WORKER.

INT. RICE FUNERAL HOME. KITCHEN. DAY (D2)

JOE/ISABEL
We're off to the woods.

DINESH
You know who hangs out in the woods? Serial killers. And bears. So just saying. This is a bad plan.

Joe and Isabel can't help but smile at each other, in sync. Whether they like it or not, they make a good team.

INT. BANK. DAY (D2)

Tyler enters and approaches a teller named **BETH**.

BETH
Hi there, how can I help you today?

TYLER
Yes... Beth... I have an account here. I'd like to close it out.
(then)
Also, would you happen to know where I can convert American cash into pesos?

Off this surprising turn of events...

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. WOODS. DAY (D2)

Joe arranges the dead woman's body in the driver's seat. As a final touch, Isabel removes her necklace and places it around the dead woman's neck. As Dinesh places the BOMB on the dash:

DINESH
Done. Enjoy your death, Isabel. I know I will. Joe, let's go.

Dinesh walks off. Joe starts to follow, then --

ISABEL
Joe, wait.

Joe stops. Dinesh turns around, annoyed.

ISABEL (CONT'D)
One minute. That's all.

DINESH
No can do. Joe? Coming?

But Joe doesn't budge.

DINESH (CONT'D)
Unbelievable.

Dinesh stomps off, hurt. Joe stands there, feeling a little foolish and a lot exposed as Isabel tries to find her words.

ISABEL
I just wanted to say... thank you.

Joe's guard immediately goes back up.

JOE
That's what you wanted to say? The only reason I helped was because you literally had a gun to my head.

ISABEL
It wasn't loaded.

To prove her point, Isabel SHOOTS the gun. Nothing happens. Joe shakes his head, feeling more and more foolish.

JOE
You must think I'm such an idiot.

ISABEL
Not at all! You're missing the point.

JOE

What is the point, Isabel?

ISABEL

That I would never hurt you.

JOE

Except you did. More than a gunshot
ever could.

For the first time, he's not being sarcastic. Or accusatory.
He's speaking from the heart. They stand there, not knowing
what to say, but neither of them ready to say goodbye.

JOE (CONT'D)

So I have a question. Was any of it
real? I mean... did you ever care
about me at all?

Isabel looks at him - so much she wants to say. Finally:

ISABEL

I noticed you before you noticed
me. Mr. Carter's English class? You
sat in front of me. I remember your
flannel shirts smelled like
cigarettes and Downey. The first
time we actually met, I pretended I
didn't know who you were. I was
afraid if I said anything it would
be too obvious how I felt.

(then)

It was always real, Joe. And then
it got... too real. After Tyler was
born... I wasn't ready to be a
mother. But you... You were born
ready. I always knew you'd be a
great dad.

JOE

What makes you think I'm great?

ISABEL

There aren't a lot of 16 year old boys
who know how to book international
flights. You've raised an independent,
precocious young man. And I appreciate
you encouraging him to explore his
roots. It's good for him to know where
he comes from.

At this point, Joe is completely baffled.

JOE

What are you talking about?

ISABEL

Tyler's trip to Buenos Aires. I saw the plane ticket on his computer. I was surprised you'd let him go alone, but... I'm sure you know what you're doing.

Obviously, Joe did not know ANY of this. Any maybe she's tipping him off, but he won't give her the satisfaction.

JOE

That's right. I do.

Joe FLIPS the timer on the bomb.

JOE (CONT'D)

Good luck, Isabel. And this time?
Don't come back.

EXT. SIDE OF THE ROAD. DAY (D2)

Away from the woods, Dinesh is waiting/stewing by the hearse when Joe marches up, his head spinning.

DINESH

Next time you fake your ex-wife's death, leave me out of it.

JOE

Did you know Tyler was going to Buenos Aires?

DINESH

I feel like you're purposely changing the subject.

JOE

I have to talk to Tyler. Give me the keys.

As Dinesh hands Joe the keys, he notices:

DINESH

Where's the money?

JOE

(suddenly remembering)

Aw, crap.

DINESH

Unbelievable!

JOE

I was upset about Tyler! I forgot.

DINESH

Well go back and get it.

JOE
Do I have to? I left on a high note. I never leave on a high note.

DINESH
Is the high note worth half a million dollars?

Joe considers the question. Dinesh RAISES a brow.

JOE
I'm thinking!

EXT. WOODS. DAY (D2)

Isabel opens the trunk and removes the GYM BAG FULL OF CASH. She straps it to her chest, GENTLY closes the trunk, careful not to disrupt the bomb, and heads into the woods.

MAN (O.S.)
Hand over the bag, Isabel.

Fuck. Isabel turns around to find Creepy Mourner - otherwise known as **COLE** - calmly aiming a gun at her head! Isabel reacts, equally calm. She obviously knows him.

ISABEL
Hi, Cole. Nice pants.

COLE
The bag. NOW.

Cool as a cucumber, Isabel tosses him the gym bag.

ISABEL
Did Saul send you?

Wait, what?! Isn't Saul dead?! SO MANY SECRETS AND LIES!

COLE
Does it matter? The number of people you've screwed over, you're like the walking dead.

ISABEL
So you're here to put me out of my misery? Is that it?

COLE
That's not my call. Unlike you, I follow orders. Now shut up and let me do my job.

With one hand, Cole keeps his gun trained on Isabel, while the other attempts to unzip the gym bag and confirm the money is all there. The second he looks down, ISABEL ATTACKS!

Cole falls to the ground and HITS his head on a rock. Isabel grabs the bag, jumps into --

INT. ISABEL'S CAR. CONTINUOUS

She shoves the dead body into the passenger seat and starts the car. **TIGHT ON: THE BOMB.** Five minutes and counting!

EXT. HIGHWAY. DAY (D2)

Joe and Dinesh, still arguing.

DINESH

If you'd tried MY therapist, like I asked you to --

JOE

I told you! He wasn't on my plan!

Suddenly, they hear GUNSHOTS! They both instinctively DUCK.

DINESH

What the hell is she doing?

JOE

It can't be Isabel. Her gun wasn't loaded.

And then Isabel comes FLYING out of the woods in the car. Cole is hot on her tail, driving a motorcycle. Joe and Dinesh watch as they pass by. **As does a nearby LLAMA.**

DINESH

Of course there's a guy on a motorcycle.

JOE

Don't act like you saw that coming.

DINESH

I totally saw that coming.

Joe JUMPS into the driver's seat. Dinesh sighs.

DINESH (CONT'D)

Just like I saw this coming.

As Dinesh gets into the passenger seat...

INT. CVS DRUGSTORE. DAY (D2)

Tyler strolls the aisle, putting travel soap, toothpaste and toothbrush in a basket. **AND SOMEONE IS WATCHING HIM.** (At least, that's what the CAMERA is indicating.) And given what's currently happening in the woods, this could be a scary situation...

Oblivious to his stalker, Tyler pulls out a small bottle of Elizabeth Arden Mist. A saleswoman walks by.

TYLER
Who doesn't like a calming,
hydrating mist? Am I right?

She ignores him. As he puts the mist in the basket, he looks over and notices... George! (Phew! Not a killer!) But boy does he look pissed...

TYLER (CONT'D)
Hey! This is a coincidence.

GEORGE
It would be less of a coincidence
if I wasn't looking for you after
you LIED about where you were.
(holds up his iPhone)
Find My Friends.

Tyler silently curses himself for leaving that on.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
I was coming to tell you we'd been
robbed. But then I found out from
the bank that I'd been robbed.
Apparently by you.

TYLER
I can explain, George.

But he can't explain. Because explaining would involve talking about his mother which is something Tyler Rice simply WILL NOT DO. Too many feelings involved. So he punts.

TYLER (CONT'D)
Here's a thought. Let's you and me
grab some 'za --

GEORGE
You know what? I don't even care.
You're just going to say something
to somehow convince me that what
you did was right... because you're
a manipulative, selfish narcissist.

TYLER
I feel like some calming mist might
help in this situation.

GEORGE
Keep the stupid mist. And keep the
money. The only person you've ever
really cared about is you. Well,
congratulations.
(MORE)

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Now you get to spend as much time
as you want with the person you
like most.

And George stalks off. Then turns back, just to make sure.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
I meant you.

George leaves. Tyler sighs, UPSET, then SPRITZES himself.

INT. ISABEL'S CAR. DAY (D2)

BACK TO THE ACTION! The bomb is ticking down. THREE MINUTES AND COUNTING! The gym bag is stuck in the door of the passenger seat. Isabel does her best to pry it loose while driving. Through her rearview mirror, she sees the motorcycle gaining on her. She speeds ahead...

EXT. HIGHWAY/INT. HEARSE. DAY (D2)

Joe is driving as fast as he can. A solid 58 MPH.

DINESH
You never should have let her back
into our lives.

JOE
I didn't let her back in. She
showed up!

DINESH
You should have kicked her out.

JOE
She had a gun!

DINESH
Not at first!

JOE
You know, you're being really
judgmental right now.

Up ahead, the motorcycle picks up even more speed. They're falling behind. Joe PRESSES his foot on the accelerator.

EXT. HIGHWAY. DAY (D2)

Cole has now caught up to Isabel's car! He has the gun out! Just as he SHOOTS, Isabel's car makes a WILD LEFT turn, SCREECHING into the woods. The motorcycle follows. The hearse tries to follow, also SCREECHING, but instead of going left, it just ends up SLIDING out of control before coming to a stop. You know, because it's a hearse. And now it's quiet...

EXT. LONE PALM TRAILS. DAY (D2)

KAPLOW! Back to the beginning and our giant explosion.

INT. WOODS. DAY (D2)

... Joe rushes up to the car, which is engulfed in flames. HUNDRED DOLLARS BILLS are burning in the air. Cole lies DEAD on the ground.

JOE
Oh my God...

Dinesh looks at Cole, piecing it all together.

DINESH
This man... He was in the house today. I knew something wasn't right, no one wears that much leather to a funeral.

But Joe doesn't hear that right now. He approaches the car --

JOE
Isabel -- ?

Dinesh pulls him back, kind but firm.

DINESH
We have to go.

JOE
I can't leave her like this --

DINESH
There's nothing you can do for her now. And the cops are gonna show up. Or worse. More motorcycles. We can't be here...

Joe nods, unable to take his eyes off the fire. He tries to move, but he stumbles a bit.

DINESH (CONT'D)
Come on. I got you.

As Dinesh gently leads his friend away from the wreckage...

END ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

INT. RICE FUNERAL HOME. KITCHEN. EVENING (N2)

Joe sits at the kitchen table, surprisingly calm. Or maybe he's dead inside. Hard to say. He hears the front door open --

TYLER (O.S.)
I'm home!

JOE
In here.

Tyler walks in, out of sorts from his fight with George.

TYLER
What's for dinner?

JOE
I was thinking we'd order fried chicken since you probably won't be able to get that in Buenos Aires.
Although I hear the coffee is great.

Joe hands Tyler a printout of his plane ticket. FUCK. Tyler runs the gamut of teenage emotions. First, terror.

TYLER
Dad, I can explain --

JOE
Nope.

Okay then. Tyler moves past fear onto righteous indignation.

TYLER
So you went on my computer without asking me? Do you have any idea what a violation that is? Does privacy mean nothing to you?

JOE
Nope.

Now Tyler is a little confused.

TYLER
Nope, it means nothing, or "nope"
you're not having this conversation?

JOE
Oh, we are HAVING a conversation.
But YOU are not leading it.

TYLER

Well, if I don't lead it, it won't happen. So... whatever.

JOE

What the hell does that mean?

TYLER

It means you don't talk to me about anything. EVER. So why would I have talked to YOU about this?

JOE

Because I'm your father! That's how this relationship works.

TYLER

But this relationship doesn't work! That's the point. I ask questions, you never give me any answers --

JOE

Because I don't have any answers!

TYLER

Which is why I'm going to Buenos Aires. Because she does.

JOE

You are not going anywhere. Except maybe back to Dr. Woo.

TYLER

I don't need a shrink, Dad. I need to talk to my mother!

ARGH! Joe wants to smack the stupid off this kid! Instead, he takes a breath. Tries to bring it down a notch.

JOE

What makes you think your mom lives in Buenos Aires? I'm just curious.

TYLER

I don't think she lives there. But I know Aunt Lucia does.

Joe reacts, legitimately surprised by Tyler's knowledge.

JOE

How do you know about Aunt Lucia?

TYLER

Remember that Target gift card you gave me for my birthday last month? I sold it for cash and hired a PI.

JOE
(genuinely confused)
Why would you do that?

TYLER
I'm sixteen, Dad. Did you really
expect me to go my whole life
without ever looking for her?

Joe realizes he did expect that. And maybe that was foolish.
So he stops arguing and starts listening.

TYLER (CONT'D)
Turns out Aunt Lucia still lives in
the same city where she and mom
were born. I bought a cheap plane
ticket and booked an Air B&B
through this guy, Carlos. Although
I probably should've done that in
reverse. Lesson learned.

Speechless, Joe just shakes his head. He doesn't even know
where to begin. His reaction makes Tyler more defensive.

TYLER (CONT'D)
Whatever. It's not a bad plan.

JOE
You're right. It's not bad. It's
terrible. It's RIDICULOUS -- !

TYLER
What's so ridiculous about wanting
to meet my own mother? Thanks to
you, I don't even know what the
woman looks like!

JOE
Thanks to me? This is MY fault?

TYLER
You're the one who burned all her
pictures! Seriously, who does that?

JOE
It's a thing. People do it! And the
reason you don't know your mother
isn't because I burned her
pictures, it's because SHE LEFT US!

TYLER
She left YOU. And I don't blame
her. I wish I could.

Ouch. Mercifully, this moment is interrupted by the DOORBELL.

INT. RICE FUNERAL HOME. FRONT DOOR. NIGHT (N2)

Joe opens the door to find a police officer, **JACKIE**, on the other side. Now it's Joe's turn to be terrified.

OFFICER JACKIE

Joe Rice?

JOE

Yes. Is everything okay?

Tyler appears behind Joe.

OFFICER JACKIE

I'm here about Isabel Reyes.

JOE

Isabel doesn't live here anymore.

OFFICER JACKIE

I'm aware of that, but you're listed as her next of kin.

TYLER

What about her?

Off Joe, dreading where this is going...

INT. RICE FUNERAL HOME. RECEPTION ROOM. MOMENTS LATER (N2)

Joe, Tyler and Officer Jackie sit in the salon. Tyler is unusually quiet, still processing the shock of what he's just been told. Joe is doing his best to appear "surprised."

OFFICER JACKIE

... We found her car out by the trails near Rockleigh Woods. We think someone must have planted a bomb.

JOE

(too quickly)

Who would do that?

OFFICER JACKIE

We don't have too many details. The investigation is still ongoing. But we think it may have been some sort of revenge plot. Your wife --

JOE

Ex-wife.

OFFICER JACKIE

Ex-wife. It appears she had some ties to organized crime.

TYLER
My mom was in the mafia?

Joe is equally surprised by this little tidbit. Jesus...

OFFICER JACKIE
Like I said, this is an ongoing investigation. The explosion made it difficult to... That is to say, we won't be able to have you identify Isabel's remains.

The officer pauses, uncomfortable, but Tyler is now hopeful.

TYLER
Then how do you know it was her?
Maybe it was someone else driving her car.

OFFICER JACKIE
That's what we're trying to find out.

The officer reaches into her case and pulls out a small evidence bag containing ISABEL'S NECKLACE.

OFFICER JACKIE (CONT'D)
Does this look familiar to either of you? We found it on the scene. I understand it's been some time since you've seen her, so --

And just like that, Tyler's hope dies.

TYLER
That's hers. That's my mom's necklace.

OFFICER JACKIE
Are you sure?

TYLER
She's wearing it in my picture. I have a picture...

OFFICER JACKIE
Alrighty then. That helps.

Joe sees how rocked Tyler is by all of this. Before the officer can ask more questions, he stands up -- ending it.

JOE
If it's all right with you,
Officer, I think we need a moment.

Officer Jackie reads the room, decides Joe is right. She stands up, collecting her things.

OFFICER JACKIE
I'll let myself out.

The officer walks out. Joe turns around to deal with Tyler, whose head is spinning, heart is breaking. For the first time he seems... young.

TYLER
Do you think..? Has she been living
here the whole time? Or maybe...
maybe she was coming home?

Joe searches for something comforting to say, but no words come. Overwhelmed, Tyler jumps to his feet.

TYLER (CONT'D)
Never mind. Doesn't matter.

JOE
Tyler --

TYLER
Just more questions you'll never
have the answers to.

Tyler bolts up the stairs. Joe wants to follow, but his feet stay glued to the floor. We hear Tyler's bedroom door CLOSE. Off Joe, feeling like the worst father in the world.

END ACT FIVE

ACT SIXINT. RICE FUNERAL HOME. JOE'S WORKSHOP. DAY (D3)

CLOSE ON the CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON MASK. Pull back to reveal that Joe has removed it from UNDER THE GLASS and is now taking photos of it with his iPhone.

He sits down in front of his LAPTOP which is open to eBay. The description of the Creature is listed along with a price. After Joe hits send on his phone, we watch as the image of the mask loads onto the laptop screen. The mask is now for sale. No turning back. He hears a NOISE from the kitchen.

JOE
(calls up)
Tyler?

Joe grabs a key off a shelf and unlocks a cabinet drawer. He rifles through some stuff we can't see, but then finds what he's looking for. A PICTURE OF ISABEL. She looks the same, just younger. As Joe walks out, picture in hand, he calls...

JOE (CONT'D)
Ty?

INT. RICE FUNERAL HOME. KITCHEN. DAY (D3)

Joe walks in, ready to finally share a picture of Isabel with his son, but Tyler is already gone. Off Joe, looking at the picture with a touch of sadness...

INT. BERGENFIELD HIGH. HALLWAY. DAY (D3)

Tyler walks down the hallway, more subdued than usual. Cassie purposefully approaches, oblivious to his mood.

CASSIE
Hey. Is your father hiring?

TYLER
And good morning to you.

CASSIE
(whatever)
Sorry, I didn't realize we were in
England. Good morning. Is your
father hiring?

TYLER
Hiring what?

CASSIE
An intern? An assistant? I'll do
anything. I just want the experience
of working with dead people.
(MORE)

CASSIE (CONT'D)
I'm planning on pre-med and this
would look great on college
applications.

Tyler looks at her for a beat, or looks right through her.
He's barely listening, you see. Lost in his own thoughts.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
Hello? Are you there?

TYLER
Actually, no.

Without so much as an apologetic smile, Tyler makes a sharp left and heads into the bathroom. CAMERA REVEALS: George, having watched the exchange from afar. He approaches.

CASSIE
What's up with Debbie Downer? Did he run out of Botox?

GEORGE
No idea.

CASSIE
You coming to class?

He should. Plus, any opportunity to walk with Cassie cannot be taken lightly. Unfortunately, George has a conscience.

GEORGE
I'll see you in there.

George heads into the bathroom after his friend.

INT. BERGENFIELD HIGH. BOYS' BATHROOM. DAY (D3)

Tyler pees at a urinal. George enters. He tries to discern what's up with his friend without giving away any power.

GEORGE
Nice mood. You planning on being a jerk to everyone today?

Tyler doesn't say anything. Just flushes. Which is annoying.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Hey. I'm the one who's mad at you.

TYLER
So leave me alone.

GEORGE
What the hell, man? Who died?

TYLER
My mom, actually.

George reacts, horrified. Tyler remains completely stoic.

GEORGE
Dude. I'm so sorry...

TYLER
Don't be sorry. I didn't know her.
So, who cares?

GEORGE
You care.

TYLER
I don't.

GEORGE
You obviously do.

Tyler tries to leave, but George won't let him.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Why won't you talk about this?

TYLER
Because I don't want to talk about it
with you. You wouldn't understand.

GEORGE
Try me.

Tyler sighs, hating this.

TYLER
Okay. You know how you and your mom
have the exact same weird ears? I
wish I had that.

GEORGE
You wish you had my ears?

TYLER
I wish I had what you had. I wish I
knew who my mom was. Which is why I
stole our car money and spent it on
a non-refundable plane ticket to
Buenos Aires. To try and find her.

George tries to process all of this. It's not easy.

GEORGE
You were gonna move to Buenos Aires
and not tell me?

TYLER
No. It wasn't about, like, "finding
my new family." I didn't think she
was gonna solve all my problems --

GEORGE
What problems?

TYLER

-- Part of me wanted to find her just so I could yell at her. 'Cause what she did... I mean, it was so messed up. And I'm rightly pissed off. But mostly, I wanted to ask her why. Why'd she leave? I wanted to know the truth. And now I never will.

George takes a moment, not sure what to say next. Finally:

GEORGE
Non-refundable plane ticket?

Tyler can't help it. He laughs. George laughs. Thank God.

TYLER
 Guess I owe you a Jeep.

GEORGE
 Screw that. You owe me a Land Rover. And you have to help me get a date with Cassie.

TYLER
 So you do like Cassie?

GEORGE
 (nervous)
 Why? Do you?

TYLER
 (lying)
 No.

GEORGE
 Good. 'Cause that would've been awkward.

Off this promise of a love triangle, we...

EXT. RICE FUNERAL HOME. DRIVEWAY. DAY (D3)

Joe is writing a "For Sale" sign on his crappy car when Alice from the bank approaches.

ALICE
 I left you two messages. You never called me back.

JOE
 I'm sorry. Yesterday was...

Insane? Horrible? Worst day of his entire adult life?

JOE (CONT'D)
... busy.

ALICE
The only other time you didn't call
me back was after our second date,
and that was because I wore a beret.

Joe smiles. Wait, they're a couple? How cute is that?!

JOE
It wasn't because of the beret.

ALICE
You told me you hated the beret.

JOE
It was a bold choice for a second
date. You need to let go of this.

Alice gives him a sweet kiss. Aw. They're a good couple.

ALICE
So are you still mad at me?

JOE
I was never mad at you. You were
just doing your job. I'm not dating
you for the bank loans.

Alice nods, feeling guilty but relieved.

ALICE
Have you told Tyler yet?

JOE
I will if it gets to that point.
But I don't want to worry him until
it's absolutely necessary.

ALICE
I can talk to him, too, if you
want. I can explain the numbers --

JOE
It's probably better if I do it.

Alice does her best not to take this personally, but we get
the sense that Joe keeps them apart. He tries to fix it:

JOE (CONT'D)
But maybe we can all have dinner
this weekend? If you're free?

ALICE
Really? I'll check my calendar.

Joe pulls her in for a deeper kiss. When they break apart, Joe sees ISABEL ACROSS THE STREET.

His first reaction is SURPRISE. Next, RELIEF. But then she WAVES at him, and he remembers he hates her. So he SCOWLS.

JOE

Damn.

ALICE

Sorry. I had cheese for breakfast.

As Alice tries to smell her own breath:

JOE

No, I mean, damn! Look at the time!
I have a client coming.

ALICE

Another funeral? That's great! God,
I wish more people would die.

JOE

Me too, babe. Me too.

He quickly ushers her around the corner, away from Isabel.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET. CONTINUOUS

ALICE

You don't have to walk me to my
car. You're so sweet.

JOE

You know what they say, never stop
dating your wife.

(then, realizing)

Or your girlfriend. Same, but
different. Both important.

He opens the car door and practically SHOVES her inside.

JOE (CONT'D)

Drive safe! Have a great day!

Alice reacts, flustered, as Joe rushes away. CAMERA follows him down the block. As he rounds the corner, he bumps into --

ISABEL

She's pretty.

JOE

You're supposed to be dead.

ISABEL

About that. Got a minute?

INT. RICE FUNERAL HOME. KITCHEN. DAY (D3)

Isabel sits at the kitchen table as Joe pours himself a large glass of water. Chugs it. Pours another.

ISABEL

You might consider a tablecloth on this thing. Something cheery. This room is a real bummer.

JOE

You know what else is a bummer? The fact that you keep showing up.

ISABEL

I'm sorry. But I need your help --

JOE

I already helped you. We staged your death, remember? It was REALLY good, by the way. Even I couldn't tell it was fake. PS, you owe me half a million dollars.

ISABEL

The money blew up with the car. Disappointing, but it happens. The good news is, I have a way to make it all back. Wanna hear the plan?

JOE

Does it involve the mafia?

ISABEL

Oh. You heard about that? It's not as bad as it sounds.

JOE

Sounds like you're in the mafia.

ISABEL

I'm not in the mafia. It's more like they're after me, but we can deal with that later. First, we have to fake another death.

JOE

Please stop talking.

Dinesh walks in. Upon seeing Isabel, he does an ABOUT FACE and starts to head out. She pulls him back.

ISABEL

Neesh! Stay! We need you, too.

DINESH

We? Are you back together? Does she have a key now?

ISABEL

I'm here on business. We've got another death to fake. Shouldn't be difficult. Nice man. Goes by Jerry. I met him in the woods.

DINESH

Told you. Serial killers.

JOE

The answer is no.

ISABEL

He's willing to pay TWICE what I was gonna pay.

DINESH

Twice?

JOE

Still no.

ISABEL

I thought you guys needed money.

JOE

What I need is for you to go away.

DINESH

True. Although, we also need money. And we're not exactly crushing the funeral industry. Maybe we could moonlight as death fakers.

JOE

Neesh!

ISABEL

Listen to your partner. There's a real business opportunity here. You could finally put all those toy masks you make to good use --

JOE

They're not toys!

ISABEL

Is this because of your girlfriend?

DINESH

You introduced her to Alice?

JOE
We're not talking about Alice.

ISABEL
Fine. Then let's talk about Jerry.

DINESH

ISABEL
The guy whose death we're faking.

JOE
We're not faking any more deaths!

DINESH
Except Jerry's. And maybe we put an ad on the dark web, start accepting Bitcoin...

The three of them start ARGUING all at once, until they hear:

TYLER (O.S.)
Hello?

They turn to see Tyler standing in the doorway. Holy shit!

TYLER (CONT'D)
'Scuse me. Just grabbing a snack.

Joe and Dinesh remain frozen in awkward, paralyzed silence as Tyler grabs a piece of fruit, oblivious. Isabel stares at him, OVERWHELMED with emotion. Before he leaves, he turns to Isabel. Ever the charming lad...

TYLER (CONT'D)
Hi. I'm Tyler.

Before Isabel can find her voice to respond:

JOE
This is Dinesh's sister. Mariana.

Dinesh looks at Joe-- *WHAT THE FUCK?* Joe avoids his gaze.

TYLER
I didn't know you had a sister.

JOE DINESH
She lives in Mexico. We don't really get along.

DINESH (CONT'D)
Both of those things.

Tyler reacts, suspicious. Isabel forces a smile, taking on her new "role."

ISABEL

Different mothers, of course. It's nice to meet you, Tyler.

As soon as Isabel takes Tyler's hand, tears spring into her eyes. Talking to her son for the first time, TOUCHING him. It's more than she can bear. So she pulls his handshake into a hug. Like a crazy, weird lady hug. Dinesh covers, explains:

DINESH

We're a "huggy" family.

Tyler nods, as he delicately extricates himself from the hug.

JOE

Anyway, Mariana is just visiting.

TYLER

That's cool. How long you in town?

Before Joe can answer for her again--

ISABEL

I'm not sure. But I was hoping I could stay here with you and your dad? My brother's apartment is so tiny. I can barely fit my suitcases!

She laughs. Joe and Dinesh do not. Tyler just shrugs.

TYLER

Fine with me.

He starts to head up towards his room, then remembers:

TYLER (CONT'D)

Oh, Dad. I almost forgot. I decided I want to have a funeral for mom.

JOE

That's... but... why?

TYLER

It's called honoring the dead. We can talk about it later. Nice to meet you, Mariana.

And he's gone. For a long moment, the three of them stand there feeling all the feelings. And there are a FUCK TON OF FEELINGS. Finally, Isabel breaks the silence:

ISABEL

Well, this should be fun.

SMASH TO BLACK!

END OF PILOT