

THE WILDING

Pilot

by

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EXT. RURAL HIGHWAY, NORTH CAROLINA -- DAY

Two lanes of asphalt surrounded by a pine forest.

Bursting from the treeline, GABY (16) and PEYTON REDDINGS (8). Siblings, African-American. Scratches on their faces. Their bodies lean, eyes wild. A bite mark on Peyton's arm.

Gaby guides her brother up the road, holds his hand tight.

GABY

Keep moving. Eyes forward.

They spot their family Pontiac parked up ahead.

GABY (CONT'D)

(re: car)

There.

Hope. They surge towards the Pontiac, Peyton hangs back.

PEYTON

What about Mom and Dad?

GABY

(tugs him along)

They're gone.

As they race for the car, they search the trees. Alert, hunted.

CUT TO:

WOODS

DAVID and NIKKI REDDINGS (African-American, 40s), their parents, sprint through the forest. The same bruises and fresh cuts as their kids. Thin, exhausted.

In a panic, they run at full speed.

NIKKI

GABY, PEYTON. COME ON BABY. WHERE ARE YOU?

Nikki's foot catches on a root, she crashes into the dirt. David helps his wife up.

They spin around, chests heaving.

No sign of their kids.

THE HONK of a car in the distance -- they sprint towards the sound, covering yards in seconds.

I/E. PONTIAC -- DAY

Gaby fumbles at the wheel, Peyton keeps watch in the passenger seat.

Hanging from the rearview mirror, a family photo of the Reddings. Happier times.

Gaby struggles with the manual transmission -- pumps the clutch, switches gears. The engine roars as she slams on the gas... the car just sputters.

GABY
(to herself)
Clutch down, drop to first.

Still nothing. Frustrated, she bangs at the dashboard -- the wipers screech, hazards flash, but the car won't move.

The Pontiac's windows fog with condensation. The temperature inside the car dropping fast.

As Gaby jerks at the gear shift, she notices a drop of condensation roll down the windshield. Peyton spots it too.

Tense, they exhale. Their breath vaporizes in the sudden chill.

Panicking, they can feel it, the air electric with the reality --

PEYTON
... They found us.

The radio crackles. Gaby snaps it OFF.

The speakers still crackle -- the garbled voice of a SOUTHERN MAN echoes out, he counts up by prime numbers - 3, 5, 7, 11...

Gaby and Peyton spring out of the car, back onto the --

HIGHWAY

Gaby surveys their surroundings -- nothing but trees and an hour of good daylight left.

GABY
The road goes somewhere...

Peyton listens to the rustling of the forest.

PEYTON
 (eyes the woods)
 Momma? Dad?

GABY
 ... a house, gas station, there's
 gotta be something, c'mon.

Gaby urges her brother up the road. Peyton looks back at the car --

A silhouette inside the backseat. A face or maybe a shadow from the trees. The condensation thickens, obscuring his view.

Peyton hustles to catch up with his sister. They disappear over a hill. We stay on the Pontiac.

Seconds later, Nikki and David burst out of the woods, lurch for their Pontiac.

DAVID
 Gaby? Peyton?

NIKKI
 Car's here, they're still here.

Nikki flings open the door. On the radio the counting continues. The prime numbers higher still... 409... 419...

Nikki and David inch away from the car.

EXT. MOUNTAIN RIDGE -- DUSK

Slick with sweat, Gaby and Peyton hike up the road. A steep climb. Peyton in the rear, barely keeping up.

Gaby drops back to Peyton. They catch their breath. Magic hour. A hillside of pines and the chatter of a creek.

The sounds of the forest shattered by the ding of a high-pitched TUNING FORK. Its ring progressively louder.

The kids hear it, scramble forward.

GABY
 Stay close.

Peyton huffs, picks up the pace.

Up ahead, a RIDGE -- Gaby races up to get a better view. Peyton lags behind.

At the top of the ridge, Gaby's heart sinks. We follow her gaze towards the valley --

There's nothing out there. No houses. No people. Just a creek that cuts through a horizon of wilderness.

GABY (CONT'D)

We need to go back, try the car again. We're better off with them than --

She turns around -- Peyton stands frozen at the foot of the ridge. Pee running down his thigh. He stares at --

Nikki and David, their parents, creep towards him.

GABY (CONT'D)

(to Peyton)

RUN.

But it's too late. Nikki snatches Peyton by his neck --

PEYTON (OS)

Momma, no --

Peyton's cry cuts off with a CRACK. Bones breaking. *

Gaby sinks to her knees, there's nowhere left to run.

SUPER:

THE REDDINGS

The whine of a high-pitched TUNING FORK carries us into --

EXT. DURHAM ROADS -- MORNING

The honking of morning traffic. We track a banged-up JEEP WRANGLER as it speeds through --

Downtown Durham. Cotton mills transformed into high-end lofts. Farmhouses leveled to build research centers. History re-purposed, a metamorphosis underway.

I/E. JEEP WRANGLER, DURHAM ROADS -- MORNING

Inside the Jeep, a couple and a teenage girl. The morning commute is a new experience for them.

Behind the wheel, MARGARET HAYES (30s). A psychiatrist in boots and jeans. First in her family to see a diploma. Always in the right and won't hesitate to tell you so.

Margaret's usually worked up and right now's no different --

MARGARET

Your business is your business.

Hands on the wheel, Margaret turns to --

KAYLA HAYES (17), her daughter in the backseat. Introverted, thoughtful. Almost always in a ponytail and flannel with a graphic novel stuffed into her back pocket.

Kayla's overwhelmed by the class schedule in her hand, the backpack in her lap, the first day of school since she can remember. But she tries to play it cool.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Anyone pushes you on what school you're coming from, tell 'em to fuck off. I mean, not like that, but you know what I mean.

KAYLA

Please watch the road.

Margaret turns the wheel sharp, catching a curb.

In the passenger seat, her husband, CARLOS FERNANDEZ (30s), snaps up from grading American history exams. Latino, not Kayla's dad. A fully recovered addict, he's non-judgmental to a fault.

As Margaret cuts off another car --

CARLOS

(jokes to Kayla)

We'll look into getting you a learner's permit.

Kayla ignores him, distracted by the high school looming up ahead. Carlos notices her nerves.

CARLOS (CONT'D)

(to Margaret)

Why don't you pull over here.

MARGARET

The entrance is up --

CARLOS
 Kayla can take it from here.
 (to Kayla)
 Don't need us walking you to the
 door, right?

Margaret gets it, pulls to the curb. Kayla smiles at Carlos,
 appreciative.

MARGARET
 You're doing great on the Zyprexa.
 But you go dizzy, get the sweats,
 anything, you call me.

KAYLA
 No cellphones allowed in school.
 Says so in the handbook.

MARGARET
 Find a stall, under the bleachers,
 but you call me... That's good you
 know the rules.

KAYLA
 I can read.

MARGARET
 You're ready. You're going to do
 great.

KAYLA
 Bye mom.
 (to Carlos)
 You coming?

CARLOS
 Go on ahead. I'll see you inside
 the halls of doom.

Before Margaret can say goodbye, Kayla is out the door --

EXT. JACKSON HIGH SCHOOL -- CONTINUOUS

A sprawling public school. Underfunded and at capacity. The
 school year has started. Everyone has a routine, a clique.

Kayla walks tall, but her confidence erodes with each step.
 Greeted by blank stares, she's on her own.

I/E. JEEP, JACKSON HIGH SCHOOL -- DAY

Margaret idles at the curb as Carlos stuffs graded exams into his messenger bag.

MARGARET
Halls of doom? Okay, Captain Cool.

CARLOS
I'm down with the youth.

MARGARET
But you'll keep an eye on her.

CARLOS
She's had enough supervision,
enough talk about what cocktail
she's on. That shit buries you.

MARGARET
You're projecting.

CARLOS
She's not your patient.

MARGARET
You're right. We can put a tracker
in her phone.

Carlos knows she's only half-kidding.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
Can you get a ride to your meeting?

CARLOS
I'll skip it, make us all dinner.

MARGARET
You sure?

CARLOS
I can get free donuts another
night. Spaghetti sound good?

As he moves to get out, Margaret grabs him, kisses him deep.

MARGARET
(excited)
Family dinners. Strange, new world.

EXT. MEDICAL PLAZA -- MORNING

A two-story medical plaza. The offices of chiropractors, dentists, dermatologists that serve the Medicaid community.

Margaret's Jeep parks in the near empty lot. Close behind, a PICKUP TRUCK follows her in. Margaret doesn't notice it as she exits her car.

We stay on the Pickup.

In the driver's seat, GEORGE WYATT (30s). Tall. Sinewy. A survivor that's always laughing at his own private joke.

Watching Margaret disappear into the plaza, George mumbles to himself. His words inaudible, but a decision has been made.

He gets out of his Pickup, surveys the empty lot, approaches Margaret's Jeep --

GLASS SHATTERS. George busts the driver's side window with a crow bar. The car alarm sounds, but he's not troubled.

With a quick jerk, George rips out the alarm fuse from the steering column. Silence. He settles into the driver's seat.

He pokes around, running his hands along the steering wheel, the radio dial, thumbing every crevice of the Jeep's interior. He stops, noticing --

A Duke Blue Devils pendant hanging from the rearview mirror. That'll do.

INT. HALL, MEDICAL PLAZA -- MORNING

Margaret passes numbered offices, placards on their doors, doctor such and such. She comes to a halt --

DEREK CHASE (early 20s), her patient, sits Indian-style outside of her office. He's in a state of agitated paranoia. A SHOE BOX rests in his lap.

She approaches him slow and steady.

MARGARET

Morning Derek. How you feeling today?

(off his silence)

Our appointment's not til --

DEREK

She had enough of me. Patty. Let loose a mess of Copperheads under my pillow. They were all up my neck, inna my mouth. But I caught 'em. Tucked 'em away.

(taps shoe box)

Hiss all night, they do. Straight through.

Margaret eyes the shoe box, notices Derek's bare feet. His heels cut up bad.

MARGARET

Honey, you walk all the way over?

DEREK

Can't sleep. They won't let me. That's what she wants.

MARGARET

You did good coming here.

DEREK

(angry)

You know they're sleeping. Copperheads, they're nocturnal.

(louder, standing)

Awake at night, sleep at day. IT'S DAY, ISN'T IT?

Margaret speaks with calm precision. She has delivered this speech before.

MARGARET

This is part of your disease. Patty is your sister, and she loves you very much. She doesn't want to hurt you. She didn't put snakes in your bed. I'm going to open this box and show you that there is nothing inside. Is that okay?

Derek shakes his head, grows more agitated. Margaret eases towards him, takes the shoe box from him.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

I'm right here, Derek.

Margaret opens the shoe box --

She jerks back -- a few strands of long, dark hair drift out. Patty's perhaps. Margaret recovers fast.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
See... nothing.

Derek peers into the empty shoe box, disoriented.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
(re: shoe box)
Can I borrow this?

Derek takes a few beats to check into reality. Still confused, he covers with a nervous laugh.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
I'm always happy to see you, Derek.
Patty's gonna come pick you up,
that alright with you?

As Derek nods, Margaret guides him into --

WAITING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Margaret settles Derek into a shabby chair beside a display of outdated travel magazines.

MARGARET
Sit tight.

Margaret disappears into her --

OFFICE

Margaret dumps the shoe box and picks up the phone, dials a number by heart.

MARGARET
Hey Patty, he's here. Yeah, made it
on his own.
(listens)
I know you are, honey. I'd like to
up his Risperdal. I'll call it into
the Walgreens on Dwight. Come down
and bring his sneakers with you.

INT. HALL, JACKSON HIGH SCHOOL -- DAY

The frenzy between classes. Kayla makes her way through the crowds, escorted by Carlos.

CARLOS

Cafeteria fills up fast. Most everybody grabs a tray and eats on the field.

A few STUDENTS bump fists and make small talk with Carlos, he's obviously a popular teacher.

Kayla pauses, noticing --

*

A MISSING POSTER for GABY REDDINGS, the teenager from the opening. Underneath a smiling photo of Gaby, stuffed animals and 'come home' cards.

KAYLA

(re: poster)

How long has she been gone?

CARLOS

A week. Her whole family disappeared with her. Happens all the time. People leave their lives behind - bad loans, bad choices. They just pick up and go. Too much of that around here.

(re: cards, teddy bears)

But you can see, we really care about each other. This is a change for you, a good one.

KAYLA

(trying to joke)

Yeah, no straight-jacket will really expand my wardrobe.

CARLOS

Your mom and I will help any way we can, but you're the only one who makes this work.

Kayla nods. Message received.

CARLOS (CONT'D)

I'm in 803 if you need me.

INT. WAITING ROOM, MARGARET'S PRACTICE -- DAY

DR. EMILY BERGOM (40s) waits. A reserved professional, smart suit. But a bit wan, withdrawn.

She takes in the waiting room, wonders what the hell she is doing here. Gum stuck to the carpet, water stains across the popcorn ceiling, the magazines sticky. About to leave --

Margaret pops out of her office.

MARGARET

Emily?

Too late. Emily follows Margaret into --

INT. OFFICE, MARGARET'S PRACTICE -- DAY

Emily settles into a sofa opposite Margaret's desk. She eyes the bowl of jolly ranchers, the AC window unit, the Glade Plugins -- the crassness of it all urging Emily to run.

MARGARET

Good to meet you.

EMILY

You come highly recommended from a colleague.

MARGARET

Mark and I go back.

A beat. Emily silent, not wanting to cede ground.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

How you feeling today?

EMILY

Fine.

MARGARET

Mark said it was urgent.

EMILY

I never said that.

MARGARET

Why do you think you're here?

EMILY

Stress. Work related.

MARGARET

You're at Prolexa Stearns with Mark?

EMILY

(bored)

I'm heading up R&D on a cholinesterase inhibitor. For Alzheimer's. We're pre-clinical. Our IRB is in a few days --

(MORE)

EMILY (CONT'D)

That's when you present to a review board before moving forward --

MARGARET

To Phase I trials. They covered that in med school. At Duke. That's how I know Mark. He was my research advisor.

EMILY

(re: her blank walls)
You don't have a degree up. I wasn't sure you're a doctor.

MARGARET

No worries, you're sure now... Mark oversees your study, so he's more of a superior than a colleague.

EMILY

You could say that.

MARGARET

That piss you off, your boss making you come here?

EMILY

I can see this from his side, I really can. My actions were erratic. The long hours, too much caffeine, low blood sugar, you get tunnel vision. There's a thought, an impulse, and you carry it through. But it was a blip, a bad afternoon... And I still have an IRB to prepare for, so...

MARGARET

Mark knows that, but he thought it was important for you to see me. Urgent even.

EMILY

He needs someone to give me a few Klonopin to get through the IRB.

MARGARET

(changes tact)
... Okay, I'm gonna show you something --

Margaret spins her computer screen around, plays a video -- the quality grainy, the position fixed. Security footage with no audio --

CUT TO:

We're inside the PROLEXA STEARNS LAB, a state-of-the-art facility. Lab Techs bang away at a bank of computer, grinding out data charts.

From the corner of the screen, Emily charges in, pushing a cart full of lab equipment and computers. All the wires tangled, screens smashed.

More disturbing than a quarter million dollars in damages is Emily -- sweat soaks through her shirt as she snatches at every scrap of metal in sight.

Still no audio, but we see Emily shouting at a Lab Tech as she tries to rip apart a 200 pound freeze dryer.

The Lab Tech blocks her -- but she keeps clawing at the hulking machine. Relentless, rabid.

The video stops.

CUT BACK TO:

Margaret waits for Emily to say something. Emily only stares at the starfield screen saver darting around the computer.

EMILY

... Mark sent you that.

MARGARET

He's concerned --

Emily unravels.

EMILY

-- I drop out and there's no way, no fucking way, the FDA will let us move forward. Mark tell you that? His head researcher pulls out two days before an IRB and his billion dollar study is over. I'm not the one on the line, he is.

MARGARET

That might be why he insisted you see me, but I don't give a shit if some IND gets pushed through the pipeline. I'm here to help you.

(MORE)

MARGARET (CONT'D)
Were you hearing voices during this episode?

Emily looks away, doesn't want to admit it.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
Do the voices come from the objects you were collecting?

Emily turns back to Margaret, surprised she knew this.

EMILY
Yes.
(defensive)
It's only when I'm at work.

MARGARET
And home, how's that going?

EMILY
This has nothing to do with my family.

MARGARET
Never said it did. You married?

EMILY
Yes, but he lost his job a year ago.

MARGARET
Him being unemployed, that make him less of a partner?

EMILY
No, it's better this way. He helps out with the kids.

Clearly an issue there, but Margaret lets it go for now.

MARGARET
Your research is under review, supporting your whole family. That's a lot to shoulder.

EMILY
Nothing I haven't handled before.

MARGARET
What do you think these voices are?

Emily deliberates, weighs how much she wants to reveal.

EMILY

(letting go)

... We're all made of the same particles - mammals, machines. All of us, aware, listening, remembering. And we know it, can feel it. This connection. But you walk forward, eyes ahead, stay in your lane. And then you hear it... all around you... Past or present, matter can't be destroyed.

Margaret not understanding, still listens. Emily pauses, it's hard to say aloud.

EMILY (CONT'D)

People died in there. And I can hear them.

Margaret nods, unfazed. Gets this a lot.

MARGARET

Ghosts.

EMILY

(adamant)

No, I didn't say that.

(struggling)

Places have memories on a molecular level. A metaphysical echo of the past --

MARGARET

And what does this place say to you?

EMILY

There's no words... Numbers. I only hear numbers.

Margaret's heard enough.

MARGARET

I specialize in psychotic disorders. These diseases present early, or they involve trauma... You're a healthy woman, overworked, but no history of mental illness. Your MRI was clear. But if there's even the slightest genetic predisposition, these diseases can be triggered. And if they are, you need treatment. Not a few Klonopin.

EMILY
I'm not psychotic.

MARGARET
I know it's a scary word to hear.
Especially for someone like you,
with your mind.

Emily's bravado melts away. Margaret takes Emily's hand, comforting her.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
These voices you're hearing, these
echos, they're not real.

Emily snaps away from Margaret, unwilling to accept that she's losing her mind.

INT. CLASSROOM, JACKSON HIGH SCHOOL -- DAY

The tail end of an Intermediate Spanish class. On the wall: maps of Spanish-speaking countries, construction paper posters, etc.

A high-octane SPANISH TEACHER leads the lesson as the Students stare back in a post-lunch stupor.

Kayla sits in the back, trying to go unnoticed.

An EDM RINGTONE blasts from the back of the class.

The Teacher clocks MIRANDA, a senior, quickly trying to silence her cell phone.

SPANISH TEACHER
(in Spanish)
*Miranda, phone away unless you want
me to keep it.*
(to rest of class)
*Pair up and practice using the
preterite. Finish all the exercises
in Chapter 4.*

The Students shuffle into pairs. Kayla scans the unfamiliar faces, everyone already finding a partner.

SPANISH TEACHER (CONT'D)
Miranda, you work with Kayla.

Miranda looks over at Kayla, rolls her eyes. They pull their desks together.

Kayla fidgets. Miranda reads from the textbook.

MIRANDA
(in Spanish)
What did you do last summer?

KAYLA
First I was in Paris, then I went to Ibiza to see Diplo, but the beaches get so crowded, so I hit up London to catch the Skrillex show and then met up with some friends in Amsterdam...

MIRANDA
For real?

KAYLA
(lying)
No, I was home watching TV like everyone else.

*

Miranda smiles.

MIRANDA
Yeah, me too.

INT. HALL, JACKSON HIGH SCHOOL -- LATER

Between classes, Kayla follows the herd down the hall. She checks room numbers against her class schedule.

Miranda, from Spanish class, sidles up to her.

MIRANDA
(checks Kayla's schedule)
We're in North building. Even numbers are in South. Other side of the field.

KAYLA
Oh, thanks.

Kayla starts away, but Miranda stops her.

MIRANDA
Your locker's probably over here.

KAYLA
Right.

Miranda breaks at a bank of lockers, switches out her books. Kayla searches the locker numbers.

MIRANDA

Where'd you transfer from?

KAYLA

... You wouldn't know it.

MIRANDA

What? You get kicked out of Trinity
or something?

Kayla stops at her assigned locker. But there's an AFRICAN
AMERICAN STUDENT in front of it. Her back to us.

KAYLA

(to Student)

Excuse me. I gotta get in there.

Not hearing Kayla, the Student doesn't turn. Kayla moves to
tap the Student, but stops short, noticing...

Blood pooling at her feet, sticking to her sneakers. The
puddle viscous like bile as it spreads across the linoleum.

Frightened, Kayla scans the nearby Students and Miranda --
none of them react. She realizes no one else can see the
blood or the Student.

MIRANDA

(rattles on)

Jason Reilly got kicked out last
year, but he's kind of a douche...

Kayla ignores Miranda, too focused on the stream of blood
flowing down the Student's neck, back, hips, her ankles.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

You okay?

Panicked, Kayla turns her back to the lockers and slips into
a practiced routine -- *

KAYLA

(mumbles to herself)

Na-ra, na-ra, na-ra...

MIRANDA

(only half kidding)

You like praying or something? If
you're gonna blow the place up,
give me a head start...

KAYLA

(ignores her)

Na-ra, na-ra, na-ra...

MIRANDA

Seriously, are you okay?

Desperate to make this stop, Kayla looks down -- the blood at her feet is thankfully gone. She catches her breath. *
*

KAYLA

Sorry, I just... I'm fine.

Relieved, Kayla turns back to her locker and --

Gaby Reddings stares back at her. Eyes cloudy. Teeth knocked out. Her mouth a gaping black hole spewing blood.

Kayla punches through Gaby -- her fist sails through air, crunches into her metal locker.

With that, Gaby Reddings is gone.

Kayla looks back at a freaked out Miranda who just grabs her books and walks away.

Kayla is left to tend to her bloodied fist on her own.

EXT. MOTEL -- DAY

A mix of families who stay for months and illicit revelers who rent by the hour. Laundry drying along balconies.

George's Pickup pulls into the parking lot.

INT. MOTEL -- DAY

Behind a bullet-proof glass barrier, TARA (20s), the motel manager, texts to pass the time. Too young and pretty to be manning this establishment, but she's tougher than she looks.

George passes her a KENTUCKY DRIVER LICENCE. Tara gives it a quick glance.

TARA

Expired.

GEORGE

It's got my name, don't it.

TARA

(points to a sign)

Sorry, hun, current ID or no room.

Irritated, George fumbles a valid ARMY ID out of his wallet.

TARA (CONT'D)
You up from Fort Bragg?
(off his silence)
That's a far drive.

GEORGE
Just far enough to find trouble.

TARA
How long you staying?

GEORGE
Long as I can pay.

George slips across all the cash from his wallet.

TARA
(counts the cash)
This gets you two nights.

Tara runs a photocopy of his ARMY ID --

GEORGE
That necessary?

TARA
Got to have ID on file. Don't find
too much trouble, and you'll be
fine.

Tara passes George a room key.

EXT. PARKING LOT -- EVENING

Worn to the bone, Margaret heads back to her Jeep -- stops short, spots her busted window.

Pissed, she pulls open the unlocked door, shattered glass spills out.

Inside, the alarm wires are spliced. But nothing's missing, not that she notices.

She scans the parking lot, an older woman in a wheelchair. A mom with a few kids in tow. No one suspicious, no other cars damaged.

Uneasy, Margaret gets behind the wheel.

EXT. OLD EAST DURHAM NEIGHBORHOOD -- NIGHT

A neighborhood in the midst of gentrification. Abandoned historic houses that hipsters buy cheap. But there are still some patches of gang-run blocks.

On the corner lot, a turn-of-the-century brick house that still needs some renovating, the Hayes' home --

INT. KITCHEN, HAYES HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Carlos mans a few pots on the stove as he listens to NPR.

Kayla slumps in, it's been a long day. Carlos motions to an onion on a cutting board.

CARLOS
(re: onion)
Get cracking.

KAYLA
Thought I wasn't allowed to play
with knives.

CARLOS
Haha, nice try. Cut them nice and
thin.

Kayla starts on the onions, her eyes tearing. Carlos notices her scabbed knuckles.

CARLOS (CONT'D)
What happened there?

KAYLA
Beat up my locker.

CARLOS
Letting off steam?

Kayla shrugs, 'yeah'. He doesn't buy it.

CARLOS (CONT'D)
Someone giving you a hard time?

KAYLA
... It doesn't matter.

Not making a big deal about it, he digs out some hydrogen peroxide and band-aids.

CARLOS
(re: her cuts)
Never was a fighter. More of a
downers man.

KAYLA
Downers?

CARLOS
Oxys when I could afford them.
Worse when I couldn't.

Kayla perks up, not expecting that.

CARLOS (CONT'D)
Yeah, a few years back, before I
met your mom... You get through it.
Doesn't feel like you will, but you
do.

Kayla cleans up her cuts, winces from the peroxide.

CARLOS (CONT'D)
(fishing)
Didn't peg you for a fighter.

KAYLA
... You know that girl, Gaby
Reddings?

CARLOS
Never had her in class. Heard she
was quiet.

Kayla pauses, not sure if she can trust him --

KAYLA
I saw Gaby.

CARLOS
What do you mean you saw her?

KAYLA
She's dead. And I saw her.

CARLOS
... That must've freaked you out.

KAYLA
Happens a lot. Mom didn't tell you?

CARLOS
Nothing specific.

KAYLA

Nevermind.

CARLOS

Look, I saw all kinds of crazy shit. The first time I went clean, my carpet was waving at me.

(off Kayla's confusion)

I had this shag rug, like bad ass 70's shag. But a couple days sober, and it turned into a million little baby arms and they were all waving at me.

KAYLA

What does that mean?

CARLOS

Nothing. Not then, not now.

Kayla nods, relaxes for the first time.

KAYLA

Don't tell mom, okay. She's just gonna flip out.

CARLOS

(compromising)

I'll let you tell her.

KAYLA

Last time I said something, she put me in Central for seven years.

Kayla drops the knife and leaves the onion half-cut.

KAYLA (CONT'D)

I got homework.

Carlos realizes he fucked that up.

INT. DINING ROOM, HAYES HOUSE -- NIGHT

Margaret, Carlos and Kayla dig into their spaghetti, still not sure how to be normal.

Kayla covertly pockets her garlic bread. Margaret and Carlos share a look, but ignore it.

MARGARET

... Someone busted my car window.

CARLOS
A patient?

MARGARET
Probably. Didn't take anything.

CARLOS
You call the insurance?

MARGARET
Premium's high enough. A garbage
bag and some Duct tape will do.

Trying to be casual --

MARGARET (CONT'D)
(to Kayla)
You like your teachers, classes?

KAYLA
Most of the stuff I already
covered.

Kayla eyes Carlos, waiting for the shoe to drop.

CARLOS
There's a girl in Kayla's year,
police are looking for her.

MARGARET
Gaby Reddings. She still hasn't
turned up?

KAYLA
They won't find her.

Margaret sets down her fork, troubled by Kayla's comment --

MARGARET
What makes you say that?

Kayla, silent, searches for the right words.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
(concerned)
If you had an episode, you know you
can tell me.

Kayla shoots a look to Carlos.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
Kayla, answer me. Why'd you say
they won't find her?

Kayla withers under her mother's glare. Guilty, Carlos interrupts --

CARLOS
There's signs all over school.
Everyone's talking about it.

Still suspicious, Margaret observes Kayla.

MARGARET
That trigger anything for you?

KAYLA
Felt sorry for Gaby, that's all.

Margaret calms, grateful that was the response.

MARGARET
Goes to show. No way you're taking
the bus --

Margaret interrupted by her cellphone. She eyes the number, takes the call into the next room --

MARGARET (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)
Dr. Hayes speaking...

We stay on Kayla, who watches her mother leave before turning to Carlos.

KAYLA
Thanks.

He nods, uneasy about lying to Margaret.

Margaret steps back in. She hangs up the phone and gathers her purse to leave.

MARGARET
Sorry. Emergency.

CARLOS
You already got one of them busting
up your car. Keep your distance,
regular office hours.

MARGARET
New patient. Trust me she wouldn't
be calling if she didn't need me
there.

Margaret kisses Kayla goodbye. She reaches down, takes the garlic bread out of Kayla's pocket.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
Sweetie, if you're hungry, the
kitchen's right there. Any time you
want. Okay?
(off Kayla's nod)
But save me some pie.

Margaret slips out, leaving Kayla and Carlos on their own.

INT. MOTEL -- NIGHT

A dump. Not much more than a double bed and a broken AC unit. Through the walls, the constant white noise of the neighbors shouting and fucking.

George hangs up his t-shirts, sets out a toothbrush, some trinkets -- makes this place home.

Settled, he digs out Margaret's BLUE DEVILS PENDANT from his pocket.

With a sense of purpose, he sits down on the bed.

His expression changes, sharpens. He leans forward, watching a scene unfold, like a TV must be on across the room...

But we follow his gaze -- only a white wall in front of him.

I/E. JEEP, RESEARCH TRIANGLE PARK -- NIGHT

A gated entrance to RESEARCH TRIANGLE PARK -- the Silicon Valley of the South. Over 200 pharmaceutical and technology companies. At this hour, it's 7000 acres of empty buildings.

Margaret's Jeep pulls up to the SECURITY GATE. She holds out her ID for the GUARD, honks to wake him up.

INT. PROLEXA STEARNS LABORATORY -- NIGHT

We're in an open-plan LABORATORY. It's the same one as the surveillance footage we saw earlier.

This facility is the crown jewel of the multi-national, Prolexa Stearns Pharmaceuticals -- big money on display.

The equipment and computers are powered down. The team gone for the night.

Margaret steps off the elevator, scans the space, spots --

Emily stands inches in front of a closed door, listening.

MARGARET

How you doing, Emily? You get a bite to eat like I told you?

Emily continues to listen. She frowns, not hearing anything. *

EMILY

They were here... five minutes ago... *

MARGARET

That's alright.

(re: fancy lab)

My husband would be a lot happier if I'd have gone into this line of work.

EMILY

Not if he likes seeing you. I appreciate you coming down so late.

Margaret motions to the closed door Emily was listening at. *

MARGARET

You heard them in here? *

Emily nods, unlocks the door to -- *

BIO-STORAGE FACILITY

A climate-controlled space housing canisters of blood and tissue samples. Pharmaceutical centrifuges emit a constant hum.

Margaret ignores the machines, observing Emily who tenses with anticipation.

MARGARET

Tell me about the first time.

EMILY

(trying to remember)

We started testing for toxicity on live tissue about a month ago. I pulled the samples - and that's when I heard them.

MARGARET

Them? There's more than one?

EMILY

Men, women. Children.

MARGARET
You recognize their voices?

EMILY
(adamant)
These are not people I know.

MARGARET
And what about now, can you hear them?

EMILY
If you can't hear them, I can't hear them.

MARGARET
Alright, well, let's give it a minute.

They both listen. Emily expectant, Margaret trying to hurry this along...

GRUMPF. Emily tenses. The cooling system comes online. Margaret, unfazed.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
You said you're only hearing this when you're at work?

EMILY
Started in here. But a few days ago, it was everywhere in the lab.

MARGARET
You have what, eight, ten people on this floor?

EMILY
Twelve assigned to my trial.

MARGARET
They hear anything?

EMILY
It's not like I called a staff meeting.

Margaret smiles, trying to lighten the mood.

MARGARET
Of course not.
(beat)
Emily, I know you wanted me here to bear witness, and I do. I see you.
(MORE)

MARGARET (CONT'D)
A woman who's afraid to ask for
help. And that's okay.

EMILY
... Just wait, they'll come back.

Margaret perks up, noticing old wiring running along the ceiling. It disappears behind a safety cabinet.

MARGARET
Stay put a sec.

Margaret steps out, leaving Emily alone.

MARGARET (OS) (CONT'D)
(loud and clear)
Six snakes slowly slither in my
soup.

Margaret pops back in.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
You hear that?

Emily nods.

Margaret walks over to the safety cabinet, heaves it forward, revealing an old INTERCOM SYSTEM.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
There's another one out in the
hall. Whole building's probably
wired with them.

EMILY
I'm not overhearing conversations.
It's always numbers. Prime numbers.
They're counting.

MARGARET
Apophenia. Seeing patterns in
random data. Your lab techs shout
out numbers, you hear counting.

Reeling, Emily peers at the intercom, tries to make sense of it.

INT. MOTEL -- SIMULTANEOUS

George, on his bed with that same fixed expression. His eyes wide like he's watching a movie. And then --

GEORGE
 (mumbles)
 Six snakes slowly slither in my
 soup.

It's Margaret he's watching. Her Blue Devil pendant tight in his fist.

INT. PROLEXA STEARNS -- SIMULTANEOUS

Emily pushes back the cabinet -- defeated, lost.

EMILY
 ... Apophenia. Is that common with
 psychotic disorders?

MARGARET
 Can be.

Emily tries to hold it together. The truth finally sinking in -- she's imagining these voices.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
 It's too early to say what we're
 dealing with. For now, we agree
 that there's an issue.

Emily takes a deep breath, consents.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
 I'll work around your schedule. In
 the mean time, I want you to do a
 little exercise for me.

Margaret grabs a rubber-band off a stack of papers, slips it on Emily's wrist.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
 Any time you feel overwhelmed, take
 a deep breath and snap the band.
 Not too hard, just enough to keep
 you present, refocus your
 thoughts... Deep breath and --

Emily closes her eyes, takes a deep breath as Margaret gently snaps the rubber-band on her wrist.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
 -- Exhale. Got it? Good. And you
 can call me day or night.

EMILY
 I appreciate it, Dr. Hayes.

Emily leads Margaret to --

MAIN LAB

EMILY

Let me walk you out. I'll just grab
my bag.

Emily disappears down the hall. Alone, Margaret snoops, even she's impressed by this facility.

THUMP. THUMP.

Margaret turns to the noise.

MARGARET

Emily?

No response. The thumping continues. It's steady, rhythmic.

She follows the noise through the empty lab. Stainless steel equipment catches her reflection at every turn --

INT. ANIMAL CONTAINMENT ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Margaret flicks on the lights. But the rats don't react to the sudden brightness. They're too busy --

They ram into their enclosures. THUMP. THUMP. Their heads smack against the glass, blood left in their wake. Over and over...

THUMP. THUMP. Until CRACK. Their necks break.

Margaret watches, mesmerized. Emily appears behind her.

MARGARET

What have you given them?

EMILY

Nothing. These are the controls.

MARGARET

I've seen animals distressed in
captivity before, but...

EMILY

This is our sixth batch.

One by one, Margaret watches the rats break their own necks.

INT. MOTEL -- SIMULTANEOUS

George still observing Margaret -- with a sudden jerk, he slams against the headboard, his head cracking the wood.

GEORGE
(mumbles)
271, 277, 281...

The objects in his room lift off the ground. His lamp, bedside tables, dirty clothes rise up a good foot.

But George doesn't look around. He can't. His body goes rigid. A croaky, guttural voice sputters out of him...

GEORGE (CONT'D)
(not his voice)
Stop... watching us.

SMACK. The beside tables, lamps, beer bottles SLAM against the wall George was facing. Chips of plaster and shattered glass hail onto the carpet.

George snaps back, shaken, unable to catch his breath. Clammy with sweat, he takes in his room -- all his belongings scattered, broken.

And for the first time since he can remember, he's scared.

EXT. MEADOWMONT NEIGHBORHOOD -- MORNING

An enclave of two-story Colonial homes with wrap-around porches. Recent construction built to look traditional Southern.

One house stands out as a little less manicured. Bikes tossed on the lawn, hedges overgrown.

INT. BERGOM HOUSE -- MORNING

We're moving through hallways insulated with patterned wallpaper and soft carpeting. Cozy, functional. The big commotion of a family of five getting ready for the day.

A phone rings off-screen...

Wrapped in a towel and still wet from the shower, Emily bolts out of the bathroom. The rubber-band still on her wrist.

EMILY
SOMEONE GET THAT.

She hurries for the phone, passing a closed bedroom. Video game gunfire thumps from inside.

EMILY (CONT'D)
Breakfast now. Bus is here in ten.

No change in the volume of the video game. She bangs again.

EMILY (CONT'D)
Elliot.

Frustrated, she hustles down the stairs to --

OFFICE

A home office with two desks. One piled high with data spreadsheets and Luna-bar wrappers, the other with motivational books and crossword puzzles.

The ringing stops. Emily missed the call. She listens to the message. Her face lights up and she races into --

LIVING ROOM

SAM BERGOM (late 40s), her husband, asleep on the sofa. He used to be the most ambitious guy in the room, now he's a cautionary tale.

Excited, Emily wakes him up.

EMILY
You got an interview. I missed the call, but they left a message --

SAM
Who was it?

EMILY
Glaxo Smith.

Sam sinks back into the sofa.

SAM
Yeah, to be their research assistant.

EMILY
It's a foot in the door.

SAM
They won't hire someone with a PHD to pick up Starbucks.

Emily tucks away his sheets.

EMILY
 (re: sheets)
 You've been down here four nights
 in a row.

SAM
 It's the only time it's quiet
 enough to get anything done.

She moves towards him, kisses his neck.

EMILY
 Sleep upstairs tonight --

Sam, distracted, collects cover letters streaked with red-line corrections.

SAM
 You talk to Mark about me?

EMILY
 After the IRB... I have to get Beth
 ready.

Sam checks the baby monitor -- their infant son sound asleep.

SAM
 I'll feed Jack

Emily is already headed upstairs.

BETH'S ROOM

A tomboy six-year-old girl's room. Dinosaur fossil decals on the wall. Pirate sheets on the bed.

Emily pokes her head in, hears mumbling from the closet.

EMILY
 Knock. Knock.

BETH (OS)
 We're having a birthday party. You
 bring a present?

Emily grabs a stuffed elephant off the shelf and walks into --

CLOSET

BETH (6), wearing glasses, holds up a tea pot. She sits under her rack of clothes.

Emily kneels next to Beth. This is the only time she gets with daughter and she cherishes it.

EMILY

Whose birthday is it today?

Beth holds up a mossy BLACK QUARTZ ROCK.

BETH

Polly.

Emily realizes Beth has arranged a circle of QUARTZ ROCKS, all of them muddy and covered in moss.

EMILY

Where did you get these?

BETH

They're my babies. They're so heavy, I put them down.

Beth pets moss on one of the rocks as if it were hair.

BETH (CONT'D)

Pretty Polly.

EMILY

Did you go outside by yourself?

BETH

No.

EMILY

Where'd your babies come from?

BETH

They were waiting for me.

*

Emily helps Beth to her feet.

EMILY

(not believing her)

Okay, but now you have to take a bath. You can thank your dirty babies for that.

INT. JACK'S ROOM -- DAY

Sam bottle feeds JACK, a colicky baby. Jack wails, refusing the bottle. Sam keeps trying, patient with him.

Emily slips in, shivering. She throws a blanket over her shoulders and notices the windows fogged with condensation. It must be freezing in here.

SAM
(re: Emily shivering)
You can't keep lower the
thermostat.

EMILY
Haven't touched it.

SAM
Our bills gonna be through the
roof.

Emily lets it go, avoids a fight. *

EMILY
(re: Jack)
He's doing better.

SAM
I switched to soy.

Emily clicks off the baby monitor, so the kids can't hear.

EMILY
Beth's keeping rocks in her closet.

SAM
(shrugs)
Helluva lot cheaper than those
American Girl dolls.

EMILY
She's got free reign, running in
and out of the house, dragging in
whatever she wants.

SAM
I'd never let her out on her own.

EMILY
She's getting older, we have to
keep a better eye on her.

SAM
Add it to the list.

Emily softens.

EMILY

The review's today. I'll be home more.

SAM

Until you get approved.

Even he realizes that he's being passive aggressive.

SAM (CONT'D)

You're gonna knock 'em dead today.

Too little, too late. Emily walks out.

EXT. BERGOM HOUSE -- MORNING

Still in his pajamas, Sam dumps Beth's rocks out in the gravel pathway.

Confused, Sam notices that the BLACK QUARTZ ROCKS stand out in the white gravel. He spreads them around to make the contrast less noticeable.

In the driveway, Emily packs Beth into the backseat of her car.

A SCHOOL BUS pulls up. ELLIOT (16) bursts from the house, dressed in a private school uniform and still half asleep. He flashes a peace sign to his mom and races onto the bus.

SUPER:

THE BERGOMS

As Emily backs out of the driveway, she waves goodbye to her family.

INT. BEDROOM, HAYES HOUSE -- MORNING

Margaret, still in bed, slept through her alarm. Carlos is already downstairs.

Margaret turns over, notices Kayla curled up on the floor next to the bed. Only a thin blanket covering her.

MARGARET

(whispers)

Kayla?

Kayla stirs awake. Sheepish, she gathers her blanket.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
What's wrong? What happened?

KAYLA
Sometimes I don't like to sleep
alone.

Margaret lifts up the comforter and motions for Kayla to get into bed.

Kayla climbs in, curls up next to her mom. Margaret holds her daughter as Kayla falls back asleep.

EXT. MEADOWPARK CEMETARY -- MORNING

Family plots, well-looked-after with fresh flowers.

RAYMOND and SUSIE WARDS (50s) lay flowers on their daughter's grave. In their Sunday best, but whittled down from a decade of double shifts and grief.

We see on the grave that APRIL WARDS was only 11 when she passed away a decade ago. Old Precious Moments Figurines crowd her flush tombstone.

George sets down a bouquet of flowers on a nearby grave. He bows his head in a quick prayer.

He turns toward the parking lot, passing the Wards.

GEORGE
Sorry for your loss.

RAYMOND
Same to you, son.

He takes in their daughter's grave, bows his head in prayer.

GEORGE
... Amen.

RAYMOND
Catholic?

GEORGE
Baptist.

SUSIE
You attend at First Calvary?

GEORGE

Union on Roxboro. Least I used to.
 (motions to another grave)
 Mine was only six... one year ago
 today... Feels like I'm just
 waiting 'til we're together again.

SUSIE

That never goes away.

GEORGE

Yeah, figured. Only wish it would
 come sooner... Least you got each
 other. Take care and God bless.

George nods 'goodbye', starts past them. Taking pity on
 George, Raymond nudges Susie.

SUSIE

... There's a diner on fifth. I
 could do with a coffee, can't face
 my boss just yet. Care to join us?

GEORGE

Coffee'd be nice.

George lets the Wards walk ahead of him. He pockets a
 PRECIOUS MOMENTS FIGURINE off their daughter's grave.

INT. JACKSON HIGH SCHOOL -- MORNING

In the frenzy between classes, Kayla races down the hall.

As she approaches her locker, she slows down...

A STUDENT stands in front of Kayla's locker. Her back to us.

Kayla inches closer, reaches out to touch her --

The Student whips around. It's not Gaby Reddings. Just
 Miranda, the student from Spanish class, late for class.

MIRANDA

Don't fucking touch me.

KAYLA

Sorry, that's my locker.

Miranda pushes past her --

MIRANDA

Whatever, psycho.

Off "psycho" -- Kayla explodes, clawing at Miranda's braids. A ferocity learned from being locked up with violent peers.

Kayla pins Miranda against the lockers, slams her fist into the metal inches from Miranda's face.

BANG. BANG. Over and over. The locker bending with every blow. Miranda shudders with each near miss. Kayla's fist inching closer and closer to her face --

TEACHER (O.S.)
HEY - HEY --

A couple of TEACHERS grab Kayla from behind, dragging her off a shell-shocked Miranda.

INT. DINER -- MORNING

A hole in the wall. Mostly Construction Workers and Cops grabbing coffee before punching in.

George polishes off bacon, eggs, pancakes. The works.

He's sharing a booth with the Wards. Only two coffees in front of them.

George is talking, we get the sense he hasn't stopped since he left the cemetery. The Wards now seriously regretting their invitation.

GEORGE
-- And that was Jenny, center stage every dance recital, ballet show. Made a helluva Tinkerbell.

SUSIE
(suspicious)
Amazing. Only six years old?

GEORGE
(recovers)
Got her involved with the arts from an early age... You know the one blessing I have, I can talk to her.

RAYMOND
We always keep our April close too.
(checks his watch)
It was a real pleasure, but we have to get a start on our day.

GEORGE

-- No. I don't talk to her in that
'memory lives on' bullshit way. I
talk to my Jenny.

George sets the PRECIOUS MOMENTS FIGURINE on the table.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

I can do the same for you.

Susie notices her daughter's figurine --

SUSIE

Where'd you get that?

GEORGE

I can talk to April.

SUSIE

(stunned, realizes)

You stole that from my child's
grave?

Outraged, Raymond and Susie stand to leave. Raymond grabs for
the figurine, but George won't let go of it --

GEORGE

April made you Christmas presents.
She knew she wasn't feeling well,
that she wouldn't make it to
December.

SUSIE

(raises voice)

You little shit, give me that.

More than a few heads turn. George doesn't care --

GEORGE

The week before April went into St.
Judes, she asked you to buy her
some glitter - green and red. She
wanted extra tubes of the green.
That's what she needed them for,
your presents.

Stunned, Raymond lets go of the figurine, sinks back down.

RAYMOND

... Had to go to three Krogers to
find that damn glitter.

GEORGE

She hid the presents in your house.
Not in her usual spot under the
blue sofa.

SUSIE

... How are you doing this?

GEORGE

She's asking me to tell you where
she hid them... Want me to keep
going?

Raymond, losing his shit --

RAYMOND

Jesus Lord Christ.

GEORGE

It's four fifty.

SUSIE

What?

GEORGE

You want me to tell you where to
find the last Christmas present
April will ever give you, it's four
hundred and fifty dollars. Cash.

Raymond doesn't hesitate, empties his wallet.

RAYMOND

I've got seventy and change.

GEORGE

Passed an ATM up the block.

Raymond races out. Susie studies George, not fully convinced.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

She misses your curly hair, says
you don't have eyes in the back of
your head no more.

This lands. An old wound reopening. Her grief raw, ugly.

SUSIE

Speak the truth all you want, but
what you are, what you're doing,
it's not right... Felt sorry for
you, I still do. Using people like
this, you're sick in the head.

GEORGE

Choir boys and killers all end up
in the same place. So what's it
matter what I do?

SUSIE

Your daughter, the ballet, none of
that's real?

GEORGE

Lady, you don't want what I'm
selling, there's the door.

Susie sits back down.

INT. PROLEXA STEARNS -- MORNING

Five PANEL MEMBERS of the INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD gather
around a communal workspace. They decide for the FDA if
pharmaceutical studies can move to Phase I, human trials.

The Review Panel flips through research reports.

MARK CLEMENS (60s), the director of the lab, keeps the Review
Board busy with chit chat. Schlubby and soft-hearted. He
should be teaching PHD students, not sweating bullets in a
suit.

He spots Emily stepping off the elevator, pulls her aside.

MARK

Take lead, you get in the weeds and
I'll be here to back you up. But
this is your show, they want to
hear from you.

(off her lack of reaction)

Margaret get you straightened out?

EMILY

Of course...

Emily eyes the freeze dryer she attacked in the video.

EMILY (CONT'D)

I need a minute.

Before Mark can stop her, she heads to --

INT. WOMAN'S BATHROOM, PROLEXA STEARNS -- DAY

At the sink, Emily steadies herself, stares at her reflection. Dark circles under her eyes, lips cracking, roots showing. She applies lipstick --

The furthest bathroom stall creaks slightly open.

Emily whips around to face the stall.

EMILY

Hello?

No response. She peers under the stalls -- they're all empty.

Emily takes a deep breath, closes her eyes, and SNAPS the rubber-band on her wrist.

Again. Another breath, another SNAP. Again...

INT. MAIN LABORATORY, PROLEXA STEARNS -- SIMULTANEOUS

The Review Panel listens to --

MARK

Pividyne combines iVig with several more stable compounds. We've been able to minimize toxicity and accelerate results. Our study has shown unprecedented breakdown of amyloid plaques. This wouldn't delay Alzheimer's, it would reverse it.

PANEL MEMBER

Dr. Bergom developed this combination of drugs?

MARK

Yes, and she'll be with us shortly to tell you about it.

Mark shoots a look to a Lab Tech - *where the fuck is she.*

INT. WOMAN'S BATHROOM, PROLEXA STEARNS -- DAY

At the sink, Emily, eyes closed, SNAPPING her rubber-band.

Behind her, the stall door gently swings open.

Emily opens her eyes, on edge. She scans the stall doors.

But none of the stall doors budge.

Relieved, Emily breathes in --

SNAP. The rubber-band on her wrist snaps by itself.

Emily jerks back, rips off the rubber-band.

LAB TECHNICIAN (OS)
Dr. Bergom, they're waiting for
you.

A concerned Tech hovers by the door, watching Emily.

Emily stares at the rubber-band on the floor, in shock.

The Tech takes off her lab coat, gestures to Emily's sweat-stained blouse.

LAB TECHNICIAN (CONT'D)
(re: lab coat)
Would you like to borrow this?

INT. MAIN LABORATORY, PROLEXA STEARNS -- CONTINUOUS

Emily hobbles in, pulling herself together. The Review Board stands, respectful.

EMILY
Apologies for the delay. If you'll
please follow me.

Emily guides them around the lab.

EMILY (CONT'D)
Pividyne is the culmination of 8
years of research. Initial clinical
trials of iVig found the drug to be
too toxic in effective doses --

A Panel Member's cellphone rings. He fumbles to shut it off.

The cellphone ring turns into a high-pitched DING, followed by its echo -- the twang of a tuning fork...

The sound grows steadily louder until it's deafening --

Emily stops, unable to hear anything but the tuning fork. She can see the Panel Members asking if she's okay, their mouths moving, but their voices inaudible.

As Emily begins to panic, regular sound fades in. She skims a research report to regain her train of thought --

EMILY (CONT'D)

Due to our toxicity concerns, we've gone above and beyond standard pre-clinical animal testing. We've charted toxicity on human tissue.

As Emily continues, she grows more confident. The Review Board, engaged.

PANEL MEMBER

Cellular testing hasn't been predictive in other trials.

EMILY

Using *live* tissue, we've been able to create a toxicity projection with a 98% accuracy rate.

Mark watches, relieved by Emily's presentation. This is the world-class scientist he hired.

INT. MOTEL -- NIGHT

Behind her bullet-proof glass, Tara still texts. George strides in, sets down three fifty in cash.

GEORGE

Room 12. I'm paying through the end of the month.

TARA

Don't you got to get back to your post?

GEORGE

You want my money or not?

TARA

Heard a commotion coming from 12 last night.

GEORGE

Could've been the gang bang above me or the screaming baby below.

TARA

I got a special ear for property damage. You break anything, that's extra.

GEORGE

AC's busted. You interested in taking care of your property, could start there.

TARA

By the time we get that fixed, you'll be whining about the heater.

Tara takes his money and begins to pack up for the night.

As George turns to go, a TWEAKER barrels in. High and itching to get rowdy. George freezes, focusing on the Tweaker.

TWEAKER

You got a date, beautiful? Moon's full, it's Saturday night.

As Tara grabs her purse and heads out, the Tweaker blocks her in. He's being playful, but still threatening.

TARA

It's Tuesday, so gimme a break, Freddie. My day's been a mile long.

TWEAKER

Yeah, that's what I meant, Tuesday. Actually, I don't get paid til Friday, you think you can spot me?

GEORGE (OS)

You coming or what, Tara?

The Tweaker notices George for the first time.

TWEAKER

Oh hey man, what about you? Help me out til Friday?

GEORGE

Tell you what, I'll give you twenty bucks for that.

George points to what he's been staring at this whole time -- a rusty HUNTING KNIFE hanging off the Tweaker's belt. *

INT. PARKING LOT, MOTEL -- MOMENTS LATER

George tosses the hunting knife into a dumpster. He walks Tara to her car, a few steps behind her. *

Tara stops shorts. George almost bumps into her.

TARA
Freddie's harmless. You don't got
to follow me to my car.

GEORGE
That knife cost me 40 bucks, let me
enjoy the walk.

TARA
I'm no princess type.

GEORGE
That's what all women say in the
beginning.

TARA
The beginning? We start something,
I'll let you know.

GEORGE
No, I was just...

Tara smiles -- she's just giving him a hard time.

TARA
Goodnight, George.

George nods goodnight, heads up to his room.

INT. OFFICE, BERGOM HOUSE -- NIGHT

At her desk, Emily downs a glass of wine as she Googles for scientific proof that ghosts exist.

She clicks on a link that leads her to a ridiculous Ghost Hunting website. The cheesy music, the bad font -- she clicks out of the website, feeling foolish.

She eyes the red welt on her wrist from the rubber-band. And clicks on the next link.

From the living room, Emily hears CRACKLING from the baby monitor. Beth's voice faint on the other end.

LIVING ROOM

Emily slips into the room, nudges Sam awake.

EMILY
Can you get Beth? She's playing in
Jack's room.

Sam shakes off his blanket, starts upstairs. He's so exhausted, he almost walks into the wall.

EMILY (CONT'D)

I'll go.

JACK'S BEDROOM

Emily peeks in -- Jack's asleep in his crib. No sign of Beth.

She settles Jack, throws a few blankets over him, noticing in the crib --

A rock. A stick. Rock. Stick. Stick. Rock. All set out in a single file formation.

She gathers the rocks and sticks, dumps them into the diaper bin.

BETH'S ROOM

Emily finds Beth fast asleep, tucked in.

EMILY

Sweetie, I know you're awake.

Beth doesn't stir. Emily gently shakes her. Beth opens her eyes.

EMILY (CONT'D)

You can't play with Jack when me or daddy aren't around.

BETH

I didn't.

EMILY

You left your rocks in his room.

BETH

I put my babies to sleep.

Emily checks the closet -- the black rocks from this morning are back, assembled in a neat pile.

She turns to Beth who has already fallen asleep again.

ELLIOT'S ROOM

Elliot playing video games with headphones on.

Emily enters without knocking. He sees her, but keeps thumbing away at the controller.

EMILY
Were you in Jack's room?

ELLIOT
Dad said he was going to put him to bed. I've done it every night this week. You're not even home --

Emily stops him, confused.

EMILY
That's fine.

She stands at the foot of his bed, thinking.

ELLIOT
You okay, mom?

Emily leaves, closing the door behind her.

JACK'S ROOM

Emily checks on Jack again. As she approaches the crib, her stomach sinks...

Back in the crib, a rock. A stick. Rock. Stick. Stick. Rock. All set out in the same single file formation.

She checks the diaper bin -- only dirt residue. None of the sticks and rocks she threw out. Someone set them back.

Hysterical, Emily snatches Jack out of the crib.

EMILY
SAM, SAM. SOMEONE'S IN THE HOUSE.

Sam lumbers in, wiping the sleep from his eyes. Elliot joins them.

EMILY (CONT'D)
(to Elliot)
Grab your sister.

Elliot shuffles off, confused.

EMILY (CONT'D)
(re: sticks, rocks)
I threw them out. When I came back, they were here again. Someone put them there. It wasn't the kids.
(MORE)

EMILY (CONT'D)
There's someone in the house. Call
the police.

Sam eyes the rocks and sticks, trying to catch up.

SAM
Everything's fine, Emily.

Elliot and Beth appear in the doorway.

SAM (CONT'D)
Which one of you is messing with
your mom?

They both shake their heads. Sam gathers the rocks and
sticks, throws them out.

EMILY
(re: kids)
They were in their rooms. Someone
else is here.

SAM
We'll check the windows, doors.

Emily, a tight hold on Jack, leads them out of the room. Sam,
Elliot and Beth trail behind her, unsettled by Emily's
behavior.

They check every window and door, all of them locked. No sign
of a break in.

SAM (CONT'D)
(to Elliot)
Get your sister tucked in.

Elliot picks up Beth, takes her to her room. Worried, Sam
stays with Emily.

SAM (CONT'D)
What's going on? You're working
late every night, you don't talk to
us. I get me, but the kids?

EMILY
It's the review...

SAM
They're burning you out.

Emily finally admits --

EMILY
No. I think I'm losing it.

Emily shakes her head, carries Jack into --

JACK'S ROOM

Sam and Emily freeze in the doorway.

The rock-stick formation is back in the crib.

SAM

They were...

Sam checks the diaper bin -- the rocks, sticks have been removed.

SAM (CONT'D)

(confused)

We'd have seen someone up here.

EMILY

... They followed me home.

Emily backs out of the room, eyes on the crib. The realization hits her --

EMILY (CONT'D)

It's not the lab. It's me.

INT. MOTEL -- NIGHT

George changes his undershirt, getting ready for bed.

A KNOCK at his door.

George, not sure if he's really hearing it, stands. Again, KNOCKING.

GEORGE

(to door)

Yeah...

No response. Another firm RAP, RAP.

George braces himself and opens the door -- it's Tara with a six-pack of cold beer.

TARA

Figured I owe you for the walk.

EXT. POOL, MOTEL -- NIGHT

At the pool's edge, George and Tara nurse beers. Their bare feet dangle over the ledge, into the water.

TARA

You swim?

GEORGE

Why? You thinking about pushing me in?

TARA

No way, you don't wanna swim in this pool. Some tweaker jumped off the roof, cracked his skull and bounced right in. Found him the next morning, had to pull him out myself.

GEORGE

Not one spot on this Earth someone hasn't died. Whole planet's one big graveyard.

TARA

That's a cheery thought.

George laughs at himself, warming up.

GEORGE

Just saying, a body's no reason to waste a perfectly good pool.

WET FOOTSTEPS approach them from behind. George cocks his head, but knows better than to turn around.

TARA

It's not superstition folks are worried about. Owners wouldn't pay to drain it, so I dumped buckets and buckets a chlorine in. This water'll turn your hair shamrock green in under a minute.

George's full attention is on those WET FOOTSTEPS smacking against the patio cement, closer and closer to them.

TARA (CONT'D)

You called me Tara... But I never told you my name.

George doesn't respond. He can't concentrate on anything but the footsteps.

TARA (CONT'D)
 (nudges him)
 How'd you know that was my name?

George finally turns back to Tara.

GEORGE
 Must've heard it.

TARA
 (sizing him up)
 No, don't think so.

Behind George, a cacophony of falling water, like someone dripping wet.

George downs his beer in one gulp, sets the bottle aside. Tara offers him another beer.

GEORGE
 I should turn in.

He stands, eyes glued to the ground.

TARA
 You sure? It's early.

But he keeps going, doesn't even look back. He's trying to avoid something we can't see -- presumably the DEAD TWEAKER.

Tara, confused, watches George hustle back to his room.

Behind her, a soft SPLASH.

She snaps her attention back to the pool -- no one swimming. But a few RIPPLES lap against her legs.

INT. KITCHEN, HAYES HOME -- NIGHT

At the kitchen bar, Kayla finishes her homework as Margaret types up her patient notes. A KNOCK on the back door.

Margaret opens the door and greets --

Derek, Margaret's patient from earlier, and his sister, PATTY (30). Patty holds out a tupperware of homemade cinnamon rolls.

PATTY
 Sorry if it's late. Only wanted to pop by and thank you for yesterday. I don't know what we'd do without you.

Curious, Kayla eavesdrops.

MARGARET
(to Patty)
You didn't need to do that, but
these'll go fast around here.

Kayla eyes Derek, waiting behind his sister. He's in his own world.

Kayla catches Derek's eye, smiles at him. He smiles back.

PATTY
We don't wanna keep you.

MARGARET
I'll see you next week.

Margaret hugs them goodbye and closes the door.

KAYLA
He your patient?

MARGARET
Derek. He's a sweetheart.

KAYLA
Is he getting better?

Margaret realizes Kayla's asking more about herself than Derek.

MARGARET
Every day.

KAYLA
He's lucky to have you.

Margaret sets down the tupperware.

MARGARET
(re: cinnamon rolls)
We should probably save them for
morning, but...

Kayla grabs two plates from the cabinet. As Margaret serves the cinnamon rolls, the phone RINGS.

Margaret licks the frosting off her fingers and answers the phone.

MARGARET (CONT'D)
 Hello... Speaking... Excuse me?
 Yeah, she's right here...

As Margaret listens, her expression darkens.

The call is obviously about Kayla. And they both know it's bad news.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE, HIGH SCHOOL -- MORNING

Cramped. The PRINCIPAL crowded behind a desk. Beside him, the ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL squirms in a folding chair. He nods throughout, a nervous tick.

The Principal addresses a grim Margaret and Carlos.

PRINCIPAL
 I've spoken with Sheila, Kayla's case manager.

MARGARET
 She checked in with Kayla on Monday. Said she's adjusting just fine.

PRINCIPAL
 And her teachers are really impressed. Kayla's a smart girl... Sheila did mention a history of aggression.

MARGARET
 Her klepto roommate kept stealing her iPod. And Kayla had enough. That's not a history of aggression, that's standing up for yourself.

PRINCIPAL
 And the incident that landed her in Central?

MARGARET
 Those records are sealed.

PRINCIPAL
 When a ten-year-old puts her teacher into a coma, it's hard not to hear about it.

Carlos sits up, stunned. This is news to him.

CARLOS

When was this?

MARGARET

(ignores Carlos)

Kayla's had seven years of treatment. She's not violent.

PRINCIPAL

Yesterday, Kayla had another student up against the lockers. Took two teachers to pull her off.

The Assistant Principal nods, backing up the Principal.

MARGARET

(off his nod, snaps)

Hey bobble-head, you serving any kind of purpose here?

PRINCIPAL

State law requires us to have two representatives at these meetings.

CARLOS

... For legal reasons.

Shit. Margaret understands how serious this is.

MARGARET

I'll ask Sheila to review my daughter's medications.

CARLOS

(to Principal)

Nobody got hurt, Kayla apologized. Kids fight. Happens all the time.

*

PRINCIPAL

That may be true, but in light of her history, I have to take into account the safety of all my students... We'll need to suspend her for a couple of days.

Margaret deflates, no argument left to make.

INT. HALL, HIGH SCHOOL -- CONTINUOUS

Margaret and Carlos emerge from the Principal's office. Kayla waits at the other end of the hall, pretending to read her Chemistry textbook.

Margaret, distraught. Carlos gives her hand a squeeze.

MARGARET
I can't lose her again.

Carlos notices the missing poster for Gaby Reddings --

CARLOS
(motions to poster)
The other night, Kayla told me she
saw Gaby Reddings at school.
Like a hallucination. Could've been
what set her off.

Margaret snaps away from him, stunned.

MARGARET
She told you this? When?

Carlos realizes his mistake right away.

CARLOS
She begged me not to say --

MARGARET
SHE'S A CHILD. Of course she
doesn't want you telling on her.

CARLOS
You never told me she was
dangerous.

Margaret stops short.

MARGARET
Dangerous?

CARLOS
I'm trying to understand --

Furious, Margaret pushes past Carlos and stomps over to Kayla.

MARGARET
Let's go.

KAYLA
I got Pre-Cal.

MARGARET
Not anymore. Move it.

Kayla trails her mom out of the school.

EXT. BERGOM HOUSE -- DAY

Sam balances on a ladder, fumbling around the rain gutters.

SAM
Pass the drill.

Beneath him, Elliot hands up a drill.

Sam anchors a SURVEILLANCE CAMERA into the side of the house. He checks the angle, pointing it at their front walkway.

Sam climbs down, carries the ladder to the side of the house. Elliot follows, toting a few more cameras to install.

ELLIOT
All the windows and doors were
locked...

SAM
Someone copied a key, picked a
lock, doesn't matter.
(re: cameras)
These have motion sensors. No one's
getting past them.

ELLIOT
Mom doesn't think someone broke
into the house, she said --

SAM
Your mom'd never tell you this, but
it's tough. With work, Jack. Hard
to think straight when you've got
that much going on.

ELLIOT
Is she gonna be okay?

SAM
Of course. We'll make sure of it.

Elliot's not convinced. He hands up another camera.

INT. LABORATORY, PROLEXA STEARNS -- DAY

A flurry of activity in preparation for the transition to Phase I. Lab Techs re-configure equipment and clear out the animal enclosures. Mark at the center, orchestrating.

Emily enters, surprised. She makes a bee-line for Mark. He pulls her into a fatherly bear hug.

MARK

Congratulations. We can recruit for the first round of trials immediately.

EMILY

We have approval?

MARK

Not officially. But my ears in the FDA say we have a greenlight.

Emily, overjoyed. Years of her hard work paying off.

EMILY

(two steps ahead)

With a double blind, it'll be a challenge to hit our enrollment targets.

MARK

We're already screening participants.

(Emily overwhelmed)

This is your victory. No one questions that. But you've had a hard few weeks. If you need to take some time, we'll still be here --

EMILY

I'm seeing this through.

Mark relents, not sure if he's making the right call.

INT. MEN'S WAREHOUSE -- DAY

By the sale rack, George tries on a black suit.

At the mirror, George looks himself over. The suit fits well, collared shirt underneath, shoes shiny -- a new man.

Nervous, George straightens his cuffs one too many times. He stops a Sales Clerk.

GEORGE

Can I wear this out?

SALES CLERK

You pay for it, you can do whatever you want.

George pulls out his wallet, a spring in his step.

I/E. JEEP, DURHAM ROAD -- DAY

Margaret drives them home in silence. Kayla figets, a sinking feeling in her stomach.

KAYLA

You gonna take me back to Central?

MARGARET

Wasn't me that put you there. The Judge said it was Central or juvie.

KAYLA

... Never knew you had a choice.

Margaret losing it a bit --

MARGARET

It happens again, I won't get one... You saw that Gaby Reddings girl --

KAYLA

Don't be mad at Carlos.

MARGARET

-- You saw her cause of those signs at school.

KAYLA

She didn't look like her photo.

MARGARET

A picture puts an idea in your head, and you make it real, but these visions --

KAYLA

THEY'RE NOT FUCKING VISIONS.

MARGARET

Kayla, please, this has to stop.

KAYLA

Cole Mill Road. Follow it to the end.

MARGARET

... What's there?

KAYLA

(a challenge)
Gaby Reddings.

Defeated, Margaret takes in her daughter.

KAYLA (CONT'D)
I'm not crazy.

At her breaking point, Margaret pulls to the shoulder.

MARGARET
Kayla, I love you, but none of this
is real. You need to see that.

KAYLA
... So drive. Cole Mill Road.

A challenge. Margaret, deliberates, pops a u-turn, driving
away from the city.

INT. PROLEXA STEARNS -- DAY

A Lab Tech wheels away a cart of animal enclosures, dead rats
inside of them.

EMILY
(re: rats)
Did the analysis come back?

LAB TECHNICIAN
We ran full scans. Same as the
others, nothing irregular.

EMILY
(concerned)
Store the samples.

The Tech nods as he wheels away the dead rats. Emily stops
short.

MAN (OS)
11... 13... 17...

Emily creeps towards a closed door, following the faint
counting.

None of the Lab Techs buzzing around her react. Do they hear
it too, she's not sure.

Pressed against the door, Emily tenses, certain she hears the
prime numbers now. She bursts into --

ANIMAL CONTAINMENT ROOM

All the Animal Enclosures have been removed. The space is now filled with a conference table.

A LAB TECH questions an OLDER MALE PARTICIPANT (60s) who thumbs his packet of consent forms.

MALE PARTICIPANT

19... 23... 29...

Emily stares, speechless. The Participant and Lab Tech turn to Emily, confused by her interruption.

EMILY

What are you doing here?

LAB TECHNICIAN

I'm sorry, Dr. Bergom, I was told to start the cognition screenings.

Emily scans the Lab Tech's notes -- a series of prime numbers. They're the same prime numbers the voices have been repeating.

Confused, Emily closes the door behind her.

I/E. JEEP, WOODS -- AFTERNOON

Margaret's Jeep heads down Cold Creek Road. No other cars in sight.

In the passenger seat, Kayla springs up.

KAYLA

(points out window)

Look.

MARGARET

You said the end of the road.

As the car speeds past, Kayla looks out the window --

The four Reddings lumber down the road. Gaby Reddings stares back at Kayla. Gaby's eyes sunken in, skin sallow.

Margaret follows Kayla's gaze -- only trees out there.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Stop here or up the road?

KAYLA

Keep going, it's close now.

Margaret turns a corner. Up ahead, the Pontiac still abandoned on the shoulder of the road.

KAYLA (CONT'D)
(points to Pontiac)
STOP. There.

Margaret eyes the Pontiac.

MARGARET
It's deer season. Hunters are out here all the time.

She parks.

EXT. JACKSON HIGH SCHOOL -- AFTERNOON

Carlos waits at the curb amidst a traffic jam of Students heading home.

CARLOS
(into cell phone)
Hey, just seeing if you're gonna be late. Or if you're coming at all...
Let me know.

Nearby, we see George's Pickup idling.

EXT. ROAD, WOODS -- AFTERNOON

Beside the Pontiac, Kayla searches the treeline as Margaret observes her.

MARGARET
Was your episode just visual?

KAYLA
She spoke, but not words. Numbers,
all I heard was numbers.

Margaret taken aback, remembering what Emily told her. About to ask more, Margaret realizes --

Kayla's body has gone rigid, her eyes locked on a point in the distance.

MARGARET
Remember, you're in control. You feel anxious, use your concentration exercises.

Kayla trembles, terrified.

*

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Is it Gaby?

Kayla doesn't respond. Her breath goes shallow.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

I'm right here. Kayla, sweetheart,
I'm here --

Margaret moves to her daughter's side.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Na-ra. Na-ra. Repeat it. Focus on
the syllables. Nothing else.

KAYLA

Na-ra. Na-ra.

MARGARET

Na-ra. Na-ra.

She chants faster, louder --

KAYLA

Na-ra. Na-ra --

Kayla's voice falters, her chest heaves in and out. She can't get enough air... and drops to her knees, convulsing.

Margaret tries to snap her daughter out of it. She lays Kayla on her side, clears her airway. None of it working.

Finally, Kayla gasps, flushed, heart racing.

MARGARET

Lie back down. Breathe --

Kayla pushes her mom off, stands up, groggy. Her body goes rigid (similar to George in the motel room). A few fallen leaves drift upward.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

You need to stay down.

Without a word, Kayla, not herself, bursts into a sprint She's 50 yards away in seconds.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

KAYLA.

Margaret gives chase -- darts after Kayla into the treeline.

Branches whipping past her, Margaret crashes through the underbrush. She skids to a stop at a fork in the trail, no sign of her daughter.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

KAYLA.

She hears rustling in the trees ahead, races after the movement --

Deeper in the woods, Margaret, soaked with sweat, slows to a stop. She gets her bearings, scans the trees --

A blur of movement to her right -- Kayla running full speed, weaving between trees with ease.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Please, Kayla -- STOP.

Not breaking her stride, Kayla continues. Margaret pursues, but she's losing ground.

Kayla, relentless, climbs uphill. Way behind her, Margaret's legs start to give out.

Suddenly, Kayla drops over a ridge-line and out of sight.

With a final burst of energy, Margaret claws up the hill. The chatter of a creek in the distance.

Scrambling downhill, Margaret scans the vista. So little daylight left, it's hard to make out shapes in the shadows.

Margaret catches the reflective glimmer from a SNEAKER snagged on some rocks in the creek.

Margaret tears towards it.

As her feet slip over the rocky bank, Margaret plunges into the muddy water --

She grabs hold of the sneaker, tugging Kayla towards her.

MARGARET (CONT'D)

Kayla, baby --

In a frenzy, Margaret drags her daughter as --

The body surfaces. A face staring back at Margaret...

Gaby Reddings. Bloated and sallow, a week's worth of beetles embedded into her flesh.

Margaret jerks back, Gaby's dead body slips from her grasp.

She scrambles back onto the shore. Hysterical, helpless. And alone. No sign of Kayla.

EXT. MOUNTAIN RIDGE -- NIGHT

Police helicopters cast spotlights throughout the woods. Search and Rescue dogs bark in the bg.

The valley is now a crime scene. The four bodies of the Reddings family laid out on the shore. A perimeter set up around them.

DETECTIVE WATSON (40s), African-American, a family man and a devout Baptist despite his profession. He offers a blanket to a shell-shocked Margaret.

MARGARET

My car, she could've found her way
back to the car.

WATSON

We have officers stationed there in
case she does. You were by the road
and she just ran off, didn't say a
word?

MARGARET

I already told three of you, no.

WATSON

She ever run away before?
(she shakes her head)
Maybe you got into an argument...
She wanted to teach you a lesson.

Frustrated, Margaret eyes the Cops by the Reddings' corpses. Their bloated bodies have been pulled onto the shoreline of mossy BLACK QUARTZ ROCKS.

Cops struggle to clear a perimeter on the uneven terrain.

MARGARET

My daughter's alive, they should be
looking for her.

WATSON

The road's a few miles back. Any
friends, boyfriend she could've
hitched a ride with?

MARGARET

She doesn't know anyone. She has a
delusional disorder and needs
immediate medical attention.

Watson straightens, more concerned.

WATSON
On any medication?

MARGARET
Zyprexa, Xanax, Propanol.

He's writing all this down.

WATSON
And you all were on a hike?

MARGARET
Yes.

WATSON
Late in the day for a hike.

In hysterics, Margaret throws off the blanket, heads into the woods.

WATSON (CONT'D)
Ma'am, stay on this side of the tape.

MARGARET
KAYLA'S OUT THERE.

WATSON
(restrains her)
We have officers on the ground, road blocks, search and rescue covering the area. We'll find her.

MARGARET
(re: Reddings)
You didn't find them.

WATSON
No, you did.

Margaret remembers to breathe, tries to focus.

WATSON (CONT'D)
You need to go home --

MARGARET
Not without Kayla.

WATSON
We'll get you home. Chances are that's where she'll turn up.

Detective Watson leads Margaret towards a waiting Cruiser.

INT. DINING ROOM, BERGOM HOUSE -- NIGHT

Energized, Sam on his laptop with a new sense of purpose. Elliot hangs over his shoulder.

SAM

We enter in the network password
and it operates over wifi.

Sam strikes a few keys and the screen shows the live feed of the surveillance cameras.

SAM (CONT'D)

You can watch on your phone too.
From anywhere.

ELLIOT

Sick.

Sam spots Emily hovering behind them.

SAM

Cameras are up and running.

Doubtful, Emily watches the live feed. She notices Elliot staring at her, concerned.

EMILY

Nice job, guys.

She kisses them both, heads into --

INT. LIVING ROOM, BERGOM HOUSE -- NIGHT

Emily finds Beth watching cartoons. A thought occurs to her, she joins Beth on the sofa.

EMILY

You know when you're watching TV,
you hear the people on the screen
talking.

BETH

(points to cartoon)
I hear Caillou...

EMILY

When the TVs off, but it's just
you, you ever hear people talking?

*
*

Beth, confused. She thinks this is some kind of test.

BETH

No. You say no TV, I turn it off.

EMILY

If you hear people, not mommy, not
daddy, not Elliot, you tell me.
Okay?

*
*

Beth nods, not understanding. Sam comes in with a bowl of popcorn, Elliot at his side.

Emily softens, pretends she was only playing with Beth.

SAM

Jack went down early.

Emily pulls Beth onto the sofa, makes room for Elliot and Sam.

They all settle down to watch TV. And for the first time in a while, they seem like a family.

EXT. BERGOM HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

The SECURITY CAMERAS on all four corners emit a steady BLINKING RED LIGHT. They're active, recording until...

Condensation forms on their lenses. One by one, the RED BLINKING LIGHTS go dark. The cameras power down.

The family inside, totally unaware.

EXT. HAYES HOUSE -- NIGHT

Margaret's SUV barrels into the driveway.

INT. HAYES HOUSE -- NIGHT

Margaret rushes in.

MARGARET

(shouts out)
Kayla?

Margaret races upstairs to find --

CUT TO:

KAYLA'S BEDROOM

Empty. Bed made. No sign she was here.

Numb, Margaret drifts out to --

KITCHEN

Carlos and George sit at the breakfast table. George is a few beers in and looking sharp in his new suit.

MARGARET (OS)

Is she here? Did she call?

Margaret storms in --

CARLOS

This is George, gave me a ride home. His daughter's in Kayla's class.

Margaret, frozen at the door. She recognizes George, takes in this man she hasn't seen in 17 years.

George stands, this is the moment he's imagined hundreds of times.

GEORGE

Hey Maggie.

MARGARET

... Why are you here?

GEORGE

Came to meet my daughter. Where's Kayla?

Margaret can only stare at George, Kayla's father. The reality finally hitting her --

MARGARET

She's gone.

EXT. EDGE OF FOREST -- NIGHT

Kayla keeps a steady pace, still weaving through the forest. She's been at it for hours -- her clothes ripped, bloodied scrapes on her face.

Finally, she crashes to the ground, and GASPS. Her body softens, her muscles relaxing.

*

*

*

*

*

*

Kayla's eyes flutter as she takes in her surroundings. She *
 doesn't know where she is or why she's here. She has no *
 memory of the last few hours. *

KAYLA *
 Mom... MOM. *

No response from the woods. *

Any teenage bravado is gone. With only moonlight as her *
 guide, Kayla is a scared, lost child, alone in the woods. *

Behind her, a TWIG SNAPS. She freezes, listens hard. Another *
 TWIG SNAPS, this time closer. *

Kayla spins around to face the noise -- can't see anything *
 out there. *

Stock-still, she listens -- her eyes wide, chest heaving with *
 anxiety. *

Another TWIG snaps, this time only a few feet away. *

Kayla bolts, races towards a clearing -- *

EXT. ABANDONED HENRY RIVER MILL VILLAGE -- CONTINUOUS *

Kayla darts out of the treeline and finds herself on the MAIN *
 STREET of -- *

A former cotton mill town, shuttered since the 70s. *

The village is nothing more that a collection of 20 *
 buildings: mill worker cottages, a company store, only the *
 basics. No trespassing signs posted throughout. *

Kayla, checks the forest behind her. No sign of anyone, total *
 stillness. Kayla shuffles down the road, looking for help. *

She walks by a row of worker cottages. The buildings' hard *
 pine sidings have started to moss over. Not a single light *
 on, no sign of any inhabitants. *

As Kayla passes the cottages, we catch shadows move behind *
 the windows. But Kayla doesn't spot them. *

Kayla stops in her tracks -- *

A hundred yards in front of her, a MAN in a winter coat, *
 stands in the middle of a road, his back turned. *

Kayla keeps her distance, wary -- *

KAYLA

Excuse me, Sir? You have a phone I
can borrow?

The Man doesn't turn around.

Kayla edges closer, maybe he couldn't hear her over the wind.

KAYLA (CONT'D)

HELLO --

Kayla stops herself, she realizes the Man's feet aren't
touching the ground...

As he slowly turns around, Kayla scrambles off the main road
to hide.

Keeping low, Kayla weaves between the cottages. Her legs too
fatigued, she can't go much further.

She peaks into the WINDOW of one of the COTTAGES -- the room
bare, floorboards warped. No one has lived here for years.

She keeps moving, spots the next building --

MILL OWNER'S HOUSE

A two-story home, the largest one in town, but nothing
elaborate. Only slightly less decayed than the rest.

Kayla notices an open back window. A curtain billows out.
Maybe someone still lives here.

She heaves herself inside --

INT. LIVING ROOM, MILL OWNER'S HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

A home filled with 70's style furniture. All of it dusty, the
sofa rotten. A feral cat meows in a corner.

Fumbling around, Kayla tries the lights. No luck.

She finds a book of matches beside the fireplace and strikes
a match --

Kayla stumbles across the room looking for a landline phone.

On the sofa, she notices a few DOLLS propped up on the sofa.
They're facing --

A chalkboard. Across it numbers scratched out in chalk -- 3,
5, 7, 9, etc. Prime numbers.

Kayla's breath quickens -- she recognizes those numbers. *

The match goes out. *

Her hands shaking, she strikes another -- *

She spins around the room, notices -- *

The dolls have moved off the sofa. The numbers erased off the board. The CHALK rocking on its ledge. *

KAYLA
(whispers)
... Hello. *

The upstairs floorboards creak. Rattled, Kayla bolts for the entryway. *

She rips open the front door --

A QUICK FLASH of ghostly FACES stare back at her. Dozens of them. The people that brought her here. *

EXT. HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS *

At the front door, Kayla screams into the night. We can no longer see the faces, but Kayla still can. *

Upstairs, a LIGHT GOES ON. Someone's home. *

FADE TO BLACK.