

6 MIRANDA DRIVE

By

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Revisions by
(Greg Mclean June 15, 2011)

White text on black screen.

The following events took place in
2009 in Sante Fe, New Mexico.

JUNE 4

EXT. GRAND CANYON -- DAY

Ancient mountains and valleys are arrayed in this primeval, awe inspiring landscape. A natural wonder so spectacular it draws 6 million curious visitors per year. Through it's heart snakes the Colorado River, like some eternal artery carrying the entire history of the nation. Maybe even it's future...

A red SUV threads through a high mountain road.

INT. SUV -- DAY

Meet the Taylor family -- PETER (Dad) BRONNY (Mom) (both late 30s), MICHAEL (10) and STEPHANIE (16).

Peter drives. Bronny sifts through tourist brochures. Steph is studying a book, trying to memorize road rules. Her little brother watches a movie on a portable DVD player, patched up with head-phones. They pass a ROAD SIGN, Michael instantly glances at it.

MICHAEL

(robotic)

Two hundred and ten... two hundred
and ten... two hundred and ten...

The boy returns his gaze back to his movie.

STEPH

Mom, tell him to be quiet.
I can't concentrate.

They catch up to a green SUV.

PETER

There they are. Not far now.

EXT. GRAND CANYON/CAMPING/PICNIC AREA -- DAY

The Taylor's SUV pulls up next to the other vehicle. We're in a spectacular area of the Canyon, dark rock forms stud the earth, steep trails descending into the shadowed valleys.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Taylor's stare out at the epic panorama.

PETER

Looks like God tore poor ol' earth
a new one.

BRONNY

Charming, Sweetheart...
(reads from brochure)
- "the Grand Canyon has some of
the oldest rocks in the world,
with samples along it's floor
being dated at 2000 million years
old." It's ancient. This place
doesn't even look real.

PETER

2000 million is old, alright.

Steph leans between them.

STEPH

Can we eat now? I'm hungry.

PETER

Imagine being the first folks to
see that. Must have been bummed
they didn't have an IPHONE.

He clicks a photo. A few chuckles, rolled eyes.

EXT. PICNIC AREA/GRAND CANYON -- DAY

Two families share a picnic table. The teenage boys,
ANDREW and PAUL CARTER (both 15) toss a football around.

Peter helps GARY (40s, a heavy-set guy brimming with
misguided self confidence) open a drinks cooler on the
tailgate of his SUV. Gary fishes out couple of beers,
tosses one to Peter, who drops it.

GARY

Whoa! C'mon Big Pete, gotta be
faster than that if you want to
make it to the big leagues!

Peter tries a smile, picks it up and pops it -- a geyser
explodes. Gary belly laughs, Peter wipes froth from his
face/hair.

PETER

Might grab another.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GARY

Don't drop this one, champ. Only
got two cases to see us through
the weekend.

He winks. A trim Soccer Mom (JOY, 30s) is opening up
plastic food containers. Bronny, a distance from the
others, takes snaps on a good-looking digital SLR. She
looks like she knows what she's doing.

She turns and snaps a shot of Joy, who notices and
becomes instantly flustered.

JOY

Oh for heaven's sake, don't take
my picture...I must look a mess. I
don't even have my face on
right...

She poses, we sense she might have done some modelling in
her day.

JOY (CONT'D)

Come on, let me take one of you
folks.

Bronny calls over Peter, Stephanie and Michael and they
huddle for a family photo -- all giving big smiles,
except Michael. He's staring in the opposite direction.

BRONNY

At the camera honey? Look at Joy,
Michael? See the camera?

The camera flashes.

JOY

You all look perfect!

Bronny grins. The group breaks, Bronny takes her camera
and helps Joy prepare lunch. The 2 fathers stand away
from the table, talking.

GARY

I ain't kidding man, it's what I
heard when I was a kid. Actually
it was the tour guides that told
us that when we came here. There's
a whole damn city *under* the
Canyon. Some explorer guy
discovered it in the 1900s.

PETER

You mean, like an Indian Village
or something?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GARY

No, something else, much older than that. Smithsonian published a report, newspapers even ran the story. Later, denied any knowledge of it.

PETER

Huh. Never heard that story. Sure someone wasn't just yanking your chain?

GARY

Pete, I'm telling you, lotta people know about it, but not everyone wants to talk about it, know what I mean?

Gary taps his nose -- "keep it quiet". Peter nods, we can tell it pains him to be around this guy. He humors him nonetheless.

PETER

Your secret's safe with me, bud.

He winks at Gary.

Another beer?

GARY

Pope shit in the woods?

Peter winces, not liking the language around his boy, but Michael is engrossed in the DVD -- the portable player now on the picnic table. Michael describes shapes in the air with his hand, by now it's clear he's moderately autistic. Joy opens a final container.

JOY

Come and get it!

EXT. GRAND CANYON / ROCKS -- DAY

The Taylor boys crawl like monkeys over large boulders, then they spot a trail and race toward it.

GARY

Hey, whoa! The hell you two think you're going?

ANDREW

Nowhere. Just taking a look around.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Gary's about to shut them down.

PAUL

Oh come on, Dad. Trail doesn't go very far, anyway. You can see where it ends from up here.

GARY

Where's your manners? Did you even ask Stephanie and Michael if they want to go with? What's wrong with you two?

ANDREW/PAUL

Nothin'.

Stephanie and Michael appear near Gary and Peter. It's clear Steph's not crazy about hiking down there, but nothing much else is going on, she nods to her Dad.

PETER

Keep an eye on him, Steph.

Steph grabs Michael's hand and they join them. The boys quickly run ahead, Gary shouts.

GARY

Don't run! You'll overshoot the goddamn trail and end up a red stain on a rock 100 feet down!

Soon the kids are gone, their voices and shrieks echoing around the rock walls.

GARY (CONT'D)

Little bastards, you do everything you can to tell'em right from wrong but everything just goes right in one ear, straight out the other.

PETER

Tell me about it. Just be glad they're boys, raising a teenage girl? Now *that's* an experience.

GARY

I hear that.

Joy and Bronny appear.

JOY

There's some shade back near the picnic table if you two have finished your gossip session?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Bronny looks around, can't see Michael, becomes instantly fearful. Peter puts an arm around her.

PETER

He's fine, honey. He's with Steph
and the boys.

Bronny smiles, but she's still concerned. Gary and Joy
have already started walking back, calling loudly.

GARY

We ever tell you pair about a
vacation we had few years back? My
god, now *that's* a story. Me and
the ball and chain here thought,
"you know what? Let's face facts,
we ain't getting any younger and
we've never even been to the
Bahamas!" Well, the Hotel we
stayed in, hol--lee-shit...

Peter and Bronny exchange a look, obviously they've heard
this a few times before.

EXT. GRAND CANYON /TRAIL -- DAY

Andrew and Paul charge down the trail, sliding to a stop
at a place where many smaller trails branch off. Steep
rock formations rise all around. Steph and Michael
stumble into the area.

ANDREW

I'll bet there's all kinds of
creepy old shit in this place.

STEPHANIE

Only shit round here is the
bullshit spilling out of your
mouth, Carter.

The boys exchange a look -- burst out laughing.

ANDREW

Whoa!

(to Michael)

You do know how hard-core your big
sister is, kid?

PAUL

'Course he doesn't know, he's
fucking retarded.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STEPHANIE

Hey shut the fuck up! He's smarter than you, asshole. He just sees things differently, that's all.

She brushes Michael's hair from his eyes. He's totally oblivious to the conversation, focused on a small tree nearby. He runs over to it and starts counting the leaves.

ANDREW

How do you mean?

STEPHANIE

His connection to the world, things around him, it's on a different level to us. He doesn't respond to stuff the way most people do.

ANDREW

So, he doesn't feel fear?

STEPHANIE

Yeah, but not of the things that scare most kids.

PAUL

Let's see.

They gather round Michael. Steph shadows them, arms crossed. Not liking where this is going.

STEPHANIE

Don't be jerks...

PAUL

-- it's OK. Hey Mikey? Did you know this place is haunted? That's right. Legend says guardians of the spirit world live in the rocks and valleys around here, one day they're all going to come back. And these ghosts, they're special...cause they eat little kids...

Steph sighs, this is stupid.

STEPHANIE

You guys are total douche-bags.

PAUL

He didn't react at all!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANDREW
That's kinda creepy.

STEPHANIE
Grow up, losers.

ANDREW
Come on, Steph. He was just
kidding around. Here...you've had
your eye on it all day, go for it.

He takes off his watch, hands it to Michael to play with.
He starts winding it, fascinated.

PAUL
Didn't mean anything by it. He
didn't even hear me anyway. Look.

Paul notes a steep trail nearby and runs toward it,
calling back.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Hey check this out. There's some
kinda lookout up there.

Andrew darts off also, turns back to Stephanie.

ANDREW
Come on.

He smiles at her, we sense he might have the beginnings
of a teenage crush. Steph grins back, she glances back to
Michael, engaged in his own world.

STEPHANIE
Stay put, Mikey. We'll just be up
there, OK?

He doesn't respond, looks pretty settled where he is. She
turns and joins the boys as they explore the trail.

EXT. GRAND CANYON / ROCKS -- DAY

Bronny roams amidst several rock structures. She clicks
off several snaps of the boulders. She extends her hand,
stroking the cold, stone surface.

EXT. GRAND CANYON/CORRIDOR -- DAY

Bronny rounds a corner into another stone corridor, then
stops as quiet voices echo. She creeps forward, seeing
dark figures ahead. Two people. Peter and Joy, speaking
quietly. Or is it intimately?

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CONTINUED:

A call from Gary echoes, startling the pair. They head back to the picnic site, the moment broken.

Bronny considers them, a flash of confusion/hurt crossing her features, before continuing.

EXT. CANYON TRAIL -- DAY

Paul climbs over a rocky outcrop, Andrew and Stephanie following.

ANDREW

Your Mom's a real ballbuster,
isn't she?

STEPHANIE

First of all, that's ridiculous
'cause she totally is not and
second, why would you even say
that?

ANDREW

S'what Mom says.

STEPHANIE

Must be true then. You're a
weirdo.

ANDREW

She says that, too.

He grins sheepishly. Steph smiles.

PAUL O/S

You can see the whole thing from
up here! Come on!

EXT. CANYON TRAIL -- DAY

Michael hears the echo of Paul's shout, turns and accidentally drops the watch. It bounces down the steep rocky decline before resting on a ledge, 10 feet down.

Michael peers over at it, and having no fear, immediately starts climbing down, deftly maneuvering over boulders and stones.

Soon he clambers down onto the rock ledge, quickly grabs the watch then stops, turning behind to see a thin crevasse. It seems there's some space beyond it. Wind passing inside creates a dull roar, like fire burning.

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CONTINUED:

POV from inside the crevasse. Michael stands peering in. He suddenly moves forward, squeezing his tiny body through the 3 foot gap, becomes stuck, then wriggles his way forward before falling down into darkness and...

...THUDDING onto a dirt floored CAVE. Blinking through the gloom, Michael stands and we see the scale of the place he's discovered.

It's an ancient dwelling of some kind. 30 foot ceilings yawn above, covered with blackened HAND PRINTS. Pin pricks of light through the rocks hit areas of the walls, revealing prehistoric paintings. Its obviously some kind of ancient ritual site...

EXT. CANYON/TRAIL -- DAY

Andrew, Stephanie and Paul stand on a ledge before a vast drop, the view before them is breathtaking. Andrew and Steph, however, are more interested in each other. Paul, oblivious, throws stones over the edge.

PAUL

...a guy at school told me the Spanish used to have a type of dog to hunt down the local Indians, back in the day.

ANDREW

Bullshit. When?

PAUL

Like, way back. They called'em "war dogs" and they actually fed them, get this, Indians they'd captured!

STEPHANIE

Gross!

PAUL

I know! They even used to take chunks of peoples flesh along on their journey's to feed to the war dogs to keep them identifying the scent of Native Americans as food. Is that totally sick or what?

Andrew can see this is not impressing Steph, he punches Paul in the shoulder.

ANDREW

Do you know how much of a total cockwad you are?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL

What? They did. I'm just saying.

INT. CAVE -- DAY

Michael blankly takes in the eerie place, then he's drawn to a large extinct fire pit in the center of the room. Piles of ancient ash are the resting place of 5 STONES, arranged in a semi-circle. Michael kneels and grabs one, examines it, presses it against his cheek. Closes his eyes, as if listening to it.

After a moment he blinks his eyes open and begins to take in the space around him. The walls are strewn with ancient etchings, barely visible through the scorched outer layer, leaving only vague imprints stretching up the high walls of the cave. Looked at a certain way they could even resemble large, human-like figures. Michael's mesmerized, edging closer as if drawn by invisible strings...

...then he kneels, putting all 5 stones into his BACKPACK. He stumbles backwards, eyes glued to the shadow figures, before he turns and climbs the wall, leading back up to the hidden entrance. After two steps, he freezes, then slowly climbs back down, before approaching the dark scorched shadows on the wall. A wind, or is it a whisper, seems to beckon him forward...

EXT. CANYON TRAIL -- DAY

Stephanie and the boys arrive back where they left Michael. She panics immediately.

STEPHANIE

Oh no. Michael? Michael?!

Looks of fear shoot between them.

ANDREW/PAUL

Michael?!

ANDREW

Shit.

PAUL

Fuck. Come on, he must be up one of these trails.

Each of them takes a different trail, calling out frantically.

EXT. GRAND CANYON / VARIOUS -- DAY

We see IMAGES of the yawning valleys. Above, clouds form evolving shapes. Sheer rock faces stare into eternity, passing by. The sun moves closer to the horizon. We sense the timelessness of this area. As if it's alive, present, aware.

EXT. GRAND CANYON / ROCKS -- DAY

Michael, now back up on a trail, wanders aimlessly. He yawns, stumbling forward as if he's been walking for some time. We can hear echoes of the search, his name bouncing around the canyon eerily. He stops a moment, staring straight up at the sun, blazing down hard.

BRONNY O/S

Oh thank God. Thank God we found you!

STEPH O/S

Mom? He's OK isn't he?

From further up the trail the group appear and race to the boys side. Bronny hugs him close.

BRONNY

You OK baby boy? We couldn't find you, we were worried sick! How did you get here? Huh?

Peter shakes his head, whispers, harsh.

PETER

Stephanie how could you let him wander off like that? He could have fallen or been killed or god-knows-what?

STEPHANIE

But we only left him for a second...

PETER

A second? It's been over an hour! What were you thinking? And as if that's not bad enough you knew we needed to get to the cabins before dark. Did you consider anyone else or were you just worrying about yourself again? Well?

(Tour master again)

Let's go everyone!

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CONTINUED:

Andrew and Paul share guilty glances with Steph. They're about to pipe up but think better of it.

Peter picks up Michael then marches off muttering about 'responsibility', 'trust', 'let down'. Steph brushes herself off.

STEPH

I said I was sorry, Mom. We only left him for a second...

Everyone's moved off, Bronny shakes her head at Stephanie as she passes.

BRONNY

We'll discuss this later.

HOLD ON -- Steph, guilty as hell.

Bronny and Peter work their way back up the trail through the rocks toward the carpark. Gary berates a sullen Paul and Andrew the whole time, each receives the occasional kick in the ass.

STEPHANIE

Hate this stupid family.

Steph sighs and looks around, confused, trying to work out how Michael could have ended up here, makes no sense. She lingers a moment, staring at the deep shadows forming all around as the sun sinks to the horizon. Chilled, without knowing why, she quickly walks to catch up to the noisy group.

CAMERA FINDS -- the shadows of the ROCKS. They loom deeper, darker. Chilling.

EXT. MOUNTAINS -- DAY

The two cars wind up into the mountains. Holiday CABINS can be seen nestled amongst the pine trees.

BRONNY O/C

Do we really have to spend the weekend with them? Not sure I can handle 'Miss Alabama' two whole days.

PETER O/S

We're here now, they invited us, so let's just make the most of it. Alright? That goes for all of you. Just have fun. Enjoy yourselves.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRONNY O/S

Have fun?

PETER O/S

Yes. You remember fun, don't you?
That thing we used to have, about
10 years ago?

BRONNY O/S

You're a jerk.

STEPHANIE O/S

I agree.

PETER O/S

That's it! You're both grounded.
Forever. Mikey, you're grounded
too! Even though you don't really
go anywhere!

Protests break out, but they're soon drowned by laughter.

CUT TO BLACK:

2 WEEKS LATER

EXT. SANTE FE/AERIALS - MORNING

We glide over ordered suburbs, even from here we can tell
from the leafy streets and swimming pools, it's a middle
class haven.

EXT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE - MORNING

A suburban home. Two cars. One story. Nothing spectacular
but very comfortable. A dog barks somewhere.

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- MASTER BEDROOM -- MORNING

Bronny and Peter kiss gently in bed. There's real warmth
there, the kisses a prelude to an early morning
lovemaking session. The barking dog persists outside.
Peter finally glares toward a draped window. Bronny
brings his face back to hers.

BRONNY

Hey. Keep your mind on the job,
stud.

PETER

Stud? Right, you're in for it now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Bark, bark, bark. Peter jumps out of bed. Walks naked to the door.

BRONNY

Be gentle with me, Mr. Taylor.

PETE

Uh, that I can't guarantee. See, once we 'studs' get rolling it's like a thunderstorm, or, at least a very strong breeze. Depending on...

He pulls a lock across the door. Turns back to his wife.

PETER

-- how long we can keep the goddam door locked.

(nods to door)

Best investment in a sex-life after kids.

He runs back to bed. Leaps on, Bronny squeals.

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- HALLWAYS/VARIOUS -- CONTINUOUS

ANGLES ON; the interior of Miranda Drive. Kitchen. Living Room. Hallway. Bathroom. Something eerie about the POINT OF VIEW. We end up looking at the door of the master bedroom. The muffled sounds of love-making beyond.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Peter and Bronny are in the throes of passion, Bronny throwing her head from side to side on the pillow when...

...a loud THUMP sounds at the door. Bronny and Peter glance to the door. Back to each other, confused.

BRONNY

Michael? Good morning, Michael. Mommy and daddy are getting ready for work. You watch your TV show and then mommy will make you breakfast, OK?

Only the mad barking of the neighbors dog remains.

PETER

For Chrissakes! Listen to that sonofabitch, would you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRONNY

It's a dog, honey. Of course it's
a son of a bitch. And I don't hear
anything. There's only you.

Peter smiles, pleads.

PETER

Don't get up yet. Come on, I'll
even do our 'special thing'.

BRONNY

Mikey, honey. 'Special thing' will
have to wait.

She gets up, throws on a dressing gown. Peter flops down,
bummed.

INT. KITCHEN -- MORNING

CLOSE ON; the tap on the kitchen sink running full
strength. Bronny enters, quickens as she sees it and
FLICKS it off. She glances around for Michael, who's
nowhere to be seen. Suddenly she stops, sniffing the air.
Something rank, burning. She moves over and sniffs the
toaster. Not that. She spins and sniffs near the oven,
not there either. Odd.

INT. MICHAEL'S BEDROOM. CONTINUOUS

A massive row of ACTION FIGURES (Star Wars/G.I.Joes) have
been spread out before Michael. He's staring up at a spot
on the wall. Behind him the door opens quietly, Bronny
peers inside. Michael's entranced. She waits, but he
doesn't register her at all.

BRONNY

Mikey? Did you knock on the door?
Mikey? What are you doing, Honey?

Nothing.

BRONNY (CONT'D)

You know not to put the tap on in
the kitchen. Mikey?

She enters behind him and crouches. Putting her arms
around him she brushes his forehead, he's burning up.

BRONNY (CONT'D)

Are you feeling OK?

(CONTINUED)

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He's just stuck on this one point. Bronny looks there -- there's nothing.

BRONNY (CONT'D)
Come on. Let's get you some
breakfast.

MICHAEL
Jenny did it.

Bronny halts.

BRONNY
Jenny? Who's Jenny?

MICHAEL
She's my new friend.

BRONNY
That's nice honey. Where is she?

His hand shoots up toward the ceiling.

BRONNY (CONT'D)
In the roof, huh? Does Jenny want
to come down and have pancakes
too?

INT. STEPH'S BEDROOM. CONTINUOUS

Stephanie preens herself in her bathroom mirror. She's singing quietly to herself. Bronny opens the bedroom door.

BRONNY
You in here?

Steph emerges, annoyed her ritual has been interrupted.

STEPH
Mom, what the hell?

BRONNY
Did you burn something in the
kitchen?

STEPH
Why do I get blamed for everything
in this stupid place!

BRONNY
Did you burn something in...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STEPH

-- I haven't even been in there
yet so how could I? Close the damn
door! Jesus H.

INT. KITCHEN -- CONTINUOUS

Bronny reappears, halts. Michael eats cereal, behind him
we can see the TAP's running again. Bronny storms over.

BRONNY

Honey, I said don't touch things
in the kitchen...

She flicks it off, irritated, then almost dry retches.

BRONNY (CONT'D)

Oh god. That smells...putrid.

Peter appears in a suit, rushing.

PETER

Come on, buddy, finish your
brek...

He stops too.

PETER (CONT'D)

What's that burning (smell)?

BRONNY

It's got to be the trash, can you
take it out now, please. Something
must have gone bad.

PETER

Jesus. Late enough as it is but
OK.

Peter quickly grabs the bag, ties it and takes it with
him. He pats Michael on the head as he passes.

PETER (CONT'D)

Maybe spray something in here,
Bron. Gotta go.

He's gone. Bronny looks to Michael. He's still staring at
the wall.

MICHAEL

(mimics Peter)
Gotta go. Go, go, go, go, go.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Bronny sighs, taking in Michael. Even for him he's acting peculiar. She dismisses it and starts cleaning the kitchen.

CUT TO BLACK:

ONE WEEK LATER

INT. CLASSROOM -- DAY

Steph sits in a classroom. Surrounded by other STUDENTS.

Her TEACHER drones on from the front of the class. Steph absentmindedly starts spinning the pencil on her desk. It whirs around then slows, sharp pencil-tip pointing at her.

She spins it again, it whirls, slows and stops. Pointing at her again. Steph starts to focus on the pencil. She pauses. Spins it again. Points at her. Again. At her.

Again. Her.

She spins it again. It starts to slow, threatening to point again but Steph SLAMS her hand down on the pencil making a loud BANG. Other students turn, staring. She stares right back, mouthing, "what?"

EXT. SPORTS FIELD -- DAY

Steph, Tasha and KAT (15, her other BFF) are sitting in the middle of the track field. Three dots in an expanse of green. Kat is eating carrot sticks. Tash is sucking on an ice-block.

TASHA

What's with the bunny food?

KAT

Not everyone can follow the chocolate donut diet, you skinny be-yatch.

Tasha pinches skin rolls on her stomach.

TASHA

You kidding? I'm disgusting.

Tasha pulls her skirt high over her hips. Steph looks at her friend's thigh. Tasha slips a finger into the elastic of her undies and pulls them out.

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CONTINUED:

TASHA (CONT'D)

Whoa, need a wax too, Sasquatch.

Tasha catches Steph's eyes. Steph glances at her hands.

TASHA (CONT'D)

Take a photo. Lasts longer.

STEPH

Screw you, mega-dyke.

Kat scans Steph with her eyes. Is something different in her friend? Conversation bubbles on.

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- DAY

Professional digital SLRs sitting on a kitchen bench. Batteries recharging. Bronny, dressed sharply for work, walks into the kitchen. She sprays some more air-freshener. Cleansing the burning smell away.

A phone RINGS, giving Bronny a start.

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- HALLWAYS/VARIOUS -- DAY

Bronny moves through the house, phone to her ear.

INTERCUT BRONNY AND PETER AT HIS WORKPLACE:

Peter walks through an office space which takes up the entire floor. It's a mid-level architecture firm, workers are hunched over computers. Focused chatter fills the space.

PETER

I'm going to be home late tonight
and before you even ask, yes,
Simon's on my ass...

BRONNY

-- Peter...

PETER

-- the excrement has well and
truly collided with every fan in
here today and guess who's 'sposed
to clean it all up? As usual.

Bronny sighs. Peter enters a stairwell. A bit of privacy at last. Gloomy and ugly but private. Untold floors above and below.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETER (CONT'D)

Oh, and pencil in Saturday night.
We're having dinner with Simon and
Wendy.

BRONNY

Really?

PETER

Yeah, I know. I've held it off for
as long as I can. Out of excuses,
I'm afraid.

Peter sniffs. Looks up. Smoke wafts down from above.
Someone smoking in the stairwell above. Peter calls up.

PETER (CONT'D)

Hey, excuse me, there's no smoking
in the stairwell. There are signs
everywhere...

(under his breath)
-- pretty hard to miss.

No reply. He goes back to the call.

BRONNY

But all they do is drink too much
and he insults her and she tries
to laugh it off and make lame
jokes. It's uncomfortable and
incredibly boring.

Peter glances up again. Something eerie about the
stairwell now. He lowers his voice.

PETER

Agreed but he's looked after me
here and Wendy likes you. God
knows why. Plus, it's a duty of my
lowly function here, Babe. Hang
out with the boss when he asks,
you know the deal.

Peter sniffs again, glancing up. Above heavy footfalls
move downstairs toward him.

PETER (CONT'D)

Gotta go.

He hangs up. And Bronny speaks into a dead phone.

BRONNY

Love you.

INT. STAIRWELL/PETER'S WORK -- DAY

Peter pockets his phone and walks up to meet whoever's there, looking rather indignant that someone's flaunting office rules so blatantly. He mounts the corner to where the sound was coming from to find...

...it's empty. Peter stares, baffled, until he hears sounds far below. He quickly peers over the edge, nothing, then a DARK SHAPE appears behind him and...

...he JUMPS, then sighs as a CLEANER in dark coveralls stands there, having just entered via the doorway.

CLEANER

Sorry bud. Didn't mean to scare you.

Peter nods, he quickly jogs back down the concrete steps and enters the normality of the office.

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- DAY

Bronny passes a dresser. She pauses a moment, stops. She takes in the family photo from the Grand Canyon vacation...

...suddenly the hallway LIGHT above flickers off. Then on, then off again. She glances up, stares at it. Suddenly it POPS. Bronny squeals, shocked. Then she gathers herself before moving to deal with the broken glass.

BRONNY

Terrific.

EXT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- DUSK

The sun seeps over a darkening horizon. Miranda Drive is cast in deep shadow. Steph, Kat and Tasha walk along together in the twilight, clandestinely puffing on cigarettes.

They stop on a corner beneath an old tree. Steph can see her house from here, her Mom's VOLVO STATION WAGON parked in the drive. She glances up. There's a pair of SNEAKERS hanging from the power lines above their house.

Kat follows Steph's sight-line to the shoes.

STEPH

What do you think it means?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KAT

Drug dealer. A sign for their customers.

TASHA

That's horseshit. Cops'd be all over if it was true. It's supposed to mark that a guy's lost his virginity.

KAT

You'd say that.

TASHA

That's what I heard.

STEPH

Maybe it means... (solemn voice)...someone's going to die in that house.

A car horn PARPS nearby, startling the girls. Headlights wash over them. They expertly hide their cigarettes behind their backs. An SUV pulls in beside them, window rolling down revealing Peter.

PETER

Evening ladies.

TASHA

Hi Mr. Taylor.

Peter can smell the cigarettes even if he can't see them.

PETER

Home soon Steph. Mom's cooking so don't be late.

Steph speaks like a robot.

STEPH

Yes, Dad. See you soon, Dad. I will comply with the program, Dad.

The girls laugh.

KAT

Your Dad's totally cute.

Both other girls squeal, "Gross", "Disgusting".

KAT (CONT'D)

What? Only in like an older-guy-past-his-prime-but-was-probably hot-in-his-day kind of way.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

STEPHANIE

Whatever.

TASH

You're insane in the membrane,
Kat.

KAT

Yeah well least I'm not fat.

A faux cat fight begins, laughter echoes down the street.

KAT (CONT'D)

You little motherfuckers!

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Several pots steam on the stove. Bronny sits at the well-set kitchen table, sips from a Diet-Coke. She clicks a mouse connected to a Mac notebook.

Closer on the computer. Bronny clicks through a series of photographs -- several of Peter and Joy chatting intimately at a campsite, rocks of the Grand Canyon in the background. Bronny's expression tells us how she feels about these images, she virtually punches the mouse to move to the next photo.

Several more shots from the holiday at the Grand Canyon; Steph cheekily drinking wine at the Cabin, Peter with his arm around Joy -- when suddenly a SOUND startles her.

The front door, then footsteps. Bronny quickly switches windows to some images of rental homes she's photographed. Steph enters.

BRONNY

Finally.

STEPH

Don't start. I've just been
embarrassed by Dad. He's such a
dumb jerk.

Steph storms through the kitchen, bound for her bedroom.
Peter enters a few seconds later.

PETER

Little shits, smoking again. I
don't know why they think we won't
know. She say anything to you?

BRONNY

What do you think?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A beat. Bark, bark, bark.

BRONNY (CONT'D)
Can you do the vegetables? I've
got to finish off the meat and...

PETER
-- in a minute.

BRONNY
Don't bother then.

He's already moving away.

PETER
Hey, I'll do it, but I'm just
running around the block first.
I'll be twenty minutes max, OK?

Bark, bark, bark.

PETER (CONT'D)
Christ! That prick-of-a-dog.

He exits. Bronny is alone again, unmoving in the kitchen.

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- BATHROOM -- NIGHT

Steph in the bathroom. The shower is running hot, the
mirrors steaming up. She takes her clothes off, rubs a
small circle on the mirror.

She stares at herself, pinching at skin. Then she climbs
in the shower. Steam rises up. Then slowly, almost opaque
against the shower cubicle door, a dark SHADOW appears.
It comes closer. It's a form. A human form.

Steph sees it, shrieks.

STEPH
Michael!

She rips open the shower cubicle.

There's no-one there.

The Bathroom door is closed. She steps out, grabs her
towel. Steph pulls open the bathroom door and looks down
the corridor. Not a soul.

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- HALLWAYS/LIVING-ROOM -- NIGHT

Steph storms through the hallways of her house. She rips open the door to Michael's bedroom. Plastic TOYS litter the floor, spilling out of his little backpack. She glances around then keeps walking.

Steph strides into the living-room and sees a strange structure. A miniature fort composed of cushions, pillows, and chairs. Steph stares at the creation. Sees two small eyes peering out.

STEPH

Were you in the bathroom just then?

Nothing. Except deeper, faster breaths coming from inside the fort. He seems terrified.

STEPH (CONT'D)

Were you in the bathroom?

Blackness. Breathing.

STEPH (CONT'D)

Michael, you better fucking answer me.

Nothing. Steph stomps over to the structure.

STEPH (CONT'D)

You admit you were in there did or I rip this stupid thing down. Got it?

Nothing. Then the eyes recede into the fort, into darkness. Steph reaches over and grips a supporting chair near the peep-hole.

STEPH (CONT'D)

Count of three. One...

Steph grips harder. Peers into that black hole.

STEPH (CONT'D)

Tw--

Michael's head thrusts out of the peephole, he lunges and bites into Steph's hand. She screams and hits him, the boy shrieks and retreats into his fort. Steph stares at the deep bite, stunned.

STEPH (CONT'D)

Ow! That hurt! You little dumb ass!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Steph starts tearing the fort apart. Michael starts screaming, he's clearly been terrified by something. The boy tries to cover himself with pillows as fast as Steph tears them away.

MICHAEL

Stop! Leave us alone! Stop it!!

Steph claws and grabs at Michael, animal-like. The next-door neighbor's dog barks continuously.

BRONNY (O.S.)

Stephanie!

Steph turns and looks at her mother then resumes attacking the boy. Bronny shrieks and runs over, tries to grab Steph's arms but the girl's too fast. Steph suddenly has Michael by the throat, she pulls back a fist but Bronny gets in between them.

BRONNY (CONT'D)

Don't you dare...

Steph glares then storms out. Bronny turns to Michael.

BRONNY (CONT'D)

You okay, baby-boy?

Michael is now emotionless. He starts righting the chairs, repositioning the pillows. Fort building. Bronny watches him, looking like she might cry.

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- STEPH'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Steph lies on her back staring up at the ceiling. Tube of antiseptic cream beside her. Her hand is white and slick with ointment.

A knock at the door. Peter walks into her room. He's in damp running clothes. Hair pasted with sweat. He stands there a moment.

STEPH

Get out.

PETER

Watch it.

(Softens)

Wasn't sure if you were asleep.

STEPH

Light's on. Usually a hint I'm not.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETER

What'd you do it for, Steph?

STEPH

He knows.

PETER

He's not always--

STEPH

He knows.

PETER

Well, he can't tell us. So why
don't you be the bigger person OK?

Several long beats. Steph doesn't blink her eyes.

STEPH

He knows.

Peter shakes his head. Walks out.

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- HALLWAY/STUDY -- NIGHT

Bronny, toting the dirty laundry hamper, passes the open doorway to Peter's study. She looks in. Peter stands near the window, cell phone to his ear. His posture tells us it's an intimate conversation. He laughs easily.

PETER

I would if I could, you know how
things are...

Behind Peter, Bronny's face reveals the hurt of wishing she was the one making her husband laugh that way. She grabs the door handle and pulls it shut...

...Slam!

Inside, Peter jolts, glances to the door. He immediately employs a business-like tone as he wraps up the conversation.

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- MASTER BEDROOM/EN SUITE -- NIGHT

Bronny storms into the master bedroom, snatches up dirty clothes angrily, shoves them in the hamper. Tears stream down her face.

Bronny then enters the en suite, stowing more dirty clothes and towels into the hamper. She walks back into the master bedroom.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The OBJECTS on the chest of drawers are rocking to and fro -- a few are face down. As if someone's clumsily grabbed at them.

BRONNY
(through tears)
Oh, Mikey...

She rights the objects and turns to the bed. The comforter lies strewn on the floor at it's side. It's raised in the middle, as if there's someone hiding under it.

BRONNY (CONT'D)
(tentative)
Michael?

She walks over to the comforter. Stares down at the humanoid shape, prods it with her foot. It collapses.

No-one there.

Bronny sighs, then leaves the room -- which we stay on, just watching the room...

...in stillness, until...

...the comforter MOVES slightly. Then it twitches again, as if SOMETHING were underneath...

CUT TO BLACK:

JULY 21

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- KITCHEN -- MORNING

Bronny dressed for work, buzzes about the kitchen. Michael raps on his bowl with a spoon and sing-song chatters. ACTION FIGURES are assembled on the table, backpack nearby.

MICHAEL
I want to play with you,
Jenny...no...don't go. Don't.
Jenny!

BRONNY
You're going to break that, hon.

Peter bustles into the kitchen. Late and addled. Trying to find something.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRONNY (CONT'D)

(to Peter)

Now, pick up two packets of that nice chicken stock on the way home, can you? The big boxes not the small ones, I hate those.

Peter throws up his hands.

PETER

I give up, first I can't even find my shoes now I can't even find my goddam wallet.

He exits, shaking his head.

BRONNY

(calling after him)

Don't get that cheap brand you got last time! It's shit!

Steph enters, swinging her schoolbag. She pats her Mom on the way through.

BRONNY (CONT'D)

Got your lunch?

STEPH

Yup.

BRONNY

What's that then?

Her lunch is on the table. Steph ignores it.

STEPH

Cafeteria.

BRONNY

They serve rubbish. Mikey, give your sister her lunch.

Michael grabs a lunch box and whirls about. He looks from his Mom to another corner of the room. Won't even look at Steph.

BRONNY (CONT'D)

Come on, honey. Look at your sister.

Michael's head snaps toward his mother's hand.

BRONNY (CONT'D)

At Stephanie!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Michael's head snaps back in the direction of the corner of the room. At empty space. From outside: Bark, bark, bark. Steph sighs.

STEPH

Once again, this is deeply
fascinating, but I'm late...so...

Steph steps toward Michael. He turns away from her, clutches the lunch box to his chest. Bronny tries to wrestle the lunch box away from her son. He grips it tighter.

MICHAEL

No -- Jenny wants it!

BRONNY

Michael, no games now. Give -
Steph - her - lunch!

Michael yells then hurls the box across the room. Food scatters all over the room. Steph rolls her eyes. Bronny quickly opens her purse and hands Steph a twenty dollar note.

BRONNY (CONT'D)

Just go.

A beat. Then Steph's gone. Michael starts hammering on the table with his hands. Bronny stares at her son. She is, bar Michael, now alone with the empty house. Filthy kitchen, rhythmic banging and incessant barking. She sighs. Sometimes, life just sucks.

BRONNY (CONT'D)

Is Jenny happy now?

Michael ignores her, involved in his own world.

EXT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- MORNING

The front door opens. Peter emerges, dressed for work.

Two cars in the drive; his SUV and Bronny's Volvo. From nearby, he hears a deep, low growling. He looks up.

The next door neighbor's dog. He can only make out small glimpses of the animal behind the fence. A black eye between the slats. A big animal. Suddenly a form makes Peter JUMP...

...Jeff is there. Watching. Peter tries to smile. Fails.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JEFF

Heard you hollerin' at Clyde last night. Dog's been acting crazy last few weeks. You got a new pet over there? Cat, maybe?

PETER

No Jeff, we don't have any new pets. Time to take him to the vet maybe?

JEFF

What for?

The dog starts to go more berserk. Smashing against the fence.

PETER

What for? What do you think? Check him out for insanity, put him down, fuck should I know? Come on, man.

Peter unlocks his car, shakes his head.

PETER (CONT'D)

Try be a good neighbor.

Jeff watches him, clearly these two have hated each other a long time.

EXT. MIRANDA DRIVE -- MORNING

Bronny's stacking the dishwasher. She glances up at Michael, playing with his TOYS. He gets up and walks down the hall, chattering the whole way.

To no-one.

Bronny watches him, curious. He seems to be engaging with this imaginary friend in a way she's never seen before.

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- DAY

LATER. Bronny walks through the house, sorting the mail. There's an envelope for Steph, cell phone bill. She shakes her head.

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- STEPH'S BEDROOM -- DAY

Bronny walks into Steph's room and places the envelope on her pillow. She pauses, sniffs the air. Frowns.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She pulls open the closed window blinds. A dead FLY on the sill. Bronny throws open the window. Noon sunshine and breeze come into the room. She flicks the dead insect into the garden.

Bronny starts to walk out the door. Then pauses. She swipes Steph's perfume off her dresser and sprays the air. A loud THUMP somewhere in the house, Bronny sighs and moves quickly out of Steph's room.

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- VARIOUS/MASTER BEDROOM -- DAY

Bronny searches for the source of the noise. The sound of TINKLING GLASS. She hones in on the sound. She races into the master bedroom...

...to see a collection of OBJECTS are arranged in a semi-circle on the floor. Perfume bottles, a jewelry box, two antique CHINA FIGURES. As if a child has been playing with them.

BRONNY

Michael!

EXT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- HALLWAYS/MICHAEL'S BEDROOM -- DAY

Bronny charges through the house, furious.

BRONNY

Michael!

A smoke alarm suddenly screams to life. Bronny runs into the hallway. Black smoke belches out of Michael's bedroom.

Bronny gasps, runs and rips open Michael's bedroom door...

...a wall of posters are on fire.

Bronny frantically searches for her son. Sees him at the end of the hallway.

BRONNY (CONT'D)

Michael? What have you done?!

He just stands there, face still, emotionless. But there's terror in his eyes; he's seen something. He drops a box of MATCHES. Bronny charges into the burning room, grabs a blanket from the bed, vanishing into the smoke.

HARD CUT TO:

EXT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- BACKYARD -- AFTERNOON

Peter slides his car to a halt in front of the house, panicked. He dives from the vehicle, clutching a bunch of flowers.

Parked outside 6 Miranda Drive are 2 gleaming red fire trucks, crew milling around. It's all over now.

INT. MICHAEL'S BEDROOM -- AFTERNOON

Peter stares into the blackness of a burnt wall. A scorched blanket used to put the fire out lies smouldering on the ground nearby. The wall is so dark it's like staring into the mouth of a tunnel. Or a cave...

...Peter shakes his head, fury building. He leaves and we stay on the room. All is still until the gloom itself starts to move...like a SHADOW within a shadow and we...

HARD CUT TO:

EXT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- BACKYARD -- AFTERNOON

Peter strides out the back door. He unbuckles his belt, starts slipping it from his trousers.

On the other side of the pool he sees Bronny nursing Michael. Soothing him. Michael has his ever-present backpack.

At the sight of Peter, Michael bolts for the tree-house. He nimbly climbs the ladder. Peter fumbles at the pool gate. He rips it open, tosses the flowers onto the lawn, tears his belt completely free.

Michael slips through the trapdoor at the base of the tree house.

PETER

Get down from there! Now!

BRONNY

Peter--

PETER

Don't protect him, Bronny! This has gone far enough and he's got to learn. He could have killed himself or you or Steph.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRONNY

Peter, no-one got hurt.

PETER

This time!

Peter strides toward the tree house. Attempts to seize the little ladder but it's hoisted out of his hand and up into the tree house. The trapdoor is closed firmly.

PETER (CONT'D)

And you'll stay up there you little shit!

BRONNY

You're scaring him.

PETER

He's scaring me! I can handle the counting, the forts in the living-room and the damn toys that I never get sick of standing on but I draw the line at playing with matches. If he does it again...

BRONNY

-- oh what? What do you ever do?

PETER

He's not staying here.

BRONNY

You can try.

PETER

Picking sides already. Funny it's never mine. And you wonder why I gave up.

Peter stalks back to the house, leaving Bronny alone.

A beat.

Then she hears. A quiet voice from inside the tree house.

MICHAEL

1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1...

She picks up the Flowers. Petals fall. Most of the stems have snapped.

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE --HALLWAY/VARIOUS -- NIGHT

Steph is at the computer on FACEBOOK. Headphones in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Peter watches the NEWS on T.V. Feet up.

Bronny piles washing into a basket and moves through 6 Miranda Drive like an apparition. She stops behind Peter on the couch, laughs at something on the news. Peter ignores her. She glances over to Steph -- in her own world also. She goes.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Bronny enters the master bedroom. Into the en suite. Sits on the toilet. The tears slowly come.

The sounds of objects gently TINKLING. The chest of drawers are just out of sight. Bronny sighs, then flies out of the en suite. She freezes as she sees...

...all the objects have been assembled on the floor again, now in a full circle.

BRONNY

Michael, what did I tell you!

Bronny runs from the room.

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- VARIOUS -- CONTINUOUS

Bronny dashes through the house in a fury. She looks into Michael's room. Empty. The styx-black wall mesmerizes her for a second. She tears herself away. Runs on.

EXT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- BACKYARD -- CONTINUOUS

Bronny hurls open the back door. No-one there. She looks up to the tree house. Torchlight within illuminates it softly. The ladder is up. Michael peers out from the window of his tree house. Bronny looks from the tree house window, down the tree, back to the house. Calculating the impossible distance.

BRONNY

Honey? Honey, did you see anyone come out here?

Michael stares at her blankly.

BRONNY (CONT'D)

Mikey, please answer me. I didn't mean to yell at you. Did you see...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Then the tree house window curtain is yanked shut. Bronny just stands there. In the middle of the yard.

Totally baffled.

INT. MICHAEL'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Peter's pulling down the blackened curtain and the melted curtain rod. Stuffing things in the trash. Bronny is standing at the doorway.

PETER

Lucky you got it right when it started. There's not that much damage, look, it's mostly superficial anyway. I can fix it, Bron.

Peter turns to her for the first time. He's trying to make amends.

PETER (CONT'D)

I can just paint over that, I'm very good with my hands.

He pretends to squeeze some boobs. That gets a tiny smile from Bronny. Bronny looks at his hands, black with soot. She continues, exasperated.

BRONNY

I'm being serious, Peter, how do you explain it?

He sighs deeply.

PETER

Every day I go into my office, junk's been moved around. Same thing.

BRONNY

Moved by the cleaners, Peter. Or customers. Or your work friends, I'm all alone here!

PETER

You're not alone. We've got a son who's out of control...

BRONNY

-- you're not listening, Peter. There's something in this house. Something's here besides us.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETER

Here we go folks, someone's crazy mom has filled their head with ten years worth of New Age, Crystal gazing bullshit and this is the fucking result right here...

BRONNY

-- what? Stop being an asshole and listen to me...I'm not saying it's anything other than some kind of... maybe it's karma.

PETER

Karma? For what?

BRONNY

You don't think Steph's condition...

PETER

What condition?

Bronny stops short.

BRONNY

You're not serious? She's lost half her body weight in a month. She's like a rake.

Peter wipes his hands on his jeans. The filth just won't come off.

BRONNY (CONT'D)

What I'm saying is...do you think it has anything to do with us? As parents?

Peter's turn to stop short. Face flushes red with anger.

PETER

Bron, you start heading down the guilt-trip path and you end up blaming...I mean to even suggest that we're responsible --

BRONNY

...it's what Dr. Mitchell said. He says we can never underestimate how much our kids are influenced by the problems and emotions of their parents. The way they are with one another, how they relate, how much affection they...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PETER

-- that smug creep. Doesn't have a job if he doesn't find a problem and he can't treat her if he can't point his finger at a cause. And on it goes. He pays off his holiday house by the lake and we're scraping to pay school fees.

BRONNY

Well, you are the one who insisted on that ridiculous school. There are places that don't cost a million bucks a term, you know.

Peter's about to get really angry when the next-door neighbor's dog starts to growl.

BRONNY (CONT'D)

Steph's home.

PETER

What?

A beat. Bronny gives her husband a flat look.

BRONNY

God, can you try opening your eyes for once, Dickhead.

PETER

Bron? Bronny!?!

The dog erupts into furious barking. Bronny walks away.

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- HALLWAY -- NIGHT

Steph is standing in the hall, facing the wall, schoolbag dumped at her feet. Staring at the photo of her family posing among the Grand Canyon rock formations. Bronny appears.

BRONNY

You should let your room air out anyway. Funky smell in there.

Silence. Bronny studies her daughter.

BRONNY (CONT'D)

Honey, if there's anything you want to--

STEPH

Gotta study.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRONNY

What about dinner?

Steph stops. Back to her Mom.

STEPH

I ate.

BRONNY

What?

STEPH

Burger.

BRONNY

Where?

STEPH

In town. With fries and a Coke.
That alright with you, Control
Freak?

Bronny goes to open her mouth. Before she can speak...

STEPH (CONT'D)

Call Kat and Tasha if you don't
believe me.

Steph walks off without looking back. Bronny stares after her then looks at that photo. The one with her family and the ancient Canyon. A chill passes through her.

PETER

Pictures are getting old.

Peters at the end of the hallway, hands still stained black. He's carrying the trash can of burnt and useless things.

BRONNY

Last vacation.

PETER

Time for some new memories.

Peter says this in a pointed way, which Bronny purposefully ignores. She remains, staring at her own ghost-like reflection in the glass.

CUT TO BLACK:

AUGUST 11

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- MASTER BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Peter and Bronny asleep. Backs to each other. It's silent. Even the next door dog has ceased its barking.

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- LIVING-ROOM -- NIGHT

Michael sleeps in the living-room, surrounded by a fort-like construction of pillows and cushions and blankets draped over furniture. Action Figures are positioned in parade formation around the fort. He moans, dreaming. Kicks in his sleep and several cushions tumble to the floor, wiping out a regiment. A beat.

His eyes snap open.

EXT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- BACKYARD -- NIGHT

POV: a presence moves low and silently across the Taylor's backyard. Rockets over the lawn, toward the closed back-door. Then the presence halts and hovers there. Waiting.

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- STEPH'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Steph lies on her side in the dark. Dribble pools on her pillow.

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- VARIOUS ROOMS/HALLWAYS -- NIGHT

POV: the presence is inside the house. It moves through the dark rooms and hallways. Stealthy and silent but always moving. Searching with purpose.

Hunting. It enters the hallway decked with photographs.

Then charges off at speed. Inhuman speed. It rounds a corner into another hallway. Chews up the distance to a doorway. Steph's doorway.

It jumps toward the solid door.

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- STEPH'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

BAM! Steph, eyes half opened, stirs from slumber. She sits up groggily. Stares at her bedroom door.

BAM! The door quakes. Steph shrieks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BAM! The door is smashed open. Something inhuman charges into her room. Leaps at her. Brute. Beast. Slavering. Fangs. Rhodesian Ridgeback cross. Next door neighbor's dog.

It's got her.

It's jaws snap and champ at her throat. Her hands are up, covering. Teeth sink into her arms. Blood. Screams. Growls. Lights come on. Attack even more shocking in the light. Steph finally manages to kick the animal off.

Michael stands by the light switch, frozen.

STEPH

HELP ME!

But he watches impassively. The dog snarls and leaps back onto Steph. Bites at her flailing arms.

Peter and Bronny charge into the doorway. Bronny screams.

Peter quickly spins to some sporting goods leaning against the corridor outside, grabs a Baseball Bat and SMASHES it over the huge dogs head. The animal has a Skull like concrete but finally it yelps and scampers from the room. Steph is a wreck. In shock.

Peter charges from the room, screams to Bronny.

PETER

Stay with her!

Then he's gone. Bronny, dazed, looks from her bleeding daughter to her staring son. Michael still hasn't blinked.

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- VARIOUS ROOMS -- NIGHT

Peter charges through the house, wielding his makeshift weapon. Runs from room to room, down the stairs, looking for the dog. He spots spatters of blood and sticky, red paw-prints. He follows them, finds the back door wide open.

EXT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- BACKYARD -- NIGHT

Peter rushes after the animal. The dog is limping toward a hole at the bottom of the fence. It's chewed through wooden palings to get through. Peter hefts the bat in the air but the dog dives into the hole. Peter brings down the bat again but it only smacks against the fence. Then the dog resumes its ferocious barking. Angrier than ever.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Next door's lights pop on. A door opens on the other side of the fence.

JEFF (O.S.)
Clyde. Clyde. Cut it out!

Peter reels about. Dog barking. Neighbor yelling. The silhouettes of his wife and kids like ghosts in the light of Steph's window.

JEFF (CONT'D)
What's going on over there?

PETER
Your fucking pet just attacked my daughter!

INT. EMERGENCY WARD -- NIGHT

The Taylor's are in a busy emergency ward. Steph sobs in her mother's lap. She's covered in blood. Ghastly. Bronny strokes her daughter's hair.

Peter is arguing with hard-faced NURSES, wanting Steph seen to immediately. He's not having much luck.

Bronny looks over to the other side of the waiting room. Michael sits far away, backed into a corner of the ward. His backpack leaks Action Figures. Bronny notices that the warriors are lined up outwards. Warding something off.

Peter appears, flustered.

PETER
Unbelievable. They've got to wait for someone to become available before they see her. 10 minutes, they said.

Bronny just stares.

BRONNY
The back door was locked. I locked it.

INT. OFFICE -- DAY

Peter stares blankly at a spreadsheet on his computer. He looks utterly exhausted. His eyes drift to a desk photo of Steph. There are other pics too -- Bronny, Michael. All of them as a family.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A tremor of emotion ripples across Peter's face. He wipes it away with his hands, tries some deep breaths.

His eyes flit back to his computer screen. He glances around the office. People are heads-down at computers or on the phone.

He clicks out of the spreadsheet. Brings up a search engine. He finally types in a single word: KARMA. He moves his mouse onto the SEARCH button. A voice booms...

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

What do you think you're doing?

Peter jumps in his seat, looks up. There's a man in a suit and tie standing at his door. SIMON (late 40s, handsome in a baby-faced kind of way, smug prick written all over him). Peter hurriedly closes the search engine.

PETER

Simon, not much. I mean, work.

Simon glares at him.

SIMON

Net porn, wasn't it?

PETER

Simon...no...

Peter's clearly on the edge. Simon finally catches on.

SIMON

Dude, I'm kidding. What's up?

PETER

Nothing. Like I said.

SIMON

Pete, seriously, if you need to take some more time off take it. You've got enough sick leave owing.

PETER

Let me think about it. I'm fine, though, F.Y.I.

Simon leans on Peter's desk. Scratches his head.

SIMON

Well, to be perfectly honest, your work rate says you're not.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SIMON (CONT'D)

Your whole team's down ten percent
in the last quarter and auditing
says its all starting and stopping
with you.

PETER

Simon, it's alright. It's all
under control.

Simon nods, smiles then claps Peter on the shoulder.

SIMON

That's all I needed to hear, pal.
You've always had stellar
capacity, Pete. Stellar. See you
at dinner, OK?

Peter nods. Simon leaves. Peter stares after him, fake
smile plastered.

PETER

(under breath, re:
Simon)

Go kill yourself, you colossal
dipshit.

Peter turns back to his computer. He stretches out the
stress. Eyes go to the photo frame on his desk, family
snap from their recent holiday. They all look so happy
and wholesome. A very different image to the one his mind
holds now. His head is spinning to make sense of what's
happening in his home. To his family.

INT. WAL MART -- DAY

Long, colorful aisles. Bright fluro lighting. Pop muzak
piped through speakers. Bronny pushes a trolley filled
with a few random items. She's not really present. Just
wandering. Michael strolls along by her side. Pointing
and counting products on the shelves. Bronny halts the
trolley as the liquor aisle.

She glances left and right, before putting 2 bottles of
VODKA into the trolley and freezes as she sees...

...Michael, standing at the head of the aisle, several
packets of ACTION FIGURES in his hands. As many as he can
carry.

CHECK-OUT

The checkout girl scans the Vodka. And packet after
packet of figures.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHECKOUT CHICK
Looks like a bitchin' night.

Bronny pretends she doesn't hear, flicking through "US WEEKLY" magazine.

EXT. MIRANDA DRIVE -- DUSK

Peter jogs along Miranda Drive. He slows when he sees activity outside his neighbor's house.

He watches as an animal controller leads a very docile Clyde into the back of the van. The dog now looks anything but dangerous.

Looking old and heart-sick, Jeff watches from his front gate as the van door closes loudly. He catches Peter's eye as he walks by. Hatred simmering in his look.

PETER
Jeff, look...

Jeff walks away. Peter stares after him, scratches his head.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Bronny sits in front of a bureau. Hands come into frame, arms prickled with fresh stitches. Steph. She begins to brush her mother's hair. Bronny is dressed for a night out.

BRONNY
Tonight, if there's any problems with Michael you know to --

STEPH
...I know.

BRONNY
Just call me if --

STEPH
... I know. Stop worrying, mom.

Steph reaches out and strokes her mother's hair. A beat.

STEPH (CONT'D)
Everything's going to be fine. You look pretty.

BRONNY
So do you, honey.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Peter enters, dressed for dinner. He takes in his wife and daughter a moment; real concern flooding his face. But business is business, he puts his chin up and chest out, he's ready to keep up appearances.

Bronny manages a tense smile. She stops close to Peter, whispers.

BRONNY (CONT'D)

I really don't think we should
leave them tonight...

PETER

-- I don't want to leave them
either but let's just get this
over with and we'll be back in an
hour and a half OK? Don't make it
worse than it already is, babe

EXT. FRONT DOOR -- NIGHT

Front door swings open. Bronny and Steph emerge. Michael holds his mother's hand. Peter bustles out. Fishes for his car keys, remotely unlocks the SUV. Bronny kisses Michael.

PETER

Bron, come on.

She kisses Steph.

BRONNY

Remember to call if there's any
trouble. I'll have the cell on.

PETER

Honey, the sooner we get there the
sooner we'll get back, you do
understand that concept?

Peter gets in the SUV. From inside the car Bronny gives one final look back to her children and the car pulls away. Soon red tail lights vanish into the darkness.

INT. RESTAURANT -- NIGHT

Table for four at an upmarket place in Sante Fe. Bronny and Peter sit opposite Simon and Wendy. Wendy (40s) is in good shape, impeccably dressed and made up but her husband doesn't notice. Everyone's drinking except Bronny. She occasionally sips a diet coke. A pretty WAITRESS is flitting around them. Simon isn't subtle about his interest.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SIMON

Another Scotch, sweetheart. This
one evaporated. On the rocks.

He winks, watching her wiggle away to fetch it. He shoots
a sleazy glance to Peter, who rustles up a limp smile.

BRONNY

(to Wendy)
How's the astrology going?

Simon snorts.

SIMON

Like the crystal healing classes
and Rieki massage course, put on
hold. Doesn't matter though, she's
already working full time signing
credit card receipts.

He laughs it up.

WENDY

Don't mind Simon, he's a
Neanderthal in a suit...

SIMON

-- a Neanderthal in a Brooks
Brothers suit, thank you...

The waitress reappears. She pours another round and goes.

WENDY

It's going well, thanks for
asking, Bron. As fascinating as
ever and I complete five years of
study next month.

She raises her glass and she and Bronny toast. Simon
pulls out his IPHONE, cuts her off mid sentence.

SIMON

-- you guys gotta see this insane
pleasure boat. We're cruising
around Catalina Island in a
friends sixty five footer this
weekend, then from there we're
headed to...

Bronny turns to Simon.

BRONNY

-- do you mind?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Simon looks like he's been slapped. He glances at Peter. Peter inspects a morsel of food.

SIMON

You got the floor, darlin'.

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE - NIGHT

Steph blankly watches TV. Michael stands staring down a long corridor. It's dark at the far end. He appears to be talking quietly to someone his own size.

MICHAEL

That wasn't funny Jenny. That was naughty. Naughty! No. No!

(He laughs)

That's a rude word! You shouldn't say that about her. You'll get in trouble if you say that. OK.

He wanders further down the corridor, accompanying his unseen friend. Steph doesn't notice -- she's engrossed in the T.V.

INT. MICHAEL'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Michael opens the door, the room is still a mess. Drop sheets and clothes litter the floor. The ominous scorched wall seems to beckon.

He dutifully moves to the bed, pulls out his backpack and sits before the scorch. Then he assembles the 5 stones in a half circle, staring back up as if expecting something...

MICHAEL

Jenny that's all of them, 2, 2, 2,
2, 2, 2....

...there's some movement in the darkness but then...

...behind Michael, the drop sheet MOVES, again as if something is attempting to stand beneath it as...

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

...Jenny? Jenny...

...the boy hears the movement, turns, regards the strange phenomenon blankly, curiosity registering in his face as...

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

-- 3, 3, 3, 3, 3....

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

...whatever is under there keeps growing...until the one next it MOVES also, their shadow falls across the boys face...

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Jenny?

HARD CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Wendy rummages in her bag. Brings out a pen and starts to draw on a napkin.

WENDY

It's an ancient symbol of good fortune from Indian mythology. Very auspicious.

She finishes drawing and happily holds the napkin up. They stare at what's there.

SIMON

Wendy that's a swastika.

WENDY

No, Simon, it's called a sun wheel.

SIMON

Darling-Heart, it's a swastika with the arms on backwards. I watch the history channel. I know stuff.

Wendy continues to show the others the drawing. Simon takes a long slug. Wendy folds the napkin and puts it back into her bag. Bronny glares at Simon, who's ogling the waitress, openly now. Suddenly Bronny brightly changes the subject.

BRONNY

Well. Our daughter Stephanie has been sick. We're not sure what it is but...I think there's something in our house...

Peter quickly attempts to get the conversation back on track.

PETER

-- that sixty footer, is that Dave Olsen's new boat?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SIMON

-- five. Sixty five footer.

Simon's already checking his phone messages. Bored.

BRONNY

Michael's been acting strange lately, even for Michael. And the neighbors' dog broke into the house the other night and...

Peter shoots his hand up.

PETER

Check!

EXT/INT. SUV -- NIGHT

Driving home. Peter fixedly gazing ahead. Bronny staring out the window.

BRONNY

What the hell are you so angry about?

Silence from Peter. Then...

PETER

What do you think?

BRONNY

Because I embarrassed you in front of that piece of shit boss of yours? Peter he's a total scum bag. Did you see the way he spoke to his wife? His tongue was practically on the ground staring at that waitress' tits. He's disgusting.

PETER

A scum bag who'll now tell the entire office my wife can't get through dinner without bringing up our family problems and ruining the whole fucking night.

Bronnys about to speak but is too angry to form words. They drive on. Silence as heavy as the blackness pressing in from all sides.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- NIGHT

Steph barely looks up as Peter and Bronny enter. Peter immediately walks to the bedroom, still royally pissed. Bronny walks over to Steph's side, pulls out her IPOD earbuds.

BRONNY

Hey Steph. Where's Mikey?

Steph look around, realizes she hasn't seen him for a long time. Bronny reads this in her face and spins toward his room.

BRONNY (CONT'D)

Michael? Where are you?

INT. MICHAEL'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Bronny pushes open the door slowly.

BRONNY

Mikey?

He's nowhere to be seen, until she hears a whimper in the gloomy corner of the room. Mikey is there, almost hidden behind a pile of drop sheets. He seems dazed, hair mussed, with black hand prints on his face. Other than that he seems perfectly normal. Bronny sinks down to him.

BRONNY (CONT'D)

Mikey I told you not to play in here until we clean it up. And why'd you have to go and put your hands in it..?

She wipes the black stains from his face, the boy opens his mouth to speak and BLOOD streams out...

...Bronny screams.

INT. KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Michael is propped up on the bench, mouth open, Peter has some cotton wool he's setting on the insides of the boys mouth. His little singlet is streaked with blood. Bronny and Steph hover, concern etched on both faces. Peter steps back, wipes his hands.

PETER

I think that's OK for tonight. I can take him into Dr. Herbert first thing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRONNY
That better, Big Mike?

The boy is expressionless.

PETER
Need to change his shirt.

Stephanie, knowing she's screwed up again by not watching her little brother, lifts him off the bench.

STEPHANIE
Come on, let's get changed then go to bed, OK?

Leaving Bronny and Peter staring at each other.

BRONNY
I told you we shouldn't have left them.

PETER
He's alright, Bron. He's done that before, several times.

BRONNY
Drawing a bit of blood biting your lip is one thing, but he's made cuts inside his mouth, Peter.

PETER
Maybe he had another seizure, that'd make sense? He must have.

BRONNY
But he hasn't had one for years.

PETER
Like I said, Dr. Herbert will be able to tell us what's what before we start jumping to any conclusions. OK?

Peter's being extra calm and logical, which just makes Bronny angrier, she leaves. We stay with Peter, mystified.

SEPTEMBER 15

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- KITCHEN -- DUSK

Michael plays VIDEO-GAMES on TV. Standing up, totally engrossed but emotionless as game-play rolls on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Steph surfs FACEBOOK on a computer in the corner, munching on a chocolate bar.

Bronny is looking at her LAPTOP, on the phone to a client, while serving dinner onto four plates.

BRONNY

I know Martin. I know. Don't worry about that. Should be totally fine. One hundred and ten percent fine.

(covers phone)

Steph?

(back to phone)

Yeah, OK, nope. Not a problem at all.

Steph nods without looking over. Bronny continues talking business. Juggling everything almost effortlessly.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD -- NIGHT

Peter, jogging, slows then comes to a standstill. Sweat drenched, he slowly walks the remaining distance to his car, parked beneath an overhead street light. Bugs buzz about, he swats one before electronically opening the car with a loud 'bleep'.

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- STEPH'S ROOM -- NIGHT

The door opens and Steph enters. She closes the door, carefully locks it. She sniffs and then sprays deodorant.

Then Steph removes something from her school bag, sits on the bed. She unwraps a plastic shopping bag.

We move closer toward the closet. The door is ajar, darkness inside. Something alive in it.

Steph checks the shopping bag for holes and then throws up in it. Finished, she ties the bag off, then stoops under her bed.

The closet door creaks open a little. Steph stops. She stares into the darkness of the closet. A long breathless beat. A FORM flies out of the darkness, Steph screams.

INT. SUV/6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- NIGHT

Peter sits in the parked SUV. He has the lights off, windows up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He stares at his house like it's a stranger's home. Suddenly SCREAMS from the house make him jump, he scrambles out of the vehicle.

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- VARIOUS -- NIGHT

Peter barrels around a corner. Bronny is inside Steph's room, trying to close the bedroom door on her. Steph is crazed, flailing at her mother. Raking her with nails.

STEPH (O.S.)
Get out! Get out! Get out!

BRONNY (O.S.)
Peter!

PETER
What the hell?!

BRONNY
She lied, Peter!

STEPH
Fuck you, Bronny! Get out of my room!

BRONNY
I know how sick you are!
(to Peter)
She's sick. She's so sick.

PETER
What's going on, Steph? Steph!

Bronny shoves Steph back. Grabs Peter's arm, hauls him into Steph's bedroom. She slams the door on Steph. Bronny throws her shoulder against the door, locking it. Steph goes nuts on the other side. Hurling herself at the door, ripping at the handle.

STEPH
You cunt! You evil fucking cunt!
You're always spying on me! Fuck you!

BRONNY
(to Peter)
See!

Peter looks around. Confused.

BRONNY (CONT'D)
Look at it!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETER

What?!

Peter moves closer to the bed. He's seen something under the peeled back mattress.

He peers through the exposed springs. Then he muscles the entire heavy mattress off the bed.

The entire sheltering span of the bed has been stacked with containers. Every kind imaginable. Buckets, lunch boxes, pots and pans. Peter picks up a Chinese takeaway container. Green/black liquid sloshes inside. And now he can hear an insect humming. The containers are alive with tiny black dabs. Flies.

PETER (CONT'D)

Oh, Jesus. Don't tell me...

BRONNY

She's eating, then she comes in here, locks the door and throws it all up. She's sick, Peter.

The hammering on the door ceases. Then a sad, weary little voice.

STEPH (O.S.)

Don't tell anyone. Please?

Peter stands, moves over and opens the door. He embraces a shivering Steph. He then plonks her down on the remnants of the bed next to Bronny. They both put arms around her. Peter and Bronny hold a glance -- "how the hell did we end up here?"

CUT TO BLACK:

INT. BAR -- DAY

Boozy lunch. Suits from Peter's office drink and laugh too loudly at each other's jokes and toss handfuls of peanuts down their throats.

Peter stands at the bar alone, sipping a beer. He hears a girl's shriek behind him.

He turns and sees a CUTE GIRL (early 20s) in business wear. She's surrounded by a throng of suited guys, encouraging her to drink a shot. Simon slips up beside him, in sleazy jerk mode.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SIMON

New assistant in financial. Ass
like a ripe mango. I'd like to
wear her like a feedbag, so help
me lord...

Peter turns to Simon.

PETER

-- remember we talked about taking
some time off?

SIMON

Sure.

He doesn't.

PETER

Mind if I take you up on it?

SIMON

Dude, no problem. I'll have Liz in
accounts step over for a while.
Everything alright at home? Wife's
not busting your nuts too
frequently, I hope.

Peter shakes his head.

PETER

Just want to finish some
Renovations out the back.

SIMON

Really? What kind of work are you
doing?

PETER

Just some stuff I've been meaning
to finish off for ages. You know.

Simon nods, but it's obvious Peter's lying.

PETER (CONT'D)

Everything's great at home. Bron's
great. Kids're great.

SIMON

That's great.

We're unsure whether he's responding to Peter, but
Simon's attention is already back to the girl with the
short skirt. Peter drains his beer and makes a quick
exit.

EXT. GRANDMA'S HOUSE -- DAY

A door opens on Peter and Bronny with Michael in between. All smiles. TRISH (70s), Peter's mother, stands with arms outstretched to the boy.

TRISH

My look how you've grown! Come here, Mikey!

He ignores her and barrels past, dragging his backpack.

MICHAEL

TV TV TV TV TV TV.

The adults linger a little, obviously some tension here.

PETER

Listen thanks for taking him today on short notice, Mom. Steph's not feeling so hot and we just need some time to spend with her alone, you know? Nothing serious.

TRISH

Darling anytime is fine, you know that. Just wish you'd bought him over more when your father was alive.

A very awkward beat. Peter's totally speechless. Bronny breaks it up.

BRONNY

Thanks Trish. If there's any problems call us. We'll pick him up at six, OK?

Bronny gives her a forced kiss on the cheek. Peter's already halfway down the path, obviously they're running late.

INT. SUV -- DAY

Peter driving. Steph in the passenger seat in her school uniform. Silence.

STEPH

Can I go for my driving exam soon?

PETER

A promise is a promise in this family, right?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Steph only turns and looks out the window. Peter turns the SUV into a suburban plaza. He brakes outside a shop front with a dark front window. A new AUDI is parked outside in a reserved park. Steph gets out.

PETER (CONT'D)

Your Mom and me, we're not the enemy, Steph. We just want you to be happy and healthy and strong. Get through this crap, put it all behind you.

Steph tries to suppress an embarrassed grin.

STEPH

Dad...

PETER

You know we only want you better, sweetheart.

Finally, a small, frail smile from Steph.

STEPH

I know. But do I really have to go back through this? There's nothing even wrong with me...

PETER

-- I believe you honey, but just a few more sessions and we'll see how you're feeling after that, OK? Do it for Mom. It'll make her feel better.

Steph thinks, resigns herself. Then she nods, walks toward the shop front. A discreet sign above the door - Dr. Cameron Mitchell. Psych. PhD. Peter watches Steph until she's gone, then makes a call from his cell.

PETER (CONT'D)

Hi... Yeah, she's there... Yeah, maybe Doc Mitchell will shave a little off his fee this time around. You know, for faulty workmanship.

INT. EMPTY HOUSE -- DAY

Bronny is at work on a real estate photo shoot, cell pressed against her ear. She starts dragging a heavy couch around the room. A YOUNG REAL ESTATE AGENT lingers uselessly by, fingers a blur on a Blackberry.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

INTERCUT: Bronny and Peter.

BRONNY

Don't talk like that. We need to stay positive. At least we're trying to do something for her. Look, I gotta go...

(Quietly)

-- got a 10 year old agent who's terrified work will ruin his 500 dollar suit.

PETER

Big day?

BRONNY

Gotta shoot 3 properties back to back. Why? You want to drop by and fool around on someone else's bed?

Peter laughs.

PETER

Thought you might be up for lunch while I kill time but sounds like you're busy.

BRONNY

Not that busy. Give me twenty minutes and I can be out --

PETER

...by the time we get together I'll have to turn around and pick up Steph. Another time, Bron.

Silence from Bronny.

PETER (CONT'D)

Right?

BRONNY

Right. Peter...?

PETER

I'll get a quick bite then see you at home.

BRONNY

Why do you think she didn't just use the toilet? If she was trying to keep it a secret?

Long silence.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PETER

Hon I gotta go. We'll talk about
it later, OK?

Peter hangs up. Denial one way to deal with things.

INT. TRISH'S HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

Michael sits at the bench, staring. Trish stands
opposite, preparing food.

TRISH

Now, Mister, do you want Peanut
Butter and Jelly or I've got some
nice fresh ham here? You'd like
some of that, wouldn't you? Big
boy like you?

MICHAEL

You're going to die soon.

Trish pauses, not sure she heard right.

TRISH

What? You shouldn't say things
like that, Michael. It's silly.
Who told you that? Steph, wasn't
it?

Michael stares.

MICHAEL

Jenny. She said there's nothing we
can do about it. She said we're
all going to die.

Trish, confused, but chilled nonetheless.

TRISH

That's not true, Sweetheart. You
shouldn't listen to other children
when they say bad things like
that, alright? Now I don't know
who this Jenny girl is, but I
think it's time you went and
watched your favorite TV show
while I finish up in here? How's
that sound?

She glances down to large CAT, anxiously brushing her
legs, meowing.

TRISH (CONT'D)

Kingsy can keep you company, OK?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Michael doesn't respond, just grabs his backpack, then walks around and picks up the Cat -- who snarls as Michael nears.

TRISH (CONT'D)

Kingsy? What's gotten into you today? Stop that nonsense...

The cat, panicked, darts out of the kitchen and vanishes up the hall, slipping into the TV room.

Trish, curious, watches as Michael follows the path of the animal slowly up the hall, seemingly whispering to himself as he ambles along, pauses, then enters the TV room. Closing the door. Trish calls after.

TRISH (CONT'D)

Michael? Best leave him alone today, OK Sweetie?

Trish shakes her head, goes back to finishing his sandwich. She pours a glass of milk, collects both and walks up the hallway. She slows as she hears deep voices emanating from the TV room. Something about them is oddly chilling. She pushes the door open with her foot and freezes, dropping the milk and plate which SMASH to the floor.

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- FRONT DOOR -- LATE AFTERNOON

Peter opens the front door to two UNIFORMED POLICE OFFICERS. Eyes invisible behind dark sunglasses. A police CRUISER parked further up the street.

POLICE OFFICER 1#

Mr Taylor?

A beat.

PETER

Yeah. What's going on? Has there been--

(alarmed)
What happened?

POLICE OFFICER 1#

Just relax, Sir.

The second cop moves closer to the yard, peers over the fence.

PETER

What's this about?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The nosy cop moves closer to the house -- peers in windows. Peter catches a glimpse of Jeff -- his old neighbor -- watching him from his front yard.

PETER (CONT'D)

Can I help you with something?

POLICE OFFICER 1#

Mr. Taylor we heard there's some noise problems coming from your property. Disturbances all hours of the night. Maybe some fights going on? You've got two kids living at this address, Stephanie...16 and Michael, 10, right?

(beat)

Look, we've had a few calls from concerned neighbors. We're just here to give you a warning, but if we do get any more, then we'll have to take more formal action, understood?

Peter nods, slowly.

PETER

Sure. No problems at all, Officer.

The Cops leave, speaking quietly between themselves as they get in their car. They eyeball Peter as they cruise past. Peter waves, then shakes his head. He turns, sees Jeff.

PETER (CONT'D)

Hey, Jeff. Do me a favor?

Jeff tries to slink away, as if he wasn't eavesdropping the whole time.

PETER (CONT'D)

GO AND FUCK YOURSELF!

He's about to go back inside, he freezes, looks at his watch.

PETER (CONT'D)

Oh shit!

INT. SUV SANTE FE STREETS/ DUSK

Peter drives like a maniac, phone jammed to his ear. Cussing slower motorists as he races to pick up Michael.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETER

Come on, Mom, pick up the damn phone!

He hammers the horn, hangs up and speed dials another number.

PETER (CONT'D)

Bron, I'm going to pick up Mikey but I can't get through to Mom -- what? You've already got him, why? What? Oh no. No, hang on. Be there in ten. Jesus. Just hang on.

INT. HOSPITAL / EMERGENCY WARD -- DUSK

Bronny sits in a plastic seat, Michael huddled by her side. We see Peter down the hall, charge up to the front desk. The NURSE points them toward Bronny and he races up.

PETER

How's Mom? Is she alright?

BRONNY

She's fine, she's fine. They've got her upstairs on oxygen. Should be OK to go home in a few hours or so...

Her eyes go to Michael, obviously she wants to talk to Peter without him hearing. Peter drops down.

PETER

And how's big Mikey going? You OK, big guy?

Michael ignores him. Stares. Peter stands and he and Bronny move a few feet away, close enough to keep an eye on him but far enough to be out of earshot. She takes a breath.

BRONNY

Michael was playing in the living room. Your mother was making sandwiches in the kitchen. She got a fright because...she heard Michael talking to someone.

PETER

What...like on TV?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRONNY

No. In the room. She was confused and then when she went in there, there was only Michael. Alone. She asked him where the voices were coming from but he wouldn't say anything. Because Jenny didn't want him to...

PETER

Jenny?

BRONNY

He's talked about this imaginary friend before, calls her "Jenny". Anyway, then she noticed he was being very still. Then she heard it. The cat was trapped under the cushions. He was suffocating it. Peter, Michael was trying to kill her cat.

Peter shakes his head.

PETER

No, no, no, he loves animals? That can't be right? He'd never...

Bronny just stares at him. They both look over to Michael, minds spinning. Horrified. Peter rubs his eyes.

PETER (CONT'D)

I don't understand this. I don't.

Bronny's just as drained. She walks back to Michael, who seems utterly oblivious. She sits him on her knee while they wait.

Peter just stares, grappling with the reality that some unseen power seems intent on ripping them apart from within. But how much of it is just their own darkness and how much is the 'other'?

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- LIVING-ROOM -- NIGHT

Bronny's in the living-room, perched on the edge of the couch. Remote in her hand. The room is dark but the TV glow washes and flickers over her skin. Her face is blank. Behind her, Peter appears in the hallway.

PETER

Want to talk?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRONNY

What's to talk about?

Bronny exits the living-room. Peter follows her into the Kitchen. It's tense.

PETER

Look, I know it's been rough
between us, but we need to talk.

Bronny, vying for 'silent treatment' champion 2011.

PETER (CONT'D)

Things are getting a little
screwed up around here. For all of
us...

She cracks.

BRONNY

-- "A little screwed up?" You
didn't even notice when our
daughter was walking round the
place looking like a skeleton for
a month and now you want to talk?

She goes to leave.

PETER

I did notice.

She stops.

PETER (CONT'D)

A part of me just decided to think
it was all OK. That I wasn't
seeing what was right in front of
me because if I did, then I'd have
to work out how to deal with it.
And...I didn't know how to help. I
don't know how to help her, Bron.

Bronny looks away. Sits.

PETER (CONT'D)

But I do know why she didn't use
the bathroom...

She voices what they both already know.

BRONNY

-- she wanted us to find it.

Peter sits by her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PETER

If we're going to help Steph and Michael we have to move on from our problems. Our past. Please. I'm asking you now...what do you honestly think is happening around here?

A beat.

BRONNY

The air in here is...rotten. Like it's wearing us down...

PETER

-- don't say that, Bron. But we gotta work it out together...

She screams in his face -- exploding.

BRONNY

-- this isn't a tax problem, Peter, we can't solve it. We don't even know what it is!

Peter's opened up and he's shocked she's attacking him. He's about to shout back, fists clench, when...

MICHAEL (O.S.)

Mom?

They both freeze. They look at Michael.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

M'hungry.

Peter and Bronny glance to each other, ashamed. Peter quickly moves over to comfort the boy.

PETER

Come on, buddy. Let's sort you out, huh?

Peter grabs his hand which the boy quickly pulls away, Peter notes this and inspects his forearms. He gasps as he sees deep bruises running all the way up both little arms. As if powerful hands have grasped him violently.

PETER (CONT'D)

What the...what's happened?

Bronny races over, stares at her child's bruised arms.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MICHAEL

I don't want to play with Jenny anymore.

BRONNY

How did you do that, honey?

MICHAEL

Didn't. Jenny did.

The two parents eyes meet in horror.

PETER

Come on, Mikey. Come with me.

They disappear out of the room. Bronny slumps back down on the couch and sits there. Eyes brimming with tears. The pressure almost unbearable.

CUT TO BLACK:

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Bronny stands at the kitchen bench. Works the mouse on her notebook until the screen comes on. Michael sits at his little table, food untouched in front of him. Bronny plugs in her camera, downloads images onto her notebook. Peter appears, stands in the doorway. Looks at Michael.

PETER

He OK?

Bronny doesn't look up from the computer. Nods.

PETER (CONT'D)

What are you looking for?

Bronny just shakes her head, a brush off.

PETER (CONT'D)

Cleaned the floor in there.

BRONNY

Why?

PETER

The broken frame in the hallway?
The glass. You didn't see it?

BRONNY

Don't notice anymore. Just get's messy again anyway.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETER

Well, I painted over the wall in Mickey's room yesterday. Damn burn mark keeps seeping through the paint, so yeah...

Then Peter casually produces a half empty bottle of VODKA, obviously found stashed during his clean-up. He sets it on the table next to her.

PETER (CONT'D)

-- I liked it when we kept things a little cleaner 'round here too.

Long silence. Deep shame wells up in Bronny.

BRONNY

It's...it's not what you think...

Suddenly the front door is heard opening. The effect is instant and obvious. Michael looks up, no longer fixated on his pain and injury.

Bronny and Michael listen as Steph moves through the house. Coming closer. Michael gets up, retreats away. Peter conceals the bottle under his jacket.

PETER

Just going to get rid of some trash.

Bronny looks at him. Wet eyes. Under so much pressure.

BRONNY

Okay.

Peter walks away. Bronny turns to Steph. Bright smile, trying to keep up the strong facade.

BRONNY (CONT'D)

Hey honey. There's something in the oven if you'd like...

Steph stumbles through like a zombie. Heads for her room. Bronny watches her vanish, then she turns back to the computer, stares at the blank screen.

BRONNY (CONT'D)

-- I made it special for you.

EXT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- BACKYARD/POOL -- NIGHT

Peter walks toward the trash cans, vodka bottle in hand. He lifts the lid, hears a clattering noise in the yard behind him, freezes. Like footsteps on timber.

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Bronny is scanning the thumbnails of the real estate photographs she took in the afternoon.

She notices a folder labelled FAMILY VACATION. She thinks a moment, then absently clicks on it.

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- MICHAEL'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Michael sits against the black scorch mark in his bedroom. He grimaces. Shakes his head. Rocks back and forth furiously.

A SHADOW elongates from within the blackness behind him and moves across the ceiling above.

MICHAEL

Jenny? No. No, I don't want to
play anymore. No, Jenny...

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- STEPH'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Steph lies on her bed, dozing. Earphones on, trailing from her IPOD. The song finishes.

Silence. Stillness. We can hear the soft rasp of Steph's breathing.

Suddenly a breeze from nowhere MOVES the curtains. Then slight DEPRESSIONS can be seen appearing on the bed, as if an invisible weight was being lowered around Steph.

Then charcoal-like smears appear around her wrists and feet, holding her in place. Her eyes snaps open, filled with terror as she realizes she can't move.

She screams, but somehow no sound escapes.

EXT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- BACKYARD/POOL -- NIGHT

Peter looks up at the tree house. At the dark timbers and black window high above him. A ragged curtain moves in the tree house window. He strains to penetrate the darkness.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETER

Who's there?

No answer.

A scratching sound up in the tree house. Peter looks up again. The curtain waves in the wind.

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- STEPH'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Steph's eyes rolls back and she trembles violently all over, sweat suddenly pouring from her forehead.

More dark smears appear around her thighs, legs, breasts.

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- MICHAEL'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Michael stares at the wall, his face blank. More SHADOWS within the blackness of the burnt area swirl and move...

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Bronny scans photographs from Grand Canyon trip. Shots snapped of Steph walking away from the photographer. Various shots of adults lounging, posing on boulders. Bronny clicks back through the thumbnails looking for one shot in particular.

EXT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- BACKYARD/POOL -- NIGHT

Another creak of timber floorboards inside the tree house. Peter wields the vodka bottle -- an improvised weapon.

He starts to climb. Rung by rung. Creeps closer to the closed trapdoor in the floor. Then suddenly the trapdoor COLLAPSES downwards, swinging an inch from his head. He peers up into the black mouth of the open trapdoor. Listens. Nothing. Then a skittering from somewhere inside.

PETER

I've a got a...knife.

A beat. A horrific hiss and screech as a...

...large RACCOON rockets out of the tree house door and out along a tree branch.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Peter recoils and drops the vodka bottle to the lawn below. He chuckles at how wound up he's become. Jumping at every shadow.

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Bronny leans closer. CLOSE ON: a shot of the Taylor family at the Grand Canyon with black, blurry figures perched high on the rocks behind them.

Bronny ZOOMS in and scans the photograph, face hard with concentration. Now she can see other SHADOW figures on and around the rocks, at first glance they blend right into existing shadows...

...but these are darker, menacing, huge forms. Utterly chilling.

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- TREE HOUSE -- NIGHT

Peter takes in his home. Warm lights in the windows, looks so damn 'normal' from here.

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Bronny stares at the 5 SHADOW FIGURES. She raises a shaking hand to her mouth.

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- TREE HOUSE -- NIGHT

Peter stands by the pool, stretching out the tension. He moves off. Glancing at Steph's window, he sees a strange, distorted SHADOW appear, then another, and another, as if they're falling out of the ceiling. Peter's confused, his walk quickly becomes a run.

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- MICHAEL'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Expressionless, Michael rocks violently against the wall. A smear of blood appears on the blackened wall where his head strikes. He rockets himself backward again. Harder.

MICHAEL

GO AWAY!

INT/EXT 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- VARIOUS -- NIGHT

Peter races through hallways, slowing as he hears odd noises from Steph's room. He moves toward her door, hand reaching for the knob.

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- MICHAEL'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

The wall behind Michael is now slick with blood. His eyes roll back. A foamy drool starts to spill from his mouth.

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- STEPH'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Peter's legs almost give out, he grasps the door frame to keep standing as he sees Steph...

...she's covered in black marks, most of them ashen handprints and bruises all over her skin. Black handprints are scattered across the walls...

...he rushes to her side. She's lifeless, eyes are open but she's in a trance-like state.

PETER

I've got you. I've got--

Suddenly she SCREAMS, the sound pouring from her is primal, terrified, horrific. Peter quickly picks Steph up under the armpits and drags her out of the room.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Peter hears SHATTERING GLASS and turns toward the open doorway of the master bedroom. He gently sits Steph down on a chair -- she's groggy but stays upright. He then moves toward the door, slowly, freezing as he sees...

...all the OBJECTS on the chest of drawers, SMASHED and SCATTERED all over the room. Pieces of glass and china litter the floor.

His eyes fall on the light coming under the bathroom door. He edges toward it, but his foot comes down on a SHARP SHARD of glass and spears through his shoe into his foot. He SCREAMS and buckles, hand slamming down on a piece of CHINA which cuts a deep gash in his hand. He winces and brings his bloody hand to his chest. Blood flows fast. He stands, hobbled, then faces the bathroom and braces himself, expecting the worst...

...Bronny. Splayed against the wall, shot glass hanging limply in her hand, beyond wasted.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Peter glances to the empty bottle, tears welling as he steps closer. She must have pounded a dozen straight shots. Her head lolls up to look at him.

BRONNY

I can't...I can't take this...
anymore....

Peter rushes to Bronny. Hauls her to her feet.

PETER

Get to your feet, Bron. Now.
We're getting out of here. We've
got to get the kids out--

Then ice shoots through his veins.

PETER (CONT'D)

Michael...

Peter turns quickly, hears a noise, sees another open bedroom door. Moves forward -- another nightmare inside....

...Michael is barely conscious as he rocks himself into the blood and hair pasted blackened wall behind him. More of the black handprints stretch out from the scorched area...

...THAP... THAP... THAP... THAP...

PETE

(screams)
Michael!

INT. SUV/6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- CONTINUOUS

In the backseat of the SUV, Steph is passed out. Wrapped in a beach blanket patched with blood. Beside his sister, Michael's pale little face is hooded by a towel. He's clutching his BACKPACK tightly to his chest. The boy stares over at Peter carrying Bronny in his arms. Like a bride over a threshold. Peter, limping badly, gently feeds her into the open passenger door.

He has to help her buckle up, she's as infantile as her kids at this point. Peter takes in his battered family. Terrified, his hand goes to his mouth to stifle some terrible noise of guilt/remorse.

Then he composes himself. Sucks in breaths. Charges around to the driver's side and buckles himself in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He reverses out, red stained hands rigid on the steering wheel. Then he guns it down the quiet, leafy street.

HARD CUT TO:

INT. SUV/PARKING LOT -- NIGHT

Bronny snaps awake. They've parked in a dark allotment. Peter is gone. Bronny turns in her seat.

The kids are deathly silent in the back. The driver's door is suddenly yanked open. Peter's carrying bulging shopping bags with a DRUG STORE logo on the side. He sees she's awake, hands her a bag.

PETER

Sort through that, I got everything we'll need.

He guns the engine, drives away. Bronny peers into the bag; band-aids, antiseptic. Bronny looks at her husband, she doesn't register what any of this means.

BRONNY

Hospital..?

PETER

No.

BRONNY

Hospital! Peter...

PETER

-- we had the police around this afternoon, Bron. They questioned me in front of the whole street. Made me feel like worthless scum. Someone's reported me for domestic violence and God knows what else!

BRONNY

Peter...we have to take them to a hospital.

PETER

Remember the seizures he used to have? You've done all the medical training we could ever want, look, I've got pain-killers, antiseptic, bandages here...

BRONNY

-- Peter!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETER

-- look at them. Look!

Bronny looks back at her children. Both asleep, completely exhausted.

BRONNY

You didn't do this, Peter.

PETER

Then who did? What do we say happened?

Bronny can't answer.

PETER (CONT'D)

They'll report this. They have to. We'll have to lie about it and it'll look like we're lying and next thing you know 60-fucking-Minutes'll be camped out on the front lawn with ten cameras in our faces. Do you want to put them through that too, do you? Imagine school? Work? What they'd do to you at your work? At mine? I mean what would we say to people?

Peter holds on to the wheel for dear life. The only way he's keeping his grip.

PETER (CONT'D)

This is private business. Family business. We'll deal with it ourselves.

A long beat. Bronny eyes him. She knows they can't handle whatever is tormenting them.

BRONNY

Something's in our house and I'm not taking our kids back there.

PETER

We're out of there now. We're alright.

Bronny looks over to her children; her heart breaking as she takes in their battered, sleeping forms.

PETER (CONT'D)

We'll be alright.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY -- NIGHT

The bright lights, cool marble of a hotel lobby. Nice. Four-stars at least. Calm muzak fills the air. The reception CLERK is reading something on a computer.

RECEPTION CLERK

Well, it's a week night so you're in luck as there is a room available, but it's a sub-penthouse. Weekends are a total nightmare at the moment. It's six hundred and --

PETER

Just cut the shit and gimme the...

The Clerk stares, shocked. Peter whispers, edgy.

PETER (CONT'D)

-- just give me the key.

Peter slides over a credit card. The Clerk glances at the bloodstained, disheveled man before him. He's still dressed for a jog and carrying a plastic shopping bag. Then he looks over at the tired-looking drunk woman standing far back in the lobby. The one with the barefooted girl swaddled in a beach blanket and the small boy rocking from foot to foot, humming audibly even above the lobby muzak.

RECEPTION CLERK

Any bags, Sir?

Peter glares at him, if looks could kill...

INT. HOTEL ELEVATOR -- NIGHT

Exhausted, the Taylor family ride an elevator. Muzak continues. Peter and Bronny stand on different sides. Michael stands as far away from Steph as he can, facing into a corner.

The lights in the elevator suddenly stutter and the machine makes a disturbing clanking noise then stops. The digital readout flickers. Bronny and Peter look at each other. Then at Steph.

A long beat.

Then the lift rattles and resumes. They breath again.

INT. HOTEL ROOM -- LATER

Peter stalks around the penthouse, picking up bloody bandages from tables, stowing them in his plastic shopping bag.

Michael's sleeping on a king sized bed. The back of the boy's head is heavily bandaged. His action figures pebble the surface of the quilt.

Peter halts at a bathroom door. He looks in. Can just make out a span of Steph's bruise ravaged body in the bath. Bronny appears beside him.

PETER

There's a dryer and washing machine here. We can wash their clothes. Or buy some more.

No answer from Bronny. She walks past him, into the master bedroom and the sleeping Michael. Peter follows.

Bronny gently opens a drawer on the bedside table. She searches for something. Can't find it. Tries another drawer.

PETER (CONT'D)

What're you looking for?

Bronny ignores him, strides around to the other side of the bed. Searches the second bedside table.

BRONNY

Where is it?

PETER

Shhh! Don't wake him.

Bronny paces over to the TV cabinet. Starts rummaging through drawers.

BRONNY

They're in every hotel room I've ever stayed in. Where is it?

A beat.

PETER

Seriously? You're looking for a Bible?

She rips open another drawer.

BRONNY

Shit!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETER

What then, Bron? We get down on our knees and pray? For being bad people. Bad parents?

BRONNY

At this point, yes. I'll do anything.

PETER

Yeah, well, that's not going to help!

BRONNY

And how would you know?

PETER

Because I know!

Michael stirs, nearly wakes. Bronny pauses, then continues searching for the elusive holy book. Peter, out of habit, now closes curtains, checks under beds, checks all the cupboards before sitting down opposite Bronny. He rubs his eyes hard. Squints out the tiredness.

PETER (CONT'D)

They got rid of Bibles in hotel rooms years ago.

BRONNY

Why?

PETER

Because, apparently, it's discriminatory having only one religion represented.

BRONNY

Jesus.

PETER

Not any more.

Bronny lies down on the bed, facing away from Peter.

PETER (CONT'D)

Bron...?

BRONNY

I could sleep forever.

She closes her eyes.

PETER

I'm sorry.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Silence.

PETER (CONT'D)
About everything.

BRONNY
So why'd you do it?

Peter sighs hard. Shakes his head.

PETER
We haven't been right for so long
I've just kinda accepted that this
feeling, this emptiness, is
normal. That going through the
motions is what's...required. If
that makes any sense. The
affair...that didn't even mean
anything. Other than that I was
trying to...trying to feel
something again.

Beat.

BRONNY
Well it meant to me that I was
married to a gutless worm too
scared of being honest with
himself who'd rather jeopardise
everything we've built together
for one lousy fuck...

She stops herself, before she really lets go.

PETER
At least I'm not a drunk who
screwed up...

Bronny's head snaps toward him, freezing him with her
look. She slowly shakes her head with infinite sadness.

BRONNY
What happened to us?

PETER
Like I said...

BRONNY
-- you're sorry? So am I. Whatever
happens just remember...

Michael stirs in his sleep. Steph emerges from the
bathroom in her pyjamas, crosses to the couch and passes
out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BRONNY (CONT'D)

-- forget it.

Peter stands, looks to Bronny. He nods to Michael.

PETER

I'll go out, bring back his
favorite.

Peter's at the door. She doesn't open her eyes.

BRONNY (O.S.)

If you want to go back to her, I
won't blame you.

Peter stops dead. An old wound obviously. But the kind
that never heals.

PETER

See you soon.

He leaves. Bronny passes out.

WE MOVE DOWN; and see Michael's backpack. Hold on it.

INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR -- NIGHT

Peter walks briskly down the corridor before suddenly
stopping, and we see the reason he left the room. He
stifles a series of sobs, desperately holding back tears.
But it's too much and he takes a couple of huge heaves,
looks left and right, takes a deep breath. He wipes
tears, then continues.

EXT. CITY STREET -- NIGHT

Peter walks on then halts as he sees something across the
street. An all night games and internet cafe.

INT. 24 HOUR INTERNET CAFE -- NIGHT

Peter threads through the aisles of computers in the net
cafe. Checks the token in his hand and matches it to a
monitor. A guy a couple of seats up has gone to sleep
watching porn.

Peter sits down. Opens a browser. Types two words:

GHOSTS / SPIRITZ

He misspells it. Hits search. It asks him if the word
he's looking for is SPIRITS. It is.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Dozens of links appear. Hundreds of thousands of search results. Peter's eyes brim, desperate to make sense of the things he's seen.

MONTAGE -- as we see images from African Possession, Tribal Exorcism Ceremonies, twelfth Century woodcuts, Japanese Prints showing Spirits possessing a living body, Medieval engravings of GHOSTS stalking graveyards. Native American Ghosts, Shamans and hauntings of burial sites...legends of the GRAND CANYON...this one get's his attention. He clicks on a link and sees...

...an elaborate image of a 16th engraving, 5 huge shadow figures emerge from a fire. A tribal hunter stands before the flames, in some kind of prayer. Below the image the text reads; "in the mythology of pre-Columbian America, thousands of years before the advent of the European Pioneers, it was widely believed there were 'portals', throughout many sites in the Midwestern and Southwestern landscape, where spirits from another world enter and depart this plane, referred to as 'the fourth world'. Many believe the Grand Canyon to be home to dozens of these 'portals'. Many of these powerful spirits are said to find and torment human hosts, by either sending them insane or by physical death and attack."

Peter rubs his eyes, squints, forgetting how exhausted he is. He re-focusses and reads on...

..."stories of these destructive entities were concealed for centuries, and upon further study one quickly understands the reticence to share them, as all of them feature an inevitable, karmic destruction of the invaders of the landmass known today as the United States of America."

Peter shakes his head, unsure whether he should dissolve into laughter or tears -- finally it's all so overwhelming he PUNCHES the keyboard, waking the guy a few chairs down.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY -- NIGHT

Peter enters carrying a tray of Subway sandwiches and Cokes. He ambles toward the elevators, the reception clerk hangs up the phone.

RECEPTION CLERK

Sir! Mr. Taylor.

Peter approaches the counter.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RECEPTION CLERK (CONT'D)

Sir, we've got a strict policy about noise after twelve PM. If it continues to disturb our other guests you may be asked to leave the hotel.

Peter blinks. Understanding hits like a punch in the guts. He bolts for the elevators, dropping so much food and drink he finally just DUMPS the whole tray on the foyer floor.

RECEPTION CLERK (CONT'D)

That will have to be cleaned at extra charge to your room! Mr. Taylor..?!

INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR -- NIGHT

Peter arrives at the door, trying to catch his breath. He starts, hears muffled scream/noises from inside. He leaps at the door...

INT. HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Peter bursts inside.

PETER

Bronny?

The room is empty.

PETER (CONT'D)

Bron?! Michael?!

BRONNY (O.S.)

Peter!

Peter charges into the next room. Bronny is slumped against the bathroom door, hand clasped around the handle. Stephanie stands nearby, nearly catatonic with fear. Horrific screams and sounds are coming from inside.

PETER

Bronny, what..?

Peter races to the door, moves Bronny aside and tries with all his strength to open it. It's solid as rock. Not budging an inch.

PETER (CONT'D)

Michael? Can you hear me? Open the door, Mikey. Come on. Michael?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Bronny cries, she can't take anymore. She staggers over and embraces Steph. The sounds coming from inside the bathroom are truly horrific; like a blasting storm mixed with screams and the deep roar of a blazing fire. Peter releases the handle, gets a run up, determination steeling him as he SMASHES his shoulder against the door and it...

...FLIES OPEN, Peter sprawls into the spacious bathroom and crumples against the side of the bath, something CRACKS in his wrist and he writhes in pain.

Silence.

Bronny and Steph cautiously enter, and the three of them slowly look over to Michael.

He's facing the wall, looking up. Peter pulls himself off the floor, rests against the bathtub.

PETER (CONT'D)

Michael?

They then follow his gaze up to the HUNDREDS of blackened hand prints, stretching across the ceiling. Peter glances to his wife, sanity teetering on the very edge.

BRONNY

It followed us, Peter. It followed us.

CUT TO BLACK:

EXT. SIMON/WENDY'S HOUSE -- MORNING

Simon opens the door with a somewhat bemused look on his face.

SIMON

Well, well, well. I never thought I'd see the day. You two finally made the effort to come all the way over our side of town. Nice job.

ANGLE ON an awkward Peter and Bronny.

PETER

Simon, come on. We're 5 blocks away. No need to rub it in.

BRONNY

Hey Simon. I bought some cake.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SIMON

Great. Wendy's making coffee.

He goes inside, Peter and Bronny exchange a glance, both look nervous.

INT. SIMON/WENDY'S HOUSE -- MORNING

Peter and Bronny sit one side of the couch, Simon and Wendy on the other. Cake and coffee in the middle.

Silence.

SIMON

So, you guys were just passing by, wanted to hang?

Peter and Bronny squirm some more. Simon chuckles.

SIMON (CONT'D)

-- ah, look at you guys, I'm just screwing around with you. Hey Pete, come check out the boat I'm thinking of buying. It's insane.

PETER

Sure.

Peter stands and they go off deeper into the house. Wendy studies Bronny, she can see the strain and stress she's under, evidenced by the rattling coffee cup she puts down.

WENDY

Is everything alright?

Without warning, Bronny suddenly descends into tears, like someone's turned on a tap. Wendy quickly moves over to comfort her, concerned.

BRONNY

I'm...I'm sorry. Just, no one's asked me that, and hearing it just set something off. I'll be OK in a minute.

She settles, Wendy hands her a tissue, brushes back her hair. Bronny stops.

BRONNY (CONT'D)

We need your help.

INT. SIMON AND WENDY'S HOUSE/OFFICE -- MORNING

Simon's home office is an impressive room. He takes his job very seriously -- a few computers, awards on the walls, drafting tables. Peter's a little on edge. Simon just eyes him.

PETER

What?

SIMON

Come on, man. I'm not stupid,
what're you really doing here?

Peter -- stunned. How the hell does Simon know what's going on? And how does Peter tell him without sounding completely crazy. Finally he bites the bullet.

PETER

Well, I guess the only way to
describe it is to say that...well,
I'm just tired...worn out...we all
are...

Simon nods knowingly.

SIMON

I'm not surprised and I should
have done this months ago, Pete,
before you decided to come over to
my house on a Saturday to quit.
So...I've decided to give you a
raise. It's only an extra 40 grand
a year but within 2 years we'll
make it 60 and full partner in the
firm within 3. Deal?

Peter is speechless, so he just keeps nodding.

PETER

OK.

INT. SIMON/WENDY'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM -- MORNING

Wendy writes down a phone number on a business card for Bronny. She hands it over.

BRONNY

Thank you. It's hard to talk to
people about this kind of thing
as, well...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WENDY

-- most people don't believe it?
Simon's the same, think's it's all
nonsense. Only likes things that
science can empirically
quantify...

Simon and Peter appear from within the house.

WENDY (CONT'D)

-- let me know how you go.

Bronny nods, Peter puts her arm around her, smiles.

PETER

Well, we should do this again
sometime.

EXT. SIMON/WENDY'S HOUSE -- MORNING

Peter closes the car door, staring straight ahead. Bronny looks at him, worried.

BRONNY

Honey?

PETER

Simon just gave me a 40 thousand
dollar raise.

A beat. Then they both burst out laughing, the absurdity of the moment overwhelming. It dies down, Bronny produces the card with the number on the back.

BRONNY

I got a number.

Peter looks at the card. He smiles as best he can.

EXT. LAKE SIDE -- DAY

Peter sits in the car watching as Michael plays on the beach with a sand castle. He glances behind to the backseat, where Steph is huddled in a blanket. She's asleep. He watches her a moment and faces front again. Tension keeping his expression tight. We sense his frustration with the powerlessness of the situation.

EXT. SUBURBAN BACKSTREET -- DAY

Bronny holds a piece of paper with an address on it. She stops suddenly before a neat house, noting a small sign which reads -- KAREN ARMUNDSEN -- offering Divine Light Healing, Home Clearings and other spiritual services.

She glances left and right, embarrassed, then approaches the door.

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- LIVING ROOM -- DAY

Bronny sits opposite two women; KAREN and BREE ANNE, quietly talking. Karen (30s) dresses like a librarian. Neat. Very conservative. Bree Anne (mid 40s) is hugely overweight, has short blonde hair but is bubbly, with a bright smile.

They both look bizarrely normal. You'd never in a million years pick these two are PARANORMAL SPECIALISTS.

They all stop upon hearing the front door open. Peter and the kids bustle down the hall. Bronny turns to them, smiles.

BRONNY

Honey, this is Karen and this is Bree Anne.

Peter looks over the pair then steals a glance at Steph. She's staring like the visitors have got two heads.

KAREN/BREE ANNE

Hello/Lovely to meet you all.

Peter shakes hands, it's awkward.

PETER

Hi. Nice to uh...meet you. Mikey, why don't you go and play up in your room. Steph..?

Steph glares at them with a flat, cynical look then leaves, slamming her bedroom door hard. Peter and Bronny sigh, then glance back to the guests.

PETER (CONT'D)

Sorry bout that.

BRONNY

Hasn't been feeling very well lately.

EXT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- NIGHT

The three cars are still out front.

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Empty COFFEE CUPS are spread over the table. Voices are low to avoid the children hearing.

BRONNY

You've seen this kind of thing before? The exact things we're describing to you?

The healers exchange a knowing smile.

KAREN

Sounds like a spirit, this "Jenny", has attached itself to Michael and Stephanie somehow. If it's pulling the kind of tricks you've described it sounds like it wants to be noticed. Wants to play. Maybe it was abandoned...

Peter's eyes widen. They talk about ghosts and the paranormal as if about shopping or the weather. For them this is the everyday.

KAREN (CONT'D)

-- but either way, these sound like very human emotions. The emotion of anger, regret, guilt, hate are human responses to events, not demonic traits reserved for the spirit world. And emotions can be extremely powerful. So powerful they echo through time, vibrating forever until the cycle is broken. Either way, "Jenny" needs to be moved on.

Peter's trying to hold it together.

PETER

Spirit...world.

He glances to Bronny.

BRONNY

Can...can a ghost...hurt you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BREE ANNE

That all depends on the strength of the spirit in question. Listen, we need to stress that what we do here, may not be successful. You understand that, don't you? It might take a number of visits to establish exactly what we're dealing with here.

Peter and Bronny exchange a weary glance. They nod.

KAREN

You said you went away from here but the events still took place?

Bronny nods. Bree Anne and Karen exchange a look.

BREE ANNE

That's unusual, spirits from a place can attach themselves to certain people, but it's rare...

KAREN

-- they're really just like we are, they get attracted to all kinds of personalities and follow them around, and they can also become angry or upset by disrespect...

She suddenly stops. Closes her eyes. Opens them again.

KAREN (CONT'D)

-- OK. I can sense something moving, seems it's being a little bashful with visitors here?

Bronny nods. Peter's still trying to grapple with these two. She stops suddenly, takes a deep breath, as if psychically holding back a powerful force.

KAREN (CONT'D)

Whoa. There's a lot of energy present. Definitely not happy about us being in this space...

(to Bree Anne)

-- let's go.

BREE ANNE

She's ready. Best we get started right away.

Peter and Bronny exchange a look, shocked that it's happening right away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BREE ANNE (CONT'D)
Presuming of course you want to
clear this house as fast as
possible?

Peter and Bronny nod eagerly.

BREE ANNE (CONT'D)
Good. Best keep the children
close.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

The women move into the room, putting down their bags, eyes roving the ceiling as they take in the space. Bronny enters, herding a reluctant Stephanie and curious Michael.

KAREN
It's been getting more and more
violent?

Bronny nods. Karen then moves around the space, seemingly trying to locate something.

BREE ANNE
You should sit down.

Peter and Bronny sink into chairs and watch, keeping the children very close. Karen paces the room as Bree Anne shadows her. Karen closes her eyes and draws in breath. She nods. Bree hands her a large CONTAINER and a large spoon, and takes the same for herself. Karen opens it and we see white powder inside.

BREE ANNE (CONT'D)
(off Peter's look)
Salt.

Peter nods; not sure of the significance but at this stage -- willing to try anything. Karen speaks in a loud, commanding voice as she spreads tablespoons of salt into each corner of the room.

KAREN
This is a house of the living, not
the dead or those in deaths
domain. We bless them and send
them to the Supreme Light, to
their highest Place of Being. I
ask that they be removed from
here; that they understand that
this is my space and time and that
they may not return.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Bree Anne also scatters the salt, whispering the same commands.

KAREN (CONT'D)

This is a house of the living, I
command you in the name of the
Supreme Light to leave and not
return.

Bronny and Peter exchange a glance, waiting for something to happen.

KAREN (CONT'D)

This is a house of the living, I
command you in the name of the
Supreme Light to leave and not
return.

She scatters salt in a corner, then stops as the light bulb above her starts to BUZZ and FLICKER. All eyes are on it, then just as suddenly it returns to normal. Michael cheers happily.

MICHAEL

Jenny!

All look at him, then to the light, nervous.

KAREN

This is a house of the living, I
command you in the name of the
Supreme Light to leave and not
return.

The pair continue moving through the house, Peter and Bronny collect the children and trail behind them as they enter...

INT. STEPH'S BEDROOM. CONTINUOUS

The quartet all stop. Karen pushes through and scatters the salt, the others hovering by the door. She speaks quietly but firmly.

KAREN

This is a house of the living, I
command you in the name of the
Supreme Light to leave and not
return.

Karen comes closer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KAREN (CONT'D)

This is a house of the living, I command you, Dark Forces, in the name of the Supreme Light to leave and never return.

Karen sprinkles salt over Steph's bed, windows, cupboards.

Bronny cries, holding onto Steph as they watch the ritual. Karen motions for them to continue through the house. One by one they file out into...

INT. MICHAEL'S BEDROOM. CONTINUOUS

Karen and Bree Anne stand in the doorway. Michael pushes through, and stares at the...

...large scorched area on the wall, looming like a gaping mouth.

MICHAEL

Come on! They want to play. Jenny?

Karen is entranced by it, then she shudders, as it struck by something powerful...

...she staggers a little, looks terrified, eyes widening.

KAREN

-- a river, rocks, a cave...blood, fire, a river of fire? What's that...vengeance, a terrible vengeance...

She screams.

KAREN (CONT'D)

-- No!

Karen breathes in, attempting to stop the flow of images distracting her from her task at hand. She slowly regains her composure, standing upright.

KAREN (CONT'D)

You are not welcome here, this is a house of the living, I command you in the name of the Supreme Light to leave.

Salt is scattered in the corners, over the burnt area. Strange SOUNDS suddenly emanate from it -- deep rumbles and whines. Peter grabs Michael, holds him close.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The women turn to each other, clearly terrified. Karen speaks in an even more determined voice, holding her ground.

KAREN (CONT'D)
I command you in the name of the
Supreme Light to leave, never
return.

They turn and slowly leave the room.

INT. HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

Karen leads them down the hall, the ritual continues.

KAREN
This is a house of the living, I
command you in the name of the
Supreme Light to leave.

Bree Anne dusts every corner with a healthy dose of salt.

Peter sees something behind Bronny's back; a chair slides across the floor. Peter taps her on the shoulder, Bronny looks up just as the chair SLIDES across the room, bumping into a wall before halting.

Karen and Bree Anne reappear, Peter and Bronny follow them into the...

INT. KITCHEN. CONTINUOUS

They move around the kitchen table, Karen gives the couple a reassuring nod, motions for them to join in.

KAREN/BREE ANNE/PETER/BRONNY
This is a house of the living, I
command you in the name of the
Supreme Light to leave.

They all wait, eyes on the ceiling. Karen nods again.

KAREN/BREE ANNE/PETER/BRONNY
(CONT'D)
You are not welcome here, I
command you in the name of the
Supreme Light to...

Then suddenly....KA--BOOM! A thunderclap of SOUND as all the lights go out. Then all is silent. Still. Calm.

Total blackness.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STEPHANIE

Mom?

BRONNY

Here honey.

STEPHANIE

Stop doing that.

BRONNY

Honey, I'm over here.

STEPHANIE

Who's touching my hand?

Steph screams, deep, earth shattering RUMBLES sound from beneath the house, the lights flicker, everyone blinks in...

...Steph and Michael screaming in terror as they're lifted by unseen hands and roughly slammed against the ceiling. Blackened hand prints appear all around them. The rumbling NOISE builds, deafening, as if a 747 jet engine were blasting just above the roof of the house. Bronny and Peter run to the traumatised children, reaching up for them desperately, screaming, horrified. Karen and Bree Anne are frozen with fear, until Karen snaps out of it, runs and stands on the couch and...

...stretches up and GRABS an arm of each child and drops to the floor, hauling them under her. Peter and Bronny then huddle over the children also, as the SOUND above reaches a pitch that, like the breath of God suddenly exhaling, BLOWS out every window and is suddenly...

...gone.

Darkness remains, all is dead silent but for terrified breathing, Steph's broken sobs and Michaels protestations. A car alarm goes off across the road. Neighborhood dogs go crazy around the block.

PETER

Is...is everyone OK?

No answers.

A beat.

The lights flicker. The few remaining globes buzz back on and dimly illuminate the trashed room. Shattered glass is everywhere. Junk is strewn. The traumatized family huddle.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Steph starts crying. Michael just stares at the ceiling. Actually looks sad it's over. Bronny grabs him, holds him.

BRONNY

It's OK baby. It's OK now.

Karen breathes out deeply, exhausted. Bree Anne guides her to the sofa. Bronny grabs a glass of water, brings it over to the trembling woman, who downs it in one go.

Bronny glances up to Peter, who's peering around nervously. Stunned and terrified by the extraordinary display.

BREE ANNE

We're...we're good. I think we're done here.

Peter and Bronny hold hands over the children. Tears flow.

HARD CUT TO:

The quartet sit around the kitchen table. All eyes are on Karen.

PETER

Are you sure you're alright?

BREE ANNE

A clearing can take a heavy emotional as well as physical toll...

KAREN

-- the violence, the anger in this presence...was immense. It was holding on tight, fighting to stay, to stay with the children.

She stops, the images running through her mind too terrible to continue. She sips her whiskey, glances over to the couch where Michael and Stephanie are passed out, covered by a large comforter.

BRONNY

Why Michael and Steph? Why not target us?

KAREN

Spirits are drawn to them because their openness is like a powerful light.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

KAREN (CONT'D)

Their innocence, their
imagination, makes a good foothold
into our world.

Bronny nods, makes sense.

KAREN (CONT'D)

Whatever was here...seems to have
moved on.

Peter and Bronny hold hands. Bronny sheds a tear.

BRONNY

Thank you. Thank you both so much.

They stand to leave. Karen and Bree smile. Bronny hugs them both and leads them out. Peter stands, watches them go. He's still nervous, but deeply relieved. He glances around the room, it feels different already. Lighter somehow.

WE TRACK WITH HIM as he walks to the couch and checks the children; they're sound asleep. He smiles, looks up as Bronny arrives. Puts a hand on his shoulder.

BRONNY (CONT'D)

Thank God.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK / 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- NIGHT

Bree Anne closes the door of the Pickup. She freezes as she looks across to Karen -- her hands are gripping the steering wheel hard in a bid to stop the trembling. She's almost catatonic with fear.

KAREN

I...saw something else back
there...

Karen fixes her with a look of pure terror.

KAREN (CONT'D)

-- God help us all.

CUT TO BLACK:

EXT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- BACKYARD -- MORNING

Bronny is emptying trash. Peter has stuck his four fingers into four Miller Beer cans. He clinks them.

PETER

Bron...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She looks. Peter clinks the can-fingers together.

PETER (CONT'D)

Who am I?

Bronny shrugs. Shakes her head.

PETER (CONT'D)

(humourless)

Edward Miller-hands.

He clinks the cans again. Bronny bites on her lip. She almost laughs. Then...

STEPH (O.S.)

Mom...

Bronny and Peter freeze and turn.

STEPH (CONT'D)

Michael says Jenny's gone.

They just stare, disbelieving their prayers could have come true. Steph starts to hitch then cry. Then Michael walks around the pool, up to Bronny.

Peter picks up Michael and they all make the small trek around the pool toward their daughter. The family embraces tightly. Sobbing with joy.

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- BATHROOM -- DAY

The shower is going full-bore on Steph. Mirror and shower-door opaque with steam.

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- MASTER BEDROOM/VARIOUS -- DAY

Bronny opens a closet, finds an empty vodka bottle stuffed under some clothes. We follow as she walks out. We notice the house is now neat. Ordered. Brighter.

Bronny knocks on the bathroom door and enters.

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- BATHROOM -- DAY

We can barely make out Steph's silhouette in the shower.

BRONNY

Just me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Bronny twists the cap off the vodka and pours it down the sink. She jams the bottle into a small bin and then sits down on the toilet (lid down).

BRONNY (CONT'D)

You feel OK?

The shower door opens. Steph's head juts out, hair slick and dark over her gleaming eyes.

STEPH

Can we go out?

Bronny smiles.

INT/EXT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE/SUV -- DAY

The SUV backs out of the driveway.

EXT. LAKE SIDE CAFE -- DAY

Bronny and Peter sit at a table, sipping coffee as a PRETTY WAITRESS clears a stack of plates. Peter only has eyes for his wife. He watches Bronny watching their kids...

Bronny lifts her SLR. Steph and Michael are across the street, playing in a park. Clear, blue sky over calm waters.

Sunshine abounds. Steph turns her face into the breeze. Eyes shut. Feeling it on her skin.

EXT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- BACKYARD/POOL -- DAY

The pool cover slides back. Sunlight pierces the gloom. Drives the shadows away.

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- MICHAEL'S ROOM -- DAY

Dressed in an old paint-stained T-shirt and jeans, Peter begins to re-paint the room. We see that he's only half way through covering the burnt area, when he stretches and stops for the day.

INT/EXT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- BACK DOOR/BACKYARD -- DAY

Peter walks through with a coffee mug, still in his paint-flecked work clothes. He moves up to the back door and looks out to the backyard.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The kids are in the pool, Michael lies on his back, floating and staring up at the clouds. Steph is swimming and duck-diving. Bronny is taking pictures of them.

Peter sips at his coffee, smiling over his mug.

INT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- VARIOUS/LIVING-ROOM -- NIGHT

Peter, in his boxer shorts, walks from room to room, he's on patrol. In the living-room, he eyes some shadows and silhouettes suspiciously. Moves furniture around to make sure the shadows are all accounted for. They are.

CUT TO BLACK:

OCTOBER 31

EXT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE -- NIGHT

ANGLES ON: the dark rooms of Miranda Drive. Kitchen. Living Room. Corridor. Unsettling. Something isn't right...

INT. MASTER BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Bronny and Peter sleep. A NOISE thuds from another room. We can vaguely make out VOICES. A louder THUD wakes Bronny. She squints awake, confused by the noise. She leans up on an elbow.

BRONNY

Michael?

She looks at Peter, sound asleep. She gets up.

INT. CORRIDOR/MIRANDA DRIVE -- NIGHT

Bronny walks through the darkened house, making for the end of the corridor and Michaels room.

She pauses halfway down, notices the FAMILY PHOTO on the floor near the bench; the faces of the family have been scorched out, as if by flame. Her mind spins as she tries to make sense of it when she hears another loud SOUND and...

...peers down the end of the hallway. We can hear Michael's soft voice interspersed with the deeper VOICES of men. She treads slowly toward his door...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

...she stops there, trembling. A strip of light cuts across the blackness of the corridor.

MICHAEL (O.S.)

3, 3, 3, 3, 3, 3...

Bronny softly opens the door. Michael is sitting on the floor, facing away from his mother. It's now only his voice.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

-- 3, 3, 3, 3, 3, 3, 3, 3...4, 4,
4, 4, 4, 4, 4,...

He has his Action Figures assembled before him. Her voice is quiet, throat constricted with fear.

BRONNY

Honey? Who're you talking to?

Bronny takes another step and she notices a STONE, spilled from a backpack hidden under the bed. She pulls the bag up, the rest of them spill out. 4 of them.

BRONNY (CONT'D)

Mikey, where did these come from?

MICHAEL

From our vacation. The sky people gave them to me.

Bronny -- a chill runs through her. She eyes the stones, the defensive line of action figures. Makes a connection.

Bronny crouches slowly, placing the stones into a plastic bag when she suddenly freezes. Sensing something behind her. A presence. Or many.

BRONNY

Sky people? Where...are they?

MICHAEL

(like it's obvious)
Right there.

He's pointing behind her. She's too scared to turn around, voices are whispering close. Hissing, violent, enraged.

BRONNY

Are they like...Jenny?

MICHAEL

No they just made Jenny up so they could stay with us...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Bronny - ice shoots through her veins.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

-- they say they don't want to go.
They want us to come and live with
them now. Forever and ever.

Bronny's voice is choked with terror. Tears slick her face.

BRONNY

Whatever you are...I...want you
all out of this house...

Bronny swallows, turns to...

BRONNY (CONT'D)

...now!

...the beckoning open door. She grabs Michael's hand and races toward it, dragging him along when it SLAMS in her face. She slowly turns and we see...

...4 HUGE, INHUMAN SHADOW FIGURES emerging from the burnt section of the wall...like the darkness has become alive...

...SOUNDS that are chilling, twisted noises fill the space. Almost sucking all the air inwards even as their screams push outward, like nails on a vibrating blackboard from hell itself.

They didn't go after all, and now they are...

...reaching for Michael and Bronny from some hellish zone.

Michael -- the child who doesn't understand fear -- now has a face twisted with primal terror, scream frozen in his throat, as he sees the terrifying spectral forms. We notice a pool of yellow liquid puddling around his tiny shoes.

Bronny screams, grabs her son's hand as she WRENCHES at the door handle. It flies open and they spill into the hall.

EXT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Bronny, Michael in tow, bursts into the master bedroom.

BRONNY (O.S.)

Peter...Peter get up!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Peter starts and sits bolt upright.

PETER

Bron, what's--

BRONNY

Get Stephanie. Now!

The force of her tone makes Peter immediately jump out of bed. Bronny quickly leaves the room with Michael.

INT. SUV -- DAWN

Stephanie's in the back seat next to Michael. She's as baffled as her father. Bronny nurses the bag of STONES on her lap. Peter glances across to her, goes to speak.

BRONNY

Just drive.

Tires squeal as they turn a corner. It's clear they're breaking the limit many times over.

EXT. LAKE SHORE/DOCK -- DAWN

First light glows across the inland waterways horizon. The Taylor's car, engine still running, rests 20 feet behind Bronny, who reaches the end of a short pier. Peter slams the drivers door and races to catch up with her.

Bronny, with all her strength, swings the bag and releases it. It flies through the air and lands in the water, bobbing momentarily before slowly sinking into the dark depths.

The 4 stones vanish into deep, deep water.

Bronny sighs with relief as Peter appears, looks at her.

PETER

What was that?

Bronny doesn't answer, she just stares into the distance. Attempting to comprehend that which defies all logic, rational thought. Then her mind turns to resolve, determination. She turns to Peter.

BRONNY

The end.

EXT. SUV - CONTINUOUS

An unusual angle behind the car. We see Stephanie and Michael inside craning to see what their parents are up to. Beyond them at the end of the pier stand Bronny and Peter. Peter puts a protective arm around his wife.

INT. SUV - CONTINUOUS

Steph sighs, relief washes over her. Michael's face is blank, he could be staring at a wall.

MICHAEL

What are they doing?

STEPHANIE

Saying goodbye.

Steph watches as Michael produces a single STONE from his pocket, holds it out to her on the palm of his hand.

MICHAEL

5,5,5,5,5,5,5,5,5...

Bronny didn't get them all.

Suddenly a SHADOW FIGURE rises behind Michael's seat, it reaches out and touches Michael's shoulder as...

...Stephanie's mind turns to jelly with pure terror as...

...a loud CLICK makes both children spin around. They see the DOOR LOCKS have snapped closed.

Steph grabs at one; it won't budge. She looks up as the engine suddenly SCREAMS to life. Both children exchange a glance, no time to scream themselves as they watch the car SLOT itself into DRIVE before they're sucked back in their seats as the accelerator SLAMS down.

They're speeding right at Bronny and Peter who...

EXT. PIER - CONTINUOUS

...react to the sound of the racing vehicle too late and it SMASHES square into them, like a bowling ball collecting two pins. Only these pins are fragile; Bronny's head opens like a melon as she collides with the windscreen and Peter's body spins high. Leg and neck on impossible angles as he clumsily lands. A broken sack of dead meat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The car EXPLODES in a spray of water as it impacts. We see Steph and Michael banging desperately against the windows as the vehicle quickly sinks beneath the dark, deep water.

And it's gone.

EXT. BOTTOM OF LAKE - CONTINUOUS

The car, now filled with water, glides then bumps the deep, sandy bottom of the lake. Two still SHAPES float inside. Like tiny astronauts in zero gravity.

A squad of Michael's plastic Action Figures float by outside the car.

Then the bag containing the stones comes to rest in the foreground.

CUT TO BLACK:

TODAY

EXT. 6 MIRANDA DRIVE - DUSK

A suburban street in Sante Fe's outer Suburbs. A dog is barking somewhere. A water sprinkler coughs like a ticking clock. A jogger runs by, we pan after him a moment then we swing back around to...

...the real 6 Miranda Drive. This is the actual house where these events took place.

In a quiet, average street. In a normal home. To a normal family.

Just like yours.

CUT TO BLACK: