

I N V A S I O N

Written by

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1

SPACE

1

Cold, lonely, fear-inducing, awe-inspiring Space. The frame is filled with vibrant clusters of shimmering stars. Beyond them - in deep space - purple and turquoise nebula.

Five asteroids enter the bottom of the frame and slowly travel upwards, though slow is a relative term out here.

We move 'up' with the asteroids. Keeping pace. A 50,000mph galactic tracking shot.

The earth slowly enters frame. We're on the dark side of the planet so 'nightglow' is visible; a lustrous green haze in the upper part of the atmosphere.

The earth fills the screen and we see patchworks of city lights. Dense labyrinthine constellations.

The asteroids flame-up as they burn through the atmosphere.

2

EARTH

2

WIDE - a purple dawn. A few stars are visible at the top of the frame. Silhouettes of trees and houses skirt the bottom. A few lights are on, early risers.

An asteroid - now a raging fireball - tears across the sky. The afterglow is a spectrum of hypnotic colors.

It explodes into a dozens of meteorites. No sound is emitted. Not yet. The fragments splinter off in separate directions.

A delayed BANG echoes out, no louder than a distant firework. Birds SCATTER. A car alarm BLARES. A few dogs BARK.

The meteors vaporize. Within seconds there's no trace left. At least none we can see.

The car alarm is switched off.

The dogs stop barking.

And it's like it never happened.

3

FOREST

3

Meteor dust sprinkles over an expanse of woodland.

They glimmer in the bright shafts of morning light.

The particles land on leaves, ferns, flowers and forest detritus.

4 OMITTED 4

5 LAND 5

A hot, damp, gloomy forest floor. Small insects chew on nectar, pollen, leaves, and unsuspectingly - the meteor dust.

MACRO CLOSE on the particles - not 'dust' but tiny parasites.
Wrinkly microorganisms with stubby feet.

Larger predators descend; locusts, mantes, beetles and arachnids. They rip the small insects apart with their mandibles. We hear each BITE, TEAR and CRUNCH. An orgy of violence.

But we're also enthralled by the beauty of these strange beasts.

The glue of nature.

And now - oblivious hosts.

6 SKIN 6

WE PAN across human skin. Hard to tell what part of the body. It's hairless and has soft undulating ridges of veins.

WE LAND on a mosquito. An ugly, hairy creature with dazzling polychrome eyes. It's proboscis pierces the skin.

7 VEIN 7

A crimson tunnel. It gently throbs as blood rushes through it.

The parasite flows downstream. It claws onto a fibrous wall and burrows through.

BRAIN

A dark, cavernous landscape made of towering canyons, immense arches and twisting stalactites. This is a submicroscopic world of the human brain but seems like a surreal alien landscape.

The parasite penetrates the membranous tissue. It convulses and hundreds of long, sinuous worms burst from its body. WE TRACK towards the writhing worms until they fill the frame.

9

INT. MOTEL - DAY

9

Somewhere in Northern California.

In a cheap, dark, musty motel, a watch BEEPS. MALIK KHAN (38), South Asian American, bolts upright and turns his alarm off. Hardwired instincts.

He hears something - a low pulsating hum. He turns, sees an air vent in the corner of the room. He stares at the vent trying to discern if it's the source of the sound.

SLOW ZOOM in on the circular air vent.

CUT TO:

MACRO CLOSE on Malik's eye. The iris fills the frame. The eye moves up, down, left, right. The TV plays in the background:

NEWSCASTER (O.S.)

Rioters are storming parts of the city, looting stores and setting buildings on fire...

WIDER: Malik inspects his eye in the bathroom mirror. We get a better look at him: Chiseled but craggy for his years, lived a whole life already. He's ripped - a man of discipline, and he has the deep watchful eyes of a man being hunted.

NEWSCASTER (O.S.)

The mayor has issued a statement saying that "thugs are trying to tear down the city and incite violence".

Malik picks up a can of insect repellent and SPRAYS his face, arms and body, covering every inch of exposed skin.

We glimpse Malik's tattoos: on his forearm - a flaming skull with stars speckled around it. On his other arm - a child's stick figure drawing. The primitive crayon lines rendered in colorful detail. A warrior. A father.

Malik enters the bedroom and watches the news report - a riot rages in an American city. Civilians throw rocks at police, tear gas is fired into crowds. A bus is on fire. Total chaos.

But from Malik's steady gaze it's nothing he hasn't seen before. This is the world now.

NEWSCASTER

The National Guard fired into the crowd taking three lives. It's not yet clear whether this was an act --

Malik turns the TV off hearing something - that PULSATING HUM. It's louder now, distinctly organic, made of dense OSCILLATING PATTERNS and DISTURBING FREQUENCIES.

He scans the room, trying to locate the source...

He approaches the bedside, places his ear against the wall and hears a RAGING BOMBILATION. A swarm has built a nest inside the wall cavity.

Malik's eyes roam the wall and sees -- a Red Wasp crawl out of a crack above his bed.

Malik takes the Bible from the bedside table and SLAMS the wasp.

CUT TO:

FULL FRAME - a map of America pinned to a wall. Half the states are colored with highlighter. Malik peels it off.

Malik urgently packs items into a military duffel bag: the folded map, a Glock pistol, combat knife, field rations, penlight, flashlight, socks, compass, a file...

*

Another Red Wasp crawls out from the crack, followed by another, and another...

Malik pulls out a can of insecticide and SPRAYS them - TSSSS...

10

INT. OREGON FARM HOUSE, JAY'S BEDROOM - DAY

10

Somewhere in Southern Oregon.

We're CLOSE on a drawing - an astronaut fires a ray gun at an insectoid. Impressively detailed for the young hands at work.

CLOSE ON JAY KHAN (10). He makes SHOOTING NOISES as he draws, totally immersed within his imaginative world.

On his desk we see a framed photo of a clean-shaven Malik in his Marine dress blues.

We take in the room: Creaky. Dated decor. Peeling wallpaper. Jay's drawings adorn the walls: rockets, astronauts, a boy being beamed up by a spaceship. Dreams of escape.

Jay's mother, PIYA (30s), opens the door, and quietly studies her son. She radiates a kindness.

PIYA

Jay, you can't stay in all day.

Jay glances at the cattle farm outside his window.

JAY
It stinks out there.

PIYA
You'll get used to the smell.

No response. Friction between them.

PIYA
Dylan's taking Bobby out on the tractor.

JAY
Dylan stinks.

Piya THWAKS her neck.

PIYA
Ow. Getting eaten alive today.

She looks at her hand, a crushed Horsefly.

She brushes the remnants away, enters and hugs Jay from behind.

She studies his drawing, marveled by his raw talent.

PIYA
This is incredible baby.

Jay shuffles himself away from her hug. Piya stands, rethinks:

PIYA
Want me to send it to your dad?

Jay nods.

PIYA
Okay. But you gotta do me a favor.

Jay looks up at the farm beyond his window.

10A **EXT. MOTEL CAR PARK - DAY**

10A

Malik enters his Jeep Cherokee and places his duffel bag on the passenger seat.

He starts the ignition, turns to look out and sees a CHILD (5), in the adjacent car staring at him.

Malik smiles and waves at the kid. Gets nothing in return.

Malik presses his mouth to the window and blows - his cheeks expand and he crosses his eyes.

The kid laps it up. Does the same - pressing his face against the glass and blowing.

The child's MOTHER, (30s), arrives at the scene:

MOTHER

What are you doing to my child?

Malik puts his palms up.

MALIK

Just being a dumbass.

MOTHER

You leave us alone.

Malik studies the woman, something seems off. He sticks his car in reverse and pulls away.

11 **EXT. OREGON FARM - DAY**

11

WIDE - a flat endless landscape of ploughed earth. Wind blows dust across the field. A tractor trundles into frame...

INSIDE THE TRACTOR

Jay discreetly draws a spaceship on the window with a marker pen. It's angled in such a way that it flies away from the farm.

Next to Jay sits his brother, BOBBY KHAN (8), a cherubic-faced, rough-and-tumble ball of energy. He has a huge grin, clearly taken by their new life on the farm.

Their step-father, DYLAN (40s), drives. He picks Bobby up, places him on his lap and lets Bobby steer.

Jay studies Dylan. Doesn't trust something about him.

He returns to his spaceship and adds exhaust plume to the engine. The ROAR OF A SPEEDING ENGINE RISES...

12 **I/E. MALIK'S JEEP CHEROKEE, CALIFORNIA A-ROAD - DAY**

12

Malik tries tuning the radio as he drives. He struggles to find a station - just HIGH-PITCHED STATIC.

He sees a road rage brawl ahead -- A BUSINESS MAN and a HOCKEY FAN tear at each other. Cars swerve around them.

Malik slows as he passes. It's a brutal fist fight. Blood smeared across both their faces. Their vehicles are totalled.

13

INT. OREGON FARMHOUSE, DINING ROOM - EVENING

13

Piya, Dylan, Jay and Bobby eat dinner. An awkward atmosphere. This isn't a family yet.

Jay draws as he eats. He glances at Dylan then adds a mustache to the insectoid.

DYLAN

(To Piya)

You know Bobby practically drove the tractor all by himself. Ain't that right?

BOBBY

Uh-huh. Jay was too scaredy-cat --

Jay punches Bobby on the arm.

JAY

No I wasn't dumbass.

BOBBY

Mom!

PIYA

Jay, what is the matter with--

Piya drops her fork and winces. She stands, exits and walks down the hall. We hear the muffled sound of Piya VOMITING.

The boys share a concerned glance.

JAY

(to Dylan)

Is Mom alright?

DYLAN

Just a bug. Don't worry about it.

(moving on)

So how about I take you both fishing after school tomorrow? My Daddy says you ain't truly fished till you fished the Chewaucan.

Bobby gestures to his toy frog laying on the table.

BOBBY

Can Franklin come too?

Dylan leans over to Bobby and conspiratorially whispers:

DYLAN

Well that depends, does Franklin
like fishing?

Bobby thinks a beat then nods.

DYLAN

Then hell yeah Franklin can come.

Dylan winks at him. Bobby tries to wink but ends up blinking.

Jay studies Dylan SCRATCH a swollen insect bites on his wrist.

Dylan senses Jay's gaze.

DYLAN

Wowzers, that is an awesome picture
Jay. Maybe we can frame it.

Jay looks Dylan dead in the eye and slowly SCRUNCHES it up.

DYLAN

That's it, go to bed young man.

Jay stands, exits and SLAMS the door.

14 **INT. OREGON FARMHOUSE, JAY AND BOBBY'S BEDROOM - EVENING** 14 *

A cosmic night light throws up a scene of colorful nebula.
Jay lays in bed reading from a shoebox of letters.

CLOSE on the letter - we glimpse phrases: "*secret mission*",
"*have to keep fighting*", "*see you real soon*", "*Love, Dad*".

Jay's eyes mist up. Hasn't seen Malik in a long time.

Jay digs in the box and takes out a frayed 80s sci-fi comic,
'Space Solider'. The source of his inspiration.

Jay reads the comic. Pure wonder in his eyes.

CLOSE-UPS of the comic - the Space Soldier boards a rocket
and pilots across the galaxy, past colossal planets, through
meteor showers and prismatic wormholes.

15 **I/E. MALIK'S JEEP, OREGON HIGHWAY - NIGHT** 15

ANGLE, CAR HOOD, we enter an orange tunnel and weave through
traffic, going twice the speed of other vehicles.

Malik glances in the rear-view to see if anyone is following.
His eyes are always vigilant. Always watching.

16 **EXT. OREGON FARMHOUSE - NIGHT**

16

WIDE - vivid stars in the country night sky. The house below, vulnerable and isolated. The surrounding farmland is alive with twinkling fireflies, mirroring the stars above.

WE TRACK TOWARDS a bug zapper on the porch annihilating an army of insects. Its purple light FLASHES with each kill.

17 **INT. OREGON FARMHOUSE, JAY AND BOBBY'S ROOM - NIGHT**

17

CLOSE UPS on Jay and Bobby. Their eyelids gently twitch, existing in another dream dimension.

Jay's hand dangles off his bed. Beside his fingertips is the letter. Malik's hand comes into frame and picks it up.

CLOSE ON MALIK, the nebula nightlight slowly spins across the contours of his face. He scans the letter then takes in the sight of his sleeping boys. Savors the moment.

He crouches down next to Jay and gently strokes his head.

MALIK
(whispered)
Wakey-wakey Jay.

Jay's eyes blink open.

JAY
Dad!? Dad! You're back!

Jay rises and hugs Malik, squeezes tight as he can.

MALIK
Sorry it took so long.

Malik pulls away, studies his son.

MALIK
Look at you, overtakin' me as
handsomest man in the family.

Malik takes out a penlight and shines it in Jay's eyes. Jay squints under the glare.

MALIK
Hold still a sec...

Satisfied, Malik stands, starts searching for clothes.

MALIK

Okay get changed, I'm taking you on
a road trip.

Jay rises, leaps onto Bobby's bed and jumps up and down.

JAY

Wake up, wake up, wake up. Dad's
back, Dad's back, Dad's back.

MALIK

Shhhh, Jay, calm down.

Malik picks Jay up and plonks him next to the cupboard and
hands him the clothes.

MALIK

Come on, we're movin' out in two
minutes.

Jay changes. Malik leans down to the disorientated Bobby.

BOBBY

Dad?

MALIK

Come and give me a hug little man.

They embrace. Malik smells the top of Bobby's head. A wave of
emotion hits him. He pulls away and checks Bobby's eyes with
the penlight.

MALIK

Just gotta check something...

Bobby strokes Malik's beard.

BOBBY

You look different.

Malik turns off the penlight. Ruffles Bobby's hair and smiles.

MALIK

You too kid.

Malik rises and starts pulling out Bobby's clothes.

MALIK

Get up Bobby we're going on
vacation.

BOBBY

Is Mom coming?

MALIK

Nope. Just the three of us.

BOBBY

I wanna sleep some more.

Bobby lays back down and closes his eyes.

MALIK

Bobby if you don't get up the Zoids
are gonna come and get you.

Malik shapes his hands into two snapping claws.

Bobby dives beneath the duvet and GIGGLES in anticipation.
Malik crouches over Bobby and tickles him with his 'Zoid'
hands. Bobby wriggles and LAUGHS under the sheets.

18 **INT. OREGON FARMHOUSE, HALLWAY - NIGHT**

18

Malik leads Jay and Bobby down the dark hallway.

Bobby grabs a door knob, goes to turn...

MALIK

(whispered)

Hey, hey, hey! What are you doing?

BOBBY

Sayin' bye to Mom.

MALIK

Bobby it's the middle of the night,
she's fast asleep. We'll call her
over breakfast, okay?

Bobby nods. He lets go of the door knob and continues.

19 **INT. OREGON FARMHOUSE, LOBBY - NIGHT**

19

Jay and Bobby put their sneakers on. Malik approaches the
front door and looks out the window. Always watching.

Jay ties his laces and glances down the hall -- into the
kitchen -- and sees an upturned chair. Strange.

MALIK

Okay boys we're going to play a
game - it's called 'get in the car
as fast as humanly possible'.
Who do you think's gonna win?

Both boys raise their hands. Malik smiles.

MALIK

Let's see about that. One... two...
two and half...

JAY

Come on, come on --

MALIK

Three!

Malik opens the door and they all race outside...

20 **EXT. OREGON FARM HOUSE - CONTINUOUS**

20

and sprint towards Malik's Jeep... Jay jumps in the back,
quickly followed by Bobby.

Malik enters the front and pulls away.

21 **I/E. MALIK'S JEEP, OREGON FARM HOUSE - CONTINUOUS**

21

Jay pokes Bobby in the ribs.

JAY

I won dip shit.

BOBBY

Shut up fart breath.

MALIK

Boys get those seatbelts on.

The boys clip themselves in. Malik pulls onto the road and
breathes a first-hurdle-sigh.

22 **I/E. MALIK'S JEEP, OREGON HIGHWAY - NIGHT**

22

Malik drives down a highway, snaking past other vehicles.

JAY

Why didn't Mom tell us we're going
on this road trip?

MALIK

Well obviously she wanted it to be
a surprise.

BOBBY

Where are we going?

MALIK

That's also a surprise.

BOBBY

Disney Land!?

MALIK

No we're not going to Disney Land.

BOBBY

Why?

MALIK

Why!? Because... it's closed.

BOBBY

Why?

MALIK

Because...

(improvising)

a ride broke and lots of children
died. Ain't that right Jay?

Bobby looks at Jay, who shrugs, news to him.

JAY

Why aren't Mom and Dylan coming?

MALIK

They're going on their own
vacation... skiing... in Canada.

BOBBY

I want to go skiing.

MALIK

Come on, you want to freeze your
ass off on top of a mountain with
Mr. Stick Up His Butt?

Bobby and Jay snicker.

MALIK (CONT'D)

Besides this is going to be way
more fun than Disney Land and
Canada combined. This is a Special
Operations road trip. Code name:
'avoid the zoids' There's no bed
times. You can eat what you want.
And, if you follow the rules, I
might let you fire my pistol.

The boys eyes light up like this is the coolest thing they ever heard.

MALIK (CONT'D)

Rule number one - don't talk to anyone. No telling whose a Zoid.
Rule number two - keep yourself sprayed with insecticide.

Malik lobs a spray bottle to the boys.

JAY

What is it?

MALIK

Don't want you boys getting sick on vacation.

Bobby SPRAYS his arms. Jay snatches the bottle from him.

JAY

My turn.

Malik sees a police car in his rear-view.

MALIK

Boys get your heads down.

The boys continue to wrestle for the spray. Malik reaches behind and gestures for them to duck...

MALIK (CONT'D)

Down! NOW!

The boys sink in their seats.

JAY

Why are we hiding?

MALIK

Um... we got a Zoid following us.
Don't make a sound.

The boys cover their mouths with their hands and giggle.

The cop car sidles up next to them. Malik glances across at it:

MALIK'S POV - THE COP stares back.

Malik turns away, discreetly opens up his duffel bag, takes out his Glock and places it on his lap. Jay sees this.

JAY

Dad!?

MALIK

Shhhh Jay. Everything's okay.

Malik turns the radio on. A 50s ROCKABILLY TUNE blares out.

The cop keeps staring at Malik. Malik keeps his eyes forward...

The cop car BLARES ITS SIREN and zooms ahead.

Malik BREATHES OUT. Indicates.

MALIK (CONT'D)

Lets take the scenic route.

WIDE - Malik's Jeep pulls off the glittering highway.

JAY (O.S.)

Dad can you tell us a war story?
Like all the battles you got in?
And have you ever driven a tank?

BOBBY (O.S.)

And have you ever jumped out of a
helicopter? No wait have you blown
up a helicopter?...

23

I/E. MALIK'S JEEP, GAS STATION - NIGHT

23

Malik pulls into the forecourt and parks.

MALIK

I got to fill up and pick-up a few
things.

JAY

Can we come with you?

Malik sizes up the customers inside: THREE DRUNK BROS.

Outside: a MAN covered head-to-toe in PPE cleans the forecourt
with a pressure washer hose.

MALIK

You could, or you could stay right
here and open up your presents.

Malik takes out two gift-wrapped presents from his duffel bag
and hands them to the boys.

Malik exits and begins to fill the jeep with gas.

The boys open their presents. Bobby has an Action Man.
Jay has fancy drawing pens.

Cool. JAY Whoa. BOBBY *

Bobby plays with his action man. Jay opens his pens but then realizes he doesn't have his sketchbook.

He HUFFS and slumps in his seat. But then he spies something--

Malik's file sticking out the duffel bag. He leans forward, grabs it and flicks through the pages.

CLOSE on the pages - a scientific paper on 'mind-control parasites'. It features electron microscope images of parasitic organisms. Ghastly Lovecraftian creatures rendered in exquisite detail.

CLOSE ON JAY, mesmerized by their terrifying strangeness.

DDRRRRVVVV - the pressure hose sprays against the window.

AH! JAY Aggghhh. BOBBY *

Jay and Bobby turn to see the cleaner staring at them through the smeared glass. Hard to discern if he's benign or sinister.

24 **INT. GAS STATION CONVENIENCE STORE - SAME**

24

A MELANCHOLIC COUNTRY TUNE plays from a stereo.

Malik stares up at a Dung Beetle fly around a fluorescent light.

The CASHIER (40s), a heavysset woman, watches Malik with a dead-eyed stare. *

Malik senses her gaze. He looks at her, smiles, and approaches the counter. *

He lays down his items: red bull, energy bars and a map: 'California & Nevada'. The cashier begins to scan the items.

MALIK
Full tank on number four.

CASHIER
Goin' on a road trip?

MALIK
Something like that.

CASHIER
Where you headin?

MALIK
North.

The cashier scans the map, glances at the cover.

MALIK
I collect them.

WARPED SCREAMING from the backroom. Malik look to the door.

MALIK
What was that?

The cashier leans over to the stereo and TURNS IT UP.

CASHIER
What was what?

25 **EXT. OREGON FARM HOUSE - NIGHT**

25

The MELANCHOLIC COUNTRY TUNE continues over:

SLOW TRACK TOWARDS the large barn doors beneath the house.

From within comes BANGING. Something trying to break free...

26 **I/E. MALIK JEEP, CALIFORNIA STATE PARK - NIGHT**

26

The Jeep bombs down a long straight road flanked by miles of large pine trees.

Bobby is asleep. Jay stares out the window, deep in some imaginative world.

MALIK
Jay, come up here.

Jay crawls to the front seat and buckles in.

He looks up at Malik. His hero. Sees a four-inch scar under his eye. The skull tattoo on his forearm.

MALIK
So you kept my letters.

JAY
Yeah.

MALIK

I kept all your drawings too. Some days I thought I'd never make it back. Those drawings kept me going.

They both smile, a touching beat.

JAY

Dad why do you have pictures of monsters?

MALIK

Monsters?

JAY

In your file.

MALIK

You're not supposed to go through my stuff.

JAY

That wasn't a rule.

MALIK

It is now; rule number three. And they're not monsters. They're parasites.

JAY

What's a parasite?

MALIK

It's a tiny organism that lives inside another creature.

JAY

Inside humans?

MALIK

Why don't you get some sleep and we can talk about it in the morning.

JAY

I gotta pee.

MALIK

How bad?

JAY

Real bad.

Malik glances in his wing-mirror - empty road. He pulls over.

27 **EXT. CALIFORNIA STATE PARK - CONTINUOUS**

27

They exit and walk into the shrubland. After a few feet:

MALIK
Alright that's enough.

They stop, unzip and begin to pee. Malik looks down at Jay.

MALIK
You getting any hair round your
pecker yet?

Jay turns away, embarrassed. Malik CHUCKLES to himself.

'WOOP'. Red and blue lights throb across the landscape. Malik turns and sees a STATE TROOPER pull up behind his Jeep.

MALIK
Jay get in the car.

Jay runs back to the Jeep and dives inside.

28 **INT. MALIK'S JEEP, CALIFORNIA STATE PARK - CONTINUOUS**

28

Jay enters. SLAMS THE DOOR. Bobby wakes, bleary-eyed.

BOBBY
Are we there yet?

JAY
Shut up.

They look out - A STATE TROOPER (40s), exits his vehicle. Thick neck, austere expression.

*

Malik approaches.

MALIK
Evening officer.

TROOPER
You can stop right there.

Malik stops beside the trunk of his Jeep.

29 **EXT. CALIFORNIA STATE PARK - CONTINUOUS**

29

The Trooper approaches Malik and gestures at the Jeep.

TROOPER
What's going on here?

MALIK

(shrugs)

We're on a road trip and stopped
for a toilet break.

TROOPER

And didn't think to put your hazard
lights on?

Malik breathes a sigh of relief.

*

MALIK

Oh. No one was on the road so...

TROOPER

I was on the road.

MALIK

My bad. I apologize.

Beat as the trooper squints and sees the boys inside the Jeep.

TROOPER

You say you're on a road trip?

MALIK

Uh-huh.

TROOPER

At 3am?

MALIK

The early bird...

The Trooper studies Malik for a long beat.

TROOPER

Put your hands on the trunk and
spread your legs.

MALIK

Shit, there ain't no need for--

The Trooper unclips the safety strap on his gun holster.

TROOPER

I got an 'easy-way hard-way' speech
prepared if you want to hear it.

Malik turns and places his hands on the back window.

The Trooper comes up behind Malik and gives him a pat-down,
starting at the ankles.

Jay and Bobby nervously watch from inside the jeep. Malik sees the fear in their eyes.

He winks at them and gestures at them to put their head down. Jay and Bobby lower themselves out of view. *

The Trooper finds Malik's Glock tucked in the back of his jeans.

TROOPER

You got a permit for this?

MALIK

Not on me. That against the law?

TROOPER

It's a class A misdemeanor if the firearm is loaded.

The Trooper opens the magazine - it's full. *

Malik mumbles a 'fuck' under his breath.

TROOPER

Do you have any other concealed weapons on you?

MALIK

No sir.

The Trooper tucks the gun into his belt then taps Malik on the shoulder. Malik turns.

MALIK

Look I'm a Marine, just came back from tour.

Malik slowly takes out his Marine I.D from his wallet and hands it to the Trooper.

The Trooper studies it on both sides, runs his fingernail across the photo.

MALIK

I'm taking my boys on a camping trip in Tahoe. I only have them for the weekend so I drive at night to make the most of it.

Beat on the Trooper studying the I.D. Then studying Malik. Then studying the I.D.

TROOPER

Guess you should know better. I'm placing you under arrest. Put your--

MALIK

You're arresting me for a
misdemeanor!?

TROOPER

And a traffic violation.

Malik sees a parasitic worm slither across the white of the Trooper's eye. Malik prickles with fear.

He turns and walks to his drivers door, frantically calculating his next move: *think, think, think...*

TROOPER

Woah, woah where you going?

MALIK

Let me just get my driver's license
officer. You can write me a ticket
and we'll be on our way.

The Trooper whips out his tazer and aims it at Malik's back.

TROOPER

Stop right there.

Malik freezes.

TROOPER

Place your hands behind your head.

Malik turns to face the Trooper, puts his palms out.

MALIK

Okay, chill, let's just--

The Trooper fires his tazer, the probes dart into Malik's chest. He collapses to his knees and his muscles lock up as 50,000 volts surge through his body.

MALIK

AGGHHHHH--

The 5-second-shock ends. Malik rips the wires away, rises--

The Trooper pulls out his service weapon--

Malik charges forward and grabs onto the Trooper's gun--

The Trooper FIRES - the bullet tears through the peak of Malik's truckers cap sending it spinning into the air.

They wrestle for control of the weapon - it's a messy, contorted, life-or-death grapple.

Hard to see who's winning in the darkness, we just hear GRUNTING and the SCUFFLE of boots on tarmac.

Malik's Glock falls from the troopers belt and CLATTERS to the ground. Neither can risk reaching for it.

BANG - a shot is fired into the sky. BANG - another shot is fired at the ground and kicks off the road.

The gun is twisted toward the JEEP -- at the boys... BANG!

The bullet PIERCES the window, spider web cracks splinter across the glass. Bobby SCREAMS... *is he hit?*

Malik CRIES OUT, galvanizing every fiber of strength -- he tears the gun away and PISTOL WHIPS the Trooper - hammering the handle into the Trooper's, face, CRACK, CRACK, CRACK--

The Trooper stumbles backward and COLLAPSES on the ground.

Malik darts towards the Jeep... the splintered window....

MALIK

BOYS!?

Malik swings the door open - sees them cowering inside.

JAY

We're okay.

Malik leans on his knees. Breathes once again.

QUICK SHOTS:

- Malik picks up his Glock from the tarmac.

- He reaches his hand inside the Trooper's vehicle and rips out the receiver.

- He enters his Jeep and screeches away. WE TRACK SIDEWAYS revealing the immobile Trooper laying by the side of the road.

30

I/E. MALIK'S JEEP, CALIFORNIA STATE PARK - CONTINUOUS

30

Malik GUNS the engine. The boys are adrenalized with fear.

MALIK

Sorry you had to see that boys.

Malik pulls the taser darts from his chest. He grimaces as the barbs tug against his skin.

BOBBY
I wanna go home.

MALIK
Arggghh, I know kid.

BOBBY
I wanna go home RIGHT NOW!

MALIK
We can't go home Bobby!

Bobby begins to SOB.

JAY
Why can't we go home?

Beat on Malik, *should he tell them?*

JAY
Dad!? Why can't we got home?

Malik pulls over and turns in his seat.

MALIK
Okay Bobby chill, chill. Come on,
take a breath. Nice and slow.

Bobby stops crying and takes several SHAKY BREATHS.

MALIK
That's it. You too Jay, breathe
in... and out...

Jay and Bobby mimic their father. After a few calming breaths:

MALIK
Okay look. This is isn't a road
trip. It's a rescue mission.

The boys glance at each other.

MALIK
You know I've been away fighting.
What I couldn't tell you was what
I've been fighting. Boys I've been
in a war that no one knows is going
on, fighting an enemy we weren't
even sure existed. Something's come
to our planet.

Stunned expressions on the boys as they compute:

JAY

Aliens?

MALIK

Non-terrestrial microorganisms.

BOBBY

I haven't seen any aliens.

MALIK

You have you just don't know it.
They live inside us and use us as
hosts. Folks look like they're
normal but they're not, they've got
a tiny creature inside them.

BOBBY

There's an alien inside of me?

MALIK

No, not unless you're infected.
It's spread through insects that's
why we use the spray. Think of it
like a force field.

JAY

What happens if you're infected?

MALIK

The parasite alters the neurochemistry--
(remembers his audience)
Okay you know that voice inside your
head that tells you right from wrong?
That's called your conscience. The
creature stops that from working.

BOBBY

So you become.... a baddie?

MALIK

Exactly. Even if you're a goodie.

JAY

How many people have been infected?

MALIK

A lot. We don't know exactly. Could
be as many as half the population.

BOBBY

We gotta go back and save Mom.

Sombre beat. Malik doesn't say anything. Jay connects the dots.

JAY
Mom's an alien.

MALIK
She's got one inside her. She's
still alive, just not in control.

Bobby and Jay start to silently cry. This kills Malik.

MALIK
I'm gonna save her boys. Trust me.
But I got to get you safe first.
I'm taking you to a base that's
still operational where there's a
whole team of scientists working on
a cure. Hell, they might even have
found one already.

Malik reaches his hand out.

MALIK
Take my hand.

CLOSE on their small hands clasping onto his.

MALIK
We're like the Three Musketeers.
Know who they were? The toughest
soldiers there ever was and there
were three of them. And they could
survive anything because they stuck
together.

31 **EXT. CALIFORNIA STATE PARK - DAY**

31

A MELLOW HUM OF INSECTS. WE TRACK TOWARDS the Trooper, laying *
just as Malik left him...

WE LAND ON A CLOSE-UP and hear GURGLES, he/it's alive.

The Alien-Trooper rises, revealing the mangled wreckage of a
face - collapsed eye socket, dislocated jaw, broken nose.
Dried blood streaks from every wound.

However he doesn't seem in pain. In fact he remains eerily
calm as he spits out tooth debris.

32 **INT. THE PATROL CAR - DAY**

32

The Trooper enters, reaches into his mouth, TEARS out a molar
and throws it out the window. He starts the car and drives away.
His one working eye doesn't blink.

33 **EXT. SHOPPING PRECINCT - MORNING**

33

The Trooper pulls into the parking lot. He takes his pump-action shotgun from the car holster and exits.

He strides across the parking lot and approaches Malik's Jeep.

He peers inside and sees Jay and Bobby fast asleep in the backseat. Jay's head is pressed against the window.

CLOSE ON THE TROOPER, studying Jay. The Trooper cries a single tear, perhaps the man inside trying to fight back...

The Trooper PUMPS his shotgun, presses it against the car window -- at Jay -- and FIRES--

34 **INT. JEEP, SHOPPING PRECINCT - MORNING**

34

Jay bolts upright and breathes in SHARPLY.

He checks his surroundings:

Outside a delivery truck has crashed into shopping carts.

Bobby sleeps next to Jay in the backseat.

Malik sits on the hood.

35 **EXT. JEEP, SHOPPING PRECINCT - SAME**

35

Malik reads scientific documents. He circles certain words and scrawls notes in the margins.

Jay exits the jeep. Malik turns.

MALIK
How'd you sleep?

JAY
Had a nightmare.

MALIK
I know the feeling.

Malik PATS the hood. Jay climbs up and sits next to him.

JAY
What you reading?

MALIK
I'm trying to become a
Neuroparasitology expert.

JAY

What's that?

MALIK

The study of mind control
parasites.

Jay looks at the file.

CLOSE on the document, listing parasites: "*Neurocysticercosis*",
"*Plasmodium falciparum*", "*Toxoplasma gondii*". Jay points at one.

JAY

What's this one do?

MALIK

Diplostomum pseudospathaceum. It
burrows inside a fish's eye and
manipulates its behavior so it gets
itself eaten by a bird. Then it
reproduces inside the birds guts.

JAY

Are the aliens reproducing inside
Mom's guts?

MALIK

God no. No, no, no. And even if
they did your mother's got guts to
spare. She's gonna be fine.

Malik shuts the file and steps down from the hood. He takes
out the map from his back pocket and lays it out and points
to a location in Nevada.

MALIK

So, our mission is to get here.
Groom Lake.

He then runs his finger into California's central valley.

MALIK

And this is where we're at.

Jay points further up the map at southern Oregon.

JAY

And this is where we came from.

MALIK

Shit who needs GPS when I got you.
You just got yourself a job
navigating.

Malik pats him on the arm and squeezes him.

MALIK

Woah, those muscles?

Jay shrugs. Malik takes him in more fully.

MALIK

You grew. Bobby and all.

Awkward beat - what Malik has missed.

MALIK (CONT'D)

Bet you got a big appetite to help those muscles grow don't you.

Malik BANGS on the roof of the jeep.

MALIK (CONT'D)

Bobby rise and shine. It's time for breakfast.

36

INT. DINER - MORNING

36

A DOZEN CUSTOMERS dot the tables, running the gamut of eccentric to the everyday. Everyone and no one could be one of 'them'.

Malik nurses a black coffee and scans each of them. Always watching. Always vigilant.

Bobby keeps his eyes down. Fearful to catch anyone's eye.

Jay studies an OLD MAN (80s) at the adjacent table. He has a nasal cannula hooked to a canister on the ground. His skin is almost translucent, we see the network of veins on his arms.

MALIK

Jay I thought you were drawing a picture for me.

Malik TAPS a napkin. Jay takes out a pen and starts drawing.

Malik lifts Bobby's chin so he looks up at him.

MALIK

Bobby try to relax. Nothing bad's going to happen while I'm around. And shit if this ain't an adventure I don't know what is. When it's all over you'll have one hell of a story to tell your school buddies. Just keep a smile on your face, best disguise there is.

Bobby gives a gap-toothed grin.

MALIK

Besides. I drove halfway across the state last night. That Trooper ain't gonna find us.

JAY

What if Bobby gets infected when we ain't looking. How will we know?

BOBBY

I ain't turning into an alien.

JAY

You sure smell like one.

Bobby shoves Jay. Jay grabs Bobby's action man and rips off his head. Bobby CRIES OUT. Malik grabs their hands.

MALIK

Stop! He's your kid brother.

Malik POPS the head back on and hands the action man to Bobby.

An inhumanly tanned WAITRESS (50s), approaches and places down three plates of pancakes and bacon. Jay and Malik tuck in.

MALIK

So, y'all remember this place?

The boys look around their surroundings blankly.

MALIK

We used to come here all the time.
Shit we lived only ten clicks up the road.

Zilch from the boys. Malik SIGHS. Notices Bobby's not eating.

MALIK

You're not hungry Bobby?

BOBBY

My tummy hurts.

MALIK

That's because you're anxious.
You've got an overflow of cortisol in your bloodstream which is stimulating your stomach acid.

Malik is met with a WTF expression.

MALIK

It's a perfectly natural reaction
to a stressful situation. But you
still gotta eat.

Malik picks up the maple syrup and oozes it onto Bobby's plate.
Bobby and Jay exchange a glance.

MALIK

What, you don't like maple syrup?

BOBBY

I'm not allowed.

JAY

Dylan says sugar makes him hyper.

MALIK

Well hell yeah it does, that's the
damn point - gives you a buzz.

Malik oozes more onto the plate, Bobby's eyes widen.

They tuck in and their unease melts away. Malik savors the
moment - almost a regular family meal.

MALIK

So Dylan a pain in the ass like
that - 'don't eat that sugar'?

BOBBY

He cooks macaroni and cheese and he
helps with homework and he lets me
drive his tractor...

JAY

Tells lame jokes. Has bad breath.

BOBBY

He takes us to Dave and Buster's.
Remember he won a big bear playing
skee-ball?

MALIK

Skee-ball huh? My 4th grade science
teacher liked skee-ball. Turned out
to be a swinger. Now I'm not sayin'
there's a correlation but it's
worth thinking on.

BOBBY

What's a swinger?

Malik half-regrets the comment.

MALIK

The worst kind of aliens.

BOBBY

People still play skee-ball when
they're aliens?

MALIK

They do lots of the same things we
do. They're just like us, just
without the soul.

37 **I/E. HATTIE'S CAR - DAY**

37

HATTIE HAYES (50), black, drives through a meth-blighted town
in northern California. She wears large cat-eye sunglasses.

A 40s Jazz song plays on the car radio *"It's so Peaceful in the
Country"*. Hattie MURMURS along, half-remembering the words.

38 **INT. MALIK'S MOTEL, CALIFORNIA - DAY**

38

Sound of a KEY TURNING. A MALE CARETAKER opens the door and
Hattie enters. Still wearing her sunglasses. We see a law
enforcement badge clipped to her belt.

HATTIE

You can leave.

The caretaker walks away. Hattie walks around the room and
inspects everything: empty cans of red bull in the trash, an
ashtray stacked with cigarette butts, empty cupboards.

She walks to the mini-fridge and sees a family photo: Malik,
Piya, Jay, around four, and Bobby, two years old.

She rips it away - the COWBOY magnet holding it in place
falls and BREAKS.

39 **EXT. PARKING LOT, SHOPPING PRECINCT - DAY**

39

Bobby races ahead holding his Action Man in the air. Jay and
Malik walk behind him.

MALIK

I'm getting a few supplies. Can you
hold fort and look after Bobby?

Jay looks across at the Walmart, wants to go with him.

MALIK

Big responsibility. Kind of a promotion. You up to it?

Jay nods. Malik hands him the keys.

MALIK

Good man. I'll be five minutes tops. Just stay in the Jeep

Malik puts on his truckers cap and Oakleys and walks away.

40

INT. MALIK'S JEEP - SAME

40

Bobby enters the back. Jay enters the passenger seat.

JAY

Dad says I'm in charge so you got to do what I say.

BOBBY

Well my blood is all anxious so I'm not doing nothing.

JAY

Fine. You lay low and I'll stand watch.

Bobby lays down on the back seat and plays with his action man.

Jay scans the SHOPPERS milling about in the car park.

BOBBY

Jay what do you think it's like when there's an alien inside you?

JAY

It's like you can hear everything and see everything, but you can't make a sound and can't move. You're a prisoner inside your own body.

BOBBY

You think the Red Sox are aliens?

JAY

Who cares. Why do you even like the Red Sox?

BOBBY

Dylan says they're going to win the season.

JAY

If Dylan likes them they're definitely aliens. And everyone on that dumb show he watches about doctors got aliens inside them. And his dad.

BOBBY

Grandpa's an alien?

JAY

Yup. That's why he smells funny.

Bobby contemplates that.

Jay turns to see - a FRENZIED WOMAN (30s) in the parking lot. Wild eyes. She jerks her limbs in strange contortions. Hard to tell if she's high or infected.

She turns to the boys -- they sink in their seats and whisper:

BOBBY

I think she saw me.

JAY

Shhh. Just stay down.

Bobby picks up the insect repellent from the floor and sprays himself - TSSsssss - empty.

They wait a long nervous beat...

JAY

(whispered)

Maybe she's gone.

Bobby looks up and sees the frenzied woman staring at him through the window bullet hole.

BOBBY

AHHHH!

Bobby unlocks his door and exits.

JAY

Bobby!?

Jay glimpses Bobby charge through the parking lot.

The woman BANGS on the passenger window. She has dried puke down her shirt. Wild eyes.

FRENZIED WOMAN

Hey you got ten dollars!?

She starts LAUGHING MANIACALLY. Jay's petrified.

He exits the Jeep, bolts towards the supermarket -- a car
nearly rams into him, breaking a few inches from him.

Jay turns another corner, sees Malik, runs towards him...

Malik turns. Jay approaches, panting as he speaks:

MALIK
How the hell d'you do that? I told
you to stay in the car!

JAY
There was an alien... and Bobby got
scared... and he ran away... and...

MALIK
Okay, calm down, calm down.
(scans the aisles)
Fuck.

Malik and Jay approach.

MALIK
Christ Bobby. What do you think
you're doing running off like that?

BOBBY
I got scared.

MALIK
That's not a goddamn excuse!

Bobby's eyes mist up.

MALIK
Look if you cry you're just gonna
draw attention to us.

A tear falls down Bobby's cheek. Malik SIGHS, eases up.

MALIK
Bobby...

Malik crouches down, takes off his Oakleys and puts them over
Bobby's wet eyes.

MALIK
You gotta pull yourself together
kid, we're behind enemy lines here.
You want us to get through this in
one piece you got to follow orders.
Understand?

Bobby nods. Malik lifts him up, places him in the trolley
then approaches Jay.

MALIK
This isn't a game. You mess up
again we got problems.

JAY
Why are you angry at me when he's
the dumb shit that ran off!?

MALIK
Because he's just a kid.

JAY
So am I.

MALIK
No you're not, not anymore. The
situation we're in calls for you to
grow up real fast. Which means
looking after your little brother.
We're a family and families take
care of each other. Understand?

Jay shakes his head at the injustice.

JAY

Yesssss.

Malik sees a BULKY SECURITY GUARD (40s), eyeing them from across the aisle. He turns back to Jay.

MALIK

Alright. At ease Marine.

Malik takes off his truckers cap and places it on Jay's head.

Malik turns and pushes the trolley, with Bobby inside.

Jay takes off the cap and studies the bullet hole.

44 **INT. SUPERMARKET, VARIOUS AISLES - DAY**

44

QUICK SHOTS:

Malik's hand comes into frame and grabs:

- Hot dogs.
- Six pack of beer.
- Two toothbrushes.
- Six pack of Red Bull.
- Burner cell.
- Box of 9mm's rounds.
- Bobby's hand comes into frame and grabs transfer tattoos.

*

45 **INT. LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICE - DAY**

45

Hattie, still wearing her shades, walks down a soulless corridor, humming the Jazz song.

*

46 **INT. HATTIE'S OFFICE - DAY**

46

She enters her office sees a PAROLEE (40s), waiting for her. An insect is tattooed across his shaven skull.

*

*

HATTIE

Stand.

The man rises. He towers over her.

HATTIE

Why are you in my office?

PAROLEE

You told me to come at noon.

*

HATTIE

And what time is it?

PAROLEE

(glances at his watch)

So I'm early.

HATTIE

I don't want you to be early.

I want you to be on time.

The Parolee clenches his jaw.

Hattie lowers her shades so he can see her eyes.

HATTIE

Oh you want to get real?

The Parolee relents and exits.

Hattie sits down at her desk, picks up the phone and dials.
She adopts a polite voice, almost transforming as a person:

HATTIE

Hi, is this Mrs González? ...

This is Hattie Hayes, yeah... so

have you seen Malik... Hmm, okay...

okay... thank you.

Hattie puts the phone down then takes out the photo of Malik
and his boys and pins it against a cork board of headshots.

She takes out her vape and inhales -- we hear the GURGLING...

CLOSE on the photo. Thick vapor enters frame and clouds our view.

47

I/E. MALIK'S JEEP, JAWBONE CANYON - DAY

47

*

Malik drives down a desert road. Bobby sits next to Malik.
Jay sulks in the back.

JAY

How come Bobby gets to sit in the
front?

MALIK

Cos he ain't lookin' at me like I
took a giant dump in his pillow.

Bobby licks a transfer tattoo and places it on his forearm.
He holds it up against Malik's skull tattoo.

MALIK

Look at that. Brothers in arms.

Malik notices a scar on Bobby's elbow.

MALIK

How'd you get that?

BOBBY

Fell out a tree.

JAY

Dylan told him not to climb it.

MALIK

(to Bobby)

But you went and did it anyway huh?

Bobby nods. Malik ruffles his hair.

MALIK

That's my boy.

Jay shakes his head, stung by this growing bond.

JAY

He just wants to look like you.

MALIK

And what's so bad about looking
like your old man?

Jay ignores him. He takes out the picture he drew of Malik at the diner - a remarkable likeness. He draws in large black 'alien' eyes, ruining the picture.

Malik studies Jay through the rear-view. He opens his window and puts his foot down. AIR GUSHES in.

MALIK

Hey Jay you think this can hit a
hundred?

Jay leans forward and watches the speedometer.

BOBBY

Go, Dad!

MALIK

Come on...

The needle passes 85, 90, 95... teeters on a hundred. Jay grins.

MALIK

Y'all ready to leave this planet?

Malik punches it, the speedometer reaches 100...

MALIK

Four. Three. Two. One. Lift off--

Malik veers off road -- onto a desert plain.

48

I/E. MALIK' JEEP, JAWBONE CANYON - CONTINUOUS

48

They SHAKE WILDLY in their seats as they RUMBLE across the rough ground. Dust clouds billow out from behind the Jeep.

MALIK

(yawns)

I feel like a nap all of a sudden.

Malik feigns to fall asleep and lets go of the wheel. Bobby excitedly takes the wheel, swerving around the sage bush. Jay, nervous, shoves his dad--

JAY

Dad wake-up, wake-up!!

Malik 'wakes'. Takes the wheel.

MALIK

What I miss?

BOBBY

I was driving.

MALIK

Yeah right, kids can't drive.

Malik pulls back onto the road.

49

I/E. MALIK'S JEEP, REDROCK RANDSBURG RD - DAY

49

*

Malik clocks the adrenalized smiles on the boys faces.

MALIK

So we all friends again now?

JAY

Sure.

Malik switches on the radio, 80s Heavy Metal BLASTS OUT.
Malik turns it up.

MALIK

Alright.

Malik glances at the boys grimacing faces.

MALIK

What y'all don't like Heavy Metal?

*

Blank faces from the boys.

MALIK

Come on - Megadeath? Guns 'N' Roses?
Iron Maiden???

JAY

I like K-Pop.

Malik shakes his head in disapproval.

MALIK

That's why you're in the back seat.

50

I/E MALIK'S JEEP, CALIFORNIA ROAD - DAY

50

A CHEESY-BUT-INFECTIOUS R'N'B BALLAD blasts from the stereo:
(e.g. *'Lose You To Love Me'* by Selena Gomez).

Malik's Jeep drives through a sandstone valley. He grits his
teeth through the music.

Jay looks outside and sees a small bee farm huddled around
grove of desert trees. A DOZEN BEEKEEPERS, looking like space
men, puff smoke around the beehive boxes.

JAY

Dad why doesn't the government just
spray insecticide from planes?

MALIK

You know how many insects there are
in the world? Two billion. For
every human being. We can't just
spray them to oblivion. Never mind
the ecological implications even if
we could. No pollinators means no
food, means we'd starve.

JAY

So how are they going to stop it?

MALIK

I don't know. I'm not a scientist,
just a Marine. And my mission's not
to save the world. Just you two.

JAY

And Mom.

MALIK

Right, and Mom.

BOBBY

And Dylan?

MALIK

Mmmm, might be too late for Dylan.

JAY

You think there's a part of mom
still fighting it?

MALIK

(laughs)

Sure sounds like your mother.

JAY

I think there was. I mean she'd
been acting real funny recently.

MALIK

Yeah?

JAY

Yeah like barfing all the time.

MALIK

Barfing huh. Like in the mornings?

JAY

Uh-huh. And eating weird stuff like
chicken nuggets and peanut butter.

Malik abruptly pulls over and SKIDS to a stop.

He stares out into the distance, his mind whirring,
conflicted impulses.

JAY

Dad, what's wrong?

MALIK

Just gotta check in with base.

51A **EXT. SHRUB LAND - DAY**

51A *

Malik exits and marches into the shrubland...

51B **INT. DEPRIVED TOWN - DAY**

51B

Hattie walks through a semi-abandoned neighborhood. Half the houses are boarded up. She approaches a derelict house.

An Akita dog runs towards her but is yanked against it's chain. It BARKS at Hattie, possessed by some feral instinct.

Hattie gazes back, unfazed.

Her phone RINGS. She answers and walks away from the dog.

INTERCUT:

MALIK

Hattie it's me, Malik.

HATTIE

Malik! Where the hell you been?

MALIK

Hattie I'm sorry I --

HATTIE

You didn't turn up for work.

MALIK

Listen --

HATTIE

You missed your psych-evaluation.

MALIK

I know, I --

HATTIE

You want to go back to prison?

MALIK

Hattie shut up and listen! I need you to go check on Piya.

HATTIE

Check on Piya!? Tell me what's goin' on and where you --

MALIK

I went and got my kids.

HATTIE

What do you mean 'got them'?

MALIK

They're with me now.

HATTIE

Christ Malik that's called kidnapping, and if you've crossed state lines that's a federal offense.

MALIK

Didn't kidnap them, I saved them. Can't explain it all now but they're safe.

HATTIE

Malik stop, stop talkin'. Tell me exactly where you are right now!

MALIK

Can't do that Hattie, you might be one of them.

HATTIE

One of what!?

MALIK

Just go check on Piya, she's in the garage with Dylan.

HATTIE

Garage!? What!? Malik, have you lost your mind?

ON MALIK - he hangs up, stares at his phone and considers what Hattie just said. It disturbs him.

He switches the phone off and looks at the boys staring at him from the Jeep.

52

EXT. OREGON FARMHOUSE - DAY

52

PRE-LAP: Gustav Holst's 'Neptune' plays over:

SLOW TRACK towards the large garage doors. TWO COPS watch as a HANDYMAN uses a buzzsaw to cut through the chain lock.

It breaks. The cops heave open the doors.

Sunlight floods into the garage revealing Piya and Dylan, mouths gagged with gaffer tape and hands bound with zip ties. They squint under the sun's glare.

53 **I/E. MALIK'S JEEP, TRONA PINNACLES - DAY**

53 *

Malik turns up 'Neptune' playing on the radio. Mythical, mystical music. It seems to soothe him as takes in view outside: Striking tufa spires reaching up into the sky.

Malik glances in the rear-view at his boys asleep in the back.

CLOSE on Bobby's arms are covered in transfer tattoos.

CLOSE Jay's forearm where he's drawn a skull with stars around it, emulating Malik's tattoo.

54 **INT. OREGON, FARMHOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY**

54

Piya and Dylan, sit on the sofa talking to two FBI agents:

- SHEPARD WEST (57), features carved from granite, eyes that have seen it all. He talks softly which tempers his grave appearance.

- LANCE DUNN (35), slicked-back undercut. Wired energy. Eager to prove.

Piya and Dylan, teary-eyed and traumatized, talk hastily:

PIYA

He says he just wants to talk so I let him in. But then he starts acting really strange, shining a flashlight in my eye.

SHEPARD

Hmm. Then what?

DYLAN

I try to get him to back off and he throat punches me and then whips out a fucking gun --

PIYA

And then he just explodes, never seen him like that, told us not to come near him, like he was afraid of us even though he was holding the gun. Tells us he's going to 'save' the boys.

Shepard and Lance exchange a look on 'save'.

HATTIE enters and surveys the hive of activity: An FBI TECHNICIAN copies the family computer hard drive. A COP sifts through family photos. Another fills out a report.

Hattie ambles toward the sofa, hovers within earshot:

SHEPARD

And you weren't expecting him?

PIYA

Well, no, I knew he was out but he was supposed to come next week. See the boys didn't know he was in prison. Malik felt they were too young to come to terms with it.

Dylan shakes his head, always thought this a bad idea.

PIYA

So we pretended he was still in the military and he was going to tell them when he was out.

Hattie steps forward.

HATTIE

Hi, I'm Malik's parole officer. I called this in.

LANCE

Your office said he'd missed a psych-eval?

HATTIE

That's right, I was chasin' him up on it.

LANCE

And you waited twenty four hours?

HATTIE

Excuse me, Malik wasn't deemed a flight risk!

Shepard gives a 'slow down' gesture to Hattie and Lance.

SHEPARD

Let's not play the blame game. Miss if you don't mind stepping aside.
(gestures to the corridor)
We'll talk when we're done here.

A COP edges Hattie out the living room and closes the door on her. She stands in the hallway looking at the closed door, feeling wretched.

56

INT. OREGON FARMHOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

56

Hattie sits at the dining table staring at Bobby's Toy Frog. *

LANCE

I'm Special Agent Lance Dunn from
the FBI Child Abduction Rapid
Deployment Team.

HATTIE

Um, Hattie Hayes. Shasta County
Parole. *

Shepard enters and sits at the kitchen table.

SHEPARD

And I'm just plain ol' Shep.
(gestures)
Take a seat Hattie.

Hattie sits. Shepard takes out a notepad and pen.

SHEPARD

Mind showing me the number he
called you on? *

Hattie passes Shepard her phone. As he writes the number:

SHEPARD

What cases you work Hattie?

HATTIE

Mostly drug'n'thug.

SHEPARD

So tell us what you know about our
kidnapper.

HATTIE

Grew up in foster care. Not all of
it good. Staff Sergeant in the
Marine Raider Regiment. Did ten
tours in all. He was court-
martialed for beating up his
Captain. *

Lance interjects, reading from his iPad:

LANCE

Broke the guy's jaw into five
pieces... nerve damage... permanent
scarring... had to be placed in a
medically induced coma for a week.
Did two years in Leavenworth *

Shepard stares at Hattie, *that true?*

HATTIE

That's right.

SHEPARD

And your experience with him?

HATTIE

He'd been out for nearly a month so we only met four times. He was very polite, called me 'Ma'am', not everyone does that. He seemed like a good guy. The only reason I arranged the psych-test was because he said he wasn't sleeping.

LANCE

That was your assessment - 'he seemed like a good guy'?

HATTIE

Excuse me I'm a good judge of character.

LANCE

Everyone thinks they're a good judge of character.

HATTIE

Well I turn over a hundred and twenty clients a year, been doin' this for eighteen years and that's...

(tries to do the math)

A lot of cases. And I got to look each of 'em in the eye and see if I can find the good in them. That's what I do, that's my job. Now Malik has royally fucked up but... he's a good guy.

LANCE

Look it's very sweet you're one of those 'benefit of the doubt' P.O's but by not putting out an arrest warrant straight away you've exponentially increased the risk of these boys being hurt or killed.

Hattie laughs, thinks this is melodramatic.

HATTIE

Malik ain't gonna hurt anyone,
least of all his boys.

LANCE

There's a State Trooper in Tehama
who would beg to differ. Malik damn
near took his face off.

Hattie is stunned. She looks to Shepard who confirms with a nod.

HATTIE

Is he gonna be okay?

LANCE

After reconstructive surgery.

SHEPARD

Lance go and see if tech's finished
up, we're headin' out in five.

Lance exits.

HATTIE

What's up with Johnny Utah?

Shepard TAPS his pen on his pad, unsure whether to say:

SHEPARD

We think Malik could be a family
annihilator. That's when a parent--

HATTIE

I know what it is.

SHEPARD

But you don't buy it?

Hattie shakes her head, though the thought terrifies her.

SHEPARD

He sure ticks a lot of the boxes:
Separated from his wife. Isolated
from his children. Dishonorably
discharged from the one thing he
did well. No benefits, no
healthcare, no pension. A complete
and total loss of status. A few
years inside for all that to
ferment - the resentment, the rage.
Add PTSD into the mix and you got
yourself a ticking time bomb.

He gives her a look like the conclusion is obvious.

SHEPARD

He packed no clothes for the boys.
No toys. Not even a toothbrush. You
know he had a gun on him? What's a
convicted felon doing buying a
pistol?

Hattie doesn't want to go there.

HATTIE

But... he loves his boys.

SHEPARD

Practically all annihilators are
considered loving fathers. That's
why no one sees it coming.

Hattie feels sick to her stomach.

SHEPARD

If we don't stop him Malik Khan is
going to execute his children then
kill himself because that's the
ultimate revenge on his ex-wife.

A solemn beat. Shepard stands and hands Hattie her card.

SHEPARD

He calls again get in touch.

Shepard exits. Hattie stays seated, devastated.

And with this chilling diagnosis echoing in our minds we cut to:

57A **I/E. MALIK JEEP, CINDER CONE - DAY**

57A *

Malik's Jeep hurtles across a dirt road that's banked by red
and black sand dunes. A surreal alien landscape. *

CLOSE ON MALIK, his wired eyes focus on the road. Sweat
trickles down his temple. His jaw is clenched. Every fiber of
him tightly coiled.

Jay and Bobby sit in the back, oblivious to the potential
danger they're in. Bobby swings his leg hitting Jay's foot.

JAY

Hey you're on my side.

BOBBY

No I'm not.

Jay SHOVES Bobby's leg. Bobby punches Jay on the thigh.

JAY

Ow.

MALIK

Quit it!

Beat.

BOBBY

Are we there yet?

MALIK

No.

BOBBY

Are we there soon?

MALIK

Bobby I need to think right. So
let's all just quietly enjoy the
view.

Bobby brings his window down and holds his action man outside
so he 'flies' across the landscape.

MALIK

Bobby pull your hand in.

Bobby pulls his arm in but still dangles the action man out
the window. Malik watches at him through the rear-view.

MALIK

You drop that thing I ain't turning
back.

Bobby continues to bob his toy up and down, tempting fate...

He glances at Malik, who isn't looking -- and lets go.

BOBBY

It slipped.

MALIK

Well he's gonna have to fend for
himself from now on.

It dawns on Bobby he won't see his action man again. His lip
quivers. His face creases up and he begins to cry.

BOBBY

(sobbing)

Turn around.

MALIK

Welcome to the school of life kid.
You fuck up you pay the price.

Bobby explodes into a volcanic tantrum - he SCREAMS and lashes out at Malik, slapping his arm and face.

BOBBY

TURN AROUND! TURN ROUND!

MALIK

Whoa, woah, woah!!!

Malik tries to grab Bobby's hands. Bobby HYPERVENTILATES, claws at Malik, scratching his face.

57B

I/E. MALIK JEEP, CINDER CONE - CONTINUOUS

57B

*

The jeep veers toward a steep mound of dirt... Malik swerves back - the jeep tips onto two wheels...

Malik, Jay and Bobby grip onto the roof handles. They're too terror-struck to make a sound. We hear the creak of metal, anticipate the crash...

The Jeep miraculously falls back and SLAMS onto it's other wheels.

Malik brakes. All three jolt against their seatbelts.

A moment of stillness as the three of them take nervous shallow breaths. Malik turns in his seat and studies his boys.

MALIK

You okay?

Jay and Bobby are too scared to speak. They simply nod.

Malik turns and punches the dashboard - SMACK, SMACK, SMACK--

MALIK

JESUS FUCKING CHRIST BOBBY YOU
NEARLY GOT US KILLED!

The boys just watch in stunned silence. Malik spins around and points at Bobby with his bloody fist.

MALIK

You're acting like a goddam baby!
When I tell you we're leaving the
toy we're leaving the damn toy!

JAY

Jesus Dad, leave him alone.

Malik turns, shamed. He BREATHES SLOW. Tries to depressurize...

Bobby cries silently, scared of making a sound. He begins to pee himself. He unbuckles, exits the car and sprints off.

MALIK

Bobby!? Fuck.

Malik exits and runs after him...

58

EXT. CINDER CONE - DUSK

58

WIDE - Bobby sprints as fast as his legs will carry him. He's dwarfed by the immensity of the landscape.

WE TRACK WITH MALIK - charging after him...

MALIK

BOOOOOBBBBBBYYYYYY!

TRACKING WITH BOBBY - panting, heart-racing, feet pounding--

He trips into the gravel... no time to cry. He rises -- runs--

Malik approaches and TACKLES him -- they collapse into the dirt. Bobby SCREAMS, tries to wrestle free. Malik hugs him close.

BOBBY

(hysterical)

Get off me! I hate you, I hate you!

Malik soothingly rubs his bloody hand over Bobby's forehead.

MALIK

Sorry Bobby, I fucked up, I'm sorry.

Malik rocks Bobby back-and-forth and continues to stroke his head. He softly whispers 'shhhhhh', slowly calming Bobby.

59

EXT. CINDER CONE DIRT ROAD - DUSK

59

CLOSE on the action man laying on the gravel with an arm missing. Malik's Jeep reverses into frame.

Bobby's hand reaches down and picks up the action man.

60

EXT. ALABAMA HILLS - DUSK

60

*

WIDE - an expanse of rocky hills. Nestled in a corner is a small desert lake.

*

*

Bobby and Malik swim in the murky green water.

MALIK

It's just survival instincts kid,
fight or flight, your body gets rid
of everything that might slow you
down. I've seen Navy Seals piss
themselves when the bullets start
flying. Toughest guys in the world.
Just means you're still human.

Jay watches from the water's edge. Still spooked by Malik.

MALIK

Come on Jay, Three Musketeers.

Jay weighs it up. *Fuck it.* He rises and jumps in--

Improvise: The three of them swim and play in the spring.
Malik throws the boys in the air and dunks their heads
underwater. Jay and Bobby revel in the rough play.

61

INT. BOWLING ALLEY - EVENING

61

Hattie enters what is more an entertainment-complex-meets-nightclub than traditional bowling alley. As she navigates through it the SCREAMING CHILDREN, POUNDING MUSIC, ARCADE NOISES assault her from every angle.

She approaches a PARTY OF A DOZEN. Mix of parents and kids.
Her daughter, ZOE (12), runs up and hugs her.

ZOE

You made it!

As they embrace Hattie waves to the other parents.

HATTIE

Sorry I'm late baby, you winning?

ZOE

We're losing but I got two strikes.

HATTIE

Damn girl, look at you.

FRIEND (O.S.)

Zoe it's your go.

Zoe runs back to the lane. Hattie sits next to her husband, ERNIE (50s), kind face that's always on the verge of a smile.

ERNIE

Don't worry I've been pretending to
be you so you're actually doing
pretty good.

Hattie musters half a credible smile. Ernie clocks her unease.

ERNIE

You okay?

She bobs her head side-to-side. Ernie swivels in his seat and begins to massage her shoulders.

ERNIE

Jesus you got rocks under here?
Gonna break my fingers. Come on,
deep breaths.

Hattie breaths deep, tries to relax.

ERNIE

Who got on the wrong side of you
today?

HATTIE

I got on the wrong side. Gave
someone the benefit of the doubt
that I shouldn't have.

ERNIE

You can't be right all the time.

HATTIE

Yeah but this guy could be bad
news.

ERNIE

How bad?

Hattie studies Zoe LAUGHING with her friends, cushioned from the horrors of the adult world.

HATTIE

As bad as they come.

Arcade noises explode nearby: KABOOM!

Hattie turns, sees -- a MAN IN MILITARY FATIGUES, Malik's age, plays a shooting arcade game. He's intensely focused as he fires at the screen. KABOOM!

CLOSE ON HATTIE, watching, thinking...

62

EXT. ALABAMA HILLS - EVENING

62

Malik covers the boys' bodies in insect repellent. Then he sprays the earth, creating a muddy texture, and dabs it onto the boys faces like camouflage make-up.

SHEPARD (PRE-LAP)

He's a desperate man willing to take desperate measures: Kidnapping, false imprisonment, resisting arrest, aggravated battery. We've put the AMBER alert out but Malik Khan has a twenty-two-hour lead on us and that's a scary head start so we need to tighten the net real quick.

Improvise: Malik teaches his boys to shoot. He shows them how to load the gun and fire at empty beer bottles. It's unnerving to see such young children handling a weapon.

63

INT. FBI HEADQUARTERS - EVENING

63

Shepard addresses a task force of a dozen agents.

SHEPARD

This rescue operation extends to all adjacent states. So make the calls, scan every pixel of CCTV, at every gas station and every ATM.

Shepard's briefing continues over:

64

INT. OREGON FARMHOUSE, JAY AND BOBBY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

64

Piya surveys the room - it's just as they left it. Clothes scattered everywhere. Rumpled bedsheets. The imprint of their heads on the pillows.

*

Piya holds back welling tears.

SHEPARD (O.S.)

And remember he's a highly trained Marine who has had survival and tactical training and multiple combat experiences. Likely has Complex PTSD and may exhibit impulsivity and extreme aggression.

SHEPARD (O.S.) (CONT'D)
So be vigilant and be safe. That's
all ladies and gentlemen.

Piya sees Jay's scrunched up drawing on his desk. She sits and unfolds it, gently, as if it were a precious artifact.

CLOSE on the warped picture of astronaut-Malik, firing a ray gun.

Dylan enters. Piya looks up at him. Sees the tears in his eyes. His heart is broken too.

He walks towards her. She stands and they embrace and cry together. We HOLD on them grasping onto each other.

65

INT. HATTIE'S HOME, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

65

Hattie on her laptop scrolling through Malik's Facebook page.

CLOSE on a the screen - a picture of Malik posing with a sniper rifle. She clicks on another where he poses with other Marines. Some of their faces are pixelated out. She writes the names of the others.

ERNIE (O.S.)
These the boys?

Hattie turns -- sees Ernie watching a news report about the abduction. School photos of Jay and Bobby appear on screen.

Hatties stares at the TV, guilt eating her up inside.

66

EXT. ALABAMA HILLS - NIGHT

66

Bobby sleeps on a blanket next to the dying campfire. Malik and Jay sit next to each other, Malik sips from his beer.

JAY
You shouldn't have been so hard on
him. He's just a kid.

Malik smiles, filled with pride Jay is sticking up for his kid brother.

JAY
And he just explodes if you provoke
him like that.

MALIK
Yeah, Bobby's combustibile like me.
But you're something else.

JAY

I ain't tough if that's what you mean.

MALIK

Don't know about that. You can keep a level head when all hell's breaking loose. That's a rare kind of tough. That's why we need you around.

Jay gives a 'maybe' shrug.

MALIK

Humble too. Girls'll love that. Learn to tell a few jokes and cook a fancy meal you got yourself a full deck of cards.

Jay half-smiles, the world of 'girls' some years away.

JAY

Dad, do you still love Mom?

MALIK

Sure I do. We had some tough years, but we had plenty of good ones too. Did I ever tell you how we met?

Jay shakes his head. Malik sips his beer.

MALIK

A buddy of mine took me to a dance. Now I'm not much of a dancer so I got pretty loaded to loosen up. Must have sunk a dozen whiskeys cos a few hours later I'm all in. I mean you haven't seen anything like it, I'm the star of the show. But then I try and do a back flip and end up kickin' her in the face.

Jay laughs, spitting out beer. Malik laughs too.

MALIK

Felt so bad I tended to her the whole night getting ice to put the swelling down. Must have said something right because the next evening we go on a date, 'cept because of her black eye we're getting funny looks, like I'm... you know, beating her up. So instead we drive to the lake and...

Malik censors himself but smiles fondly.

MALIK

We had a good time.

Malik sips his beer, savoring the memory.

MALIK

You know me and Dylan used to be friends?

Jay nods.

MALIK

Would *that* Dylan have gotten with her and pretended to be your father? People change, but not that much. Loyalty - that's human.

Malik stares up at the night's sky.

MALIK

Jesus you see that.

Jay looks up at the star-filled desert sky.

JAY

What?

MALIK

Meteors.

Jay glances at an awestruck Malik. Then looks back up at the static constellation of stars.

JAY

I don't see anything.

MALIK

What are you blind!? Must be a hundred of 'em.

Jay studies Malik, at his intense unblinking eyes.

MALIK

You see them explode?

Malik looks at Jay, incredulous he isn't witnessing the same cosmic phenomenon. Jay looks back up at the sky and nods.

JAY

(pretending)

Oh yeah. Must be a hundred.

MALIK

We better move out. Only a matter of
hours before they're in the ecosystem.

Malik stands and stops on the dying fire. Jay watches him.

67

EXT. MALIK'S JEEP, DESERT ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

67

Malik's shines his flashlight on a flat front tire.

MALIK

Sonovabitch.

JAY

You got a spare?

MALIK

Thousand dollar cars don't come
with spares.

Malik looks down the dark empty road ahead of them.

68

INT. SPORTS BAR - NIGHT

68

A FEW LOCALS dot the tables. PRO FOOTBALL plays on the TV.
Hattie enters and approaches an ALPHA, RAÚL (40s), at the
counter.

*

HATTIE

Raúl?

(he turns)

Sorry I'm late.

RAÚL

Get in quick, they're 'bout to
close up.

Hattie waves to the barman and points at Ray's beer.

HATTIE

Whatever he's having.

(as she sits)

Thanks for coming.

RAÚL

Not a problem. So you said...

(quietly)

Malik kidnapped his boys?

HATTIE

Yup. Pulled a gun on Piya and her husband, tied them up and took the boys. We don't know where he is or what he's planning to do.

The barman places a beer on the table.

HATTIE (CONT'D)

I'm trying to figure out what triggered him. You guys were close right?

RAÚL

Yeah. Very. Been through hell and back together. He was a good guy that was handed a raw deal.

HATTIE

What kind of Marine was he?

RAÚL

Malik was a fucking badass. Excuse my French. But he also knew how to turn it on and off.

HATTIE

What about the assault?

*

RAÚL

That was out of character. But you got to take into account what we were going through. We'd been in three different firefights that day, seen two of our buddies get ripped up, it's 120 degrees, we're gettin' eaten alive by bugs. The stress was just... unimaginable.

*
*

Raúl remembers, the trauma simmers just below the surface.

RAÚL (CONT'D)

We found some children in the wreckage. Our dip shit Captain made an offhand comment and Malik exploded. Something snapped.
(he shrugs)
Then his fucking world came tumbling down.

*
*
*
*
*
*

HATTIE

Did he ever mention Piya, or the divorce, was he resentful?

RAÚL

Resentful? No. He was the one who asked for it. Told her to get on with her life.

*

HATTIE

Huh. You mentioned some letters?

Raúl digs into his backpack and hands Hattie some letters.

RAÚL

So we kept in touch but a year ago I get these.

CLOSE on the letters, we glimpse sentences: *"The world has changed"*. *"Our humanity is eroding"* *"How do they infect us?"*. *"Have to save my boys"*.

RAÚL (CONT'D)

Pretty out there stuff. Obviously I thought he was having some kind of breakdown so I wrote back telling him to get help. Never got a reply.

Hattie flicks through them, some have haunting sketches - a man covered in bees, another shows worms bursting from a skull, another is just page of eyes, full of byzantine detail.

HATTIE

How'd I miss this?

She shakes her head, trying to fathom where she went wrong.

HATTIE (CONT'D)

Mind if I take these?

Raúl gestures, *yours*.

HATTIE (CONT'D)

You think he'd ever hurt his boys?

Raúl sips his beer, never wanted to entertain that thought.

RAÚL

The man adores them. But...
(gestures at the letters)
That's way above my head.

Malik's jeep ROARS down a dark desert road. The burst front tire means the car shudders and leans to one side.

Malik's eyes scan the landscape for refuge. Jay studies the map shaking wildly on his lap. Somehow Bobby sleeps through this in the back seat.

JAY

Dad if half the world are aliens
how come nothing's been on TV?

MALIK

They don't want to create panic.

JAY

So the president knows?

MALIK

He probably got turned first. Sure
would explain a lot.

JAY

Has anyone else seen one of these
meteors?

Malik thinks a beat, doesn't have an answer.

JAY

Wouldn't there be videos online?
Wouldn't NASA know about them?

MALIK

They take that stuff down.

JAY

Why would they take it down?

MALIK

(taps on the map)
Jay you're supposed to be the
navigator remember. I'm the
commanding officer. Leave the big
picture stuff to me.

CLANG! The car sinks down further as the tire rips away
leaving the wheel rim to SCRAPE VIOLENTLY across the ground.

Bobby wakes from his slumber, totally disorientated.

The car swerves across the road, Malik struggles to maintain
control. He sees a lonely ranch house ahead...

The jeep lurches to a stop beside a weathered ranch house.
Malik eyes a car in the driveway.

MALIK

You think I'm making this up?

JAY

No.

Malik turns and studies Jay. Sees doubt in his eyes.

MALIK

You don't look so sure.

JAY

It's just... a lot to take in.

Malik takes out his penlight, grabs Jay's head and shines it in his eye. Jay tries to wriggle free.

JAY

Get off me.

MALIK

Stay still.

BOBBY

SSSSTTTTOOOOOOPPPP!

Malik glances at Bobby. Doesn't want another outburst.

MALIK

Pack the gear up and wait here.

Malik exits. Jay and Bobby exchange a glance.

71

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

71

Malik walks up the path sweeping his Maglite across the yard.

He approaches a Ford Crown Victoria. Tries the door - locked. Next to it is a bullet-ridden Cadillac. Behind the windscreen - a sign: "*Trespassers will be shot. Survivors will be shot again*".

A flag SNAPS in the wind. Malik shines his flashlight up at it - an American flag with the Roman numeral 'III' surrounded by a circle of stars (symbol of the 'Three Percenters' militia).

It's as if the universe were screaming at him to turn back. He looks back at his sons inside the jeep.

He looks back at the ranch house. All lights are off.

72

INT. RANCH HOUSE, KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

72

Malik tries the back door, it's open.

He enters and turns on the kitchen light. Cockroaches scatter *
across the kitchen surface.

Malik slowly walks through the kitchen and enters...

THE DINING ROOM

*

He flips the lights on and sees a key hanger by the front door.

He walks towards it, reaches out for the car keys...

A gun is COCKED. Malik spins and whips out his Glock.

GRANT

Easy now.

The Rancher, GRANT (60s), sits in a rocking chair holding a *
sawn-off shotgun. He's in shadow but we can just make out his *
long beard.

GRANT

Two boys, eight and ten. A thirty
eight-year-old male. Armed and
dangerous, driving a blue Cherokee
with California plates; my camera
couldn't pick out the plates but if
I were a betting man...

MALIK

Our car broke down.

GRANT

So you were fixing to take mine?

MALIK

I wasn't looking to hurt anyone.

GRANT

That gun you in your hand loaded?

MALIK

Yeah.

GRANT

So there's that.

Malik notices Grant's camouflage clothing.

MALIK

You in the military?

GRANT

Not the one you're talking 'bout.

MALIK

I did five tours.

GRANT

Yeah? Whose side were you on?

Beat as Malik calculates his next move.

MALIK

The side that awarded me the bronze star.

GRANT

(laughs)

You can put whiskers on snake and call it a kitty don't mean it ain't gonna bite.

MALIK

Look I can just leave, walk to the next town.

GRANT

You coulda done that but you chose to come in here. Onto my property. And that's a helluva mistake when you got a ten thousand dollar reward on your head.

The tension in the air thickens.

GRANT

Then again, can't say I hold much esteem for the federal government. So why don't you put your gun away and we can talk like men. Maybe there's a way we both come out of this on top.

A tense beat. Then Malik tucks the gun in the back of his jeans.

Grant stands and steps forward into the light - his skin is ravaged with clusters of tiny holes, like a beehive, inside each cavity yellow larvae writhe to the surface. He lets out a HORRIFYING WARPED SOUND.

Panic grips Malik's spine, he runs to the door --

Grant aims at Malik -- FIRES - hits a shelving unit CRACK.

*

Malik darts back, runs into the living room -- jumps over the couch -- Grant FIRES - BOOM - feathers erupt from the cushions. The HI-FI system is hit too - it turns on and 'YACHT * ROCK' plays from the speakers. *

Malik lands on the floor with a THUD. His gun scatters away.

He GRUNTS. Wounded. He looks down - his shirt is speckled crimson. He rips it open and sees blood drooling from a hole beneath his ribs.

Grant LOADS two more buckshots and PACES towards the sofa--

Malik scans the floor for his Glock - sees it several feet away* He goes to reach it but sees Grant's shadow approaching...

A split second decision - he reaches for a wooden floor lamp, grabs it with both hands, rises...

And swings - the base SMASHES into Grant's face. Grant drops to the floor like a marionette that's had its strings cut.

Malik stumbles over to Grant and sees...

He's perfectly human. Blood oozes out from a thick gash on his forehead.

CLOSE ON MALIK, in total shock. The veil of his delusion lifted.

73

INT. MALIK'S JEEP, RANCH HOUSE - NIGHT

73

Jay and Bobby stare at the ranch house from the Jeep.

BOBBY

You think dad shot an alien?

JAY

How the hell am I supposed to know
I'm sitting right here with you!?

Jay picks up Malik's cell from the dashboard, turns it on - '23 missed calls'. He goes to the 'previous call' list.

BOBBY

What are you doing?

JAY

Calling base.

74A

EXT. MALIK'S JEEP, RANCH HOUSE - NIGHT

74A

*

Jay exits the jeep and paces on the gravel path outside.

74B **INT. HATTIE'S CAR, NORTHERN CALIFORNIA ROAD - NIGHT**

74B *

Hattie drives down an empty road.

Her phone RINGS. She glances at the caller - 'MALIK KHAN'.

She veers, pulls over and answers.

INTERCUT:

HATTIE

Malik!?

JAY

It's Jay, his son. Is this base?

HATTIE

Base!? No Jay, my names's Hattie
Hayes, I'm your father's parole
officer, where are --

JAY

What's a parole officer?

HATTIE

They help people who come out of
prison. Is your dad with --

JAY

My dad was in prison?

HATTIE

Yes he was, for two years.

JAY

Why was he in prison?

HATTIE

Jay I need to know where you are
right now.

JAY

I don't know. We entered Nevada a
few miles back. Why was he in
prison?

HATTIE

How many miles was that?

JAY

How do I know you're not an alien?

Car lights glare, Jay turns - sees the Crown Vic approaching.

HATTIE

Alien? Jay listen, you've been
kidnapped, Your Mom is terribly--

JAY

Mom. Is my Mom okay?

HATTIE

Yes she is but she wants you to come--

The Crown Vic pulls up beside the jeep. Jay hangs up.

MALIK

Boys get in.

Bobby exits the Jeep and dives in the Crown Vic. Jay hesitates.

JAY

Did you shoot an alien?

MALIK

Sure I did. A mean ugly one.

JAY

How'd you know it was one of them?

MALIK

You want to go and see for yourself?

75

I/E. GRANT'S CROWN VIC, DARK NEVADA ROAD - NIGHT

75

*

Malik drives. Jay's next to him. Bobby sleeps in the back.
Malik sweats profusely and is drained of color. Jay looks
down at his blood-stained shirt.

JAY

You're bleeding.

Malik looks under his shirt to check his improvised dressing -
a dish cloth gaffer-taped to his abdomen.

MALIK

Flesh wound. I'll fix it up later,
Got to get some miles under us.

Malik grimaces. Jay studies him - his face a mask of pain.

JAY

But you're hurting real bad.

MALIK

I'm fine.

Malik RETCHES. He quickly opens his door and VOMITS onto the road. The Crown Vic RUMBLES onto a rocky embankment...

Malik swerves back onto the road and brakes. He looks at Jay. Puke-tears in his eyes, spittle hanging from his mouth.

MALIK

Think it's time you learnt to drive.

Jay stares back dumbfounded.

MALIK

It's automatic. You can't fuck it up.

Jay quickly exits the car and dashes to the driver's side. Malik scoots over to the passenger seat.

Jay enters, clips his seatbelt and grips hold of the wheel, which he can barely see over. Malik points at the pedals.

MALIK

Right - accelerate. Left - brake.

Malik pushes the gear into:

MALIK

D's - drive.

Jay puts his foot down, the car rushes forward.

MALIK

Whoa, whoa, whoa!

Jay eases his foot off - the car crawls at 5mph.

MALIK

Okay, split the difference.

Jay puts his foot down firmer, building to 20... 30... 40.

Malik pats Jay on his knee with his blood-soaked hand.

MALIK

Attaboy. You got it.

Jay smiles through his nerves. Malik's eyes blink slowly.

MALIK

(mumbled)

You're doing great Jay. You're doing great.

HATTIE

I know people.

SHEPARD

Well there was no need to come all this way. Thank you for relaying all the information, we're heading down there now, I'll update you --

HATTIE

I want to go with you.

Shepard notices Hattie's overnight bag. His smile fades.

SHEPARD

What? Why? You know what - doesn't matter, you can't come.

Shepard turns and walks down the corridor. Hattie follows.

HATTIE

Shep, please. I feel responsible and it's killing me and I want to see this through.

SHEPARD

Hattie you've done your job, let me do mine. We appreciate your contribution.

HATTIE

Look I think Malik has an undiagnosed psychotic disorder.

SHEPARD

You're a psychiatrist now?

HATTIE

Nope. But I spoke to a Marine buddy of his who was sent these.

Hattie rummages into her bag, digs out Malik's letters and hands them to Shepard.

He scans them. The haunting sketches give him pause.

HATTIE

His son asked me if I was an alien. Maybe Malik's not out to hurt his boys. Maybe he thinks he's on a mission to save them.

SHEPARD

Maybe. Maybe makes him even more dangerous.

SHEPARD (CONT'D)

Imagine: A cashier at a 7-Eleven gives him a funny look, Malik thinks he's an alien so he shoots him. Thinks his kids are aliens so he shoots them too. Doesn't change what I need to do.

HATTIE

Surely it changes how you engage him?

Shepard SCOFFS, actually insulted.

He stops at an elevator, presses the button.

*

SHEPARD

Look I've been doing this for twenty eight years. Used to head up the hostage negotiation. I'm not going to antagonize the man.

Hattie holds up her palms, *cease-fire*.

HATTIE

I'm not doubting you know how to do your job. But I am saying that Malik called me. And his son called me. So I am an asset to you. Why not just bring me along for the ride. And if you need me, I'm there. If you don't, I just sit in the backseat, keep my mouth shut and learn from the best.

Shepard SIGHS, caving. The elevator BINGS --

79

INT. GRANT'S RANCH HOUSE - DAY

79

*

'YACHT ROCK' continues to play from the stereo. Grant still lays on floor. Blood has now dried on the carpet.

*

*

A Dodge Ram pulls up outside. TWO MEN exit and approach the house. This is DWIGHT MCKINLEY (30s), skinny, wild curly hair, rectangular glasses. And KURT MCKINLEY(40s), gym-toned, drinking a protein shake.

*

*

*

*

KURT

Hey, whose is that piece of shit out --

They freeze as they see Grant laying on the floor. The smashed lamp beside him. Kurt drops the shake. It GLUGS onto the floor.

*

DWIGHT

Dad!?

Dwight approaches Grant, kneels down, in the blood, and cradles his father's head. His face crumples and begins to cry.

Kurt doesn't approach. He's frozen by shock.

GROANING from Grant.

GRANT

Arrrggghhh, that motherfucker.

80

INT. ABANDONED HOUSE - DAY

80

CLOSE ON JAY, asleep, dappled morning sunlight dances across his face. A hand comes into frame and pinches his nose.

Jay shudders awake to see Bobby loom over him.

BOBBY

Is dad turning into an alien?

JAY

Why?

BOBBY

He smells funny.

Jay rises, approaches Malik and studies him. Malik's sweat glistened face twitches, deep in some curative sleep.

Jay kneels, unbuttons Malik's shirt and sees the blood-soaked kitchen cloth taped to his abdomen.

JAY

No, he's just wounded.

He pulls the duct tape, it resists. He tugs harder - it TEARS. Malik stirs but doesn't wake. Jay looks at the wound - a yellow gunk has formed on top.

81

EXT. ABANDONED MINING TOWN - DAY

81

Jay and Bobby exit and survey the ravaged ghost town. It looks like the vestiges of civilization after the apocalypse.

They see the Crown Vic passenger door ajar. Fragments of food scatter the ground.

They approach the car and see Malik's duffel bag torn to shreds.

BOBBY

You think aliens ate our food?

JAY

Probably.

BOBBY

Aliens like Pop Tarts?

JAY

Everyone likes Pop Tarts Bobby.

Jay scans the surrounding derelict houses.

82 **I/E. MINING TOWN - DAY**

82 *

MONTAGE (improvised):

- Jay and Bobby force open the door of an abandoned house. They search inside, find the remnants of the family that once lived here: an old family photo in a smashed frame, a dead plant, a moldy pair of sneakers.

- Another house Jay finds remnants of less savory occupants: A tin of ancient marijuana, a burnt spoon, porn.

- Windows are smashed with rocks, just for the hell of it.

- Another house Bobby finds a bag of sugar. He tries to pour some onto the kitchen surface but it all falls out. He licks his finger, dips it in the mound and sucks on it, wincing at the sugary overload.

- Jay finds a cluster of bullet holes outside another house. He runs his fingers across holes and indentations.

- They dump their haul on the ground - ain't much: a box of lucky charms and a bag of rice. Their empty stomachs GROWL.

- They sprint across the dilapidated mining factory.

*

83 **I/E. GRANT'S CROWN VIC, LOS LUNAS ROADS - DAY**

83 *

Jay drives, peering over the steering wheel. Bobby sits in the passenger seat. The radio plays COUNTRY POP.

They pass a sign: *'Welcome to Los Lunas, population: 1,251'.*

84 **EXT. LOS LUNAS MAIN STREET - DAY**

84

A small, dusty, desolate town. Most of the shops are boarded up. If it weren't for a YOUNG MEXICAN GIRL riding in circles on her BMX you'd think it were a ghost town too.

The Crown Vic enters frame and Jay attempts to park, crawling diagonally across two spaces, one wheel mounts a curb, then it abruptly brakes.

85 **INT. CROWN VIC, LOS LUNAS - DAY**

85

Jay turns off the ignition and hands Bobby ten dollars.

JAY

You get us something to eat, I'll get medicine. Meet back here in five.

Jay opens the door but Bobby grips his arm.

BOBBY

What about aliens?

Jay follows Bobby's eyeline to the BMX girl staring at them.

JAY

Bobby you got ten dollars. You can literally buy anything you want. You're telling me you're not going to because of a six-year-old alien?

86 **INT. LOS LUNAS DRUG STORE - DAY**

86

A small town pharmacy. One of the few that's been overlooked by the juggernaut chains.

DRING - the store bell tingles as Jay enters.

An old timer, DEXTER (70s), looks up from his newspaper. He has sun spotted skin, no lips and kind eyes.

Jay ambles down an aisle and studies the pharmacy shelves.

DEXTER

Howdy. What can I do you for?

JAY

My daddy got bit by a dog and... there's a tooth stuck in him.

DEXTER

Son that sounds kinda serious. You want me to call an ambulance?

JAY

No! It's not that bad. Just... medium bad. He can fix it.

DEXTER

Well if you say.

Dexter comes around the counter and picks out a few items.

DEXTER

I guess he'll want some Tylenol for the pain. Some antibiotic cream to stop infection and some dressing. Suggest y'all go to a hospital to pull out the tooth.

Dexter walks back to the counter and dials the items into the till and places them in a paper bag.

DEXTER

That'll be nine forty.

Jay flicks through Malik's wallet and hands Dexter ten dollars.

JAY

Keep the change.

Dexter takes the ten and notices dried blood on the money.

DEXTER

Hope he feels --

DRING - Jay exits. Dexter returns to his newspaper...

Something ain't right. He looks back up at the door.

87

I/E. CROWN VIC, LOS LUNAS - MOMENTS LATER

87

Jay turns the ignition. SPORTS NEWS plays from the radio. He changes station: CLASSICAL, changes again:

RADIO ANNOUNCER

...a multi-agency task force are looking for them. The FBI describes Malik Khan as a hundred and eighty pound Pakistani-American standing five feet, ten inches with black hair, brown eyes.

CLOSE ON JAY, stock-still as his world collapses.

RADIO ANNOUNCER

Khan served two years in prison and
is considered armed and dangerous--

DEXTER (O.S.)

You ain't driving that are you son?

Jay turns off the radio and sees Dexter standing by the door.

JAY

No way, kids can't drive. I'm
waiting for my brother. Bye.

Jay presses the window switch, it HUMS upward - Dexter stalls it.

DEXTER

Say you ain't in any kind of
trouble are you?

Jay stares at Dexter - his kind eyes.

JAY

Nope.

DEXTER

Cos you can tell me if you are.

JAY

But I ain't.

Bobby enters the passenger side holding a paper bag of sweets.

DEXTER

That your brother?

JAY

I got two. Great talking to you.

Jay presses the window switch, it HUMS to a close. Then he
turns on the radio - HIP-HOP. Jay turns it to FULL VOLUME.

MIDDLE-AGED LADY (O.S.)

DEX!

Dexter turns and sees a FEMALE CUSTOMER standing outside his
pharmacy. Dexter waves at her and walks back across the road.

TIGHT ON MALIK. Tiny beads of sweat dot his face. His eyes
jitter beneath his eyelids. Inner turmoil.

His eyes slowly open. He stares up at the ceiling. Blinks several times as reality comes into focus.

He turns his head and sees a thumb-sized Fig Beetle crawl across his fingers.

Malik gently grips it with his thumb and forefinger and studies it. He's beguiled by it's velvet-green shell.

It flies away. His eyes swell with tears. He begins to sob.

89 **I/E. KURT'S PICK-UP, LOS LUNAS ROADS - DAY** 89

Kurt drives. Dwight next to him. A heavy silence. Their eyes keenly scan the road.

Grant's Crown Vic whizzes past in the opposite direction, Jay and Bobby inside.

Kurt and Dwight double take, *the fuck?* Kurt U-turns, screeching across the road...

90 **I/E. GRANT'S CROWN VIC, LOS LUNAS ROADS - SAME** 90

HIP-HOP continues to pump from the speakers. Bobby devours a chocolate bar, half of it is smeared across his face.

Jay wears a solemn expression, his mind somewhere else.

91 **INT. COMMERCIAL PLANE - DAY** 91

Shepard works from a laptop. Lance power naps next to him. Hattie sits across the aisle. She has her eyes closed, and her hands are gripped tight around the arm rest.

Shepard notices.

SHEPARD
Nervous flier?

The plane SHUDDERS from turbulence. Hattie grimaces.

HATTIE
When that happens.

Shepard stifles a smile. The turbulence subsides.

HATTIE
Shep. If Malik wants to kill his
family why'd he tell me to check on
Piya, why let her go?

SHEPARD

Sometimes the revenge is greater if
they survive.

Hattie opens her eyes. Chilled by the idea. She turns to him.

HATTIE

You seen that happen before?

Long beat on Shepard, weighing whether to go there...

SHEPARD

Silver Springs, Nevada. A perfect couple. Straight out of catalogue. They had two daughters. Lilly and Nadia. They'd experienced a few knockbacks during the crash; his building firm went bankrupt, their house was foreclosed, moved into a motel. And he got into huge debts, just unpayable sums of money. Then the wife got promoted and she was sustaining the family. Guess that was one too many indignities for him so one day he takes the girls to a lake where they used to camp, shoots them then kills himself.

HATTIE

Oh my.

A mournful beat. Shepard is still haunted.

SHEPARD

He'd left the wife a note saying he was 'saving' his daughters. Same thing Malik said to Piya.

Hattie is deeply unsettled.

SHEPARD

I didn't sleep for a week after that one.

HATTIE

How's your sleep now?

SHEPARD

I get my four hours. Most days.

Hattie looks at Shepard in a new light - a man who has witnessed hundred of tragedies.

Shepard takes a deep breath then glances at his watch.

SHEPARD
Should be there soon.

He returns to his laptop.

The plane enters turbulence, Hattie grips hold of her seat and closes her eyes.

92 **EXT. ABANDONED MINING TOWN - DAY**

92

The Crown Vic approaches the house and pulls over. *

Jay and Bobby exit and walk toward the house.

BOBBY
You think dad's going to be okay?

JAY
I don't know.

Jay stops and turns to face Bobby.

JAY
Bobby I think we need to call Mom.

BOBBY
But... she's an alien.

JAY
What if she ain't? What if Dad just made it up? What if he made all of it up?

Bobby tries to smile away his discomfort.

BOBBY
You're teasing.

JAY
Think about it - aliens taking over the world!?

BOBBY
You just said they ate our pop tarts.

JAY
You think aliens eat pop tarts!?
Are you an idiot? *

Bobby throws the action man at Jay - SMACKS into forehead.

JAY

Ow!

Jay SLAPS Bobby. Bobby SCREAMS OUT, yanks Jay's hair. They SCUFFLE, exchanging a flurry of wild slaps and punches. Jay shoves Bobby backwards -- he SLAMS onto the ground and CRACKS his skull on the dirt.

Bobby touches the back of his head and looks at his fingers, there's blood.

JAY

Bobby you okay?

Bobby rises and sprints away... disappearing behind a some burnt out houses...

JAY

Bobby!

Jay rises and chases after him. He runs around the burnt out houses--

But cant't see him.

93

EXT. BURNT OUT HOUSES - SAME

93

Bobby sprints through the charred skeletons of burnt out houses. He turns around to see if Jay is following --

He turns back -- Kurts large hands grab hold of him and pull him behind a tree.

Bobby's panicked eyes study Kurt, a bear of a man.

KURT

It's okay, we're here to save you.

Bobby looks at Dwight hunkered in the underbrush loading a Vector submachine gun.

Both men wear flak jackets featuring the same 'Three Percenters' flag outside Grant's ranch house.

Kurt signals 'shhhh' to Bobby as he slowly releases his hand.

BOBBY

JAAAA --

Kurt quickly put his hand back over Bobby's mouth.

94

INT. ABANDONED HOUSE - DAY

94

Jay enters. Sees Malik laying down, his eyes half open. Malik speaks quietly, his body drained of energy.

MALIK

Hey Jay.

Jay doesn't respond. Just stares at Malik with new eyes. Sees a different man than the one he knew.

MALIK

Where've you been? I was worried.

Jay gestures at the pharmacy bag he holds.

JAY

I got some things for you.

MALIK

You can drive all by yourself now?

Jay nods. Malik smiles.

MALIK

Look at you.

JAY

Are you going to be okay?

MALIK

Well it ain't bleeding any more, so its probably just stuck in some muscle tissue. I'll live.

Malik studies Jay, senses his discomfort.

MALIK

Come here.

Jay shakes his head and hovers by the doorway.

MALIK

What's wrong?

Jay takes a moment to build the courage...

JAY

I know you've been lying to us.
You weren't on a secret mission all those years. You were in prison.

Jay holds back tears. Malik closes his eyes. Can't bear to watch.

JAY

And you've been lying about aliens
coming down.

MALIK

That's not the whole truth Jay.

Malik slowly stands, GROANING, as he gets to his feet.
He hobbles toward Jay.

JAY

Stay away from me!

Malik stops.

MALIK

Okay. Okay. Listen. FUCK.
(gathers thoughts)
You're right. I was in prison. I
hid that from you. I thought it'd
be easier if you didn't know, but
maybe it was just easier for me.
I'm sorry.

He steps towards Jay -- who steps back, keeping his distance.

MALIK

Jay listen, I've been really...
confused. Something ain't right up
here.
(taps his head)
Understand?

JAY

You're lying. You've been lying
this whole time!

Jay throws the pharmacy bag at Malik.

KURT (O.S.)

(from outside)

MALIK KHAN.

The two-man militia stand in the clearing, houses on either
side. Kurt holds onto Bobby by the back of his neck.

KURT

We're here to arrest you for the abduction of your two sons, the assault of Joseph McKinley and the theft of his motor vehicle. Come out with your hands above your head.

WIND BOOMS across the landscape.

A door BANGS OPEN. Dwight spins and FIRES at it with his Vector -
- a fusillade of bullets PUNCTURE the exterior.

96 **INT. ABANDONED HOUSE - SAME**

96

Bullets CRACK into the decor creating a cloud of debris. *

Malik grabs Jay, pulls him down onto the floor and covers him from the DEAFENING GUNFIRE --

The gun fire stops. Malik and Jay lay low, PANTING. Malik looks above. No bullets have penetrated their house.

MALIK

Stay down.

Malik rises, peers out the window, sees the two men with Bobby.

97 **EXT. ABANDONED MINING TOWN - SAME**

97

Bobby runs from Kurt and sprints between the clearing of two houses.

Kurt mumbles a 'fuck'. He turns to Dwight who shakes with adrenaline.

KURT

Fucking ASSHOLE! You want to shoot a ten-year-old boy!? Get your skinny ass in there.

Dwight gulps. Takes out a pump-action shotgun and approaches the hole-ridden house. Kurt jogs after Bobby.

98 **INT. ABANDONED HOUSE - SAME**

98

Malik's heart THUNDERS. Adrenaline surges through him. His mind whirs, calculating possible maneuvers - not many options.

Plus - his abdomen - he holds it, winces at the pain.

MALIK
Where's my gun?

JAY
(shrugs)
In the car?

Malik pats his pockets.

MALIK
Keys?

Jay takes the keys from his pocket and throws them to Malik.

MALIK (CONT'D)
Curl up in a ball, put your hands
over your head and stay here. Okay?

Jay nods. Malik peers out, sees Dwight approaching...

Malik turns around, closes his eyes, breathes slow deep breaths.
WE SLOWLY ZOOM in on Malik as he:

Suppresses the pain. Calms his heart. Centers himself.

Summons the warrior within.

WE LAND ON A TIGHT CLOSE-UP. Everything goes quiet. Malik
achieves a moment of zen-like focus.

He opens his eyes - opens the door and jumps outside --

99

EXT. ABANDONED MINING TOWN - SAME

99

He sprints to the Crown Vic.

Dwight turns and sways the shotgun in Malik's direction,
fires -- KA-BOOM -- hits the car door as Malik opens it.

INSIDE THE CROWN VIC

Malik enters, starts the car.

KA-BOOM -- a slug PIERCES the windscreen and OBLITERATES the
passenger headrest.

Malik FLOORS IT -- surges towards Dwight -- COLLIDES into him
-- he SLAMS into the windscreen - Malik BRAKES...

OUTSIDE

Kurt comes sprinting into the clearing, sees Dwight's body
vault off the car...

He aims his M16 on Malik and OPENS FIRE--

INSIDE THE CROWN VIC

Malik flips the seat back to avoid the bullets which SHATTER the windshield, TEAR into the roof, RIP up the seats. The car swirls with plastic, glass and foam debris.

Malik puts it in reverse - accelerates - driving blind...
He turns the wheel, attempts to pull behind a house...

OUTSIDE

The car turns -- but then stalls. Steam RASPS from the bonnet.

Kurt FIRES A DEAFENING HAIL OF BULLETS: THUNK-THUNK-THUNK-, tearing the car to its skeletal frame. Bullets bore into the HOLLOW METAL. Windows EXPLODE. Tires HISS.

On the other side - Malik opens the door and crawls out and hides behind the wheel. He checks his gun's magazine - one bullet. Closes it. Pulls the slide. Waits. Hoping for...

Kurt's rifle CLICKS - the magazine's empty. He punches it out, grabs a new one, slides it in - CLICK.

Malik rises, aims at Kurt chest - BOOM - the bullet slams into Kurt's bullet proof vest and knocks him backwards.

Malik darts towards Kurt, snatches his M16, sprints off.

Dwight, hobbling on one foot, FIRES at Malik with his Vector--

Bullets SHRIEK past Malik - kicking up the dirt at his feet.

He dashes between two houses for cover, bullets trail behind him, peppering their exteriors: THUNK-THUNK-THUNK

100 **INT. ABANDONED HOUSE - SAME**

100

Jay peers through the window and sees Dwight firing.
He flinches with each round.

Jay closes his eyes, BREATHS SLOW DEEP BREATHS.

101 **EXT. ABANDONED MINING TOWN - SAME**

101

Jay exits the house and charges at Dwight - he grabs onto his gun, tries to wrest it free. Dwight pulls Jay into headlock.

102 **EXT. OUTER RIM OF THE MINING TOWN - SAME** 102 *

CLOSE on Bobby, tears streaming down his cheeks. *

Without breaking stride Malik comes into frame and picks him up*

CUT TO: *

Malik places Bobby behind a secluded electricity box and kneels in front of him.

MALIK

Bobby what's the biggest you can count to?

BOBBY

(guessing)
Three hundred.

MALIK

Well I want you to get to six hundred. Can you do that for me kid?

Bobby nods through tears and begins: "1, 2, 3, 4, 5...."

Malik kisses him on the forehead and darts off.

103 **EXT. BURNT OUT HOUSES - DAY** 103

Malik zigzags between trees with the primal focus of a predator chasing prey. We only catch fleeting glimpses of him, like this were a wildlife documentary and he a rare species adept at avoiding detection. A phantom of the forest.

104 **EXT. ABANDONED MINING TOWN - DAY** 104

Dwight still holds Jay in a headlock. His fearful eyes dart across the landscape.

DWIGHT

HEY ASSHOLE. I GOT YOUR BOY!

He FIRES randomly at the houses, thinking he sees Malik.

CLOSE ON a gun barrel nuzzle against the back of Dwight's head.

MALIK

Raise your hands.

Dwight quickly complies. Malik snatches the Vector from him.

MALIK

Jay get back in the house.

Jay sprints off into the house.

MALIK

Why you trying to shoot me?

DWIGHT

You attacked our daddy.

Malik joins the dots.

MALIK

He shot at me.

DWIGHT

In his home!

Malik scrunches his eyes, computes the chain of events.
He takes a deep breath, stemming his thoughts.

MALIK (CONT'D)

That water in that flask?

Dwight nods. Takes the flask from his belt and holds it up.

MALIK

Mind opening it up, please.

Dwight untwists the lid. Malik takes the flask from him and thirstily gulps it down.

MALIK

Now take your shirt off.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

- Bobby's toy action man laying in a muddy puddle.
- Dwight and Kurt handcuff themselves to a road sign as Malik watches.
- Bobby curled up in the ditch, continues to count: "604, 605, 606, 607". Malik's hands come into frame and lift him up.

105

INT. ABANDONED HOUSE - DAY

105

Jay sits on the floor with his head hung between his knees.

Malik opens the door wearing Dwight's shirt.

MALIK

You okay?

Jay nods.

MALIK (CONT'D)

I'm gonna make this right Jay.
I promise.

Jay looks at Malik, uncertain.

106

I/E. KURT'S RAM, NEVADA HIGHWAY - DAY

106

Malik drives. Jay and Bobby in the back. A leaden silence hangs in the air. Aftershock reverberating through each of them.

MALIK

How'd you like these new wheels
boys? Bit of an upgrade huh?

Jay offers half a smile. Bobby stares forward, shell-shocked.

BOBBY

Were they aliens?

Beat on Malik, unsure what to say...

JAY

Yeah Bobby. Evil aliens.

Jay takes hold of Bobby's hand and squeezes it.

Malik studies Jay through the rear-view. Jay stares back.

107

EXT. AMBOY CAFE - DAY

107

WIDE - a dust covered gas station and diner, sit next to each other on a desolate desert highway.

Malik talks on a pay phone. WE SLOWLY TRACK TOWARDS HIM, gradually picking up bits of the conversation as we get closer...

MALIK

...I don't know what else to say...
I'm sorry... I can't... not now...
I know... Piya, I gotta go.

Malik puts the phone down. Stands there for a moment and stoically lets the emotion course through him.

He looks at the cafe and sees his two sons inside.

108 **OMITTED**

108 *

109 **INT. AMBOY CAFE - DAY**

109

Bobby and Jay sit opposite each other. Bobby is still paralyzed by shock. Jay is unsure what card to play.

Malik approaches holding a tray of food. The adrenaline subsided, he grimaces with each step. He sits and places the tray in front of the boys.

MALIK

Two buffalo burgers and two cokes.

The boys leave their food. No appetite.

MALIK

So I got good news and bad news.
The good news is that Mom and Dylan
have been cured. Just got off the
phone with them now.

Jay and Bobby's eyes light up.

MALIK

Told me they can't wait to see you.
And they love you more than
anything in the world.

Malik keeps nodding, feeling this truth deep within him.

BOBBY

What's the bad news?

MALIK

Bad news is I gotta keep fighting.

Malik looks at Jay, sending him a veiled message.

MALIK

Now don't worry, one of the servers
here is a buddy of mine.

He points at an oblivious WAITER (20s), serving customers.

MALIK

He's working undercover. Gonna keep
an eye on you both. You just stay
put and someone's going to come and
get you. Can you do that?

Bobby nods. Jay, unsure, studies Malik, is this goodbye forever?

Malik puts his hand out on the table.

MALIK
Three Musketeers.

They take his hand. He gives them a misty-eyed smile.

MALIK
I want you to know I'm real proud
of you both. Bobby you got the
heart of a lion. And Jay... you
keep that level head when all
hell's breakin' loose.

So much more he wants to say. He studies their small hands.
Doesn't want to let go.

Jay sees a vulnerability he's never seen before.

Malik stands, takes out some money from his pocket - ten
dollars and handful of quarters - and lays them on the table.

MALIK
This is for ice cream. Bobby you
can have as much as you damn want.

He gives Jay one final look.

MALIK
Look after your brother.

Malik pick up the pharmacy bag, exits and walks across the
forecourt to a restroom.

Jay watches him, his mind in overdrive. He turns back to his
brother.

JAY
Bobby. You know I love you?

Bobby studies Jay. He nods.

The two little men hug each other.

110 **INT. AMBOY CAFE, BATHROOM - DAY**

110

SERIES OF SHOTS:

- A bloody bullet falls into the ceramic sink.
- Malik applies antibiotic to his wound.
- Covers it with a dressing.
- Washes his hands.

Malik dries his hands -- sees something -- a long, thin worm wriggling under his skin.

He tries to scratch at it, but it slithers up his forearm. Another emerges on his neck. He scratches at that too.

Then dozens of worms writhe under his skin. A total parasitic infestation. He vigorously scratches at his whole body.

He CRIES OUT, terrified at what's happening to him.

THE CAMERA SLOWLY PANS to the bathroom mirror -- where we watch Malik claw at his body -- no sign of the worms.

Malik catches his reflection. Stops. Sees his red raw skin.

He leans against the sink. Grips tight onto the ceramic rim. His body trembles.

Malik looks up his reflection - into desperate eyes. He lets out a GUTTURAL SCREAM, part animal, part human.

111A **EXT. AMBOY CRATER - DAY** 111A *

A FBI helicopter soars above an extinct volcano. It's mythical in proportions. *

111B **EXT. NEVADA HIGHWAY - DAY** 111B

A convoy of Federal and State Police vehicles gun down an interstate. Behind them - armored vehicles and Humvees.

111C **INT. SHEPARD'S TAHOE, NEVADA HIGHWAY - DAY** 111C

Hattie sits in a FBI Tahoe with Shepard and Lance. An uneasy silence hangs in the air. We can almost hear their churning stomachs.

111D **INT. AMBOY ROAD - DAY** 111D *

A police officer enters the truck stop diner and sees Bobby alone at the table. *

111E **INT. OREGON FARM HOUSE - DAY** 111E

Piya staring at her phone at the table. It calls, she picks up and hears *Bobby's voice*? Tears of relief run down her face.

112 **I/E. RAM, NEVADA HIGHWAY - DAY**

112

Malik drives down an empty highway that cuts through an enormous dry lake.

He sees movement in the rear-view -- a blanket in the backseat squirms. Malik reaches back and pulls it away revealing Jay underneath.

MALIK

I told you to look after your brother!

Jay rises.

JAY

He isn't the one that needs looking after.

Beat on Malik, crushed by Jay's observation.

A HELICOPTER ROARS above them. Malik peers out through the windscreen.

113 **I/E. HELICOPTER, NEVADA HIGHWAY - DAY**

113 *

HELICOPTER CAMERA "VIDEO" FOOTAGE - the Ram drives on the deserted highway. *

CLOSE on the pilot speaking into his receiver:

PILOT

I have visual on suspect driving a Dodge Ram license - Nevada plate, November, Lima eight, two, seven. Driving on Highway twenty five, heading south at a speed of ninety miles an hour.

114 **I/E. SHEPARD'S TAHOE, NEVADA HIGHWAY - DAY**

114

Shepard speaks into his phone:

SHEPARD

The other boy in there?

They wait in tense silence...

PILOT (O.S.)

Yes he's in the vehicle.

SHEPARD

Thank God.

(into his HT radio)

We're about three miles up the rear. Keep that birdy nice and close. Soon as he thinks his next move I want to know about it.

Shepard switches the channel.

SHEPARD

Noah I want a Bear to stop him in case he goes cross-country.

115A **I.E. RAM, NEVADA HIGHWAY - DAY**

115A

Malik frantically looks around him. No other cars on the road.

MALIK

Fuck.

He sees a small dirt track ahead...

MALIK

Jay come up here.

Jay moves to the passenger seat and buckles in.

Malik swerves a right, TIRES SCREECH -- he pulls onto the narrow dirt road.

115B **I/E. RAM, DIRT ROAD - DAY**

115B *

Malik floors it -- racing across rough gravel. The two of them shake in their seats.

MALIK

Hold on.

Malik pulls hard right -- and disappears into sagebrush.

115C **I/E. RAM, DRY LAKE - DAY**

115C *

We glide over the expansive lunar-like dry lake bed. *

Malik's Ram bursts into the bottom of the frame. Dust billows out behind the vehicle, like a rocket charging through the atmosphere. *

A Bearcat follows in pursuit. It crosses through the Ram's dust cloud and takes position on the outer rim, hemming Malik within the dry lake. *

JAY

Dad, stop!

Jay reaches down and pushes the gear stick into reverse. The Ram SKIDS -- a mountainous cloud of dirt is thrown up behind them.

Malik pries Jay's hands away and pushes it back into drive. *

MALIK

Whose side you on?

JAY

Yours.

The Bearcat now slides up next to him.

Malik pulls hard left - SKIDS sideways-- *

And sees Humvee charging towards them... *

Malik quickly jerks the wheel, the bonnets skim each other... *

Then the Ram disappears into the Humvee's dust trail. *

All we can see is dust. As if we were in the middle of a sand storm. Everything goes eerily quiet... *

115D **I/E. RAM, SALT FLAT - DAY**

115D

Malik ploughs through a mound of salt and into a salt flat surrounded by mounds on either side. Every inch of the Ram is now covered in salt and sand.

He breaks. He flicks on the windscreen wipers. They edge away the salt revealing COP/SWAT/FBI vehicles in front of him.

He glances in his rear-view and sees another CONVOY OF LAW ENFORCEMENT VEHICLES funnel through the mound he blasted through. He's hemmed in from every side.

Sweat drips down Malik's temple. His eyeballs jitter, his mind whirs, running on fumes, options dwindling.

Jay puts his hand on Malik's arm.

JAY

Dad. I want to go home.

Malik looks at his son. Something shifts inside him, some kind of acceptance.

116 **I/E. HELICOPTER, SALT FLAT - DAY** 116 *

AERIAL "VIDEO" FOOTAGE - the police vehicles come up behind the Ram boxing Malik in. *

117 **EXT. SALT FLAT - TWILIGHT** 117 *

The sun skirts the horizon. The police lights blink in the twilight.

The FBI, SWAT team, cops and highway patrol exit their vehicles, load their weapons and aim at Malik. *

We TRACK TOWARDS the Ram, landing on Malik, staring ahead blankly, lost in some existential hell.

Jay takes in the surreal circus surrounding them.

118 **OMITTED** 118 *

119 **INT. SHEPARD'S TAHOE, SALT FLAT - TWILIGHT** 119

Shepard watches Malik through binoculars, can't see much through all the salt on the wind screen.

HATTIE

Shepard what's with all the guns?

SHEPARD

Standard procedure Hattie, we're facing an armed and dangerous individual.

HATTIE

There's a ten-year-old boy in there.

SHEPARD

That's who I'm worried about.
(talks into his HT radio)
Noah I'm going to engage.

Shepard exits.

Hattie opens her door. Lance grabs her.

LANCE

Let Shep do his thing.

Hattie acquiesces and shuts the door.

120

I/E. SALT FLAT - TWILIGHT

120

Shepard strides in front of the line of police vehicles, holds out his phone and points to it.

Malik pulls out his cell - it's ringing. He answers.

INTERCUT:

SHEPARD

Hi Malik I'm Special Agent Shepard West. I want to work with you to find a peaceful resolution to this. We've kept the news crews away...

MALIK

Listen asshole you want to point that hardware some place else I got my boy in here.

Beat as Shepard quickly calculates the risks.

SHEPARD

You're right. Let me do that now.

Shepard gestures to the officers to put their weapons down. They comply.

SHEPARD

I'm sorry about that Malik. But now you do the same for me. Surrender your weapon so we can both talk on the same level.

MALIK

Insult my intelligence again I'll be tempted to do somethin' real stupid in your direction.

Malik sees Hattie exit the Tahoe.

MALIK

Hattie's here?

Shepard glances around, sees Hattie has exited the Tahoe. He mumbles a 'fuck' under his breath.

SHEPARD

Yes she is. She wants you to know...

MALIK

Put her on.

SHEPARD

Malik she's not trained for this kind of...

MALIK

Asshole put her on.

Shepard sighs, walks to Hattie and hands her the phone.

HATTIE

Malik?

MALIK

I dug myself in pretty deep here Hattie.

Hattie approaches the 'front-line'. A cop stops her walking any further.

HATTIE

I can see that but there is a way out of this.

MALIK

Not for me. I deserve what's coming.

HATTIE

I'm sorry I'm going to have to disagree with you there Malik. There are things going on inside your head you're not in control of. Your brain has played a horrible trick on you. And everyone's going to take that into account. In fact, given what you've been through I think you've been pretty damn heroic. Risking everything to save your boys. And now they need you more than ever.

Beat on Malik, absorbing this.

Hattie searches deep for the words he needs to hear.

HATTIE

I think if we do this right then
you will always be a hero to your
sons.

Malik nods. The words resonating. Then --

Hattie sees SNIPERS creep up behind Malik's car.

HATTIE

Wait, no!

Malik sees Hattie waving at someone behind him -- he turns --
sees a Sniper.

Malik leans his gun out the window and blindly FIRES a round -
- it kicks the salt by the agent's feet.

VARIOUS SHOTS: Hattie, Shepard, cops, agents - duck.

Malik shouts down the phone.

MALIK

You trying to fuck me Hattie?

HATTIE (O.S.)

No Malik, wait--

Malik throws his cell out the window.

WIDE: The snipers behind the Ram walk back toward their Humvee.

Except one - who takes cover directly behind the trunk.

121

INT. THE RAM, SALT FLAT - NIGHT

121

The light is dying now, darkness closing in. Malik and Jay
are illuminated by the pulsating blue and red lights of the
vehicles that surround them.

A pain suddenly seizes Malik, his face contorts. He claws at
his scalp with his fingers, as if kneading away creatures
burrowed under the skin.

CLOSE ON JAY watching Malik, it's heartbreaking to witness.

JAY

Dad!? Dad what's wrong?

MALIK

I'm seeing things that aren't there
Jay. I've got demons inside me.

Jay stares at Malik's gun and deep in his gut he fears what we fear; That Malik intends to shoot himself.

MALIK

You better run off now Jay. Go home
to your mother and Dylan.

JAY

I'm not going without you.

Malik SIGHS, doesn't have the resources for a debate.

MALIK

Get out of the car.

JAY

No. Not without you. Families take
care of each other.

MALIK

Well I didn't take care of you. I
put you in danger. You trusted me
and I lied to you. LOOK AROUND YOU.

He gestures at their surroundings.

MALIK

Look around you. LOOK WHERE I GOT
US TO!

Tears roll down Jay's cheeks.

JAY

Yeah but it was one hell of story.

Malik looks at Jay who smiles through his tears.

JAY

And it was the demons that made you
do those things. And maybe we can
get them out.

Malik is floored by his son's radical empathy.

A tender moment opens up. Jay slowly puts his hand onto
Malik's and gently takes the gun away.

Jay breathes out like he's just defused a bomb.

Malik closes his eyes. His muscles relax.

Jay sees movement in the wing mirror -- a Sniper with his
rifle up. He exits and sprints to the back of the Ram.

JAY (O.S.)
Get back!!!

XCU - Malik's eyes. They open.

He looks in the rear-view -- sees Jay facing the sniper.

Hardwired instincts: *Save my son.*

Malik unbuckles himself, opens the door and leaps outside --

122 **EXT. SALT FLAT - NIGHT**

122

And waves his arms in the air, drawing everyone's attention.

MALIK
HEY! OVER HERE.

The helicopter switches its spotlight on, illuminating Malik in a shaft of light, like the tractor beam of a spaceship.

The sniper trains his gun on Malik, the laser floats on his torso.

MALIK
Jay put the gun down.

Jay keeps his gun trained on the sniper... who keeps his gun trained on Malik. A bullet could fire at any moment...

JAY
They're going to shoot you.

Malik looks at the sniper, who looks back, *an understanding?* ...

The sniper drops his aim.

MALIK
No they're not Jay, I'm giving up.

MALIK'S POV - Jay turns, his face pulsates with hundreds of tiny turquoise lights, like a legion of glow worms were trapped beneath the skin.

Malik is fearless against the hallucination.

Jay puts the gun on the ground and sprints towards his father.

Malik falls to his knees, keeps his arms open wide.

Jay enters the circle of light and embraces Malik. Hugs him as tight as a child can hug their parent.

The helicopter DOWNDRAFT sends dust swirling around them. An electrifying moment of love between father and son. A bond that can never be broken.

CLOSE ON JAY, he looks up at the bright light shining down. Ready to be beamed up.

CLOSE ON MALIK, bathed in light, he closes his eyes, and for the first time in years, the buzzing stops.

T H E E N D