

H U S K

Screenplay
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FADE IN:

Black.

We see nothing.

A crow caws. Then comes the subtle sound of a vehicle humming down a road. It is distant. Faint. Slowly approaching.

FLASH: BAM! BAM! BAM! A barrage of BLACK CROWS collide into the vehicle's windshield. Blood splatters everywhere. Tires screech. Passengers scream. The sudden imagery is startling.

Black again.

Nothing. Silence.

FLASH: BAM! The vehicle (SUV) smashes through a ROAD SIGN, careening off-road. SLAM! The DRIVER is thrown head first into the steering wheel. Hard. Tires swerve off-road.

Black.

FLASH: We look around the interior of the car through the blurry pov of the barely conscious driver. His panting breath is heavy. Panicked.

FLASH: He stumbles out of the car.

FLASH: POV: He inspects the damaged windshield. The bumper.

Black.

DRIVER (V.O.)
Heh...hello?

FLASH: He spots someone watching from the nearby CORNFIELD.

Our title slowly fades in. Simply. Ominously.

" H U S K "

BRIAN (V.O.)
Natalie.
(beat)
Natalie.

INT. SUV - DAY

NATALIE (23) sits in the middle of the SUV's backseat. She's groggily awakening. Uncomfortable. She holds her neck, nursing what feels like whip-lash.

BRIAN (23) leans in the doorway beside her. Concerned.

BRIAN
Are you okay?

NATALIE
I'm fine, I'm fine.

Brian places an ice cold water bottle behind her head. She flinches at the cold, awakening further.

BRIAN
(ie: water bottle)
One to keep there.
(offering a second bottle)
One to drink.

Natalie suddenly stares straight ahead at the windshield.

NATALIE
What about everyone else?

BRIAN
Everyone's fine. Johnny's gone. He wandered off somewhere.

NATALIE'S POV: The front windshield is riddled with CRACKS and splattered with BLOOD and BLACK CHUNKS.

Beyond the windshield, she notices CHRIS (25), the previous shotgun passenger. He stands along the CORNFIELD outside. He holds a water bottle against his right shoulder.

Brian approaches Chris, checking on him. Natalie's too dazed and confused to pay attention.

CHRIS
What the fuck was he thinking?

BRIAN
Probably getting help or something.

Brian trades Chris for a fresh, cold water bottle.

Natalie peers around the front seat. Keys still hang in the ignition. The driver's door hangs open. Seat empty.

BRIAN (O.S.)
You said he saw somebody, right?

CHRIS (O.S.)
I heard him talking to somebody.

She turns out the other passenger door beside her, also open. Outside, she sees SCOTT (22), the last member on the passenger list.

CHRIS (O.S.)
What the fuck kind of driving is this? You see this shit? I mean, what happened?

Scott sits on a cooler, holding a water bottle against the side of his face. He stares blankly into the distance, just as dazed as Natalie.

CHRIS (O.S.)
(to himself)
I just don't get it, man.
(beat)
What happened?

EXT. SUV / COUNTRY ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

The engine chokes as Chris fiddles with the ignition. He's sweating through his thin wife-beater, showing off his tattoos. A cigarette is tucked behind his ear.

He slams the steering wheel, frustrated.

Scott surveys the gory windshield. Amidst the mess, he grabs a BLACK BIRD WING, repulsed.

SCOTT
Disgusting.

Chris storms over to the front of the car, ripping open the hood, staring at the engine. He signals Scott into the driver's seat where Scott runs the ignition.

Natalie stands by the road. Searching. Hoping. Here, the sunlight better reveals her for the striking beauty she is. Tall. Slender. Confident.

POV: The road stretches off into the distance. Fuming with heat. Desolate.

Chris slams the hood shut. Defeated.

Brian, the muscular, blue-eyed gentleman, is in the shade of the suv's open trunk door, taking off his wrist watch. He perks at the sound of the hood slamming.

BRIAN

Well?

Chris, steaming mad, shakes "no". Scott removes the car keys from the ignition, tossing them over to Brian.

Brian adds the keys, along with his wrist watch, to his collection of everyone's dead cell phones. The graveyard.

BRIAN

Well, that makes everything.

SCOTT

Everything but us.

Scott walks past Brian, journeying through the off-road brush behind the car, searching around.

BRIAN

(sigh)

This doesn't make sense.

SCOTT (O.S.)

It would if we were in Bermuda. You know? The triangle?

BRIAN

Funny.

Natalie walks over from the road. She examines the front of the suv. The damage to the bumper.

From the bumper, she turns to the cornfield. She stares into it for a moment, continuing her gaze over towards a LARGE POST, collapsed out of the corn in the near distance. Leaning against the end of the collapsed post is a SCARECROW. From her vantage point, it almost looks like a collapsed man, dead in the off-road brush. Eerie.

She then returns her gaze to the car. The banged up hood. The cracked, bloody windshield.

She continues along the car. The empty driver's seat. Brian greets her as she approaches...

BRIAN

Baby, how's your neck?

NATALIE
(distracted)
Better.

She steps up onto the suv and props herself up as high as she can, looking out over the cornfield.

BRIAN
How's your head?

NATALIE
Thinking.

NATALIE'S POV: A HOUSE peaks over the edge of the cornfield in the far distance.

BRIAN
What, you see anything?

NATALIE
Not yet.

BRIAN
(back to his work)
It's alright. No hurry.

Elsewhere...

Scott has trekked a decent distance behind the suv, following the tire tracks through the brush. He continues along.

Suddenly, Scott comes upon something. Something on the ground. Buried in the brush. He moves closer...

Back at the SUV...

Chris grabs a water from the cooler.

BRIAN
How many of those are left?

CHRIS
(bothered)
Enough.

He walks off, retreating into the front seat.

CHRIS
We're gonna die in this heat if he doesn't hurry.

Natalie hops down from the suv, interjecting...

NATALIE
How do we know he's okay?

Brian stops, considering the thought.

CHRIS
We're okay, he's okay.

BRIAN
Yeah, Nat, he's fine. He does this.

NATALIE
Yeah, yeah, sure. Just might help
to be sure, you know?

Chris laughs from the front seat.

CHRIS
She's gonna be a great mom one day,
Bri.

Brian laughs, grabbing Natalie, assuring her.

BRIAN
Baby, everything's fine. He's fine.
We're fine. We're just waiting.

Natalie tries to shrug her concern away.

NATALIE
Sure. You're right. Everything's
gonna be fine.

Elsewhere...

Scott stares down at the ground. He tilts his head, trying to better examine his finding:

SCOTT'S POV: a large wooden ROAD SIGN, snapped from it's legs, is collapsed in the brush. It reads in thick black writing "NO TRESPASSING". However, over the bold text is some red graffiti, spelling out a more obscure message: "GEN 4:11".

Scott stares at the sign, then over to the cornfield. He peers into the cornstalks, suspicious.

WIDE: The desolate road, stretching as far as the eye can see. The cornfield stretching along with it. And stranded in the middle of it all, a broken down SUV.

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - EARLIER

ZOOM! The familiar SUV (a lot less banged up here) speeds down a country highway.

INT. SUV - CONTINUOUS

JOHNNY (Our DRIVER. 25.) sits behind the wheel. He's a clean-cut, well dressed guy, obviously equipped with the ability and resources to look good.

JOHNNY

Wait a sec. What are the stakes?

Scott's in the passenger seat lounging back. Brian and Natalie are in each other's arms behind him.

SCOTT

What do you mean, stakes? It's just a question.

JOHNNY

No, it's a challenge. You're putting your degree against my street smarts.

SCOTT

Don't be silly.

Chris sits up from the back seat.

CHRIS

Street smarts my ass!

JOHNNY

I'm not playing without a prize.

SCOTT

Fine fine. This is for everybody then. Whoever gets this wins the master bedroom for the week.

JOHNNY

Bullshit! You can't do that!

(Scott shrugs)

It's *my* place. If anybody's assigning rooms, it's me. And just for that, *you're* in the basement.

Scott lounges back further, kicking up his feet.

SCOTT

Great. There's a pool table and bar down there.

They all laugh. Natalie sits up, trying to join the conversation. It's obvious that she's trying to fit in.

NATALIE

How long have your parents had their cabin, Johnny?

JOHNNY

Since we were all kids.

NATALIE

Oh, that's cool.

JOHNNY

You should make Brian give you the grand tour.

(beat)

I actually thought you guys should share the master. Make it sorta like a honeymoon suite.

NATALIE

Ah, no thanks. A lady needs her privacy.

Brian gasps at Natalie, appalled. Natalie smirks back...

NATALIE

Aw, don't worry, sweetie. I'm sure there's room in the basement.

Johnny and Chris shout at Brian, amused.

JOHNNY

Cold blooded!

BRIAN

Fine, fine. Scott's a better sleeping buddy anyway.

SCOTT

No, I wet the bed. Regularly.

INT. CAFE - DAY

The cafe is littered with locals, all eating breakfast.

SCOTT (O.S.)
So that then raises the question:
what makes evil truly evil?

We move through the crowd, finding our group of young
travelers crammed in a small booth.

NATALIE
You mean what, like a motive?

SCOTT
Yeah, exactly.

Scott's smashed against the window. Textbooks in front of
him. Natalie humors him in conversation as Brian finishes his
greasy eggs and pancakes beside her. Chris nurses a black
coffee. Annoyed.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Is there always a motive behind
evil or is being evil by nature a
motive in itself?

NATALIE
I don't follow.

CHRIS
None of us do. Just give it a rest.

SCOTT
Okay, for the sake of conversation,
lets say "The Exorcist".

BRIAN
(laughing)
Let her eat, Scott.

SCOTT
Regan gets possessed by an evil
spirit. A demon. Was the motive
specifically to harm *her* or was she
just a random *pawn* of evil, used to
accomplish something else, because
if you ask me, the ones that got it
the worst were the priests and the
mom. They had to witness all this
crazy stuff and basically came out
in the end doubting good could even
exist. Doubting *God* could even
exist. *That's* evil.

NATALIE
That's also a motive, isn't it?

SCOTT

No, I think it's an irrational instinct. That demon couldn't help but do evil because it was evil by nature. See, sharks attack the smell of blood, regardless of who's it is.

CHRIS

Then don't get in the water.

BRIAN

You're giving me a headache.

SCOTT

No, that's your eggs.
(back to Natalie)
The point is this: evil is not rational. I want to believe things can be solved and stopped and rationalized, but when that doesn't exist, that's when I get truly freaked out--

BRIAN

--Scott.

SCOTT

(off his look)
Fine. Fine. I'm done.

BRIAN

(to Natalie)
You need to know this about Scott: you give him your ear, he might not give it back.

They all laugh. Scott tries not to laugh, protesting...

SCOTT

That's not true. She's enjoying intellectual conversation. You guys should try it.

NATALIE

This is actually more entertaining than most of my classes.

CHRIS

This isn't school. This is vacation. Give it a rest.

Scott scoffs, retreating into his textbook. Chris smirks.

INT. CAFE - CONTINUOUS

Johnny leans over the register counter, holding up a folded piece of paper with directions to a waitress.

JOHNNY

I just need you to tell me if this
is it or not.

The waitress shakes her head, denying a response.

JOHNNY

Look, I've been going this way for
years. I know what I'm talking
about. I'm just making sure--

--The waitress walks off. Johnny sighs, frustrated. Another waitress replaces her, taking Johnny's receipt and popping the register. Johnny removes cash from his wallet...

JOHNNY

Ma'am, could you tell me if this is
the road that connects to Huckford?
I'm just double-checking my route.

The waitress is distracted, counting change. As Johnny waits, he notices the young woman standing behind him...

SHEILA (22), a trendy young woman, dressed with a fashion sense that is obviously foreign to the local community. She scans her own receipt.

Johnny checks her out, grabbing his change from the counter and stepping aside.

Sheila steps up, handing her receipt over to the waitress at the register. The waitress rings her up as she drops her purse on the counter, searching for cash--

--DING! The register chimes and the waitress presents her with a receipt. Sheila's confused.

The waitress hands Johnny his change. He closes his wallet, smiling at Sheila.

SHEILA

You didn't have to do that.

JOHNNY

It's done.
(off her look)

JOHNNY(cont'd)
Just trying to prove that chivalry
isn't dead.

SHEILA
Well...that's very generous of you.
Thank you.

JOHNNY
(extending his hand)
Johnny.

INT. CAFE: RESTROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Chris hides in a stall, smoking a cigarette. He's found his sanctuary. He inhales and exhales, blissfully.

Chris steps out of the stall, cigarette still hanging in his lips. Brian stands outside, arms folded, giving Chris a stern look. Chris surrenders. Caught.

CHRIS
Shit, Brian.

BRIAN
You know what now, right?

CHRIS
Come on, man, I'm dying here.

Brian holds out his hand. Chris, begrudgingly pulls his LIGHTER out of his pocket and gives it to Brian.

CHRIS
You gotta be kidding me?
(beat)
You know, I have enough people
trying to take care of me, right?

He hands Brian his pack of cigarettes too.

BRIAN
One week. *You* said it.

CHRIS
You asked. I said it.

Chris walks over and washes his hands. Frustrated.

BRIAN
It's only been one day.

CHRIS
It was only one cigarette.

BRIAN
(laughing)
That I'll smell for the next 100
miles.
(off Chris' look)
Hey, it's not my fault this is so
hard for you.

CHRIS
I know exactly who's fault this is.

Chris shoots Brian a glare through the mirror. Brian's
confused. Chris moves for the door...

CHRIS
It never bothered you before.

INT. CAFE - MOMENTS LATER

Natalie finishes her breakfast. Brian and Chris return to the
booth. She smiles as Brian leans in to kiss her...

BRIAN
Did you miss me?

NATALIE
Of course.

Natalie notices Chris, stewing across the booth. She tries to
ignore it, but his frustration seems focused towards her. She
considers saying something...

CHRIS
Where's Johnny?

EXT. CAFE: PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Johnny leans down into the driver's window of Sheila's car.
He engages her and her equally attractive carpool, RACHEL in
conversation...

JOHNNY
That's a pleasant coincidence.
Where are you staying?

SHEILA
Somewhere up by the lodge. You?

JOHNNY
My parents have a cabin up there.

SHEILA
Whoa, really? Well, now I'm a
little jealous. If it's near the
lodge we'll have to stop by.

JOHNNY
It's close for sure. Right on the
water.

RACHEL
Aren't those places like mansions?

JOHNNY
(modest)
It's big. Big enough for a few
guests, for sure.

SHEILA
(flirty)
Oh really? Guests like who?

JOHNNY
Guests who don't end up liking
their place by the lodge.

Over at Johnny's SUV...

Brian holds the door open for Natalie as she climbs into the
backseat. He notices Johnny nearby, flirting with the girls.
He laughs...

BRIAN
Can't go anywhere with that guy.

SCOTT
(still reading)
You can't expect a man to shed his
nature.

NATALIE
(Playful to Brian)
Did you used to do that? You better
tell me. Did you?

Brian playfully surrenders as Natalie slugs his arm.

NATALIE
(teasing)
She better have been pretty.

BRIAN
You say it like there was *one*.

She hits him again. Hard. Brian laughs.

Back at Sheila's car...

Johnny finishes scribbling on a piece of paper, then hands it to Sheila. Sheila reads...

JOHNNY
That's the address and that's
directions to get there.

SHEILA
(ie: directions)
What way is this?

JOHNNY
Shortcut. Shave two or three hours
off your trip.
(extending his hand)
You said "Sheila", right?

EXT. ROAD - DAY

The SUV speeds down the highway, passing old buildings, farms, oil rigs, prairie landscape.

INT. SUV - DAY

Everyone is back in their designated seats. Chris stares out the window, listening to his ipod. Natalie leans on Brian. Her most comfortable place is right here on his shoulder.

JOHNNY (O.S.)
Okay. If you woke up tomorrow with
one million dollars, what would you
do with it?

SCOTT (O.S.)
Cash?

JOHNNY (O.S.)
Sure.

SCOTT (O.S.)
Who's cash?

JOHNNY (O.S.)
It's yours. What would you do?

Scott and Johnny are up front. Johnny driving again.

SCOTT
Well, I'd be suspicious. Is someone
coming for it? Are the police
looking for it?--

JOHNNY
--No. Stop. It's hypothetical. It's
yours. No strings.

Scott stops to think.

JOHNNY
Brian?

BRIAN
I'd sponsor a track and field
program.

Natalie slaps Brian's chest.

BRIAN
What?

NATALIE
Thanks for the wedding ring.

BRIAN
You want a million dollar ring?

NATALIE
No, just a nice one.

BRIAN
So I'm marrying you now?

NATALIE
Not anymore.

Brian laughs. Natalie smirks back at him, then sits up to
give her answer...

NATALIE
Well, if I--

JOHNNY
--What about you, Scott?

SCOTT
I'd open a comic shop.

Natalie sits back. Disappointed. Brian holds her, oblivious.

JOHNNY (O.S.)
You have got to be kidding me! I'm
talking about a million dollars!

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

The SUV is parked at a stall. Chris leans against the car, pumping gas. He glances back at the station, taking in the peculiar property:

The station is seemingly in the middle of nowhere. The few fuel stalls are rusty and faded with old age. The shop is equally old and weathered. A wood porch stretches around the front where two old men are playing chess: an equally old, equally odd fixture to this already questionable setting.

The old men notice Chris and smile. Chris smiles back, trying to mask his unease.

Brian, Natalie, and Johnny step across the porch, stepping inside. Scott saunters up behind them, casually stepping over to the chess game, watching the old men.

SCOTT
Good afternoon, gentlemen. Do you
mind?

INT. GAS STATION: SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Johnny steps up to the counter, greeted by an old woman.

JOHNNY
Where's your pay phone?

The old woman indicates the nearby wall.

Meanwhile...

Natalie stares into an ancient store cooler, examining some equally ancient looking drinks. Brian rubs her shoulder.

NATALIE
Does water go bad?

EXT. GAS STATION - CONTINUOUS

Chris leans against the pump, watching the counter. He carefully peaks around the SUV towards the shop, checking the windows. The coast is clear.

Chris pulls a cigarette out from his back pocket and puts it in his mouth. As he does, he leans in the driver's door and pushes in the cigarette lighter... checking his cover...

Over on the porch...

Scott has successfully taken the seat of one of the old men. He now plays against the other old man. Both men watch Scott, intrigued by their new player.

Scott makes a move. Pleased. He gives a gloating glance to his opponent. The old man nods at a move well played.

CLOSE ON CHESSBOARD: as the old man uses his turn to "promote" one of his pawns. He removes one of his pawns and trades it for a KNIGHT.

SCOTT
You just wasted a promotion.

INT. GAS STATION: SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Johnny's on the payphone...

JOHNNY
Stacy, hey... yeah, I know it's a
pay phone... Hey, where's dad?...
No, I got it under control, just
tell him...What? Oh! Hey Dad...

Natalie glances at Johnny on the phone, then back to her questionable water bottle...

NATALIE
Your friends don't like me.

BRIAN
Sure they do.

NATALIE
Scott's the only one that even
talks to me.

BRIAN
Nat, don't worry.

NATALIE
Why am I even here?

BRIAN
Just give it time, okay? It's only
been a day.

Natalie pouts a moment...

NATALIE
It doesn't help how different
you've been acting.

BRIAN
What? I'm not different.

NATALIE
(smiling)
Yes you are. You're... different
around your friends.

BRIAN
(laughs)
That's not true!

NATALIE
Yes it is. It's okay, I guess. It's
new for both us, not being alone.

Brian turns back, checking on Johnny...

BRIAN'S POV: Johnny, frustrated, hangs up the phone and heads
out the door.

BRIAN
I know where we can be alone.

EXT. GAS STATION - CONTINUOUS

Johnny walks up, frustrated. He hangs up the gas nozzle as
Chris finishes his cigarette.

CHRIS
How's the folks?

JOHNNY
As overbearing as ever.

Johnny turns, finally noticing Chris, who smiles behind his
smoldering cigarette. Johnny laughs.

On the porch...

Scott makes another move across the chessboard. He smiles,
pleased. Suddenly, the old man retaliates with his KNIGHT,
knocking out Scott's pawn.

SCOTT
Wait! You can't...

Scott second-guesses himself, realizing he's been beat. The old men laugh.

OLD MAN 1

Well son, take it from an old man who's had a few more years to see a few more tricks: if you keep your eyes on the other side, you might miss the traps along the way.

SCOTT

You've been playing me since I got here.

OLD MAN 1

(to Old Man 2)

Always count on the young ones to under-estimate their opponent, huh?

They both laugh. Scott fake laughs as he moves to leave...

SCOTT

Dirty chess sharks. Shame on you.

OLD MAN 2

Our turf. Our rules.

SCOTT

Yeah, well let me know when you're in Los Angeles.

INT. SUV - MOMENTS LATER

Scott finds Johnny and Chris inside. Waiting.

SCOTT

Where's Brian?

INT. GAS STATION: BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

It's a small, dirty bathroom, but Brian and Natalie could care less. They're up against the wall, kissing and grabbing. Wildly. Passionately. They haven't had any privacy for awhile... and they seem to be making up for it.

HONK! HONK! The suv's horn roars impatiently outside. Brian and Natalie pause at the sound, interrupted.

NATALIE

Your friends.

INT. SUV - MOMENTS LATER

Brian and Natalie climb into the backseat. They buckle-up as Johnny, Chris, and Scott try not to snicker. Brian and Natalie are oblivious. Suddenly, Brian smells something...

BRIAN
What's that smell?

CHRIS
Shit.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

The SUV zooms by, on the road again.

INT. SUV - CONTINUOUS

Johnny is behind the wheel, listening to the quiet radio. Everyone else is passed out, sleeping. It's just Johnny and the road.

He continues on, staring ahead. He checks his directions, then looks for road signs. Good. Everything's going well.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

A CROW, perched on a road sign along the road, watches the road. As it does...

The SUV zooms by, down the road. The crow simply watches.

INT. SUV - CONTINUOUS

The radio begins to cut in and out of static.

Johnny turns it up a bit, playing with the tuner. Nothing. More static. He keeps playing with it.

Suddenly, the radio static begins to turn in and out of a LOW WHISPERING VOICE--

--BAM! BAM! BAM! CROWS SLAM INTO HIS WINDSHIELD. LOTS OF THEM. Johnny scrambles with the wheel--

CUT TO:

EXT. SUV / COUNTRY ROAD - PRESENT

The "No Trespassing" sign is collapsed in the weeds.

Brian and Natalie stare at it, trying to understand the graffiti. Scott stands aside.

They turn, sharing a concerned glance with Scott.

EXT. SUV / COUNTRY ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

Chris reclines in the front seat with a sweat rag over his face, trying to nap. He perks at a subtle crunching sound outside. He sits up and looks out over the hood...

CHRIS' POV: a distance ahead of the car is the collapsed scarecrow post and the scarecrow propped up against it. A CROW is perched on the post beside the scarecrow, looking around.

Chris sneers at it and returns to his attempted nap.

Meanwhile...

Brian sits on the cooler, holding a water bottle against the back of his neck. The heat is becoming exhausting... well, the heat or his growing concern.

BRIAN

Scott?

Scott stands roadside, playing with Brian's dead wrist watch.

BRIAN (O.S.)

Scott.

Scott gives up on the watch and stares up at the horizon.

SCOTT

I don't know. It's been a while.

SCOTT'S POV: The sky is glowing orange. It's DUSK now.

SCOTT

Probably not much time left.

He turns to Brian, questioning. Brian struggles with the bottle on his neck, wiping sweat off his brow.

SCOTT

What do you think we should do?

NATALIE (O.S.)

Brian.

Brian turns to Natalie. She is standing up on the SUV again, looking over the cornfield at the house.

Brian climbs up, joining her...

POV: the house peaks over the corn in the distance. Unlike before, a LIGHT is on in one of the upstairs windows.

NATALIE

You see that?

EXT. SUV / COUNTRY ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

Brian rummages through the luggage in the trunk. He pulls out his track zip-up and pulls it on.

BRIAN

(to Scott)

You'll need something or you'll get cut up.

Scott groans with frustration as he grabs his suitcase.

SCOTT

Oh my gosh, I'm gonna melt and die.

NATALIE

Brian.

Natalie stands aside, watching Brian with arms folded.

BRIAN

(off her look)

No. We're gonna be fast. You'll be happier here.

CHRIS

(from the front seat)

It's a dumb idea!

Natalie indicates Chris to Brian with a look.

BRIAN

(hushed)

Don't worry about him.

Scott pulls on a jacket, instantly annoyed by the heat.

SCOTT

The humidity in my armpits just
jumped two-hundred percent!

BRIAN

(to Natalie)

I'm gonna be back as fast I can. I
gotta race the sun.

CHRIS (O.S.)

I'm telling you, this is stupid!

Natalie smiles at Brian, then notices the sky behind him...

NATALIE

You better hurry.

Brian also notices the sky. He considers it...

BRIAN

Chris! You got a flashlight?

CHRIS

I *had* a lighter.

BRIAN

I mean, did Johnny have one in his
trunk?

CHRIS

Why the hell would Johnny have one
in his trunk?

BRIAN

Do we have anything?

CHRIS

No!

(giving Brian a look)

You know, he's probably gonna show
back up here just after you leave,
and then it's gonna be *your* stupid
ass we're stranded here waiting
for.

Brian smiles back at Natalie, apologizing for his friend's
temper. They share a warm glance...

BRIAN

I love you.

Natalie finally perks up at Brian. She gives in. They kiss.

BRIAN
I'll hurry. I promise.

NATALIE
You better.

Brian moves for the cornfield...

BRIAN
You ready, Scott?

SCOTT
(following)
I can actually feel myself getting
dehydrated.

Brian pulls some cornstalks aside, as if holding a door open for Scott to enter. He shoots Natalie a wink.

Natalie winks back. Her smile slowly fades, somehow concerned as she watches Brian disappear into the corn.

FADE TO BLACK.

Black. Some sounds slowly fade in...

The buzzing of a field full of bugs. Flies.

The subtle sound of corn, crunching under footsteps gradually fades in from a near distance, approaching...

FADE IN:

INT. CORNFIELD - DUSK

Brian and Scott trudge through the cornfield, pushing aside cornstalks, crunching under them. Brian is determined. Scott is miserable.

INT. CORNFIELD - MOMENTS LATER

Brian and Scott continue ahead. As they do, Scott suddenly gags, as if he's about to vomit. Brian turns.

SCOTT
Holy shit.
(swatting the air)
Smells like... well... shit.

Brian laughs, continuing on. Scott follows...

SCOTT
What, you don't smell that?

WIDE: as they walk off, an unseen SCARECROW is revealed in the nearby cornstalks, sprawled on the ground. Flies buzz all around it.

INT. CORNFIELD - MOMENTS LATER

They continue through the corn. Brian hesitates, searching through the thick foliage, trying to navigate. He picks a direction and they continue.

As they do, Scott begins coughing, out of breath.

BRIAN
Are you okay?
(Scott catches his breath)
You need me to slow down?

SCOTT
You have track medals... I have allergies.

Brian surrenders, holding back laughter. Scott's defensive.

SCOTT
I can be as tough as you when I want to.

They both laugh--

--SOMETHING PASSES THROUGH THE CORN in the near distance. They both turn toward the sound.

It's gone. Silence. Just buzzing bugs and distant crows--

BRIAN
Hello?

--MORE MOVEMENT. Farther off. Disappearing...

BRIAN
Hello?

Nothing. Silence again. They follow in its direction.

INT. CORNFIELD: FENCE - CONTINUOUS

They push through the corn. Brian tries to find the sound, Scott just tries to keep up. Suddenly...

Brian stops, staring ahead. Scott notices the same thing.

POV: a RUSTY MAILBOX stands on a small wooden post, right in the middle of the cornstalks.

Scott looks closer. "COMSTOCK" is painted across the side.

Brian notices a SMALL WOODEN FENCE, about waist high, branching off one side of the mailbox and disappearing into the corn. A short distance away on the other side of the mailbox, the fence continues again, disappearing into the other direction. It's as if the mailbox indicates a break in the fence... or a road.

Brian follows along the fence...

INT. CORNFIELD: BROKEN DOWN CAR - CONTINUOUS

...Brian and Scott follow the fence further and further.

Suddenly, they stop at the sight of something ahead.

SCOTT
Oh, that's hilarious.

A BROKEN DOWN CAR is parked along the fence. Cornstalks have grown around, inside, and through the car. It's old, rusted, and faded: a peculiar sight.

Scott approaches for a closer look.

BRIAN
Come on.

Brian steps over the fence, pulling Scott along.

BRIAN
This way.

Scott reluctantly follows. They disappear over the fence.

As they do, we pull back, along the broken down car, revealing a familiar sight: the WINDSHIELD is cracked and corroded with rotten bird guts.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUV / COUNTRY ROAD - DUSK

The sun drops slowly towards the horizon. The sky shares an orange gradient with impending darkness.

Natalie stands by the road, watching. Hoping.

At the suv...

Chris uses his POCKET KNIFE to pick at the undercarriage of the steering wheel, investigating the ignition. He notices Natalie by the road...

CHRIS

(beat)

So how'd you guys meet?

Natalie turns from the road, confused. Maybe even shocked.

CHRIS

I don't bite, ya know?

NATALIE

School.

CHRIS

I know school. How? What's the romantic story?

NATALIE

You don't seem like the type for romantic stories.

CHRIS

I'm not. Just the curious type.

Natalie nods. Chris climbs under the steering wheel for a better look. He uses his knife to start prying open the undercarriage covering.

Natalie, growing more comfortable, approaches the car...

NATALIE

We're both on the track team.

CHRIS

No shit. Brian and I ran sprints together in high school.

(beat)

What events?

NATALIE

Distance.

Chris starts laughing.

CHRIS

Then I know everything I need to know.

(ie: undercarriage)

Can you hold this?

Natalie leans in, holding the plastic covering open for Chris as he works under it.

NATALIE

What do you mean?

CHRIS

All distance runners are the same. Patient. Disciplined. They calculate the journey, plan the course, train for it, have endurance, pace themselves... The race for them begins weeks before.

(snapping some wires)

See you, you've probably planned everything out. How long you guys will date, when you'll marry, *where* you'll marry, where you'll live... all that and everything it'll take to get there.

(giving a look)

Which may include suffering a road trip to get to know his friends.

Natalie glares at Chris. She forces a smile, trying to mask her frustration.

NATALIE

(ie: undercarriage)

What are you doing?

CHRIS

Something I didn't think about earlier.

~~(MORE)~~

Something you didn't want Brian and Scott to see?

Chris hesitates. Natalie shrugs.

NATALIE

You probably didn't learn that in auto-shop.

(off his look)

You're not so hard to read yourself.

NATALIE(cont'd)
(ie: his tattoos)
You only have it written over your
whole body.

Chris laughs, returning to his work.

CHRIS
Yeah, I guess we're all pretty
predictable. We either got
everything going for us, or we're
scrambling to survive, right?

Chris laughs. Natalie doesn't respond. He keeps working--
--SNAP! The plastic covering snaps closed over the wires.

CHRIS
Hey!

Chris looks up, only to see Natalie stepping back, staring
off towards the cornfield.

NATALIE (O.S.)
Hello!?

Off her look, Chris climbs up to see what she's yelling at.

NATALIE
Hello!

CHRIS' POV: A FARM BOY JUMPS BACK INTO THE CORN. Barely seen.

CHRIS
What?

NATALIE
I saw a boy. He was standing right
over there.

Natalie walks closer for a better look.

CHRIS
A boy?

INT. CORNFIELD - DUSK

Brian and Scott press through the cornstalks. Tired.

SCOTT
We gotta be close, right?

Brian stops, searching around the cornstalks. It's impossible
to navigate. The stalks are over ten feet high.

BRIAN
Should be.

Scott scans the area too. He suddenly notices something...

SCOTT
Hey, got an idea.

He leads Brian off in a direction.

INT. SCARECROW CLEARING - CONTINUOUS

Brian and Scott step out of the cornstalks, into a man-made clearing: a small space clearer out of the corn.

In the middle of the clearing is a SCARECROW POST, standing high over the corn. Perched on the post is a bizarre looking SCARECROW. Ominous. Creepy.

Brian and Scott step closer, staring at the scarecrow.

POV: The body is covered in what seems like crusty mud. Strings of twine are tied tightly all over the body. It's face is sloppily stitched together with varying patches of burlap and cloth. The only resemblance of a face is its TWO BEADY EYES: two tiny holes torn in the burlap.

Scott moves for the post, grabbing it...

SCOTT
Here, boost me up.

BRIAN
What are you doing?

SCOTT
Farmers normally place scarecrows grid-like through the field to help them navigate when the corn's high.
(off Brian's look)
I read it off a box of Corn Flakes.

CUT TO:

Scott pulls himself up, clinging to the scarecrow. He flinches at the scarecrow's stench.

Brian, below, braces Scott by his feet.

BRIAN
Anything?

Scott looks around, over the cornfield...

POV: The HOUSE is much closer. A LIGHT still glows from one of the upstairs windows.

SCOTT
Practically there.

Something moves inside the window.

EXT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

MATCH CUT: of upstairs window...

Scott and Brian step out of the field, approaching the house.

WIDE: Establishing. The house is old but quaint. Welcoming. Perhaps the type of house "Auntie Em" might have had... and neglected to take care of for twenty years. Two stories. Curtains in the windows. A friendly front porch with a swing. Inviting, despite all the dust, cobwebs, and peeling paint.

Brian and Scott step across the porch towards the door. Wood creaks under their every step.

The front door hangs WIDE OPEN. Brian peaks inside...

I/E. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

BRIAN'S POV: A fireplace and hearth, antique couches arranged around an antique coffee table for visiting. A grandfather clock. Several pictures on the wall, including a friendly, embroidered picture, reading "Welcome To Our Family." As quaint as the outside suggested... only buried under years of dust and cobwebs. It's like it's been frozen in time.

Scott and Brian scan the room, confused. Suspicious.

Everything is growing dark with the setting sun. The only light comes from upstairs, glowing down the stairway.

Brian stares at the light as he inches inside the door, politely knocking. Hard.

BRIAN
(listening)
Hello?

They listen. Suddenly, the CEILING CREAKS ABOVE THEM with movement upstairs.

BRIAN
Hello?

SCOTT
Johnny!

The creaking suddenly turns into a subtle HUMMING SOUND.
Scott listens. Brian quietly moves for the stairs.

EXT. CORNFIELD - CONTINUOUS

Natalie approaches the scarecrow post, scanning the cornfield's edge, searching.

NATALIE
Hello!

Nothing. The cornstalks simply sway in the dusk breeze.
Natalie steps right up to the cornstalks, peering inside.
POV: Dark. Thick. Cornstalks prevent a view of much distance.
Useless. She gives up... noticing the SCARECROW, sprawled against the fallen post beside her.

It's fallen face down, like a dead body in the weeds. Natalie kneels down beside it. She carefully grabs its shoulder and flips it over for a better look.

We've seen something like this before: mud caked clothes, twine wrapped body, stitched burlap scraps for a face. This specific scarecrow, however, has no eyes. Instead, A SINGLE LARGE STITCH stretches across the entire lower half of the face, holding two large pieces of burlap together, forming a LARGE SMILE. ("Smiley")

Natalie is almost hypnotized by the strange face. She looks closer, noticing a small gap between the two burlap pieces...revealing something underneath...

Meanwhile at the SUV...

Chris flicks two exposed ignition wires together. Nothing happens. He tries again. Nothing.

CHRIS
Shit. Figures.

He drops the wires, defeated. He looks up over the hood, seeing Natalie knelt down over the scarecrow.

A CROW lands on the car's hood, curiously pecking around. Chris tries to shoo it away.

Back at the cornfield...

Natalie reaches for the scarecrow's face. She carefully pries open the two burlap pieces of the "mouth"...

CLOSE ON SCARECROW'S FACE: the two burlap pieces slightly pull apart... revealing HUMAN TEETH AND ROTTED FLESH.

Natalie gasps, jumping back. She stares in shock.

EXT. SUV - CONTINUOUS

Natalie walks back to the car, shaken. Chris notices.

CHRIS
What's going on?

She passes straight by him, heading straight for the cooler. She pulls a water bottle out. Her mind is somewhere else. Chris watches her, slightly concerned.

CHRIS
Hey, are you alright?

She's distracted. She sips at her bottle, noticing something...

Natalie walks into the weeds behind the suv. She finds the "no trespassing" sign.

CLOSE ON SIGN: "No Trespassing." "GEN 4:11"

She stares at it a moment, only elevating her concern.

CHRIS (O.S.)
HEY!

Natalie snaps out of it, turning back around where Chris waits at the suv.

CHRIS
Look, I didn't mean to hurt your feelings earlier if that's what I did.
(beat)
I can't always help being a dick.

Chris laughs. Natalie doesn't. She heads straight to the trunk of the suv.

In the heap of luggage, she finds her suitcase and instantly begins rummaging through it. Chris watches, confused.

CHRIS
What are you doing?

NATALIE
I need to go find Brian.

CHRIS
Wait, what?

Natalie finds a sweater. She pulls it on, heading off towards the cornfield. Chris stops her.

CHRIS
He'll be back in a minute.

NATALIE
I don't think so.

She continues off, disappearing into the cornfield.

Chris watches her leave, confused. He glances over at the scarecrow in the near distance... suspicious...

INT. HOUSE: SECOND FLOOR - DUSK

Brian and Scott round the top of the staircase. Several doorways line the upstairs hallway. LIGHT pours out from under the door at the end of the hallway. The HUMMING is louder behind it.

BRIAN
Hello?

Scott and Brian approach the doorway. As they do, they pass another doorway, hanging wide open. Scott looks inside...

SCOTT'S POV: It's a bedroom. Trophies and ribbons decorate a wall near the bed. Another wall is heavily decorated with tons of TAXIDERMIED ANIMALS: stuffed pig and deer heads, birds, etc. Not what you'd expect to see in a bedroom.

Scott and Brian continue...

INT. HOUSE: SEWING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The door is cracked open. Brian slowly pushes the door open. A single LIGHT BULB dangles from the center of the room, glowing bright enough to blind Scott and Brian as they enter.

A MAN sits hunched over a SEWING MACHINE in the opposite corner of the room, sewing. The man feverishly runs the machine with a push-peddle, causing the humming.

Brian politely knocks on the open door...

BRIAN

Excuse me.

The figure doesn't respond.

Scott steps closer for a better look. His eyes adjust. As they do, his face falls with concern...with recognition...

The man remains hunched over the machine, obscuring his face. SLASH WOUNDS riddle the man's back. His clothes are soaked with BLOOD and MUD. A BLOOD PUDDLE collects on the floor beneath his chair. Despite it all, the man hurriedly sews.

INT. CORNFIELD - DUSK

Natalie aggressively presses through the cornfield. Fearless.

EXT. CORNFIELD - DUSK

Chris approaches the "Smiley" scarecrow collapsed near the field's edge. He kneels down to investigate.

He pokes at the scarecrow. Grabs at it. Nothing interesting.

Disappointed with his findings, Chris violently hurls the scarecrow into the cornfield.

CHRIS

You smell like shit.

INT. CORNFIELD - CONTINUOUS

Natalie continues pressing through the corn. Determined.

She hesitates a moment to find her way...then continues.

INT. HOUSE: SEWING ROOM - DUSK

The man continues sewing at the machine.

Brian and Scott step through the room, trying to get a better look of the man at the machine. The closer they get, the better they recognize him...

...IT'S JOHNNY.

BRIAN

Johnny?

Johnny's face is buried in his work. Unaware of anyone else.

Scott stays back against the wall as Brian moves closer--

--THUMP! The sewing machine stops. The room goes silent. Brian and Scott freeze as they watch Johnny, otherwise lifeless, carefully removing his BURLAP SEWING PROJECT from the sewing machine... of a nature unlike their friend.

BRIAN

Johnny.

Johnny places his hands inside the burlap and raises it into the air, revealing a BURLAP STITCHED FACE.

Johnny carefully examines his work. Pleased, he gently sets it down beside the sewing machine.

Brian inches around the sewing machine, trying to get a closer look of Johnny's face.

HIS EYES ARE WHITE. PURE WHITE. Brian doesn't understand--

--JOHNNY JOLTS IN A SUDDEN SPASM! Scott and Brian jump back.

BAM! Johnny collapses onto the sewing machine. Dead.

BRIAN

Shit.

SCOTT

JOHNNY!

CLICK! The LIGHT BULB turns itself off. Darkness.

INT. CORNFIELD - CONTINUOUS

Natalie continues through the cornstalks. She hesitates again, searching around...

NATALIE

BRIAN?--

--NATALIE'S ATTACKED BY A FIGURE IN THE CORN. SLASH! CLAWS RIP ACROSS HER BODY. SLASH! ANOTHER WOUND. Blood gushes. The figure is too fast and the corn's too thick. SLASH! SLASH!

INT. HOUSE: SEWING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Brian moves to the window as Scott holds Johnny.

SCOTT
He doesn't have a pulse.

BRIAN
Did you hear that?

Brian leans in towards the window...

NATALIE'S BLOOD CURDLING SCREAM ERUPTS FROM THE CORNFIELD.

Brian is frozen.

BRIAN
No.

INT. CORNFIELD - CONTINUOUS

It's a blur of bloody and violent images as Natalie is ripped to shreds by her unseen attacker. The figure darts in and out of the thick corn, adding SLASH WOUNDS across her body.

I/E. SUV - CONTINUOUS

NATALIE'S SCREAMING continues.

Chris climbs out of the car, staring into the cornfield, horrified by the sound.

INT. CORNFIELD - CONTINUOUS

SLASH! SLASH! SLASH! The brutality continues. Bloody. Gross.

EXT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Brian explodes out the front door, barreling over the porch and flying straight into the cornfield. He's fast. Scott races after him, hesitating on the porch...

SCOTT
BRIAN!

EXT. SUV - CONTINUOUS

Chris already has a sweater pulled on. He digs through a storage flap in the trunk of the suv, removing a FLASHLIGHT.

He clicks it on, hurrying into the cornfield.

INT. CORNFIELD - CONTINUOUS

Brian sprints through the cornstalks, crushing them in his path, chasing Natalie's scream. Suddenly--

--NATALIE'S SCREAM STOPS. SILENCE.

Brian abruptly stops, desperately listening...

BRIAN
Natalie?
(silence)
NATALIE!

Nothing. Brian panics. All he can do is pick a direction and go! So he does.

INT. CORNFIELD - CONTINUOUS

Elsewhere, Chris hurries through the corn, searching.

CHRIS
Where are you?

He has no clue where to go. The field's getting too dark.

He picks a direction and leads the way with his flashlight.

CHRIS
Natalie!

INT. CORNFIELD - CONTINUOUS

Brian spins at the sound of Chris' voice in the field.

CHRIS (O.S.)
Natalie!

Brian follows his voice.

INT. CORNFIELD - CONTINUOUS

Chris continues through the corn, trying to search around--

--CRUNCH! SOMETHING IN THE CORN! Chris turns towards it...

SFX: FOOTSTEPS rush away, dragging something along with it.

Chris quietly moves closer...

POV: BLOOD IS SMEARED ALL OVER THE CORNSTALKS AHEAD.

Chris raises his flashlight: blood drips from the cornstalks, blood smears all over the ground... and trails off in the direction of the footsteps.

Chris stares along the path...horrified.

In that direction...

CLOSE ON GROUND: as NATALIE'S BLOODY BODY is dragged carelessly through the cornstalks.

Meanwhile...

Chris is unsure what to do. Where to go--

--BRIAN EXPLODES OUT OF THE CORNSTALKS.

Chris gasps as Brian catches his breath.

BRIAN
Chris... where is she...

Chris hesitates, still frozen.

Brian glares at the flashlight in Chris' hand. He follows the beam down to the blood on the ground, then off into the corn.

CHRIS
That way.

INT. CORNFIELD

Brian and Chris move through the corn as quickly as they can. The field continues to grow darker with nightfall.

EXT. HOUSE: PORCH - NIGHT

Scott stands anxiously on the porch. He scans over the field, trying to determine what could be going on.

He watches the last bit of sunlight disappear over the corn.

INT. CORNFIELD - CONTINUOUS

Brian and Chris race ahead. Suddenly, Brian stops as he hears something.

SFX: Subtle crunching. CREAKING WOOD. Not far away.

Brian follows the sound.

INT. SCARECROW CLEARING - NIGHT

Brian and Chris approach the scarecrow clearing. The sound of creaking wood is prominent just ahead.

They enter the clearing...

A scarecrow post creaks loudly under the weight of NATALIE'S HANGING BODY. She's strung up by her ankles. The rope around her ankles runs over the post and into the cornstalks behind. Blood pours down her brutally slashed body.

CLOSE ON GROUND: as blood collects into a large MUDDY PUDDLE.

Brian is frozen. Horrified. Chris is stunned. Both of them speechless. Shocked.

Chris snaps out of it, turning to the surrounding corn. He grabs Brian...

CHRIS
We need to go.

Brian is silent. Locked in an unbelieving stare.

CHRIS
Brian. Please.

Suddenly...

NATALIE
(faint)
Br...Brian...

Natalie's dying voice startles both of them.

Brian rushes to the post, ripping at the ankle ropes. He fights his tears, trying to rescue her--

BRIAN

--Nat. Don't worry. I'll get you
out of here--

--NATALIE IS SUDDENLY TUGGED HIGHER ONTO THE POST.

Brian jumps back, startled by the sudden movement. Chris raises his light up to the rope, trembling with tension.

YANK! Again, Natalie is tugged higher.

Brian glares at the rope, then into the cornstalks behind--

INT. CORNFIELD - CONTINUOUS

--BRIAN LEAPS INTO THE CORNSTALKS, tearing them apart, searching for the perpetrator...

...No one is there. Nothing is there except a LARGE HOOK in the ground where the rope has been tethered.

FOOTSTEPS race off into the nearby corn. Disappearing. Brian glares in their direction, fuming...

INT. SCARECROW CLEARING - CONTINUOUS

Chris anxiously awaits in the clearing. In Brian's absence, he gives a more honest glance at Natalie...at the corn...

Chris disappears into the corn, running away.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Scott stands on the porch, watching the cornfield. Helpless.

INT. CORNFIELD - NIGHT

Chris rushes through the cornfield, panicking. He scrambles to find the right direction. It's impossible to tell. He sprints ahead, jumping at every sound.

INT. CORNFIELD - NIGHT

Brian struggles through the corn. His steps are heavier. Slower. His breath strains...

NATALIE'S BLOODY BODY is slung over his shoulders. Her blood is smeared all over Brian's face and body.

INT. CORNFIELD - CONTINUOUS

Brian struggles through the corn. It gets harder for him.

He groans as he strains ahead, only to suddenly collapse to his knees. Natalie's body slides down to the ground as Brian struggles to catch his breath.

BRIAN

Almost there... don't worry...
everything's gonna be fine...

Behind Brian, perched over the cornstalks, is a SCARECROW ON A POST. Brian is unaware of it.

THE SCARECROW DROPS OFF THE POST, disappearing into the corn below. Corn crunches as something races towards Brian. Fast.

Brian grabs Natalie, ready to continue ahead--

--NATALIE'S BODY IS RIPPED AWAY! Gone in a flash.

BRIAN

NO!

Brian jumps up, racing after her body.

INT. CORNFIELD - CONTINUOUS

Natalie's body gets dragged through the corn. Fast. Violent.

Brian races through the corn. Forcefully. Faster than ever.

BRIAN

NATALIE!

POV: Natalie getting dragged into the corn ahead.

Brian races. Faster. Madder. He closes in...closer...closer--

--BRIAN POUNCES NATALIE'S ATTACKER, crashing to the ground.

A SCARECROW is smashed under Brian's body. Brian instantly grabs the scarecrow--

BRIAN
--YOU SON OF A BITCH!

He shakes the scarecrow violently... only to get no response. Nothing. The scarecrow is completely limp. Lifeless.

Brian's confused--

--ANOTHER SCARECROW ATTACKS HIM FROM BEHIND!

Brian is slammed to the ground. BLOOD pouring from his side.

BAM! The new scarecrow smashes its foot into Brian's chest, pinning him down.

Brian gasps with horror as the scarecrow comes face-to-face with him, inspecting him. Before he even understands--

--ZOOM! THE SCARECROW DARTS AWAY. It's footsteps race off through the corn, dragging Natalie's body behind.

INT. CORNFIELD - NIGHT

Chris runs in a panic. Scrambling in every direction.

He suddenly raises his light up, spotting something ahead. He darts in its direction--

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

--Chris explodes out of the cornfield, discovering the HOUSE looming over him. He stares. Confused.

SCOTT
CHRIS!

Scott rushes over. Chris is too shaken to acknowledge him. Scott grabs him.

SCOTT
What are you doing?

CHRIS
(distant)
Brian...

SCOTT
What's going on?

CHRIS
There's something in the corn.

CRUNCH! Something moves in the cornfield a distance away.
Chris and Scott turn to the sound...

BRIAN stumbles out of the corn. Wounded. Exhausted.

SCOTT
Brian!

Brian hurries straight to the porch, collapsing on the steps.

SCOTT
What happened?

Brian points at the cornfield--

--SLASH! A SCARECROW SLASHES FROM WITHIN THE CORN, narrowly missing Chris as he and Scott jump away. The scarecrow flails from behind the cornstalks, not breaching the field's edge.

Chris and Scott are frozen, staring in disbelief.

The scarecrow stops, staring back from within the cornstalks, watching them... like a predator to its prey.

Chris and Scott inch away from the field. As they do...

...the scarecrow also inches away, disappearing.

Chris and Scott share a horrified look. The look is shared with Brian on the steps. Everyone is speechless.

CUT TO BLACK.

Black.

We hear the subtle scratching of a bird on a perch.

EXT. HOUSE: PORCH - NIGHT

A CROW scratches around on the porch railing.

Beyond the crow, we see Brian, leaning against a porch beam, bracing a dirty rag against his wound. He stares at the cornfield. Distant. The shell of the man he was before.

INT. HOUSE: KITCHEN - LATER

Scott opens a kitchen cabinet. Just dusty plates and cups.

As he steps back, we see all the other kitchen cabinets are already opened and also cluttered with dusty, useless things. Drawers opened. Also useless.

Scott cranks the sink faucet. Nothing comes out. Dry.

Beside the sink is a cluttered counter top. Scott shoves the clutter and cobwebs aside revealing an OLD ROTARY TELEPHONE.

EXT. HOUSE: BACK PORCH - NIGHT

Chris leans over the back porch railing, shining his flashlight along the cornfield. Confused.

He steps off the porch, following along the back of the house, keeping his light on the cornfield. Still confused.

EXT. HOUSE: SIDE YARD - CONTINUOUS

Chris treks through the foliage and junk, shining his light.

POV: of the cornfield running around the surrounding yard.

Chris stops. Perplexed.

EXT. HOUSE: PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Brian remains distant, oblivious to Chris coming around the side of the house. Chris keeps his flashlight on the cornfield. Appalled.

He storms past Brian, into the house...

CHRIS
You're fucking kidding me...

INT. HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Chris re-enters, greeted by Scott coming in from the kitchen.

SCOTT
Can you fix a rotary telephone?

CHRIS
We're surrounded.

SCOTT
What?

CHRIS
It's everywhere.

Scott can't believe it. He struggles for a moment.

SCOTT
So by surrounded, you mean trapped.
(beat)
There's gotta be something.

Chris is already looking for it. He opens a nearby closet, waving his flashlight around. Desperate.

Scott joins him, opening an antique cabinet against the wall.

CHRIS
Brian better get his ass in here
and help.

EXT. HOUSE: PORCH - NIGHT

Brian stares at the field. His gaze slowly follows the field's edge along the property. Scanning intensely.

As he looks, his gaze finds something across the property. Something in the distance beside the house. His interest is peaked... enough to lure him off the porch towards it...

INT. FRONT ROOM - NIGHT

Chris notices some pictures on and around the fireplace mantle. He raises his flashlight toward them...

A PICTURE FRAME holds a picture of a family: a father and two sons. They stand in front of the much younger looking house.

THREE VINTAGE PORTRAITS hang on the wall. One is of a beautiful, matronly looking woman. The next is of a smiling young man, about 15 years old. The last one is broken. Glass splinters throughout the frame, obscuring the image of what seems to be another young man.

Chris clenches at the sight, only further unsettled.

Meanwhile, amongst the antique furniture, Scott finds a DUSTY CHESSBOARD AND TABLE, complete with pawns and two chairs. The pawns are arranged as if a game was never completed. A SCORECARD is tucked under the board. Scott grabs it. The names "COREY" and "ALEX" are scribbled on the top.

Chris finds a closet under the stairway. He tugs at the door, finally forcing it open. Several BIBLES spill out from inside. Chris raises his flashlight--

--A CORPSE IS COLLAPSED INSIDE.

It holds a relaxed sitting posture (or perhaps hiding posture). A BIBLE is opened in his hand. A BRIEFCASE partially full of them is spilled open beside him.

Chris, repulsed, waves the corpse fumes away. As he does, he recognizes something.

Scott steps up for a look, recognizing the same thing.

SCOTT
Smells like *them*.

Brian enters.

He walks straight up to Chris and Scott, taking the flashlight from Chris' hand. Chris doesn't fight it. This is the first sign of life Brian's given them.

CHRIS
What are you doing?

Brian continues back to the front door, leaving. Scott follows him.

SCOTT
Brian.

Brian stops in the doorway. His back is all he gives.

SCOTT
What is it?

BRIAN
Found something.

Brian continues out the door, leaving no room to discuss. Scott on instinct chases after.

Chris watches them go. As he does...

THE CEILING CREAKS ABOVE with movement. Suddenly, TAC! TAC!
The sound of hammering faintly echoes from upstairs.

Chris stairs at the ceiling, nervous.

CHRIS
Johnny?

EXT. HOUSE: YARD - NIGHT

Brian leads Scott through a yard littered with farming equipment and weeds. It's as unkept as the house. Brian's leading is much less concerned with Scott than it was before.

SCOTT
Where are we going?

Scott looks up, and sees it...

EXT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

A DARK BARN sits on the far opposite side of the property from the house. The cornfield runs along and around it.

Several DATED CARS (50's, 60's) are poorly parked outside the barn. They're as frozen and untouched as the house.

Brian heads straight to the cars, waving his flashlight inside the driver's windows. Scott follows, unsure.

Brian checks an OLD CHEVY TRUCK. Nothing there. A station wagon. Nothing there.

Scott takes special notice of a 60's SQUAD CAR. Faded. Old.

SCOTT
What exactly are we looking for?

BRIAN
Keys.

Scott looks at the cars, then to the cornfield. He begins to suspect Brian's plan.

Brian resorts to opening glove compartments, flipping open sun visors, anything. He motions Scott to one of the cars.

BRIAN
Search around.

INT. OLD TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Scott climbs into the cab. He searches around, lacking Brian's speed and drive. Sure enough, it only takes a moment before Brian has caught up to him, searching the other side.

SCOTT
So what's your plan?

BRIAN
Get us out of here.

Scott continues... slowly reconsidering Brian's answer...

SCOTT
Us?

Brian's too distracted. Searching around.

BRIAN
All of us.

SCOTT
Brian...
(hesitant)
you, me, Chris...we *are* all of us.

Brian finally stops, giving Scott a stern, adamant glare.
The glare silences Scott. He can only watch as Brian leaves
to continue his search.

INT. HOUSE: KITCHEN - NIGHT

Chris searches through the kitchen. He finds the ROTARY
TELEPHONE. He grabs it, tugging it away from the wall,
discovering a FRAYED PHONE WIRE. Useless.

Chris laughs, tossing it carelessly back onto the counter. He
moves to leave, hesitating at the sight of something...

POV: across the kitchen is a door. The CELLAR DOOR. Obscured
by shadow. It hangs half open.

Nervous, Chris pulls his small POCKET KNIFE out... then looks
in a nearby drawer and trades it for a LARGE KITCHEN KNIFE.

He stares at the door, waiting. Nothing.

Chris inches closer. Closer. He shuts it. Locks it.

A sigh of relief--

--interrupted by LOUD FOOTSTEPS CHARGING DOWN THE STAIRCASE.

Chris only spins around in time to see the front door swing
shut as a figure sprints across the porch and vanishes into
the cornfield.

Chris is petrified.

INT. HOUSE: FRONT ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Chris drags a DRESSER against the front door. Secures it. He then nervously checks the room behind him.

RING! RING! RING!

Chris freezes at the sound of the rotary phone, ringing from the kitchen. Horrified, Chris turns toward the sound...

POV: around the corner, in the kitchen, the rotary phone rattles on the kitchen counter. It's frayed wires dangling.

Chris continues around the corner...nervously...

POV: The cellar door comes into view. A FARM BOY JUMPS BACK INSIDE THE OPENED CELLAR DOOR, SLAMMING IT SHUT.

INT. HOUSE: STAIRCASE - CONTINUOUS

Chris rushes up the stairs, gripping his kitchen knife, watching his back.

INT. HOUSE: SECOND FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Chris backs down the hallway, watching the stairway. His hands are out, knife ready as he watches the darkness.

POV: the stairs, growing more distant, remain quiet. Nothing.

Chris flinches at the passing doorways, descending further down the hallway. He backs straight into the final doorway--

INT. SEWING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

--He hurries inside, slamming the door shut behind him. He flips the light switch, but nothing happens.

The room is DARK. The SEWING MACHINE is EMPTY.

CHRIS
Johnny?
(beat)
Shit.

Chris spots a CLOSET across the room. He immediately grabs a CHAIR and props it up against the closet door handle.

He backs into the middle of the room. Knife ready. Trembling.

INT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

The barn doors cut the darkness as Brian pulls the massive doors open. His flashlight pierces through the pitch black as he and Scott enter.

POV: FLASHLIGHT: It sweeps across the barn. HAY and STRAW strewn everywhere. The far wall is decorated with THREATENING TOOLS: an axe, pitchfork, sickle, etc. Farming tools.

Brian's search suddenly comes to a halt.

POV: A ROTTEN PIG (amongst other dead animals) HANGS FROM ITS ANKLES BY A ROPE. A RUSTY METAL BASIN is directly below it. Slash wounds are deliberately scattered over its body. The rope strings up over a beam, tethered on the other side by a LARGE HOOK in the floor.

Scott's too distracted by his own discovery to notice.

SCOTT

Brian.

Brian turns, bringing the flashlight around...

A SCARECROW TORSO is draped over a WORK BENCH. Straw pours out of its incomplete legs.

The bench is decorated with scarecrow making supplies. CHEMICALS. A PILE OF COTTON. STRAW. TWINE. As well as some peculiar tools. Taxidermy tools.

BRIAN

See what you can find.

Before Scott has a choice, Brian is moving across the barn. He watches his friend...or rather the person resembling him.

Brian finds a large cabinet. He pulls it open. SHOTGUN SHELLS spill out of a box on the floor, but the GUN RACK is empty.

Scott reluctantly tugs at some drawers in the work bench. As he does, he catches a closer glimpse of the scarecrow's face. Scott becomes distracted by it. Mesmerized by it.

BRIAN

Anything?

Scott snaps out of it.

SCOTT

No. Not yet.

THE SCARECROW TORSO JUMPS TO LIFE!

With its arms, it scampers across the work bench, knocking everything away. It suddenly claws its way up the wall, like a crazed spider.

BRIAN (O.S.)
SCOTT!!

CUT TO:

Brian grabs Scott, forcefully. Scott's paralyzed. He turns back to the work bench.

Everything is as it was. Scarecrow. Supplies. Untouched.

BRIAN
What was it?

Scott is speechless, struggling to understand. He turns back to Brian perplexed. Suddenly, he fixes his stare over Brian's shoulder... behind Brian...

CUT TO:

INT. BARN - DAYTIME

SCOTT'S POV: Over Brian's shoulder. The barn is lit with daylight. The sun pours in through the windows.

ALEX (18), a young farm boy (perhaps recognizable from the mantle photos) strings a DEAD PIG up by its ankles. His proud father, FARMER COMSTOCK, watches proudly.

FARMER COMSTOCK
Look at that fella.
(inspecting)
I don't see entry wounds.

ALEX
I used a snare. Rigged some twine,
laid it out, snatched him up by the
feet. Just clubbed him when it was
done.

FARMER COMSTOCK
Well I'll be...

Scott turns back to the work bench. Another farm boy (15), has his back to Scott, working on the scarecrow torso.

FARMER COMSTOCK (O.S.)
You chicken snared him?

ALEX (O.S.)
Ha. Sure did. With a bigger rope, I
bet I could chicken snare even
bigger game then this guy, ya know?

Scott approaches the bench for a closer look. It's then that
this other farm boy is recognized as the one from the field
and the cellar. This is COREY.

FARMER COMSTOCK (O.S.)
Son, you got a skill and a gift.
You're turning into a real man. I
can see it. I couldn't be prouder.

Corey stops. Silently hurt. Silently angry. Scott sees it.

FARMER COMSTOCK (O.S.)
And your brother's not far from
catching up with you, ain't that
right, Corey?

Corey forces a nod and a smile.

Comstock gleams at his boys, oblivious to Corey, attentive to
Alex. Alex is pre-occupied with a LARGE KNIFE.

FARMER COMSTOCK
Together, you two got the perfect
trade. You snatch and bleed 'em,
your brother stuffs and sews 'em.
You're ready to open up shop.

CLOSE ON METAL BASIN: as PIG BLOOD drips down from above.

Comstock kicks the basin, adjusting it. He halts his son who
readies another slice..

FARMER COMSTOCK
Now you remember what I taught ya?
(motioning slices)
Start with the belly. Here. *Then*
the thighs. A few in the back. You
still want 'em to be useful.

CLOSE ON METAL BASIN: as MORE BLOOD drips in.

CUT TO:

INT. BARN - NIGHTTIME

Scott stares dazed over Brian's shoulder as nighttime returns. Reality returns.

He checks for Corey back at the work bench. Gone. He turns back to Brian. Puzzled.

BRIAN
What's going on?

SCOTT
Something.

INT. SEWING ROOM - NIGHT

Chris creeps towards the sewing machine for a closer look.

BLOOD drips, dries, and smears all over the chair. A RUSTY HAMMER rests on the machine's table top, along with a scattering of RUSTY NAILS.

Chris is confused by the sight. He turns...

Beside the sewing machine, below the window, is a PILE OF SCRAP FABRICS: lots of burlap, varying patterned strips... and TORN CLOTHING. Shredded pieces of a sun dress, the remains of a letterman's jacket, a plaid dress shirt, etc.

Chris stares at the pile--

--FLASH! THE LIGHT BULB BEAMS TO LIFE. Blinding. Startling.

Chris spins around, knife ready. No one's there.

Chris suddenly perks at the sound of something outside. He creeps carefully towards the window for a look...

POV: A FIGURE disappears under the roof of the porch.

BAM! BAM! The front door begins pounding violently against the dresser downstairs. Chris freezes as he listens to the dresser crash to the floor.

The door creaks open. FOOTSTEPS creak across the front room.

CHRIS
BRIAN!

No response. Just footsteps. They begin to ascend the stairs.

Chris' anxiety heightens as they pound louder and louder up the staircase.

CHRIS
SCOTT!

No response. Silence. The wood beams creak at the other end of the hall. The creak slowly grows closer as the footsteps steadily approach the sewing room door.

Chris grips his knife, watching the door.

The footsteps pause outside the door. After a moment that feels like eternity, THE DOOR KNOB GENTLY JIGGLES.

CLOSE ON DOORKNOB: as the lock slowly unlatches itself.

The door creaks open. The darkness in the hallway obscures the figure on the other side.

Chris watches in horror as NATALIE'S MUDDY, BLOODY BODY steps awkwardly into the room. Wounds string across her body. Her crusty hair obscures most of her face, except her WHITE EYES.

CHRIS
(to himself)
Natalie?

Natalie moves strangely through the room, oblivious to Chris' presence. Chris is paralyzed with shock.

CHRIS
Natalie.

She continues, moving straight past him, towards the sewing machine. Chris trembles. Distraught. Confused.

Natalie takes her seat at the sewing machine. She brings several scraps of fabric to the machine and begins.

Chris can only watch. He's unaware of the sewing room door slowly shutting itself behind him. It locks.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Brian and Scott enter, noticing the dresser knocked over beside the doorway. Concerned.

SCOTT
Chris?
(no response)
CHRIS!

INT. SEWING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Scott's voice snaps Chris out of it. He moves for the door, only to discover it doesn't open. He clicks the lock. Still nothing. He tries again. The door won't budge.

CHRIS
Shit.
(calling out)
SCOTT!

INT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

CHRIS (O.S.)
UP HERE!

Scott moves for the stairs. Brian hesitates, scanning the kitchen and the front room. He trusts nothing.

INT. HOUSE: SECOND FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Scott spots the light under the sewing room door, along with the shadows of Chris' anxious steps on the other side.

SCOTT
Chris?

CHRIS (O.S.)
The fucking door won't open.

Scott grabs it. Nothing happens.

SCOTT
It's locked on *your* side.

CHRIS (O.S.)
It won't open! I got to get out of here!

Scott throws his feeble body into the door to no effect. Chris begins to panic on the other side.

SCOTT
I don't know what to do!

CHRIS
(hysterical)
I NEED TO GET OUT OF HERE!

SCOTT
I'm trying.

CHRIS
PLEASE! SCOTT!
(beat)
She's in here.

Scott stares at the doorway, trying to understand. He suddenly turns at the sound of Brian at the end of the hallway. Brian understands.

CHRIS (O.S.)
Please just get me out. She's
fucking in here. With me.

Brian moves straight for the doorway. His face flaring with festered rage.

BRIAN
(to Scott)
Move.

Scott has no choice. He jumps aside, narrowly missing Brian's foot as it shoots into the door. CRACK! Again. CRACK!

Scott stands aside, watching as Brian's aggression grows.

BRIAN
(lunging into the door)
Natalie!
(another lunge. Stronger.)
NATALIE!

INT. SEWING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

CRACK! Chris backs away from the door as Brian attacks.

BRIAN (O.S.)
NATALIE!

He watches the door pulse and crack. Yet somehow, the door holds strong. It fights back.

Natalie is at the sewing machine. Oblivious. Sewing.

INT. HOUSE: SECOND FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Scott watches his friend snap. Raging.

Brian now hurls his entire, muscular body into the door, howling with rage. With pain.

He stops, panting wildly, assessing the situation.

Suddenly, Brian races off, disappearing down the stairs.

Scott watches. Alone.

CHRIS (O.S.)
What's happening?

SCOTT
Brian's gone.

INT. SEWING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Chris leans against the door.

CHRIS
Gone? Where?

SCOTT (O.S.)
I don't know.

Chris groans, frustrated. Desperate. He turns to the room...

POV: across the room, beside Natalie, is the WINDOW.

EXT. HOUSE: YARD - NIGHT

Brian sprints across the yard. Fast. Frantic.

BRIAN
(under his breath)
Don't worry baby. Don't worry.

INT. SEWING ROOM - NIGHT

Chris inches across the room towards the window.

As he approaches, he gets a closer look of Natalie's sewing project. She remains oblivious...for now.

INT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

-Brian kicks the barn doors open, raising the flashlight.

-Brian removes an AXE from the wall of farming tools.

INT. SEWING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Chris reaches the window. He tugs at it. It won't budge. The rotten wood and paint has sealed it shut. He tugs again, each tug careful to watch Natalie.

Natalie is quiet. Eyes white. Wounds bloody. Fingers sewing.

One straining tug. The window pops loose. Chris slides it open and moves to exit--

--Natalie reaches towards him, rummaging through the pile of fabric at Chris' feet.

Chris watches her, startled at first, then disturbed. Her face is glazed over. Her whole body is. It's like her body is unaware that her arm is reaching for fabric. Like a puppet.

She adds the fabric to her sewing project, continuing.

Chris continues too, raising his body up and out the window.

EXT. HOUSE: SECOND FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Brian hurries down the hall, axe ready to go.

BAM! He plunges the axe into the door. Scott jumps aside, too close to be safe...not that Brian would care.

BAM! Another plunge. BAM! Another. The door begins to splinter under the axe blade and Brian's strength.

EXT. ROOFTOP - CONTINUOUS

Chris slips on the moldy shingles, catching himself with the window sill. He turns back at the sound of Brian's axe breaking through the door. As he does...

Natalie turns eerily from her work, her white eyes glaring straight at Chris. No longer glazed over. They see him.

A chill shoots down Chris' spine--

--BAM! THE WINDOW CRASHES DOWN ON HIS HANDS!

Chris falls back, slipping. He shoots down the rooftop. Off the rooftop.

Chris smashes onto the ground below--

--SMASH TO BLACK

FADE IN:

INT. HOUSE: FRONT ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: COREY'S PORTRAIT on the wall by the fireplace.

Scott inspects the photo closely. Recognizing him. He grabs another photo sitting on the mantle, brushes the dust from the frame, and brings it close.

CLOSE ON PHOTO: Farmer Comstock has his arm around Alex who poses with several dead quails, strung by their ankles.

Chris is on the couch behind Scott. A pillow is torn apart beside him. He uses the shreds to wrap his bleeding hand.

INT. SEWING ROOM - NIGHT

A large hole is hacked out of the door. It hangs open.

Inside, Natalie is hunched over the sewing machine, obscuring her work. She raises the rusty hammer up, bringing it down hard on something obscured. TAK! TAK! TAK!

Brian is collapsed against the wall behind her. Broken. His face in his hands. Silent (or speechless). Mourning. This is the last place in the world he wants to be, but the only place he *can* be. With her.

INT. HOUSE: FRONT ROOM - NIGHT

Chris finishes wrapping his hand, flinching with pain.

CHRIS

Shit!

He jumps up, angrily kicking the coffee table over.

CHRIS

Fuck!

(to Scott)

We've gotta get the fuck out of here!

SCOTT

How?

Chris is silenced by Scott's look. A challenge.

CHRIS

We can run. How do we know we can't
out run those things?

SCOTT

I know I can't.
(Chris is silent)
But we can try if you don't mind
the gamble. I kind of do.

Chris leaves his answer vague, simply staring back.

EXT. HOUSE: PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Scott steps onto the porch, peering over the field.

CHRIS

I'm just saying there's gotta be
something.
(beat)
What did you guys find earlier?

A CROW lands on the porch railing. Pecking around. Scott
takes notice of him.

SCOTT

Nothing we can use. A bunch of
tools and broken down cars.

Chris perks at Scott's response...

CHRIS

Cars?
(beat)
Where?

Scott indicates the direction of the barn as he approaches
the crow. He's intrigued by the crow's bravery to let him get
so close.

Meanwhile, Chris steps across the porch, trying to spot the
barn and the cars.

CHRIS

How old did they look?

Scott is distracted. He's practically face-to-face with the
crow. They seem to stare back at each other.

Suddenly... the crow's stare causes a change to fall over Scott's face. He continues to stare... but differently...

COREY (O.S.)

Psssst.

Scott turns to the sound. Corey has returned. He stands at the fields edge, beckoning Scott toward the field. Friendly.

COREY

Psssst. Come on.

INT. SEWING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Brian stares across the room. No longer broken. Strengthened. A calm has returned to him. An acceptance. A resolve.

MOVEMENT OUT THE WINDOW catches his attention. He climbs to his feet and peers outside...

POV: Scott walks toward the cornfield. No sign of stopping.

BRIAN

Scott!

EXT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Scott walks up to the edge of the field and peers deep into the cornstalks. Not worried. Not anything. Just staring.

EXT. HOUSE: PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Chris turns around, discovering Scott's no longer behind him. Suddenly he sees him...

SCOTT DISAPPEARS INTO THE CORNFIELD.

CHRIS

SCOTT!

INT. CORNFIELD - DAYTIME

The sunlight beams through the cornstalks as Scott follows Corey through the cornfield. Corey is a trustworthy leader...

COREY

Just up here. Not far.

He guides Scott along. Scott doesn't mind. Just follows.

COREY
This way.

INT. SCARECROW CLEARING - DAYTIME

Scott stops just inside the clearing, watching as Corey leads his brother Alex into the middle of it.

Corey shows Alex the scarecrow. Alex is unimpressed.

ALEX
Great. They get better all the time.

Alex is unaware of Corey removing a PITCH FORK from the cornstalks behind him. Scott watches Corey do so in horror.

Corey raises the pitch fork up...

ALEX
Can we get back already?

SCOTT
NO! DON'T--

--CRACK! Alex is knocked to the ground. No sooner does he hit the ground before Corey begins stabbing violently. Brutally.

SCOTT
STOP! STOP!--

INT. SCARECROW CLEARING - NIGHTTIME

--Scott snaps himself back into reality.

SCOTT
STOP!

He catches himself, re-assessing his surroundings. No more daylight. No more Corey and Alex. Just a dark cornfield... and a SCARECROW HANGING HIGH FROM ITS NEARBY POST.

Scott is petrified. Unable to move. He turns, searching for the direction of the house...

POV: the house peaks over the tops of the corn, made visible by the SEWING ROOM LIGHT, glowing like a beckon.

Scott prepares to make his move... but something stops him--

--FOOTSTEPS RACING THROUGH THE CORN. TOWARDS HIM.

Scott trembles, anticipating the worst. He braces himself as the sound closes in on him...closer...

BRIAN (O.S.)

SCOTT!

Scott perks at the recognition of Brian's voice. Approaching.

SCOTT

BRIAN!

The approaching footsteps reveal BRIAN as he explodes out of the corn into the clearing. Urgent. He sees Scott.

...BRIAN EXPLODES INTO THE CLEARING.

BRIAN

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

SCOTT

I don't know.

Brian freezes at the sight of the scarecrow. He hesitates, quickly grabbing Scott...

BRIAN

Move.

They rush into the corn.

INT. CORNFIELD - CONTINUOUS

Brian and Scott move through the field. They attempt to be as stealth as they can possibly be. Still hurrying. Terrified.

EXT. HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Brian and Scott hurry out of the cornfield. Finally safe, Brian grabs Scott. Frustrated.

BRIAN

Scott!

Scott is speechless. Incredibly shaken.

Brian and Scott collapse onto the porch steps. Exhausted.

BRIAN
What the hell were you doing!?

SCOTT
I don't know!--

BRIAN
--WHAT WERE YOU DOING?

SCOTT
I DON'T KNOW! OKAY?

They both pant, exhausted. Thankful to be alive. Chris glares at Scott, suspicious.

CHRIS
What's the matter with you?
(Scott's silent)
You both could have been killed.
(to Brian)
You know that?

Neither of them answer. They catch their breath instead. Chris shakes his head. His trust fading.

CHRIS
You're losing it. Both of you.

He moves to leave...

SCOTT
I saw somebody. A boy.

Chris stops. A shiver shoots down his spine.

SCOTT
He was over there. I don't know why
I followed him.
(beat)
I just did.

CHRIS
(hesitant)
Did he have brown hair? Overalls?

Brian and Scott turn, shocked by Chris' addition. Chris winces under Brian's questioning glance...

CHRIS
I think Natalie saw him. From the
road. In the corn.

Brian rises to his feet...

BRIAN
She did?

CHRIS
(nods)
Then I saw him here. In the house.

Brian comes close...

BRIAN
Where?

CHRIS
Kitchen.

Brian clicks on the flashlight and heads inside.

CHRIS
He was hiding in the cellar.

INT. HOUSE: KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Brian heads straight for the cellar door. Fearless. Scott and Chris reluctantly follow. Hesitating back.

Brian grabs the cellar door and rips it open. He raises the flashlight up, breaking the darkness. A staircase descends deeper than the flashlight can illuminate.

CHRIS
Whoa! Stop!
(Brian turns)
After what happened out there,
you're just gonna do *this*? Don't
you realize the shit we're in? Have
you gone completely nuts?

BRIAN
Then don't follow me.

~~SCOTT~~
I think we should stick together.

CHRIS
Fuck that! I don't have a death
wish, Brian!

Brian and Scott watch as it's Chris' turn to snap.

CHRIS
I can't explain the shit going on
here! Neither of us can!

CHRIS(cont'd)

But how can you watch your girlfriend die and not respect that our lives are on the line here? We can't afford to be stupid!

BRIAN

Someone here knows exactly what's going on, and I'm going to find it out and get us the hell out of here.

Chris is equally adamant in his silence. Considering something. Brian notices.

BRIAN

Do you have a better idea?

CHRIS

(beat)

No.

Brian grabs a nearby BROOMSTICK and breaks it over his leg, forming a weapon. Scott hesitates, questioning Chris.

SCOTT

We're not splitting up, right?

CHRIS

You guys go. I'll watch from here. Make sure we don't miss something.

Brian gives Chris a suspicious glance. He and Scott disappear into the cellar. Chris watches.

INT. CELLAR - NIGHT

Black. Pitch black. The flashlight beam barely cuts through the darkness as Brian and Scott creep down the steps.

POV: FLASHLIGHT: BOXES are scattered everywhere. DIRT pours all over. Dusty furniture. Long forgotten. Cobwebs stretch everywhere. Thick.

Brian carefully steps through the darkness. Tripping over everything. Scott keeps close. Nervous.

WHITE SHEETS, caked with dust, cover a gathering of stored furniture, creating large, suspicious shapes.

Brian spots something in the corner of the room.

BRIAN

Hello!

Scott spins around, startled.

POV: TWO LEGS stick out from behind the clutter.

Brian and Scott watch. Wait. Nothing happens. They carefully approach, fixing the light on it...

A YOUNG FARMER is collapsed on the ground. His head blown off. Blood and brain is crusted to the wall. A shotgun hangs in his dead hands.

BRIAN

That him?

Scott inspects his clothes. What little hair is left. Although skeptical, Scott nods.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Chris sits at the kitchen table, staring out the window. Hands clasped. Brow furrowed. Thinking... or debating.

He stares at the cellar door... then back to the window.

INT. CELLAR - NIGHT

Brian brings the flashlight close, investigating the dried guts on the wall. He then grabs the body's hands. They're rotten. Long dead.

Brian turns to Scott, very skeptical. Concerned.

BRIAN

This isn't him.

SCOTT

I think it is.

Brian struggles with the thought. Impossible.

BRIAN

There must be someone else.

LOUD FOOTSTEPS POUND FROM ABOVE!

Brian and Scott whip around, raising the flashlight towards the underside of the staircase.

FOOTSTEPS CHARGE DOWN THE STEPS, ACROSS THE FRONT ROOM!

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Brian explodes out of the cellar door. Chris is gone.

INT. FRONT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

He darts around the corner, raising the flashlight around the room. No one's there.

Scott follows as Brian races out the front door.

EXT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Brian jumps off the porch, scouring the front yard with his flashlight. Nothing.

Suddenly, Brian turns up towards the sewing room window.

The window is dark. THE LIGHT IS OFF.

He and Scott share a suspicious glance. Suddenly...

The sound of a struggling engine chokes in the distance. Faint. Subtle. Brian turns towards the sound...

BRIAN
What is that?

INT. OLD TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Chris bites his pocket knife as he flicks two wires together. THEY SPARK! He flicks again. ANOTHER SPARK! Suddenly, the engine stops choking, steadily humming along. Ready.

Chris drops the wires and presses the gas pedal, revving the engine.

EXT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

Brian sprints across the yard, toward the barn. He's suddenly halted, blinded by HEADLIGHTS as they sputter to life.

Brian raises his hands, struggling to see.

POV: Chris shifts the truck into gear.

BRIAN
You son of a bitch.

INT. OLD TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Chris guns the engine, off-roading through the weeds, racing towards the cornfield.

EXT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

The truck barrels into the cornfield. Brian chases after on foot. Fuming.

INT. OLD TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Chris grips the wheel. Struggling. Determined.

The cornstalks are too thick to see through. They slap against the hood and windshield. Blinding.

The needles on the dashboard fluctuate chaotically. Unstable.

INT. CORNFIELD - CONTINUOUS

Cornstalks are crushed under the truck, parting a PATHWAY.

Brian dashes through the cornfield, racing down the path.

BRIAN
CHRIS!
(running)
CHRIS!

The truck continues ahead, demolishing the cornfield.

BAM! Brian trips over the collapsed cornstalks, falling hard.

I/E. OLD TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

The engine begins to struggle. Chris hammers the steering wheel, desperately.

CHRIS
Come on!

CRASH! THE TRUCK COLLIDES INTO THE SMALL WOODEN FENCE!

Chris jolts forward, abruptly halted.

The splintered fence beams jab into the truck's bumper and undercarriage. The wheels spin helplessly in the air.

CHRIS
Shit! SHIT!

He desperately guns the gas. The engine roars, worthless.

He stops, assessing the situation. Adrenaline makes way for fear as he scans the cornfield, reluctant to brave it.

Chris carefully shoves his door open. It won't budge.

Outside, the fence beams firmly brace the door shut.

He spots the problem through the window. Hopeless. He then shifts his focus across the cab to the other door...

...A METALLIC SCREECH SCREAMS FROM THE BACK OF THE TRUCK.

Chris whips around, pressing against the glass for a look.

A CORPSE-LIKE HAND, pierced through the fingers with rusty nails, retreats into the cornstalks. Unseen. It leaves a long scratch across the truck's rear.

Chris nervously watches, seeing nothing.

He hesitates a moment before carefully scooting across the cab to the passenger side.

He quietly pops the door, creaking it open--

--A SCARECROW LEAPS INTO THE CAB, ATTACKING CHRIS.

It slashes wildly. Aggressive. Chris grabs its flailing wrists, narrowly protecting himself from its claws.

Struggling, Chris kicks the scarecrow. Hard. Sending it out the door. In the same motion, Chris is up, slamming the door.

THE WINDOW'S OPEN. Chris scrambles with the window lever, manually rolling it up as fast as he can--

--THE SCARECROW RETURNS! Its arm reaches wildly through the closing gap in window, desperately swiping at Chris.

Chris struggles with the window, dodging the scarecrow's claws. He closes the window further...further...

The scarecrow suddenly drops limp. Motionless. Hanging limp against the truck door, pinned in the window.

Chris is frozen. Confused. He stares through the glass... Slowly recognizing something about the scarecrow...

CHRIS
Johnny?

BRIAN (O.S.)
HEY! CHRIS!

Chris spins around.

POV: out the back, Chris sees Brian, standing in the red glow of his tail lights.

INT. CORNFIELD - CONTINUOUS

Brian glares at the truck. Angry. Waiting.

BRIAN
HEY!

SLASH! A SCARECROW RIPS BRIAN OPEN. SLASH! AGAIN! SLASH!

Chris screams helplessly from the truck--

CHRIS
NOOOOO!!!

Brian is spun around, getting brutally ripped to shreds. He tries to resist but it's no use. The scarecrow's too fast. Blood spills too quick. He never stood a chance.

EXT. HOUSE: PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Scott paces frantically on the porch, listening to the faint echoes of the carnage in the cornfield.

SCOTT
(to himself. Nervous.)
Oh God. Please no. Oh God.

INT. OLD TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Chris ducks down in the cab. Cowering away. By the sound of things outside, it's become too much to watch.

He helplessly listens as flesh tears. Blood spills. Brian's breath gargles away.

Silence. Dead silence.

Chris holds his breath. Suddenly, corn crunches and shuffles around. Chris hears the scarecrow forcefully dragging Brian's dead body away.

Chris peaks up. The scarecrow's gone. Brian's gone.

Chris' terror has reached a new height. His breath trembles as he locks eyes with the "Johnny" scarecrow pressed against the glass, motionless... or just waiting...

BAM! Chris kicks the driver's door. Desperate. Aggressive. BAM! The wood fence slowly knocks away under the frantic pounding of the driver's door.

BAM! The door explodes open. Chris leaps out. Hysterical.

INT. CORNFIELD: FENCE - CONTINUOUS

Chris stumbles through the cornfield, bracing himself with the wooden fence as he searches around. Frantic. Hurrying.

MOVEMENT IN THE CORN!

Chris panics at the sound, picking up speed.

EXT. HOUSE: PORCH - NIGHT

Scott couldn't be more worried. He watches the field.

SCOTT

BRIAN!

(nothing)

BRIAN!

INT. CORNFIELD: BROKEN DOWN CAR - CONTINUOUS

Chris breaks through the corn, stumbling upon the broken down car. He immediately ducks behind it. Hiding. Listening.

The cornfield is quiet. Still.

In a sudden impulse, Chris pulls the car door open--

INT. BROKEN DOWN CAR - CONTINUOUS

--he pulls himself inside, quickly pulling the door shut behind him. He retreats into the backseat. Ducks down.

His heart pounds. He tries to listen to the cornfield over his panting breath.

Nothing but crickets... the night breeze...

SNAP! Something in the distance. A safe distance.

Chris attempts to brace himself on the driver's seat--

--IT COLLAPSES FORWARD--

--A SCARECROW EXPLODES THROUGH THE WINDOW!

EXT. CORNFIELD: BROKEN DOWN CAR - CONTINUOUS

CHRIS IS RIPPED OUT OF THE CAR AND SLAMMED ON THE GROUND.

The scarecrow's on him. A scarecrow in a hardly recognizable 1950's police uniform. It slashes and attacks.

CHRIS FIGHTS BACK! Resisting. He scrambles and flails as frantically as his attacker. Desperate.

CHRIS
NO!
(struggling)
N0000!!

Suddenly, Chris has the upper hand, knocking the scarecrow back. The scarecrow no longer slashes, but scrambles with a THICK ROPE, frantically throwing it around Chris' legs. Chris knocks it back again. It returns, throwing more rope.

They scramble chaotically. Desperately. Chris with his punches. The scarecrow with its rope.

Suddenly, BAM! Chris kicks the scarecrow back. It collapses to the ground. Limp. Done.

Chris sits up. Bloody. Catching his breath.

He tries to stand, but the mess of rope makes it tricky. He picks at the ropes, trying to pull them off--

--CHRIS IS TUGGED VIOLENTLY INTO THE CORN!

INT. CORNFIELD - CONTINUOUS

Chris flies through the field. Fast. Getting torn apart by the cornstalks and dirt.

He releases a final, gut-wrenching scream--

EXT. HOUSE: PORCH - NIGHT

--Chris' scream echoes out of the field.

Scott freezes at the sound of it, watching the field, hopelessly. Tears approaching.

Silence. Scott is alone.

INT. SCARECROW CLEARING - NIGHT

Brian hangs by his ankles on a scarecrow post. Bleeding. Dead. His blood collects in a large, grotesque puddle below.

A scarecrow enters the clearing. A new scarecrow. A female.

The "Natalie" scarecrow approaches Brian's body. Inspecting his wounds. His blood-flow.

SLASH! She adds a slice across his belly. SLASH! His ribs.

CLOSE ON PUDDLE: as blood flows more fluidly.

EXT. HOUSE: PORCH - NIGHT

Scott sits on the porch swing. Devastated. Defeated. Alone.

He pierces the ground with a hopeless stare. After a moment he hears something...

A CROW is perched in front of him on the railing. It cocks its head at Scott. Curiously. He returns a fuming glare.

SOMETHING MOVES IN THE CORNFIELD.

Scott jumps to his feet. He watches the corn. Hopeful...

Corey steps out of the field. Scott drops. Suspicious.

Corey hides his hands under his overalls, scanning the property. He crosses the porch, heading inside.

Scott hesitates... following Corey through the front door...

INT. FRONT ROOM - DAYTIME

Daylight follows Scott as he opens the front door.

Corey rushes upstairs, keeping his hands under his overalls.

Scott watches, distracted by the front room. The dust and cobwebs are gone. This house looks liveable. Cozy.

INT. SEWING ROOM - DAYTIME

Corey ducks into his bedroom. He removes his BLOODY HANDS out from under his overalls. He stares at them, horrified.

INT. UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Corey runs his hands under the faucet. The sink is pink with draining blood.

INT. SEWING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Corey is at the sewing machine. Working. He assumes a familiar, hunched posture as he works. Focused.

The machine suddenly stops. Corey places his hands inside his burlap project and raises it up in the same manor as we saw Johnny do before. He inspects his work.

CLOSE ON MASK: it's recognizable as the "SMILEY" MASK.

INT. FRONT ROOM - DUSK

Scott watches from the front door as Corey rushes downstairs--

--FARMER COMSTOCK cuts off his path at the bottom. Corey freezes under his father's stern look.

FARMER COMSTOCK
Where's your brother?

COREY
I don't know. I'm not in charge of him.

Comstock stares at him a moment. Giving him one last chance.

FARMER COMSTOCK
Supper's almost ready.
(noticing the mask)
You almost done with that scarecrow?

COREY
I'm gonna finish right now.

His father steps aside, letting him pass. Scott also steps aside as Corey dashes off for the cornfield.

INT. SCARECROW CLEARING - DUSK

Corey pulls the SMILEY MASK over his dead brother's face.
He wraps some TWINE around the neck, tying it tight.

JOHNNY (O.S.)
You know any good ghost stories?

CUT TO:

INT. SUV - NIGHT

Brian, Natalie, and Chris are asleep in the backseat as the car hums down a highway in the dark. Johnny sits wide awake behind the steering wheel, engaging sleepy Scott...

SCOTT
Yeah. I know some pretty good ones.
Just can never remember them when I
finally have a chance to tell them.

JOHNNY
I know what you mean.
(watching the road)
Remember how we used to make this
trip in the RV?
(Scott nods. Sleepy.)
When I was younger, my dad would
make us camp in one of those RV
parks. He'd make a huge bonfire and
we'd end up hanging out with all
these other campers.

(beat)(MORE)
No matter where we were, or who was
there, everyone would always have
these freaky ghost stories. Real
ones. Like encounters. Man, made it
so hard for me to sleep. I'd just
be wide awake. Terrified.

(beat)
It was like all these campers had
collected all these creepy stories
about the places they'd passed
through. Local's stuff.

JOHNNY(cont'd)

(beat)

Man, I'm trying to remember one.

SCOTT

You're *trying* to spook me awake so you don't have to be alone.

JOHNNY

Yeah? How about you drive and we'll see how *you* feel?

SCOTT

I have no problem being alone.

JOHNNY

Bullshit.

SCOTT

I don't. Helps me think.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE: FRONT ROOM - NIGHT

Scott sits alone in the front room. Alone in the dark. Well... not completely alone...

He sits beside the corpse in the closet. His positioning mimics it. Relaxed. Surrendered. He skims through a bible...

CLOSE ON BIBLE: as Scott fingers through pages. "Genesis 4". His finger scrolls down. Verse 11.

Scott's eyes struggle in the darkness.

CLOSE ON BIBLE: "cursed from the ground." "Cain." "Abel."

Scott reads further, then raises a glance toward the portraits hanging across the room by the fireplace.

CLOSE ON PORTRAITS: Corey's friendly smile. Alex's shattered frame.

Scott's suddenly intrigued by a thought. He considers for a moment, scanning the room. Suspicious.

FLASH! The sewing room light suddenly illuminates the stairs.

Scott turns towards it... suddenly apprehensive with a thought. He turns nervously toward the front door... anticipating something.

Suddenly... that something arrives.

POV: the front door obscures the sight of SOMETHING OUTSIDE. Approaching. Footsteps cross the yard... creaking across the front porch... the front door slowly swings open...

BRIAN ENTERS THE HOUSE. His clothes caked with blood. His eyes white. His legs carry him unwillingly up the staircase.

Scott can only watch. Bewildered. Overwhelmed.

SCOTT
(to himself)
Brian.

As Brian disappears upstairs, Scott loses his composure. His emotions catch up with him. Despair. Fear. Hopelessness.

He stops as he hears Brian's footsteps creak across the floor boards above him, entering the sewing room.

INT. HOUSE: SECOND FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Scott watches Brian through the hole in the sewing room door.

POV: Brian's at the sewing machine, just like we've seen.

Scott cringes with suspicion. He struggles with an idea.

He notices the open bedroom doorway again. The taxidermy animals inside.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Scott enters into the room. Only darkness, except for the moonlight spilling in through the window.

A YOUNG MAN'S BED is neatly tucked in the corner. Scott reconsiders the ribbons and medals collected on the wall. The STUFFED QUAILS adorning the wall, hung by their ankles. The TAXIDERMY HEADS mounted on the wall.

As Scott enters further, he notices a desk, positioned near the window, much like the sewing machine next door.

A SPOOL OF TWINE is on the desk. It's tied into a practice snare. A jar holds a collection of SHOTGUN PELLETS. Another jar holds a collection of ARROWHEADS. Hanging beside the desk is a HUNTING BELT, rigged with a hunting knife, canteen, a satchel pouch, etc.

INT. FRONT ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Scott comes downstairs. He stares out at the cornfield through the window, still wrestling with a thought...

CUT TO:

Scott sits at the chess table. He arranges the chess pieces for himself and an invisible foe.

JUMP CUT TO:

Everything's arranged. The game is on. Scott moves a pawn for his invisible foe. He scours the board with intense focus as he considers his own retaliation.

Scott makes his move. Satisfied, Scott rises to make a move for his foe... but something stops him. A thought.

Scott's beginning to unravel something...

A change falls over Scott. A drive. A direction. He clears the pawns from the board, placing FIVE PAWNS on one side.

He stares at the five pawns a moment...

FLASH: Scott and the gang driving. Sunny. Cheery.

...then turns from the five pawns out to the cornfield. A long, dark glance. Suddenly--

--he scatters several OPPOSING PIECES randomly around the middle of the board, standing off against the five.

Scott takes one of his five pawns...

FLASH: Johnny laughing behind the steering wheel--

...and slides it to the center of the board.

Scott again glances at the cornfield...

FLASH: Scott hanging on the scarecrow. Brian boosting him up.

...then slides one of the opposing pieces against it, knocking "Johnny" off the board.

Scott grabs two of his four remaining pawns...

FLASH: Brian and Scott disappearing into the cornfield.

...and slides them both together to the center of the board.

He glances up, through the ceiling at the sewing room, then back to the board...

CLOSE ON CHESSBOARD: Scott uses his opponent's turn to "promote" his knocked out pawn with a KNIGHT. Just like the Old Man did at the gas station.

FLASH: Johnny, bloody, hunched over the sewing room.

Scott then brings his two "Brian" and "Scott" pawns, waiting in the center of the board, safely to the other side.

FLASH: Brian and Scott nervously leaning in the front door.

He glances from his two pawns up at the front door.

SCOTT

Oh my God.

He stares at the board, considering his theory further. This is making sense. Becoming clearer...

FLASH: Natalie rushes into the cornfield.

...Scott quickly grabs one of his two remaining pawns ("Natalie") and slides it to the center of the board.

FLASH: Natalie runs through the cornfield.

Scott slides an opposing (scarecrow) pawn against her...

FLASH: Natalie getting attacked. Screaming.

...knocking her off the board. He grabs his final pawn...

FLASH: Chris staring into the corn, listening to Natalie's blood-curdling scream.

...and his safely crossed "Brian" pawn...

FLASH: Brian darts off the porch, sprinting into the corn.

...and slides them together, from both sides, into the middle of the board.

FLASH: Chris screaming out for Natalie.

FLASH: Brian running through the cornfield.

Scott uses his opponents turn to exchange (promote) his Natalie pawn with another KNIGHT.

FLASH: Natalie at the sewing machine. Inspecting her mask.

Scott slides the "Chris" and "Brian" pawns safely to the other side where they join Scott's own pawn.

FLASH: Brian, Chris, and Scott staring at the cornfield in horror as the scarecrow slinks away into the cornstalks.

Scott stares for a moment, enthused by his new clarity. However, the clarity soon yields a more somber thought...

CLOSE ON CHESSBOARD: as Scott removes "Brian" and "Chris" from the board, leaving only "Scott" against a chessboard worth of scattered "scarecrows".

Scott stares intently at his own pawn, considering something. He stares up at the sewing room, then out to the cornfield... like he's staring in the face of a challenger...

SCOTT

Here we go...

CLOSE ON CHESSBOARD: As Scott slides his own pawn back out into the center of the chessboard.

Crescendo into--

INT. BARN - MOMENTS LATER

--Scott charges into the barn. Adrenaline pumping. Scared.

-He removes a SICKLE from the wall of tools.

-A GARDEN HOSE from the work bench.

-A RUSTY GAS CAN from the shelf.

He sheathes the SICKLE in the hunting belt from the bedroom, now strapped around his waste. He scrambles with several SHOTGUN SHELLS, dropping them into the satchel. He's nervous.

EXT. BARN - MOMENTS LATER

Scott blows hard into the garden hose. The other end is shoved into the gas tank of one of the old cars.

Scott suddenly flinches back as GASOLINE GUSHES OUT OF THE HOSE. He quickly aims the hose down into the rusty gas can.

His eyes shoot up to the cornfield. Watching. Panicking.

INT. CELLAR - MOMENTS LATER

The cellar door opens, revealing Scott armed with the sickle. His hesitation is overwhelmed by desperation. He descends the staircase.

Scott finds Corey's exploded corpse. He shakes nervously, struggling to pry the SHOTGUN from Corey's hands, too distracted by the horrible sight of his dead body.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Scott fumbles with SEVERAL SHOTGUN SHELLS, attempting to load the shotgun. He is obviously not well experienced.

He pants heavily. This isn't exhaustion. This is nerves.

INT. FRONT ROOM - NIGHT

Scott carries the heavy shotgun, hesitating at the bottom of the staircase. He gazes up. Preparing himself.

FADE TO BLACK.

We hear the humming of the sewing machine. Steady. Focused.

INT. SEWING ROOM - NIGHT

Brian is hunched over the machine. Oblivious to all else.

His bloody fingers guide his project carefully under the needle, which pounds feverishly through the fabric.

Scott stands in the doorway behind him. Watching him. The shotgun trembles nervously and awkwardly in his hands.

He takes a moment, watching Brian. Watching... "it".

(MORE)

SCOTT

I figured it out.

(Waiting. Nothing.)

I didn't think I would, but I did.

(beat)

Amidst all the things that have happened, I kept wondering: Why me?

Not a self pity thing, but... Why *me*? Why am I the one standing *here* and not the one sitting *there*?

(beat)

SCOTT(cont'd)

Then I realized, it wasn't chance.
It wasn't luck. There was something
different about the time when I
came through.

(beat)

Johnny. He didn't make it. Natalie
didn't. Now, not even Chris...or...

He stares at the chair. At his friend. Brian.

SCOTT

But I'm here. Not by chance, but
for a reason.

Scott raises the shotgun. His trembling slowly disappears.

SCOTT

You... You were *here*. In *that*
chair, in *this* room. Only it was
with Johnny then.

Scott more bravely advances closer. Shotgun ready.

SCOTT

You can't help it. You have to do
this. In that chair. In this room.
I figured it out: You're as trapped
in here as I am.

Scott raises the shotgun at the back of Brian's head. His
bravery is suddenly crippled with emotion. He struggles to
see the back of his enemy's head. It's his friend's. He
fights to keep the gun raised...

SCOTT

Brian?
(no response)
Brian.

Scott inches closer...carefully reaching towards Brian...

SCOTT

If there's anything left of you in
there...

Scott removes CHRIS' CIGARETTE LIGHTER from Brian's pocket.

SCOTT

...hold "it".

Scott clutches the lighter and races out of the room.

"Brian" turns from the sewing machine, his pale white eyes
watching Scott disappear down the hall. Not happy.

EXT. HOUSE: PORCH - MOMENTS LATER

Scott races out the front door and stops on the porch steps. His rusty gas can and hunting belt await him.

He quickly slings the belt over his shoulder and snatches up the gas can. He's off towards the cornfield.

A CROW watches him from the railing, cawing in protest.

INT. CORNFIELD: TRUCK PATH - NIGHT

Scott enters the field via the path plowed by Chris' attempted escape.

He dashes as quickly as his frail self can muster. Adrenaline pumping with desperation. The plowed path offers him good visibility. He keeps the shotgun up and ready. Hurrying.

INT. SEWING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Brian leans over his project, his focus more intense than ever. The needle pounds harder. Faster. It's a race.

INT. CORNFIELD: TRUCK PATH - CONTINUOUS

Scott sprints through the field, keeping a sharp lookout.

INT. CORNFIELD: OLD TRUCK - MOMENTS LATER

The "Johnny" scarecrow still hangs limp from the truck, pinned by the window.

BAM! The scarecrow's head explodes. Scott's shotgun smokes, but he's anything but a "bad-ass" behind it. He's terrified.

He shoves the body aside, twisting the truck's gas cap open. He then removes the garden hose from his satchel, shoving it into the tank.

INT. SEWING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON SEWING NEEDLE: pounding through burlap.

Brian sews. Quickly. Furiously.

INT. CORNFIELD: OLD TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Scott gags as gasoline spews out of the truck. Scott tosses the hose aside, letting it gush on the ground.

Scott checks up, over the cornfield...

POV: The light still glows from the sewing room window.

Good. Scott fumbles with the gas can, popping the cap off and shaking gas all over the surrounding cornstalks.

He continues off through the field, covering his tracks with gas from the can. The hose continues to spew from the truck, forming a large gas puddle.

INT. CORNFIELD - CONTINUOUS

Scott hurries through the cornfield. Spreading gasoline.

INT. SEWING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The needle pounds with lightning speed. The gears spin wildly. Brian's foot rapidly pumps the pedal.

THUMP! HIS FOOT STOPS.

INT. CORNFIELD - CONTINUOUS

Scott shakes the gas can, trying to keep up his pace. He looks up again, checking the house...

POV: The sewing room light TURNS OFF.

Scott stops. Frozen. Horrified.

SCOTT

No.

EXT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

BAM! The front door explodes open as Brian speeds past.

In a blink, he's vanished into the cornfield.

INT. CORNFIELD - CONTINUOUS

Scott is petrified. He snaps out of it, throwing caution into the wind, flailing gas everywhere as fast as he can. Running.

INT. CORNFIELD: ELSEWHERE - CONTINUOUS

"BRIAN" RACES THROUGH THE CORNSTALKS LIKE LIGHTNING. A BLUR.

INT. CORNFIELD - CONTINUOUS

Scott scrambles. Nervous. Trying to hurry. He suddenly stops--
--Something races towards him. Distant. Fast approaching.
Scott gulps nervously. It's no use.

INT. CORNFIELD: ELSEWHERE - CONTINUOUS

BRIAN'S POV: cornstalks blur as he speeds ahead.

INT. CORNFIELD - CONTINUOUS

Scott drops the gas can and lowers to the ground. He braces himself on one knee and raises the shotgun. Trembling.

The sound fast approaches...closer...closer...

BRIAN'S POV: breaks through the corn, ATTACKING SCOTT--

--BAM! SCOTT FIRES!

The "Brian" scarecrow is blown backward. No sooner does it hit the ground before it jumps right back up to attack again--

--BAM! Scott fires another shot. Sending the scarecrow down.
BAM! Another shot. BAM! Another.

Scott unloads. His shells. His fury.

CLICK! CLICK! It's done. Scott pants, out of breath, staring at the scarecrow's... at Brian's dead body. Blown apart.

Scott backs away. Shaken. He keeps a watchful eye on Brian's dead body. He stumbles over the gas can, spilling the remainder of it's contents over the ground.

Scott keeps an eye on Brian's body as he removes CHRIS' LIGHTER from his pocket.

Still trembling and shaken, he fumbles it open. He flicks the igniter. Only a spark. He flicks it again. A little more.

Anxious, Scott struggles to hold his hands still. He tries one more time, getting a bigger spark--

--"SMILEY" SCARECROW JUMPS UP BEHIND SCOTT.

Before he can even react, SLASH!

HARD TO BLACK.

Black.

As we listen close, we can hear the subtle sounds of movement. Soon, dragging. Corn crunches under footsteps.

We fade in and out of the random images of Scott's blurry consciousness: Smiley's menacing face. Cornstalks passing by.

The images turn into glimpses of more distant memory: the cafe. The drive. The road. "We have nothing to worry about."

Suddenly, we return to the opening...

FLASH: BAM! BAM! BAM! The barrage of BLACK CROWS colliding into the windshield. Tires screech. Passengers scream.

Black again.

FLASH: BAM! The SUV smashes through the "no trespassing" sign, careening off-road. SLAM! Johnny is thrown head first into the steering wheel.

Black.

FADE IN:

I/E. SUV - DAY

Johnny lifts up from the steering wheel, groaning with pain. Chris sits shotgun, holding his head.

CHRIS
What the fuck happened?

JOHNNY
I...don't know...

Johnny painfully climbs out of the car. Dizzy.

He inspects the windshield. A grotesque mess. He continues toward the front bumper. Damaged from the sign.

JOHNNY

Shit.

Dizzy, Johnny braces himself against the car. As he does...

A CROW lands on the hood. It begins pecking at the mess. Johnny watches the crow, somehow intrigued.

VOICE (O.S.)

Pssst.

Johnny turns to the sound, coming from the cornfield.

COREY peaks out of the field, beckoning Johnny over.

JOHNNY

Hey!

INT. SUV - CONTINUOUS

Brian, Natalie, and Scott groan painfully from the backseat.

Chris holds his head...

CHRIS

Holy shit.

BRIAN

Is everyone okay?

SCOTT

Let's define "okay".

EXT. SUV / COUNTRY ROAD - CONTINUOUS

The CROW WATCHES JOHNNY FROM THE HOOD.

Johnny approaches the cornfield. Not dazed. Not anything. Just like we saw Scott earlier. Just going.

COREY (O.S.)

Pssst.

CUT TO:

Chris climbs out of the car, holding his head. He looks up...

CHRIS
Johnny...

Johnny is gone. Vanished.

Chris momentarily forgets his pain. Confused.

CHRIS
Johnny!

The crow sits on the hood. Watching.

INT. SCARECROW CLEARING - DAY

THUD! JOHNNY'S BLOODY CORPSE IS DROPPED TO THE GROUND. Eyes gaping. Lifeless. His ankles get strung with rope--

SUDDEN CUT TO.

INT. SCARECROW CLEARING - NIGHT

--SCOTT JUMPS AWAKE. Also bloody. Nearly dead. Something is stringing rope around *his* ankles.

Scott tries to move, discovering the fatal wounds covering his body. He winces from the pain... causing him to discover the gaping wound across his neck. He can barely make a sound.

Scott painfully sits up. CHRIS' BODY hangs from the scarecrow post in the middle of the clearing.

He falls back... noticing the hunting belt, still slung around him. The sickle handle sticks out from under him.

BAM! SMILEY smashes his foot into Scott's chest, pinning him down. He leans down. Close. Inspecting him.

Scott stares back...nervously...

SCOTT SHOVES THE SICKLE INTO SMILEY'S HEAD!

He screams with pain as he uses all of his strength to grab Smiley and pull him to the ground. Hard. Scott slams the scarecrow down again and again.

Smiley goes limp. Lifeless on the ground.

Scott stumbles back. Panting. Exhausted.

He stares Chris. Dead on the post. He's frozen by the sight of his dead friend...

...a sight suddenly obscured by the RISING FORM OF "SMILEY".

Scott watches in horror as "Smiley" painlessly removes the sickle from his head. Now he's armed with it.

Scott's horrified. There's nothing he can do. This is it.

CHRIS GRABS "SMILEY", HOLDING HIM BACK!

Chris chokes through his bloody throat, expending all he has left in his hold.

CHRIS

Run.

"Smiley" fights. Hard.

CHRIS

RUN!

Scott painfully rises to his feet, stunned by the sight of his friend.

CHRIS

GO! RUN!

Scott snaps out of it. He stumbles back into the cornstalks.

INT. CORNFIELD - CONTINUOUS

Scott moves through the corn. Limping. Stumbling. Dying.

He groans painfully as he spends every last bit of strength.

He moves as fast as he can, but not nearly fast enough.

INT. CORNFIELD: SCARECROW POST - CONTINUOUS

A SCARECROW pulls himself up onto the post. Mounting itself.

INT. CORNFIELD - CONTINUOUS

Scott continues. His eyes rolling back. Consciousness fading.

EXT. CORNFIELD: COUNTRY ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Scott inches beyond field's edge. Head hanging heavy. Feet barely working. He sees the country road, but is blinded by something in the distance...

BLURRY POV: HEADLIGHTS ILLUMINATE JOHNNY'S SUV.

Two girls search around the car. SHEILA AND RACHEL. Their too far to be heard. They're arms are up, confused. Rachel protests climbing back in Sheila's car.

EXT. SUV / COUNTRY ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Sheila looks around. Confused.

RACHEL
Come on. Let's go.

SHEILA
(hesitant)
But I know this is his car.

RACHEL
No you don't.

EXT. CORNFIELD: COUNTRY ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Scott raises a trembling, desperate cry for help. It's silenced by his wounded throat. Nothing but gargling.

He tries to raise his hands up, only to find his strength failing. He collapses to his knees. Screaming silently.

INT. CORNFIELD: SCARECROW POST - CONTINUOUS

The scarecrow is mounted on its post. Silent. Suddenly...

ITS HEAD TURNS EERILY TOWARDS THE ROAD. TOWARDS SCOTT.

EXT. SUV / COUNTRY ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Rachel spots something in the distance ahead...

RACHEL
There's something.

Sheila turns.

Scott is barely visible, collapsed in the field's edge.

EXT. CORNFIELD: COUNTRY ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Scott can scream no more. His energy is gone. His dying gaze falls to the ground...fading...

SHEILA (O.S.)
Hello?

INT. CORNFIELD: SCARECROW POST - CONTINUOUS

THE SCARECROW SUDDENLY DROPS LIMP, lifeless--

EXT. CORNFIELD: COUNTRY ROAD - CONTINUOUS

--SCOTT SUDDENLY RISES TO HIS FEET. His weakness is suddenly overcome by a new strength. A new "something"...

SHEILA (O.S.)
Hello!

Scott turns towards them. EYES WHITE. He glares from within the cornstalks... like a predator to its prey.

"Scott" slinks back, disappearing into the cornfield.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

The house peaks over the cornfield. The sewing room light suddenly turns on... glowing... like a beckon.

CUT TO BLACK.

---- E N D C R E D I T S ----

As the credits end, we linger in black, suddenly hearing a sound. The sound of an idling engine, slowly dying...

EXT. SHEILA'S CAR - NIGHT

The HEADLIGHTS fade off. Dying. Gone.

INT. SHEILA'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Rachel slams her fist into Sheila's dashboard. Sheila leans in the driver's seat...

SHEILA
What the hell happened?

RACHEL
Nothing happened. I was just sitting here.

They search around in the darkness. Sheila struggles with the keys, testing the ignition. Nothing. She feels the heat of Rachel's "I told you so" glare.

SHEILA
Stop. We'll fix it.

RACHEL
Yeah? How is that?

Sheila turns away, avoiding the issue. As she does... she notices something. Outside. In the corn.

SHEILA
Did you see that?

Rachel turns. Looking.

RACHEL
What?

POV: Outside, the cornfield is quiet. Nothing.

EXT. CORNFIELD - CONTINUOUS

The cornstalks blow peacefully in the wind. Perhaps it was nothing. Or perhaps it was that strange looking scarecrow, collapsed beside the scarecrow post, hanging out of the field. The one with the huge smile across it's face.

We move in close... closer...

...close enough to think we saw it move.

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END.