

NIGHTLIGHT

by

Chris Lee Hill & Tyler MacIntyre

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Infinite Lives Entertainment

Management:

Epicenter

(310) 476-4102

Agency:

APA

(310) 888-4200

Close on a GIANT SNARLING MONSTER--

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Pages turn in a pulp magazine, we pan to see a mess of papers with makeshift diagrams and graphs in pencil crayon.

BOY (O.S.)

... And although the earth is apparently going to be st-st-standing still, I should be exposed to advanced vocabulary, which will help d-during Astronomy next semester.

Pull back to reveal the stuttered voice belongs to STANLEY, 10, precocious with a bad haircut.

He stands in the middle of the suburban kitchen, complete with wood-paneling and patterned wall-paper, illustrating his presentation points like a frantic pitch-man at a high-stakes board meeting.

STANLEY

And then at 2:00 AM we have the cult c-classic 'Piranha', which should give me a nice jump on the Marine Biology unit in junior high.

He flips through the dog-eared pages of a big blue book entitled THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MONSTERS.

STANLEY (CONT'D)

There will be anatomically correct makeup effects, which will help me develop a firm grounding for Anatomy class in c-college.

Reveal MOM, mid-30s, grinning to herself. She's not buying a single word but enjoys watching his enthusiasm as he holds up a picture of Bela Lugosi.

STANLEY (CONT'D)

And then at 4:30 AM the last film is 'Dracula', a classic based on one of the pillars of literature, written by Bram St-Stoker.

Stanley shuffles over to a graph clocked by his moody sister GINNY, 15, who sits on the counter painting her toenails.

STANLEY (CONT'D)

Therefore, you can expect full-letter grade improvement in both English and Science, by next report card...

Like a mini-weatherman, he adjusts the make-shift thermometer indicating his potential progress.

STANLEY (CONT'D)

Not to mention, an article I found
in the Reader's Digest in the upstairs
bathroom said that happiness
supposably contributes to overall--

MOM

Suppos-ed-ly.

STANLEY

Right, yes. Suppos-ED-ly contributes
to overall ac-academic achievement.
See? I'm learning already.
Therefore...

Stanley repositions himself very formally in front of an oversized easel.

STANLEY (CONT'D)

I should be allowed to watch the All-
Night Monster Movie Marathon on
Channel 16 this evening. Good day.

He pulls on a string to unroll a sign that says "PLEASE!" written in giant letters. Ginny rolls her eyes.

GINNY

She's not buying this.
(to Mom)
You're not buying this...

MOM

Well, let me just say that your
presentation was quite persuasive.
And the visual aides were very well
put together.

STANLEY

Why thank you.

MOM

But, Stanley, you know that you guys
are here with me this weekend since
your father is out of town. And you
know how I really don't like those
movies.

Stan's face starts to sink.

MOM (CONT'D)

And you're aware that you aren't old
enough to watch them by yourself, so--

STANLEY

Mom, I see where you're going with this, and let me just--

MOM

Stan, honey, you slept with a nightlight every night up until last Christmas.

GINNY

And wet the bed up until Thanksgiving.

STANLEY

See? I've come a long way... and like Dr. Clausen said, d-d-doing new things on my own is healthy for my development.

MOM

I'm sorry honey, I just don't think you're ready for a horror movie marathon. And neither am I, frankly.

STANLEY

Dad would let me, let's give him a call--

Stan darts for the phone, starts dialing.

MOM

Remember what we talked about?

She takes the receiver, getting annoyed.

MOM (CONT'D)

When you're at dad's he can weigh in, but while you're here I'm the boss, okay?

She hangs up the phone.

MOM (CONT'D)

You two can stay up together next time. He'd probably love that.

Push in on Stanley, his dream crushed.

MOM (CONT'D)

I'm sorry honey, you'll just have to wait until you're older.

Cut to black.

TITLE: NIGHTLIGHT

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

We see the family's large craftsman home in an unassuming neighborhood, tall trees lining the street. The ideal place to grow up. Stan waits with his backpack at the sidewalk.

SUPERIMPOSE: Fall, 1989

OLD MAN HERMAN, 50's, walks by with his little brown PUG. The animal tries to sniff Stan, but Herman coaxes the dog along without saying hello.

Stan kicks his feet, looking at the trees, a plane in the sky, then down the street where a beat up BROWN CHRYSLER with tinted windows is parked. A little out of place for the street, Stan sits up and sees some movement inside - a shadow?

Vrrrooommm. A jacked RED TOYOTA PICKUP pulls up in front of the house, music pounding. The driver is DALLAS, 19, fixing his hair in the rear-view.

Ginny bolts out of the house, messes up Stan's hair as she passes, annoying him.

GINNY

Enjoy the bus, loser.

STANLEY

Sh-shut up!

Ginny gives her best smug older sister grin, climbs into the passenger side of the truck. She kisses Dallas and the Toyota takes off.

As the dust settles, Stan catches sight of someone at the house across the street: the gorgeous female NEIGHBOR, 20s, emerges dressed in a silk bathrobe.

Stan tries not to stare as she crosses the walk-path to her mailbox, leans down to pick up a recently delivered newspaper. She stands back up, notices Stan.

NEIGHBOR

Hi, there!

He blushes, tries to mouth a response, but manages only a small wave. The Neighbor chuckles at him, strolls back inside while sorting mail.

Stan's view is suddenly obscured by the Chrysler, which slowly drives past. By the time the car passes, she's back inside.

The whine of a SCHOOL BUS engine leads us into--

INT/EXT. SCHOOL BUS - DAY

The crowded, rowdy vehicle putters along. Kids laugh, chase each other, throw paper airplanes.

We find Stanley sitting alone with a seat all to himself, quietly reading his monster book.

Two kids in front of him, DUSTIN and CELINA, both 11, look over the back of their seat at Stan.

DUSTIN

Hey.

He ignores them.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)

I said hey. Where's your buddy? The guy with glasses.

STANLEY

I dunno. I-I-I...

The kids look perplexed, Stan reluctantly lowers his book, takes a beat.

STANLEY (CONT'D)

I think he's sick.

CELINA

You talk funny.

STANLEY

Sorry.

DUSTIN

What's that?

Stanley puts his book away.

STANLEY

N-nothing.

DUSTIN

You know the Loch Ness monster isn't real, right? That's bullshit.

STANLEY

You don't know th-that.

CELINA

He isn't. It's just a bunch of crap. Like the Tooth Fairy.

STANLEY

That's st... st... stupid. The Tooth Fairy is make believe.

CELINA

You don't make any sense.

They slide back down into their seat. Stanley mouths a comeback silently to himself, looks out the window.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

The TEACHER lectures at the front, doing a pretty good job of engaging the kids. Near the back of the class Stanley doodles, not looking up.

TEACHER

... So Zeus, he's the king of Mount Olympus, a father figure, god of sky and thunder. He's what you're probably picturing, huge beard, throwing lightning bolts.

The class chuckles, Stanley doesn't. His coiled notebook has its margins absolutely jam-packed with doodles. Bats, spider-webs, pumpkins, swords, dragons, fruit, guns, UFOs and of course monsters litter the page around sparse class notes.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

But he has some secrets too. There's a lot of stories about how he can get into some pretty crazy shenanigans down on earth with the mortals. Now, can anyone tell me his wife's name? The queen of the gods.

He zeroes in on Stanley.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

How about you Stan?

No response, he doesn't even notice. The other kids start turning.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

Earth to Stanley...

The girls next to him giggle. Stan finally realizes he's being called on.

STANLEY

What?

TEACHER

Try to stay with us okay buddy? We're almost through.

STANLEY

Oh yeah, s-sorry.

The teacher continues talking. Stanley closes his notebook, trying his best to be interested.

INT. COUNSELOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Knock-knock-knock. Stanley politely raps on the door which has a nameplate that reads "Laurie Clausen, Speech Pathologist".

A tidy professional lady, LAURIE, late-20s greets him with a warm smile.

LAURIE

Hello there Stanley. Right on time.

STANLEY

Hi, Laurie.

He enters, puts his book bag on the floor, sits in the large puffy chair across from her.

LAURIE

How is your day going so far?

Stanley chooses his words carefully.

STANLEY

... Good. H-how are you?

LAURIE

I'm well, thank you for asking. And that's great to hear. How are your mom and sister?

Stan sighs, a little thrown by the question.

STANLEY

They're okay.

LAURIE

Well, as spoke about last time, going through a separation is hard on them too. Even if they don't say it. Can you remember that for me, Stan?

He nods.

LAURIE (CONT'D)

Great. Now, do you remember what we worked on last week?

STANLEY

Yes, but r-r-remind me.

He winces at his stutter, knowing that she's aware of it.

LAURIE

Of course. And you know that you can ask me to go over anything again at any time, just so you can be crystal clear, right?

STANLEY

Yes.

LAURIE

We were talking about bumpy words and smooth words. Do you remember that?

STANLEY

I do.

LAURIE

Great. So smooth words are when you say things and they just flow naturally. Bumpy words are when you get stuck at the beginning and have trouble.

STANLEY

I remember.

LAURIE

Okay, so do you want to do the exercises first and then the game, or the game first and then the exercises?

STANLEY

G-game first.

Laurie smiles, pulls out a children's book from her desk and a bag of M&Ms, starts reading.

LAURIE

There once was an old sow who had three little pigs. She loved them and cherished them, but didn't have enough to keep them, so she sent them out to seek their fortunes.

She gestures to the illustration.

LAURIE (CONT'D)
Now what type of clothes are they wearing?

STANLEY
They're wearing overalls.

LAURIE
Good, how were those words?

STANLEY
S-smooth.

LAURIE
That's right, take one.

Stanley takes an M&M and eats it.

LAURIE (CONT'D)
The first little pig that went off met a man with a bundle of straw. What did the man have?

STANLEY
A b-bundle of st-st-straw.

LAURIE
How were those?

STANLEY
A little b-bumpy.

LAURIE
Let's try again. A bundle of straw.

STANLEY
A bundle of st-straw.

LAURIE
Much better.

Stanley takes another candy.

LAURIE (CONT'D)
Please, can I have that straw to build me a house? Asked the first little pig...

Stanley looks on, their repetition continues.

INT. LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

A tastefully decorated home, not sparkling but functional. A row of Sears family portraits line the mantle, everyone in matching sweaters, but the DAD is folded out of the framed picture.

Next to the photos is a collection of FIGURE SKATING TROPHIES, the championship award being the most prominent.

The heavy front door opens and Stanley enters, discarding his backpack sloppily on the floor.

STANLEY

Mom, I'm home!

MOM (O.S.)

'Kay.

He kicks off his shoes wildly, then carefully arranges them on the mat at the foot of the hat-rack.

Stanley flops onto the couch, depressed, still clutching his monster book.

MOM (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Did you clean the gutters yet?

He sighs.

EXT. ROOF - LATER

A rickety metal ladder hits the edge of the roof. The gutters overflow with dark, mushy leaves.

Stanley climbs into view with a garbage bag, starts slowly scooping the sludge out of the gutters.

After three handfuls he get bored, tosses some of the muck on the roof, wipes his hand on his shirt, climbs back down.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Stanley flops back onto the couch in front of the window.

He looks to his right and sees his yellow and blue Fisher Price BINOCULARS sitting on the side table. He takes them, spins around on the couch to gaze out the window.

POV BINOCULARS as Stanley scans the neighborhood. A crow sitting on the power-lines, pan up to find a jet in the sky, then down onto the street where Stan notices a stream of water rushing toward the drain. He follows it back up to a garden hose flowing liberally onto the concrete beside a bright red bucket.

In dips a hand with a sponge - pan to reveal the Neighbor washing her car across the street.

Stanley lowers the binoculars, time slows down and his jaw drops. Her long blonde hair sways as the suds flow over her shiny TransAm. She waves to Old Man Herman who passes by, laughs and smiles idyllically, Stanley is transfixed until--

GINNY

Ew.

Stanley spins around to see his sister standing there, judgmental, arms crossed.

GINNY (CONT'D)

You're a pervert.
(yelling upstairs)
Mom!

INT. STANLEY'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

CLICK-- The door opens and Stanley is ushered into the room by his ear.

MOM

What did I tell you about spying on people?

STANLEY

It's w-weird.

MOM

That's right.

She notices the generally messy state of the room, perfect for a hasty punishment.

MOM (CONT'D)

And, uh, clean this place up.

SLAM. Door shuts, leaving him alone. Stan lingers dejected, listening to the conversation outside his door.

GINNY (O.S.)

You really need to watch him. He can't go five minutes without doing something creepy...

MOM (O.S.)

Mind your own business, he's just curious.

GINNY (O.S.)

And what about that tramp across the street? She moved in two months ago and she's washed that car like fifty times...

The voices trail off down the hall and Stanley refocuses on his closet.

He opens the door, moves aside old tennis shoes and stuffed animals. He pries one of the floorboards loose, revealing a SECRET STASH of comics, candy and firecrackers.

Stan looks over his stockpile, something's missing. He puts a searching hand in, still nothing.

UNDER THE FLOORBOARDS Stan shines his small reading light to reveal a few SPIDER WEBS. He reaches in, there's enough space Stan could fit, but it would be a tight squeeze. His light finds what he's looking for - a half-eaten box of GLOSETTE CHOCOLATES, which he snatches up.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - LATER

A large PILE OF CLOTHES bobs out of the bedroom, with Stanley wobbling his way down the hall.

He stops at a small tin handle, pulls it to open the laundry chute, begins stuffing everything in.

INT. LAUNDRY CHUTE - CONTINUOUS

The clothes fall down the long metal shaft leading into the basement. Stanley sticks his head in, drops the last sock into the abyss below. He makes a plane crashing sound, smiles.

INT. ATTIC - EVENING

Stanley sits on an old box of clothing near the window, talking into a makeshift TIN-CAN TELEPHONE that stretches from the attic window, out across the neighborhood.

STANLEY

... But then they said that the Loch Ness monster is just like the tooth fairy. Th-th-that doesn't make any sense.

Intercut with--

INT. MATT'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - SAME

Nearby, the other end of the string runs to a tin-can on the second floor of a somewhat nicer house.

REVEAL Matt, sitting in bed wearing He-Man pajamas, glasses and with a healthy stack of comic books.

MATT

I wouldn't worry about it, Dustin and Celina are dick-faces anyway.

STANLEY (O.S.)

Yeah. I just wish that my dad was here, everything would be easier. I could see whatever movies I want.

MATT

Do you think your mom would let you come over here and watch? My parents would be cool with it.

INT. ATTIC - SAME

Stanley is dejected.

MATT (O.S.)

It'd be like that time we watched 'The Lost Boys'.

STANLEY

Nah, she'd never go for that.

Stanley checks over his shoulder.

STANLEY (CONT'D)

But I have a p-plan...

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Crickets chirp, the street is all but deserted.

INT. STANLEY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Stanley lies awake in his bed with his flashlight reading a comic, glancing nervously up to his alarm clock. The glowing red digits tick slowly to 9:47 PM.

He gets out of bed, slowly tip-toeing his way toward the door, careful not to make any noise.

Stan reaches the door, grasps the handle and gives it a SQUEAKY turn, slowing down his pace until he hears a muffled CLICK.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Peering down the hall toward his mother's bedroom door, which is still open just a crack, Stanley eases his own door open.

He steps outside and closes the door behind him gently, proceeding with caution, expertly dodging the creaky spots in the floor until he reaches the carpet.

Stanley passes his sister's room, notices the phone cord is stretched down the hall and running under her door. He rolls his eyes, arrives at his mother's room.

Inside a light SNORING is heard, Stanley pauses a moment to check. His mom rolls over, groggily, revealing her eyes covered with a SLEEP MASK.

Stanley turns the doorknob delicately to its open position, places his other hand on the hinge, slowly shuts the--

CREAK!

The snoring stops. Stanley shuts his eyes. Is he dead?

His mother coughs, rolls over, then goes back to snoring, still sound asleep.

Stanley finishes closing the door, and slowly releases the doorknob until he hears the satisfying click.

He smiles.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

The door of the 'junk food' cupboard swings open to reveal the wonders within. Stanley grabs a bag of chips, cookies, beef jerky, etc.

The gas stove sparks to life, a container of Jiffy Pop hits the burner.

He opens the fridge, gathers cans of soda, baloney, peanut butter, etc., carefully arranging his supplies on a flimsy TV dinner tray.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Stanley rounds the corner, balancing his precarious load as he comes in for a landing on the coffee table.

Plopping onto the couch, Stan gives one last fleeting look upstairs - he appears to be in the clear.

He picks up the oversized remote, hits the power button.

The heavy wood-paneled television sparks to life with a dim, electronic hum.

COMMERCIAL

(LOUDLY, on the TV)

--Turn off the TV without getting
up. Clap on, clap off. The Clapper--

Stanley frantically turns down the volume on the commercial, momentarily nervous. He turns the channel up a few clicks to find channel 16, featuring a creepy Public Service Announcement.

PSA ANNOUNCER

--What's a little time, or money, or
thought if it can help you prevent
accidents around the home?

Stan cracks a soda while watching a series of slow-motion shots of people randomly falling down stairs, out of showers, etc.

PSA ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

You can be badly injured, crippled
or handicapped for life. A third of
a million people are in the US every
year.

The spot ends and the title card for Drive In Theater flashes on-screen with cheesy music, drawing his attention.

JOE BOB BRIGGS

(on the TV)

Welcome, to the first annual all-
night drive in Spook-A-Thon, I'm
your host Joe Bob Briggs.

The well-dressed cowboy-themed JOE BOB BRIGGS sits in a large leather La-Z-boy, with a six-pack of Old Milwaukee tall-boys on the table next to him.

JOE BOB BRIGGS (CONT'D)

I'm rested, I'm limber, I went to
the gym today and did two minutes on
the treadmill.

Canned laughter roars, Stan giggles too.

JOE BOB BRIGGS (CONT'D)

Well, I hope you're ready cause we're
going to fit in as many pulse-
pounding, splatter-filled thrill-
rides as we can before the sun comes
up. Up first we have...

Stan stuffs a handful of popcorn in his mouth, settles in for the long haul.

EXT. HOUSE - LATER

A soft blue flicker emanates from the large bay window. Down the block, the beat-up brown Chrysler from earlier turns in, pulls up to the house across the street.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

On screen we see Freddy Krueger chase a young girl around a house. Stanley laughs and snorts making soda spill out of his nose, clearly enjoying himself.

The girl lures him around a corner and hits a light switch when BOOM-- a makeshift bomb explodes burning Freddy.

STANLEY

Whoa!

The action ensues until the antique clock on the mantle strikes one o'clock, with a single low chime, then--

Upstairs Stan's mom's bedroom light turns on.

Quick like a ninja, Stanley hits the MUTE button, silencing the TV. The bedroom door opens, he freezes.

Footsteps plod down the hallway as he holds his breath. It's game over.

...

The bathroom door shuts. Stanley exhales a sigh of relief. False alarm.

He turns off the TV, waiting it out.

The ticking of the clock on the mantle drones on, Stanley bores easily.

His eyes wander across the street where a light is on in his Neighbor's house. He picks up his binoculars and peers toward her place.

POV BINOCULARS as Stanley sees shadows moving, quickly ACROSS THE STREET--

The curtains on the front bay-window of the neighbor's house shift oddly. Something's not right.

Stan squints, he's not close enough to really make anything out until--

SLAM! The NEIGHBOR collides violently with her window, choked from behind.

Her body spasms hard, cracking the glass.

She claws desperately for anyone outside, screaming for help... but is alone.

Stanley's face to drops in disbelief, as her muffled cries continue. She flails hard before being YANKED BACK INTO THE DARKNESS.

He drops the binoculars, mouth agape.

FLUSH--

Upstairs, the bathroom door opens and his Mom stumbles back down the hallway half-asleep, shutting her door and turning off the light.

Stan looks back at the neighbor's house, now motionless and dark except for the crack in window.

He pauses, pinches himself to make sure he isn't dreaming.

Stanley checks the time on the clock: 12:47 AM, then looks down at his Velcro sneakers by the door.

He puts his shoes on, grabs his bulky Polaroid camera, looking a little like Encyclopedia Brown.

EXT. HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Stanley exits, pulling on his Ninja Turtles hoodie, sneaking quietly over his family's front lawn, past a mailbox that says 'Roberts'.

He checks both ways, then makes his way across the street.

EXT. NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Stan eyes the Chrysler parked out front, ducking down as he gets to the edge of the picket fence.

He tip-toes carefully down the driveway to the side of the house, seeing a light on. He hears muffled MEN'S VOICES coming from within.

Stan glances up to the window, seeing only the stucco ceiling and cheap light fixtures. He jumps once, trying to get a better look, which obviously doesn't work.

Stanley continues to the back of the house, seeing two metal garbage cans. He quietly picks up the one with the lid and maneuvers himself back to the room with the light.

Placing the garbage can below the window, Stanley steadies himself as he climbs on, sticking his arms out for balance, grimacing every time the metal tin flexes under his weight.

When fully extended, Stan is still just a little too short to see anything, his field of view stopping just at the top of the paintings hanging on the wall.

He carefully braces himself on the windowsill precariously as he pulls himself up to the full height of his tip-toes.

INT. NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Stanley's POV, broken picture frames and a SHATTERED VASE litter the ground.

He struggles to make sense of the scene until he spots BLOOD. A small shiny pool, dripping through the hardwood and ruining the rug, leading up toward the NEIGHBOR.

We see her clearly now. The same young female Neighbor from earlier, now sober and non-idealized. Duct tape over her mouth, her breathing slows, skin pale. Her large, saucer-like eyes plead with him until--

Her expression goes blank.

She's not breathing.

Stanley stops too.

The life fades from her eyes. She's gone.

SUDDENLY-- Black fills Stanley's vision as a PROWLER in a ski-mask appears at the window in front of him.

EXT. NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Stanley gasps, falls backward tumbling off the garbage can.

PROWLER (O.S.)

Hey, you--

He hits the ground hard. Voices inside start to panic as he struggles to get up, entangled in the spilled refuse.

OTHER PROWLER (O.S.)

HEY!!

Stanley manages to get to his feet when--

FLASH!

The Polaroid camera around his neck goes off. Everyone halts.

Stanley looks up to the window and sees TWO SHADOWY figures looming.

PROWLER (O.S.)
He's got a camera--

Not wasting any more time Stanley breaks into a run, down the driveway and across the street.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

SLAM! Stanley closes the door, frantically locks it behind him.

He backs away from the door, unsure what to do, the house eerily quiet. Stan runs into--

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Grabs the phone off the wall, starts dialing 9-1-1, puts his ear on the receiver, out of breath.

FRIEND (O.S.)
(on the phone)
Ginny, what are you doing?

GINNY (O.S.)
(on the phone)
I didn't do anything, was that you?

STANLEY
Ginny, get off the ph-phone!

GINNY (O.S.)
Stanley! You're dead!

STANLEY
I n-n-need to call the police!

GINNY (O.S.)
You get off the phone! I'm having a private conversation here--

Stanley stretches out the phone cord, struggling to see out the windows, noticing the Prowlers exiting the house across the street, but not able to tell what they're doing.

STANLEY
Shut up! I need to call right now!

GINNY (O.S.)
Don't tell me to shut up you little brat!

Upstairs Ginny's door opens.

GINNY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Mom!

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Ginny bangs on the door to their parent's room

GINNY

Mom, Stanley's being a creep again!

Mom opens the door, still wearing her sleep mask, but surprisingly even-tempered.

MOM

What?

GINNY

I was on the phone with Rachel and she was right in the middle of telling me something really important and--

Mom looks over Stanley's room, which is still closed.

MOM

Stanley!

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Stan watches the front door, paranoid.

MOM (O.S.)

Stanley, get out here!

He reluctantly hangs up the phone, runs upstairs.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Mom opens the door to Stanley's bedroom, turns on the light to see his bed is empty.

STANLEY (O.S.)

Mom... mom, I have to tell you something.

Stanley jogs up the stairs, Mom turns.

MOM

What are you doing down there?

STANLEY

We need to c-c-call the police. There's g-guys across the street and they--

He's breathing hard, sweaty.

MOM

Slow down. Tell me what happened.

STANLEY

I saw them. Two guys across the street. They h-hurt her.

Ginny rolls her eyes.

STANLEY (CONT'D)

Robbers, bad guys in black masks. I saw 'em.

MOM

Stanley, what are you talking about?

GINNY

He's finally gone mental.

STANLEY

(to Ginny)

Shut up!

He walks over the end of the hallway, points out the window.

STANLEY (CONT'D)

It was r-right there. They killed her!

Mom follows him to the window, looks across the street to the house, no lights on. Nothing suspicious whatsoever.

MOM

Stan, baby, I don't know what you're talking about. Everything is fine... go back to bed.

STANLEY

I saw it! I did! I l-looked outside and she was--

Mom notices behind him the glowing cool light of the television.

MOM

Stanley! What's that?

Stanley freezes, looks to see that the television is still on downstairs.

MOM (CONT'D)

What did I say about watching those movies!

GINNY

You're so dead...

MOM

I told you you weren't allowed to watch them alone. Now do you see what happened? You've scared yourself half to death.

She ushers him back toward his bedroom.

MOM (CONT'D)

Now we're all up in the middle of the night because you had to go and give yourself nightmares.

STANLEY

No! I have proof.

Stanley fumbles for his camera, handing her the newly developed SNAPSHOT.

Mom looks at it, puzzled. The picture is mostly the ground of the neighbors driveway and part of the siding.

MOM

What's this?

Stan takes a look at it, realizing it doesn't tell the whole story. Or anything to help him, really.

STANLEY

It's not the best angle, but inside she was hurt. And there were these two g-guys...

Ginny looks at the photo, equally puzzled.

MOM

When did you take this?

Ginny examines it closer, recognizes it as the neighbor's house across the street.

GINNY

You're out taking pictures of people's houses at the night?

Stanley shoots her a look.

GINNY (CONT'D)

(whispering to Mom)

I told you he was a pervert.

Mom is at a loss.

MOM
Stan, honey, go to bed.

STANLEY
B-but, I'm not making this up...

RING!

Everyone stops, looks down the hallway to the small table where the upstairs phone sits.

STANLEY (CONT'D)
Don't answer it!

It rings again, Ginny picks it up.

GINNY
Hello?
(beat)
Uh, yeah. She's right here. Hold on.

Mom looks at Stan as if to say 'this isn't over', takes the receiver.

MOM
Yes, hello?

VOICE (O.S.)
Good evening Mrs. Roberts, sorry to wake you this late. This is Officer Green down at the Chamberlain P.D. I'm afraid we picked up your daughter's boyfriend startin' fights outside the bar again.

Mom rolls her eyes.

MOM
Dallas?

VOICE (O.S.)
Yeah, that's right, Dallas.

Stanley mouths 'who is it?' To Ginny, she waves him off.

MOM
Ugh, I'm so embarrassed, so sorry about that. How can I help you?

Mom signals Ginny to get ready to leave, she does.

VOICE (O.S.)
Well, he asked me to give you folks a call to come pick 'em up here.
(MORE)

VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Just so I don't have to make it
 official.

Annoyed, Mom lights a cigarette, Stanley watches as she places her LIGHTER on the table beside the phone.

MOM
 Oh, okay. Um, shouldn't we call his
 parents instead?

INT. NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Across the street we can see Mom on the phone with Ginny and Stan, while a heavy county PHONE BOOK open to the 'R' section sits beside a rotary phone.

VOICE (O.S.)
 He asked me to try you folks first,
 just in case.

The cord stretches up to reveal the voice belongs to the Prowler, standing in the dark, gazing out the window.

PROWLER
 But between you and me I think he
 just doesn't want to make it a bigger
 deal than it is. I've heard his old
 man can be a little bit of a handful.

MOM (O.S.)
 Right, of course.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Mom exhales smoke, annoyed.

MOM
 What bar did you say again?

There's a pause on the line.

MOM (CONT'D)
 Hello?

PROWLER (O.S.)
 The County Seat, about twenty miles
 south of main.

MOM
 All the way out there? Christ...

PROWLER (O.S.)

I know, ma'am, and I'd take him myself, but I'm on the clock. Option two, we put him in the holding cell for the night with whoever his roommates happen to be, if you know what I mean. Up to you.

Mom meets eyes with Stan, who shakes his head.

MOM

I'll be down there as soon as I can.

PROWLER (O.S.)

That's very kind of you, ma'am. You have yourself a good night.

MOM

You too, bye.

She hangs up.

STANLEY

Mom, you can't go. We need to call the--

MOM

(to Stan)

Not now!

(to Ginny)

This is the last time we're going to pick him up! He was starting trouble again.

Ginny emerges, having quickly changed into stylish t-shirt and workout pants.

GINNY

He told me he was going to bed! Ugh! Right after homecoming we're so done...

STANLEY

Mom, you can't go...

They ignore him. Ginny checks herself in the bathroom mirror, fires a quick cloud of HAIRSPRAY, heads for the stairs.

MOM

Really? At one in the morning?

GINNY

Don't start.

The women head down the stairs toward the front door.

STANLEY

Please, wait you guys...

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Stanley continues to protest as the Mom and Ginny put on their jackets, shoes.

STANLEY

You can't l-l-leave, this must be a trick! They killed her! I saw it! Why won't you believe me.

Mom grabs her purse, doing her best to tune him out.

STANLEY (CONT'D)

You n-need to call the police!

MOM

That was the police, Stan. Now put your shoes on, we're going.

GINNY

No, Mom! He can't come!
He's just a stupid
kid! He'll be weird
and complain and be
weird the whole time!

STANLEY

I kn-know what I saw! The
lady across the s-street
is dead! Why won't you b-b-
believe me! We have to
stay!

MOM

Alright!
(they quiet)
Enough. Ginny, get in the car.
Stanley, stay here. If there's an
emergency, call the Dunmeyers.

Ginny slips out the door, Mom right behind her.

STANLEY

Mom...

MOM

Shut off the television and go to
bed. I'll deal with you in the
morning.

Slam. She leaves.

Stanley rushes to the couch, props himself up in time to see the family station wagon back into the street and drive away.

Moments later, two dark figures re-emerge from the neighbor's house. Stanley gulps. The figures cross the street.

Stan breathes, trying not to panic, and failing. He hurries to lock the front door.

Careful to stay out of view, he crawls over to the far window shuts and locks it.

CLINK-- Stan jumps. The front door rattles as they try to open it.

He crawls low.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Stan clamors in, sees the window above the sink wide open, he reaches up, but is too short.

He pulls over a chair, uses it to climb up to the counter, then struggles to slide the heavy pane down into a closed position, flips the lock.

Stan hops down, hiding in the darkness.

A moment later the mask-covered faces of the Prowlers pass by the window, Stan crouches.

One of them leans up against the window, cups his eyes trying to see inside, breath misting the glass.

PROWLER

I don't see anything--

The Other Prowler crosses behind him.

CLUNK-- the back door vibrates, starts to open. Stan dives towards it.

A dark, gloved hand enters, Stan shoves his weight up against the door, closing it on the hand-- CRUNCH!

The Other Prowler YELLS, yanks his hand back.

OTHER PROWLER

Son of a bitch!

Stan locks the deadbolt, retreats into the corner, terrified.

PROWLER

Told you he's still in there...

OTHER PROWLER

First things first.

The Other Prowler shakes off his injury, keeps walking to the rear of the house.

Stan looks up at the phone on the wall, back at the Prowler peering in.

A moment later the Prowler backs off, starts searching his pockets. Stan uses this opportunity to carefully move toward the phone.

PROWLER

But he must still be in there.

Stanley pulls the receiver off the base as carefully as he can, stretches the cord back down into a hiding spot beside the fridge.

Stanley starts dialing the rotary number 9-tickticktick...

EXT. HOUSE - MEANWHILE

The Other Prowler walks directly toward the telephone box, opens it up, uses his CROWBAR to pry the connections apart.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Stanley's phone goes dead. He clicks the switch-hook.

STANLEY

C-come on...

Nothing.

He looks back to the door where the Prowler takes out a LOCK-PICK from his pocket.

Stan watches, not knowing exactly what's going on, but he sees the pick glint as the Prowler struggles to push it into the deadbolt.

A moment later the thumbturn on the deadbolt begins to rotate.

Stan drops the phone, rushes toward the door and grabs the thumbturn, preventing it from going any further.

Now face-to-face with the Prowler, Stanley and the masked man lock eyes.

A beat, sizing each other up, until--

CRACK! Stanley staggers back, holding the broken-off metal thumbturn in his hand.

The Prowler struggles against the door, now jammed.

PROWLER

Dammit!

He kicks the door, childishly. Stan withdraws to the wall.

OTHER PROWLER
Let's go, I'll deal with this later.

The Prowler turns his attention to his accomplice.

PROWLER
That little shit has a picture of
us!

OTHER PROWLER
(stern)
Keep your voice down.

PROWLER
Fine!
(softer)
That little shit has a picture of
us. He saw me, he saw everything. No
witnesses.

OTHER PROWLER
Let's not lose our heads here.

The Other Prowler moves close, starts speaking quietly.

OTHER PROWLER (CONT'D)
(whispering)
Now listen, he can't do anything...
phone-lines are cut...

Stanley can barely hear so sneaks across the linoleum, careful to stay out of the light, trying to get a better view of the conversation.

OTHER PROWLER (CONT'D)
... I'll take care of it. Alright?

The Prowler calms.

PROWLER
Alright. You better.

The Prowlers walk back toward the front of the house. Stanley follows.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Stanley's eyes tracks the men's shadows as they walk around the house, past the front door.

He peers out the window, watching skeptically as the Prowlers cross the street and get into the beat-up Chrysler.

The engine roars to life, pulls away from the neighbors house and drives down the block.

Stanley catches his breath, takes a moment.

He wanders over, plops down on the couch, relieved he is momentarily out of danger.

The screen in front of him flickers. The marathon still going on mute. A peaceful moment. He reaches over and pushes the button.

JOE BOB BRIGGS

Well, boy, wasn't that hoot-hollarin'
scary good time?

Joe Bob still sits in his chair, sipping on a coffee.

JOE BOB BRIGGS (CONT'D)

I hope you've had a chance to grab
another bag of popcorn and refill
yer soda, cause we have another gory
tale comin' at you quick.

Suddenly a grinding engine grows from down the block.

JOE BOB BRIGGS (CONT'D)

And now, on with the show...

Stanley looks out the window, hoping to see his mom returning, but instead sees the Chrysler roll to an abrupt stop in front of his house.

The driver's side door kicks open and the Prowler gets out, moving with purpose.

He reaches into his back seat and brings out a tire iron, storms up the walkway.

Stanley backs up toward the stairs, unsure what to do.

SMASH! The small window beside the front door shatters.

Stan retreats upstairs.

A dark, gloved hand reaches in and pats around trying to find the lock.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Stanley trips on the top step, scrambling toward his room.

He pauses, thinks, then starts shutting all the doors, Ginny's room, his parent's room, the bathroom, etc.

He finally goes into his room, snatching the colorful stencil DRAWING of his name off the door as he passes.

INT. STANLEY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Stanley closes the door, discards the drawing.

The sounds of more SMASHING coming from downstairs, he backs up, at a loss for next steps.

He maneuvers over to his large oak DRESSER.

Stan braces himself, pushes with all his might, trying to slide it over to block the door, but it won't budge. He's too weak.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MEANWHILE

CLANK! The trim breaks, and the front door swings open.

The Prowler enters, spinning the tire iron casually.

He pulls out a 'maglite' FLASHLIGHT starts searching the downstairs.

PROWLER

Come out, come out wherever you are...

INT. STANLEY'S BEDROOM - SAME

Stanley hears the Prowler calling from downstairs, moves over to his window.

He opens it, sticks his head out and sees a good twenty foot drop to the concrete, with a pointy fence lining it. Damn.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MEANWHILE

The Prowler skulks through the darkness, stops at the Sears family portrait.

He picks it up and shines his light across the faces of Mom and Ginny. He chuckles a creepy chuckle, sets it back down.

Prowler moves along the mantle to the Mom's skating trophies. He picks up the largest one, scoffing to himself.

PROWLER

Wow...

Prowler thinks he hears movement. He sets the trophy down on the coffee table, keeps searching.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The Prowler enters, checking under the table, in the pantry, trying to eliminate potential hiding spots.

Creak.

He stops, looks up. Movement above.

The Prowler heads for the staircase.

INT. STANLEY'S BEDROOM - SAME

Stan tosses aside his polaroid camera, puts the snapshot he took on the top of the dresser - in plain sight.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

The flashlight beam cuts through the darkness as the Prowler arrives on the top floor. He surveys the layout, starting at the first door.

He reaches down, opens it to reveal...

A linen closet.

He moves on to the next door, opens to Ginny's room.

INT. GINNY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The Prowler checks under the bed, the side of the dresser, finding nothing.

He notices a poster for the Indigo Girls on the wall, shakes his head, moves on.

INT. STANLEY'S BEDROOM - SAME

Stan opens his closet, pushes his shoes and dirty laundry aside, pulls open the floor to his secret stash.

INT. UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - MEANWHILE

The Prowler opens the door, rubbernecks a little.

He pulls back the shower curtain, briefly glances at the medicine cabinet, moves on to the next room.

INT. STANLEY'S BEDROOM - SAME

The hinges SQUEAK as the door slowly opens, the Prowler enters.

He scans the room, casting the flashlight everywhere but still no Stan.

PROWLER

I know you're in here. I just want
to chat.

The Prowler crouches low, looks under the bed, which is
littered with toys, dust bunnies and socks. No kid.

PROWLER (CONT'D)

This doesn't have to be difficult.

The Prowler takes a heavy step forward-- reveal Stanley,
lying under the floorboards doing his best to keep quiet.

The light shines across the many drawings of creatures that
decorate the walls. The Prowler leans in admiring the detail,
reads the name in the bottom right corner.

PROWLER (CONT'D)

Stanley. Age 9.

Stanley notices a LARGE SPIDER crawling next to him, he winces
and tries to slide away, but it comes closer.

PROWLER (CONT'D)

There's some fine work here, Stan.
Why don't you come out and we can
talk about it--

The Prowler stops, noticing the polaroid camera and then the
snapshot sitting out on his dresser.

He picks it up, relieved, realizing that it isn't a clear
picture, or even of him.

PROWLER (CONT'D)

Now, that's what I came for.
Appreciate you leaving it out for me
like this.

Still no response.

Stanley closes his eyes as the spider crawls across his face,
trying not to make a sound.

The Prowler looks into the closet, sees the hastily placed
gap in the floorboards, and the fact it doesn't have anything
over it.

He looks downward, figuring out that Stan must be beneath
him. He smiles.

PROWLER (CONT'D)

Well, that's it I guess.

Prowler starts backing up toward the door.

PROWLER (CONT'D)

Appreciate your cooperation. I'll see you next time.

The Prowler leaves, shutting the door behind him.

Stanley GASPS, slapping frantically at the spider until he squishes it. Phew.

EXT. HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

The Prowler walks toward his car, tearing up the snapshot as he goes.

He pops the trunk, tosses the photo pieces inside, removes a large AXE.

INT. STANLEY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Stanley starts crawling back toward the opening in the closet when--

Thump, thump, thump, thump...

Heavy work boots stomping up the stairs. He stops.

The door kicks open, Prowler enters.

PROWLER

You've had your chance Stan, now it's time for the fun part.

He brings up the axe and WHAM!

The floorboards break. The sound is deafening, Stan covers his ears.

WHAM! WHAM! The strikes chip the surface, chopping up a hardwood floor isn't as easy as it seems.

Stan is covered in dust, particles kick up into his eyes.

He looks toward the opening, still far away. He crawls.

Above the Prowler picks up speed, like a hyper lumberjack, WHAM-WHAM-WHAM!

Stan moves as quickly as he can when CRACK!

The floor in front of him splinters, the head of the axe breaks through, embeds itself in the support beam below.

The Prowler tries to pull back the axe, but it's stuck.

Stanley backs up, looking around him and seeing only cobwebs and darkness.

The Prowler repositions himself, levering the axe back and forth, loosening it.

Stanley sees a gap in the insulation near the corner. He crawls quickly.

Finally, the Prowler manages to pry the axe free. Hears some movement, crouches to get a better look.

Stan arrives at the gap, seeing that there is a space about two feet where there is no puffy pink fiberglass insulation, looks down into the dark.

The Prowler flips over Stanley's bed, exposing more floor, starts chopping at the ground near the wall.

Ripping away more of the insulation to make a hole big enough for him to fit in, Stanley digs frantically.

WHAM-WHAM-WHAM!

The pace of the Prowler's strikes accelerate, the axe breaks through the floorboards a couple feet from his head.

PROWLER (CONT'D)

Nowhere to run Stanley...

WHAM! A strike kicks wood chips into Stan's face. He shrugs it off, turns his body around, attempting to put his legs through the gap while avoiding the axe.

The Prowler kicks at the loose floor boards, trying to make the hole bigger, which doesn't work, then goes back to chopping.

Wham. The axe breaks through again. Stanley struggles, his body still too big for the opening.

WHAM. The axe draws closer...

WHAM! And closer...

Stanley closes his eyes, pulls his body into a ball.

WHAM!! The axe hits the support beam--

Snap!

The rotten wood frame of the insulation gives way, Stanley falls BEHIND THE OUTSIDE WALL--

His body twists and spins like a rag doll as he slides through years-old dust and grime, for what seems like an exceptionally long time until--

THUD!

INT. BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

Stan hits the ground in a heap of debris.

He's sandwiched between the cement foundation and a piece of dry wall, out cold.

The sounds of the axe still chopping echo through the house.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

Crickets and moonlight, no other vehicles on the road except the station wagon.

The family passes a sign that says 'Welcome to Chamberlain'.

INT/EXT. STATION WAGON - CONTINUOUS

Ginny dozes in the passenger seat while Mom stares ahead, concentrating on the road.

For reasons she doesn't seem to understand, she's punchy, so Mom lights a cigarette and cracks a window.

The radio finishes some soft rock tune, and an abrasive DJ takes over.

DJ (O.S.)
You're listening to 102.7, all night
easy listening. We're with you until
the break of dawn, so--

Mom shuts off the radio, annoyed.

Ginny perks up.

GINNY
Hey, that's a good song.

MOM
Oh, sorry honey.

Mom turns it back on, another song starts.

GINNY
Can I have one?

She motions to the cigarettes. After brief consideration Mom decides against the midnight lecture and gives in, hands her the box.

MOM

They're a bad habit. Don't tell your father.

GINNY

You're all so stressed all the time.

Ginny cracks her window, lights up. She takes a drag and closes her eyes again.

GINNY (CONT'D)

You gotta learn to relax a little. There's nothing to worry about.

Mom glares at her, she doesn't notice.

INT. STANLEY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The Prowler continues to hack at the shattered hardwood, splinters flying. The floor of the room is not completely demolished.

He stops, winded.

PROWLER

I... I know you're down here...

Kneeling he tosses aside pieces of wood, seeing nothing below but dusty support beams all nicked up. No Stan.

INT. BASEMENT - BEHIND WALL - MOMENTS LATER

Push in on Stan's unconscious body, still.

PROWLER (O.S.)

Stanley, don't make me play by myself...

Stan wakes up abruptly, as if from a bad dream. He inhales dust, coughs.

INT. STANLEY'S BEDROOM - MEANWHILE

The Prowler hears the coughing.

He frantically rips up more wood, puts his arm in to feel around. He pulls out a chunk of insulation, still nothing.

INT. BASEMENT - BEHIND WALL - MOMENTS LATER

Stanley stirs, contorted and scraped. Brushes off pieces of drywall and insulation.

He sits up, trying to figure out his bearings, and ends up headbutting a stray RUSTY NAIL.

STANLEY

Agh...

He bites down on his finger, seething, a little drip of blood runs down his forehead.

STANLEY (CONT'D)

(to himself)

That's going to b-be infected for sure.

Stan pushes up against the drywall, which is pretty solidly attached, painted over. He shoves harder.

INT. BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

An unfinished rumpus room, with a water heater and furnace exposed through wooden frames. Random boxes and under-used exercise equipment strewn everywhere.

As Stan pushes the drywall, the section of the wall flexes, jostling the family reunion photos hung above.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

The Prowler stomps down the stairs, pointing his finger and mumbling to himself, trying to keep track of the architecture.

He slows to a tip-toe, finds what he thinks is the spot in the wall where Stanley fell to.

Opening the cupboards he looks under the sink, knocking the random detergent and cleaning products out onto the floor.

Finally the Prowler settles on a patch in the tiling next to the sink. He swings, plants his axe in the wall.

INT. BASEMENT - BEHIND WALL - MOMENTS LATER

Stanley looks up to see a patch of light growing bigger with each subsequent hit.

Debris falls down on Stan's head, he struggles to his feet.

Stan kicks, trying to remain in-sync to the axe-hits and make as little noise as possible, but it isn't working. He needs more force.

Stanley finally manages to get himself turned around, braces both his legs up against the foundation, and pushes back with maximum effort.

The nails begin to give way from the studs, the drywall warps.

INT. BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

CRACK!

The drywall breaks off in a large section, Stan's little body tumbles into the room.

Stanley bolts up, free at last. He's actually now very filthy from the dust and blood.

He climbs quickly up the stairs where the basement door is ajar, stops.

Stanley's POV, looking through the crack in the door we see the Prowler going ape-shit on the wall, as he swings haphazardly trying to make the hole bigger.

Stan traces the path to the front door, which happens to be through the kitchen, directly behind the Prowler...

He closes the door carefully, backs slowly down the stairs, making no noise.

The distant axeing continues, more shards trickle down through the hole in the drywall. Stanley quickly picks up the largest chunk of drywall, shoves it back into place. He braces it with a vintage stationary bike... it still looks like someone jumped through the wall, but not quite as obvious.

Searching for a place to hide, Stan rips the packing tape off a large box, which is full of books and stuff too heavy to quickly empty out.

The axeing stops, so does the debris.

Stanley glances over to the pile of laundry beside the washing machine.

INT. KITCHEN - SAME

The Prowler sticks his head into the wall, looks down and sees nothing but darkness.

PROWLER

Son of a bitch.

He chucks the axe at the floor, frustrated, notices the closed door beside the pantry.

INT. BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

The door opens slowly to reveal the silhouette of the Prowler towering at the top of the stairs.

He turns his flashlight on, creeps down the stairs.

The light shines around the corner, illuminating the old B&W tube television, holiday decorations that litter the floor.

The Prowler scans over the large crack in the wall, propped up by the exercise bike, paying it no mind.

INT. LAUNDRY CHUTE - CONTINUOUS

Nearby we find Stan, who has wedged himself up inside the laundry chute. He looks really uncomfortable, supporting his body weight with his knees, but he keeps quiet.

INT. BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

The Prowler's eyes search thoroughly behind the washing machines, water heater, careful not to miss any of the small crevasses where a kid might hide.

INT. LAUNDRY CHUTE - CONTINUOUS

His face straining, Stanley quietly shifts his body to a more comfortable position. He gazes upward to what looks like a long, long way.

At the very top the moonlight from the attic seeps in. Bracing himself with his back against one side, he slowly puts one foot above the other - starts his, long, painful ascent up the laundry chute.

EXT. COUNTY SEAT PUB - NIGHT

The station wagon rolls to a stop in the parking lot of a roadside bar. No other cars, neon signs off, nothing.

INT./EXT. STATION WAGON - CONTINUOUS

Mom and Ginny look around for an sign of life, or Dallas.

MOM

There's nobody here...

GINNY

Maybe they arrested him because we took too long. Mom.

MOM

Well, it would serve him right.

GINNY

We have to go to the police station
and get him out.

Mom sighs, already exhausted.

GINNY (CONT'D)

You promised.

MOM

I'd like to give that officer who
made me drive out here a piece of my
mind. Waste of my Goddamned time...

She backs the car out.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Frustrated he can't find the kid, and probably tired from
all the axeing, the Prowler slumps down onto the foot of the
stairs. He brings out a pack of unfiltered cigarettes and a
booklet of matches, lights up.

INT. LAUNDRY CHUTE - CONTINUOUS

Stanley takes baby steps upward, cautiously, inch-by-inch.
When he's walked a bit he braces himself and scotches his
back up, climbing slowly but surely.

INT. BASEMENT - MEANWHILE

Exhaling a long drag, the Prowler sees a copy of Reader's
Digest on top of a stack of old magazines sitting beside the
railing. Drawn in by the cover, he cracks it open, starts
reading.

INT. LAUNDRY CHUTE - CONTINUOUS

Breathing heavily and turning a bit red, sweat drips from
Stanley's brow. He sees the long stretch above, and now a
long fall below.

Stan pushes on, making more and more noise. The metal of the
chute flexes.

INT. BASEMENT - MEANWHILE

The Prowler looks up, drops the magazine. He's missing
something.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Sounds of metal flexing are faint, but distinct. The Prowler
enters the main area, looks around trying to figure out where
they're coming from.

INT. LAUNDRY CHUTE - CONTINUOUS

Arriving at the upstairs chute door, Stan slows himself, out of breath.

Through the crack in the metal door he can see downstairs, the Prowler appears. Stan gasps.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The gloved hand of the Prowler touches the wall, trying to find vibrations. He moves up the stairs.

INT. LAUNDRY CHUTE - CONTINUOUS

Stan watches the Prowler coming closer. He hurries, wiggling his way upward.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

The hand slides along the wall, over the closet. The Prowler sees the chute door at the end of the hallway.

He rushes over, opens the door.

INT. LAUNDRY CHUTE - CONTINUOUS

The Prowler looks down just as Stanley's sneakers escape into the attic. He looks up, doesn't see anything. Slams the door in frustration.

INT. ATTIC - NIGHT

Stanley breathes sporadically, relieved to hear the door shut.

He looks to the window where his trusty tin-can telephone sits waiting, Stan hurries over, picks it up.

STANLEY

(whispering)

M-M-Matt... Matt. Can you hear me?
You need to w-wake up.

INT. MATT'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Matt's bed is empty, sheets messy. Reveal the light on in the bathroom down the hall.

STANLEY (O.S.)

G-get up... s-someone in my house...
you... police...

The faint voice gives way to the toilet flushing.

A sleepy Matt returns to bed, covers his head with a pillow.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - MEANWHILE

The Prowler pauses, listens, hears someone talking, very faintly.

PROWLER
 (to himself)
 What the--

The Prowler sees the phone on the table at the end up the hall, he picks it up, still dead.

Puzzled, he looks to the ceiling, notices the entrance to the attic down the hall with a small PULL-STRING.

INT. ATTIC - CONTINUOUS

Stanley continues to speak quietly, grows nervous.

STANLEY
 M-Matt, please... wake up. There's
 someone in my house. You n-need to
 call the police. I repeat, there's...

INT. MATT'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Matt turns over, looks up at the noisy tin-can, confused.

STANLEY (O.S.)
 G...gog...a...ouse.

He rolls his eyes, reaches up and pulls the can closer to him.

MATT
 Stan?

STANLEY (O.S.)
 ... Bring... we need a...

MATT
 Stan, what are you doing? It's like
 two in the morning...

STANLEY (O.S.)
 S... with a b... in...

MATT
 Huh?

INT. UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

The Prowler follows the noise, arriving just under where Stanley is.

He looks out the window and sees a wool string stretching from out in the neighborhood up to the attic window.

The Prowler opens the window, tries to reach. Realizes he needs something longer.

INT. ATTIC - CONTINUOUS

Stanley glances outside, nervous.

MATT (O.S.)

What? I can barely hear you at all.
Speak up.

STANLEY

I c-can't, he'll hear me. Pull the
string t-t-tighter.

INT. MATT'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Matt sits up, annoyed, tugs on the string.

MATT (O.S.)

Slow down and talk louder. You aren't
making sense.

Matt looks out the window toward Stanley's house, mostly obscured by foliage.

STANLEY

L-listen... me.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The Prowler retrieves his axe from where he chucked it, returns upstairs.

INT. ATTIC - CONTINUOUS

STANLEY

I s-said there's somebody in my h-
house. You need to wake up your
parents.

Stan glances over his shoulder, watching the trap-door entrance to the attic.

STANLEY (CONT'D)

Tell them we need to call the police.
(MORE)

STANLEY (CONT'D)

I saw the neighbor across the street
get murdered.

INT. MATT'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Matt listens hard, still confused and a little bored.

STANLEY (O.S.)

She... stabbed in the ... you guys
need to... police, now.

MATT

Stan, you can tell me about the movies
tomorrow. I'm exhausted, dude. Go
back to bed.

INT. UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

The Prowler sticks his upper-body out the window, hanging on
to the towel-rack as he dangles.

He brings up the axe high, swinging at the string - misses.

Stan's muffled pleas can be heard below. The Prowler swings
again - chop! He cuts the wool phone line.

INT. ATTIC - CONTINUOUS

STANLEY

Call the police now!

The string piece goes limp. Stanley watches helplessly as it
falls into the next door neighbor's yard.

INT. MATT'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - MEANWHILE

Matt pulls back as the connection goes limp.

MATT

Hello? Stan?

Matt looks out the window, sees the string fell.

MATT (CONT'D)

Aw, man...

Matt lays back down, but stays awake, not sure what he just
heard.

INT. ATTIC - MOMENTS LATER

Footsteps below.

Stan's eyes dart toward the trap door. He drops the tin can.

The trap door starts to open. Stan rushes over, pulls on the upper strap, braces himself on some crates.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Below the Prowler and Stan start a tug-of-war with the attic door. Stan pulls hard and it snaps shut.

Getting testy, the Prowler jumps, putting all of his weight on the string.

INT. ATTIC - CONTINUOUS

The strap snaps out of Stanley's hand.

STANLEY

Ahh...

The mini-ladder spills into the hallway, Stanley sees the Prowler below, jumping on the bottom rung.

Stanley turns over a box of LAWN DARTS, shakes them.

PROWLER (O.S.)

Come here you little--

The colorful, sharp little objects riddle the Prowler below.

PROWLER (CONT'D)

Gah!

Stanley runs for the window.

The Prowler slaps the box aside, climbs into the attic. He pulls a bright yellow lawn dart out of his forearm, throws it to the floor angrily.

Stan opens the window, crawls out onto the ledge.

EXT. ROOF - CONTINUOUS

Stanley attempts to crawl to the rear of the house, quickly realizes that the roof overhang stops abruptly, with a nasty drop into the back yard.

The Prowler reaches out, tries to grab Stan's shirt, forcing him to head along the ledge to the front of the house.

Stan's sneakers balance precariously as he strides over the wet shingles, covered in leaves, until--

Whoops! Stan slips, his body hits the roof.

STANLEY

Oof.

Stan slides down the side, the edge racing towards him.

He claws at the shingles, plants his legs firmly, finally regaining traction when his feet hit the storm gutters.

With the Prowler in pursuit, Stan scrambles toward the front edge of the house, his adversary closing in.

PROWLER

There's nowhere to go little guy,
this is the end of the line.

The Prowler steals a glance down to the ground below, it's far.

PROWLER (CONT'D)

Just come inside, everything's gonna
be fine.

STANLEY

S-s-stay back!

PROWLER

There's nothing to be afraid of.

The Prowler stands up to his full height, trying to intimidate Stan, and it's working. He brandishes his axe in the street lights.

PROWLER (CONT'D)

Come here.

Stanley backs up, his feet teetering on the edge, literally nowhere to go.

PROWLER (CONT'D)

I said get over here!

The Prowler takes a step toward Stan, his foot hits a small patch of sludgy leaves, slips out from under him.

WHACK! The Prowler's skull ricochets off the roof.

Dazed, his body slides quickly down the slick surface of the shingles and launches into a sharp drop.

THUD!

The Prowler hits the concrete, hard.

Stanley retreats from the edge, finds sure footing. He catches his breath, takes a moment before carefully peering over the edge.

Below, the unconscious body of the Prowler lies silent, contorted on the front side walk... is he dead?

Stan squints carefully, sees the Prowler's chest move up and down. He's breathing, still alive but down for the count.

EXT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

The family station wagon slides to a stop outside the modest brick building.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

A standard local county office, the night shift CREW mill about sipping coffee and complaining to each other. The TOWN DRUNKS sway side-to-side on the little metal bench in the foyer, awaiting the weekly lecture from the station Chief.

OFFICER JACKIE, 50s, crushes a cross-word puzzle. She looks up through her thick glasses to see MOM entering with GINNY in tow. They approach the bullet-proof glass, bickering.

MOM

Good evening.

Officer Jackie looks them both over, impatient.

MOM (CONT'D)

We got a call from you guys about half an hour ago. We're here to collect Dallas, uh...

Mom turns to Ginny.

GINNY

Seriously?

MOM

What's his last name?

GINNY

Anderson.

MOM

Dallas Anderson.

Officer Jackie shuffles about her desk, checks the paperwork.

OFFICER JACKIE

I don't have anything here. Are you sure it's this station? Not Oak Park?

MOM

Yes, they said Chamberlain on the phone, that he was at a bar causing trouble. This wasn't even thirty minutes ago.

OFFICER JACKIE

Do you know the name of the officer that contacted you?

MOM

Officer Green?

OFFICER JACKIE

Ma'am, to my knowledge, there is no Officer Green working at this station, or in this county. Did you get a badge number?

MOM

No, I didn't get a badge number.

Mom looks around the office, trying to see if there's anyone else around that looks like could be Officer Green.

MOM (CONT'D)

Look, can you please go get someone in charge and we can sort this out?

Officer Jackie lets out a heavy sigh, putters off down the hall.

OFFICER JACKIE

Nobody tells me anything...

Mom checks her watch, annoyed.

MOM

I don't like leaving your brother by himself.

GINNY

Gawd, Mom.. It's not like he's going to run away.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Stan steps gingerly down the stairs, approaches the front entrance. He hesitates at the knob, quietly pulls open the door.

EXT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Lying on the cement path is the Prowler. Stan takes a hard look for any sign of movement.

He sees the street beyond, his chance at safety.

Stan puts one foot onto the porch, then another...

PROWLER

Uhhh...

The Prowler rolls over, winded, and still dazed. Stan stops.

Deciding against it, he slips back inside the house, and quietly shuts the door.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Stanley puts his back against the door, thinks for a moment.

He looks behind him at the TV still playing, then upstairs, an idea forming.

INT. STANLEY'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Stan enters with a purpose, careful of the unstable flooring. He grabs a colorful FANNY-PACK off his dresser, crosses to his chopped up treasure-trove.

He pulls at the splintered wood, grabs what might be useful: firecrackers, his reading flashlight, some pencils and paper, candy, etc.

Stanley looks to the top shelf where a 'Build Your Own Rocket!' Kit sits unused. He pulls it down, opens the box, and starts taking pieces, holding up a model rocket ENGINE.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

The Prowler pushes himself up to a sitting position, wheezes. He cracks his neck.

PROWLER

Ghhh... shit.

On the sidewalk across the street Old Man Herman takes his pug for a nightly walk.

He sees the Prowler in pain, can't help but approach.

HERMAN

Hey, you okay pal?

Prowler freezes. Herman walks his dog into the yard.

HERMAN (CONT'D)

I said are you alright?

No way to avoid the interaction, the Prowler rolls with it.

PROWLER
Yeah, um, I'm okay.

He lets Herman help him stand up, playing for sympathy.

PROWLER (CONT'D)
Just a bit winded.

HERMAN
What the hell happened?

Herman looks the Prowler up and down, settles on his mask.

PROWLER
Out for a late night run. Gets kinda chilly this time of year. I'm in training for... uh, cross country running.

Herman takes that in, skeptically.

PROWLER (CONT'D)
Guess I pushed it too hard. Had a dizzy spell.

His pug BARKS at the Prowler.

PROWLER (CONT'D)
Do you mind keeping him quiet? Kid's asleep inside. He's impossible to put down at night.

Herman tries to coax the little animal.

HERMAN
Easy, Columbus. Shhh... something happen to your window?

Herman notices the smashed window by the door.

INT. UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - MEANWHILE

Stan does a sweep of the room, looking for anything that could be useful. He looks under the sink, snatches up Ginny's bottle of hairspray with warnings of fire, etc.

He stuffs the spray in the pack, then grabs a container of small copper HAIR-PINS for good measure.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Stan snatches his MOM'S LIGHTER from where she left it on the end table. Suddenly he hears BARKING.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

The Prowler sees the window.

PROWLER
Oh, yeah, that...

He looks at the old man, subtly stepping towards him.

PROWLER (CONT'D)
My boy's a real troublemaker. You
know how kids can be.

HERMAN
Of course...

Herman nods along, inching back down the path.

HERMAN (CONT'D)
Alright, have a nice night.

The Prowler quickly bends to pet the dog, taking him by the collar, keeping Herman in the yard.

PROWLER
How old is he?

HERMAN
Six.

PROWLER
But in dog years that's much older,
isn't it? Never know when they're
gonna kick the bucket.

Herman registers the threat.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - MEANWHILE

Stan arrives at the window with a partial view of the action out front. He struggles to see, the dog barks again.

EXT. HOUSE - SAME

The Prowler holds onto the dog, as he barks, then growls at him. Herman notices the axe lying on the ground not far away.

PROWLER
Damn yard work never ends.

Herman's had enough, he pulls on the leash.

HERMAN
Come on, Columbus.

PROWLER
Sure you don't want a cup of tea?

HERMAN
Sorry, it's late, we have to get
going.

PROWLER
If you insist--

The Prowler steps on the leash, Herman trips forward-- quickly the Prowler gets hold of Herman's throat, crushing his larynx, then covers his nose tight.

The old man fights, but the Prowler is too strong.

The dog bites hard into the Prowler's leg--

PROWLER (CONT'D)
Ghhh!

The Prowler kicks at the dog, which runs off into the night.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - SAME

Stan watches as the Prowler drops Herman's body to the ground, grabs the axe. His heart sinks.

Stan rushes off, scared but determined.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

The Prowler looks down at his leg, pants torn, skin bloody, savagely bitten. He tries to put weight on it, has to limp.

PROWLER
Son of a bitch...

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The Prowler enters through the front door, pulling Old Man Herman's body, drops it unceremoniously on the living room floor.

He feels the pain of his wound, looks to the kitchen.

INT. STANLEY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Stan sorts his makeshift bomb ingredients on his desk, patiently opening the firecrackers one-by-one to combine tiny amounts of powder. He unwraps the rocket engine, crushes it into a powder, adds it to the mix.

He breaks apart the metal hair-pins, drops them in, then adds various pieces of Meccano and random other metal bits

he finds on his desk including the blade from a pencil sharpener.

Stanley considers putting them into the rocket, but has another idea.

He sees his NIGHTLIGHT on the wall, crosses and starts unscrewing the bulb.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

The Prowler opens the liquor cabinet. He pulls out a bottle of WHISKEY. Examines his leg.

PROWLER

Here's to you, you dumb bitch.

He takes a swig, then douses his injured leg with alcohol, grinning through the pain.

INT. PARENTS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Stan stretches from the top of his parents' dresser to reach the ceiling light fixture, carefully screwing his weapon in place.

He finishes, crawls down, careful not to make any noise, then hides in the closet, pulling the door shut.

INT. PARENTS' BEDROOM - CLOSET - CONTINUOUS

Stan turns on his little flashlight to get a look at his surroundings. Suits on one side, pastel dresses and a fur coat on the other, spacious as a kid would find it.

Stanley takes a breath, pushes further back into the clothes for cover, he bumps into something... he pulls up a shoe-box sized wooden GUNCASE with a handle, a small brass logo and a lock.

He shakes the case, hears the weapon rattle inside. Stan tries to pry open the lock, but no-go. He examines the keyhole, thinking hard.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

The Prowler takes another drink before pouring more booze on his leg, resting up.

We see a rack hanging by the fridge with various keys strung along, including one small SILVER KEY for the guncase.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

A very bored Ginny waits as the TOWN DRUNK watches her from a nearby desk, which he's handcuffed to. She feels his stare. He winks at her. Ginny turns her chair to face away.

Meanwhile, Mom argues with the tired-looking station CHIEF.

MOM

What do you mean no one here called me? I'm not making this up.

CHIEF

Mrs. Roberts, I don't know what to tell you. There's only four of us on tonight. The accountant, the dispatch, her, me. That's it. No patrol cars called in.

MOM

So my daughter's boyfriend was never arrested?

CHIEF

Not unless your daughter is dating this pain in the ass right here.

Chief motions to the Drunk, who waves back, glad to be included in the conversation.

GINNY

Gross...

DRUNK

You know what your problem is?

The Drunk leans in close, Ginny shifts.

DRUNK (CONT'D)

You think you're better than me.

GINNY

I know I'm better than you.

DRUNK

What are you doing later?

GINNY

Uh, going home with my mom.

DRUNK

Ooohh, I could be into that.

Ginny stands, crosses to her Mom.

GINNY

Can we go yet? This place is grody.

Mom thinks for a moment, something not right.

MOM

So this is just like some kind of crank call?

CHIEF

Wouldn't be the first time.

MOM

Well, it worked. Got us down here in the middle of the night.

CHIEF

Actually I'd appreciate if you filled out an incident report.

He pulls out a clipboard.

CHIEF (CONT'D)

Impersonating an officer is no joke.

MOM

I don't know...

CHIEF

It'll take five minutes. Good to have a record of this stuff, just in case.

Mom tacitly accepts, but something nags at her. The Chief moves off searching for a pen.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Stanley creeps along the railing, fanny-pack on, the guncase in hand. He listens for sounds of the Prowler, hears him softly cursing somewhere.

PROWLER (O.S.)

Goddamn...

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The Prowler daintily wraps a tea-towel over his wound, grumbling to himself.

PROWLER

Agh, rabid friggin' beasts running around...

He seethes, takes another swig from the bottle.

Behind him Stanley inches his way down the stairs, the wood guncase under his arm.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Stanley steps off the bottom step, reaches his foot out for the carpet to minimize his disruption.

He sees the keyrack on the wall in the kitchen, the silver ring dangling. Stan crouches low, hiding behind the wall, just feet away from the Prowler.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Stan cautiously peers around the corner, the Prowler tends to his wound, facing the other direction. He slides his body slowly around the corner and into the kitchen.

The Prowler opens another bottle of liquor, this time SWEET VERMOUTH, he takes a long pull and spits it out almost immediately.

PROWLER

Ugh, why?

He chucks the bottle behind him blindly, Stan dodges quickly. The bottle smashes on the ground in the living room.

Rattled but still in the game, Stan continues towards the key rack. The Prowler cinches his half-assed bandages tight.

Stan makes his way passed the fridge, tries to take the key... it's just a little out of reach. He's a few inches short for the height of the rack.

Beside the dishwasher is a small step-stool, Stan every-so-softly pulls it across the floor under the rack.

In the reflection on the door of the oven, the Prowler catches a glimpse of movement. He stops drinking, resists the urge to turn around immediately, watches.

Stanley, not noticing he's in trouble, climbs silently onto the stool, reaches up to the keys.

A small smile curls up on the Prowler's lips as he finishes another swig, corks the bottle.

Stan finally gets his finger into the key ring, lifts it off of the hook and slowly closes his hand around the keys, careful to avoid any unwanted metallic sounds.

He looks over at the Prowler who is uncharacteristically still, but Stanley remains focused. He sees another key-chain with a GARAGE DOOR OPENER, decides to take that too.

Stanley puts both keys in his fanny pack, moves back toward the living room.

PROWLER (CONT'D)

You know...

Stan stops dead.

PROWLER (CONT'D)

I'm always losing my keys, too.

Stanley's heart skips a beat as the Prowler turns around in his chair, stands up, casting a shadow over the boy's face.

Stan gulps.

PROWLER (CONT'D)

Don't do anything stupid--

The kid turns to run, the man lunges after him grabbing at his back collar. Stan pulls away, darting out of the kitchen.

The Prowler limps after him as fast as he can.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Stanley makes it to the stairway, runs up so quickly he trips on a step.

The Prowler lays out, snags Stan's ankle, yanks him down a few steps.

Stan reaches inside his pack just as the Prowler gains the upper hand, flipping him over--

SSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS!

Stan unloads a prom's worth of hairspray onto the Prowler, mostly his face and out-stretched hand.

PROWLER

Gahhhhhh!

The Prowler claws at him, blind, Stan rushes to get away, in the process dropping the guncase-- which tumbles down the stairway.

Stan manages to get to the top of the stairs, looks back to see the Prowler wiping his eyes, the guncase now trapped behind him maddeningly out of reach.

Stan looks at the key in his hand, makes the hard decision to leave the weapon behind, runs.

INT. GINNY'S ROM - CONTINUOUS

Stan sprints inside, shuts the door behind him. He pushes hard on his sister's dresser, which is smaller than his own, this time able to wedge it in front of the door.

BOOM! BOOM!

The door pushes violently against the dresser, the Prowler body-checking it hard, trying to get in.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The Prowler pounds on the door.

PROWLER

You shouldn't have done that, Stan!

He kicks the door with his bad leg, recoils.

INT. GINNY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Stanley backs away from the door, hiding behind the bed. The door is jammed at a couple inches open. The Prowler gets a few fingers in, but that's all for the moment.

PROWLER

Stan, let's talk about this for a second. 'Kay bud?

Stan stays hidden, controlling his breathing.

PROWLER (CONT'D)

See there's only a couple ways this is going to end. Do you hear me?

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The Prowler tries to stick his arm in, but it doesn't fit. He shifts his weight, trying to get a view of Stan's face.

PROWLER

One, you open the door, and we figure this out, man to man. You promise not to tell anybody about what you saw, and we go our separate ways. I like that version.

INT. GINNY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Stan listens, unconvinced.

PROWLER

Or two, I find a way in there, and I will find a way in, and then I hurt you. A lot. That's less fun, for you at least.

Stanley watches the intruder's fingers tapping on the door frame gently.

PROWLER (CONT'D)

Then there's three. We sit and wait. We wait so long that your mom and sister come home, and I'm still here.

Stan looks fearful for the first time.

PROWLER (CONT'D)

I kill them. And I take my time. Real slow like.

Prowler strokes the door, creepily.

A beat. Stanley considers, digs into his pack.

PROWLER (CONT'D)

Have you thought about them at all?

Stan pulls out the garage door opener, presses the button. Nothing happens.

PROWLER (CONT'D)

Pretty selfish of you to drag them into this by playing around. You know I'll do it, too.

He moves closer to the window.

PROWLER (CONT'D)

Then again, maybe I won't do it tonight. But I know where you all live. Think about it, Stan.

Stan pushes the garage door button, it lights up.

EXT. HOUSE - GARAGE - NIGHT

The metal pulley WHINES as the garage door begins to rise.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

The Prowler hears the garage door opening moving.

PROWLER

Oh, what's that?

He looks toward the front driveway, surprised.

PROWLER (CONT'D)
Out of time, Stan.

INT. GINNY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Stan watches as the Prowler's fingers leave the doorframe, hears footsteps moving down the stairs.

Working quickly, Stan scoops up a stack of his sister's teen magazines, piles them in a wastebasket. He positions the basket directly beneath a SMOKE ALARM.

INT/EXT. HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

The Prowler moves outside, but stays quiet. He sees no one out front just as the door finishes opening.

He stalks to the edge of the house, continues to the rear.

INT. GINNY'S ROOM - MEANWHILE

Glancing outside to the house next door, Stanley opens the window.

Removing the lighter from his pack, Stan sparks a flame along the edge of an issue of TEEN BEAT. He drops it into the bin, smoke billowing.

Stan pushes the dresser out of the way, leaves the room, sure to close the door behind him.

INT/EXT. HOUSE - GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

The Prowler stalks up to the garage, he sees there's no light on. No car, no family members. Huh.

PROWLER
Smart little bastard.

Before heading back in, the Prowler surveys the tools, selects a HAMMER hanging from the workbench.

INT. GINNY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Flames lick up the inside of the wastebasket. Thick grey smoke puffs up to the alarm.

INT. ATTIC - SAME

Stan rushes up the steps, pulls the trap door up behind him.

BEEP-BEEP-BEEP-BEEP-BEEP! The smoke alarm sounds.

EXT. HOUSE - SAME

The Prowler hears the alarm too. He rushes back inside, limping, hammer in hand.

INT. ATTIC - NIGHT

Click. Stan sees one of the neighbors' house lights have turned on, but no sign of life yet.

Stan pushes open the attic window, trying to get their attention but the angle isn't straight-on.

STANLEY

H-hey! Hey!

Stan waves his arms, desperate to wake the occupants.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The Prowler re-enters frantically, rushes up the stairs, stepping over the guncase once again.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The Prowler smashes the knob off the door with the hammer, then backs up, readies himself.

STANLEY

Fire's very dangerous, Stan!

He gets a running start, throws his weight into the hit--

INT. GINNY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

CRASH! The Prowler unexpectedly smashes the door down, ending up on the floor in a heap.

He springs to his feet, looks around the smoky room, no kid.

STANLEY

You little shit-stain, where are you?!

He sees the flaming wastebasket below the alarm.

The Prowler crosses, smashes the alarm with the hammer.

INT. ATTIC - NIGHT

Stan hears the alarm stop.

Across the way, a YOUNG COUPLE wander to the window, groggily having a look.

He waves harder, pleading for their attention.

STANLEY

C-come on! Look over here! P-please!

INT. GINNY'S ROOM - NIGHT

The alarm in pieces, the Prowler coughs from the smoke.

He sees the light on at the neighbors across the way, moves to the window, closes it.

INT. ATTIC - CONTINUOUS

The sleepy couple glance out the window, squinting and shrugging to each other, they obviously can't hear Stan's cries. They disappear from view and turn off the light.

STANLEY

N-no! Shoot...

Stanley slumps down, defeated.

INT. GINNY'S ROOM - NIGHT

The Prowler tries to get the small fire under control. He stomps wildly at it with his foot, then bends down to pick up the basket.

WHOOSH!!

Fire rapidly engulfs the Prowler's arm-- the hairspray from earlier lights him up! His eyes go wide as the flames catch on to his balaclava.

PROWLER

Ahhhhhh!

The Prowler flails, trying to snuff out the fire, but it just keeps spreading.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The Prowler lets out a blood-curdling SCREAM as he stumbles into the hallway, half-engulfed, knocking down picture frames and the small table as he goes.

INT. ATTIC - SAME

Stanley hears the screams of the Prowler, perks up.

INT. UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

The Prowler pushes his way through the door, jumping under the showerhead. He fumbles with the knobs.

PROWLER

Oh, fuck, oh, fuck...

Water shoots down. He uses the plastic curtain to suffocate the flame.

The Prowler finally collapses into the tub, a painful mess. He lets the water run on him, taking a breather.

INT. ATTIC - NIGHT

The Prowler's cusses and groans can be heard a floor below, Stanley can't help but feel a small victory.

PROWLER (O.S.)

Uhhhhhh!

STANLEY

Yes...

Stan looks back out the window, around the other side, still no sign of neighborhood activity.

He searches the attic boxes for some other plan, notices a coil of green GARDEN HOSE.

INT. UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - NIGHT

The Prowler turns the water off, grunts while he drags himself out of the bathtub and up to have a look in the mirror.

He turns on the light, sees the melted material of what's left of his balaclava singed to his face.

He warily pulls at the cloth, peeling it ever-so-slowly as it clings to his charred skin.

Rrrriipp! He lets out a yelp as the last of the mask comes off, gets a look at himself in the bathroom mirror...

Bright red and yellow burns cover half his face. He stares at the damage, rage building. He yells to Stan--

PROWLER

You little prick! I'm going to kill you, Stan! You hear me? You're dead!

INT. ATTIC - SAME

Stan uncoils the garden hose, quickly, as he listens to the threats. He looks out the window, too far to climb down.

PROWLER (O.S.)

Nobody's coming to help you! It's just you and me!

Stan takes this in, a new resolve forming.

He digs harder through the junk in the attic. Eventually he unearths something interesting-- a small, rusty, Honda push LAWNMOWER.

INT. UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - MEANWHILE

The Prowler rummages through the medicine cabinet. He pulls out some mild anti-burn aloe vera-type ointment, starts liberally rubbing it onto his face.

PROWLER

Ah... ah... okay... that's the stuff,
right there...

He looks at his face, definitely not fixed.

He rifles through various pill bottles, finds some pain killers, and pops them down the hatch. He throws on more ointment, exits.

INT. ATTIC - SAME

Stan works on the lawnmower, taking off the protective guard with a screwdriver. Other screws and bolts lie with the wheels, all removed on the floor.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The Prowler stumbles into the couch area, his whiskey bottle near-empty. He looks for Stan, hammer in hand, almost drunk.

PROWLER

Stan! Come on out and have a drink,
Stan! I'm getting bored! Don't make
me come up there, young man!

He stops briefly to look at the TV, where various bikini-clad beach-goers run from the killer piranha. After a moment he shakes his head, refocuses.

PROWLER (CONT'D)

Alright, you were warned!

The Prowler turns, almost trips on the guncase where it landed earlier.

He looks at it more closely, annoyed.

PROWLER (CONT'D)

Hey, you shouldn't leave your toys
by the stairs, Stan!

The Prowler picks up the case, sees the lock and brass logo which features a revolver.

PROWLER (CONT'D)
Someone could get hurt!

He sets it down, pulls out the hammer, and smashes it repeatedly until the box breaks.

Inside he finds Stan's DAD'S GUN, a lightly used 9MM pistol with two clips pre-loaded. The Prowler can't believe his luck, grins boyishly.

PROWLER (CONT'D)
So this is what you needed that key for, huh buddy?!

INT. ATTIC - SAME

Stan listens, shakes his head realizing what just happened.

PROWLER (O.S.)
Great idea! This will make things a lot easier on both of us!

He hurries his work on the mower.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Mom finally hands off the paperwork to the Chief while Officer Jackie works the phone behind them.

CHIEF
Thanks for doing this. If it comes up again, please don't hesitate.

MOM
Sure.

Mom crosses to get Ginny.

MOM (CONT'D)
Come on, Ginny, let's go.

GINNY
What about Dallas?

MOM
Dallas isn't here.

GINNY
Well, maybe we should drive by his place to make sure he's okay.

MOM

It's late, you can call him tomorrow.

GINNY

Mom...

Officer Jackie speaks to the Chief.

OFFICER JACKIE

I've got a Mrs. Dunmeyer on the phone,
said their kid might have heard
something weird at the next house.

Mom's ears perk up.

MOM

Those are our neighbors...

CHIEF

What did she say exactly?

OFFICER JACKIE

That her boy Matthew was talking to
the Roberts boy through one of them
walkie-talkies or some such. Thought
there was something strange going
on, woke up his parents.

Mom approaches the desk, putting things together.

OFFICER JACKIE (CONT'D)

They tried to call over, but the
phone line's out.

Mom grabs the phone on the desk, quickly dials. It doesn't
ring, goes straight to a busy signal.

She looks at the Chief, heads for the exit.

MOM

Ginny. We're leaving.

Ginny doesn't argue with that voice, follows.

CHIEF

Hold on, I'll send a car with you.

MOM

Tell them to hurry the hell up!

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

The Prowler ascends the staircase, slides the clip in the
handle and cocks it.

PROWLER

Thanks Stan. You're a true pal. Just one more game of hide and seek and this nightmare is over.

The Prowler moves to Stan's room, checks inside. Nothing.

PROWLER (CONT'D)

Am I getting warmer?

He crosses to Ginny's room, has a look. Nope.

PROWLER (CONT'D)

Maybe hiding under mommy and daddy's bed...

INT. ATTIC - SAME

Stan puts the lawn mower in place above the trap door, carefully ties the rope on the trap door to the pull-cord of the lawnmower.

INT. PARENTS' BEDROOM - SAME

The Prowler enters, is about to turn on the light.

PROWLER

Come on. Come out and face me like a man.

STANLEY (O.S.)

O-over here!

The Prowler pauses.

INT. ATTIC - SAME

Stan sketches something on a piece of paper. He calls down through the partially open trap door.

STANLEY

In the at... at... attic, asshole!

He waits, listening.

The Prowler laughs.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - SAME

The Prowler moves towards the attic door, chuckling.

PROWLER

You've got some balls on you, kid. How about I shoot them first?

The Prowler aims the gun at the door.

STANLEY (O.S.)
You b-better not.

PROWLER
Oh yeah? Wh-wh-wh-why shouldn't I?

INT. ATTIC - SAME

Stanley looks down through the crack in the doorway, just able to see the Prowler's dark shape, burned face.

PROWLER
Are you gonna st-st-st-stutter at me
some more?

Stan clears his throat, carefully finishes his drawing.

STANLEY
(to himself)
Smooth...
(then)
If you shoot, the noise will wake up
my neighbors, and they'll call the
police, and they'll kill you.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - SAME

The Prowler grins up at Stan in the attic, but can't help looking out the window at the neighbors place.

STANLEY (O.S.)
So don't even think of coming up
here...

INT. ATTIC - SAME

Stan finishes his drawing: a decent approximation of the Prowler's features. He quickly folds it, stuffs it in his pocket.

STANLEY
Because you're no match for a nine-
year-old kid, dingus!

Stan positions himself at the laundry chute, starts securing the garden hose to one of the wood beams of the roof.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

The Prowler's eyes fill with anger. He puts the gun in the back of his waistband.

He pulls on the attic door cord, it snaps shut, like something is blocking it.

INT. ATTIC - SAME

Stanley finishes tying the hose to the beam, looks down the laundry chute, throws the other end up down, which stops short about ten feet from the basement.

STANLEY

That's all you've got? You're pathetic and stupid!

Stan takes hold of the garden hose, starts climbing into the laundry chute.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - SAME

The Prowler tightens his grip on the attic door cord.

PROWLER

No, you're stupid! I'm gonna make sure nobody ever finds your body, Stan! You hear me--

He pulls hard, the lawnmower's engine chokes to life.

The stair gives way, the Prowler looks up as the lawnmower careens down, straight towards him, the blades exposed and spinning.

GRRRrrrrriiiiiinnndddd-- the mower slices through his arm, mangles his chest, neck and face.

INT. ATTIC - SAME

Stan doesn't wait around. He repels on the garden hose--

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - SAME

The Prowler screams, fights back at the metal contraption, eventually stumbling backward, away from danger.

He collapses in a heap, struggling to breathe from the damage.

The mower falls from the attic, bounces down the stairs, turns to a stop.

INT. LAUNDRY CHUTE - CONTINUOUS

Stan half-slides, half-climbs his way down, slowing his descent as much as he can on the steel walls.

He runs out of garden hose, dangles for a moment, takes breath and lets himself drop.

INT. BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

Whoosh.

Stan lands softly on a pile of laundry at the bottom, rolling and standing up immediately.

He runs up the stairway, not missing a beat.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Stan emerges from the basement, running for his life, heading straight for the front door, for freedom, for--

Stan opens the door to find the burnt, damaged and enraged Prowler staring down at him.

BLAM!...

Stan is shocked by the impact.

He sees the gun in the man's hand, still smoking. The Prowler smiles a bloody grin at Stan, who falls onto the rug.

The Prowler slams the front door.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

The family station wagon flies down the rural road, followed by a police cruiser struggling to keep pace as they pass the sign for Chamberlain.

INT/EXT. STATION WAGON - SAME

Mom drives intensely, Ginny riding shotgun, leaning over nervously to check her mom's speedometer.

GINNY

Slow down, mom, you're driving like a psycho...

MOM

I just want to get home, alright?

Mom sees a stop sign up ahead, speeds through. The patrol car behind flashes its lights.

GINNY

Mom! There's a cop like right behind you, god...

MOM

Your brother might be in trouble.

(MORE)

MOM (CONT'D)

(beat)

And I know this is hard for you to understand at your age, but try, just for a minute to think about someone other than yourself.

Ginny looks at her mom, finally showing some sympathy.

GINNY

Look, he's probably okay.

MOM

I hope you're right.

Mom continues to step on it.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Stanley flops over onto his back, stares up at the ceiling, struggling to breathe, as the pain of the gunshot hits home.

He looks down at his chest to the small hole near his collarbone, steadily turning his shirt red, expanding out in a circle.

The Prowler gloats over him, barely able to stand.

PROWLER

Tag. You're it.

Stan flips his body over, starts to crawl away, whimpering and slow.

We see the Prowler's POV blurring, groggy, going DOUBLE.

He squints, takes aim once again.

PROWLER (CONT'D)

That's not how the game works, Stan.

BLAM-BLAM!

The Prowler's arm sways as he fires off another couple shots hitting the floor, the wall.

PROWLER (CONT'D)

There's two of you and only one of me... that's not fair.

Stan makes it to the bottom of the staircase.

We see Stan's POV, fading quickly, looking up what now appears to be a GIANT STAIRCASE with many large stairs.

He slowly and painfully crawls his way up.

PROWLER (CONT'D)
Here's the thing, Stan... my blood
is everywhere.

The Prowler limps after him.

PROWLER (CONT'D)
That's a lot of evidence. Normally I
like to run a tighter ship than this.

Stan painfully pulls himself up each stair. The Prowler follows, looming over him like a giant.

PROWLER (CONT'D)
That means I'm gonna have to move
cities. And man do I hate moving.

Stan hauls his bloody body over the top stair.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Stan flops his legs over, dragging himself down the hallway, a trail of blood left from his wound.

We see Stanley's POV again, an impossibly large and foreboding version of the hallway with what seems like an insurmountable distance between him and the parents' room.

The Prowler takes his time following, amused that the kid still has some fight left in him.

PROWLER
Some of the stuff you did to me
tonight... these scars are not easily
fixed, or explained away, you know?

Stanley glances back. From his POV, the Prowler looks huge, invincible.

He shakes off the hallucination, keeps pulling towards his parents' room.

PROWLER (CONT'D)
You probably think I like killing
kids, right? Well, that's not really
my thing.

The Prowler leans against the wall to steady himself.

PROWLER (CONT'D)
But your sister, and mom... that's
right up my alley. So, I'm going to
make you a promise, Stan my boy.

He pauses to make his point, feeling this is important to articulate properly.

PROWLER (CONT'D)

After I watch you bleed out, or shoot you in the head or what have you, I promise that I'm going to come back here. One night when they're all asleep, snug in their beds, and all of this is a distant nightmare.

Stan makes it to just outside the bedroom door, completely exhausted.

PROWLER (CONT'D)

I'm going to ruin your family, Stan. They're going to suffer. I'm going to really enjoy it. And I want you to know that it's your fault.

Stan musters all the fight he can, continues to drag himself, determined.

INT. PARENTS' BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Stan fights through the pain, claws his way under the bed. The Prowler steps into the doorway.

PROWLER

You made this personal, Stan. Who knows... maybe deep down, you're just like me.

Stan waits, his vision blurred, trying not to pass out. The giant feet of the Prowler stride into the room.

PROWLER (CONT'D)

Still think you're safe under mommy and daddy's bed? The real monster's out here, Stan. Coming to get you...

Stanley covers his eyes as the Prowler reaches for the light switch, hits it--

Pffffttt-- BANG-SMASH!!

A brilliant flash of light as the bomb lightbulb EXPLODES. Fragments of glass and metal fly everywhere.

The Prowler is knocked into the wall, falls to the ground. He drops the gun, writhing in pain. Hair pins embedded in his skin, including one fragment implanted in his eyeball.

PROWLER (CONT'D)

RAAAAAAAAAAHH!

Stan seizes the moment, a surge of adrenaline. He crawls out from the bed, hobbles as fast as his legs will carry him for the door.

The Prowler swings wildly, grabbing at Stan--

He manages to get his hand near the bullet-hole in Stan's chest, presses his thumb into it.

STANLEY

Ahhhh!

Stan tries to push back on the Prowler's arm, but he's too strong. He kicks desperately, trying to connect--

The Prowler lifts Stanley off the ground. One of Stan's feet finds the Prowler's lawnmower cuts, rips it open further.

PROWLER

Gah!

The Prowler is forced to let go, dropping Stan.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Stanley flees, holding his wound. The Prowler bursts out of the room behind him, in pursuit.

Stan nearly makes it to the stairway when--

The Prowler snatches him by the collar, throwing him against the wall.

His grimy smile widens as he wraps his hands around Stan's neck, trying to choke the life out of him. Stanley attempts to pry the man's arms away from his throat, but he's no match. He reaches for the Prowler's face--

Finding the hairpin sticking out of the Prowler's eye, Stan JAMS HIS THUMB DOWN HARD. The Prowler retracts in pain, loosens his grasp.

Stan pushes by him, crawls to the top of the stairway. The Prowler reaches out, grabs his leg.

The two engage in an uncoordinated schoolyard wrestling match to the death, grappling with their last ounces of strength. The Prowler ends up with his back to the stair railing.

Both nearly spent, they suddenly see the reflection of headlights on the wall, the sound of a car pulling into the driveway.

The Prowler and Stan look at each other. A smug expression on the Prowler's face. This is it.

The Prowler forces himself up, tries to get down the stairway.

Suddenly Stan charges him, throwing his weight into the Prowler. The two crash through the railing and fall--

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

We stay on Stan in midair. Although he's endured incredible pain, he seems oddly at peace.

CRASH--SCHINK! The Prowler's body lands on the coffee table, right where the skating trophy was left-- the little gold figure tears through his chest.

THUD. Stan lands hard on the carpet. He breathes... in and out... time slowing down.

He manages to turn his head to see his adversary. The Prowler lies several feet from him, heart impaled.

Stan tries to get up, but is too weak to move.

With nothing left, he closes his eyes. The front door opens, blue and red flashes of light reflect off Stan's face.

FADE TO BLACK

Nothing.

Then--

We hear the beeps of a heart monitor.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Fade in to Stan's POV, a big white bed in front of him in a stale room.

He's safe.

Sitting nearby is his Mom, holding his hand, an expression on her face that's equal parts relief and guilt. His sister Ginny sits a bit further back - she's been crying, but has since dried her tears.

Stan instinctively flails, breathing hard. Mom places a reassuring hand on his shoulder.

MOM

Stan, it's okay, we're here.

We see the damage on Stan: cuts and bruises, capillaries burst in one of his eyes, his wrist in a cast, and a large bandage covering over his chest and back where the bullet went through.

STANLEY

Thirsty...

MOM

Here you go, kiddo.

Mom gives him a juice box to sip on. Sister looks on, insecure with all this pent up emotion.

MOM (CONT'D)

Is there something you want to tell your brother?

GINNY

I'm glad you're not dead, Stan.

MOM

Gin, go tell the nurse that he's awake, please.

GINNY

Alright, I'm going...

Ginny pats Stan on the leg, genuinely happy.

GINNY (CONT'D)

You're still a creep.

Stan manages a smile at her and she exits.

MOM

We were lucky to get home when we did... thank god you're alright.

STANLEY

Is he gone...?

Stan's eyes well up with tears. Mom hugs him.

MOM

Yes, baby. Nobody's going to hurt you ever again. They'll have to go through me.

Stan nods into her shoulder. She strokes his hair.

DAD (O.S.)

There he is...

DAD enters. He's late-thirties, wearing a white collared shirt and patterned tie. He sets down a couple cups of coffee.

STANLEY

Hey, Dad.

Dad crosses, full of concern.

MOM
Your father drove all night from the
conference right after he got off
the phone with me.

DAD
How you feeling, big guy?

STANLEY
I'm okay.

DAD
You gave us a pretty good scare there.

STANLEY
I'm sorry...

MOM
It's not your fault.

DAD
It's alright, we don't need to talk
about anything now. All that matters
is you're safe, and we're all
together. You just take it easy.

Dad gives Stan a firm squeeze on the shoulder.

MOM
We should let him rest.

DAD
Back in a bit, bud.

The parents take their coffees into the hall, talking in
hushed tones.

Stan looks out the window, stares, lost in thought.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

A modest rural hospital, days later. The winter months are
close and fall is fading.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Stan is mostly healed, at least physically. The police Chief
goes through some questions with a pad and pencil.

CHIEF
And as per your statement, the death
of the home invader due to a fall
was ultimately accidental?

STANLEY

Yes.

CHIEF

And that his primary motivation for entering the property was the belief that you had witnessed a crime, being the, uh, altercation involving Ms. Hudspeth across the street?

STANLEY

Yeah.

CHIEF

And you believe you may have seen two suspects at that location, later hearing them in conversation?

STANLEY

Yes.

CHIEF

And was the suspect in your house known to you or anyone in your family?

Stan thinks for a beat.

STANLEY

No.

Chief reads the boy for a reaction, shrugs.

CHIEF

Alright, thanks for speaking with us, Stanley. You've been through a lot, and I'm sorry to bother you, just part of the job.

Stan nods. The Chief smiles at him, exits the room where Stan's Dad is hovering.

The Chief and Dad step out into the hallway, leaving the door open a few inches. Stan watches, curious, strains to hear them.

CHIEF (CONT'D)

Apparently this guy's been active in the area for the last ten years. A dozen victims that we know about.

DAD

Really? That's scary stuff.

CHIEF

And typically these weirdos work alone, exclusively.

DAD

Yeah, I think I read an article about that.

CHIEF

Sometimes kids... they see things when they're scared that just aren't there.

DAD

Tell me about it.

CHIEF

His main objective was obviously the murder of Ms. Hudspeth across the street, and when the boy interrupted he simply followed him home--

Dad nods along as a NURSE enters, putting on gloves.

NURSE

Alright, let's change that dressing.

She shuts the door.

Stan sees the Chief and his Dad still in conversation through the little observation window. His Dad charms the Chief, shakes his hand.

INT. INT/EXT. STATION WAGON - DAY

Stanley, patched up, stares out the window as Mom drives him home.

They look at each other. She smiles and he gives her a smile back, then looks back out the window, worried.

INT. DINING ROOM - EVENING

Stan sits at the dinner table, eyes downcast.

Ginny finishes setting the table as Mom and Dad bring in the serving dishes.

Everyone sits, start serving themselves, making small talk that we can't hear. His Mom shovels some casserole onto Stan's plate, asks Ginny about her day.

Push in on Stan as the family laughs and jokes around him, everything feels empty.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - LATER

We can see in the background the kitchen downstairs where an old song plays on the radio as his parents do the dishes, Dad washes and Mom dries. Stan sits on the top step, lost in thought.

Dad playfully tosses a dish in Mom's direction, she catches it, giggles. Stan doesn't react.

DAD
See? I miss this.

Mom continues putting away the glasses, gives him a noncommittal grin.

DAD (CONT'D)
Don't you?

MOM
Maybe.

Stan's eye is caught by the off-color paint patch in the wall where the bullet hole hit, then sees the dark brown stain on the floor where the Prowler bled to death. He shifts his weight.

DAD
Why don't I stay here tonight?

MOM
I don't think he's ready for that, I don't want to confuse them.

DAD
Alright, alright. But maybe all of this is a sign we should... try again.

MOM
We'll see.

She goes back to putting dishes away, drawing her boundaries yet falling under his spell.

GINNY (O.S.)
Hey.

Stan turns to see his sister watching him eavesdrop, uncharacteristically non-judgemental.

She approaches, he scoots over so she can sit beside him.

Ginny notices their parents flirting, dancing to the music in the kitchen.

GINNY (CONT'D)

At least someone is lightening up a little around here.

She turns, notices his stare, despondent. Ginny ruffles Stan's hair. He bats her hand away, they both smile.

GINNY (CONT'D)

Com'on, let's get you ready for bed.

They get up.

INT. UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Stan and Ginny stand side-by-side brushing their teeth. They are thorough, Stan even seems to be counting in his head.

They both go to spit at the same time, almost bump heads, giggle.

INT. STANLEY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The place is cleaned up, but still clear evidence of the aftermath from the home invasion, plywood over the hole in Stan's floor, etc.

Stanley waits patiently as Mom applies a fresh bandage to his chest.

MOM

And arms...

Stan puts out his arms, she puts on his pajama shirt.

MOM (CONT'D)

There we go. We've got it down to a science.

Mom pulls back the bed covers and Stan climbs in. Dad enters, sets a glass of water on the bedside table.

DAD

If you need anything in the night, don't hesitate. Your mom is just down the hall, and I'm only a phone call away, okay?

STANLEY

Thanks, guys.

Mom kisses him on the cheek, Dad turns off the light, they start to exit.

STANLEY (CONT'D)

Mom...

She stops.

MOM

Yes?

STANLEY

Can you leave that on...

She understands, reaches down and plugs in his nightlight.

MOM

Good night, baby.

The parents retreat into the hall, leaving Stan alone, not tired at all. He hears them talking, the door open a crack.

DAD

I think he's fine, just needs some time. That's what the doctors said.

MOM

He's not fine, I can tell.

DAD

Well, what do you want to do? We already send him to the speech therapist, now we have to add a shrink to that too?

MOM

Don't you dare put a price on our son's health.

Dad becomes conscious that the door is still open.

DAD

Let's not lose our heads here.

Stan's eyes go wide at the familiar phrase. His dad reaches out to close the door and Stan notices that his RIGHT HAND IS BANDAGED.

FLASHBACK TO:

Stanley hiding in the kitchen earlier, watching the Prowlers argue amongst themselves.

OTHER PROWLER

Let's not lose our heads here.

Stan slams the back door, on the Other Prowler's right hand. He yells.

BACK TO SCENE

The same perspective on the parents argument.

His Dad slowly closes the door with his injured hand, leaving Stan alone in the darkness.

INT/EXT. SCHOOL BUS - DAY

Stan gazes out the window, silent. Matt sits next to him, chatting away.

MATT

So that's the thing about the Mothman,
is you never know when he's going to
show up, but when he does, something
bad is about to happen, guaranteed.

Matt flips through the pages, Stan stares through him, uninterested.

MATT (CONT'D)

Like there was this bridge-collapse
in Brazil, and dozens of witnesses
claim there was a guy with wings
showing up all over.

STANLEY

Uh-huh.

Matt tries a different tactic.

MATT

Hey, maybe next weekend we can have
a sleepover at my house. Wanna?

Before Stan can respond, Dustin and Celina peek over the seat in front of them.

DUSTIN

My mom said you almost died.

Stan stares at him.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)

Well? What happened?

CELINA

Aren't you gonna say anything?

STANLEY

Piss off.

Dustin and Celina are taken aback by his sudden resolve. They slink back down.

Matt looks to Stanley, impressed, then continues on his with his one-sided ramblings. Stan looks on, despondent.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Stanley sits in class, the notebook in front of him uncharacteristically doodle-free.

TEACHER

Alright, we've made it most of the way through this pantheon of Olympus. Now can someone name a demi-god?
(then)
Stanley?

STANLEY

Heracles.

TEACHER

Yes, that's a good one. Nowadays he even has his own cartoon. Heracles...

Stan tries to stay focused, the teacher drones on.

INT. COUNSELOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Stanley sits in the comfy chair, completely at ease with himself. Laurie leads him through a different book of other fables and children's nursery rhymes.

LAURIE

Jack be nimble. Jack be quick. Jack jumped over the what?

STANLEY

Jumped over the candlestick.

Laurie gives him an M&M, flips ahead.

LAURIE

Excellent.
(then)
Goldilocks tried three bowls of porridge. The first was too hot, the second was too cold, the third was--

STANLEY

The third bowl was just right.

Laurie hands over another chocolate.

LAURIE

Awesome! Okay, lets try one that's a little tougher.

She flips the page to the back of the book, slows her speech.

LAURIE (CONT'D)
 Red Riding hood visits her grandma
 and says 'my what big teeth you have'.
 And Grandma says...

STANLEY
 The better to eat you with, my dear.

LAURIE
 Yeah, that's right. Uh, great work,
 Stanley! You're getting so good.

She sets down the book.

LAURIE (CONT'D)
 I think you earned a little something
 extra today.

Laurie hands him the bag of M&M's. Stan munches on the candy.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

Kids rush for the bus. Behind them Stan takes his time, hands
 in his pockets.

DAD (O.S.)
 Hey, kiddo.

He looks up and sees his Dad leaning against his car in the
 parking lot, casually waiting for him.

DAD (CONT'D)
 Got off early so I thought we'd grab
 a cone.

Stan hesitates.

His Dad opens the door.

DAD (CONT'D)
 Com'on. It'll be fun.

Dad puts his arm around the boy, leads him to the car.

INT. DAIRY QUEEN - DAY

They sit in silence near the classic bubble-windows of the
 DQ. Stan's half-melted ice cream cone dangles precariously.

His Dad sits across from him, eating his cone.

DAD

As you get older, you're gonna realize that being a man means taking responsibility for your actions.

Stan doesn't look at him.

DAD (CONT'D)

And that can mean a lot of things. Sometimes it means keeping secrets. You know how to keep a secret, don't you, Stan?

Stan nods.

DAD (CONT'D)

For example, if you ever did something wrong, but you knew telling someone else about it would only make things worse, you'd keep it to yourself, wouldn't you?

Stan stares, his ice cream drips.

DAD (CONT'D)

Because that'd be the right thing to do.

(then)

How's that cone?

STANLEY

It's good.

DAD

Mine's falling apart. Goddamn place... not how it used to be. Gimme a minute.

Stan watches as his dad approaches a CLERK.

DAD (CONT'D)

Hey, what are you guys trying to pull here? Look at this thing, it's a fucking mess. Do you want to lose a customer?

CLERK

Uh, no sir.

DAD

I thought not. Get your shit together. Ridiculous. Can I get a new one or do I need to talk to your manager?

Stan watches as his Dad chews out the Clerk unnecessarily. After a beat, Dad returns with a fresh cone.

DAD (CONT'D)

This fucking place...

(then)

Anyway, I know you've been through a lot this year, and it's been rough on all of us. Your sister and I, and your mom especially. She's worried sick about you, and the effect this has all had on us as a family.

Stan's attention drifts, wanting out of this conversation.

DAD (CONT'D)

Are you listening, Stanley? This is important.

STANLEY

Yeah.

DAD

Look at me.

Stanley looks up at his father.

DAD (CONT'D)

I'm proud of you. You're tough. You're a survivor. You're practically a grown up now. And being a grown up is about protecting those close to you.

Stan stares.

DAD (CONT'D)

I know you're very confused about what happened... that's natural. But it's better for everyone if you keep it to yourself. Forever. Just like a secret. You get me?

Stan nods, reluctantly.

DAD (CONT'D)

Good. I want you to know that I'm always going to be around. I'm always watching. Because I'm your father, and I'll do whatever it takes to keep this family together.

(then)

Understand?

Stan finally takes a lick of his ice cream.

STANLEY

Yeah.

Stan's dad seems satisfied with the talk.

DAD

Hey, I got us tickets to the drive
in this weekend. It looks really far
out, I think you're going to like
it.

He puts down two tickets that say "CHUD II" down on the table,
slides them toward Stan.

DAD (CONT'D)

My treat. Don't tell your mother.

STANLEY

C-cool. Thanks.

DAD

Did you just stutter? Thought that
was fixed.

STANLEY

Me too.

INT. LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Dad enters with Stan in tow. We see the place has been patched
up, new windows, carpet, etc.

DAD

We're back!

MOM (O.S.)

How was your day?

Mom enters, overly attentive.

DAD

Great. We got some ice cream on the
way home. Just guy time, y'know.

She takes Stan's book-bag and hangs it up carefully.

STANLEY

Mom, do you want me to clean the
gutters?

MOM

Well, that's a generous offer Stan,
do you feel up to it?

He shrugs.

DAD

No, I'll take care of it.

Dad messes up Stan's hair, similar to Ginny but a parody of affection, heads back outside.

Stan follows his mom.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

A knife slices through veggies, Mom tosses them into the simmering pot on the hot stove. Stan enters and watches her.

MOM

Did you have a good time at school today?

STANLEY

Yeah.

MOM

How did it go with Dr. Clausen?

STANLEY

Good.

She turns to look at him, sees something in his expression that concerns her.

MOM

Everything okay?

Stan thinks long and hard about it.

STANLEY

Yep.

His mom pulls up a chair, hunkers down to talk to him.

MOM

You know you can tell me anything, right?

STANLEY

I know.

MOM

Okay then. What's gotten into you?

Stanley hesitates. He looks at her, so genuine and empathetic. Stan desperately wants to reach out. He pours over her face for a sign that he should blurt something out... but can't quite bring himself to say anything.

STANLEY

Nothing. I'm fine.

MOM

Well, whenever you're ready.

STANLEY

Maybe, when I'm older.

Mom smiles and goes back to chopping.

MOM

This is about a girl, isn't it?

Stanley rolls with it.

STANLEY

Mom...

MOM

Come on, tell me about her.

Stan helps his mom with the veggies.

EXT. ROOFTOP - LATER

Stanley's Dad balances precariously on the fully-extended ladder, leaning outside the high part of the attic window.

The dead leaves are now abundant, mixed with twigs and dirt into a mulch. Dad curses to himself, scooping handfuls into a garbage bag.

He ties the bag, tosses it below, pulls out another but startles when he sees Stanley, standing at the window in front of him.

DAD

Whoa, hey there buddy. You scared me.

He glances over his shoulder toward the ground, a steep drop with the fence below.

DAD (CONT'D)

Look, I know you want to help, but I should do the high parts.

Stanley stares at him.

DAD (CONT'D)

You shouldn't be up here anyway. Very slippery. Dangerous.

Dad looks him over, he's not getting through.

DAD (CONT'D)
Why don't you go back downstairs?
I'll be in in a little bit.

Stan grabs hold of the windowsill, braces his foot up against the ladder.

DAD (CONT'D)
Stanley, what are you doing? Go inside
right now!

He ignores him, pushes firmly, the ladder sways backward.

DAD (CONT'D)
Stan...

The ladder tips over carrying Dad backward. He screams briefly but is silenced by the unforgiving THUD of the pavement.

Stanley looks down to the ground, lingers for a moment.

The wind blows softly and birds chirp. He shuts the window.

Cut to black.

The End.