THE TRIGGER EFFECT

by

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inspired by the BBC television series
"Connections," presented by

James L. Burke

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thank you,
Rosario Varela

1 EXT FOREST NIGHT 1

A bunch of coyotes GRUNT and GROWL as they rip apart a kill in a clearing in this thick forest. A legend says:

Friday

From somewhere far off the coyotes hear a noise and scatter in all directions. We follow one of them, tagging along as he bounds through the trees in his lopsided gait.

As the coyote moves through the wilderness, he passes a structure that's distinctly out of place here --

-- a heavy-duty power line pylon. The coyote keeps running, but we stick with the pylon, and start to climb it. The structure is enormous, part of a huge power station that sits in the middle of an otherwise barren spit of land, a bizarre technology island.

Coils, capacitors, dense forests of cable and wire HUM and SNAP as the current surges through them, on its way to --

CUT TO:

2 EXT OUTDOOR MALL NIGHT 2

-- an unassuming AC outlet stuck in a wall plate. An orange extension cord is plugged into one of the sockets, and from somewhere nearby comes the HUM of a power tool.

We follow along the cord as it rises and falls, pulled taut occasionally by a JANITOR using a large floor buffer in the distance. FEET pass over the cord every few seconds, successfully avoiding it.

As we pass a bar in this outdoor mall, a TRENDY GERMAN GUY gets up from a table and walks toward us. As he approaches, an UNLUCKY BLACK SHOE hooks a toe on the cord and trips its owner. The Trendy German Guy CURSES (in German).

Rising up, we see the situation. The GUY WHO TRIPPED has dumped a whole cup of coffee on the Trendy German Guy's trendy German suit.

GUY WHO TRIPPED
Oh, man, I'm sorry --

The Trendy German Guy spouts off in German, cursing and gesturing, but the Guy Who Tripped edges away from him.

GUY WHO TRIPPED (cont'd)
Don't know what you're sayin', dude, but, you know, like I said, sorry --

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED: 2

The Trendy German Guy checks his watch and hurries off, toward the street. We pull back with him as he CURSES some more, mumbling and gesturing. This place is crowded and modern; a couple people talk on cellular phones. *

The German Guy's walking fast, and preoccupied, so he doesn't see a HANDHOLDING COUPLE approaching rapidly. He SMACKS right in between them, busting their hands apart. Pissed off, he keeps walking, barely MUTTERING a German apology.

HANDHOLDING GUY spins around. Now he's pissed off.

HANDHOLDING GUY
Hey!

HANDHOLDING GIRL
Come on!

They must be late, because she grabs him by the arm and pulls him onto an escalator, headed up. We go with them. Handholding Guy keeps looking back over his shoulder, glowering as the escalator rises. His date rubs his back soothingly.

HANDHOLDING GIRL (cont'd)
He's a jerk. Forget about it.

3 EXT MOVIE THEATRE NIGHT 3

At the top of the escalators, Handholding Couple hurries to the box office, where another young couple, their double dates, is waiting for them, tickets in hand. DOUBLE DATE COUPLE smiles broadly and greets Handholding Couple by name.

But Handholding Guy, still pissed off, barely acknowledges them, just snatching the extra tickets out of Double Date Guy's hand and breezing inside, leaving Double Date Couple to follow behind them.

We stay with Double Date Couple. Now Double Date Girl is the one who's pissed off.

DOUBLE DATE GIRL
(to her date)
What is with him? *

DOUBLE DATE GUY
What?

DOUBLE DATE GIRL
Could he be any ruder?

4 INT THEATRE LOBBY NIGHT 4

The Couples come in and head for the concession counter, moving quickly. *

DOUBLE DATE GUY
Oh, he's probably just, you know -- *

DOUBLE DATE GIRL
Why do we go out with them? *

HANDHOLDING GUY
Hurry up, we're late! *

Double Date Girl waves them off.

DOUBLE DATE GIRL
(irritated)
You guys go, I'll get the stuff. *

The other three head off to the right. The Concession Counter WOMAN turns around from the popcorn machine. *

COUNTER WOMAN
Next! *

Not really looking, Double Date Girl steps up to the counter, right past an African American man in his late twenties (whose name is RAYMOND). Raymond was looking the other way too, and when he looks back, Double Date Girl has skipped in front of him. *

RAYMOND
Hey! I was waiting! *

DOUBLE DATE GIRL
(snappish)
Well, I didn't see you. *
(to the Counter Woman)
Okay, two medium popcorns -- one with no butter, one with really really light butter -- two medium diet cokes -- well, hang on, how much is a large?

Exasperated, Raymond looks at his watch and says the hell with it. He takes off to the left, headed for one of the cinemas, and we go with him. As he walks, he MUTTERS under his breath, the bad mood now passed on to him. A distinctive earring dangles from his left ear. *

He reaches the doors to a theatre and heads inside.

5 INT RAYMOND'S THEATRE NIGHT 5

RAYMOND comes into the darkened theatre. The crowd is urban, the theatre about half full, the movie already underway. Raymond picks his way down the aisle, looking for somebody, his eyes not yet adjusted to the light. *

RAYMOND
(calling out in a normal voice)
Johnny? Hey! Johnny!

He is SHUSHED, but a voice calls out from the middle: *

VOICE (o.s.)
Over here!

Raymond goes over toward the voice. He fights through an aisle and PLOPS down next to JOHNNY, same age, his friend. *

JOHNNY
(in a normal voice)
Where the fuck's the popcorn? *

RAYMOND
I'm standin' there in line, right? * And this chick walks right in front of me, blows right past me like I don't even exist, and goes to the counter. And I say, you know, hello, there's a line here -- and she basically says fuck you.

JOHNNY
What?! *

As they go on about it in loudish tones, we drift off of them and down a row, to the people sitting directly in front of them --

-- MATTHEW and ANNIE KAY, thirties, white middle class. * They're trying to watch the movie, but Johnny and Raymond are clearly audible, talking in normal speaking voices.

Forced to listen, Matt in particular is going crazy. He rolls his eyes. He squirms. He and Annie exchange a look. Finally, he leans over to Annie and whispers.

MATTHEW
This can't wait? It has to be * now?

Raymond and Johnny's conversation continues unabated. Matt rolls his eyes, in agony.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: 5

MATTHEW (cont'd)
I gotta say something. *

ANNIE
You should.

Summoning his nerve, Matt steals a quick look behind him. Raymond is closest. Matt's eyes flicker over Raymond's clothes, searching for clues to break his code. Jeans, a tee shirt -- doesn't tell him much. Matt settles for giving him * the old Half Turn Angry Glare and turns around again.

Matt looks at Annie, shrugs, and goes back to watching the movie. On screen, a truck ROARS by and Johnny exclaims:

JOHNNY
Hey, my brother's got a truck like that!

Now Annie turns and gives them the Glare. Johnny catches eyes with her, they stare for a second, then she turns back and * whispers something to Matt.

Whatever she said, Johnny thinks she said something else. * Surprised, he turns to Raymond.

JOHNNY
What did she just say?! *

Annie turns around and faces him squarely.

ANNIE
SHHHHH!

JOHNNY
Hey, fuck you. *

Annie just stares at him, surprised. She turns and looks to Matthew. He's staring at the screen, as if he hasn't heard.

But he heard. He feels Annie's gaze on him and turns around, sneaking half a glance at them. Matthew briefly catches eyes with Raymond, but he turns away without saying anything. Annie, surprised and angry, turns away as well.

JOHNNY
You're the one that should fuckin' shut up. Bitch.

The color rises in Matthew's cheeks. His jaws clench. Seconds tick away, agonizingly, and then --

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: 2 5

-- everything goes completely black. The power in the theatre abruptly goes out, killing the projector, the exit signs, anything once lit isn't now. *

Since we can't see anything, we listen extra hard, but the crowd is silent at first, just hoping for the power to come back. But it doesn't, and they start to GROAN, and then one or two OOOOH! and HOOT. *

But then, as abruptly as it left, the power returns. The projector flickers back to life, the sound of the movie crawls up to speed, and things progress as normal. *

Unnerved, Matt leans over and whispers to Annie.

MATTHEW
You want to move?

She looks at him.

ANNIE
Sure.

They get up and slide out of the row. Annie walks ahead, up the aisle. Matthew gets a couple rows past Raymond's. He stops. He looks back, over his shoulder.

Raymond, as if sensing it, looks back at him. They hold eye contact for a moment --

-- then Matt turns and walks away, up the aisle.

CUT TO:

6 EXT MOVIE THEATRE NIGHT 6

The movie's over now, and the CROWD is letting out. MATT and ANNIE come out of the theatre lobby and onto a terrace. Matt recoils at the oppressive summer night.

MATTHEW
Oh, Jesus! What, it got hotter?

ANNIE
Did you like it?

MATTHEW
Ah, more or less.

He looks over his shoulder, distracted, as they head for the escalators.

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED: 6

ANNIE
I liked it, it was scary. When she said "this is really happening?" *

MATTHEW
(another look over his shoulder)
Yeah, that was great. *

Behind him, RAYMOND and JOHNNY come out of the movie theatre and head for the escalators. Matthew sees them and swerves, changing course to head for the elevator.

ANNIE
In a hurry?

MATTHEW
Huh? No. Want to take the elevator?

She follows him. As he turns away, she looks back, at the escalators, and sees why he changed course.

Matt SLAPS the down button for the elevator. The moment he does so, we leave them and jump --

7 INSIDE THE ELEVATOR MACHINERY. 7

There is a low POWER HUM as the metal contact point on the other side of the button makes contact with a metal plate inside the panel.

A circuit closes, which flicks a relay switch on a panel of many. A signal pulses down a wire, and at the top of the elevator shaft a large stack of counterweights goes into a controlled descent, raising the elevator car.

From inside the shaft, we watch the elevator machinery tug the doors open. Matt and Annie climb in, but we don't see them, just overhear snippets of their conversation over the BUZZ and CLICK of circuits and currents they pay no attention to.

The sequence of connections plays itself out in reverse and --

8 INT PARKING GARAGE NIGHT 8

-- the elevator doors slide open. MATT and ANNIE step out and into a parking garage. He darts a look around, to see if they're alone.

ANNIE
I thought we parked on three.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED: 8

MATTHEW
No, it's here.

They walk. Unspoken words tremble in the air.

MATTHEW (cont'd)
Boy, those guys, huh?

ANNIE
Yeah.

MATTHEW
Those guys behind us.

ANNIE
I know.

Pause.

MATTHEW
You think I should have said something?

ANNIE
(she heard)
What?

He puts his arm around her.

MATTHEW
Should I go back in there? *

She shrugs. *

MATTHEW (cont'd) *
Well, they're probably gone by now. *

ANNIE
I'm almost positive we're on three.

She walks off, ahead of him. He stares after her.

CUT TO:

9 THRU 10 OMITTED 9 THRU 10

11 EXT CUL-DE-SAC NIGHT 11

A middle class street on the verge of the suburbs. The street's short, a cul-de-sac with three houses on each side and two at the end.

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED: 11

Matt and Annie's car turns onto the block and pulls into the driveway of the last house on the left.

A central air conditioner HUMS outside the living room window, a tag on the front says "Environmental Control Systems."

11A INT FOYER NIGHT 11A

A door from the garage opens into the foyer and an alarm panel in the wall starts to BEEP. MATT and ANNIE come in. Their house is comfortable, not opulent.

A baby can be heard crying from upstairs.

ANNIE
Oh drag.

She heads up. Matt punches in the alarm code, silencing it.

12 INT KITCHEN NIGHT 12

There are ladders, drop cloths, and other tools around the kitchen, someone is working on the cabinets. MATT goes to one of them and opens it. A photo strip, one of those black and white one you have taken in a dollar photo booth, is taped to the cabinet door. Matt, Annie, and their baby are captured in the strip, grinning into the camera. *

The cabinet door nearly falls off in Matt's hand, held only by the hinge at the bottom. He curses as he catches it and replaces it gently. He MUTTERS as he takes a glass from the cupboard. *

MATTHEW
Money well spent.

AT THE WATER JUG,

the big plastic bottle GLUGS as water tumbles into Matt's glass.

13 INT BABY'S ROOM NIGHT 13

ANNIE is already there with DEBBIE, seventeen. She has SARAH, a ten or eleven month old baby, in her arms when MATTHEW comes in. Sarah is crying.

ANNIE
(to Matthew)
She has a fever, she's burning up. Feel her. You poor thing. Do you feel bad? Huh?
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED: 13

ANNIE (cont'd)
(nods to the dresser)
The thermometer's in the second drawer.

Matt goes to get it.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED: 2 13

ANNIE (cont'd)
We should call Dr. Bischel.

MATTHEW
How much do we owe you, Debbie?

DEBBIE
(tip of her tongue)
Thirty-one fifty.

ANNIE
She's really upset. Maybe it's another ear infection.

MATTHEW
I'll ask him for the pink stuff.

CUT TO:

14 INT BEDROOM NIGHT 14

MATT hangs up their bedroom phone. ANNIE pokes her head out of the bathroom, unbuttoning her blouse. *

MATTHEW
One guess what he said.

ANNIE
Not to worry unless it's over a hundred and three and he'll phone in a prescription in the morning.

MATTHEW
You got it.

ANNIE
Same thing he always says.

MATTHEW
He mentioned that too.

Matthew starts to get undressed.

ANNIE
He actually said that?

MATTHEW
Why does he have to make us feel like idiots?

ANNIE
Did you tell him?

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED: 14

MATTHEW
(at the dresser)
Have you seen my black watch? It's missing like a week now.

ANNIE
See what I'm saying? Lately?

MATTHEW
I must have left it in New York.

ANNIE
(unconvinced)
Um hm.

MATTHEW
What do you want me to do, start accusing the world, pointing fingers, conducting strip searches?

ANNIE
Things have been missing lately. Right?

MATTHEW
That's kind of a sweeping statement.

ANNIE
And there have been a lot of workmen in the house? Right? I'm not making any accusations, but isn't that true?

MATTHEW
I'll say this -- we may have mislaid some things.

ANNIE
Oh, go run for Congress.

She goes back into the bathroom. Matt sits on the edge of the bed, listlessly takes off his shoes, and sits back against the pillows. He picks up a magazine off the night table and flips through it.

MATTHEW
Don't you love me, baby?

Annie reappears in the doorway to the bathroom, getting undressed. Underneath her fairly conservative clothes, she's * wearing some wicked lingerie.

ANNIE
No. Not for years.

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED: 2 14

Behind the magazine, he doesn't notice her or what she's wearing.

MATTHEW
Tell me you love me.

Noticing him not noticing, Annie disrobes further, running her fingernails slowly across one breast.

ANNIE
Why should I?

MATTHEW
Because I want to hear it.

ANNIE
Hang on, I'm thinking.

MATTHEW
(still behind the magazine)
You're evil. Profoundly evil.

ANNIE
No, I'm a nice girl now.

MATTHEW
Yeah, where's the old wild child?

ANNIE
I wonder.

Finally, he turns a page in the magazine and notices her.

MATTHEW
Oh. Hey. C'mere. Lay down a second.

But the easy moment that might have been there is kind of labored and forced now. She just looks at him. He looks back, and neither of them speaks for a moment.

MATTHEW (cont'd)
Say something.

But from the other room, Sarah starts to cry. They both hold * out a fist.

MATTHEW (cont'd)
One -- two -- three.

On three, Matt holds out two fingers, Annie holds her hand out flat. Scissors cuts paper -- he wins.

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED: 3 14

She sighs and heads for the baby. Matt lays back, reaches over to the light, and flicks the switch.

15 INSIDE THE LIGHT BULB, 15

the brilliant blue bolt of energy that arcs between the wavering filaments abruptly FIZZES out.

16 INT SARAH'S ROOM NIGHT 16

SARAH, the baby, so tired she can hardly keep her eyes open, sits in ANNIE's lap in a chair in her bedroom. ANNIE reads soothingly from a children's book by the pale light of a nightlight.

ANNIE
"That very night, in Max's room, a forest grew -- and grew -- and grew until his ceiling hung with vines and the walls became the world all around. And an ocean tumbled by with a private boat for Max -- "

CUT TO:

17 EXT CUL-DE-SAC NIGHT 17

Night is taking over, only a few lights on in the Kays' house. ANNIE'S VOICE continues over, still reading.

ANNIE (o.s.)
" -- and he sailed off, through night and day, and in and out of weeks, and almost over a year -- "

A racoon waddles across the driveway, setting off a motion sensor light above their garage. The racoon looks up at it. We look up too, rising high above the house.

The skyline of the city is visible in the distance now, its glow seeming to waver in the night heat.

ANNIE (o.s.)
" -- to where the wild things are."

Suddenly, as if someone reached out and threw a switch --

-- <u>the skyline shuts off</u>.

Every light in every building goes black, and on this dark night, that means the whole city just vanishes from our view.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED: 17

In rapid succession, the lights of every intervening building between the city and the cul-de-sac shut off as well, crashing toward us like a wave until finally the streetlight in the foreground unceremoniously blackens with a quiet little ZZZT.

ON THE SIDE OF THE HOUSE,

the air conditioner shuts off, WHIRRING to a stop.

CUT TO:

18 INT BEDROOM NIGHT 18

A red light in an alarm panel, next to the word "Armed," abruptly goes out. The TV shuts off too, as does everything else in MATT and ANNIE's bedroom. In bed, they GROAN.

MATTHEW
Oh, God. Now what?

He starts to get up.

ANNIE
Wait. Don't move. It either comes back on right away, or not at all.

They lie still for a moment, staring at the dark. Finally:

MATTHEW
Shit.

He gets out of bed.

ANNIE
Check the circuit breakers, maybe it's just us.

MATTHEW
(at the window)
It's not just us.

ANNIE
Blackout! Fun!

He looks at her.

MATTHEW
Hysterical.

CUT TO:

19 EXT HOUSE NIGHT 19

Sure is dark out. MATT comes outside, shining a flashlight this way and that. He shines it up at the streetlight. Yep, it's out all right.

From across the street, he sees another flashlight, this one extremely powerful, a halogen beam, in his neighbor's yard. Matt wanders into the street.

MATTHEW
Steph? That you?

The beam turns and shines in his face, blinding him.

STEPH
(the voice behind the light)
Matt?

Matthew winces, eyes stung by the light, and waves his hands at it. The Neighbor redirects it and we get a look at STEPH, fortyish, bearlike, wearing sweat pants and a football sweatshirt. He walks with the only slightly unsteady gait of a practiced drinker.

STEPH (cont'd)
Sorry.

MATTHEW
So whaddya make of this?

STEPH
(shining the light back in Matt's eyes)
Blackout.

MATTHEW
Hey. You mind?

STEPH
Got any idea what caused it?

Steph shines his flashlight back and forth over Matt's house. Matt looks over his shoulder, watching the investigation.

MATTHEW
Seemed like a storm was coming, maybe it was that.

STEPH
Yeah, or Raji using those weird power tools again.

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED: 19

He shines his light on a neighbor's house accusingly. From down the street, another flashlight makes its uncertain way toward them. Steph notices.

STEPH (cont'd)
Ah Christ, here comes Chuckles. *

Matthew looks. MR. SCHAEFER, sixtyish, hurries toward them in his bathrobe. Mr. Schaefer never gets too close, and he never turns fully toward you, as if he's reluctant to commit to actually being present.

MRS. SCHAEFER lurks ten yards behind him, clutching her robe at her neck.

MATTHEW
How are you, Mr. Schaefer?

MR. SCHAEFER
The power is out.

STEPH
Geez, I hadn't noticed. We were just trying out our new flashlights.

MR. SCHAEFER
Did one of you call it in?

MATTHEW
I think they probably know.

MR. SCHAEFER
Well, one of you should call it in.

He turns and heads back the way he came.

STEPH
Don't get involved, Al, you never know what kind of list you'll end up on!

Matt looks at him and Steph laughs. Matt recoils a little at Steph's breath and waves his hand in the air as he turns to head back inside.

MATTHEW
Have one for me.

STEPH
Always do!

Steph heads for his own house, which we now notice has a huge satellite dish parked in the middle of the front lawn.

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED: 2 19

STEPH (cont'd)
Sunday? Football? *

MATTHEW
You bet. *

STEPH
Don't forget to make your picks. *

MATTHEW *
Yeah, yeah. *

STEPH *
I mean it. *

MATTHEW *
All right. *

Steph turns back, shining his flashlight under his chin in a spooky way. * *

STEPH *
Lock your doors and windows. *

Matthew laughs. *

CUT TO:

20 INT BEDROOM DAY 20

It's morning now and a piercing SHRIEK from off screen blasts MATT's eyes open. He squints at the digital clock on the nightstand, but its face is still dead. Over the blank face, another legend:

Saturday

ANNIE hurries into the bedroom, carrying SARAH, who is crying desperately.

ANNIE
She's worse.

MATTHEW
(not fully awake)
What?

ANNIE
Her fever, I swear to God, it's worse, feel her.

She sits on the edge of the bed, next to him, and he feels his daughter's forehead.

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED: 20

MATTHEW
The power's still out?

ANNIE
It has to be an ear infection, she only wigs out like this from an ear infection. Will you please call the doctor?

He grabs the cordless phone from the night table, but it is, of course, dead.

21 INT KITCHEN DAY 21

MATT, dressed in whatever he threw on, snaps up the kitchen phone, the older kind you don't have to plug in. But when he raises the receiver to his ear, all he hears is a rapid busy signal. *

He hangs up and tries again. Same result.

ANNIE comes in with SARAH, trying to soothe her. Matt grabs his jacket off a chair.

MATTHEW
I'll go get the pink stuff.

ANNIE
Did you talk to him?

MATTHEW
Phones are all tied up. I'll pick up the prescription and be back in twenty minutes.

CUT TO:

22 OMITTED 22

23 EXT HOUSE DAY 23

MATT comes out of the house, car keys in hand. He happens to look across the street, to Steph's house. Steph's car is gone and a metal gate has been hastily rigged and closed in front of the front door. Curtains are drawn in front of all the windows. Matt shakes his head.

23A INT MATT'S CAR DAY 23A *

MATT gets in his car and slams the door. He starts it and immediately turns on the radio. STATIC blasts from the speakers. He punches a couple of preset buttons. More static. He hits the "SEEK" button. The digital display whirs up and down the dial, searching for a signal. *

It finds none. *

CUT TO:

24 OMITTED 24

25 INT DRUGSTORE DAY 25

MATT comes into the drugstore. The lines are long at the checkstands, where of course the power is out. A GUY at the front substitutes for the public address system.

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED: 25

GUY
Due to the power outage, we cannot accept credit cards, ATM cards, or personal checks. Please use the smallest bills you have or be patient as our cashiers try to make change --

BACK AT THE PHARMACY COUNTER,

Matt, at the front of a line, is dealing with a beleaguered PHARMACIST.

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED: 25

MATTHEW
He said he'd call it in this morning.

PHARMACIST
Circuits are busy. He'll keep trying, why don't you come back in a couple hours.

MATTHEW
I know what it is, it's amoxicillin, you know, in the pink liquid? With the little eye dropper? For an ear infection? It works great, it's really fast, he's prescribed it for her before.

PHARMACIST
Maybe you have a refill left on an old prescription.

MATTHEW
Can you check the computer?

PHARMACIST
No.

MATTHEW
I tell you what, if you can just let me have it I'll bring the prescription in when the power's back on.

PHARMACIST
I can't do that, sir. I could lose my license.

MATTHEW
Oh, I understand, I understand, I'm not saying that. I'm just --

PHARMACIST
There are other people waiting.

MATTHEW
Did you ever see a baby with an ear infection? It's very painful, they try to put their whole fist in their ear. Breaks your heart.

PHARMACIST
(unmoved)
Uh huh.

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED: 2 25

MATTHEW
Look, let's -- we're not talking about morphine, okay, it's penicillin.

PHARMACIST
What do you want me to do? I'm not a physician, I can't prescribe drugs. The law is the law.

MATTHEW
Yeah, but you know me.

PHARMACIST
I don't know you.

MATTHEW
What do you mean, you don't know me?

PHARMACIST
I mean I don't know you. You ask me who you are, I don't know.

MATTHEW
I've been coming here since we moved here -- over a year I've been coming here!

PHARMACIST
What do you want me to tell you?

MATTHEW
I've watched you fill this exact same prescription three times, it's in a drawer five feet away from you! How hard can it be?

The line behind him is growing impatient. The Pharmacist gets frosty.

PHARMACIST
You're very insulting.

MATTHEW
I'm not insulting you.

PHARMACIST
That's not for you to decide. That's my call, and I say I'm insulted.

MATTHEW
I apologize.

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED: 4 25

PHARMACIST
I don't like you.

MATTHEW
You don't like me?

PHARMACIST
Uh uh.

MATTHEW
I'm not trying to start a fight.

PHARMACIST
Well, lucky me.

MATTHEW
What is your problem?

PHARMACIST
Step out of the line.

MATTHEW
No! I will not go home to a sick child without the medicine she needs because of one asshole who doesn't have the -- the --

He trails off, realizing he's gone too far. They stare each other down for a moment. The Pharmacist gestures for Matt to lean in closer. He does.

PHARMACIST
Tell you what. You turn around and get your skinny little butt out of here or I'll push your face through the other side of your head. *

Matt notices the Pharmacist's forearms for the first time. They're like four by fours.

After another moment of eye contact --

-- Matt turns and leaves.

CUT TO:

26 OMITTED 26

27 INT KITCHEN DAY 27

MATTHEW BANGS through the kitchen door of his house. He goes straight to the phone, picks it up, and gets the same rapid busy signal. He SLAMS it down. * *

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED: 27

ANNIE, down the hall, hears him over the continued cries of SARAH.

ANNIE
Thank God!

She heads toward him, down the hallway, carrying the still shrieking baby.

ANNIE (cont'd)
Look at her, she's covered in sweat. I hope you made sure to get the liquid.

Matt just stands there, frozen, as she approaches him. She extends her free hand as she draws close to him, and he looks down at her empty right palm.

MATTHEW
They wouldn't give it to me.

ANNIE
What?

MATTHEW
The idiot pharmacist, I'm telling you, I got into a huge fight with the guy, but Bischel never got through with the prescription and legally they can't give --

ANNIE
Oh, God.

MATTHEW
-- legally, they can't dispense without a -- you know, it's the law, I was, I was -- do you know why the pharmacist doesn't like me?

ANNIE
She's hysterical, Matt.

She is, in fact. Their voices grow progressively louder over the baby's HOWLS.

MATTHEW
Look, the phone'll probably be working again in --

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED: 2 27

ANNIE
You don't know that. We don't know anything right now, certainly not how long it'll take for things to get back to normal. I tried the car radio and all I got was static.

MATTHEW
I know. *

ANNIE
All over the dial.

MATTHEW
I know. Let's give her a cold * bath, like Bischel said --

ANNIE
I tried that, what do you think I've been doing here all this time? Here.

She hands him the baby, which makes things worse -- her cries grow louder. Annie goes to the counter and picks up the car keys.

MATTHEW
What are you doing?

ANNIE
I'll take care of it.

MATTHEW
No.

He hands the baby back to her.

MATTHEW (cont'd)
I will take care of it.

ANNIE
How?

CUT TO:

28 OMITTED 28

29 INT HOSPITAL DAY 29

The emergency room of a local hospital is jammed, noisy, oddly lit by emergency lights. In one corner, a SICK TWO YEAR OLD leans against his MOTHER, exhausted. He holds a toy telephone in his hands, when he pushes the colored buttons, they announce themselves -- "RED, RED, GREEN, RED" -- over and over and over.

MATTHEW stands at the front of a line at the emergency admitting desk, talking to the ADMITTING NURSE.

NURSE
I understand completely, the problem is Burnside and St. Joseph's both lost their backup power, so we have triple the load we usually have and --

MATTHEW
She's in pain. All she needs is a prescription! Can't somebody just --

NURSE
As soon as possible. I promise.

Matthew stands there for a moment, stewing, burning up inside. He looks across the crowded emergency room, to where ANNIE is rocking SARAH, who's still CRYING.

The E.R. seems to grow louder, more chaotic, as he stands, immobile. The Sick Two Year Old keeps banging on his plastic phone, but now he's only hitting one button -- "YELLOW, YELLOW, YELLOW, YELLOW."

Matt marches across the room, past Annie and Sarah.

MATTHEW
I'll be back to pick you up in ten minutes.

ANNIE
Where are you going?

But he's out the door.

CUT TO:

30 OMITTED 30 *

31 EXT STRIP MALL DAY 31

Back in the strip mall, there is a narrow alleyway between two of the buildings. Far down the alleyway, a LITTLE GUY sits on the ground, his back against the wall, his hands up in self-defense as a BIG GUY towers over him. From this distance, it almost looks as if the Big Guy is raising a hand to the Little Guy --

-- but MATTHEW hurries past the alleyway, dragging us with him as he walks quickly down the sidewalk. One by one, the STORE OWNERS of the shops he passes CLANG shut their big metal security gates.

Closing early.

32 INT DRUGSTORE DAY 32

The store is twice as crowded as before, and there has been a not-so-subtle increase in the tension level. There is another announcement from the GUY:

GUY
The store will be closing in thirty minutes. Please make your selections now, we will be closed in thirty minutes.

On his way to the back, MATT passes a very vocal argument at the front register, where a MAN is demanding they accept his personal check.

MAN
No, you calm down! I've been writing checks in here for seventeen years, don't you dare pretend you don't know me!

Matt starts down an aisle that leads to the pharmacy counter. All the way at the back, he can see the PHARMACIST, who is with a customer.

Matt slows as he reaches the end of the aisle. He stops just around the corner from the pharmacy counter, leaning against a display for "The Club." Sweating now, he takes a deep breath and stares at those drawers behind the counter where the medecine is kept.

The Pharmacist, a prescription slip in hand, turns and goes into the back.

Matt looks up, into a corner of the ceiling. A surveillance video camera is mounted there, but its red light is dead and the camera seems to droop.

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED: 32

As if pushed by an unseen hand, Matthew moves forward, out of the aisle. He strides to the counter, lifts the hinged portion of it, and slips behind it. The people in line watch him do it, staring blankly at him, as if watching TV.

He walks the few steps to the row of drawers he pointed at earlier. He opens a few, searching quickly, not finding what he needs. A VOICE speaks from the counter behind him.

GUY (o.s.)
Hey.

Matthew whirls. A GUY is staring at him.

GUY (cont'd)
(low voice)
Hurry up, man.

Matt turns back and opens a drawer that has a dozen or so bottles of a thick pink liquid inside. He grabs one, slips it into his pocket, and darts away, back to the other side of the counter again.

He walks away coolly. Behind him, a few Customers shake their heads in disapproval. The Pharmacist comes out of the back. One Customer, the Guy who urged Matthew on, gestures for the Pharmacist.

GUY
Psst. You know what?

TOWARD THE FRONT OF THE STORE,

Matthew walks quickly down a row, his hands in his pockets, the front doors of the store in his sights. He just barely forces a smile through his sweaty mask when --

PHARMACIST
HEY!

Matthew turns. The Pharmacist is standing at the end of the aisle they're in, livid.

Now everything happens at once. The Pharmacist SHOUTS for security, other People in the aisle move out of the way of any potential conflict, and Matthew takes off, up the aisle, toward the exit.

The Pharmacist gives chase.

Matthew tears down the aisle, toward the front of the store. The Pharmacist is slower, but he's not that far behind.

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED: 2 32

PHARMACIST
POLICE! SOMEBODY CALL THE POLICE!

Ahead, a SECURITY GUARD appears at the end of the aisle, but Matthew blows by him and breaks out into the open at the front of the store. He vaults the turnstile and races out the door.

33 EXT PHARMACY DAY 33

MATTHEW has his keys out of his pocket before he gets to the car. He unlocks it --

-- the Pharmacist and Security Guard come flying out of the store --

-- Matthew jumps in and slams the door --

-- they paw at the handle --

-- and he hits the door locks.

SHOUTING obscenities, the Pharmacist HAMMERS on the window, nearly breaking it, but Matthew gets the car started and SQUEALS away.

The Pharmacist whips a pair of glasses out of his pocket and squints at the license plate as it recedes.

PHARMACIST
(trying like hell)
Two -- T -- no, L -- ah, shit.

He lost it.

PHARMACIST (cont'd)
What the hell is the matter with people?!

CUT TO:

34 INT LIVING ROOM DAY 34

MATTHEW is sitting in a chair in the living room, a faint, strange smile on his face. ANNIE comes quietly down the stairs and over to him.

MATTHEW
She asleep?

ANNIE
Yeah. I'm sorry if I was -- if I jumped all over you before --

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED: 34

MATTHEW
Don't be sorry.

He pulls her down, into the chair, onto his lap.

ANNIE
So I guess the phones are working, huh?

He kisses her.

ANNIE (cont'd)
I mean, they got the prescription?

MATTHEW
Not exactly.

ANNIE
Then why did they give it to you?

He kisses her again, more fully.

MATTHEW
They didn't. Give it to me.

ANNIE
What do you mean?

MATTHEW
What do you think I mean?

She begins to kiss back.

ANNIE
Matthew --

MATTHEW
Yeah.

ANNIE
Are you out of your skull?

He laughs, breathy, and now the kiss grows furtive as she responds.

ANNIE (cont'd)
You didn't -- hurt anybody?

MATTHEW
No.

ANNIE
Did anyone recognize you?

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED: 2 34

MATTHEW
No.

He kisses her neck. She tilts her head, to open it to him.

ANNIE
There had to be other ways. I don't like this.

But she shifts, to sit astride him.

MATTHEW
You like something about it.

He brushes the shirt she's wearing back, to expose her shoulders. She adjusts her position on him. His hands slide over her. *

ANNIE *
(whispering) *
Right here? *

Looking over his shoulder, Annie's gaze falls on the living room windows, covered with blinds. Outside the windows --

-- someone walks past. Annie GASPS.

MATTHEW (cont'd)
What what what?!

ANNIE
There's somebody outside!

MATTHEW
Where?!

ANNIE
Right outside our window, I saw somebody! Looking in!

MATTHEW
Wait here.

35 THRU 36 OMITTED 35 THRU 36

37 INT DINING ROOM DAY 37 *

MATTHEW scurries through the dining room, staying below the window line. Outside, he sees a figure move away quickly, as if it saw him. The figure moves toward the front door. *

37A INT CLOSET DAY 37A

MATTHEW rummages through a closet and comes up with a baseball bat.

37B INT FOYER DAY 37B

MATTHEW reaches the front door, grips the bat, and flings the door open, brandishing his weapon.

(CONTINUED)

37B CONTINUED: 37B

JOE stands outside. Joe is the same age as Matthew, but there's a confidence in his carriage, it's not necessarily size, he's just physically impressive.

JOE
I swear I didn't see you guys making out. *

Matthew lowers the bat in relief.

MATTHEW
What are you creeping around like that for?!

Joe punches the dead doorbell button. *

JOE
Bell doesn't work. *

ANNIE appears behind Matthew.

ANNIE
Hey Joey, how are you?

MATTHEW
I said to stay back there.

She gives him a look.

ANNIE
Sorry, Sarge.
(to Joe)
C'mon in.

CUT TO:

38 INT KITCHEN DAY 38

JOE reaches into their refrigerator and takes a can of beer. MATTHEW and ANNIE are in the kitchen with him.

JOE
Don't you guys have any idea what's goin' on?

MATTHEW
What? Blackout. *

JOE
You don't know. You really don't. *

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED: 38

ANNIE
Know what?

He looks at them somberly.

JOE
The Martians landed. They want our women.
(to Matt)
Watch her like a hawk.

Annie finds this funny, Matthew does not.

MATTHEW
Did you hear anything or not?

JOE
Uh uh.

ANNIE
Nothing?!

JOE
(puts a cigarette in his mouth)
Well, the guy across the hall from me says --

MATTHEW
Don't smoke in the house.

ANNIE
Don't smoke in the house.

JOE
(takes it out)
Sorry. He says a meteor landed in the preserve last night. And a guy in the line at the Food King says there was a meltdown out at Indian Point. And the checker at the Food King says he saw the meteor, but that's not the problem, the problem is our "grid is fucked up."

Matthew is at the phone, still trying to get a dial tone. Still no luck.

MATTHEW
Why are the phones out?

JOE
Their grid's fucked up too?

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED: 2 38

ANNIE
That's all you've got? Rumors from the Food King?

JOE
Hey --

He grabs a remote control from the kitchen table and hits the power button, pointing it at a small, unresponsive TV on the counter.

JOE (cont'd)
How am I gonna know?

ANNIE
This sucks!

Joe pulls a beeper off his belt and tosses it on the table.

JOE
Not for me, now I got the day off.

Matthew hangs up the phone, giving up.

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED: 3 38

MATTHEW
What the hell is going on?

JOE
People are freaking out. They say there was a lot of looting last night. And shootings. *

ANNIE
People were killed?

JOE
I heard that, yeah.

MATTHEW
I don't believe it.

ANNIE
I do, if it's anywhere near where I used to work.

MATTHEW
How many people?

JOE
I heard a lot of numbers. They're not small numbers. *

Pause.

MATTHEW
Okay, look. We don't know anything for certain. *

JOE
Right. So I'm gonna go find out.

ANNIE
You wanna go out there?

MATTHEW
Find out how?

JOE
Ask the cops. Wanna come?

MATTHEW *
Do you know what the police station must be like right about now?

CUT TO:

39 INT POLICE STATION DAY 39

A DESK OFFICER sits behind the counter in the reception area of a city police station, sorting through a stack of reports. * She looks up and breaks into a big, friendly smile. *

DESK OFFICER
Well, hello there!

She's speaking to SARAH, who rides on the hip of ANNIE as * she, MATTHEW, and JOE come into the police station.

Contrary to their fears, the police station is clean, well-lit by back-up power, and completely devoid of people. Soothing MUZAK echoes in the clean, empty space.

The Desk Officer reaches into a bowl on the counter and holds a Hershey's Kiss out to Sarah.

DESK OFFICER (cont'd)
Can I give you a kiss, sweetheart?

She looks up at Annie. *

DESK OFFICER (cont'd)
Mom?

ANNIE
(disarmed)
Uh -- sure.

She unwraps the chocolate and hands it to Sarah, who takes it * happily. The whole mood of the station is so calm it momentarily throws the three of them off.

DESK OFFICER
What can I do for you folks? *

MATTHEW
Well, we were, uh -- concerned about the -- you know, the situation.

DESK OFFICER
Strange, huh?

MATTHEW
Yeah, it certainly is, and we can't seem to get any information about * what's going on -- *

DESK OFFICER
(pleasantly, but for the hundredth time today)
Okay. It's called an EMP, an * electromagnetic pulse.

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED: 39

She takes three copies from a stack of public information releases in front of her and hands them out.

DESK OFFICER (cont'd)
It shuts down anything electrical and scrambles all broadcast signals. It's like a lightning bolt making static for a few seconds on your radio -- this one just hasn't stopped yet.

ANNIE
Where's it coming from?

DESK OFFICER
A solar storm. Or is it electromagnetic storm? It's all in the release. The power company's working on it and we have an open line to them at all times. There's a chance everything'll be back on within the hour.

Matt spies a couple pay phones on the far wall. He goes to them and tries them.

JOE
It hit the whole city?

DESK OFFICER
Most of this part of the country.
(o Sarah, who's devouring the chocolate)
Is it good, sweetie?

ANNIE
But things are -- under control?

DESK OFFICER
It's really only a blackout, folks. Go on home, make a baby like everyone else.

Annie notices Sarah has managed to smear her entire face with chocolate.

ANNIE
Do you have a bathroom I can use?

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED: 2 39

DESK OFFICER
(pointing)
Down, first right, bear left.

40 INT CORRIDOR DAY 40

ANNIE walks down a long corridor, toward a ladies' room. She turns a corner and starts down another corridor.

At the door to the bathroom, she pauses, her eye caught by a doorway all the way at the end of the hall. The door is slightly ajar, and she can hear VOICES from beyond.

There's a sign on the door:

BOOKING THRU
SOUTH ENTRANCE <u>ONLY</u>

She looks back, down the corridor. She's alone.

40A INT MAIN AREA DAY 40A

Matt is trying the pay phone, with no success. Joe, still at the desk, isn't satisfied with the answers so far. *

JOE
I heard there was a lot of looting last night.

DESK OFFICER
Did you?

JOE
Was there?

Pause.

DESK OFFICER
Some. Scattered looting, yes.

MATTHEW
How much?

DESK OFFICER
There's always an element that's quick to take advantage of a situation like this. Isn't there? *

For some reason, she was staring directly at Matthew when she said that. *

40B INT CORRIDOR DAY 40B

Annie walks toward the door, slowly. The voices from behind it get louder as she approaches.

40C INT MAIN AREA DAY 40C

Joe is still grilling the Desk Officer.

JOE
Were people killed?

The Desk Officer doesn't answer, just stares at him.

JOE (cont'd)
How many?

DESK OFFICER
(getting frosty)
You know, I work for an awfully big company. It has eighteen divisions. Do you know exactly what's going on in every department of your company all the time? Especially when your phones are down? *

Matt returns from the pay phones. *

MATTHEW *
If your phones are down, how do you have an open line to the power company?

The last traces of the Desk Officer's smile fade, her jovial mood completely gone. *

JOE *
How many people died last night?

Pause.

DESK OFFICER
(cold as ice)
I can't comment on that. *

40D INT CORRIDOR DAY 40D

Annie reaches the door. She stretches out a hand, and nudges it open another foot or so. Through the door --

-- it's like Attica. There must be a hundred and fifty PEOPLE jammed into the booking area, handcuffed to benches, bars, and each other. DOZENS of COPS mill around, trying to keep up with the paperwork, SHOUTING at the prisoners to shut the hell up for a minute, dozens of PERPETRATORS are dragged in in handcuffs, kicking and screaming.

Annie GASPS. A COP sitting near the door hears her, reaches out to the door, and SLAMS it shut.

CUT TO:

41 EXT AN INTERSECTION DAY 41

The dead eyes of a stop light stare blankly at two cars, smashed together in a city intersection, smoke curling from under the hood of one. Traffic is backed up at all four corners of this intersection, HORNS are blaring as the DRIVERS SHOUT at each other, out of their cars and in the middle of the road.

42 INT MATT'S CAR DAY 42

MATT and ANNIE are in the front of Matt's car, stuck in the chaos. JOE is in back, with SARAH in her car seat. Annie must have told them what she saw; the mood is quiet.

Finally:

ANNIE
You know, Joe -- if you want to, you could stay with us until the power comes back on.

Matthew turns and looks at her.

JOE
That's okay. Thanks.

ANNIE
I'm just saying, you know, if you don't want to be home alone, we understand.

MATTHEW
Well, if he doesn't want to --

ANNIE
I'm just offering.

MATTHEW
He said he doesn't want to.

ANNIE
(trying to lighten it)
It'd be fun. Like camp or something. We'll get drunk on cheap wine. It's no big deal.

Another pause. More horns BLARE all around them.

JOE
Well -- if you want me to.
(to Matt)
And you don't mind.

The Two Guys in the intersection have come to blows, the reflection of their brawl reflected in the windshield.

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED: 42

MATTHEW
(through clenched teeth)
Why would I?

CUT TO:

43 INT KITCHEN DAY 43

SARAH crawls around MATT, ANNIE, and JOE's feet, playing with a TV remote control as the useful contents of the kitchen are assessed and arranged on the counter. They have:

-- two packages of size D batteries, one package of AA, one loose AAA,

-- two working flashlights, one fairly dim already,

-- an odd assortment of a dozen candles, different sizes and colors,

-- a cigarette lighter and a fire starter,

-- two big five gallon jugs of bottled water,

-- and a small stack of cash, mostly singles, a few fives and tens, and a lone twenty.

ANNIE is going through the contents of the refrigerator, JOE is on a chair, rummaging in a cabinet high up.

MATTHEW counts the cash.

MATTHEW
Annie, thirty-one dollars, between the two of us? I can't believe it.

ANNIE
We have a box of change in the closet, there might be another fifty in there.

JOE
You've got a full bottle of tequila up here, but the Scotch situation looks very grim. *

MATTHEW
Cash is definitely our problem. All the ATM's are down, nobody's gonna take Visa --

ANNIE
We don't need much money.

(CONTINUED)

43 CONTINUED: 43

MATTHEW
We should buy more water, diapers, definitely batteries, candles --

He stops, as the WHOOP WHOOP WHOOP of two helicopters zips right over the top of the house. They all look up. Joe hops off the chair. *

JOE
And a gun. *

ANNIE
Yeah, right.

JOE
Unless you have one. I don't.

They turn and look at him. He's serious.

ANNIE
A gun.

JOE
Relax, I didn't say I was gonna kill somebody with it.

ANNIE
You want to buy a gun.

MATTHEW
Well, wait a minute, wait a minute, maybe we should discuss this.

ANNIE
Nope. No guns in this house.

MATTHEW
I said I want to discuss it.

ANNIE
I hate guns. You hate guns.

MATTHEW
Let him make his point.

JOE
I don't like guns either. But let's not be idiots here. The power, phones, TV, I mean, come on, can you remember a situation like this? Ever? What's wrong with taking a few precautions?

(CONTINUED)

43 CONTINUED: 2 43

MATTHEW
You know what, Annie, this crossed my mind too, but I didn't want to say anything because -- you know, how you feel about guns.

ANNIE
How we feel about guns. Remember?

MATTHEW
You know what it's about? It's about not being naive.

Sarah is calling for attention. Annie picks her up.

ANNIE
(to Matthew)
You've never even shot a gun.

MATTHEW
So?

JOE
It's not that hard. *

ANNIE
C'mon, guys --

MATTHEW
I'm talking about a discussion.

ANNIE
Let's just -- not. Please? As a favor to me?

She leaves the room with Sarah, who is WAILING now. Matthew and Joe watch her for a moment, then Matthew takes the cash off the counter, pockets it, and takes his jacket off the back of a chair. He looks at Joe.

MATTHEW
You coming?

JOE
(smiles)
Really?

MATTHEW
My house too.

44 IN SARAH'S ROOM, 44

ANNIE hears the kitchen door open and close. She shakes her head.

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED: 44

ANNIE
Damn it.

CUT TO:

45 EXT GUN SHOP DAY 45

A MAN with a distinctive earring walks in front of us, toward the entrance to a gun shop in the city. He reaches the door and holds it open for a minute while he looks down, drops a cigarette on the ground, and mashes it out with his shoe.

While he's doing that, MATTHEW and JOE pass in front of him, through the open door and into the shop. The Man in the hat looks up.

It's RAYMOND, the guy from the movie theatre. He didn't see Matthew. Matthew didn't see him. Raymond goes into the shop behind them.

CUT TO:

46 INT GUN SHOP DAY 46

This gun shop is dark, crowded, and the mood surly. MATTHEW and JOE are at the front of an impatient line, facing a CLERK.

CLERK
Cash only, fifteen day waiting period on all handguns so forget about that, we're outta twelve gauge shells and all ammunition for twenty-twos, thirty-eights, and forty-fives, unless you want hollow point, that we got for thirty-eights only. So what'll it be?

Matthew and Joe look at each other, unprepared.

MATTHEW
(low)
You handle it.

JOE
Why me?

CLERK
People are waiting, fellas.

Matthew turns to Joe, and just as he does, RAYMOND steps up to the counter on the other side of him and asks the Clerk a question.

(CONTINUED)

46 CONTINUED: 46

MATTHEW
(still to Joe)
Come on, man, you're in construction, you're better at this shit.

Joe turns and looks at him -- what the hell does <u>that</u> mean? Next to them, the Clerk answers Raymond, pointing to the other side of the store.

CLERK
Far wall.
(calling to the line)
Next!

Matthew and Joe turn back, just as Raymond turns and walks away. Again, they've missed each other.

JOE
(to the Clerk)
No, hang on, we're ready. We're looking for something for home defense.

CLERK
'Course you are. How much cash you got?

JOE
We've got this.

He gestures to Matthew, who takes off his watch and holds it out to the Clerk.

JOE (cont'd)
And before you turn it down, I think you should know that happens to be worth six hundred dollars.

The Clerk takes the watch, glances at it quickly, and tosses it into a box filled with more watches, rings, and other jewelry.

CLERK
You got three hundred credit. I recommend --

He takes a twelve gauge shotgun and SMACKS it on the counter in front of them.

(CONTINUED)

46 CONTINUED: 2 46

CLERK (cont'd)
-- twelve gauge pump action *
Winchester "Defender." Blue steel *
barrel, wood grain stock, extended *
tube for an eight round capacity. *
Twelve gauge is a good gun. Twelve gauge is a house gun. You get a big bang, you get a big pattern, you don't have to be a genius to hit something. That barrel's eighteen *
and a half inches, shortest barrel *
legal in this state, but if you feel *
your personal safety requires something more easily concealed, you can get a hacksaw across the street at the hardware store. I'll even throw in a box of shells.

JOE
I thought you were out of twelve gauge shells.

CLERK
Yeah, my mistake. That's the deal, *
three hundred, you want it or not?

JOE
The tag says ninety-five dollars.

CLERK
All prices are triple.

JOE
What are you, kidding?

CLERK
Hey pal, you're the one trying to buy a shotgun during a blackout, don't take the moral high ground with me.

He grabs the watch out of the box and holds it out to them.

CLERK (cont'd)
Now you can have the gun or you can have your watch back, which one you want?

CUT TO:

47 EXT GUN SHOP DAY 47

MATTHEW and JOE come around the corner of the building and into the gun shop's parking lot. Matt is carrying the twelve gauge and a box of shells.

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED: 47

JOE
I am a licensed carpenter's foreman. I am not "in construction." You think you can keep that straight?

MATTHEW
Oh, come on, I didn't mean anything by that.

JOE
Maybe it's all the same to you, but it's not all the same to me.

MATTHEW
Joe --

JOE
And I would like to know what the fuck the fact that I build houses has to do with buying weapons.

MATTHEW
I just meant that you're better at bargaining, and that kind of thing.

JOE
Bullshit.

MATTHEW
Joe, please, I'm not going to stand here holding a shotgun and have an insipid argument with you.

He walks to a Ford Explorer.

JOE
Hey, you know, maybe I didn't make a hundred thousand dollars last year --

MATTHEW
Oh, for Christ's sake --

He tries the back door, but it's locked. *

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED: 2 47

JOE
Man, once the money comes it's just a matter of time, isn't it?

MATTHEW
Oh, blow me. I have treated you exactly the same way for fifteen years.

JOE
Yeah, like a seventeen year old.

MATTHEW
Would you unlock the God damn car?

Joe pushes a button on his car keys. The Explorer CHIRPS and the doors unlock.

JOE
Why don't you tell me, Matt. For the record. What exactly were you trying to say in there?

MATTHEW
Just that, you know -- it was actually a compliment, if you think about it.

JOE
And how is that?

Matt opens the back of the truck and throws the gun in.

MATTHEW
You know, you're always telling us about dealing with subcontractors, and all the fights you have to have, and -- you deal with an element of society that's more -- more like --

JOE
Scum?

MATTHEW
(fed up)
Yes, Joe. Scum. That's exactly the word I was searching for. You yourself, scum of the earth, that's what you are. *

JOE
It's not a joke.

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED: 3 47

MATTHEW
Heavy in the forehead.

JOE
I'm not laughing.

MATTHEW
A knuckle-walker.

JOE
Doesn't bother your wife to have a knuckle-walker around, does it?

Matt stops. That stung.

MATTHEW
Why'd you wanna say that?

JOE
Well, the shit hit the fan and suddenly I get invited to your house -- which hasn't happened much lately, has it?

MATTHEW
You're not exactly lonely, though, are you?

JOE
Jealous, Matt?

MATTHEW
Are you?

An uncomfortable moment goes by.

JOE
We done?

MATTHEW
You got something else to say?

JOE
No. You?

MATTHEW
No.

JOE
All right.

MATTHEW
Great.

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED: 4 47

Joe gets in the car and SLAMS the door. After a moment, Matt does the same.

CUT TO:

48 THRU 49 OMITTED 48 THRU 49

50 EXT CUL-DE-SAC NIGHT 50

A few candles glow in the windows of the half dozen houses on the otherwise darkened cul-de-sac.

51 INT LIVING ROOM NIGHT 51

It's night now, and a fire burns brightly in the fireplace in the living room of Matt and Annie's house. The shotgun leans against the hearth, the box of shells on the mantel above it.

MATT, ANNIE and JOE are sitting around, Matt and Joe on opposite ends of the room, Annie sitting on the floor in between them. Matt has a phone on the couch next to him, and is idly dialing it over and over again, still hoping for a dial tone. *

An empty wine bottle or two is on the table and they're tipsy. Especially Annie.

ANNIE
Monopoly?

JOE
Takes too long.

ANNIE
Life.

JOE
Too much paperwork.

MATTHEW
I don't feel like playing a game.

ANNIE
Oh, come on, this is supposed to be fun.

JOE
Scrabble, Matt? *

ANNIE
Too educational.

She fans her blouse.

ANNIE (cont'd)
Do we really need the fire? I'm burning up over here.

(CONTINUED)

51 CONTINUED: 51

MATTHEW
I like the light.

(CONTINUED)

51 CONTINUED: 2 51

ANNIE
What's that one game -- you know, where you have to give away your secrets? Matt, we played that once.

MATTHEW
I'd rather stick my tongue in a fan. *

ANNIE
We'll play like in high school, you know, where you have to tell everyone who did you always want to fuck real bad.

JOE
Really?

ANNIE
(laughing)
Or where. *
(harder) *
Or how.

JOE
How is the wine?

She notices Matt is unamused.

ANNIE
Insufficient.

JOE
Then I guess Twister's out.

ANNIE
Oh, I wouldn't say that.
(crawling over to Matt)
Honey, how much butter do we have?

JOE
Oooooh.

ANNIE
(sexy, her hands in Matt's hair)
It's all melted.

JOE
I'm in.

ANNIE
(softly, to Matt)
You used to like my checkered past.

(CONTINUED)

51 CONTINUED: 3 51

Matt doesn't answer, just stares at her.

JOE
Checkers?

MATTHEW *
(to Joe) *
That's a two person game. *

ANNIE
I -- need another drink.

MATTHEW
Think so?

JOE
I know I do.

They get up. Annie salutes Matt smartly and marches off to the kitchen. Joe follows.

52 INT KITCHEN NIGHT 52

ANNIE opens the loose cabinet in the kitchen, the same one * Matt opened earlier. The black and white photo strip is * gone, just the bits of tape left at the corners of where it * use to be. JOE is behind her, leaning against the counter * while she gets glasses. *

JOE
He mad?

ANNIE
He's a big boy, he can say so if he is. This is what I get, since I had Sarah.

JOE
Well, you look great.

ANNIE
Stop it.

JOE
I'm telling you.

He has risked a glance at her cleavage, which she notices. He realizes she's seen him. Both of them change the subject at the same time. Joe opens a drawer and takes out a * screwdriver. *

ANNIE
I changed my hair, that could be it, I took a few inches off.

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED: 52

Joe looks at the unfinished carpentry in the kitchen as he opens the cabinet door and tightens a turnscrew on the hinge. *

JOE
Looks like that guy you got's doin' a real number here.

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED: 2 52

ANNIE
Oh, yeah. They're terrible.

JOE
I warned you.

He ends up looking at her again.

JOE (cont'd)
You do look great.

ANNIE
So how's Carol?

JOE
I hear she's fine.

ANNIE
That didn't take long.

JOE
Long enough.

ANNIE
There's this thing called "marriage."

JOE
One step closer to death.

ANNIE
That how you see us?

JOE
That how you see you?

ANNIE
You know what your problem is?

JOE
Now there's a question I hear a lot.

He closes the cabinet door. All fixed. *

ANNIE
You have too many options.

JOE
Just tryin' to keep the bloodline alive.

ANNIE
I hate you.

53 INT LIVING ROOM NIGHT 53

MATT sits on the couch, in the middle, alone. From the kitchen, he can hear their VOICES, laughing as they make something involving glasses and ice.

They must have a candle in the kitchen, as their shadows are thrown out the door and onto the ceiling of the living room.

Matthew stares at the shadows as they bop playfully across the ceiling.

They laugh again, loudly.

54 INT KITCHEN NIGHT 54

JOE and ANNIE are making drinks from what's left of the ice. They're laughing, having a good time.

ANNIE
Another scotch and slush, or are you good?

JOE
Scotch is dead, babe.

ANNIE
Okay, slush and slush then.

She slurs it horribly.

JOE
"Shlush and shlush?"

MATT's voice calls from the doorway.

MATTHEW (o.s.)
The baby's trying to sleep.

They turn around.

JOE
Uh oh. Dad's here.

ANNIE
You want another drink, Matt?

MATTHEW
All right.

JOE
Great! Could you run out and loot us some scotch?

Annie elbows him and he breaks into a laugh. Matt looks at her, aghast.

(CONTINUED)

54 CONTINUED: 54

JOE (cont'd)
Ooops.

MATTHEW
You told him?

ANNIE
(stalling)
What?

MATTHEW
You told him.

ANNIE
Well -- I'm sorry, I didn't think it was something --

JOE
Listen, if you're going out looting tomorrow, I'm a forty-two regular and I love cashmere. Single breasted. *

ANNIE
Joey, leave him alone.

JOE *
Looter. *

MATTHEW
I am not a looter. I took what I * took to fill a very specific and * immediate need. *

JOE
Like the guy who took the TV. *

MATTHEW
TV is not a necessity.

JOE
It is if you sell it for food.

MATTHEW
Gee, I'm sorry. Did I interrupt something in here?

ANNIE
Of course not.

JOE
Yes. You did. I think your wife * thinks you- *

(CONTINUED)

54 CONTINUED: 2 54

MATTHEW
Are you actually going to stand in my kitchen and tell me what my wife is thinking?! Who the fuck-

ANNIE
You know, if you boys can't play nice we just won't have any more of these little sleepovers.

Pause.

JOE
Well. I think I'll go to bed.

MATTHEW
(quickly)
Good night.

Joe looks around. The tension's a bit thick.

JOE
Good night. Everybody.

He sets his glass down and leaves, leaving Matt and Annie alone. When he's out of earshot --

ANNIE
Matt, I --

MATTHEW
Good night.

He leaves the room, leaving her alone.

ANNIE
Shit.

She dumps her glass in the sink in frustration.

55 INT LIVING ROOM NIGHT 55

ANNIE, alone now, blows out candles in the living room. She stops at the mantel, next to the box of shotgun shells. Intrigued, she opens the box and takes out one of the shells.

She examines it in the candlelight. It's a fat plastic cartridge, folded at one end, with a gold cap at the other and a small, round firing pin.

Annie sets the shell down and picks up the gun, feeling its weight.

(CONTINUED)

55 CONTINUED: 55

She looks down the barrel, which glows an odd blue in the candlelight.

She looks over her shoulder, to see if she's alone. She is.

CUT TO:

56 EXT KAY HOUSE NIGHT 56

The house is dark now, the only light coming from the full moon shining down on it.

57 INT UPSTAIRS HALLWAY NIGHT 57

Inside the house, FEET creep up the stairs. Whoever it is moves very, very slowly down the corridor, placing his feet carefully, not to make a sound.

He reaches the end of the corridor and reaches out to the doorknob. He opens the door to the bedroom, and as he slips inside, we see that it's JOE. *

58 INT MATT & ANNIE'S BEDROOM NIGHT 58

MATTHEW and ANNIE are asleep in bed. JOE is a dim silhouette, standing over Annie, staring down at her. He looks up, at Matthew, and raises his arm, revealing something he was holding slightly behind his back. *

It's a long-bladed kitchen knife. Joe walks quickly around the foot of the bed and leans down over him, close -- *

-- and WHISPERS in his ear.

JOE
Someone is in the house.

Matthew wakes. He sits up, slowly.

JOE (cont'd)
Where's the gun?

MATTHEW
In the living room.

(CONTINUED)

58 CONTINUED: 58

JOE
No, Matthew, it's not, where the fuck is the gun?!

Annie sits up and looks at them.

ANNIE
What's going on?

MATTHEW
We can't find the gun.

ANNIE
It's at the bottom of the swimming pool.

They just look at her for a moment.

MATTHEW
Someone is in the house, Annie.

She stares at him. She didn't know that.

JOE
(to Matthew)
Get up.

Matthew does, shaking. He's wearing sweat pants already. He reaches under the bed and finds the baseball bat.

59 INT HALLWAY NIGHT 59

MATTHEW and JOE edge down the upstairs hallway, moving as silently as possible. Halfway down, Joe turns back and looks at Matthew. Joe is grinning. *

JOE
You up for this?

59A INT FOYER NIGHT 59A

MATTHEW and JOE come down the stairs and into the foyer. Joe moves ahead, creeping along the wall, headed toward the kitchen. From here, they can hear occasional sounds as whoever is in the kitchen rummages through their things.

Matthew follows Joe, darting a look into the empty, darkened dining room. They reach the living room.

Joe leans forward, peers around the edge of a doorway, and looks into the kitchen.

60 IN THE KITCHEN, 60

a PROWLER is in there all right, a smallish guy, wiry, his movements jerky and erratic. He's filling his pockets with their batteries, with food, with anything he can find. He opens one particular drawer and finds --

-- the stack of money.

He holds it up in the moonlight, counting it, then pockets it. He searches on.

61 IN THE LIVING ROOM, 61

Matthew moves a few steps to his right, away from Joe, and into the living room. There is an archway there that also leads into the kitchen, through which he too can see the Prowler.

The Prowler moves toward him --

-- and Matthew slides back along the wall, meeting Joe where they once stood. Joe points to the kitchen, speaking with half-whispered words, half gestures.

JOE
Small guy. I'll go around.

He points to the front door, and indicates circling around to the kitchen door.

JOE (cont'd)
Watch. Jump him -- together.

Matthew shakes his head no, vigorously. Joe practically rips Matthew's head off. A fierce whisper this time, right into his ear.

JOE (cont'd)
He has our money.

And before Matt can object again, Joe is off, scampering away toward the front door.

He manages to open it silently and slip through, but when he pulls it shut behind him, the latch makes a loud CLICK.

Matthew freezes, against the wall. He turns slowly to see if the Prowler heard --

-- and the Prowler did. He's standing right there, just around the corner of the door, in the kitchen, only three feet away, but he and Matthew are just out of each other's sight lines.

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED: 61

Sensing something, Matthew lowers himself to a crouch and stays pinned against the wall. The Prowler steps forward, into the living room.

Matthew dares to turn his head. He sees the Prowler, who is inches from him, reach into his pocket and pull something out. The Prowler raises his hand --

-- and the hand CLICKS open a switchblade.

The Prowler looks to the left. Nobody. He turns and looks to the right, right over Matthew's head.

Nothing. He backs away, back into the kitchen.

Matthew pauses, waiting for him to recede, then turns and darts across the dining room.

61A INT DINING ROOM NIGHT 61A

As Matthew crosses the dining room, he stays low, and it's a good thing he does, as the Prowler is crossing the kitchen at the same time, visible through the still-under-construction wall frame between them.

Matt reaches the far end of the room and pauses, looking into the kitchen. He can see the french doors the Prowler must have come through, which have a broken window pane just above the doorknob.

Through the glass, Matt can dimly see the shape of Joe moving outside. Matt gestures, but Joe moves away before seeing him.

Matt hurries over to the window on the far side of the dining room. He can see Joe's back now. He raises his hand to knock, thinks better of it, and raises a finger to the pane of glass between them.

He runs his finger lightly down the pane. It SQUEAKS. Joe hears it and turns.

62 THRU 64 OMITTED 62 THRU 64

65 IN THE KITCHEN, 65

the Prowler goes to a certain drawer, opens it all the way, and finds a small key in the bottom of a dish in the back.

With the key, he goes to another cabinet, opens it carefully, and moves some bowls out of the way. In the back, there is a strongbox. He seems to know exactly what he's doing as he uses the key to open the strongbox.

65A IN THE DINING ROOM, 65A

Joe comes to the window and faces Matthew. Joe furrows his brow and stares -- "what?"

Matthew points to the kitchen. He raises one hand slowly, as if holding a knife, and makes a slashing gesture across his throat.

Joe gives him a thumbs up gesture, as if this is <u>good</u> news.

65B IN THE KITCHEN, 65B

the Prowler opens the strongbox. Inside is a gold Tiffany clock, heavy and expensive looking, the kind of thing you inherit from your grandparents.

The Prowler takes it, turns away, and now finds the last thing he was looking for -- a set of car keys.

65C IN THE DINING ROOM, 65C

Matthew sees the Prowler turn and leave the kitchen. He looks back to Joe. Joe's eyes light up with an idea. He digs in his pocket.

Behind Matthew, the Prowler moves through the foyer, headed for the front door.

Outside, Joe pulls his car keys from his pocket and holds them up, showing something to Matthew. It's the remote control for his car alarm.

CUT TO:

66 THRU 68 OMITTED 66 THRU 68

69 EXT DRIVEWAY NIGHT 69

The Prowler is halfway across the driveway, heading for Matthew's car, when Joe's truck, parked on the street behind him, erupts to life, lights flashing, horn HONKING, shrill alarm SCREAMING.

The Prowler whirls. He sees Joe hiding in the bushes near the corner of the house. He pulls out the switchblade and CLICKS it open.

70 IN THE BEDROOM, 70

ANNIE, holding SARAH now, hears the alarm and holds her tighter.

71 IN THE DRIVEWAY, 71

the Prowler is at Matthew's car, fumbling with the keys, while the other car's alarm continues to SHRIEK behind him. He rips open the door to Matt's car --

-- and sets off that alarm as well. MATTHEW comes racing out the front door as JOE peers out from around the corner of the house and SHOUTS.

JOE
Leave the stuff!

PROWLER
TURN THE FUCKIN' ALARMS OFF!

MATTHEW
(to the Prowler)
Just get out of here!

The Prowler, realizing he's outnumbered, backs away from them, arms slightly raised. He points Matthew's keys at the car, * hits the button, and silences the alarm, but Joe's is still * blaring. He drops the keys, backing off. As he reaches the * middle of the cul-de-sac --

-- a brilliant white beam of light switches on. The Prowler turns around and squints into it, disoriented.

He starts to sort of slide away from it, toward the mouth of the cul-de-sac, his arms dropping now.

CRACK.

A single GUNSHOT rips the air. The Prowler's body lurches, a slug slams into his chest, and he flies back, off his feet.

The clock sails over his head and SMASHES to a million pieces on the pavement; the knife skitters a few feet away and spins to a stop.

The halogen beam stays on the motionless Prowler, held on him, as if checking for further movement.

Joe and Matthew take a few tentative steps toward the body.

A moment goes by, the only sound the continued SCREAMING of Joe's car alarm.

Realizing, Joe pushes the button again, and with a contented CHIRP, the alarm ceases.

Silence.

From across the street --

-- the light shuts off.

(CONTINUED)

71 CONTINUED: 71

Matthew stops, but Joe continues to move forward, toward the dead body. He pauses when he reaches it and leans forward, staring into the sightless, glassy eyes.

The knife lies on the other side of the body. To reach it, Joe skirts the body carefully, bends down --

-- and a hand latches onto his wrist.

The Prowler, not dead after all, pulls hard and Joe THUDS to the pavement.

Matthew GASPS and races forward a few steps, but it all happens in just a second or two. He watches as the Prowler scoops up his switchblade and SLASHES at Joe.

He misses, Joe lunges, and lands on him with a THUD. The Prowler raises the switchblade --

-- but Joe sinks the kitchen knife into his chest.

Just as quickly, Joe pulls it out and crawls away from the Prowler, horrified.

He drops the knife, which CLATTERS to the pavement.

The Prowler drops the switchblade again and lies still.

Matthew walks forward slowly, horrified, and bends over the Prowler. Joe stands a short distance away, staring, his eyes wide in disbelief.

ANNIE now appears at the end of the driveway, holding the baby.

ANNIE
What happened?!

Matthew puts a finger to the Prowler's neck, feeling for a pulse.

JOE
I -- stabbed him.

MATTHEW
I think he's alive!

JOE
No. He's not.

Across the street, the halogen light goes on again.

ANNIE
Matt -- ?!

(CONTINUED)

71 CONTINUED: 2 71

He looks at her, but she's looking over his shoulder. Matt turns. The light is walking towards them.

It's STEPH, the neighbor from across the street. In one hand he holds the powerful flashlight, in the other he's carrying a deer rifle with a scope. Steph weaves a little where he stands, he's had a few tonight. When he speaks, he over-enunciates. *

STEPH
You all okay?

MATTHEW hovers over the PROWLER, who bleeds into the driveway, one leg twisted unnaturally under him.

MATTHEW
(to Annie)
Get something to stop the bleeding!

She turns and hurries back into the house. Matthew, Steph, and Joe just stare down at the Prowler in silence for a few seconds. The pool of blood spreads; it looks like motor oil on the pavement.

JOE
His -- leg.

No one replies. Finally, Steph speaks.

STEPH
Some wicked switchblade, huh? *

Something occurs to Matthew. He turns and looks up at Steph, noticing for the first time his dead-eyed alcohol glaze.

MATTHEW
(quietly)
You knew he only had a knife? *

STEPH
Yeah.
(pause)
Why?

Matt looks away. Annie comes hurrying out of the house with a towel. Before she gets to them:

STEPH (cont'd)
(still to Matt)
Hey. Why?

Annie reaches them. Matthew grabs the towel and presses it to the Prowler's severely bleeding chest.

(CONTINUED)

71 CONTINUED: 3 71

STEPH (cont'd)
(to Joe)
What'd he mean by that?

Joe can't speak.

Annie leans down and whispers into Matt's left ear.

ANNIE
Is he dead?

JOE
Yeah.

MATTHEW
We don't know!

Steph walks around, bends down, and whispers into Matt's right ear.

STEPH
Look, I may have a big problem here if you don't have your head on straight about this --

MATTHEW
That's not the point right now, okay?! We have to help this --

JOE
The guy is dead, okay?

They all look down at the Prowler. He is. They stand.

Steph turns and walks away quickly, back to his house.

ANNIE
Oh, God.

MATTHEW
Take Sarah inside.

ANNIE
Oh, my God.

MATTHEW
Get her inside!

ANNIE
(staring at the dead body)
It's Richard.

MATTHEW
Who?

(CONTINUED)

71 CONTINUED: 4 71

ANNIE
Richard, the guy who works for Mr. Alvarez, the guys fixing the kitchen, Matthew, that is Richard!

They turn and look at the dead man again. Somehow, things are different. They know him. Annie peers at a wristwatch Richard wears on his left wrist.

ANNIE (cont'd)
And that's your watch.

Pause. The three of them stare down at the body for a moment, watching as the pool of blood spreads out from under him. The blood nears the tips of their shoes, and they are forced to take a step back.

MATTHEW
(quietly)
Please take Sarah inside.

Annie retreats, toward the house, still staring. Joe staggers a short distance away and drops to a sitting position on the asphalt.

Matthew turns away. He too takes a few steps away from the body. Long pause.

JOE
He tried to stab me.

MATTHEW
I saw. *

Several NEIGHBORS have come out of their houses and are headed toward them, tentatively. MR. SCHAEFER is one of them, MRS.

SCHAEFER trailing a few yards behind him. RAJI is another, dark-skinned, mid-forties, an unfamiliar accent. His OLDEST SON is with him, also trailing behind.

Steph comes back out of his house and hurries over to the body of the Prowler as Matthew and Joe walk toward the Neighbors.

RAJI
What happened?

MATTHEW
Somebody broke into our house and -- Steph --

Steph busts into the middle of the group.

(CONTINUED)

71 CONTINUED: 5 71

STEPH
The guy was waving this gun around, he was about to shoot one of these guys here. I shot him first.

Matt turns and looks at Steph, incredulous. Steph avoids his gaze, looking at Joe instead.

STEPH (cont'd)
He was about to take a shot at you. Wasn't he?

Joe doesn't answer right away. Matt turns and walks back to the body. The Prowler now holds a handgun in his stilled right hand.

Steph and Joe step up beside him, hovering over the body. They have a second alone, before the others reach them. They look at each other. Matt stares at Steph, aghast. Steph says nothing, just returns the gaze, evenly.

The other Neighbors now join them, just the men, the women and Raji's son lingering behind. They all look back at the body.

STEPH
Oh, God. Jesus, it makes me sick.

MR. SCHAEFER
You did what you had to do.

Light suddenly washes over them, brilliant light, white, red, and yellow, flashing. Their heads snap in the direction of the end of the block --

-- where a police car has turned the corner and now approaches them, fast.

STEPH
Oh, my God.

MR. SCHAEFER
The guy had a gun. You'll be okay.

RAJI
You've got nothing to worry about.

But they back off, not wanting to be part of any official business. The police car CRUNCHES to a stop and TWO COPS get out. Steph moves quickly, to get to them first, and starts telling his story.

Matthew looks at Joe -- "what do we do?"

(CONTINUED)

71 CONTINUED: 6 71

JOE
It is what it is.

He walks over, to join Steph and the cops. Matthew remains behind. He looks back, over to Annie, standing near the doorway of the house. He's alone on this one.

Slowly, he walks over and joins Steph and Joe with the Cops.

STEPH
(finishing)
-- and I fired. Just once. I just wanted to put him on the ground, where we could get the gun away --

JOE
He probably saved my life.

The Cops turn and look at Matt.

OFFICER
Where were you?

MATTHEW
I was -- I was on the front steps, there --

OFFICER
That how you saw it?

Pause.

MATTHEW
I'm sorry, I didn't hear what, uh --

STEPH
I just told him what happened, Matt, how the guy was --

OFFICER
Just a second, sir.

The Officer takes Matthew aside a few steps and lowers his voice.

We stay with Steph, and can't hear what is said between Matthew and the Officer.

CUT TO:

72 EXT CUL-DE-SAC NIGHT 72

The cul-de-sac is awash in the flashing red lights of the patrol car and, now, an ambulance parked there.

(CONTINUED)

72 CONTINUED: 72

The body of the PROWLER is loaded into the back of the ambulance.

MATTHEW and STEPH are separated, at opposite sides of the driveway, each with a POLICE OFFICER. The Officer with Matthew hands him back a small pile of cash.

OFFICER
I think, under the circumstances, we can save you a lot of time and just return what he took right now. *

Matt takes it, feeling sickened. He mumbles something and pockets the money. He looks over at Steph.

MATTHEW
What's going to happen?

OFFICER
There'll be an investigation. I wouldn't worry about your neighbor, he'll stand up fine. The guy was breaking into houses, you all saw him with the gun -- and the blackout, they'll consider that.

MATTHEW
Is it bad out there?

The Officer looks at the puddle of blood on the driveway. He looks back at Matthew.

OFFICER
Out where?

CUT TO:

73 INT RAJI'S LIVING ROOM NIGHT 73

Everyone from the block, children excluded, is crowded into the candlelit living room of Raji's house -- MATTHEW, ANNIE (SARAH is asleep in a bassinet next to her), MR. & MRS. SCHAEFER, RAJI and his WIFE, STEPH (with a couple cans of * beer on a six pack ring), and a MIDDLE-AGED COUPLE we haven't * seen before. JOE is there too, numbed by the events.

The front door is open, to let some fresh air in, but temperatures, and tempers, are running a little high.

MR. SCHAEFER
"Back on in an hour," who do they * think they're kidding? *

(CONTINUED)

73 CONTINUED: 73

RAJI
That's not what the cop said --

MR. SCHAEFER
That's exactly what he said! I heard him!

RAJI
He said there was a chance it could be on in an hour.

ANNIE
They told us the same thing this afternoon.

MR. SCHAEFER
They don't have the slightest idea when the poser's coming back, and neither do we. A solar storm, how gullible do they think we are?

MIDDLE AGED MAN
It doesn't matter what happened -- what can we do to protect ourselves, that's the question.

MR. SCHAEFER
We should have gated this street when we had the chance.

The group GROANS, not this again.

MR. SCHAEFER (cont'd)
Well, we wouldn't be having this problem now, would we? I swear to God, I do not understand you people.

ANNIE
I don't want to live behind bars, Al, what's so hard to understand about that?

RAJI
Look, the important thing is to stick together.

MR. SCHAEFER
Fifteen hundred lousy bucks each --

ANNIE
It wasn't the money --

While the group dissolves into an argument, Matthew turns and looks across the room, at Steph, who is staring at him.

(CONTINUED)

73 CONTINUED: 2 73

Steph doesn't look away. So Matt does. *

(CONTINUED)

73 CONTINUED: 3 73

Mr. Schaefer notices Joe for the first time.

MR. SCHAEFER
Hey, wait a minute. Who's this guy?

MATTHEW
He's a friend of ours.

ANNIE
Does anyone have any information? *
Not a rumor, not something they *
heard from a friend of a friend of
their brother, but hard
information.

They all look at each other, hoping someone is in the know. But there's only silence and blank, frightened gazes.

ANNIE (cont'd)
Nobody?

The silence only grows, and that alarms them even more. Finally, quietly:

MIDDLE AGED MAN
We could park a couple cars, you know, facing together at the end of the block. To seal it off.

MR. SCHAEFER
Now that's a good idea.

MIDDLE AGED MAN
How about that Lincoln of yours, that's a good hunk of steel.

MR. SCHAEFER
Oh, you thought -- the Lincoln?

MIDDLE AGED MAN
Why not?

MR. SCHAEFER
Well, I don't want to have to move it all the time --

MIDDLE AGED MAN
Leave the keys in it.

MR. SCHAEFER
Are you insane?

ANNIE
What are you people talking about?

(CONTINUED)

73 CONTINUED: 4 73

MR. SCHAEFER
I'll tell you what I want to talk about. I want to talk about Raji's generator.

RAJI
Hey!

MR. SCHAEFER
Well?

STEPH
You have a generator?

RAJI
Well, yeah, but --

STEPH *
What if one of us has some kind of emergency? It's the sort of thing we should know is there.

RAJI
I have a very limited amount of gasoline.

STEPH
So we'll use our own gas.

RAJI
You don't understand, it's a very small generator --

STEPH *
Blah blah blah blah blah. *

MIDDLE AGED MAN
Look, I don't know how they do things where you come from, but around here we --

RAJI
Miami.

MIDDLE AGED MAN
What?

RAJI
I come from Miami, and they do things pretty much the same way, okay?

MR. SCHAEFER
What are you saying, Raji? If we have an emergency or something you're not going to let us use it?

(CONTINUED)

73 CONTINUED: 4 73

RAJI
I didn't say that.

MIDDLE AGED MAN
Some of us have kids, you know.

RAJI
I have kids.

MIDDLE AGED MAN
(competitive)
How many?

RAJI
Two.

MIDDLE AGED MAN
Well, I have three.

RAJI
So what?

MIDDLE AGED MAN
I'm just saying.

RAJI
Look, the important thing is to stick together.

Joe finally speaks up.

JOE
Yeah, stick together. But not with your generator, and not with his car. Is that about the size of it?

They all look at him.

MR. SCHAEFER
Who the hell is this guy?

CUT TO:

74 EXT CUL-DE-SAC NIGHT 74

One by one, flashlights nose out of Raji's house as the RESIDENTS disperse, making their way back to their own homes.

MATTHEW, ANNIE, and JOE head back to their house; across the street, STEPH is keeping pace with them. He calls out.

STEPH
Hey. Matt.

(CONTINUED)

74 CONTINUED: 74

Matthew looks.

STEPH (cont'd)
C'mere.

Still walking, Matthew doesn't change directions. Steph stops and lightens his tone, he sounds almost friendly.

STEPH (cont'd)
C'mon, I just want to tell you something.

Matthew and Joe step forward together.

STEPH (cont'd)
(to Joe)
No, I was just talking to Matt.

Joe looks at Matthew. Matt takes a deep breath and walks across the street to Steph's driveway. Joe follows anyway, two steps behind, just to be there.

It's a long walk. Matthew reaches the other side of the road and he and Steph stare at each other, a few feet apart.

STEPH (cont'd)
What did you tell the cop?

MATTHEW
It doesn't matter.

STEPH
Kinda matters to me, wouldn't you say? What did you tell him?

MATTHEW
I lied through my teeth.

Steph breathes a sigh of relief.

STEPH
Thanks, man.

MATTHEW
They'll pull the registration on the gun. They'll trace it to you. *

STEPH
There is no registration on that one.

MATTHEW
Why not?

(CONTINUED)

74 CONTINUED: 2 74

STEPH
Won it in a card game.

MATTHEW
Congratulations.

He turns to walk away. Steph grabs his arm and pulls him back. Matthew rips it free.

STEPH
Woah. Easy. I just want to ask you something.

MATTHEW
What?

STEPH
Where do we stand? You and me. I mean, do we -- have a problem now?

Matthew doesn't answer. Doesn't even look at him.

STEPH (cont'd)
Hello?

Still no answer.

STEPH (cont'd)
Okay. I see. I see how we're gonna play this.

He looks over Matt's shoulder, at Joe, then back at Matt.

STEPH (cont'd)
Think you can hide behind him forever?

Steph stares him down. Matt returns the gaze --

-- but then breaks it, turning around and walking away, back toward his house.

CUT TO:

75 INT KITCHEN NIGHT 75

The middle of the night, but no one's sleeping. JOE lights a cigarette from a candle with shaking hands and takes a puff. He, MATTHEW, and ANNIE sit around the kitchen table, shaken hard. Matt is holding SARAH, who is asleep on his shoulder. * They all whisper, not to wake her. *

MATTHEW
(to Annie) *
Your parents' place is closest. *

(CONTINUED)

75 CONTINUED: 75

ANNIE
How do we know the power's not out in Colorado, too?

MATTHEW
We don't. But it's gotta be better than here. It's not that far, we've driven it before --

JOE
Hang on, let me get this straight. You want to run?

MATTHEW
Look, we're the ones who have a kid, okay? It's a little different.

JOE
You want to run away?

MATTHEW
It's not running away!

JOE
What the hell's the matter with you?

MATTHEW
Nothing's the matter with me, a guy just died in my driveway and I can't get the fucking image out of my head, that's all!

JOE
Well, I certainly do apologize. I'm sorry I made you have that image in your head.

MATTHEW
That's not what I meant. *

JOE
I promise it's ten times worse for me.

MATTHEW
I'm sure it is. I'm not saying that.

JOE
Just be grateful you didn't have to get your hands dirty.

Matthew lets it go. Joe does not.

(CONTINUED)

75 CONTINUED: 2 75

JOE (cont'd)
No, actually, let me be absolutely clear about this. I feel <u>good</u> about what I did. I <u>acted</u>, me and that guy across the street, and you, or you, or your child may be <u>alive</u> because we acted. Okay?

They do not respond. After a moment:

JOE (cont'd)
But tomorrow morning, if you want me to leave, I will.

ANNIE
No. We're <u>all</u> leaving. Until this is over. We're getting the hell <u>away</u> from this.

CUT TO:

76 INT LIVING ROOM NIGHT 76

The middle of the night. JOE sits on the sofa, his eyes big and empty, smoking a cigarette by candlelight. A sound makes him jump -- *

-- but it's only ANNIE.

ANNIE
Mind if I sit here?

He shakes his head no. She sits.

ANNIE (cont'd)
Can't sleep either? *

Joe shakes his head. He won't look at her. She leans forward, takes one of his cigarettes from the pack, and lights it from the candle. *

They sit in silence for a moment. She looks at him again. *

ANNIE (cont'd)
Are you all right? *

Finally, he makes eye contact with her. His eyes are red and full. He just shakes his head "no."

Annie gets up and goes to him. She sits down on the couch next to him and puts her arms around him. He buries his head in her shoulder and cries, quietly. *

(CONTINUED)

76 CONTINUED: 76

ANNIE (cont'd)
(whispering)
It's okay. It's okay. Shhhh. *

After a moment, he pulls his head off her shoulder and looks at her. They're very close. The moment seems to last an awfully long time -- *

- and then Annie gets up. She puts her hand on his one more time.

ANNIE (cont'd)
Good night, Joey. *

She blows out the candle and leaves the room. *

CUT TO:

77 INT BEDROOM NIGHT 77

ANNIE creeps back into the bedroom. MATT is in bed, facing away from her. His eyes are wide open. She slides into bed next to him, trying not to disturb him, but he rolls over and looks at her.

ANNIE
(whispers)
Did I wake you?

He doesn't answer. She moves closer.

ANNIE (cont'd)
Your feet are freezing!

He stares at her for a moment --

-- then rolls over again, facing away. There is a long pause. She thinks.

ANNIE (cont'd)
Matt?

No answer.

ANNIE (cont'd)
Why are your feet so cold? *

Still no answer. She rolls over, facing away from him. *

ANNIE (cont'd)
Shit. *

CUT TO:

78 EXT SWIMMING POOL DAY 78

The morning sun reflects off the surface of the Kays' swimming pool. At the bottom of the water we can just make out the shimmery outline of the submerged twelve gauge and box of shotgun shells, just where Annie said they were.

Sunday

A figure moves, under the water, swimming toward the gun and shells. It grabs onto them and kicks, heading up.

The figure breaks the surface -- it's JOE, stripped to his shorts. He sets the gun and shells carefully on the brick edge of the pool and looks at them despondently.

Over this and the following, JOE'S VOICE:

JOE (v.o.)
Okay. Boulder is five hundred and thirty miles from here.

79 INT HOUSE DAY 79

JOE has laid out the shotgun shells, one by one, on a towel in the kitchen to dry. He has another towel and is carefully blotting the shotgun dry, bit by bit.

JOE (v.o.)
We'll drive my truck, it's got four wheel, you never know.

80 INT BEDROOM DAY 80

ANNIE throws clothes into a suitcase. She has SARAH with her, and she will from now on.

JOE (v.o.)
If we can keep up twenty or so miles a gallon, that means we'll need twenty-six gallons total.

81 INT GARAGE DAY 81

MATTHEW opens the garage door, spilling sunlight into the dark, dirty space.

JOE (v.o.)
The tank holds fourteen, we can siphon some from the other two cars and keep it in a can in the trunk.

Matt hunts through a pile of crap and comes up with a length of plastic tubing. He SNAPS the tubing out of the pile and cuts one end with an exact-o knife.

(CONTINUED)

81 CONTINUED: 81

JOE (v.o.)
That means somewhere between here and Colorado we're going to need another seven gallons of gas. Gas stations aren't going to be open. Even if they are, they won't sell to us. And even if they would, we couldn't pay.

82 OMITTED 82

83 EXT DRIVEWAY DAY 83

MATTHEW is in the driveway now, one end of the plastic hose stuck into the gas tank of his Honda, the other end in his mouth.

He takes a gentle suck, gets nothing, tries harder --

JOE (v.o.)
But along the way, we are going to have to get our hands on that extra seven gallons. Somehow.

-- and spits out a mouthful of gas. He quickly shoves the now-flowing end of the siphon hose into the open top of a five-gallon gas can.

While the gas drains, he looks up, across the street. STEPH stands in the garage of his house. Watching him. Matt looks away.

84 EXT YARD DAY 84

JOE is in the side yard of Matt and Annie's house. He carefully slides one of the now-dried shotgun shells into the belly of the twelve gauge. MATTHEW appears and approaches him.

MATTHEW
Hey, Joe --

Joe FLICKS the safety off, puts the gun to his shoulder, aims it at the ground, and pulls the trigger.

CLICK. Misfire.

MATTHEW (cont'd)
Yo, c'mon, let's go.

Joe RACKS the pump, expelling the useless shell, and pulls the trigger again.

CLICK. Misfire. He racks.

(CONTINUED)

84 CONTINUED: 84

MATTHEW (cont'd)
They're not gonna work, not after they sat at --

CLICK. Misfire. He racks.

MATTHEW (cont'd)
-- the bottom of the pool for --

KA-BOOM!

Matthew leaps backwards as the gun BLASTS.

84A EXT DRIVEWAY DAY 84A

ANNIE, loading SARAH into the car seat in the back of Joe's Explorer, jumps at the gunshot.

84B EXT SIDE YARD DAY 84B

JOE picks up the empty shell casing and flips it to MATT.

JOE
Some of 'em work.

85 THRU 86 OMITTED 85 THRU 86

87 EXT DRIVEWAY DAY 87

JOE wraps the shotgun in a blanket and puts it in the back of his Explorer. ANNIE stares at him from the passenger seat. Their eyes meet; he looks away quickly. *

JOE
Won't do us any good if we don't bring it.

MATTHEW comes from the house, and notices Annie sitting in the passenger seat. He turns to Joe.

MATTHEW
Mind if I drive?

JOE
Uh, yeah, kinda.

MATTHEW
C'mon, no big deal.

JOE
My car.

(CONTINUED)

87 CONTINUED: 87

MATTHEW
We'll switch off.

JOE
Your car, you drive. My car, I drive.

He gets into the driver's seat. Matt looks over at Annie plaintively.

ANNIE
You know I get carsick in back.

87A MOMENTS LATER, 87A

the Explorer, all loaded and ready to go, backs into frame, revealing MATT, steamed, sitting in the back seat next to SARAH, who's in her car seat. JOE drives, ANNIE is in front next to him.

The car pulls out of frame, and out of the cul-de-sac.

DISSOLVE TO:

88 OMITTED 88

89 EXT LONELY HIGHWAY DAY 89

The long, straight cul-de-sac dissolves into an image of a longer, straighter two-lane highway in the middle of nowhere. The highway's pretty busy, considering where it is, a continuous stream of cars zips by, one every five or ten seconds.

Tall, green corn grows on the left side of the road, the "Plainfield Cafe" is planted on the right. Five or six cars are parked in front of the Cafe, Joe's approaching Explorer turns into the gravel parking lot and makes it six or seven.

JOE, MATT, and ANNIE get out of the car and stretch their legs. Joe wanders over to the antique-looking gas pump.

MATTHEW
Any gas?

JOE
(peering at the pump)
Not since it was forty-five cents a gallon.

90 INT PLAINFIELD CAFE DAY 90 *

Inside the cafe, JOE steps to the counter just as a WAITER turns away, carrying two plates with sandwiches and two cans of Coke. Instead of hanging with Joe, we go with the Waiter as he crosses the room --

-- and stops at a table on the other side. There's a Guy at the table, facing away from us, but we can see he has a familiar, dangly earring. The Waiter comes around him.

The guy is RAYMOND, the man from the movie theatre and the gun shop. There are two place settings on the table, one in front of Raymond, one across from him. But no one is sitting across from him.

WAITER
(setting down the plates)
Two cheese sandwiches, two warm Cokes. Sorry, that's the best we can do. *

RAYMOND
Thanks.

The Waiter walks off. Raymond looks up, and his glance falls on the booth across from him. TWO REDNECKS are staring at him. He looks away. They don't. It makes him uneasy.

Raymond checks his watch, then casts an anxious glance up at a door marked "REST ROOM."

RAYMOND (cont'd)
(mumbles)
Come on, hurry up.

The front door of the cafe opens and a guy walks in. GARY is in his early forties, dressed in jeans and a denim jacket it looks like he's had on for days.

As Gary comes in, Joe, who has his Coke now, passes him, headed out. They bump each other and mumble "excuse me's" over their shoulders without looking back.

Gary looks around the cafe and goes to a MAN and WOMAN in a booth. Something ain't necessarily right about Gary, and Raymond watches him.

Raymond jumps as Gary LAUGHS hard, sarcastically, at something the Man or Woman said. Raymond keeps an eye on him as Gary turns and looks around the cafe, scanning the clientele.

Gary's eyes fall on Raymond, who looks away. Too late. Gary comes over to his table. He looks Raymond up and down.

GARY
Hey. Name's Gary.

(CONTINUED)

90 CONTINUED: 90

He offers his hand. Raymond shakes it.

RAYMOND
Raymond.

GARY
You know anything about cars, Ray?

RAYMOND
Nope.

GARY
Shit. Oil pump's about to go, I think. You don't know anything at all?

RAYMOND *
Sorry.

Gary nods, just staring at him. He looks at the sandwiches on the table.

GARY
Yum.
(another thought)
Spare any gas?

RAYMOND
Can't do it.

GARY
For ten bucks a gallon?

RAYMOND
Said I can't.

GARY
You can't spare one gallon of gas, for ten bucks.

RAYMOND
That's right.

Gary smiles and shakes his head. He looks at the WOMAN in the booth next to Raymond's, who's staring at him anxiously.

GARY
(to the Woman)
This guy's a terrible businessman.

(CONTINUED)

90 CONTINUED: 2 90

The Woman looks away. Gary looks at Raymond's table and notices the empty place setting.

GARY (cont'd)
What about your friend? He got a car?

RAYMOND
We're together.

GARY
Guess it's just tough shit for me, huh?

RAYMOND
I didn't say that.

GARY
Sure you did.

Raymond notices Gary is looking down at the table again and he follows his gaze. Gary's staring at Raymond's car keys. Gary looks up again. Raymond meets his eyes.

Gary turns abruptly and calls out to the Waiter.

GARY (cont'd)
Hey, where's the john?

The Waiter points to the door in back. Gary starts to turn, but Raymond's voice stops him.

RAYMOND
(quick and hard)
Someone's in there right now.

GARY
Sor-ree. Who is it, the Pope?

RAYMOND
Be out in a minute.

Gary just looks at him and sighs.

GARY
I don't think you and I are ever going to be friends.

He turns and walks off, to the far end of the counter, climbs into a chair, and starts in on the waiter.

Raymond watches him until he's seated, then casts another anxious look at the bathroom, and that empty seat across from him.

CUT TO:

91 EXT HIGHWAY DAY 91

At the intersection of two state highways, three or four cars are stopped beside a large white truck with an ice cream cone on the side. A handwritten sign leaning against the truck says "FREE!"

Joe's truck pulls up and stops and MATT, ANNIE, and JOE get out, stretching their legs. Joe and Annie head across the road, Matt leans against the car, glancing in at SARAH, asleep in her car seat.

Matt turns and watches Joe and Annie as they get big helpings of half-melted, gloppy ice cream from the truck.

Matt looks around, at several PEOPLE leaning against their cars, eating ice cream. There's a weird sort of peace out here, a respite from the storm.

A car, a newish red four door Cadillac, ZIPS down the road between the cars, faster than it ought to for so many people around. Matt glances at it in annoyance, but it's already gone.

Matt looks down the road at a WOMAN, sixtyish, sitting on the hood of the car in front of theirs. She smiles at him.

Across the road, Annie turns and walks away from the truck. She has a cone, which is ill-advised, drippy as it is. He watches as she walks off by herself, struggling with it.

A breeze blows, whipping her hair around her head. She brushes it away the best she can with one hand, and as she does she notices him staring at her.

She looks at him. She pushes himself forward and walks across the road to him. She looks up at him apologetically, a lot on her mind, not saying any of it. He reaches out and brushes her hair away for her, tucking it behind one ear.

ACROSS THE ROAD,

Joe stands by the ice cream truck, staring at them for a long time, a strange look on his face. Matt pulls Annie close, and she holds onto him.

Now another car drives through this little gathering, this one a new black BMW with heavily tinted windows that prevent even a glimpse inside. The car slows and turns up a long, gravel driveway, headed for a beat-up farmhouse.

Joe watches the car as it goes, throwing up a cloud of dust as it winds up the drive toward the farmhouse. He furrows his brow.

(CONTINUED)

91 CONTINUED: 91

MATTHEW
(suddenly beside him)
Ready?

Joe points at the car, and the house it's heading for.

JOE
Look at that. You live in the middle of nowhere, your house is a pile of shit, there are actual holes in the walls, but instead of fixing them, you buy a brand-new BMW instead. *

MATTHEW
So?

JOE
So who would do that?

MATTHEW
(shrugs)
These people.

JOE
(shakes his head)
That's not their car.

MATTHEW
Maybe it's the son of the owners. He moved to the city with nothing, made good, and now he's returned to his roots to care for his aged and * frightened parents during this time of trouble.

JOE
Try this. BMW guy comes running out of the city, like us, like everybody else. He runs low on gas. Suddenly, he realizes he has no food or shelter. He sees this house. So he pulls up the driveway, waits for the right moment, then breaks in, kills the owner, and lives off his stuff.

Matt just looks at him for a moment, then laughs. Joe laughs too. They look back at the BMW. It just sits there, seeming * to wait, nobody getting out. The dust settles around it.

Annie appears next to them.

ANNIE
Let's hit it.

(CONTINUED)

91 CONTINUED: 2 91

They turn and head for their car. Just as they turn, the driver's door of the BMW opens.

CUT TO:

92 92 *
THRU OMITTED THRU *
93 93 *

94 EXT HIGHWAY DAY 94

Further down the highway, a newish red four door Cadillac sits by the side of the road, abandoned, its hood and trunk opened in a position indicating distress. It's parked on the wrong side of the road, and skid marks behind it indicate a sudden stop.

A big black crow is perched on top of the car, not a very good vantage point, but it'll do.

In the distance, the Explorer approaches. It passes the distressed car, slows, and stops in front of it. The crow lazily flaps its wings and takes off.

95 INT CAR DAY 95

JOE starts to get out of the car.

MATTHEW
What's up?

(CONTINUED)

95 CONTINUED: 95

JOE
See that abandoned car behind us?

Matt turns and looks out the back, at the red car.

96 EXT ROAD DAY 96

JOE upends their gas can into the Explorer's tank.

JOE
Go see if he's got any gas we can siphon. Maybe we can fill up the can again.

MATT looks over to the abandoned Cadillac. He walks back toward it. As he draws close, he sees under the hood. It's a steaming, smelly, oil-stained mess.

Matthew pauses, checking it out.

Looking down, he notices something odd. No license plates. He looks back at Joe.

MATTHEW
No plates.

Joe doesn't seem to hear. Matt continues toward the car. As he moves along the hood, he leans in close, looking down at the dashboard. There's a plastic frame inside the dashboard, long and thin, but nothing in it.

Matt turns back to Joe again.

MATTHEW (cont'd)
No VIN number either.

JOE
What?

MATTHEW
The identification number, you know, the little metal tag, it's not --

He turns back, to gesture to the dashboard, and just as he does --

-- a MAN pops up from inside. Scared out of his skin, Matthew leaps back a few feet and SHOUTS.

MATTHEW (cont'd)
Jesus Christ!

JOE
What is it?!

(CONTINUED)

96 CONTINUED: 96

Matthew walks quickly back to his own car.

MATTHEW
There's a guy in there!

Joe sets down the gas can as Matthew reaches him.

JOE
Take it easy.

ANNIE looks out from inside the car.

ANNIE
What's going on?

MATTHEW
Nothing, this guy startled me, that's all.

ANNIE
What guy?

The guy gets out of the car. It's GARY, the guy from the cafe. He smiles broadly and raises his hand in a wave as he walks over toward them.

GARY
Hello there!

Wiping his hands on his trousers, Joe walks forward and meets Gary halfway. Matthew follows.

JOE
Hello. What happened?

They stop midway between the cars.

GARY
Boom, that's what happened. Oil pump finally blew. I knew it was coming -- had to happen today, right? Been sitting here for an hour. * Couldn't get anybody to stop to save my life, finally I quit trying. Once the heat let up, I was gonna try and walk back to that --

He gestures behind him, to the twin towers of a nuclear power plant far in the distance.

GARY (cont'd)
-- but I think it's shut down anyway. Guess I fell asleep.

(CONTINUED)

96 CONTINUED: 2 96

MATTHEW
Did you come from the city?

GARY
Sure did.
(to Matt)
You scared the hell out of me.

MATTHEW
Yeah. Likewise.

Pause.

GARY
Any chance of my getting a ride from you guys?

MATTHEW
Well, uh --

As he lights a cigarette, Gary stretches his neck around them for a look at their car. He sees Annie in the front seat, holding Sarah. She's looking back at them. *

GARY
You got room in there?

As he puts away his cigarettes, Gary's denim jacket parts ever so slightly. There is a brilliant glint as the sunlight catches something metallic shoved in his belt. *

It's the butt end of a gun. Joe notices. He looks over at Matthew, to see if he saw. He did not.

Gary turns back to them and smiles.

GARY (cont'd)
You sure would be saving my life.

A moment goes by. Joe is thinking like crazy.

GARY (cont'd)
So. What do you say?

JOE
Listen, the fact is, we're kinda full up.

GARY
Oh, no. You sure?

JOE
I think so, yeah.

(CONTINUED)

96 CONTINUED: 3 96

GARY
(to Matthew)
You think so too? 'Cause the thing is, I really have to have a ride.

Silence for a second. Joe just stares at him.

MATTHEW
(relenting)
Well --

Joe cuts him off.

JOE
(to Gary)
Geez, it sure must have been hot in there, you look like you took a dip in our pool. I did the same thing this morning.
(to Matt)
You know what I mean?

Matt looks at him for a moment, then deciphers that statement. He looks back at Gary.

MATTHEW
He's right. We barely fit, the four of us.

Gary just stares at him.

GARY
Sorry to hear you say that.

That had menace to it. Joe suddenly brightens.

JOE
Hey, you know what? Wait here a second, let me see if I can shove a few things around and make room.

GARY
Oh, I'd sure appreciate that. I'll grab my stuff.

He turns and heads for the Cadillac. Joe turns and walks quickly to the Explorer. Matthew goes with him.

MATTHEW
He's got a gun?!

JOE
That's right.

(CONTINUED)

96 CONTINUED: 4 96

Matthew inadvertantly slows, but Joe grabs him by the jacket and pulls him along.

BEHIND THEM,

Gary, looking back over his shoulder, notices their hushed tones and the hitch in Matthew's step. His smile fades.

AT THE CAR,

Joe gets in and makes a big show of rummaging in the back, shoving things this way and that. He looks up at Matthew, who stands near the door, frozen.

JOE
Talk to him. Stay between him and me.

Annie, in front, turns around.

ANNIE
What's going on?

JOE
Nothing. Just giving this guy some water.

ON THE ROAD,

Matthew turns away from the car, to head toward Gary --

-- but Gary is already walking towards him.

MATTHEW
It's okay -- I think if we put some stuff on the roof --

IN THE CAR,

Joe tugs sharply on one end of the blanket, spinning the shotgun out onto the floor.

ANNIE
Joe?!

JOE
Get down on the floor.

ON THE ROAD,

Joe backs slowly out of the car, right behind Matthew. He starts to draw the gun out behind him --

-- Gary's eyes widen as he identifies what the shape is --

(CONTINUED)

96 CONTINUED: 5 96

GARY
Hey!

-- Joe pulls back faster, revealing the shotgun --

-- and Gary draws his pistol and FIRES.

A CRACK echoes over the highway. Matthew gapes as the slug WHIZZES right past him and SLAMS into Joe, blowing him off his feet.

He lands flat on his back in the middle of the road. The shotgun CLATTERS to the pavement and SKITTERS a few feet further.

GARY (cont'd)
WHY'D YOU DO THAT?!

In the car, Annie SCREAMS and scrambles over the seat to Sarah, in the back.

Matthew runs to Joe and bends over him. His chest is a bloody mess, near his right shoulder. Joe's pawing at it, his eyes wide open in disbelief.

MATTHEW
YOU SHOT HIM!!

ANNIE
IS HE OKAY IS HE OKAY?!?

MATTHEW
STAY IN THE CAR!!

ANNIE
WHAT HA-

MATTHEW
ON THE FLOOR!

She pulls Sarah out of her seat and covers her with her body. Matthew crawls frantically across the pavement and paws at the shotgun.

CRACK!

Another gunshot, and this one BLASTS up a chunk of pavement between Matthew and the shotgun. Matthew jerks his hand away from the gun and Gary is on him in two more steps.

GARY
DON'T TOUCH IT!!

Matthew looks up at him.

(CONTINUED)

96 CONTINUED: 6 96

GARY (cont'd)
I WASN'T GONNA DO NOTHIN'!

MATTHEW
Why, why did you do it, why -- ?!

GARY
I JUST WANTED A RIDE, WHY'D HE HAVE TO PULL A GUN?!

Gary fumbles a handkerchief out of his pocket and picks up the shotgun with it. He flings the gun into the bushes. As he does, his "John Deere" baseball cap comes off and falls to the pavement.

Gary turns and points his pistol at Annie, who is on the floor with Sarah.

GARY (cont'd)
GET OUT OF THE CAR!!

MATTHEW
Do it!

Annie scrambles out of the car, holding Sarah.

GARY
DON'T LOOK AT ME!

She huddles near the ground and stares at it, using as much of her body as possible to cover her baby. Gary jumps into the driver's seat of the Explorer.

MATTHEW
Don't take the car, please, please, wait --

GARY
The fucker pulled his gun first. Remember that.

He punches the gas --

-- and SQUEALS away.

Matthew crawls across the concrete to where Annie is huddled over Sarah and grabs onto them.

MATTHEW
Are you okay are you okay?!

Annie is crying. Matthew looks up, watching, desperate, as the truck recedes into the distance. As the sun beats down, they are a tableau --

(CONTINUED)

96 CONTINUED: 7 96

-- the abandoned Cadillac by the side of the road --

-- Joe's body, writhing on the center stripe --

-- and Matthew, Annie, and Sarah, huddled in the middle of the asphalt.

CUT TO:

97 INT ABANDONED CAR DAY 97

Late afternoon. JOE lies in the back seat of the abandoned car, his chest wrapped tightly in a jacket that serves as a makeshift bandage, blood seeping through it. He's conscious, but shivering violently, sweating. Annie is with him, * holding SARAH, trying to keep them both calm. *

98 ON THE ROAD, 98

MATTHEW stands in the middle of the highway, staring off into the distance. His eyes look almost artificial, big and empty. A car approaches. Matthew waves to it, frantic. *

MATTHEW *
Hey! Help!

The car draws closer, and it's moving very fast. Matthew * stays exactly where he is.

MATTHEW (cont'd)
Stop! Stop!

The car draws closer. The driver lays on his HORN and holds * it down. Matthew stays rooted in the middle of the road. *

MATTHEW (cont'd)
STOP PLEASE STOP!!

(CONTINUED)

98 CONTINUED: 98

It's a matter of split-seconds now, Matthew is right in the middle of the road and the driver obviously has no intention of even slowing down, but Matthew holds his ground --

ANNIE
(shouting from the car)
MATTHEW, MOVE! *

-- Matthew just closes his eyes, his feet planted in the center of the road --

-- and the car cuts ever so slightly around him, nailing him with a BLAST of air, but nothing else. *

CUT TO:

99 EXT HIGHWAY DAY 99

The day is fading now. ANNIE is in the scrub brush at the side of the road, hunting for something. She finds it.

The twelve gauge.

She comes back to the car. Matthew is standing next to it, holding SARAH. Annie returns, with the gun. She takes the baby from him and hands him the weapon.

He holds it up, pointing to the safety, a little metal post next to the trigger.

MATTHEW
Safety. On.
(click)
Off.

Annie nods. He puts the safety catch back on.

MATTHEW (cont'd)
Tight to your shoulder, like this.
It'll kick. *

ANNIE
To shoot again?

In answer, he racks the pump and a shell flies out the side. She nods and takes the gun from him.

(CONTINUED)

99 CONTINUED: 99

She picks up the shell and replaces it in the belly of the gun, which accepts it with a metallic CLICK.

MATTHEW
Some got soaked. But some didn't. Just keep racking and pulling the trigger until one works.

ANNIE
How long will it take you? *

MATTHEW
It's at least an hour just to get to the house.

ANNIE
You're sure there was a car?

MATTHEW
I saw it pull in.

He holds the gun out to her. She takes it.

100 EXT HIGHWAY DUSK 100

As the sun goes down, Matthew turns and walks away from the car, leaving ANNIE, holding SARAH, behind him. He bends down and picks something up from the middle of the road.

It's a "John Deere" baseball cap, the one Gary wore. Matthew puts it on. He picks up his pace, walking faster.

Then jogging.

Then running down the middle of the highway.

CUT TO:

101 INT CAR DUSK 101

JOE is awake in back, his eyes big and empty. We think the worst for a moment, but then he turns his head to the sound of soft SINGING coming from the front seat, where ANNIE cradles SARAH in her arms.

The baby isn't crying, exactly, but she's far from happy.

ANNIE
(singing)
Lullaby. And goodnight. Go to bed now, sleep tight. Close your eyes and -- start to yawn -- pleasant dreams until the dawn.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

101 CONTINUED: 101

ANNIE (cont'd)
When the sun -- lights the sky -- you will wake feeling --

She stops, starting to cry. She forces herself on.

ANNIE (cont'd)
Close your eyes -- start to yawn -- dreams until -- dawn.

CUT TO:

102 EXT FARMHOUSE DUSK 102

This is the farmhouse Matthew and Joe saw from where they were stopped on the side of the road. The BMW is still in the driveway.

In the gathering night, MATTHEW half-walks, half-jogs along the shoulder of the road and stops at the foot of the driveway. He bends over, hands on knees, catching his breath.

He summons himself and starts up the driveway. It's a long walk. He tries to catch his breath as he draws closer. He reaches the front porch. He climbs it. He pauses, then RAPS confidently on the door.

A long moment goes by. Matthew reaches out, to knock again, but the door jerks open suddenly, stopped by a chain. The man inside --

-- is RAYMOND. He has a flashlight, which he holds on Matthew while he speaks.

RAYMOND
Yes?

Matthew blinks, there's something vaguely familiar about the guy. He squints from the probing beam of the flashlight, trying to place him.

RAYMOND (cont'd)
What do you want?

MATTHEW
(short of breath)
My name -- is Matthew -- Kay. We were -- driving -- we stopped to help someone whose car had broken down -- my friend was shot -- the man stole our car --

Raymond studies him. *

(CONTINUED)

102 CONTINUED: 102

He furrows his brow, maybe recognizing it, maybe not, definitely confused and suspicious. While Matthew talks, Raymond glances around outside, looking for others.

MATTHEW (cont'd)
My wife and baby -- we're stranded out on the road, four or five miles back. We have to get to a hospital. Is there any way -- can you drive us?

RAYMOND
You want me to drive you?

MATTHEW
Or -- we could use your car. I can give you money -- once the power's back --

RAYMOND
You mean take my car?

Matthew fumbles in his pocket for his wallet and shows his driver's license.

MATTHEW
You can keep my driver's license. You can keep the whole wallet --

RAYMOND
Just hold it up.

Matthew does, and Raymond shines the light on it, examining it. Matthew squints at Raymond, almost recognizing him.

MATTHEW
Do I know you?

RAYMOND
No, man. You don't know me. And I don't know you.

MATTHEW
No one will stop -- the guy stole our food and water --

Raymond finishes examining the license and shines the light back in Matthew's face. Finally --

(CONTINUED)

102 CONTINUED: 2 102

-- the flashlight CLICKS off.

RAYMOND
I can give you some food and water.

He starts to close the door. Matthew panics.

MATTHEW
Wait a minute, wait a minute --

RAYMOND
Look, man, I gotta be honest, I don't know if you're lying -- I can't risk it.

MATTHEW
You don't know if I'm lying?!

RAYMOND
That's right.

MATTHEW
If I was lying I would have kicked through the God damn door by now!

RAYMOND
What are you talking like that for? That isn't gonna help you! That isn't gonna help you at all.

Matthew notices something. The window to the right of the door has a pane broken in the top, near where the window latches.

MATTHEW
This isn't your house.

RAYMOND
What?

MATTHEW
Whose house is this? *

RAYMOND
(indignant)
Somebody I know. I don't have to * explain myself to you. *

MATTHEW
You're full of shit. *

RAYMOND
Hey, who the hell are you to talk to * me like that?! *

(CONTINUED)

102 CONTINUED: 3 102

MATTHEW
Just let me use your God damn car!

RAYMOND
No, I will not let you use my God damn car! I have responsibilities too, okay, and I can't just hand over my car to anybody who asks! How do I know you don't have another guy waiting in the bushes as soon as I open the door?! Huh?

MATTHEW
My friend is going to <u>die</u>! He's going to bleed to death in the car! Don't you-

RAYMOND
Wait a minute, stop right there. I thought you said your car got stolen.

MATTHEW
(flustered)
It did, it's -- it's not --

RAYMOND
Yeah, okay. Like I said, I'll give you food.

MATTHEW
(trying to control himself)
No, a <u>ride</u>! I <u>told</u> you, I need a <u>ride</u>!

RAYMOND
Get away. From the door.

MATTHEW
What if I forced my way in? What would you do then?

103 INSIDE THE HOUSE, 103

for the first time, we see the other side of the door. Raymond is holding it shut with both hands, his left near the crack and his right in the middle of the door.

The right, which Matthew can't see --

-- is holding a .38.

RAYMOND
I would stop you.

104 BACK OUTSIDE, 104

the two men stare each other down for a long moment. Finally, Matt turns and walks away, quickly, feet CRUNCHING on the gravel driveway.

CUT TO:

105 INT ABANDONED CAR NIGHT 105

A very, very dark night. Back in the abandoned car, MATTHEW slides the shotgun shells back into the belly of the gun, one by one. JOE is conscious now, and staring at him, his face covered in sweat. ANNIE, holding SARAH, is sitting in the front seat. They're looking at him too. Matt doesn't return any of their gazes.

As he works, a sound comes from the distance, the WHINING of engines, cars operating at high speed. The sound grows rapidly louder as the cars get closer.

Matthew ignores the sound, calmly loading the gun as four cars BLAST by, right on each others' tails, doing at least ninety.

He RACKS the pump once. The gun is loaded.

CUT TO:

106 OMITTED 106

107 EXT FARMHOUSE NIGHT 107

Night envelopes the little farmhouse in the middle of nowhere. Smoke now curls out of the chimney of the house, firelight is visible through the windows.

Raymond must be up, keeping watch. MATTHEW arrives again, stepping up to the foot of the driveway, the very place he stood before --

-- but this time he's got the shotgun.

108 EXT SIDE OF HOUSE NIGHT 108

From the side, the house looks even smaller. Matthew creeps through the desert brush, moving as low to the ground as he can, and approaches a window.

He reaches the side of the house and leans against it. He turns and raises his head, slowly, to window level.

109 THROUGH THE WINDOW, 109

he sees the empty living room. A fire does indeed burn in the fireplace, throwing exaggerated shadows on the walls.

Whoever used to live here must have moved out, and they only left a few sticks of furniture, like a tall wardrobe against the wall and the coffee table in the middle of this room.

But the table's in use, a solitaire game laid out on it. A FIGURE passes right in front of Matthew's field of vision, startling him.

It's RAYMOND, returning to his game, carrying a Coleman lantern and a can of beer.

Matthew freezes. Raymond sits down with his back to him and goes back to his game.

Also on the table in front of Raymond, Matthew sees what he is looking for.

Raymond's car keys.

On the other side of the living room, there is a doorway that leads to the bedrooms. To the right there is an archway that leads to the kitchen.

110 OUTSIDE, 110

Matthew pulls back from the window. He continues around the house, casing it. There's a doorway in back, at the top of a few stairs, that seems to lead into the kitchen. Doesn't look right.

Matthew continues on, looking for a vulnerable place to try to enter the house.

Around the corner at the bedroom side, he finds a certain window and looks through it. It leads to an empty bedroom. He examines the window. It's held by a single lock, the kind that twists into a clasp in the middle of the frame.

111 OMITTED 111

112 INT HOUSE NIGHT 112

Raymond CRACKS open the beer. He deals out another hand of solitaire, very particular about where he lays the cards, very orderly.

113 EXT HOUSE NIGHT 113

Matt works his way down the side of the house, to the next window. He peers through it. The moonlight spills in on a bathroom.

Suddenly, yellow light from inside washes over Matt's face. He ducks back, out of sight, as the light gets brighter and enters the bathroom.

Matt risks a peek over the ledge.

INSIDE,

he sees Raymond, coming into the bathroom.

OUTSIDE,

Matt gets an idea. He scurries back along the house, to the bedroom window, and rests the butt end of the gun stock against it, waiting.

He turns his head, listening for something. After a few moments, he hears what he was waiting for -- a toilet FLUSHES.

Immediately, Matt BANGS the gun stock into the pane of glass, just hard enough to break it, sending glass TINKLING onto the floor below.

114 INT BATHROOM NIGHT 114

Raymond hears nothing over the ROARING water.

115 EXT WINDOW NIGHT 115

Matt stands, frozen, waiting.

116 INT HOUSE NIGHT 116

Carrying the lantern, Raymond heads back into the living room and resumes his game of solitaire.

117 EXT HOUSE NIGHT 117

Matt picks a few ragged pieces of glass out of the window frame, reaches in, and unlocks the window.

118 INT BEDROOM NIGHT 118

Matt slides the window open, making a space big enough to climb through. That done, he passes the shotgun through first, resting it carefully on the floor next to the window.

119 INT LIVING ROOM NIGHT 119

Raymond doesn't like the way his game of solitaire is going. He messes the cards around to start another.

120 INT BEDROOM NIGHT 120

Matthew passes himself through the window, one limb at a time. Moving slowly, he finally brings himself fully into the room and stands upright.

He nearly loses his balance, but catches himself. His breathing is quicker, and he's trying to contain it, keep it quiet. Not moving his feet, he reaches over and picks up the shotgun.

He takes a single step forward --

-- and his shoe CRUNCHES down on the broken glass.

121 INT LIVING ROOM NIGHT 121

Raymond turns his head. He heard it.

122 INT BEDROOM NIGHT 122

Matt, both feet on the floor and gun in hand now, keeps moving. He creeps across the room, silently.

122A INT LIVING ROOM NIGHT 122A

For a moment, the living room is empty. Then Raymond, also moving quietly, returns from the other room.

But now he's carrying the .38. He looks down at it, thinking. He looks up, at the wardrobe on the other side of the room.

He starts to cross the room, toward the wardrobe, staring at the top of it. There is a small box on the top shelf. A box * of bullets. *

122B INT BEDROOM NIGHT 122B

Nearly out of the room, Matthew steps on a certain board. It SQUEAKS.

122C INT LIVING ROOM NIGHT 122C

Raymond, halfway across the living room with the gun in his hand, hears the sound and freezes in the middle of the floor. He turns and looks through the archway, toward the kitchen.

122D INT DINING ROOM NIGHT 122D

Looking through the dining room, the kitchen appears empty. We draw closer and closer, until, from around the corner of the refrigerator --

(CONTINUED)

122D CONTINUED: 122D

-- an eye peers out. It's Matthew. Slowly, silently, he steps out from the cover of the refrigerator and starts to make his way across the kitchen floor.

He reaches the dining room. Ahead, he can see into the living room. It's empty. He continues forward.

Near the archway now, he can see the coffee table in the middle of the floor. Raymond's car keys are sitting in the middle of it. Beyond them, the front door, only a few feet further.

Close to his goal, Matthew walks faster, into the living room.

123 INT LIVING ROOM NIGHT 123

As Matthew passes through the archway, only feet from the keys, he glances quickly to his right, to make sure Raymond's not pressed against the wall.

Unfortunately, his excitement makes him careless and he does not dart a look to his left --

-- which is where Raymond is, flattened against the wall just beside the arch.

Matthew covers the few steps to the keys and reaches down to pick them up.

Behind him, Raymond raises the .38 and points it at the back of Matthew's head.

Matt's hand is just inches from the keys when Raymond's VOICE speaks up from behind him.

RAYMOND
Leave 'em right where they are.

Matthew whirls, raising the shotgun and pointing it at Raymond. Now both men, facing a gun barrel, panic and start to SHOUT.

MATTHEW
PUT IT DOWN!

RAYMOND
YOU PUT IT DOWN!

MATTHEW
PUT THE GOD DAMN GUN --

RAYMOND
-- DOWN, RIGHT NOW, PUT IT --

(CONTINUED)

123 CONTINUED: 123

MATTHEW
I ASKED YOU! I BEGGED YOU FOR THAT CAR --

RAYMOND
YOU GOT NO RIGHT TO BE HERE!

MATTHEW
PUT THE MOTHER FUCKING GUN DOWN!

Enraged, Matthew points the shotgun slightly to the left of Raymond's head, intending to frighten him with a warning blast. He pulls the trigger.

CLICK. Misfire.

Matthew's eyes widen. So do Raymond's.

Quickly, Matthew racks the gun, expelling the useless shell.

Raymond turns to the tall wardrobe and grabs the box he wanted before. He loses his grip and the box falls, spilling bullets all over the floor. He flips open the cylinder. The gun was empty. *

Matthew pulls the trigger on the shotgun again.

CLICK. Another misfire.

Hands shaking, Raymond frantically loads a few bullets into the gun.

Matthew RACKS the shotgun.

Raymond SNAPS the cylinder shut.

Matthew pulls the trigger.

INSIDE THE SHOTGUN,

the firing pin drives forward, into the round gold nub at the base of the shell --

-- the pin ignites the powder with a WHOOSH --

-- the end of the shotgun shell unfolds, firing the wad out the end of the barrel with a deafening BLAST --

-- and the ceiling over the fireplace EXPLODES in a shower of wood frame and plaster dust.

IN THE LIVING ROOM,

(CONTINUED)

123 CONTINUED: 2 123

Raymond COCKS his revolver.

Matthew RACKS the shotgun.

Standing on opposite sides of the room, Raymond raises his revolver, pointing it at Matthew's head. At the same time, Matthew raises the shotgun, points it at Raymond's face, and as the barrels of the now-primed weapons swing into position -- *

-- a HIGH-PITCHED SCREAM rises up in the room. Soft at first, the scream must have started some time ago, but neither man heard it over their growing battle. Now, however, the scream is piercing, unavoidable, and it's coming from the doorway to the bedrooms.

Instead of firing at each other, both Raymond and Matthew jerk their heads to see the source of the scream.

It's A SIX YEAR OLD GIRL.

She stands framed in the doorway to the bedrooms. She's staring at them, her arms stiff at her sides like steel rods, her face contorted in horror. The scream is a child's scream, a WAIL, long, plaintive, and horrified.

GIRL
(to Raymond)
DADDY?!

Matthew turns back, facing Raymond, frozen in the bizarre moment.

The little Girl's scream tapers off into sobs. Raymond starts to move toward her, then realizes that would draw Matthew's weapon in that direction too, and he freezes.

RAYMOND
Go back in the room, Kari! BACK IN THE ROOM, KARI!

Matthew just stares at him, for a long moment, absorbing the situation.

And then he lowers his gun.

MATTHEW
(softly)
I'm sorry. I didn't know.

Raymond still has the .38 pointed at Matthew, his hand shaking with rage as he decides what to do now that he has the drop on his adversary.

(CONTINUED)

123 CONTINUED: 3 123

Matthew looks down, at the keys on the coffee table.

MATTHEW (cont'd)
I have to take your car. I will bring it back. And you -- have to trust me. *

Slowly, he bends down and picks up the keys.

RAYMOND
Why the fuck should I trust you?!

Matthew looks at him, thinking, looks right into the barrel of the gun.

MATTHEW
Because I'm going to trust you.

With that, he puts the shotgun down on the table and --

-- turns his back on Raymond, turns his back on the loaded gun pointed at him. He walks out of the house, slowly, giving Raymond all the time in the world to shoot him, if that's what he wants to do.

Raymond takes a few hesitant steps after him, deciding.

124 EXT HOUSE NIGHT 124

MATTHEW walks out of the house, down the steps, and across the gravel driveway, headed toward the BMW. Behind him, he hears the door of the house open and BANG shut. He winces, but doesn't turn. FOOTSTEPS approach him in the dark.

As he reaches the car, he turns to open the door. RAYMOND steps out of the darkness, now carrying his daughter on his hip.

He and Matthew look at each other for a moment.

RAYMOND
I'll drive you.

CUT TO:

125 OMITTED 125

126 EXT ROADSIDE NIGHT 126

The flashing lights of an ambulance cut the gloom over the abandoned car, still parked at the side of the road. TWO PARAMEDICS lift JOE carefully from the back seat and set him on a stretcher.

(CONTINUED)

126 CONTINUED: 126

Raymond's car is parked on the other side of the road, RAYMOND and KARI next to it. MATT, ANNIE, and SARAH are on the opposite side of the road, the ambulance between them.

As the stretcher is wheeled onto the road, Matt makes eye contact with Raymond, across the way. He nods his thanks. Raymond nods back. He opens his mouth, as if he's about to say something --

-- but the ambulance doors open between them, obscuring their view of one another. A PARAMEDIC turns to Matthew, who has been holding a wallet.

PARAMEDIC
Did you find his card?

MATTHEW
Oh --

He opens the wallet and starts flipping through the contents, looking for something. He finds a red health insurance card and pulls it out, but he stops, noticing something under the card.

It's the black and white photo booth strips that was hanging * on the cabinet in their kitchen, the one with the pictures of * Matt, Annie, and Sarah. Matt looks up at Joe, surprised. *

He replaces the picture in the wallet, hands the card to the Paramedic, and goes to Joe. He presses the wallet into Joe's hand. Joe looks up at Matt and raises a hand. Matt takes * it. They look at each other for a long moment -- *

-- and then the Paramedics wheel him into the back of the * ambulance and SLAM the doors. Matt looks up, across the road, to Raymond again. But Raymond, Kari, and his car are gone.

Matt turns. The BMW is pulling away from them, down the road, its taillights disappearing into the night.

Faintly, several dogs begins to BARK in the distance. *

126A INSIDE A LIGHT BULB, 126A

the razor-thin filament SIZZLES and switches on. It wavers delicately, but it burns, burns so brightly that --

CUT TO:

127 THRU 129 OMITTED 127 THRU 129

130 EXT CUL-DE-SAC EVENING 130

-- we have to blink back the brightness for a second. The bulb that lit up is a streetlight, the one that burns vigilantly over the cul-de-sac. The BARKING DOG is louder now, and they walk below us, three or four of them straining mightily at their leashes, reluctantly domesticated, tugging a DOG WALKER along the sidewalk.

The neighborhood seems to be back to normal as this day ends. The WHINE of power tools comes from somewhere on the block. MUSIC comes from somebody's boom box. THREE KIDS play in a sprinkler while a fourth, a LITTLE GIRL, admonishes them from the sidewalk.

The dogs drag the Dog Walker past Matt and Annie's house. MATTHEW sits on his front steps, still in his shirt and tie from the office.

Across the street, STEPH is in his driveway. There's a boat upside down on sawhorses, and he's scraping the bottom. Steph looks up, at Matt. He sees him staring and stops scraping. They stare at each other for a moment.

Behind Matthew, ANNIE comes out of the house, carrying a couple of beers. Over Matthew's shoulder, she sees the staredown between him and Steph.

She watches as this time Steph is the one who looks away. He goes to the wall, punches a button, and his electric garage door closes.

Annie steps forward, holding one of the bottles of beer over Matt's shoulder, pressing it onto the skin of his neck. He jumps from the cold, smiles up at her, and takes it.

She sits down next to him. Behind them, their figures are silhouettes looking out at the cul-de-sac. But there's still a foot or so between them. Matthew reaches over, puts his arm around her waist, and with one sharp tug he closes the distance, pulling her over right next to him.

She rests her head on her husband's shoulder.

FADE OUT.