

WHISPERS
FROM THE
WATCHTOWER

WRITTEN BY
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BLACK SCREEN

A woman's QUIVERING voice, struggling to muster the words:

GRIEVING WOMAN (V.O.)
He's so sweet. Just a sweet little
boy and I want him back. I don't
care how, just get him back to us.

FADE IN:

INT. THE MERIDIAN MOTEL - ROOM 124 - NIGHT

ON TV: a PICTURE of a smiling child, ANTHONY MULLINS, fades
to --

The GRIEVING WOMAN (20s), surrounded by LOVED ONES. She
speaks into camera:

GRIEVING WOMAN
That's all that matters to me.
Please. We just want our Anthony
back.

She turns to her family, barely able to stand. They huddle
around and console her.

MOTEL BED

On all fours --

REESA CLAY (late 20s) watches the report with stoned eyes.
Normally she'd be quite the catch, a serious contender for
"Miss Cuba," if she wasn't busy wading in polluted waters.

She takes in the family. Their sadness. Their closeness.
Suddenly she lurches forward...

NEWS ANCHOR (TV)
That was the mother of six year old
Anthony Mullins, found missing
yesterday at the Holiday Parade...

She lurches forward again. And again. Rhythmically now.
Sounds of sex: skin slapping against skin. Reesa takes it
without a modicum of joy. Or any other emotion.

Her eyes never deviate from the screen.

EXT. THE MERIDIAN MOTEL - ROOM 124 - NIGHT

Outside that very room, a man stands with an ear to the door:

CHACE CLAY (early 40s), Caucasian, handsome but not pretentious. He jerks his ear away from the door, a repulsed look on his face. He backs away from the room --

I/E. SUV - SAME

And climbs inside his FORD EXPLORER. Chace shuts the door and sits there in silence, stewing.

A car pulls up alongside his SUV: A WOMAN (20s) exits the passenger side, giggling, chatting with a MAN (20s) who comes around to meet her.

BOOM! A force rocks Chace's vehicle, he looks out the window: the man and woman are leaning on his Explorer, playing tonsil hockey. Chace rolls down the window:

CHACE

Hey!

They look to him, surprised to see him in the SUV.

CHACE (CONT'D)

You mind? You're all over my car.

MAN

Sorry, mate, we'll take it inside.

Chace rolls up the window, goes back to stewing. Just then:

The couple heads to the motel, the man carrying a sleeping BOY (3) in his arms. Chace watches this young, idyllic family disappear inside a room.

He looks to a RING on his finger. Gives it a turn, then abruptly yanks it off. Chace throws the car door open --

I/E. THE MERIDIAN MOTEL - ROOM 124 - SAME

He storms back to the room and --

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! BANGS a fist on the door.

CHACE

Reesa! Open up!

His plea is met with silence. Chace BANGS on the door again.

CHACE (CONT'D)

Open this goddamn door, Reesa!

Finally it opens, revealing:

LORENZO DE LEON (30s). He glares at Chace with a hard, steely gaze; likely seasoned by a life of crime. He wears boxer shorts and nothing else, his TATTOOS prominently on display.

LORENZO
The fuck you beating on my door
for?

Chace scrutinizes Lorenzo, he recognizes his face.

CHACE
Unbelievable.
(beat)
Tell my wife to get out here.

LORENZO
'Fraid you got the wrong door.

Lorenzo smiles smugly, his eyes taunt Chace, provoking him.

Chace doesn't look away, or back down. Lorenzo's smile dissipates, he steps toward Chace with a menacing sneer.

LORENZO (CONT'D)
You hard of hearing? Step. Away.
Puto.

With the swiftness of an NFL placekicker --

WHAM! Chace boots Lorenzo in his baby-making factory. Lorenzo topples over in excruciating pain, GROANING. Muttering unintelligible words. Chace moves past his squirming body.

CHACE
Reesa!

INT. THE MERIDIAN MOTEL - ROOM 124 - CONTINUOUS

Reesa sits on the bed, worried eyes on the verge of tears. Chace's stare bores a hole through her.

CHACE
I want you gone by tomorrow night.

And with that he walks out the room. Reea rushes to the doorway:

REESA
You hypocrite! Don't you do this!
Chace! I'm done with him!

Lorenzo staggers back inside.

LORENZO
Motherfucker!

Reesa hurriedly collects her belongings, Lorenzo labors to a dresser.

LORENZO (CONT'D)
Ohhh, that motherfucker. I'ma kill
his bitch ass!

REESA
Shut up, Lorenzo!

She slips on a pair of LOW HEELS and hurries outside.

EXT. THE MERIDIAN MOTEL - PARKING LOT - SAME

The Ford Explorer starts to leave.

REESA
Chace, please! Talk to me! Just
stop for a second!

The SUV keeps moving. Reesa sprints after it, hysterical.

REESA (CONT'D)
Don't do this! Don't you run away!
Please, just sto--

CRACK. Reesa tumbles to the ground. Looks like a problem with one of her heels. She rips the shoe off and slams it down in frustration. Again and again and again. She sits there, crying.

Lorenzo appears at her side, holding a GUN.

LORENZO
I'ma make it right. He don't
deserve you no way.

Lorenzo watches this woman, sobbing in her broken state. He crouches down:

LORENZO (CONT'D)
I'ma go ahead and throw it out
there, 'cuz I feel it needs to be
said... I got feelings for you,
baby girl. And I want you back in
Philly with me.

Reesa looks to him.

LORENZO (CONT'D)
I don't wanna do this trading thing
no more. I want you full time.

Reesa removes her other shoe, she's now BAREFOOT.

LORENZO (CONT'D)
After I meet my connect tomorrow,
I'ma tie up the loose ends, then we
out. Cool?

She regards him curiously.

REESA
What do you mean, "loose ends"?

Lorenzo taps the gun on his thigh, gives her a look.

REESA (CONT'D)
Lorenzo, if anything happens to
Chace, I swear to God...

Lorenzo smirks, throws his hands up innocently.

LORENZO
I'm just clowning.
(beat)
But not about you coming with me. I
mean that.

Reesa gets up and heads to an AUDI CONVERTIBLE, shoes in
hand.

LORENZO (CONT'D)
Just think about it, aight?!

She gets in the car and pulls off. BAD GURL on the license
plate. Lorenzo watches her go.

EXT. JAY'S SUPERSTORE - NIGHT

An enormous building, comparable to a Wal-Mart Supercenter.

INT. JAY'S SUPERSTORE - DRESSING ROOM - SAME

AMARI PRICE (early 30s), African American with an honest
face, has stripped to his underwear; he shows off an
impressively toned body. At his feet --

A mound of girl's clothing. He retrieves a PINK T-SHIRT and a
line of TWINE. He ties the shirt tightly around his thigh.
Suddenly --

He looks to the door, seemingly without reason. But a moment later there's a KNOCK.

EMPLOYEE (O.S.)
Excuse me, ma'am? Is this your cart
out here?

AMARI
Yes it is.

EMPLOYEE (O.S.)
Oh. Sir. No carts are allowed in
this area. It's a fire hazard.

Amari looks back to the clothes.

AMARI
Aight, I'll be out in a few
minutes.

He grabs PANTIES, starts to tie that around his other leg.

EMPLOYEE (O.S.)
I'm gonna have to move it to the
desk.

AMARI
Yeah, okay. Whatever.
(mutters under his breath)
Go away.

EMPLOYEE (O.S.)
And by the way, sir, you're in the
women's dressing room.

Amari looks up, "oops."

EXT. CLAY HOUSEHOLD - NIGHT

A two-story house nestled in a small community, alongside the edge of a hilly forest. Bare branches indicate the FALL SEASON.

CHACE (O.S.)
I don't anticipate any problems,
but I'd really like you to stay
until I get back.

INT. CLAY HOUSEHOLD - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Chace makes his way to the door. The baby-sitter --

KARA (early 20s), fresh out of college and hasn't yet found her niche, trails him from behind.

KARA
What if she tells me to leave?

CHACE
Tell her you're being paid to stay.

EMILY
Daddy!

EMILY CLAY (6) sprints into the living room holding RIBBIT, her STUFFED ANIMAL FROG.

KARA
I just don't want to get caught up in anything.

CHACE
You'll be fine.

EMILY
Daddy!

CHACE
Give me a call if there's an issue.

EMILY
DADDY?!

CHACE
Emily, whoa! Jeez. What is it?

EMILY
You didn't kiss Ribbit goodbye.

She stares at Chace with puppy dog eyes.

CHACE
I didn't?

Emily shakes her head, holds Ribbit out in front of her, *"kiss him."*

Chace takes the stuffed animal and gives him a peck on his head, much to Emily's delight. He gives the frog back to his daughter.

CHACE (CONT'D)
We all squared away?

Emily smiles and grabs Ribbit. Chace turns to leave...

CHACE (CONT'D)
Daddy's gotta go to work. You be good for Kara, okay?

EMILY
I will.

CHACE
Oh.

Chace stops, looks back to Emily with a puzzled look.

CHACE (CONT'D)
Can't believe I almost forgot.

EMILY
What?

He rushes over to Emily, attacks her with a flurry of kisses. She SCREAMS in joy.

FADE TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - SUV - NIGHT

Chace's Ford Explorer weaves in and out of light traffic.

INT. SUV - CONTINUOUS

Chace browses radio stations, a good song is hard to find. He finally settles on:

HOST (RADIO)
...one oh one point three, W-E-I-R in Philly. This is "What's Hot On The Street." And, as a reminder, in a little over an hour we've got the Clay Man debunking conspiracies and uncovering mysteries...

An Audi Convertible swings aggressively in front of Chace: BAD GURL. Chace's brow furrows.

CHACE
The hell is she doing?

The Audi's HAZARD LIGHTS start to flash.

HOST (RADIO)
Keep it right here for "Breaking The Mold." Now, I want to get into that last call for a second...

The Audi BRAKES abruptly. Chace reacts in a nanosecond, his feet smash the brake pedal.

CHACE

Shit!

He grips the wheel, steers off to the shoulder. Cars HONK as they pass: nearly a major car pileup. Chace punches the steering wheel.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

He climbs out the SUV, makes a beeline for his wife's car.

CHACE

Have you lost your fucking mind?!

No movement up ahead.

CHACE (CONT'D)

You could've killed someone!

I/E. AUDI CONVERTIBLE - CONTINUOUS

Chace arrives at the window, Reesa stares straight ahead.

CHACE

Hey!

She looks to him, broken, eyes no longer high. Adrenaline seems to have ameliorated most of her intoxication.

CHACE (CONT'D)

The hell are you doing?!

REESA

Chace, I-

(beat)

I don't know how else to put this... Mi amor es para ti and I owe you the world.

CHACE

What?

REESA

Without you, I'd probably be back in Havana right now. Dead.

CHACE

Reesa...

REESA

I'm not blaming you for my actions, okay? I'm not doing that. Even though I wouldn't be wrong to bring up this all started after I caught you fucking whats-her-name.

Chace sighs.

REESA (CONT'D)

How can you be mad at me for doing the same? And then you tell me to leave? How can you just move on to the next, like that?

Reesa SNAPS her fingers, Chace doesn't have an answer for her. He pulls out his phone.

CHACE

Cut the engine, I don't want you driving. I'm calling someone...

Reesa stares at him, hurt.

REESA

I'm not Lori.
(then)
And I don't give up that easily.

She puts the car into gear.

CHACE

Hey! I said cut it!

Chace goes to reach inside the car. Reesa floors it, tearing away from the scene, leaving him in the dust.

CHACE (CONT'D)

Reesa?! Reesa!

The Convertible's rear lights shrink to red pinpoints. Chace storms off in a huff.

EXT. JAY'S SUPERSTORE - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Amari wears a BAGGY SWEATSUIT, looks like he could stand to lose a few pounds. He pushes a shopping cart across the lot, heading for his vehicle. When --

A rivulet of BLOOD snakes out of his nostril. Amari stops, wipes the blood with a tissue. Concern washes over him --

He spins around, looks at the entrance to the superstore. To us, nothing seems amiss. He closes his eyes and stands there quietly for a moment. When he opens them, he sees --

A TRUCK on the far end of the building, motoring toward the entrance. Amari races back to the superstore.

AMARI

There's a... Stop the truck!
Someone help, a girl's coming!

Curious PASSERSBY watch as he labors to the double doors.

AMARI (CONT'D)

Stop it! Stop the truck!

INT. TRUCK - SAME

Blaring ROCK MUSIC. The driver looks for God knows what in the backseat, oblivious to Amari frantically moving across the parking lot.

EXT. JAY'S SUPERSTORE - ENTRANCE - NIGHT

The doors slide open, a YOUNG GIRL flies out, laughing, enjoying life, being chased by her BROTHER.

AMARI

STOPPPPPP!

Now the others see what Amari sees, but it's too late for them. Just as the girl is about to hit the street --

Amari tackles her to the ground, knocks the boy off his feet as well. The truck moves past, inches away from mowing down a child at 35 mph.

The MOTHER comes screaming out of the store.

MOTHER

Oh, God! Jessica! Ethan!

Amari pulls himself up, the kids are okay. PEDESTRIANS scrutinize him like he's not from this planet. He shies away from their stares.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

(to the children)
What did I say about playing at the store?! Huh?!

PEDESTRIAN

(to Amari)

How did you know?

An uncomfortable amount of eyes fixed on Amari. He ducks his head and leaves, sweating in his oversized clothing.

MOTHER

Excuse me, sir?! Thank you! Is there anything I can... Sir?

Amari pulls a hood up over his head and continues on his way.

CHACE (V.O.)

As promised, we have world renowned psychic, Eleanor Skye, with us in studio.

EXT. PHILADELPHIA - WEIR RADIO STATION - NIGHT

Near the sparkling lights of downtown Philadelphia.

CHACE (V.O.)

Thank you for coming on the show, Eleanor.

INT. WEIR RADIO STATION - NIGHT

ELEANOR SKYE (60s), African American, looks like an old, wise woman. She's dressed in her Sunday best. Coke-bottle glasses magnify her eyes, studio headphones engulf her ears.

ELEANOR

Thank you for having me.

CHACE

Alright, folks, if you're like me, you could use some positive news tonight. So, I will open this segment by asking Eleanor: what are the winning lottery numbers for this evening?

CANNED LAUGHTER, sounds of money: CHI-CHING! A BOARD OPERATOR stands nearby, works his magic with the sound effects.

ELEANOR

Funny.

But Chace isn't smiling.

CHACE
Serious question.

ELEANOR
Mr. Clay, you know I can't help you
with that.

CHACE
Can't blame a brother for trying.

ELEANOR
A brother?

CHACE
How about moving this pen right
here? Can you move it across the
table?

Eleanor looks at him, annoyed.

ELEANOR
Mr. Clay, I'm psychic, not
telekinetic.

CHACE
There's a difference?

More laughter. Eleanor stares daggers at him.

CHACE (CONT'D)
I'm asking, because I really don't
know. You'll have to educate me.

ELEANOR
Before I agreed to come on your
show, I was promised a purposeful
interview.

CHACE
(to Board Operator)
I feel like we're getting
somewhere, don't you?

The board operator shrugs.

ELEANOR
Either ask questions with
substance, or I'm leaving. I'm not
here to be subjected to ridicule.

She reaches for her headphones...

CHACE
Alright, wait a minute--

ELEANOR
Frankly, I don't see the logic in a
skeptic hosting this show.

An "oooohhhh" sound effect. The board operator plays both
sides of the fence. Eleanor likes that, she holds off on
removing the headgear.

CHACE
Hold on now. By questioning my
position, you're taking a dig at my
producers.

ELEANOR
I just made an observation.

CHACE
Please don't do that.

ELEANOR
What? Observe?

Another "ooohhh" sound effect. Chace looks flustered.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)
What's wrong, Mr. Clay?

CHACE
Since you asked: you are what's
wrong. Parading around as though
you have some sort of gift.
Profiting off the hopes and
misfortunes of others. I asked you
to come on this show, not because a
caller had the audacity to call me
a "closed-minded jerk," but because
I wanted to expose you. And
everyone like you. There's no such
thing as psychic powers.

ELEANOR
Why do you have such contempt for
what I do?

Chace glowers at her. There's clearly a deeper issue here.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)
What happened, Mr. Clay?

CHACE
Maybe that's something else you
should be telling me.

Eleanor regards him with her magnified eyes, sizing him up.

ELEANOR
 Very well then: a wave the size of
 a tsunami is coming for you, Mr.
 Clay. And it's gonna rock your
 world.

CHACE
 ...Are you threatening me?

ELEANOR
 I'm warning you.

Chace regards this fragile, old woman. Her eyes unnerve him.

CHACE
 So, apparently I've just been
 threatened on live air. If anything
 happens to me, or my family, you
 all know who did it.

ELEANOR
 Your wife has poisoned the well.

CHACE
 That's it, guys. Sorry for cutting
 this short, but she's gotta go.

INT. CLAY HOUSEHOLD - KITCHEN - NIGHT

A BURST OF FLAMES from the stove. Kara cooks STOVETOP
 POPCORN, she has a phone to her ear.

KARA
 And then what? We kill her so she
 can't identify us?

MARK (PHONE)
 No, there's some bad juju if you
 kill a kid.
 (then)
 Plus, you can't collect the reward
 if they're dead.

KARA
 Then how do we do it?

MARK (PHONE)
 We put a bag on her head and lock
 her in my cellar until it's time to
 collect. Then use that money to get
 the fuck outta Reading.

KARA
Sounds like you've got it all
planned out.

MARK (PHONE)
I've seen a few movies.

KARA
Oh. Well in that case, let's do it!

MARK (PHONE)
Yeah?

KARA
No, you idiot! I'm not staging a
missing child.

Mark laughs.

MARK (PHONE)
I know. But seriously, you should
ask for more money. Especially with
all this shit they've got going on.

KARA
I don't want to seem greedy. They
could easily replace--

MARK (PHONE)
(frantic)
Oh, something's happening!

CLICK. Mark disconnects. That was weird. Kara looks
concerned. She re-dials his number, the phone rings and
rings.

Another phone RINGS within the house. Kara shakes the popcorn
and heads into the --

LIVING ROOM

She answers a CORDLESS:

KARA
Hello?

CHACE (PHONE)
Hey, Kara, just checking in. Reesa
give you any problems?

KARA
I haven't seen her.

CHACE (PHONE)
At all?

KARA
No.

CHACE (PHONE)
...Okay. Does anything else seem
out of sorts?

KARA
Nope, Emily's in bed and... Oh
crap!

CHACE (PHONE)
What?!

BATHROOM

Kara opens a CABINET under the sink.

KARA
She hid Ribbit. I forgot to get
him.

Kara retrieves the stuffed animal frog.

CHACE (PHONE)
Can you check on her? It's just...
you know.

KARA
The sleepwalking thing, yeah. No
worries, Mr. Clay. I got you.

KITCHEN

The popcorn begins to SMOKE.

EMILY'S BEDROOM

Kara enters. Emily lies sound asleep.

KARA
Sleeping Beauty's knocked out.

Kara places Ribbit next to Emily.

CHACE (PHONE)
Call me if Reesa gives you any
shit.

KARA
You got it, Mr. Clay.

CHACE (PHONE)
And that's another thing: stop
calling me "Mr. Clay!" I'm young
enough to be your boyfriend.

Kara grimaces.

CHACE (PHONE) (CONT'D)
I'll be there soon. Don't forget to
lock Emmy's door.

KARA
'Night, Mr... Chace.

Kara clicks off the phone. Immediately her brow furrows, she
sniffs the air --

BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! The high pitched whine of a SMOKE
ALARM. Panic washes over her.

KARA (CONT'D)
Shit!

Kara dashes out the room, in the process --

FORGETS TO LOCK EMILY'S DOOR

Emily sleeps peacefully, undisturbed by the smoke detector's
cries. She rolls over and puts an arm around Ribbit.

KITCHEN

Loud beeping, smoky air. Kara races to the stove, COUGHING.
She turns off the burner, grabs the smoking popcorn tin --

LIVING ROOM

She opens the front door and sets the smoking tin outside.
She re-enters the house and fans smoke through the door.

KITCHEN

Kara turns on the vent, then opens a window. She climbs a
chair to remove the SMOKE DETECTOR from the ceiling. She
struggles with it.

KARA
Ugh, shut up already!

Finally she pulls it down. She opens the back compartment and just as she's removing the batteries --

MOVEMENT BEHIND HER

Kara glances over her shoulder: no one there. All is quiet in the kitchen and living room. She writes it off as her imagination.

She turns back around and rehangs the defunct smoke detector.

EXT. WEIR RADIO STATION - NIGHT

Chace walks to his SUV, there's a stillness in the air.

JACKIE (O.S.)
Hey, asshole!

He spins around --

JACKIE (late 20s), African American, heavysset with long BLUE BRAIDS, swings a SHOE at his face, nearly connects! Chace barely dodges the attack.

CHACE
Whoa! Hey!

ELEANOR
Jackie, no!

JACKIE
You wanna talk shit about my
momma?!

Jackie advances on Chace, swinging and missing. Chace runs behind his SUV, she chases him around the vehicle.

CHACE
Make her stop!

ELEANOR
Let him be, Jackie! Stop it!

JACKIE
Talk shit to me!

CHACE
Mrs. Skye, please!

ELEANOR
(to Jackie)
Get in the car, now!

Jackie stops her pursuit. She's fuming, wants desperately to rip his head off.

JACKIE
You lucky I don't drag your ass
back to Kensington!

ELEANOR
I'm not gonna tell you again.

JACKIE
But ma--

ELEANOR
But nothing.

Jackie shoots Chace one last dirty look, she points at him:

JACKIE
You gonna get yours.

Then reluctantly leaves.

CHACE
Holy hell. Is she your bodyguard?

Eleanor approaches Chace.

ELEANOR
Are you a religious man, Mr. Clay?

CHACE
Excuse me?

ELEANOR
Open your Bible to Luke, chapter
fifteen, verse six. Though your
sheep may be lost, you shan't
worry... she's coming home.

CHACE
Lady, I have absolutely no idea
what you're talking about.

Eleanor smiles knowingly:

ELEANOR
Don't worry.

She turns and walks away.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)
You will.

INT. CLAY HOUSEHOLD - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Kara holds a POPCORN KERNEL to her mouth, fear in her eyes. The screeching sounds of HIGH PITCHED STRINGS would indicate she's watching a horror movie.

She's on edge, preparing for an imminent jump scare, when --
A pair of lips meet her ear, a voice whispers:

MARK

Hey.

She SCREAMS, jumps out of her skin. Turns to see:

MARK YOUNG (late 20s), looks like an ex meathead jock; the type who slept in his varsity letter jacket. At the moment --

He wears a nice button down shirt with a name badge affixed.

KARA

Mark?! You shit!

MARK

Smells like burnt ass in here.

Kara throws the kernel at him.

KARA

You stopped my heart!

Mark looks to the television.

MARK

What's this garbage?

KARA

It's about these parents that murdered their baby-sitter's boyfriend, because they found him trespassing in their house.

MARK

Sounds stupid.

Kara gets up, leads Mark to the door.

KARA

You have to go.

MARK

But I thought the open door was a metaphor.

KARA
What?

MARK
Give me love.

Mark wraps his arms around her.

KARA
Ew, you stink!

She pushes him away.

KARA (CONT'D)
You said you were gonna quit.

MARK
Right. After the one I just smoked.

Kara shakes her head, exasperated. She then turns curious:

KARA
Hey, what happened earlier?

MARK
When?

KARA
On the phone. You said something was happening and then you hung up.

MARK
Oh. Yeah, that was nothing.

KARA
It sounded like something.

Headlights flash on the walls, Kara looks out:

KARA (CONT'D)
Shit, you're about to get me fired.

(O.S.) A car door SHUTS.

MARK
Then you can hang with me at the motel!

REESA (O.S.)
Kara, what's Ribbit doing in the yard?

Kara looks blind-sided by the question.

KARA

The yard?

She promptly leaves to check on Emily. Reesa enters the house with Ribbit, Mark takes notice of her bare feet.

MARK

Nice shoes, Mrs. C.

She scowls at Mark.

REESA

The hell are you doing in my home?

MARK

Kara thought you'd be here earlier, so she told me to meet her. Sorry about that.

Mark looks sincere, but Reesa continues to scrutinize him.

MARK (CONT'D)

Alright look, Mrs. Clay, I'm sorry and didn't mean to break your rules. Allow me to make it up to you...

Mark removes a VOUCHER from his pocket, he hands it to her.

MARK (CONT'D)

That there is a free night's stay at Somnus, valued at forty nine, ninety nine. Anytime you need it, your stay is totally on us. So... Apology accepted?

Reesa looks to the voucher, then back to Mark. She crumples it up and throws it to the floor. So much for that.

MARK (CONT'D)

That wasn't very nice.

Kara returns to the living room, white as a ghost. Reesa looks to her:

REESA

Why was Ribbit outside?

KARA

I can't find Emily.

The look on Reesa's face: "What?!"

REESA
What do you mean you can't find
her?!

Reesa darts past Kara. Mark's eyebrows raise:

MARK
You lost the kid? Like, for real?

Kara paces back and forth.

MARK (CONT'D)
Oh shit.

REESA (O.S.)
Emily? ... Emily?!

A moment later Reesa rushes back into the living room,
panicked.

REESA (CONT'D)
Where is she?!

Kara stares at her, no words.

REESA (CONT'D)
Did you forget to lock the door?!

KARA
I... There was smoke and I--

REESA
Where is she, Kara?! Where's
Emily?!

Kara starts to shake, her eyes water. A sitter's worst
nightmare.

CHACE (O.S.)
What did I just walk into...?

Chace steps through the doorway, alarmed. They look his way.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. PHILADELPHIA - DAY

The morning sun shines brightly on the skyline of downtown
Philadelphia. A majestic beauty. To the north of the city --

EXT. NORTH PHILLY - DAY

A pair of SNEAKERS dangle from a power line. Dilapidated buildings, graffiti, litter strewn about. Police SIRENS echo in the distance. We zero in on one particular apartment --

INT. AMARI'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Not much better in here: sparse furniture, stained carpets, the bare-minimum to get by.

An old television plays the MORNING NEWS. Sitting on a cracked, leather couch --

Amari, in a JANITOR'S UNIFORM, slips on a pair of shoes.

TAYLOR PRICE (5) walks in, she wears the pink T-shirt Amari smuggled; it's two sizes too small. He grimaces.

AMARI

So you just gonna grow without telling me?

Taylor shrugs.

AMARI (CONT'D)

Go try the other one on.

TAYLOR

But it's ugly.

AMARI

No it ain't.

TAYLOR

Yes it is!

Amari sighs.

AMARI

Taylor, I know these clothes are beneath you, aight? But I'm doing the best I can with the little I have. Can you please put on the other shirt?

She rolls her eyes and stomps off. The voice of a NEWS ANCHOR cuts in loud and clear:

NEWS ANCHOR (ON TV)
 Breaking news this morning: the police department in Reading has issued an Amber Alert for six year old Emily Clay. Daughter of popular radio personality Chace Clay, the family is offering a fifty thousand dollar reward for information leading to Emily's return.

Amari whips his head to the television.

NEWS ANCHOR (ON TV) (CONT'D)
 Her last known location was her residence and deputies are unclear at this point whether her disappearance is due to a sleepwalking episode, or worse, an abduction...

Amari turns away, looks like he's weighing something heavy.

He drags himself to a mirror: doesn't like the lowly janitor staring back.

He looks around his decrepit apartment, sees a COCKROACH scampering away. He mutters to himself:

AMARI
 Can't keep doing this, Amari.

Taylor re-enters the living room in a new T-shirt. And she's right, it's hideous.

TAYLOR
 I'm ready.

Amari, saddened, turns his attention to the ceiling:

AMARI
 You win.

TAYLOR
 Who you talking to?

AMARI
 (to Taylor)
 Feel like hitting the road?

She nods, excited.

INT. CLAY HOUSEHOLD - LIVING ROOM - DAY

CLOSE ON: a PICTURE of a younger Chace, Emily (3), and an unfamiliar woman: LORI (30s). All smiles, together and happy. Pull back to reveal --

A house in turmoil. Officers traipse throughout the living room. Lori stands off to the side, frazzled hair and red, puffy eyes. Her trembling hand brings a CIGARETTE to her mouth. Officers speak to her.

Another officer questions Kara on a sofa, while Mark is questioned in a separate area.

Chace walks in, dirty and unkempt. Likely pulled an all-nighter. He heads directly for the couch, then falls over like a tree. His comatose eyes stare straight ahead.

A glass of water lands on the table. Reesa sits on the floor next to Chace. She kisses his forehead.

CHACE

Don't.

She pulls back, devastated.

LORI (O.S.)

You worthless fucking asshole!

Lori bears down on Chace like an F5 hurricane.

CHACE

Here we go.

LORI

This is exactly why I should have custody! Where the hell were you?!

(indicates Reesa)

Cheating on your damn pin-up girl?

REESA

Excuse me, pin-up girl?

CHACE

Will you stop it already?

LORI

If you were here last night like you were supposed to be, my daughter wouldn't be missing!

CHACE

She's mine too, Lori.

(O.S.) A woman's throat clears.

AGENT BAILEY (O.S.)
Sorry to interrupt...

AGENT BAILEY (40s) stands before the trio; her button down shirt and blazer indicative of her personality.

AGENT BAILEY (CONT'D)
We're sending the kids home for now, but rest assured they'll continue to be monitored.

Chace sits up.

AGENT BAILEY (CONT'D)
We're also expanding the search radius to five miles. If Emily's trapped somewhere, we'll find her.

Tears stream down Lori's face, she walks off gingerly --

Chace watches as she finds and picks up the crumpled motel voucher Reesa tossed the previous night.

REESA
Could there be something between this and that other missing boy?

Chace looks back to Agent Bailey.

AGENT BAILEY
Anthony Mullins. And we can speculate, sure, but I'm not yet ready to declare the two are related.

CHACE
When's the third wave going out?

AGENT BAILEY
In half an hour.

Chace drags himself to stand.

CHACE
Point me to them.

Agent Bailey assesses his physical condition.

AGENT BAILEY

Mr. Clay, I'm certainly not at liberty to tell you what you can, or cannot do, but perhaps rest would serve you well at this juncture?

Chace looks at her like she's crazy.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Chace hoofs it through the woods, CRUNCHING leaves and swatting away bony branches --

He's joined all around by good SAMARITANS: neighbors, fans, fellow parents, and police. Everyone marches with purpose, calling Emily's name. After a moment:

AMARI (O.S.)

I could tell you were the father from back there.

Chace looks to his rear, finds a man in a janitor's suit approaching.

AMARI (CONT'D)

You the only one out here who looks like death warmed over.

That elicits a smile from Chace. Amari extends his hand.

AMARI (CONT'D)

Amari Price. I came up from Philly to help with the search.

They shake.

CHACE

Chace. And that's incredibly generous, thank you.

AMARI

I got a little girl myself, can't imagine what you going through.

Chace acknowledges with a nod, they resume walking.

AMARI (CONT'D)

How long you been out here?

CHACE

All night. And all day.

AMARI
Damn... What if there was another
way to go about this?

CHACE
As in?

AMARI
I was watching one of those psychic
detective shows the other night--

Chace grumbles.

AMARI (CONT'D)
Yo, I'm serious.

CHACE
You know who I am? What I do for a
living?

AMARI
More or less, yeah.

CHACE
Then you know that's not an option.

AMARI
Why not?

CHACE
It just isn't.

Chace stops, gives him a hard look. Amari quiets.

AMARI
My bad, man. I was just throwing
something out there.

HYSTERICAL MAN (O.S.)
They found something!

Everyone looks to the HYSTERICAL MAN ahead.

CHACE
What?

NEIGHBOR
Up there! They've found a body! A
kid, I think!

Chace looks to Amari, the two take off running --

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Time seems to slow. Every step Chace takes is heavier than the last. A group of samaritans hover over a body, Chace fears the worst:

CHACE

No. Please no. Is it her?! Is it Emily?

SAMARITAN

No.

Chace throws himself into the huddle, looks down:

SAMARITAN (CONT'D)

It's that missing Mullins boy.

Anthony's body is encased in a BLACK TRASH BAG, surrounded by FALLEN LEAVES. His death looks relatively recent, no perceivable decomposition.

SAMARITAN (CONT'D)

There are just no words.

Chace steps away from the body and for the first time, breaks down and sobs like a child. Amari rushes to his side, embraces him.

AMARI

Hey, hey, hey, stay strong, man. We gonna get through this, aight? Believe that. Just hang in there.

Chace slowly but surely pulls himself together, Amari releases him. He observes this broken man, then offers:

AMARI (CONT'D)

You need a break.

EXT. STUCKY'S BAR & GRILL - DAY

Impressive Medieval architecture.

CHACE (O.S.)

Said you had a little one too, right? Where's she now?

INT. STUCKY'S BAR & GRILL - SAME

Soft lighting, an intimate feel. Chace and Amari confer over food and drinks.

AMARI
 Barbell Gym. Left her in child care
 so I could workout. Free
 baby-sitting.

Amari grins mischievously, Chace looks confused.

CHACE
 Why's this so important to you?

AMARI
 Should be important to everybody.

CHACE
 No, be straight with me. A man
 doesn't drive an hour and a half to
 search for a child he has no
 connection to.

Busted. Amari offers up a proposition:

AMARI
 If I tell you my story, will you
 tell me yours?

CHACE
 Which one is that?

AMARI
 Now it's you that ain't being
 straight with me.

CHACE
 You're worse than my wife.
 (then)
 I mean, it's no secret, or
 anything, so... If you want to
 know, I'll tell you.

AMARI
 Thanks for opening up.

CHACE
 What's your story?

AMARI
 I drove up here 'cause I ain't in
 the best position right now. And I
 figured if I could find Emily, that
 reward money could do some good.

CHACE
 But you're part of a search party.

AMARI
No I ain't.

Chace scrutinizes him.

AMARI (CONT'D)
Look, I know you don't wanna hear this, but we both know she ain't getting found that way.

Chace stiffens, the truth is hard to bear.

AMARI (CONT'D)
Somebody snatched her. And I intend to find out who.
(beat)
Aight, you up... Why you against psychics and all that?

Chace squirms.

AMARI (CONT'D)
C'mon, man, a deal's a deal.

Chace looks reluctant to speak. Finally he sighs, then:

CHACE
It was a Friday. June eleventh, nineteen eighty-two. I was eight, my brother Sam was fourteen...

FLASHBACK - EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT

YOUNG CHACE (8) and SAM (14) bounce down a street, approaching a convenience store.

CHACE (V.O.)
We had just seen E.T. and were walking home already talking about when we were gonna go again. We stopped at a store on the way, for some Reese's Pieces.

A 1976 CADILLAC EL DORADO sits in a parking spot just outside the convenience store.

CHACE (V.O.)
I saw this creepy, old geezer sitting in his car, watching us go in. His eyes were freaky as shit.

The GEEZER'S face is shrouded in shadows, but a BEAM OF LIGHT spotlights his beady eyes in a noir-ish way.

CHACE (V.O.)
Sam gave him the finger, told him
to "fuck off!"

PRESENT DAY - INT. STUCKY'S BAR & GRILL - DAY

Amari, on the edge of his seat, devours every morsel of this story.

CHACE
When we left the store he was gone,
but going home it felt like we were
being watched. I couldn't shake the
feeling he was following us.

AMARI
That's some spooky shit.

CHACE
Next morning mom woke me up,
shaking me... *"where's Sam?! Chace,
where's Sam?!"*

FLASHBACK - INT. YOUNG CHACE HOUSEHOLD - DAY

Young Chace looks around, confused. Not yet fully awake. His MOTHER'S eyes are filled with panic.

CHACE (V.O.)
I didn't know what the hell was
going on.

Young Chace climbs out of bed, heads to --

SAM'S ROOM

The bed is empty. Other FAMILY MEMBERS look to young Chace for answers, but he doesn't have any.

CHACE (V.O.)
Came to find out my brother
disappeared. No clues, no nothing.
Just gone.

PRESENT DAY - INT. STUCKY'S BAR & GRILL - DAY

Chace takes a second to collect himself.

AMARI
You aight?

Chace nods. He then looks Amari dead in his eye:

CHACE
You asked what I have against
psychics?

A tense moment as the two stare at each other.

CHACE (CONT'D)
We went to a psychic detective,
some woman who had helped solve
like ten cases...

FLASHBACK - EXT. PSYCHIC'S HOUSE - DAY

Chace's family questions a PSYCHIC WOMAN (40s) on her
doorstep.

CHACE (V.O.)
We asked about Sam and she told us
he was dead. Drowned in the
Schuylkill River.

Chace's mother collapses to the ground in agony. Chace's
FATHER consoles her.

CHACE (V.O.)
She even fed us some bullshit story
about where we could find his body,
but we never did. You know why?

AMARI (V.O.)
He wasn't dead.

FLASHBACK - EXT. YOUNG CHACE HOUSEHOLD - DAY

OLDER SAM (24) approaches the house in filthy, tattered
clothes. A gaunt face sitting on top of a skeletal body.

CHACE (V.O.)
Ten years later he showed up at the
house, all skin and bones...

Chace's mother opens the door, Sam immediately bursts into
tears. It takes his mother a second... and then it hits her
like a thousand anvils --

CHACE (V.O.)
But there he was. My brother Sam,
alive.

She wraps her arms around him, pure happiness and joy. He crumples to the ground. Family members rush outside.

PRESENT DAY - INT. STUCKY'S BAR & GRILL - DAY

Amari shakes his head, sympathetic.

AMARI

What happened to him?

CHACE

Remember the creep? He got Sam when he snuck out to see his girl. Had my brother locked in his basement for ten years. Turned out the bastard lived a few streets over.

AMARI

That's fucked up, man.

CHACE

After that witch told us he was dead, we stopped searching. Hell, we stopped believing. That was year two. To this day I know we would've found him if we kept looking. I know it.

AMARI

Sorry you had to re-live that. I appreciate you sharing.

Chace eyes him.

CHACE

I better not pick up one of those bullshit papers and see my story--
(beat; alarmed)
Oh, you got a little...

Chace points to his own nose.

CHACE (CONT'D)

Some blood coming out.

A rivulet of blood snakes out Amari's nostril. He wipes it with a napkin.

CHACE (CONT'D)

You okay?

Amari suddenly leaps up and looks to the BAR. A SUITED MAN sits on a bar stool, alone. TWO DRINKS on the counter.

CHACE (CONT'D)
What is it?

FLASH TO:

FLASHBACK - INT. STUCKY'S BAR & GRILL - DAY

(Note: Amari's visions are black & white. Similar quality to Super 8mm film. A slight concavity, as though looking through a peephole.)

The suited man laughs with a GORGEOUS WOMAN, orders drinks. While she leaves to powder her nose, the man drops a PILL into her glass.

CHACE (O.S.)
Amari?

PRESENT DAY - INT. STUCKY'S BAR & GRILL - DAY

Amari's eyes are closed, shifting behind their lids.

FLASH TO:

THE FUTURE - EXT. STUCKY'S BAR & GRILL - DAY

The woman can barely walk, she hangs on the man as they exit.

THE FUTURE - INT. SPORTSCAR - DAY

The woman struggles to remain conscious in the passenger seat. The man drives, spending just as much time watching her BREASTS as he does the road.

CHACE (O.S.)
Houston calling. What are you
doing, man?

THE FUTURE - EXT. APARTMENT - DAY

The man carries the woman inside. He turns to us, the devil in his eyes. Just as we're about to enter the apartment with him, the door SHUTS --

CHACE (O.S.)
Hey!

PRESENT DAY - INT. STUCKY'S BAR & GRILL - DAY

Amari's eyes pop open, as though waking from a nightmare.

CHACE
You alright? You kind of zoned out
there.

Amari looks to the bar: the same gorgeous woman from his
vision returns to the man.

Amari pushes past Chace with urgency.

CHACE (CONT'D)
Where are you going?

AT THE BAR

The woman laughs it up with the guy, then grabs her drink. As
she brings it to her mouth --

Amari snatches it out of her hand...

GORGEOUS WOMAN
Hey!

And POURS the liquid on the man's head, he leaps up.

SUITED MAN
What the fuck?!

GORGEOUS WOMAN
The hell are you doing?!

Amari's eyes burn with fire, Chace and the BARTENDER rush
over.

CHACE
Oh, shit! Hey, sorry, it's just a
misunderstanding!

SUITED MAN
That's what you call this?!

BARTENDER
(to Amari)
Sir, I'm gonna have to ask you to
leave. Now.

Amari looks to the woman and says with the utmost conviction:

AMARI
Don't you ever see this man again.

There's something extremely convincing in his tone.

SUITED MAN
 (to Amari)
 This suit's worth more than you
 make in a year!

The Bartender looks to an intimidating BOUNCER at the door.
 He's preoccupied by a woman:

BARTENDER
 Silas?! You mind doing your job
 here?

The Bartender points out Amari. The Bouncer, annoyed, lumbers
 over. Chace looks frightened.

CHACE
 Uh... Amari?

Amari keeps his attention on the woman:

AMARI
 You hear me? Never again. Shelly's
 looking out for you.

The woman covers her mouth in disbelief, obviously that name
 has value to her. Chace grabs Amari.

CHACE
 We gotta go.

SUITED MAN
 Who's gonna pay for this?!

Amari turns to the bartender:

AMARI
 This bastard put a roofie in her
 drink.

The suited man, appalled.

SUITED MAN
 I did no such thing.

Amari raises the glass, points to a CHALKY RESIDUE at the
 bottom.

AMARI
 What's that then?

The man struggles to hide the guilt in his eyes.

INT. SUV - DAY

Chace drives, Amari rides shotgun. It's silent until:

CHACE

I want to thank you again for coming all the way up here. Want you to know I truly appreciate that.

AMARI

Sounds like the makings of a break up speech.

CHACE

I just think it's best if we go our separate ways.

Amari takes that in.

AMARI

You think I'm bat-shit crazy, don't you?

CHACE

...No, not at all.

Amari chuckles, shakes his head.

AMARI

Lying 'cause you scared I'ma trip out on you?

CHACE

...No.

Chace is a bad liar.

AMARI

What I did back at the bar, that kinda came outta left field didn't it?

CHACE

You could say that, yeah.

AMARI

Well, if you wanna find your daughter, that's where we're gonna hafta set up shop.

CHACE

(dismissive)
Right.

Amari stares him down, his words aren't getting through.

AMARI
Stop the car.

EXT. SUV - SAME

The Explorer pulls over. Amari hops out, starts to walk. Chace exits the SUV, confused:

CHACE
What is this? What are you doing?

AMARI
I was wrong about you.

CHACE
What?

Amari stops, turns around:

AMARI
I had you pegged as a guy who'd do anything to find his girl. No matter what that was.

CHACE
Of course I would.

AMARI
Bull-fucking-shit.

CHACE
Where is this coming from?

Amari waves him off, starts to walk again.

CHACE (CONT'D)
Is this about the bar?

Amari doesn't answer, he's putting distance between himself and Chace.

CHACE (CONT'D)
Shit.

Chace climbs back inside. He drives and --

I/E. SUV - CONTINUOUS

Pulls up alongside Amari. He yells out the passenger window:

CHACE
At least let me take you to your
car... It's a three mile walk!

AMARI
It's cool, I'm in shape.

CHACE
C'mon, man, I'm too tired for this
shit. Cut me some slack.

Amari stops, so does Chace.

CHACE (CONT'D)
Get in.

INT. SUV - CONTINUOUS

Amari climbs back inside. Chace pulls away. After a moment:

CHACE
I never asked what you do for a
living...?

AMARI
I clean shit outta toilets.

CHACE
(taken aback)
Oh.

EXT. CLAY HOUSEHOLD - LATER

The Ford Explorer pulls up. Chace gets out, alone, he
approaches the house. Suddenly --

MUSIC IN: Jefferson Airplane's, "White Rabbit" blares from
inside. Chace's brow furrows, doesn't look too pleased.

GUS (O.S.)
"If anything happens to me, or my
family..."

He looks to the voice --

GUS LIPINSKI (60s) hobbles towards him with a noticeable
LIMP. Pudgy and balding, a CIGARETTE dangles from his mouth.

CHACE
Damn, that's right!

Chace whips out a CARD and his CELLPHONE, he makes a call:

GUS
How you holding up, kid?

CHACE
(to Gus)
One second, Gus...
(into phone)
Hi, Agent Bailey, this is Chace. I
need you to look into a psychic
named Eleanor Skye. S-K-Y-E.

AGENT BAILEY (PHONE)
For what purpose?

CHACE
I had her on my show last night.
She threatened me and my family.

AGENT BAILEY (PHONE)
How so?

CHACE
She said a storm was coming for me.
And then gave me some gibberish
about the Bible and sheep.

Silence on the other end, Chace waits for a response.

CHACE (CONT'D)
Hello?

AGENT BAILEY (PHONE)
This was said in a threatening
tone?

CHACE
Yes! Kind of. I mean she said it
was a warning.

AGENT BAILEY (PHONE)
I'll look into it, Mr. Clay.

CLICK. Agent Bailey disconnects, abrupt and rude. Chace looks
to Gus.

CHACE
Well, this is a bit of a surprise.

GUS
Why's that?

CHACE
Last we spoke we weren't exactly
holding hands.

GUS
 Water under the bridge, kid.
 (then)
 Tell me what I can do to help.

Chace cringes.

CHACE
 I can't go down that road again,
 Gus.

GUS
 What road?

CHACE
 I'm not going to hire you.

GUS
 Who's talking about money?

Chace regards him with skepticism.

CHACE
 You're saying you'd work for free?

GUS
 Chace, Emily's missing. It almost
 feels like a piece of my family is
 gone. I want to find her for you,
 hell, for me. Not to mention my ex
 partner would have my ass if I
 didn't help his son.

Gus seems sincere. Chace nods, "okay."

CHACE
 This Eleanor Skye woman. You could
 start there.

GUS
 Done deal.

Gus starts to limp away, he turns back around:

GUS (CONT'D)
 Stay positive, kid. We're gonna
 find her.

Chace nods, desperately wants to believe that. The music
 SWELLS to an ear-splitting level.

GRACE SLICK (O.S.)
 "And the White Knighhht is talking
 backwarrrrds..."

INT. CLAY HOUSEHOLD - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Grace Slick's voice bellows throughout the SMOKY house, looks like a hookah lounge in here. (*Note: Grace Slick was one of the lead vocalists for Jefferson Airplane.*)

Chace enters, fans smoke away from his face.

CHACE

Reesa?!

Can barely hear himself speak.

GRACE SLICK (O.S.)

"And the Red Queennn's off with her heaaadddd..."

MASTER BEDROOM

INCENSE BURNS, adding to the haze. Chace appears in the doorway, apoplectic --

Reesa sits on the bed, eyes closed, grooving to the music. A JOINT in her hand:

GRACE SLICK

"Rememberrrrr, what the dormouse saiiidddd...."

CHACE

REESA?!

GRACE SLICK

"Feed your heaaadddd!!!"

She can't hear him, Chace stomps over to the stereo.

GRACE SLICK (CONT'D)

"Feed your heaaa--"

The music abruptly cuts out, Reesa opens her stoned eyes.

CHACE

Federal agents are crawling around this place and you're in here smoking pot?!

She smiles.

REESA

Among other things...

CHACE
Put it out!

REESA
Just give me a second to calm my
nerves.

She takes a hit. Chace huffs, turns to leave.

REESA (CONT'D)
Remember when we used to play
"naughty cop"?

CHACE
You want a cop? I can get one in
here!

REESA
I miss the Chace I met in Florida.
(smirks)
The one vacationing with his wife.
What happened to him?

The two take a moment to reflect on that.

CHACE
Come on, throw it out. We've got
work to do.

REESA
What if I don't?

Reesa smiles. She lays down on the bed, then spreads her legs
in a sexually suggestive manner.

REESA (CONT'D)
You gonna arrest me?

CHACE
Reesa, I'm serious.

REESA
Arrest me officer!

Chace marches over with his hand out.

CHACE
Give it to me.

REESA
No!

Chace grabs her arm, going for the joint. She pulls him onto
the bed, scissor locks him with her legs.

CHACE

The hell are you doing?! Stop!

Her free hand struggles to unbuckle his belt. They tussle in the sheets.

REESA

C'mon, pig! What you got?

Reesa rolls on top, looks like she's trying to rape her husband.

CHACE

Let me go, dammit!

They struggle for a bit, rolling around in bed. Looks uncomfortable to watch. And the physicality is only starting to increase --

Reesa SCREAMS, then BITES Chace's forearm. Chace jerks his arm away, his elbow strikes her face. Reesa releases the scissor lock, Chace races to the bathroom clutching his arm.

REESA

(crying)

Four fucking months, Chace! You haven't touched me in four fucking months!

CHACE (O.S.)

You fucking bit me! What the hell?!

REESA

Why do you treat me this way? Why am I not enough?!

Chace storms back into the room, makes a beeline for the desk.

REESA (CONT'D)

Maybe that's why Emily's missing!
You treat women like shit!

He removes DOCUMENTS from a drawer, holds up the papers:

CHACE

You see these?

Reesa looks confused.

REESA

What is that?

CHACE
I filed for divorce.

REESA
You what?!

CHACE
I filed. For divorce.

Reesa leaps out of bed, a sheer look of horror on her face.

REESA
No, Chace, no you can't! I'm gonna get deported!

CHACE
This was all a mistake. I'm a fucking idiot.

REESA
Chace, please, listen to me. Everything's gonna be okay, alright? We're gonna find Emily and everything's gonna be okay. We're gonna be a family.

Chace shakes his head.

CHACE
We can't be a family, Reesa. You're not Emily's mother. You never were.

Reesa takes that in... and it sends her into a boiling rage:

REESA
She deserves to have one! You don't even care what you're doing to her! You don't even care she's gone!

Chace turns his back on her. He heads into the --

HALLWAY

Reesa continues her tirade.

REESA (O.S.)
THAT'S RIGHT, WALK AWAY! HIJO DE PUTA. BESAME EL CULO! I WISH I NEVER FUCKING MET YOU! I WISH YOU'D JUST--

THUD! The sound of a body hitting the floor. Chace spins around, concerned. He returns to the --

MASTER BEDROOM

Finds his wife on the floor.

CHACE

Reesa?

She's out. Chace rushes to her.

CHACE (CONT'D)

Reesa!

He shakes her, grabs the back of her head, his hand comes away BLOODIED.

CHACE (CONT'D)

What the f--?

He whips out his cell phone, dials:

OPERATOR (PHONE)

9-1-1, what's your emergency?

CHACE

My wife just fell and hit her head.
And there's blood. I don't know
what the hell happened!

EXT. READING HOSPITAL AND MEDICAL CENTER - DAY

Establishing.

INT. READING HOSPITAL AND MEDICAL CENTER - ROOM 20 - SAME

Reesa's head is bandaged and she has yet to regain consciousness. The BEEPING from her heart monitor holds steady.

Chace stands just outside the room, speaking with a NURSE. Looks like he's on the defensive:

OUTSIDE ROOM 20

CHACE

No. We got into an argument and she
attacked me. When I pulled my arm
away my elbow caught her face. It
wasn't my intention to hit her.

The nurse weighs Chace's conviction, then:

NURSE
Are you familiar with the term
"acute psychosis"?

Chace shakes his head.

NURSE (CONT'D)
Given what we found in her system,
it's possible she may have had an
episode, exacerbated by concurrent
usage of cannabis and M-D-M-A, but
to be certain, we'd have to
evaluate her mental state before
drawing any such conclusions.

Chace stares at her, clearly this went over his head.

CHACE
I'm sorry, what?

NURSE
Your wife was smoking pot and
popping ecstasy pills. When taken
in conjunction, the prevalence of
psychotic symptoms are raised.

CHACE
Is that why she blacked out?

NURSE
Can't say for sure. She could've
had what we term a "modern mental
health crisis," but again, any
presumptions at this point are
unsubstantiated.

CHACE
I didn't even know about the pills.

NURSE
I'm concerned for her health. And
for the baby.

Chace, stunned.

CHACE
What baby?

NURSE
Your wife is entering her second
trimester. This is news to you?

The look on his face says "obviously."

CHACE
How many months is that?

NURSE
Roughly four.

CHACE
Four months?! That's ridiculous!

NURSE
Maybe she isn't aware.

CHACE
That she's four months pregnant?!

NURSE
It's a common occurrence actually.
We screen for pregnancy prior to
imaging tests and you'd be
surprised how often we break the
news.

An ORDERLY comes over, explains something to the nurse. The nurse looks back to Chace:

NURSE (CONT'D)
Excuse me.

And heads off.

NURSE (CONT'D)
Don't go anywhere though, I need to
treat that bite.

Chace nods, turns his attention to the room: Reesa's awake.

INT. READING HOSPITAL AND MEDICAL CENTER - ROOM 20 - SAME

Chace walks in.

CHACE
How are you feeling?

REESA
A bit nauseous. How long was I--

CHACE
A few hours.

Chace sits next to her.

REESA
Emily?

He shakes his head, "no."

REESA (CONT'D)
Why do you hate me?

CHACE
I don't hate you, Reesa.

REESA
Then what is it?

CHACE
...It's not you, it's me.

REESA
No, spare me the clichés, just be honest. I can take it.

CHACE
The truth? I'm probably not winning any "husband of the year" awards.

REESA
Why would you take me out of Florida, put me up in Philadelphia, and leave Lori for me, if all you were gonna do was end it before we even had our one year anniversary?

Chace mulls it over.

CHACE
I blame the witch.

REESA
Who?

CHACE
Nevermind.
(then)
Why didn't you tell me about this baby?

REESA
What baby?

CHACE
The one in your belly.

Reesa regards him like he has three eyes.

REESA
What are you talking about?

CHACE
Nurse says you're four months pregnant.

REESA
Ha, nice try, but I've been on the pill for the past eight.

CHACE
I want a D-N-A test.

Now she's listening.

REESA
Chace, if I'm really four months pregnant, then it's absolutely yours. No question.

He glares at her.

REESA (CONT'D)
Can I have a hug? Is that too much to ask?

Chace holds the tough guy act a moment longer, then leans in and hugs his wife. Reesa holds him tightly.

REESA (CONT'D)
I love you, Chace. And after we get Emily back, we're gonna be a family. A real one this time.

EXT. CLAY HOUSEHOLD - NIGHT

A rusty, old TOYOTA CAMRY pulls up --

Amari exits the car, takes in his dark surroundings. Taylor climbs out:

TAYLOR
What we looking for again?

AMARI
I'll tell you when we find it.

INT. READING HOSPITAL AND MEDICAL CENTER - NIGHT

Chace sits in a waiting room chair, his forearm bandaged. Reesa exits a room.

REESA
I'm cleared. We can go.

INT. UBER CAR - NIGHT

Chace stares out the window, eyes combing the passing landscape. His cell phone RINGS:

CHACE
(into phone)
Hello?

AGENT BAILEY (PHONE)
Evening, Mr. Clay.

CHACE
Yes, hi, Agent Bailey.

Reesa looks to him.

AGENT BAILEY (PHONE)
We found Eleanor. Took us a while because "Skye" wasn't her given surname, but she did allow us to search her home.

CHACE
I'm guessing she didn't have Emily.

AGENT BAILEY (PHONE)
Unfortunately, no. But she did have an explanation for the Bible reference you alluded to earlier. And I have to be frank here, Mr. Clay. Her comments were... disturbing.

CHACE
What'd she say?

AGENT BAILEY (PHONE)
...Is your wife pregnant, sir?

Chace looks at Reesa, she stares back at him.

CHACE
How'd you know that?

AGENT BAILEY (PHONE)
I didn't. She did.

For a skeptic, Chace looks creeped out.

CHACE
What about her pregnancy?

AGENT BAILEY (PHONE)
Sorry, Mr. Clay. Wish I had better
news for you.

CLICK. Agent Bailey disconnects. Chace looks at the phone,
rattled.

REESA
What was that about?

He turns to her, gravely serious:

CHACE
Listen, no more drugs, alright? No
more of that shit.

His eyes make her uneasy. She nods in agreement. Chace
returns his attention to the passing scenery.

REESA
Is everything okay?

He continues to watch the houses scroll by. Reesa takes the
hint, she faces straight ahead. Moments later:

REESA (CONT'D)
Who's that girl in our driveway?

Chace looks out the windshield --

Taylor, illuminated by the headlights, stands in their
driveway.

REESA (CONT'D)
And there's a man in our yard.
Dressed like a Ghostbuster.

Chace finds Amari watching the car approach.

EXT. CLAY HOUSEHOLD - NIGHT

The Clays exit the Uber car, it pulls away.

CHACE
(to Amari)
Thought you'd be back in Philly by
now.

AMARI
You ain't getting rid of me that
easy.

CHACE
Reesa, this is Amari and...

AMARI
Taylor.

TAYLOR
Hi!

AMARI
(to Reesa)
Nice to meet you.

Amari extends his hand, Reesa ignores it. She regards Taylor and her hideous T-shirt like a vagrant child. Amari pulls his hand back. Awkward.

AMARI (CONT'D)
Okay.
(to Chace)
Ready to beat the streets?

Chace's body language implies, "how do I put this gently?"

CHACE
Amari, no offense. I know you mean well and all, but I don't think you can help us.

Amari takes that on the chin.

AMARI
Aight, I'ma be totally straight with you: I ain't no janitor. I mean I am, but that ain't what I do.

CHACE
Okay?

Amari looks reluctant to say it:

AMARI
I'm a psychic.

REESA
Oh dear.

CHACE
I'm gonna call it a night.

He and Reesa head to the house, Amari trails them.

AMARI

I know you think I'm full of shit,
aight? But it's true. I've got a
gift.

CHACE

Sure you do.

AMARI

The woman at the bar, she was gonna
get raped by that man.

CHACE

Amari, just stop. Please?

Chace keeps walking, Amari's losing him.

AMARI

How did Sam die?

Now he stops. Chace spins around, looks at Amari:

CHACE

Excuse me?

AMARI

How'd he die?

CHACE

I never told you he did.

AMARI

After you dropped me off, I had
another vision. You were standing
over a man in a hospital bed, I'm
assuming it was him. You leaned
over and whispered in his ear:

Chace tenses up.

AMARI (CONT'D)

"Sorry we gave up on you."

(beat)

And then he flatlined.

Chace stares at him, momentarily thrown.

CHACE

How the hell do you know that?

AMARI

Told you. I've got a gift.

Their eyes remain locked.

REESA

I think you're a gifted con artist.

Amari, insulted.

AMARI

Why I gotta be a con artist, 'cause I'm black? Is that why you didn't shake my hand?

REESA

My first boyfriend was Jamaican. I'm not racist.

AMARI

So you treat everybody that way?

CHACE

Shut up! Everyone.
(beat; to Amari)
Please leave.

AMARI

That's what you want? The man who says he'd do anything to get his girl back?

Chace mulls that over.

AMARI (CONT'D)

I ain't the lady that told you Sam died. I ain't her. If Emily's in danger and you ain't explored every possible avenue to find her, then you've failed. Shit, if my Taylor went missing...

Amari gestures to her in the driveway - she's gone. A moment of confused panic:

AMARI (CONT'D)

Taylor? Taylor?!

TAYLOR (O.S.)

Found something!

Taylor comes running from up the street.

AMARI

Girl, did I say you could go in the street?!

TAYLOR

Wasn't nothing by the house.

Amari shakes his head.

AMARI
This girl, I swear.

Taylor arrives.

AMARI (CONT'D)
What is it?

TAYLOR
Matches.

She holds up a pristine BOX OF MATCHES. Couldn't have been in the street for more than a day.

AMARI
I see writing on the front. What's it say?

Taylor puts the box to her nose, sounds out the words:

TAYLOR
The Mer- Mer-idian Motel.

She beams, Amari looks to the Clays.

AMARI
She's getting there, huh?

They look troubled.

AMARI (CONT'D)
Sometimes I gotta try to source the vision if nothing's coming to me. It ain't as clear, but it's something.

Taylor gives him the matches. He shuts his eyes, rubs the box between his fingers. Chace regards him curiously.

REESA
(to Chace)
Are you entertaining this?

Chace remains quiet. Amari continues to draw from someplace unknown, eyes shifting behind their lids.

AMARI
Oh. Yeah, these definitely from last night.

FLASH TO:

FLASHBACK - INT. CAR - NIGHT

(Note: black & white as before, but the concavity is more pronounced. The quality of this vision is noticeably inferior, like the events are taking place underwater.)

Our POV is beneath the steering wheel, looking up. The driver exhales white SMOKE.

AMARI (V.O.)
I'm- I'm in a car with the person.
Sitting on their lap.

CHACE (V.O.)
Uh huh. And what's he look like?

PRESENT DAY - EXT. CLAY HOUSEHOLD - NIGHT

Amari strains, shakes his head "no."

AMARI
Can't see shit from here.

CHACE
Is he Black? White?

AMARI
Hands are white, I think. A smoker.

REESA
Well that about narrows it down.

AMARI
Here we go, slowing down. Coming to
a stop. I uh... I hear beeping.

FLASH TO:

FLASHBACK - INT. CAR - NIGHT

Garbled BEEPING. Still impossible to see anything from this angle.

CHACE (V.O.)
Beeping?

AMARI (V.O.)
Yeah, like... a smoke detector
maybe?

REESA (V.O.)
Enough of this, I'm going inside.

PRESENT DAY - EXT. CLAY HOUSEHOLD - NIGHT

Reesa starts to leave. Amari's eyes remain shut.

AMARI

The person's outta the car, the matches hit the ground...

REESA

Chace. Let's go.

Chace holds up an index finger, "wait."

FLASH TO:

FLASHBACK - EXT. CAR - NIGHT

An indiscernible figure stumbles toward the house, clearly in a hurry. The vision starts to darken.

AMARI (V.O.)

Shit, it's fading! They're running to the house, but they're struggling. It's like a weird limp.

PRESENT DAY - EXT. CLAY HOUSEHOLD - NIGHT

That registers with Chace. Amari stands there, fighting to see more, but:

AMARI

It's gone.

He opens his eyes.

AMARI (CONT'D)

Dammit!

Amari stomps his foot, looks to the Clays:

AMARI (CONT'D)

When I get a vision through a source, it fades when the person ain't got it no more.

CHACE

What else can you tell us?

AMARI

I know she was taken. None of this sleepwalking BS.

CHACE

No, I meant about the guy. What else can you tell us about him?

Amari bites his lip, frustrated.

AMARI

That's all I got.

(then)

If I just had something from Emily's side, you know? Then I could finish it out. Maybe even see the person.

CHACE

You said he had a limp?

AMARI

Or maybe a broken ankle. Why?

CHACE

I know a man like the one you describe.

AMARI

Then what we standing around here for?

Chace studies Amari, guarded.

CHACE

Why matches?

AMARI

What you mean?

CHACE

Why would someone use a match when there's a cigarette lighter in virtually every car?

Reesa storms back to Amari.

REESA

It's because his story's bullshit. He planted those matches.

Amari scoffs.

AMARI

Lady, please.

REESA
I grew up in the slums, I know a con artist when I see one. That's why I didn't shake your hand.

CHACE
I'm not so sure.

Reesa looks at Chace, taken aback.

CHACE (CONT'D)
If this was a con and he did plant those matches, of all the motels in Reading, how would he know to choose The Meridian?

Reesa stares blankly, doesn't have an answer for that.

AMARI
Ain't a con if I'm asking for money on the back end.

CHACE
Hey, Taylor, can you help us?

TAYLOR
Me?

CHACE
Sure. I need you to baby-sit Reesa while I'm out with your daddy. Can you do that?

TAYLOR
Yes!

REESA
I don't like this at all.

CHACE
Would you rather I sat around?

REESA
It's a sham, Chace. I can see it. And I don't want this guy hurting you with his hocus pocus.

That hangs in the air for a bit.

EXT. SUV - NIGHT

The Explorer negotiates the roads of this sleepy town.

AMARI (O.S.)
Why you keep looking at me?

INT. SUV - NIGHT

Chace drives, Amari sits in the passenger seat.

CHACE
Forget it.

AMARI
Speak your mind.

A moment, then:

CHACE
Just can't get over how you knew.

AMARI
You a believer now?

Chace hesitates.

CHACE
You could say I'm more apt to
listen.

AMARI
That's a start.

CHACE
But I can't say I understand.

Amari takes a second to gather his thoughts, then:

AMARI
It feels like I'm in a watchtower.
And can see all this shit coming
that no one else can.

CHACE
A watchtower.

AMARI
Yeah. Say we're at war. If I'm up
there scoping shit out and see the
enemy coming our way, I know
something nobody on the ground
knows. But here's the rub: can't
nobody see this tower I'm in, so if
I run around telling everybody what
I've seen and that we about to get
blasted, you think they'd listen?
(MORE)

AMARI (CONT'D)

(then)
Hell, would you?

CHACE
Probably not.

AMARI
That's what it's like to be
psychic. I'm the guy in the
watchtower.

Chace considers that, then:

CHACE
When'd you know you were different?

Amari sighs.

AMARI
When I was five, at a playground by
our house. After I went down the
slide, my nose started bleeding.
And then I saw this little girl--

CHACE
Yeah, what's with the nose thing?

AMARI
It bleeds when I get something I
ain't asked for. A little different
from what I did back at the house,
'cause everything's clearer.

CHACE
I wish you'd get one with Emily.

AMARI
Yeah. Anyway, I saw this little
girl standing in the street. In the
middle of the road, just standing
there. She turns to me, looks me in
my eyes and says, "I can't get
out." And then she burst into
flames, screaming bloody murder.

CHACE
Jeezus.

AMARI
I took off running, blood dripping
down my shirt, trying to find my
mom, and who do I see sitting on
the bench across from her?

(MORE)

AMARI (CONT'D)

The same little girl I saw burning in the street. I thought she had a twin or something, but when I looked back to the other one she was gone.

CHACE

Guessing she died in a fire?

Amari nods.

AMARI

That night. Her momma fell asleep with a cigarette in her hand, burned everything to hell. The girl was trapped in her room.

(then)

They said she died from the smoke. Nah. They didn't wanna tell it like it really happened. That poor girl burned alive.

Chace looks at him, disconcerted.

CHACE

What'd your folks have to say about this "gift"?

AMARI

Shit, my momma pissed 'cause I don't use it for money! She got it too. I don't know if Taylor gonna get it though.

CHACE

Hell, I hope not.

(beat)

That's his place right up here.

EXT. AMITYVILLE APARTMENTS - NIGHT

Chace and Amari walk to the door.

AMARI

How you know this guy?

CHACE

He used to be my father's partner, Philadelphia PD.

AMARI

Oh. Well, it prolly ain't him then.

CHACE
I didn't say he was by-the-book.

EXT. AMITYVILLE APARTMENTS - APARTMENT 10B - SAME

Chace KNOCKS.

AMARI
Why would he take Emily?

CHACE
There's somewhat of a monetary
issue between us.

Chace KNOCKS again, calls out:

CHACE (CONT'D)
Gus?! It's Chace! Open the door.

No answer. Chace whips out his phone, dials a number.

AMARI
He smokes?

CHACE
Like a chimney.

AMARI
What's he gotta do with The
Meridian?

CHACE
That's where he caught Reesa. At
first she cheated to get back at
me. I let that go. But a little
voice kept nagging me, so I hired
Gus to follow her. He caught her at
The Meridian with the same thug.

AMARI
Damn, my fault.

Chace puts the phone away.

CHACE
He's not picking up.

AMARI
Anyone checked the dude she was
with?

Chace freezes.

CHACE
Fucking hell.

He then sprints to the SUV, Amari takes off after him.

AMARI
What?!

Chace leaps into the --

INT. SUV - SAME

Throws the vehicle into gear.

CHACE
Shit! Shit! Shit!

AMARI
You gonna tell me, or keep cussing?

CHACE
Look up "cocaine dealer busted in
Penn Valley, PA."

Amari pulls out his phone, does just that. His nose crinkles.
He shows Chace the MUGSHOT from the website:

AMARI
This the guy?

Chace checks the picture: Lorenzo.

CHACE
Yeah, that's him. Dollars to donuts
he's mixed up in some other shit
too.

Amari puts the phone away.

AMARI
Your wife's got bad taste.

Chace glares at him.

AMARI (CONT'D)
I mean, you know, with other dudes.

EXT. THE MERIDIAN MOTEL - ROOM 124 - NIGHT

The Ford Explorer pulls up outside the room, lights are on
inside.

INT. SUV - SAME

Chace looks around, all is quiet. An uncomfortable feeling.

CHACE
Maybe we should call the police?

AMARI
Nah, I ain't feeling that.
(then)
Say he's got her, worst thing you
could do is tip him off, then shit
really gets ugly.

Chace re-thinks his position.

AMARI (CONT'D)
We need to know if she's even in
there. Let me check it out, he
ain't seen my face.

CHACE
I don't like it.

AMARI
I ain't saying I'ma do something if
I see her.

CHACE
I don't want Emily in the middle of
any drama.

AMARI
Recon mission only. You got my
word.

Chace nods.

AMARI (CONT'D)
Stay here. Or better yet, check
with the desk to see if they've
seen anything.

EXT. THE MERIDIAN MOTEL - ROOM 124 - NIGHT

Amari KNOCKS on the door. After a moment it opens, an OLD MAN
appears:

OLD MAN
Yes?

Amari looks at him curiously, double checks the room number.

AMARI
Uh... You called about the toilet?

OLD MAN
(puzzled)
No.

AMARI
We got a call from this room saying
the toilet's stopped up.

OLD MAN
There must be a mistake.

AMARI
Hm. You mind if I check real quick?
I can't log the job otherwise.

OLD MAN
Knock yourself out.

INT. THE MERIDIAN MOTEL - ROOM 124 - CONTINUOUS

Amari enters, he observes the room. Nothing seems amiss.

OLD MAN
Bathroom's right back there.

AMARI
Yeah, I know.

Amari heads to the --

BATHROOM

He flushes the toilet, everything happens as it should.

AMARI
Cool. It's swirling and everything.

OLD MAN
Yep.

AMARI
I'll go ahead and log it.

OLD MAN
If there was a problem you didn't
come prepared.

AMARI
Say what?

OLD MAN
Your tools. You didn't bring any.

AMARI
Oh. Well that's because...

MAIN ROOM

Amari heads to a closet.

AMARI
...We keep the plunger in here.

He opens the closet, takes this opportunity to snoop.

AMARI (CONT'D)
But yours ain't in here, so I'll
make a note of that.

OLD MAN
Are you done?

AMARI
Um, just about. One sec...

Amari hits the floor, checks under the bed. Nothing.

AMARI (CONT'D)
Just wanna make sure you ain't got
no monsters hiding under there.

Amari stands back up, he has a smile on his face. The old man regards him, quizzical.

AMARI (CONT'D)
That was a joke.

OLD MAN
Please leave.

AMARI
You got it.

EXT. THE MERIDIAN MOTEL - ROOM 124 - NIGHT

Amari exits the room, the old man shuts the door behind him.
Amari stands there, lost.

AMARI
Well damn.

He looks to the parking lot --

The lovey-dovey man - who was all over Chace's SUV in the opening - plays with his son, throwing him high in the air, swinging him around. The boy LAUGHS gleefully. Amari takes this in, allows himself to smile. Suddenly --

His smile turns sour.

(O.S.) Sounds of SCREAMS and GUNSHOTS, possibly a school shooting. Amari looks horrified.

The boy's head swivels in his direction, the night seems to darken around him. He looks Amari in the eye, an EVIL stare --

CHACE (O.S.)
What'd you find?

Amari snaps out of his reverie. He looks to Chace, then back to the man and boy: the man continues to play with his son.

CHACE (CONT'D)
The desk claims they've never logged a "Lorenzo." They haven't seen Emily either.

Amari turns back to Chace.

CHACE (CONT'D)
Who's in there now?

AMARI
Some old guy. And the room's empty, I checked it.

Chace frowns.

AMARI (CONT'D)
Now what?

CHACE
You're asking me? I thought you had the answers.

Amari looks away, humbled.

AMARI
Ain't got all of them.

His eyes find the man and the boy again. And now the lovey-dovey woman joins her family. Chace follows Amari's gaze, sees the group by their car.

CHACE
They were here yesterday.

He starts in their direction--

AMARI

What would you do to a little boy
if you knew he'd grow to be a
murderer?

CHACE

Why are you asking me that?

AMARI

What would you do?

CHACE

Amari, I can't even think about
that now.

Chace hurries over to the family.

CHACE (CONT'D)

Hello! Excuse me?!

The man and woman look his way.

MAN

(to the woman)
It's the Peeping Tom from last
night.

Chace arrives.

CHACE

Hi again.

MAN

Cheers, mate.

Chace whips out his cell phone.

CHACE

I was wondering if either of you
might've seen my little girl around
here?

He shows them the picture on his phone.

CHACE (CONT'D)

Her name's Emily. Any information
whatsoever would be helpful.

The man shakes his head.

MAN

Can't say I have.

Amari arrives, he locks eyes with the little demon. The boy looks innocent in this moment, he smiles at Amari.

The woman continues to study the photo.

CHACE
(to the woman)
Have you? Please, take a closer
look.

The woman looks to Chace.

WOMAN
She's lost?

CHACE
Kidnapped.

She looks back to the photo.

WOMAN
I don't... I'm not sure.

CHACE
Here, I've got videos. Maybe it'd
help to see her moving around.

Chace scrolls through his phone. Amari turns his attention to the woman, reads her body language:

AMARI
There's something you ain't telling
us.

WOMAN
...I saw a girl this morning who
kinda resembled her.

Chace's eyes shoot to the woman.

CHACE
Where?

WOMAN
Coming out that room.

She points directly to Room 124. Lorenzo's old room. This only fuels Chace's fire:

CHACE
Was she with a man? Hispanic?
About yea tall, looked like a
gang-banger?

WOMAN

No.

(then)

She was with a black woman.

Our guys: huh?

AMARI

A black woman?

WOMAN

But, I mean, it might've not even been her. I'm just--

CHACE

Was this an older woman? With glasses? How'd she look?

WOMAN

She was younger, a little chubby. Also had blue hair. Braids.

The gears in Chace's head spin. He dials a number.

CHACE

Listen, I need you to tell Agent Bailey exactly what you told me, okay?

MAN

Whoa, whoa, hey now! We don't wanna get involved in whatever this is.

CHACE

This is a father fighting to get his daughter back!

(into phone)

Hello, Agent Bailey?

MAN

I said we're not getting involved!

WOMAN

(to the man)

Honey.

MAN

One minute you're answering questions about the girl, then next we've got a guy from La Eme on our tail because you snitched! No. We're not getting involved.

AMARI
 (pointing to boy)
 You need to stay involved with this
 little devil!

MAN
 (to Amari)
 What'd you call my son?

AMARI
 You heard me. And keep the damn
 guns out your house!

CHACE
 (to the woman)
 All I want is for you to tell her
 what you told me. That's it.

Chace offers the phone, the man swats it away.

MAN
 I said no! After that you're gonna
 want a sketch artist. My decision's
 final.
 (to the woman)
 Let's go.

The man grabs his son and goes to put him in the car seat.

AMARI
 Selfish ass!

MAN
 Boy, you got one more time to--

AMARI
 "Boy"? Homie, you don't even know
 me. I'll drop your ass in front of
 your lady!

CHACE
 (to Amari)
 Hey, chill out.

AMARI
 Don't get it twisted!

CHACE
 Amari!

AMARI
 (to Chace)
 You hearing this shit?

CHACE
We don't need them anyway.

Amari turns back to the man.

AMARI
Meant what I said. Keep the guns
out your house! And watch your boy.

MAN
Worry about your damn self.

The man ducks into the car with the woman. A filtered voice
speaks, barely audible:

AGENT BAILEY (PHONE)
What's going on? Where are you?

Chace talks on the phone as the young, "idyllic" family pulls
away:

CHACE
Agent Bailey, sorry about that.
(then)
Earlier, when you were at Eleanor's
place, was her daughter present?

AGENT BAILEY (PHONE)
No... Why?

CHACE
I think she might have Emily.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - SAME

A hodgepodge of ICE CREAM inside a freezer. Taylor holds
Ribbit in her arms, exploring her options. Reesa walks up.

REESA
See something you like?

Taylor nods.

TAYLOR
All of it.

INT. AUDI CONVERTIBLE - NIGHT

Reesa drives, Taylor eats ice cream in the back seat. She
looks to Ribbit sitting next to her, grabs him. Suddenly --
Her eyes squinch shut.

REESA (O.S.)
 In Cuba, we call ice cream
 "helado." How is it?

Taylor's eyes shift behind their lids, she holds Ribbit tightly. Reesa looks to her in the rear view mirror.

REESA (CONT'D)
 Taylor? You okay there?

TAYLOR
 Whoa.

REESA
 What's going on?

No answer. Reesa pulls the car over. She looks back to:

REESA (CONT'D)
 Taylor!

Taylor's eyes pop open, she takes a sharp breath, as if awakening from a dream.

REESA (CONT'D)
 What were you doing?

Taylor collects herself.

TAYLOR
 I- I saw something.

REESA
 What'd you see, honey?

There's an amazement to her.

TAYLOR
 Emily.

Reesa's brow furrows.

INT. SOMNUS INN - LOBBY - NIGHT

We see the top of a door open... then close.

We follow a figure from behind, as it limps to the --

FRONT DESK

A young CLERK sits behind the desk, playing on her PHONE. A WHITE CLOUD OF SMOKE hits her, she looks up:

GUS

Hi. I was wondering if you could help me?

Gus takes a drag on his CIGARETTE, the clerk stares at him in disbelief.

CLERK

Are you kidding me with this? You can't smoke in here!

Gus stubs the cigarette.

GUS

Sorry, my nerves are shot.

(then)

My name is Harold Clay, I'm looking for my daughter and grandchild. I was told they might've checked into this motel.

CLERK

Okay?

GUS

Can you look her up for me?

The clerk, uneasy.

CLERK

No, I can't. I'm not authorized to do that.

GUS

Is there a manager I could speak to?

CLERK

You want the Night Supervisor?

GUS

Fine.

The clerk calls to a room in the back:

CLERK

Hey, Mark! A little help, please?

A moment later --

MARK STEPS OUT OF THE ROOM

CLERK (CONT'D)

This guy wants you... if you know what I mean.

She winks at Mark, so juvenile.

MARK

Shut up.
(beat)
Who's smoking?

GUS

That's my fault, sorry. Things have been a little hectic lately.

(then)

My name is Harold Clay. I'd like to see if my daughter checked into this motel within the past day or so.

Mark refers to the computer.

MARK

What's her name?

GUS

Last name Clay, first name Reesa.

Mark looks up, startled, he knows that name.

GUS (CONT'D)

R-E-E-S-A.

Mark looks back to the computer, punches some buttons on the keyboard.

MARK

May I ask what the problem is?

GUS

Something happened between her and her ex and she didn't take it well. She got high on god knows what and ran off with my granddaughter.

MARK

That's not good.

GUS

A friend of hers said she checked into a motel, but wasn't sure which one. I'm worried she's holed up in a bathroom somewhere with a bottle of pills.

(MORE)

GUS (CONT'D)

(then)

My granddaughter shouldn't have to witness that. To see her mother in those conditions.

Mark nods, punches more buttons. He looks up:

MARK

Unfortunately, sir, we don't have anyone by that name. I'm sorry.

GUS

Hm. Maybe she's under an alias. Do you have security footage?

MARK

Oh, now that's way above my pay grade. For something like that I think you'd need a warrant.

GUS

I'm just worried about my family.

(then)

Just as I imagine you'd be worried about Kara if she ran away.

That jolts Mark, his brow furrows.

MARK

Who are you? Really?

Gus gives Mark a polite smile, he then puts a ONE DOLLAR BILL on the counter.

GUS

Thanks for the help, kid. Again, I apologize for the smoke.

Gus turns around and limps out of the lobby. Mark pockets the measly tip and watches him go. His eyes then revert back to the computer.

INT. AUDI CONVERTIBLE - NIGHT

Taylor sobs in the back seat, tears running down her cheek.

TAYLOR

But I don't wanna go!

REESA

Doesn't matter, you're going. And you'll never see your daddy again.

TAYLOR

Please!

REESA

You did not see what you think you saw! I wasn't there, comprendes? Do you understand me?

Taylor continues to sob.

REESA (CONT'D)

I said do you understand?!

TAYLOR

Yes!

REESA

Otherwise you can tell all the lies you want in Liarville. It was made for girls like you.

TAYLOR

I won't tell anymore! I promise!

Reesa looks to her in the rear view mirror.

REESA

You will not repeat that to anyone, you hear me?

TAYLOR

I won't!

REESA

Last thing I need is Chace spazzing out over some caca.

TAYLOR

I'm sorry.

Taylor chokes back tears, looks like she learned her lesson. Reesa nods, satisfied.

EXT. ELEANOR'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A hand KNOCKS on the door. It opens, revealing Eleanor. Her magnified eyes take in her guests: Agent Bailey, Chace, and Amari.

AGENT BAILEY

Mrs. Langford, thank you for agreeing to meet with us on such short notice. I know you and Mr. Clay have a bit of a--

ELEANOR

(to Amari)

Who are you?

Eleanor scrutinizes Amari.

CHACE

This is my friend Amari. He's been helping with the--

ELEANOR

I wasn't talking to you, Mr. Clay.

Chace glares at Agent Bailey, she gives him a look, "relax." Eleanor looks back to Amari.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

Well? Does the janitor speak?

AMARI

When I got something to say.

AGENT BAILEY

Mrs. Langford, may we come in?

INT. ELEANOR'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Eleanor leads the group inside.

AGENT BAILEY

Is Jackie here already?

Eleanor shakes her head.

ELEANOR

Haven't been able to reach her.

(then)

Please, have a seat.

Eleanor gestures to a couch, the trio sits.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

Can I get you all anything? Water?

(to Amari)

Kool-Aid?

AGENT BAILEY

Mrs. Langford, when I spoke with you an hour ago, I told you it was imperative to have Jackie present for this meeting.

Eleanor takes a seat in a chair, directly across from them.

ELEANOR

Well, as I said, she hasn't been picking up the phone.

AGENT BAILEY

I understand that. And since she isn't here, do you understand that withholding her number could be construed as obstruction of justice?

Eleanor's brow furrows.

ELEANOR

On what basis? Jackie hasn't done anything wrong.

CHACE

Alright, let's cut the shit.

Agent Bailey shoots him a look.

AGENT BAILEY

Mr. Clay.

CHACE

Yeah, yeah, I know. Play nice. And I tried, really. But it's obvious this woman's covering for her daughter. She's just as guilty.

ELEANOR

If I'm guilty of anything, it's being foolish enough to let you all in my home. Is this why you're here? To accost me?

CHACE

Are you seriously telling me last night has nothing to do with the disappearance of my daughter?

AMARI

It don't.

The quiet one speaks, all eyes look to Amari.

AMARI (CONT'D)

Sucks, 'cause it'd be real easy if it did. It'd make sense after what happened between y'all, but... she ain't in on nothing.

ELEANOR

Listen to the janitor.

AMARI

(to Eleanor)

I think you wanna give Agent Bailey your daughter's number.

Eleanor sizes up Amari.

ELEANOR

And why would I do that, mister...?

AMARI

Price. Amari Price.

Eleanor raises an eyebrow. She studies Amari, then brightens.

ELEANOR

Thought I recognized that face!
You're Glenda's boy?

AMARI

Unfortunately.

ELEANOR

Isn't that something! All grown up!
Last time I saw you, you was about
this tall.

Eleanor indicates a child's height. Amari nods, apathetic.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

How's your mother? I haven't seen
her in ages.

AMARI

Look, we ain't here to catch up on
the last thirty years, okay? Just
give the agent the number and we
can all be happy. Including Jackie.

ELEANOR

What kind of trouble is she in?

CHACE

Unreal. You're supposed to be
psychic, but you're asking him?

AMARI

She can't see it. The gift don't work on our own bloodline, so even with those big ass glasses, she's blind as hell.

AGENT BAILEY

Mr. Price!

Eleanor smiles.

ELEANOR

No, he's right.

She takes off the creepy glasses, looks back to Amari.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

But you don't have to be a jackass about it.

AMARI

You asked what kind of trouble she in...? It ain't the good kind.

Eleanor considers that, then looks to Agent Bailey:

ELEANOR

Two one five, one six three, five eight zero one.

Agent Bailey leaps up from the couch, makes a call.

AGENT BAILEY

I need a trace on a number. Yes, two one five...

She walks away, her voice fading out as Eleanor reads Amari:

ELEANOR

Interesting. Wanna know what I see?

Amari shakes his head.

AMARI

No offense, but I ain't try'na hear from somebody that banks off the gift.

ELEANOR

Ah, that's the source of the friction. Now I understand.

(beat)

(MORE)

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

What your mother's doing, what I'm doing, is it so different than profiting off any other gift?

AMARI

Ain't like we playing the piano.

ELEANOR

So you enjoy being a janitor?
Living in squalor?

Amari looks at her, confused.

AMARI

I don't know nothing about no "squalor." I live in Philly.

CHACE

(to Eleanor)

I need you to elaborate on what you told me earlier. About the sheep.

Agent Bailey rushes back into the living room.

AGENT BAILEY

She can do that later. We've gotta move, now!

I/E. SOMNUS INN - ROOM 13 - LATER

A fist BANGS on the door.

OFFICER MCMANUS (O.S.)

Police!

No answer. Another BANG! BANG! BANG!

OFFICER MCMANUS (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Police! Open up!

After a moment the door opens, revealing Jackie. She looks groggy, a bit out of it.

OFFICER LEE and OFFICER MCMANUS greet her on the other side.

OFFICER LEE

Evening, ma'am. Sorry if we woke you.

Jackie rubs her head, a WELT looks to be forming.

JACKIE

My head. Shit.

OFFICER MCMANUS
Are you alright, ma'am?

JACKIE
Nah. And it's a good thing y'all here, 'cause y'all need to catch the bastard that did this to me. And he took the little girl.

OFFICER LEE
The girl? Ma'am, are you referring to Emily Clay?

Officer Lee holds up a MISSING PERSON FLYER of Emily.

OFFICER LEE (CONT'D)
Is this who you're talking about?

Jackie observes the photo, confused.

JACKIE
How's that already say she's missing?

CHACE (O.S.)
Hey!

The officers spin around to find Chace, Amari, Agent Bailey, and Eleanor sprinting to the room.

CHACE (CONT'D)
Arrest that woman! She took my daughter!

AGENT BAILEY
Mr. Clay! Officers, stop him!

Officer McManus tackles Chace to the ground.

CHACE
Where's Emily?! Where's my girl?

Chace fights against Officer McManus.

OFFICER MCMANUS
Stop resisting!

Agent Bailey catches up to Chace.

AGENT BAILEY
Mr. Clay, stop it! Calm down.

Officer McManus puts Chace in cuffs.

OFFICER LEE
What the hell's going on here?

Agent Bailey flashes a BADGE to Officer Lee:

AGENT BAILEY
Special Agent Bailey, I'm on the
case.

CHACE
Where is she?!

Chace flops around like a fish out of water, red faced, veins
popping out his forehead. Amari crouches to his level:

AMARI
Hey, hey, hey! Look at you, man.
You gotta chill with all this.

Chace makes eye contact with Amari, breathing like an angry
bull. He calms.

AMARI (CONT'D)
You good?

JACKIE
(to Eleanor)
What you doing here, momma?

Agent Bailey approaches the room.

AGENT BAILEY
Jackie, I need you to tell me
everything you know and it needs to
be the truth, do you understand me?

Jackie looks to her mother.

AGENT BAILEY (CONT'D)
Don't look at her, look at me.

She looks back to Agent Bailey.

AGENT BAILEY (CONT'D)
Do you understand me?

Jackie nods.

AGENT BAILEY (CONT'D)
Is Emily Clay in this room?

JACKIE
No.

AGENT BAILEY
Is there anyone else in there who'd
want to do us harm?

Jackie shakes her head.

JACKIE
It's just me.

AGENT BAILEY
(to Officer Lee)
Officer, if you wouldn't mind?

Agent Bailey gestures to the room. Officer Lee steps inside.
Agent Bailey looks back to Jackie.

AGENT BAILEY (CONT'D)
Have you seen Emily Clay at all
within the past twenty four hours?

JACKIE
Yeah, I was watching her.

AGENT BAILEY
Where is she now?

JACKIE
I don't know.

Agent Bailey glares at Jackie, she doesn't believe that.

AGENT BAILEY
Do you understand what's happening
here?

JACKIE
Obviously not.

AGENT BAILEY
You see the man on the ground?

She points to Chace, Jackie nods.

AGENT BAILEY (CONT'D)
Emily Clay is his daughter.
(to Officer McManus)
You can stand him up.

Officer McManus pulls Chace up, he keeps the cuffs on him.
Chace shoots accusatory eyes at Jackie.

AGENT BAILEY (CONT'D)
Emily has been missing since last
night.

(MORE)

AGENT BAILEY (CONT'D)
Now, I understand you and Mr. Clay
had a bit of an altercation at his
radio station?

JACKIE
Oh, no, no, no, no. Nah uh, you
ain't putting this on me. I ain't
no kidnapper!
(to Chace)
I ain't take your girl!

AGENT BAILEY
Don't talk to him, talk to me.

Officer Lee exits the room.

OFFICER LEE
It's clear.

Agent Bailey nods.

JACKIE
Look, find Lorenzo De Leon. He'll
tell you everything you wanna know.

AGENT BAILEY
How are you involved?

JACKIE
I ain't "involved," alright? First
and foremost, let's get that
straight. I ain't do nothing.

CHACE
My ass, you're not involved!

AGENT BAILEY
Just tell me your side of the
story.

Jackie looks to Eleanor.

ELEANOR
Girl, quit looking at me like I'm
supposed to help. Just tell her
what happened.

Jackie turns back to Agent Bailey:

JACKIE
Lorenzo had her since last night,
said the girl's mother dropped her
off.

(MORE)

JACKIE (CONT'D)

Something about mommy and daddy fighting and mommy running away, I don't know.

CHACE

That's bullshit and you know it.

AGENT BAILEY

How do you know Lorenzo?

JACKIE

He stay around the corner from me.

AGENT BAILEY

Which corner?

JACKIE

In North Philly. You prolly don't know it.

AGENT BAILEY

How'd you get here?

JACKIE

Lorenzo had something to take care of and couldn't watch the girl, so he called me. I came in this morning, like around ten.

AGENT BAILEY

Jackie, I'd like to think I'm fairly bright, so you'll have to forgive me for not understanding how you had her one minute and now you don't.

JACKIE

We were going out to get some munchies, but when I walked through the door, someone clocked me in the head. When I woke up these two were here, banging on the door.

AGENT BAILEY

Wait a minute, this was recently?

Jackie nods.

JACKIE

Maybe... thirty minutes ago?

Jaws drop. Officer Lee rushes to the police cruiser, barking into his radio. Agent Bailey sprints to the --

INT. SOMNUS INN - FRONT DESK - SAME

She barges inside, the clerk looks up, startled.

AGENT BAILEY
Special Agent Bailey with the FBI.

CLERK
Whoa!

AGENT BAILEY
I need a list of all your residents
and the rooms they're occupying.

CLERK
...Mark!

EXT. SOMNUS INN - LATER

One patrol car has become many. The complex swarms with the men in blue.

A tricked out MONTE CARLO turns into the motel, blaring RAP MUSIC.

INT. MONTE CARLO - SAME

Lorenzo sits behind the wheel, nodding to the beat. He rounds a corner... and sees the police cruisers parked outside his room.

LORENZO
The fuck?

Lorenzo kills the music. He takes in the scene for a second, then turns the car around and gets the hell out of there.

INT. SOMNUS INN - FRONT DESK - NIGHT

Agent Bailey exits a back room, followed by Officer Lee. They approach Mark, the clerk, and the MANAGER (50s).

AGENT BAILEY
Tapes are inconclusive.

MANAGER
How else can we help?

Agent Bailey goes to a window.

AGENT BAILEY
Invest in cameras for the parking
lot. No reason you shouldn't have
at least one.

She looks out the window, spots an adjacent diner.

MANAGER (O.S.)
You really think it could've been
one of our residents?

She turns back to the manager, a thumb pointed at the diner:

AGENT BAILEY
Does that building have an exterior
camera?

MARK
Yeah, but it's probably not gonna
be much help over here.

Agent Bailey looks back to the diner, contemplating. She then
leaves the window and approaches the three.

AGENT BAILEY
I need every inch of this building
swept, that includes the vacant
rooms. Can I get one of you to
assist Officer Lee with that?

MANAGER
I'm on it.

The manager goes to join Officer Lee.

AGENT BAILEY
(to Officer Lee)
I'll be in thirteen if you need me.

Officer Lee nods, Agent Bailey exits.

MARK
Oh, Mrs. Hughes?

The manager looks back to Mark.

MARK (CONT'D)
Unless you wanna pay me overtime, I
should probably get going...

Mark points to a hanging CLOCK: a quarter past the hour.

MANAGER
Oh, yes. Sorry, Mark, go home.

MARK
(to Officer Lee)
You guys need to search me, or am I
good?

OFFICER LEE
No, you're good.

EXT. SOMNUS INN - ROOM 13 - NIGHT

Chace paces outside the room, his cell phone RINGS: GUS. He
picks up:

CHACE
I almost had her, Gus. She was
right there.

GUS (PHONE)
Hey, kid, don't think I'm
insensitive for asking... But if I
did find Emily, would I be entitled
to that reward?

Chace's brow furrows.

CHACE
Why would you ask me that?

GUS (PHONE)
It was a hypothetical question.

CHACE
Gus, my daughter is missing. You
can't speak in hypotheticals.

GUS (PHONE)
Say what now?

CHACE
It makes me think you have her.

GUS (PHONE)
Kid, I was patrolling the streets
with your daddy long before you
were swimming in his pipes! I can
say whatever I damn well please.

CHACE
Do you have Emily?

GUS (PHONE)
'Course not! And frankly I'm
insulted by the allegation.

CHACE
Do you have any information
whatsoever regarding the case?

GUS (PHONE)
No. But I think I'm on to--

CLICK. Chace disconnects, enough of that nonsense. Amari
rushes up to him, a wad of BLOODY TISSUE stuffed in his
nostril.

AMARI
Your key! Lemme borrow your car.

CHACE
What? Why?

AMARI
Think I've got something.

CHACE
Let's take it to Agent Bailey.

Amari gives him a look, "c'mon."

AMARI
How you think that's gonna fly?

Chace considers that...

CHACE
I'll go with you.

AMARI
No. I gotta play this smooth and
you too heated right now. You might
catch a hot one, for real.

Chace looks puzzled.

CHACE
I have no idea what you just said.

AMARI
You're too upset. You might screw
it up and get shot.

CHACE
Amari, I don't even let Reesa drive
my Explorer.

AMARI
Oh, aight. I guess we'll let the
kidnapper get away then.

Amari crosses his arms, defiant.

CHACE

Again, you're worse than she is.

Amari removes the bloody tissue from his nose, inspects it, then tosses it aside. He looks back to Chace:

AMARI

You remember what I said about my nosebleeds?

CHACE

Yeah.

AMARI

Then tell me something and be straight with me on this... Do you trust me?

Chace holds Amari's stare. Then... He presents the CAR KEYS.

CHACE

Be careful, okay?

Amari nods. He takes the keys and sprints to the Explorer.

AGENT BAILEY (O.S.)

Where's he going?

Chace looks to his six, finds Agent Bailey approaching.

CHACE

If I told you, you'd think I was crazy.

He smiles, she doesn't.

An Audi convertible pulls into the motel as the Explorer leaves. BAD GURL on the license plate.

AGENT BAILEY

Your wife's car, correct?

Chace nods. He studies Agent Bailey as she watches the Audi park: only now does he recognize the attractive woman beneath the hard-nosed exterior. Chace chuckles to himself.

AGENT BAILEY (CONT'D)

What is it?

CHACE

I've never seen a woman go out of her way to not look attractive.

AGENT BAILEY

Excuse me?

CHACE

I'm not trying to hit on you. In fact, in light of the shit I've been through, this guy right here's making a conscious effort not to objectify women. But with that being said, it would be a crime on my part if I didn't at least acknowledge your potential. And I think you should embrace it.

AGENT BAILEY

I'm sorry, potential for...?

CHACE

Breaking hearts. Making guys weak at the knees, that sort of thing.

Agent Bailey looks at him in disbelief.

AGENT BAILEY

Mr. Clay, I have absolutely no interest in your advances or your compliments. But thank you.

Chace smiles, takes the dismissal in stride.

Reesa and Taylor exit the car.

CHACE

Just an observation. Anyway, there's someone else I feel we need to look into. An Augustus Lipinski.

AGENT BAILEY

Who's Augustus Lipinski?

CHACE

A grumpy, bitter old man.

Taylor sprints to Chace and wraps her arms around his legs.

CHACE (CONT'D)

Whoa! Hey!

He hugs her back.

CHACE (CONT'D)

Happy to see you too!

AGENT BAILEY
Mrs. Clay, good timing.

REESA
Where's this woman?

Chace points to the room.

TAYLOR
Where's daddy?

CHACE
He's... checking on something.

AGENT BAILEY
(to Reesa)
I hate for us to reacquaint under these circumstances, but I'd like to ask you a few questions.

REESA
Can I have a minute with my husband?

Agent Bailey checks her watch.

AGENT BAILEY
You've got exactly that.

Agent Bailey heads to the room. Reesa looks to Chace.

REESA
You said this woman's been talking about me?

CHACE
Reesa, if there's something you need to tell me, do it now. If I'm going to even consider giving this thing a chance, I need your honesty.

Reesa looks at him, confused.

REESA
There's nothing, Chace. I tell you everything already.

CHACE
Jackie said it was you who brought Emily to Lorenzo. That the plan was for the three of you to run off together.

REESA

Why would I do something so stupid?

CHACE

I thought about that. And seeing as how our marriage was a little shaky, maybe you wanted to use a tragic circumstance to bring us closer.

Reesa takes a second to mull that over.

REESA

One, why the hell would I wanna run away with your child? Two, where has Lori been through all this?

(then)

I wouldn't leave Emily with a damn criminal, just because I wanted to--

AGENT BAILEY (O.S.)

Mrs. Clay!

Reesa looks to Agent Bailey, standing in the doorway of room thirteen.

AGENT BAILEY (CONT'D)

Now please.

REESA

Damn this woman.

CHACE

Go. We'll talk afterwards.

Reesa heads to the room.

EXT. MARK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A shitty 1998 DODGE NEON pulls up to the house.

Mark exits the car, doesn't shut the door completely. He surveys the neighborhood, all clear.

He goes around to the back and pops open the trunk. He reaches in and lifts out --

A SMALL, LIMP BODY

A PILLOWCASE drapes the head, but the pajamas ID her: Emily. Her hands and feet are DUCT TAPED.

Mark hurriedly carries her inside --

INT. MARK'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

He moves past his FATHER, a middle-aged man asleep in a recliner. A bottle of JACK DANIELS in his hand.

EXT. MARK'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Mark moves through the yard, carrying Emily to a storm cellar. He removes an industrial sized PADLOCK from the doors --

INT. MARK'S HOUSE - STORM CELLAR - CONTINUOUS

He descends a flight of stairs and gently places Emily on the ground. He races back up and closes the cellar door. A moment later --

Emily twitches, her drugs likely wearing off.

EXT. MARK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Mark exits the house, heads to his --

CAR

He shuts the door, then closes the trunk.

He makes his way back to the house, then stops. He doubles back to the car, forgot something --

INT. DODGE NEON - SAME

Mark opens the glove compartment, reaches in and retrieves a small .22 caliber PISTOL. He puts it in the back of his waist and shuts the door.

EXT. MARK'S HOUSE - SAME

As he returns to the house, he finds --

A BLACK MAN STANDING AT HIS DOOR

Seemingly came out of nowhere.

MARK
Can I help you?!

Amari turns around, he has a phone to his ear, a clipboard in his hand. Looks official in his janitor uniform.

AMARI

Oh, must've missed you somehow.
Apologies for the lateness, we've
been backed up all night.

MARK

Who the hell are you?

AMARI

Sidney Brown with JJ's plumbing?
You called about the water heater.

Clearly this is news to Mark.

MARK

This isn't a good time.

AMARI

Oh, one second.
(into phone)
Hey, boss.

CHACE (PHONE)

Amari? Where are you?

AMARI

Yes, I'm here at thirty three
Sycamore Lane, but the son's
telling me it ain't a good time.

CHACE (PHONE)

Who- What are you talking about?

Amari looks to Mark:

AMARI

My boss is saying we're booked
solid for another week.

MARK

I don't care, come back then.

CHACE (PHONE)

Hello?

AMARI

(into phone)
Hey, sorry, boss. It seems we have
a real problem here.

CHACE (PHONE)

Amari, don't tell me you've wrecked
my--

AMARI

No, listen to me. Tell Sam to come to thirty three Sycamore Lane. Right now! 'Cause I ain't come all the way out here to be turned away.

MARK

It's no big deal, man. Just come back another day.

Amari gives Mark the "one minute" finger.

AMARI

(into phone)
Boss? You get that?

CHACE (PHONE)

Are you saying... You've found Emily?

AMARI

Yes! That's exactly what I'm try'na tell you!

CHACE (PHONE)

Shit, we're going! Who has her?

AMARI

He's the son, I think. Name's Mark.

CHACE (PHONE)

Mark? Mark who?

MARK

How do you know my name?

AMARI

(to Mark)
Your motel badge.

CHACE (PHONE)

Motel Mark?! The same one from Somnus?

AMARI

(into phone)
That's right. Okay.

Amari puts the phone away.

AMARI (CONT'D)

My boss's assistant is on his way.

MARK

That's stupid and unnecessary.

(beat)

Look, my father isn't here, but I
can make decisions on his behalf.

AMARI

We'll just wait for Sam to come,
let him sort it out.

Amari stands there with his arms crossed. Mark looks around,
curious. Something's amiss. He looks back to Amari, then --

PULLS HIS GUN ON HIM

AMARI (CONT'D)

Whoa, man!

Amari throws his hands up.

MARK

Where's your van?!

AMARI

Look, put the gun down! It ain't
that serious!

MARK

Where's your fucking van?! How'd
you get here?!

Amari's expression reads, "busted."

AMARI

Damn, I didn't think about that.

MARK

Who are you?

AMARI

Alright, look, you should know my
people are on their way. So drop
the gun and give me the girl.

MARK

You're a cop?

Amari shakes his head.

AMARI

More like a detective. And I know
all about you, Mark.

Mark stares at Amari, trapped.

AMARI (CONT'D)

Well, almost: what I can't see is why you killed that kid. Anthony Mullins.

Mark flinches.

MARK

What?

AMARI

Why'd you kill him?

MARK

Fuck you, man! I didn't kill nobody!

AMARI

Then don't tell me. It'll come out eventually.

MARK

He had an asthma attack, alright? I wouldn't kill a kid!

AMARI

But you didn't get help.

MARK

So what? I didn't kill him!

The faint sound of SIRENS in the distance, Mark looks jittery.

AMARI

Where is she?

Mark tears up, he begins to cry.

EXT. PATROL CARS - NIGHT

A convoy of police cruisers tear down the road. In one of these vehicles --

INT. PATROL CAR - SAME

Chace sits in back with Reesa and Taylor. In one hand his phone, in the other a TWO-WAY RADIO. He's been transmitting the call for the entire police force to hear.

MARK (PHONE)
I'm a good person. It wasn't
supposed to be like this.

AMARI (PHONE)
I know. Shit just goes off the
rails sometimes.

MARK (PHONE)
I'm not going to jail.

EXT. MARK'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Mark looks increasingly unstable, Amari keeps his cool.

AMARI
Mark, where's Emily? What'd you do
with her?

Something changes in Mark's eyes, madness replaces tears. His
pupils burn white-hot with fire.

AMARI (CONT'D)
Just do the right thing. Tell me
where she is.

MARK
This is your fault.

Amari, caught off-guard.

AMARI
My fault?

MARK
People like you! Like him!

Mark points inside his house.

MARK (CONT'D)
You turned me into this! You made
me what I am!

AMARI
Man, I don't know what you talking
about, I just want--

MARK
Shut up! Just fucking shut up!

MARK'S FATHER (O.S.)
(drunken)
Mark?

Mark cringes, he looks to the house, then back to Amari.

MARK
I'm not letting you take me! I'm
not going to jail!

AMARI
Hey, I don't care about all that.
Just tell me where Emily--

MARK
I said I'm not going with you,
fucker! You're coming with me!

AMARI
What?

CLICK. Mark pulled the trigger! For a moment the two just stand there, staring at each other.

CLICK. Mark pulls it again. And again.

AMARI (CONT'D)
Damn, you woulda shot me!

RED AND BLUE POLICE LIGHTS barrel down the street, headed for their position. Mark takes notice.

AMARI (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Hey, asshole!

Mark looks back to Amari, finds BULLETS in his outstretched palm.

AMARI (CONT'D)
Next time lock your car!

Amari pelts Mark with the bullets. Mark throws the gun at Amari and takes off running.

AMARI (CONT'D)
Hey!

Amari sprints after him, tackles him to the ground. The two wrestle in the yard as police cruisers descend upon them.

FADE TO:

EXT. MARK'S HOUSE - LATER

Abuzz with PATROL CARS and NOSY NEIGHBORS.

Amari is crouched to Taylor's level, the look on his face suggests she told him something unpleasant. He stands up, takes Taylor's hand and approaches --

CHACE

Locked arm-in-arm with Reesa. Their worried faces watch the front door, agonizing over the unknown. Lori stands nearby, waiting with the same level of anticipation.

Amari pulls Chace aside, whispers something in his ear. Chace's brow furrows, he looks back to Reesa. Just then --

Agent Bailey exits the house holding Emily in her arms. Emily looks disoriented, like she just woke from a coma.

Chace, Reesa, and Lori rush over. Chace snatches Emily away from Agent Bailey and holds her tightly. The two women join in, hugging Emily in some sort of weird love triangle.

Amari smiles proudly.

FADE TO:

EXT. PHILADELPHIA - NIGHT

Amari's beat up Toyota Camry motors through the city. He pulls into --

EXT. JAY'S SUPERSTORE - PARKING LOT - SAME

And parks the car.

INT. TOYOTA CAMRY

Amari sits there, reflective and at peace, a triumphant look in his eye. He turns and looks to the backseat --

Taylor is sound asleep. Amari shakes her awake.

AMARI

Hey. Hey, miss thing.

She opens her eyes.

AMARI (CONT'D)

You wanna pick out another shirt?
I'm buying.

Now Taylor is fully awake. She jumps up, flushed with joy. Amari laughs, ecstatic for his daughter. They hug.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. CLAY HOUSEHOLD - EMILY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Emily lies in bed, Lori next to her. Chace kisses Emily's forehead.

CHACE
I missed you sooo much!

EMILY
How much?

He spreads his arms wide.

CHACE
This much!

Emily giggles.

LORI
I missed you more.

Chace shoots Lori a disapproving look.

EMILY
Where's Ribbit?

CHACE
Hm, good question. I don't know.

LORI
(to Chace)
You lose him too?

CHACE
Lori. Not now.

LORI
Go and find him. We'll be okay in here.
(to Emily)
Isn't that right?

Lori tickles Emily, she giggles. Chace suppresses anger.

CHACE
 Actually, it's the little one's
 bedtime, so...
 (to Emily)
 Say 'night 'night to mommy.

LORI
 Ha! I'm not going anywhere.

CHACE
 I'll let you see her tomorrow.

LORI
 You'll "let me" see her? No, as the
 only fit parent in this house, I
 think I'm gonna sleep next to my
 daughter tonight, thank you very
 much.

EMILY
 I need Ribbit!

Chace lingers for a second, staring daggers at Lori. He
 forces a smile.

CHACE
 I'll go look for him.

And heads for the door.

EMILY
 There's something else you need to
 look for too...

CHACE
 What?

EMILY
 I'm not telling you! You have to
 find it.

CHACE
 What's my clue?

Emily thinks.

EMILY
 It's something of mommy's.

LORI
 Mine?

EMILY
 No. I think it's my other mommy's.

CHACE
 Something of...? Emmy, what'd you
 take from the room?

EMILY
 Nothing, I took it from the closet
 out there. You want another hint?

CHACE
 Yes, please.

Emily thinks.

EMILY
 It's in a squishy place.

CHACE
 What the heck is a squishy place?

Emily smiles big, she has a missing bottom tooth. Chace looks
 to Lori, she shrugs, "I don't know." He looks back to Emily:

CHACE (CONT'D)
 You sneaky little trickster! Okay,
 I'll be back.

LIVING ROOM

Chace looks around, doesn't see the stuffed animal frog. Or
 the squishy place for that matter.

CHACE
 A squishy place.

MASTER BEDROOM

(O.S.) Sounds of RUNNING WATER --

Reesa's in the bathroom, taking a shower. Chace calls to her
 from outside the door:

CHACE
 Hey, have you seen Ribbit?

REESA (O.S.)
 Taylor had him earlier. Look in my
 car.

CHACE
 Thanks.

He starts to leave...

REESA (O.S.)
Come join me!

He stops momentarily.

CHACE
Oh and do you know where a squishy
place might be?

REESA (O.S.)
A squishy place?

CHACE
Yeah. Emily hid something.

Reesa mulls it over.

REESA (O.S.)
Check the couch.

LIVING ROOM

Chace lifts a cushion...

CHACE
Bingo.

And retrieves his finding --

A SHOE WITH A BROKEN HEEL

He observes it, curiously. His cell phone RINGS:

CHACE (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Hello?

AGENT BAILEY (PHONE)
Hi, Mr. Clay, sorry I missed your
call.

CHACE
Where are you?

AGENT BAILEY (PHONE)
Roughly five minutes out.

Chace takes the shoe and heads into the --

GARAGE

Reesa's Audi is parked inside.

AGENT BAILEY (PHONE)
This works quite well, given the
fact we missed the opportunity to
speak with Reesa at length.

Chace opens the car door.

CHACE
If my friend's information is
accurate, you'll be doing a little
more than speaking with her.

Chace finds Ribbit in the backseat, grabs him.

AGENT BAILEY (PHONE)
Once again, can you explain how he
came by this information...?

CHACE
It wouldn't make much sense.

AGENT BAILEY (PHONE)
Try me.

As Chace starts to climb out the car, he looks back to the
cigarette lighter receptacle: the PLUG is still in place.

CHACE
Hm.

He pushes it in.

AGENT BAILEY (PHONE)
Mr. Clay?

Chace looks back to the shoe, contemplating.

AGENT BAILEY (PHONE) (CONT'D)
Mr. Clay, are you there?

MASTER BEDROOM

Reesa removes undergarments from a dresser, a towel tied
around her body. Movement behind her, she looks to the
doorway:

REESA
Find it?

Chace stares her down.

REESA (CONT'D)
What?

CHACE

So I guess this caused the limp.

Chace shows her the SHOE, the heel dangling off.

REESA

What are you talking about?

He tosses the shoe to the ground.

CHACE

You know exactly what I'm talking about.

His fiery eyes stay locked on her. Reesa looks confused.

REESA

Chace... That's not my shoe.

Chace stares at her, momentarily thrown. Jackie's voice pops into his head:

JACKIE (V.O.)

Lorenzo had her since last night,
said THE GIRL'S MOTHER DROPPED HER
OFF.

The last part of that statement rises to a crescendo. Chace takes off, terror in his eyes.

JACKIE (V.O.)

Something about mommy and daddy
fighting and mommy running away.

HALLWAY

He rushes to --

EMILY'S BEDROOM

Empty bed. No sign of his daughter or ex-wife.

CHACE

Emily?! ... LORI?!

EXT. CLAY HOUSEHOLD - NIGHT

Chace snatches the door open, runs outside. Agent Bailey pulls up in a CHEVY IMPALA.

CHACE
She's got her! She's got Emily!

AGENT BAILEY
What?

Chace rushes to the Explorer, finds his tire SLASHED.

CHACE
Shit!

REESA (O.S.)
What's going on?

Reesa stands in the doorway, half clothed. Chace pays her no mind, he sprints to the Chevy.

CHACE
Taylor was wrong, it was Lori! Lori
took Emily!

AGENT BAILEY
She's gone again?!

Chace dives into the backseat of the car.

INT. CHEVY IMPALA - CONTINUOUS

Agent Bailey ducks back inside. Another FBI AGENT sits up front in the passenger seat.

Agent Bailey tears away from the house.

AGENT BAILEY
What are we looking for?

CHACE
A red jeep.

AGENT BAILEY
What else can you tell me?

Chace explodes in anger.

CHACE
Fucking bitch!
(then)
Sorry.

INT. JEEP - NIGHT

A foot secured in an ANKLE BRACE presses a gas pedal. Reveal:

Lori, driving with intense focus. Emily sits in the backseat, concerned.

EMILY
When's daddy coming?

LORI
Told you, he's coming later. Stop asking about him.

Emily shifts, uncomfortable.

EMILY
I wanna go home.

LORI
We are going home, sweetie. Mommy's just gotta pick up a few things.

INT. CHEVY IMPALA - NIGHT

Chace and Agent Bailey in mid-conversation:

CHACE
...left her with a thug in case the plan went to shit. That's her fall guy. She was probably gonna stick around 'til the situation cooled, then she'd disappear with Emily.

AGENT BAILEY
And she did this because...? She has no visitation rights?

CHACE
It's supervised, for exactly this reason. The woman's a total nut job.

AGENT BAILEY
What's her connection to Lorenzo?

CHACE
That guy tried to peddle his shit in our old neighborhood: Penn Valley. We're both familiar with him.

Chace's phone RINGS, he looks at the caller ID. Answers:

CHACE (CONT'D)
Gus?

GUS (PHONE)
Judging by the speed at which Lori
left your house and the tire she
stabbed on the way, I'm going to
surmise your ex-wife's on the run.

CHACE
(to Agent Bailey)
Gus knows where she is!

AGENT BAILEY
Where?

CHACE
(into phone)
Where are you?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. CROWN VICTORIA - SAME

Gus faces forward, eyes never leaving his subject.

GUS
Before you so rudely hung up on me,
I was trying to tell you I was on
to Lori.

CHACE
Gus, listen, I'm a fucking idiot,
okay? I'm sorry. Please tell me
where you are.

GUS
Before I answer your question,
you're gonna answer mine.

CHACE
What is it?! What question?

GUS
If I found Emily, would I be
entitled to that reward?

CHACE
Dammit, Gus, yes! I'll give you the
money! Where the hell are you?

GUS
The Meridian Motel.

CHACE
 (to Agent Bailey)
 They're at the Meridian!

Agent Bailey calls it in.

Gus watches Lori hobble in and out of the room, retrieving large bags from inside, taking them to the jeep. Looks like she's going on a trip.

GUS
 And kid, you better hurry.

EXT. THE MERIDIAN MOTEL - PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Lori and Emily leave the motel office, headed for the jeep. They climb inside. Lori starts the car, backs up --

A Crown Victoria screeches to a stop behind her. She HONKS.

LORI
 Move! What the hell?

She HONKS again. With a car parked in front of her, she's effectively boxed in. She climbs half way out the jeep.

LORI (CONT'D)
 Move your car, asshole!

Gus emerges from the Crown Victoria.

LORI (CONT'D)
 Gus?

GUS
 What are you doing, Lori?

LORI
 What am I doing? What are you doing?

Police SIRENS echo in the distance, closing in fast. Lori hears them, she turns back to Gus, realizing what he's done.

GUS
 Hasn't she been through enough?

Lori gets back in the jeep.

GUS (CONT'D)
 Hey!

She puts it in gear, Gus quickly climbs back inside his car --

BAM! She backs the jeep into the Crown Victoria, her tires SMOKING, revving backwards.

(O.S.) Emily SCREAMS.

GUS (CONT'D)
Stop it! Lori! Stop!

The jeep pulls forward again.

INT. JEEP - SAME

Lori puts it in reverse, looks over her shoulder, about to ram the Crown Victoria again.

EMILY
Mommy?!

Lori looks to Emily: she has tears streaming, fear in her eyes.

EMILY (CONT'D)
I'm scared.

Lori takes in her vulnerability. Her innocence. In this moment she seems to understand the harm she's inflicting on her daughter.

Outside the rear window, police vehicles crowd the jeep. No escape.

GUS
Lori!

Sound FADES OUT. Lori watches as officers scramble for position, their mouths barking orders.

Chace climbs out the Chevy, fear in his eyes. He starts shouting as well. Lori takes all of this in.

A small voice cuts through the silence:

EMILY
Mommy?

She looks back to Emily.

EMILY (CONT'D)
I wanna go home.

Lori's heart melts, a TEAR rolls down her cheek. She puts the jeep in PARK.

LORI
Come here.

And puts her arms out for a hug. Emily unbuckles her seat belt and climbs up front. Lori hugs her like a mother sending her daughter off to college. The tears flow freely now.

She pulls away, takes in Emily's face once more. She wipes her daughter's tears away.

LORI (CONT'D)
I love you, Emily. More than anyone could ever know.

EMILY
I love you too, mommy.

Lori hugs her again, then plants a kiss on her forehead.

LORI
You see daddy out there?

Emily looks outside, she nods.

LORI (CONT'D)
Go to him.

Emily opens the passenger door.

LORI (CONT'D)
Hey.

Emily looks back.

LORI (CONT'D)
Make sure you come visit me.

EXT. THE MERIDIAN MOTEL - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Emily runs to Chace. He scoops her up, holds her tightly.

CHACE
You're sleeping in my room until you're thirty.

He's absolutely serious. Off Chace and Emily's embrace, we --

FADE OUT.

THE END