

INSIDE

Written by

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TITLES UP: **Kellog, Delaware, 1987.** The words dissolve and we hear the ambient sound of children playing, the laughter and squeals and utter ecstasy of careless childhood.

MUSIC: The Mama's and The Papa's - California Dreaming plays into the scene

EXT. PARK - LATE AFTERNOON

We see the day has lost light and is in a state of autumn twilight, slowly perspective lowers and we see three teenage boys playing an intense game of football and they are running in slow motion as if in a dream.

The dream speeds up into real life, and the boys dodge and weave around one another ERIC "RICKY" ELLIS (13), running with the football under his arm at full speed, narrating his inevitable victory.

RICKY

Ellis, number twenty-three is leaving the opponents in the dust as he makes yet another touchdown in this game! Ellis has won the super bowl single handed!

Ricky's friends, TROY (13) and WILLY (14), catch their breath and laugh at their friend's bravado

TROY

You want a Heisman for that?

RICKY

The jealous losers of the day hang their heads in shame as MVP Ricky the Rocket Pack Ellis goes to receive his trophy.

WILLY

This ain't too fair of fuckin game anyway so it doesn't count.

RICKY

What are you talkin about? It was two against one and I was the one.

WILLY

Yeah, but we're both rotten and your dad's the football coach.

Ricky's face loses its color and Troy shoots a warning glare. The vibe has changed and it's heavier now.

WILLY (CONT'D)
Sorry, Rick.

RICKY
Forget it.

WILLY
What you need my man, is a
handicap. Just something to even
the odds a little. Gimp you up.

RICKY
(Laughing) Gimp me up?

They all laugh about the idea

WILLY
I was thinking if your little
brother played with you, it would
even things out.

Ricky's smile fades

RICKY
No way that little runt is a freak.

WILLY
That's why it'll even things out.

RICKY
No.

TROY
Aww come on Rick, what's the big
deal?

RICKY
The big deal is he's a punk.

TROY
Easy man, he's a little kid.

RICKY
Then you take him.

WILLY
Would you just go get him already?

RICKY
And if I don't?

The tone changes and Ricky has gotten in Willy's face now.
Willy puts on a poker face.

WILLY

Fine do what you want, but remember whose sister you want to go to the dance with. Maybe I'll just forget to put in a good word with Vanessa about you.

Ricky fumes -- the anger on his face far surpassing the situation as he clenches his teeth.

RICKY

Be right back.

Willy smiles at Troy as Ricky walks away to get his brother. Willy's hands shaking, scared shitless.

EXT. PARK - CONTINUOUS

RAYMOND "RAY" ELLIS (5), Doe-eyed moppet sits alone on a log in a clearing laughing. He's talking to seemingly no one, he's a rough and tumble kid who is more sensitive than he lets on.

RAY

Yeah right! She would never kiss you. Maybe a frog would!

Ray laughs the abandon of childhood, to his imaginary friend, and we can see Ricky approaching, a hate seeking missile to on its way to Pearl Harbor.

RAY (CONT'D)

What did you say?

RICKY

Hey freak, you talking to your imaginary boyfriend again?

RAY

No.

RICKY

Don't lie to me, I could hear that gay ass laugh from all the way down the path.

Ray is silent as he avoids his brother's eye contact

RICKY (CONT'D)

What are you deaf now?!

RAY

(Whispers) No.

RICKY

What!?

Troy and Willy show up on the path and regret it immediately.

WILLY

Hey what's taking so long man?

TROY

Yeah we're gonna have to go home soon.

WILLY

So is he gonna play?

RICKY

You're playing fuckin football with us.

Ray confused and scared looks at his brother

RICKY (CONT'D)

These guys think I play football so good that we need you to slow me down and ruin things like always.

RAY

I don't ruin things.

RICKY

What did you say?

Ray looks to the older boys with eyes pleading, they avert their eyes, shame not deep enough to stop Ricky, fear enough to stay out of it. Almost in a blur Ricky lands on top of Ray. At first it seems like usual rough housing, and the other boys laugh, until we see his face, it is unchecked fury, he punches away at his little brother who cries and looks even smaller. A whimpering sack of flour with each hit.

RAY

Stop Ricky! Stop it! Please! I'm sorry!

RICKY

No you're not! You never are! Stop crying like you mean it! Shut up!

TROY

Hey Ricky! Calm down! You're gonna kill him.

WILLY

Hey asshole! Get off of the kid
already!

Willy tries to pull Ricky off of Ray, but gets an elbow to the nose and falls backwards onto the dirt.

Ricky looks back at Troy with eyes on fire and Troy jumps back as if he felt the heat.

The break in concentration stops the beating. Ricky gets up and dusts himself off.

RICKY

You tell and I'll kill you. Just
like you did to Dad.

Ricky spits on Ray.

RICKY (CONT'D)

Let's go.

Ricky and his friends leave and Ray stays on the ground, with blood on his mouth and he stares up into the cold waning day, tears dripping from the corners of his eyes.

He closes his eyes tightly and we hear a voice speaking in a harsh whisper, the words unintelligible, but they seem barbed. Ray moves his mouth mumbling something, but we can't hear what he is saying, just the intensity of his whispers and the cadence of his voice is different than the one heard before.

Just as the last hissing syllable of the whisper is heard,

JUMP CUT TO:

EXT. DARK FOREST - NIGHT

Ray opens his eyes and the once barely lit park is completely pitch black and he scrambles to his feet.

He takes in his surroundings have changed from the nearly treeless clearing to a heavily wooded forest. How did he get here? Is he dreaming? Kidnapped perhaps?

He walks cautiously trying to keep an eye on all directions, but the ambient crunching of leaves and the absence of any animal noises make it difficult. He is scared shitless.

He walks further down the noiseless path, even the dried leaves crunch under his feet with barely a sound, this place is devoid of life.

He continues walking and notices a strange impression on a tree, he moves closer cautiously, his curiosity winning out over his reservations.

As he approaches we see what looks like the face of a man woven into the tree bark, his expression of agony forever sealed in the wood.

Ray backs away and starts back down the path when he sees a figure walk across his path. Is it help?

RAY

Hello?

No answer. He stares and the figure crosses his path again, but is impossibly far away and Ray's fear grabs hold of him as he takes flight in the opposite direction.

He sees the figure cross his path while running and he is crying.

RAY (CONT'D)

Leave me alone! Leave me alone!
Leave me! Leave me!

Ray stops running and falls to his knees afraid, he looks more like a child now than ever and he sobs into his hands, stalked by a shadow. Something strange, that must want to eat him.

A monstrous scream can be heard and Ray looks up to see the figure on the path behind him and it is sprinting towards Ray arms and legs flailing unnaturally. Ray screams and runs as fast as his legs will carry him. There is no hope of escape.

The it snatches Ray and throws him to the ground and pins him by the wrists and his skin sizzles where the creature is holding him.

The figure moves its head crookedly at inhuman angles as it examines Ray. The creature's face is obscured by the dark of night, face unseen, except an unreal grin like a jagged crescent moon.

Ray cries and shuts his eyes tightly and suddenly the sound of birds, and people in the background.

EXT. PARK - LATE AFTERNOON

It is light out again and Ray can still see his brother walking in the distance

Ray gets to his feet.

He's bewildered by that forest (*That thing*).

Was it a dream? (*No.*) He watches his brother walking away and he remembers the beating and the embarrassment and his eyes fix on him.

Ricky goes near a street and just as a car comes zooming down the road.

The air near Ricky wobbles like desert mirage heat. *Something* barely perceptible pushes him into the street.

Angle on Ray: He is smiling and his eyes have an unnerving maturity to them now. No doe, this is the look of something else.

We hear the screams of Ricky's friends and passersby and Ray snaps out of it and his eyes go wide with disbelief.

The HOODED FIGURE, waves at Ray from the accident, his face still obscured except his awful grin and as he waves, Ray feels the burns from the forest again on his arm.

TITLE: INSIDE

CHYRON: **PRESENT DAY - Avalon, New Jersey**

INT. RAYMOND ELLIS HOUSE - NIGHT

We hear a man's voice, Raymond Ellis, 43, speaking softly, and the sound of bodies shifting in bed comfortably, We see the now semi-healed burn scar on his exposed arm, just the sound of comfort. A woman's voice responds, TANYA CHAMBERS-ELLIS.

RAY

I miss you.

TANYA

I know.

ANGLE ON: Ray's face, his eyes are sad and expressive like when he was a kid, but no tears this time.

RAY

Will you come back?

TANYA

You know I can't do that.

RAY

Why?

ANGLE ON: Tanya just the eyes as two people staring at each other in bed talking, pillow talk angle. We don't see their mouths.

TANYA

That's not how this works.

Ray responds angrily

RAY

Well, why don't you tell me how it works then?

TANYA

I'm gonna go now.

RAY

Wait please? I'm sorry.

TANYA

That doesn't matter. Just pretend I wasn't even here.

Reveal: Ray in bed completely alone. He grips his pillow and sobs a bit, he's looking familiar to us now.

CUT TO:

INT. BRANDON ELLIS'S ROOM - NIGHT

BRANDON ELLIS, 17, sits at his computer blaring noise Black Pantera, casually cruising porn sites. He bobs his head and clicks on photos of nude men. He is photo shopping pictures to put online to chat with women and men on different dating web sites.

He hears a creak and switches tabs to a Twitch stream, and deletes his history with a reflex. He listens out for the parental axe to drop, but nothing.

The music resumes and continues altering pictures to put online. He hears a loud thump and this time he closes all his windows and gets up to see what it was.

He approaches the door of his bedroom cautiously.

BRANDON

Dad? I was going to bed in a few minutes, but I had some e-mails to send off. Homework stuff.

He opens the door and there is nothing.

The hallway is quiet and the darkness too vast and threatening.

We see Brandon from down the hallway, it is dark and desolate. He looks out and up both ways.

As he starts to go back in, we can see the HOODED FIGURE standing down the hallway, but Brandon doesn't notice. The Hooded figure's shoulders are rising and falling, bestial breathing

INT. KENDRA ELLIS'S ROOM - NIGHT

A beautiful baby girl sleeps soundly in her crib. She is resting peacefully and all is right with her world.

The rocking chair in her room starts to move on its own perhaps the wind.

The chair starts to go faster -- definitely not wind -- and Kendra gets herself up and peeks over the railing of her crib watching the chair.

The chair goes faster, and then is suddenly smashed against the wall and Kendra cries.

INT. RAYMOND ELLIS'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

He is still laying awake in a trance like state and the sound of Kendra's cries don't reach him, he is numb.

Brandon Ellis bursts through his father's door and shakes him out of his stupor.

BRANDON

Dad! Dad! Dad! Wake up! Did you hear that!? Come on!

RAY

What?

BRANDON

It sounds like someone's here!

Ray snaps out of it and he is back as father and protector, the weakness from earlier is far below the surface now.

RAY

Go grab your sister and lock the bedroom door!

BRANDON
No way I'm leaving this to you.

Ray senses the judgement in his son's voice.

Brandon grabs a baseball bat from the hallway closet.

RAY
Go get your sister and go in your
room.

Too much base and testosterone to argue, Brandon flees
without argument.

KENDRA ELLIS'S ROOM - NIGHT

Brandon comes dashing to his sisters room and sees the HOODED
MAN, standing near Kendra's crib and he notices the smashed
rocking chair. His mind says run, but he dashes at the figure
and starts swinging wildly at it and we see the creature
swipe at Brandon before he falls to the ground and dropping
the bat.

Ray hears the commotion and goes running down the hall and
turns the lights on.

Ray finds his son has smashed the baby monitor, Kendra is
crying, but the rocking chair is whole and still.

RAY
Are you crazy?! Swinging that bat
around? You could've hurt your
sister!

BRANDON
There was someone in here!

Ray looks around, notices the window closed and looks in the
closets and under the bed.

RAY
Well, where did he go?

Brandon with no answer just fumes and rolls his eyes, since
he knows where this is going.

RAY (CONT'D)
I need you to think before you act.
I need you to do that Brandon.

BRANDON
I'm going to bed. You can clean
that up on your own.

Brandon points to the rocking chair and sees the chair is back together. Confused, pissed, and tired he leaves and rubbing the gash on his palm left by the Hooded Figure.

Ray picks up Kendra and rocks her gently and she starts to calm, Then:

The MALEFACTOR, glides behind Ray with the awful grin, but he doesn't notice.

Kendra sees the man and he puts a finger to his lips and hushes her.

Kendra explodes into fearful crying again

RAY

What's wrong baby? What's wrong?
It's okay.

Ray pats Kendra trying to reassure her, but he feels overwhelmed between Kendra and Brandon.

ANGLE ON: Ray holding Kendra and behind them the HOODED MAN stands smiling.

INT. ELLIS HOUSE - NEXT DAY

Behind the glass of the shower we see from the silhouette just how much he has grown. His burn still visible, but faded with time. It's steamy and the sound of his family and the voice of a woman, his wife? Are muffled through the door.

BRANDON O.S.

Dad! She's crazy.

LINA O.S.

If I'm crazy Bran Bran, it's
because your Dad picking on me when
we were kids.

Ray chuckles to himself at the exchange going on downstairs. A pair of small female hands wrap around his waist and we see he is not startled, but he does not turn around and we do not see her face.

RAY

I thought you weren't coming back.

TANYA

I say a lot of things I don't mean.

RAY

Yeah.

Tanya laughs a little bit and Ray smiles slightly, not wanting her to see his delight, to smell her, and feel her hands and warmth on him.

RAY (CONT'D)
You should come back you know.

RAY (CONT'D)
The kids.

Tanya laughs and suddenly we see from the lone silhouette in the shower that she is gone, or perhaps was never there.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Brandon is walking about watching the news about a serial murderer intently, wondering if it's the same man who killed his mom, while eating his cereal, while Ray's sister, LINA ELLIS, 30, cool auntie, joyful no kids energy, feeds Kendra and Ray enters into the bustling room.

REPORTER (ON TV)
This marks the latest in a series of grisly killings that have gone on for over a year up and down the East coast. Investigators believe this to be the work of the same person and urge anyone with information to please come forward. With no leads and no suspects, people are understandably uneasy.

RAY
(To Brandon) Change the channel please.

Brandon sighs and changes the channel.

RAY (CONT'D)
Thanks.

RAY (CONT'D)
Morning Lina.

Ray kisses his sister on the cheek

LINA
Morning. You know your son has mastered the art of procrastination, ain't that right Bran Bran?

BRANDON
I haven't been Bran Bran since I
was a kid.

RAY
You are a kid.

LINA
And not a very punctual one.

Brandon becomes angry and for a moment Ray can see the same
rage that his brother once carried.

BRANDON
I'm not a kid!

Kendra cries and Lina and Ray are both stunned. Brandon seems
shocked as well and storms out.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
I'll be in the car.

There is a long pause and the tension is high

LINA
You know if you're not careful,
your son may win a few congeniality
awards.

RAY
He's still hurting Lina!

LINA
Chill, I know. I was just teasing.

RAY
I'm sorry. He's hard to get to open
up.

LINA
(Sarcastic) And I wonder where he
got that from? Will the mysteries
of the universe ever be revealed!

Ray cracks a smile and Lina laughs nibbling fruit.

LINA (CONT'D)
You know you need to let me sage
this house. Get some of the heavy
energy up out of here. All this
natural light and it still feels
mad muted? Is that what I mean.

RAY

We've got to go. I'm not really a sage guy. Or at least as much as crosses and frankincense and shit.

A HEAVY lean on a car horn interrupts the sibling moment. Ray kisses his daughter and leaves. Lina leans over and speaks to baby Kendra.

LINA

Here's hoping you take after your
momma, little bun.

Lina changes back to the news.

REPORTER O.S.

The victims had apparently been
tortured before being killed.

LINA

(To herself) Crazy times.

Lina turns off the television and we can see baby Kendra in the reflection, but just behind her is something else, barely perceptible.

INT. CAR - DAY

Ray driving, Brandon in passenger seat looking dour. The air between them is uncomfortable and tense. Brandon fiddles with his cellphone and Ray glances uncomfortably trying to initiate conversation.

RAY

How you feeling?

Silence.

RAY (CONT'D)

I can pick you up at three?

The silence remains, but Ray is struggling to be patient

BRANDON

Can I have some cash?

Ray looks to say "Is that all?"

BRANDON (CONT'D)

For lunch and stuff.

He reaches into his pocket and tosses his wallet to his son.

Brandon sifts through the wallet and finds nothing, but receipts

BRANDON (CONT'D)
This is just paper and receipts?

RAY
Then I guess air pies for you.

Ray laughs, but Brandon isn't amused. Ray tries to break the tension.

RAY (CONT'D)
Oh come on now, that was funny.

BRANDON
No...it wasn't.

Brandon smirks a bit and we see how boyish his face is when he smiles and it seems like the tension is starting to break.

RAY
Your sister would've liked that.

BRANDON
She dumped a can of spaghetti sauce in her own face and got it in her eyes and cried for an hour. Not exactly a high bar.

RAY
Your mother would've liked that joke too.

BRANDON
Well, she's dead. She doesn't like anything anymore.

The discomfort is back as quickly as it left and Brandon has his walls back up. Ray realizes his misstep and the car is quiet again.

Ray turns the radio on and it is a broadcast about distant wars in a foreign country then to another station about a missing person, and a string of other bad or violent news. He finally settles on a weather report listening to the broadcast.

WEATHER REPORTER (O.S.)
Gale force winds seem to be picking up speeds on the west coast of Hawaii.

(MORE)

WEATHER REPORTER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Residents are being alerted of emergency procedures in the event the storm increases in severity. The hope is that this storm will wear itself out, but Doppler Radar information doesn't show any sign of weakening.

Brandon puts headphones on and starts bobbing to music, but Ray continues listening to the radio.

Ray starts to hear an odd hissing feedback beneath the radio broadcast.

He tries to tune out of the station, but the feedback becomes more prominent and the sound of a voice seems to be cutting through.

The voice is still very garbled by static and the radio signal, but it grows in prominence.

The whisper grows into the sound of a deep malicious voice, Ray feels a familiar fear as the sound becomes louder and he feels himself slipping into a numb state.

Ray POV: We see the car has begun to drift into the wrong lane and the chaos that he is causing is on the outskirts of Ray's perception. He hears only the reptilian voice, speaking to him, reaching into his inner self for something precious.

Brandon is once again shaking his dad to no avail with Ray barely noticing.

The voice becomes more malevolent and speaks with such insistence in a guttural unknown language, until the voice of Tanya breaks through it.

TANYA (O.S.)

Ray!

Ray snaps out of hit and quickly darts the car onto the side of the road. It is only as he has stopped does he notice the red and blue lights flashing behind him.

BRANDON

What was that?! What happened to you!?

RAY

I'm not sure, I just. Did you hear that?

BRANDON
I can't believe you. Get it
together, there's a cop coming.

A POLICE OFFICER gets out of the vehicle and walks to the
driver's side window.

POLICE OFFICER
License and registration.

RAY
Sure officer. I'm not sure what
happened I....

The policeman cuts Ray off with his procedural questioning

POLICE OFFICER
License and registration please.

Ray hands over the documents with Brandon tense, watching
carefully.

POLICE OFFICER (CONT'D)
You been drinking?

RAY
It's eight o'clock in the morning.

BRANDON
No it's eight thirty in the
morning. Exactly, thirty minutes
past when I'm suppose to be at
school.

POLICE OFFICER
Do you know why I pulled you over?

RAY
Yeah, I know why officer.

The officer is really milking his authority now.

POLICE OFFICER
I pulled you over, not only because
you were speeding, but you were
driving recklessly and possibly
under the influence of drugs and or
alcohol. Please step out of the
car.

RAY
Officer, please don't do this to
me. I have to get my son to school
and then I have to get to work.

(MORE)

RAY (CONT'D)

I'm the camera operations specialist for the news.

POLICE OFFICER

Well ain't that convenient. So I guess if this story were to get out you'd have to point the camera at yourself then huh? (a beat)

POLICE OFFICER (CONT'D)

Now don't make me ask you again. Please step out of the car. Both of you.

The officer has his hand on his holster and both Ray and Brandon are given pause.

POLICE OFFICER (CONT'D)

I'm going to guide you through a series of tests, to gauge your sobriety and coherence.

The officer guides Ray through the check, with Brandon standing with his legs spread on the ground and face in the pavement. He is too embarrassed and angry to watch the test.

RAY

I'm not drunk, I don't know what happened exactly, but I have to get my son to school and I have to get to work.

Just as Ray is talking, he sees a jeep going by with people completely engulfed in flames in the backseat.

RAY (CONT'D)

Officer...

Before he says another word, he chokes back his words.

RAY (CONT'D)

I apologize for the issue.

POLICE OFFICER

What the hell are you going on about?

RAY

Nothing...sir.

The car is still within sight and the officer and Brandon don't notice anything, and look at Ray with confusion.

POLICE OFFICER

Okay, I'm going need you both to come with me to the station for drug testing.

RAY

Officer you mean you didn't see that?

BRANDON

(To himself) Oh my god.

The police officer handcuffs Ray and Brandon and begins reading them their rights, but Ray is still confused about why nobody else saw the flames.

CUT TO:

Intercut between the News Station and Police station

INT. NEWS STATION - AFTERNOON

TINA SALT, 40's, pretty, the prom queen runner up and class president gone investigative reporter/anchor, meticulous planner. She talks to Ray who calls her from booking at the police station.

TINA

So tell me again why you're not here?

RAY

I was arrested for reckless driving.

TINA

You're not even a drinker? I'm a drunk and I'm never caught drinking and driving. I'm drunk right now.

Tina's manic energy intimidates a lot of people, but Ray is set at ease by the familiarity in it. They are friends albeit a little dysfunctional.

RAY

We can't all be a charming white lady.

An make-up intern stares at Tina waiting to put some more foundation on her cheeks.

TINA
 According to Ancestry.com I am
 point zero zero zero four percent
 West African.

RAY
 Oh is that you cousin?

TINA
 Dick. So are you have a prison
 boyfriend already or will you be
 joining me when we go interview a
 woman who claims to have witnessed
 one of the torture murders?

RAY
 Oh my god. Well yeah, since they
 didn't find any drugs in my system
 they decided to let me off with an
 astronomical ticket and points on
 my license.

TINA
 Could be worse.(a beat)
 Seriously though. Are you alright?

He looks at his son sitting in a police station, infuriated
 with him beyond belief and still grieving for his dead
 mother. Ray doesn't know if things will ever be okay with him
 again.

RAY
 Yeah, I'm fine. Just tell me where
 to meet you and get my equipment
 down there. I just need to get my
 son squared away.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Lina has Kendra riding in her cart as they pick up
 vegetables. A man seems to be following them, but Lina
 doesn't notice as he trails her like a predator.

LINA
 Do you prefer kale or bok choy
 Kendra?

Kendra looks up at her aunt with sweet completely oblivious
 eyes.

LINA (CONT'D)
 I guess you'd eat anything we put
 in front of you huh?

LINA (CONT'D)
 Except peas, those you throw up at
 us. You're lucky you're so cute,
 because you are nasty girl.

Lina bumps into PETE, handsome a little scruffy five o' clock
 shadow, glasses and sufficiently non-threatening and
 charming. Is he the man who was following Lina?

PETE
 Oh my god, excuse me!

SELINA
 Sorry. Pardon us!

They both laugh a la ROM-COM meet-cute.

PETE (CONT'D)
 Hey I'm sorry. You are okay right?

LINA
 Yeah I'm fine. How about you?

PETE
 Fractured skull. Internal bleeding
 I think too. And some how Scarlet
 fever.

Lina laughs

LINA
 Sounds serious. You might want to
 see a doctor for all of that.

PETE
 You wouldn't happen to be a doctor
 would you?

LINA
 Cartoonist.

PETE
 Are all cartoonists as pretty as
 you?

LINA
 In fact no, I'm as rare as a
 unicorn. Won a sash and crown at
 our last function.

PETE
 Wait, we're still jokingly flirting
 right?

LINA

Yes we are.

Kendra squeals with the joy only infants seem to have

PETE

I'm Pete by the way.

LINA

Lina. Nice to meet you.

As Pete and Lina continue chit chatting, we can see that the someone is still watching them, seemingly through binoculars from outside the store.

EXT. PAWN SHOP - AFTERNOON

Tina is walking up to the pawn shop with Ray pulls up just as they are about to go inside.

TINA

Hey perfect timing. We brought the equipment, but she said no cameras.

RAY

So with no cameras then what am I doing here? You're acting as field producer today, and just to keep me company. I don't want to get murd...

Tina catches herself off Ray's look.

TINA

...I don't want something bad to happen.

INT. PAWN SHOP - CONTINUOUS

The shop is dusty and filled with discarded trinkets, that all look to have been neglected. A restless parrot tosses about in his cage occasionally saying a word or two.

RAY

(To himself) Could this place get any dustier?

They enter to find Tina sitting, with CORA LUNDY, (late 60's) an older woman with a stern face and caste iron gaze. She looks at Ray and makes eye contact immediately, and there is an unfamiliar heft to the brief exchange.

TINA
So you actually saw the murder
committed?

Cora gives a nod. Tina looks at Ray with an expression saying
this is gold.

TINA (CONT'D)
What about the murderer, what did
he look like?

CORA
It wasn't a man.

Tina stares at Ray shocked by this revelation.

TINA
So it's a woman doing this?

CORA
No.

TINA
As much as cryptic recluse bit
plays well in movies, I'm in the
business of facts.

CORA
You're in the business of profit
for pain. (A look) and cheap shoes,
but I'll tell you what I know.

Cora breaths in deep breaths as she prepares to divulge the
heaviness of what she knows. The gravity of her tone is life
changing.

CORA (CONT'D)
Alright. But, understand that there
are things unexplainable, by
conventional means. Understand,
that in asking me these questions
that you are accepting, what I have
to say. Can I trust you to do that?

Cora makes eye contact with Ray specifically. Tina nods and
Ray, after a short pause that feels like eternity, gives her
a nod.

Cora lights a cigarette and takes a long drag and puffs out
her smoke.

CORA (CONT'D)
You know I actually started smoking
after my husband died.

Tina sighs with exasperation. Ray watches engaged by Cora.

RAY
How'd he die?

CORA
Lung cancer.

Cora laughs as if delivering the punch line of a joke.

She puffs out some smoke that leads to a cough that sounds ragged.

CORA (CONT'D)
When did you lose your wife or was
it husband?

Ray winces at how she knew about it.

RAY
Wife. How did you know?

CORA
The same way anybody knows
anything, about another person. I
can see it all over your face. When
you lose people it ain't one of
them things that just goes away,
even if you try to hide. No sir,
bad things on the inside always
find a way to the outside. Ain't
that right?

CORA (CONT'D)
How'd it happen?

Ray becoming noticeably uncomfortable and his voice cracks.

RAY
Murdered I think. She went missing
first and then we found blood and
her car.

Cora takes another long drag and puffs out her smoke, keeping her eyes trained on Ray.

CORA
You have my condolences.

RAY
You have mine.

CORA

The killer was able to charm his victims. He made himself look handsome, he took great care to do that. He would stalk the victims, usually women, but some children if he is rushed. He would learn about them, down to their favorite toppings on ice cream. That part was easy. He'd wait until the victim trusted him enough and agreed to meet him for a date. He would stand them up and then as they would walk back to their cars teary eyed, he would hit them from behind with something hard and they would fall.

CORA (CONT'D)

When the victims would awaken, they'd be in his nest with all his toys and that's when his fun would begin. Brutalities beyond imagination. Nails hammered under the finger nails, teeth ripped out and glued back in, and he would cut the women, without a second thought.

TINA

Wait, I thought you were reporting an eyewitness account? To know some of these details you'd either have to be stalking the killer or the killer themselves.

Cora takes another long pause and again looks toward Ray briefly.

CORA

I am a witness, that much is true, but I didn't see the crime with my eyes. It was (searching for a word) vision. I've seen them since I was a girl. Spirits, ghosts, angels...demons.

Cora smiles as she remembers. Tina is disappointed that her lead was a bust, and is no longer the over-enthusiastic sparkplug she was just a few minutes ago and will no longer entertain this.

TINA

Mrs. Lundy when you called me, you said you had information about a crime.

CORA

And what am I telling you if not that? It was a vision.

Cora stares down Tina, and Tina folds.

TINA

Okay, vision, but vision or dream or whatever, it's not news so I can't do anything with it. Sorry.

They prepare to leave Cora's shop, but she grabs Ray's hand before they leave, and is digging into his skin. It's a grasp of desperation.

CORA

Listen to me and listen close!

RAY

Let go of me!

CORA

The killer you're looking for isn't a man, not really, not yet. It is something foul, but I gather that you know that already. At least part of you does.

Ray stares confused for a moment, something about what Cora says stings him and he's not sure why. He sees a series of chaotic images of women, violence, blood, the same women smiling, all running together like some tape out of sync. He rips his hand from Cora's grasp.

RAY

Lady, you need help.

Ray storms out and Cora yells after him.

CORA

Mind your family Mr. Ellis! What's left of it.

Ray is already outside and pauses since he doesn't recall introducing himself, but he still leaves.

EXT. PAWN SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Ray walks to the cars where Tina is waiting.

TINA

Hey what took you? Did she read your future in some tea leaves or something?

RAY

No, nothing like that.

Tina senses the serious tone.

TINA

Ray are you alri.....

RAY

I'm good. I'll see you tomorrow at work.

Ray keeps walking and Tina is left feeling uneasy.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Detective JACOB CAIN, 50's, five o' clock shadow, and prerequisite bags under his eyes from a lifetime of sleepless nights, hair is salt and pepper, and his chest is built, but he's gotten paunchy in the last few years.

He is sitting at his desk surrounded by stacks of manila folders, looking over grotesque crime scene photos while snacking on ginger snaps.

Detective KAMARI GRAVES, 40's, clean shaven, same haggard eyes, but he still has a lightness about him, he's learned to separate from work in a way Cain has never been able to, enters Cains office.

CAIN

What do you want Graves?

GRAVES

Just seeing if you were done for the night or if you died, whichever happens first.

CAIN

Your wife know how funny you are Graves? She's missing out on all that charm you think you have.

GRAVES

The way this investigations been going, I don't know if she would recognize me.

A beat

GRAVES (CONT'D)

You look like shit.

CAIN

I'm tired of all this garbage running around shooting old women, and putting their kids into boiling water to get back at an ex. I'm tired of chasing animals pretending to be people to find out where they left the scraps that people have to bury.

GRAVES

You been looking at those pictures for months man, I don't think you're gonna find any new information in them. We ran the prints at from the scene a few times and nothing.

CAIN

See that's the difference between you and me Graves. If I believe that then I feel like I'm giving up and if I give up then I may as well retire.

GRAVES

You've been talking about retiring, maybe this is as good a time as any to do that. Spend some more time with your wife, go fishing maybe.

CAIN

Maybe your right. I'll just throw in the towel and sit next to the bedside of the vegetable that use to be my wife, maybe go fishing and get myself a dog named Duke or Sparky. Maybe Aunt B will make me some corn cakes and baked beans for the road.

GRAVES

You don't have to....

Cain brushes crumbs of the pictures and holds them up to Graves.

CAIN

You want to tell this woman's family that we couldn't find the shit that cut her to ribbons because the trout were biting?

Graves feels ashamed of his suggestion and Cain sees his partners discomfort.

CAIN (CONT'D)

How long we been partners now Graves?

GRAVES

About three years I guess.

CAIN

And in that time have I ever called you by your first name?

GRAVES

Not that I remember, but none of us go by first names here.

CAIN

True, but I still can't pronounce your name. Even now, when I try to say it, it just comes out sounding like Carabou, Cow many, instead of what it should be.

GRAVES

Kamari. It's not that difficult of a name.

CAIN

I know that. But, when an old white man mispronounces a black mans name, it seems like the white man is a racist and he usually is. Now I'm not a racist, but there are a few things I don't want to be mistaken for in life, the number two thing being a racist. Number three is being ignorant, number four is a criminal. The number one thing though, that I never want to be thought of as is a quitter.

(MORE)

CAIN (CONT'D)

Whoever this guy is who cuts up girls and leaves them like this, I ain't gonna quit unless either me or him is dead.

Graves is quietly moved and saddened by his partner's steely resolve.

GRAVES

You know you're getting crumbs all over those crime scene photos right?

CAIN

It's better than donut grease. Get outta here Graves.

GRAVES

Good night. There is this thing called sleep. You should try it sometime.

Graves leaves and Cain gives a half hearted wave. Cain continues looking through the photos. He sees one snapshot of surveillance footage showing a man grabbing one of the victims.

He looks closer and there seems to be a reflection in the glass of a face.

INT. POLICE STATION TECH CRIME LAB - CONTINUOUS

Cain abruptly enters and approaches the tech crime officer, BELINDA VAZQUEZ late 30's, with photos in hand.

CAIN

Can you enhance these photos?

Belinda doesn't look up from her screen as she responds sarcastically.

BELINDA

Hello detective, no I'm not busy enhancing photos of an armed robbery, please barge in unannounced.

CAIN

No, time for smart ass back and forth Belinda. Can you enhance these photos?

BELINDA
Sure, but what's the big deal?

CAIN
The big deal is I'm seeing
something that I haven't seen
before.

BELINDA
These from that serial killer case?

Cain nods

BELINDA (CONT'D)
I see gruesome stuff everyday, but
photos of the victims before all
the blood and guts scare me more
than anything.

BELINDA (CONT'D)
It's gonna take a while, but I can
have it for you by the morning.

CAIN
Thanks, it's real important you let
me know the second it's done.
Concentrate on this little corner
where it looks like a reflection.
And if you see anything unusual
have them run labs from the scene
again.

Cain leaves and Belinda looks at the image quizzically.

BEACH - DAY

Ray is lying on the beach with Tanya and they are kissing
passionately, their clothes drape as though they've just been
intimate.

TANYA
Since when are you so passionate?

RAY
Since I've learned the importance
of holding onto the important
things. You smell like cinnamon and
spice cake.

Ray looks serious and Tanya smiles lovingly, but her smile
fades into a subtle scowl.

TANYA

If you like it then why did you
kill me, you selfish prick?

RAY

What are you talking about?

TANYA

You deny it?

RAY

Of course! I'd never hurt you, I'd
never hurt our family.

Tanya grabs him close and begins to shriek and Ray is rattled
beyond belief.

TANYA

You killed me! You killed me! You
killed me!

RAY

Tanya please tell me what happened
to you?

Tanya suddenly stops screaming and she calms inhumanely
quickly. She leans into Ray's ear and whispers.

TANYA

You're doing it all over again.

Tanya looks down towards her torso and Ray's hand is on the
handle of a knife that is plunged inside of her and his hand
covered in her blood. Ray's eyes begin to water and he holds
his face in his hands weeping.

CUT TO:

RAYMOND ELLIS HOUSE - NIGHT CONTINUOUS

Ray wakes suddenly out of his sleep and he examines his hands
as if looking for blood. He is relieved and tiredly starts to
come out of the haze of sleep.

RAY

Shit.

Ray looks at the clock that reads 4:00 A.M. And shuffles out
of bed.

RAYMOND ELLIS KITCHEN - NEXT DAY

The familiar shuffle of the Ellis family preparing for the day, except Brandon is missing. Ray kisses his sister and daughter on the cheeks. Kendra squeals happily.

RAY
Where is Brandon?

Lina holds up a note scribbled, LEFT EARLY, BE HOME LATE - Brandon.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY - DAY

Brandon is walking and his phone begins to play a Rihanna song. He sees it is his Father calling and hits ignore.

Brandon sees RED, young trans woman with a shock of red hair and a great body, smoking outside a burger joint and he's taken with her.

BRANDON
Excuse me?

The woman looks up, barely acknowledging Brandon

RED
Can I help you with something?

BRANDON
Can I get one of those?

He gestures to her cigarette

RED
Are you sure you smoke cutie?

Brandon smiles widely at the compliment and nods

RED (CONT'D)
Here you go? You need a light?

Brandon nods. She lights the cigarette and Brandon puffs it in easily.

RED (CONT'D)
You know that shit will kill you,
right?

She takes another long drag from the cigarette before stomping it out.

BRANDON

This shit or that shit. Something kills all of us. At least I'm picking this.

The woman is impressed at the insight

RED

Shouldn't you be in school? It's like nine o' clock in the morning?

BRANDON

I'll make you a deal. If you tell me your name, then I'll tell you why I'm not in school. How's that sound?

RED

Sounds like if you throw in buying me a coffee you got a deal.

BRANDON

Like a date?

RED

Like a breakfast. Now come on, there is a diner just around the corner.

INT. DINER - CONTINUOUS

Brandon sits across from the Red and a few of the senior citizen's in the diner stare and steal glances at the unusual early bird diners.

RED

Everybody is staring at us. You sure you're comfortable with this?

BRANDON

They're just jealous I get to eat with a pretty lady whose name I still don't know.

RED

You been watching a lot of James Bond movies with that charming shit.

BRANDON

Madmen actually.

They laugh

BRANDON (CONT'D)
My name is Brandon by the way.

RED
I'm Red.

BRANDON
No. You're nice. You seem nice.

Red smiles warmly at his maturity

RED
You're awfully mature for your age.

BRANDON
You should see my varicose veins.

They laugh again. It's easy. Sincere.

INT. BAR - DAY

A lone WAITRESS, mid 20's, averagely pretty, heavy eye make up gives her a dangerous quality, cleans the bar and preps for opening when a man comes in.

WAITRESS
Sorry, we're not open yet.

We see him from behind and he sits at the bar.

MAN
Are you sure? I sure could use a drink.

He strokes the waitress with fingers drifting to the plunge in her shirt cleavage.

The waitress swoons a bit and smiles.

WAITRESS
You must be really good looking or I'm really stupid for doing this.

THE MAN feels familiar somehow, but menacing. Like an ache increasing in intensity.

THE MAN
You're not stupid. You've got the same sense of adventure as I do. You love life and want to take it by the horns.

The Waitress looks up the doors and closes the shades and starts unbuttoning her blouse. She smiles sheepishly.

The Man smiles back and he grabs his crotch and tells her to come closer. Unseen behind his back is a hunting knife, sharp, and stained from past kills.

INT. CAIN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Cain groans awake to his bare bones apartment and grabs his gun as he goes into the shower.

He towels off and shaves and brushes his teeth all as a matter of course. This is his maintenance before the real work begins.

He makes breakfast, oatmeal, turkey sausage, and a banana with black coffee.

He eats across the table from a picture of his wife smiling.

CAIN

You know Renee, I've never been able to quite crisp the bacon the way you do it.

He looks at the photograph for response and then laughs at the absurdity.

Cain's phone rings with a generic ringtone

CAIN (CONT'D)

Detective Cain speaking.

GRAVES (ON THE PHONE)

Cain, you may want to get down to the station. We have a new victim.

Cain's face drains of color.

CAIN

I'll meet you at the scene.

NEWS STATION - LATE AFTERNOON

Ray replays the audio from the interview with Cora Lundy.

RAY(ON RECORDING)

How did you know?

CORA (ON RECORDING)

The same way anybody knows anything, about another person. I can see it all over your face. When you lose people it ain't one of them things that just goes away, even if you try to hide. No sir, bad things on the inside always find a way to the outside. Ain't that right?

Tina enters and pauses the recording.

RAY

Something about that lady, it I don't know. It's bugging me.

TINA

Well Deliverance level psychosis does have some oomph to it. Are you alright, you look green. It's not a great look for you.

RAY

Yeah, I'm alright all things considered, but thanks.

Tina puts her hand on his shoulder and they clasp hands momentarily. There is a palpable heat as they look at each other, but Ray pulls away.

RAY (CONT'D)

I feel like I need to see her again.

TINA

I think that Lundy woman is right in the thick of her dementia so I'd recommend against it. Besides a psychic isn't a lead in a murder case.

RAY

I just have the feeling that she knows something and I don't know really. I just want to talk to her again.

INT. BAR. - LATER

Cain arrives on the crime scene which has uniform cops all over it. Graves is inside by the counter speaking with another officer when he greets Cain.

CAIN

(Sarcastic) Jesus Graves, could you have any more uniform rookies dirtying up the crime scene? I'm having too easy of a time finding the guy already.

GRAVES

That may not be a problem anymore. Belinda gave me some information to give you.

Graves hands Cain some papers with a picture on it, showing Ray from his mug shot.

GRAVES (CONT'D)

We've been having trouble with this guy because his prints and DNA weren't in the system, but he messed up a couple days ago with some reckless driving violation.

Cain looks at the picture intensely, and studies the face.

CAIN

We sure this is the guy?

GRAVES

Pretty much. His prints match those found at multiple crime scenes for this case and apparently his wife went missing about a year ago too. She's been declared dead, and her physical description matches most of those with this case.

CAIN

Did Belinda give you those photos I asked her to enhance?

GRAVES

Yeah they should be below that mug shot and info on the suspect.

Cain goes through the papers and sees the enhanced image of the suspect photos and the reflection he sees isn't Ray, it doesn't even look like a person.

GRAVES (CONT'D)
 What do you want to do Cain? Should
 we take him in?

Cain hesitant despite his resolves, gives a nod. Is this the
 guy?

GRAVES (CONT'D)
 Alright! (To the Uniforms) Let's
 finish sweeping the scene and get
 it to the lab.

Cain stares at the photo of Ray a while longer and compares
 with the enhanced photo.

CAIN
 (To himself) Okay Ray. Let's see
 what you got to say.

NEWS STATION PARKING LOT - EVENING

Ray and Tina are the last ones to leave as they head to their
 respective cars. Ray seems oddly unfocused.

TINA
 Goodnight Ray. Get some sleep okay?

Ray doesn't respond as if he is in a trance.

TINA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
 I'm not wearing any panties and
 I'll leave my door open for you.

No response from Ray

TINA (CONT'D)
 (To herself) well that hurt my
 feelings a little.

TINA (CONT'D)
 (Screaming) Ray!

RAY
 Huh! What? What is it?

TINA
 You're going to see her aren't you?

RAY
 And?

TINA

I don't know how seeing a fake psychic will give you closure, but if it helps then by all means do it, just come tomorrow ready to work. I need you.

RAY

(Weakly) Yes captain. Thanks.

Ray salutes Tina and she rolls her eyes and drives off.

INT. PAWN SHOP - EVENING

Ray enters, passing the familiar dusty items carefully.

CORA (O.S.)

I thought you'd be dropping by Ray.
I have some chamomile if you want some.

Ray walks through the beaded doorway.

RAY

No...

Cora has already handed him a cup and moves to sit down.

RAY (CONT'D)

Thank you.

CORA

Why don't you sit down Mr. Ellis and tell me why you're here?

RAY

Well you're a psychic aren't you? Don't you know why I'm here?

CORA

Doesn't exactly work like that and last we talked, I was just a crazy old bitch.

RAY

I still think you're a crazy old bitch, but I can't explain it, something is happening I can't explain.

Cora looks at Ray a moment and gestures to his tea.

CORA

Drink your tea. It'll relax you.

RAY

I didn't come for the tea, I just want to know what you saw. What you can see.

CORA

We. What we can see. You've got to believe it before I say I word, otherwise you'll just run off laughing at crazy old Mrs. Lundy, but that won't stop your troubles. Let me guess, you seeing things that ain't suppose to be seen.

Ray nods

CORA (CONT'D)

Alright! Cora is on the board. Let me see what else, having strange dreams or seeing ghosts?

RAY

I haven't been getting much sleep lately, so the dreams aren't part of it.

CORA

Cut the shit! When are you going to get it through your head. You're in touch, just like I am. You're open Ray, to something bigger than what you can see.

RAY

How do you mean open? All I know is I haven't felt like myself since...

CORA

You're wife died. Has she visited you?

RAY

Is that a joke? Are you sick or something? Has she visited me, no and she hasn't dropped me and holiday cards either, god damn it! This is a joke, what was I thinking.

Ray starts to leave.

CORA
It's after your family Ray!

Ray pauses in his tracks.

RAY
Who is?

CORA
You're marked Mr. Ellis. From the muddied aura of yours I'd say for some time now in fact. You're not like other people, you're susceptible to the unseen world. You can communicate with things we can't see and they can communicate back.

RAY
What does that mean? I don't understand.

CORA
You're special Ray, one or both of your kids is probably special too. The bad things from the unseen world, they look for people like you, unaware of what you are and unguarded. They infest you like a parasite, and destroy your soul gradually until they get strong enough. They attract misfortune to feed on your pain and then once they drive you into a corner and you're on the brink of breaking they take everything you have left.

RAY
I don't understand. When?

CORA
That I don't know. My gift gives me glimpses of whatever it sees fit. Never what I want and never the power ball for Christ sakes. I guess God's got a sense of humor.

RAY
God doesn't exist.

CORA
All the more reason for the Devil to celebrate.

RAY

Let's say I believe you. What do we do?

CORA

We? We hell! I wouldn't know that and if I did, I surely wouldn't be along for the ride. Can you picture my old ass playing ghost busters with you? I just wanted to give you a heads up and wish you luck. Not much else I can do I'm afraid.

RAY

You're a piece of shit you know that?

CORA

You sound like my husband now.

Cora laughs, but Ray isn't in on the joke.

CORA (CONT'D)

Listen, I don't know how to get rid of a thing like that. All I know is how they work. They incite tragedy and the more it wears you down, the stronger it gets until eventually it won't need you anymore. These kinds of entities need you to survive at least for a while, if you can protect yourself from it's attacks maybe it dies off from starvation so to speak. Don't quote me or anything.

RAY

What am I suppose to do?

CORA

What parents do. Weather the storm and keep them safe as you can.

Ray stands with Cora unsure of what is suppose to happen next. Suddenly the lights flicker and a few old mirrors break one after the other.

The tea in their cups starts to boil on it's own and Cora slides back from her chair.

Ray's old scar starts to burn again and he grabs it.

RAY

What is this?

CORA

It's here.

The phenomena all stop simultaneously and Ray walks over to Cora holding his arms and he looks down at one of the broken shards and sees his reflection only it's a monstrous version of him, wearing a familiarly demonic grin with eyes that are completely milk white.

From the other side of the reflection the creature scratches something onto the glass. It reads: MINE ALONE

Ray stands frozen in disbelief and stares up at Cora and she looks up at him. The quiet is deafening.

CORA (CONT'D)

Well, at least the tea isn't cold.

Ray stares at her reproachfully. Cora calmly sips her tea.

INT. RAYMOND ELLIS HOUSE - NIGHT

Ray opens the door and is greeted by his sister along with Graves and Cain sitting in the living room. They all stand to greet him, but Ray is uneasy.

LINA

Ray.

RAY

What happened Lina? I saw the police car outside are Brandon and Kendra alright where are they!?

LINA

They're fine Ray, both upstairs. The detectives said they had some questions to ask you.

Ray eyeballs Chambers and Graves

RAY

Questions? What about?

GRAVES

In the interest of being direct. We want to ask you about the serial killings.

Ray's face contorts in confusion and Lina clasps her mouth.

CAIN

What my partner is saying here Mr. Ellis is that we are here to arrest you as it seems your finger prints were at the scene of a number of the killings.

RAY

That's impossible.

Cain notes Ray's demeanor and isn't sure about the arrest, but nods to Graves to begin reading him his rights.

GRAVES

You have the right to remain silent, anything you say can and will be used against you in the court of law. You have the right to an attorney...(continues).

CAIN

(To Lina) Ms. We're sorry about this, and thank you for the hospitality.

LINA

Let him go! He didn't do anything!
Let him go.

Brandon comes down the stairs as they are walking Ray out of the house.

BRANDON

Dad? What's going on? What is this?
Aunt Lina what's going on?!

RAY

Don't worry Brandon I'll be okay.
It's a mix up.

Ray turns back to see a familiar ghastly grinning shadow standing behind his son and he starts fighting furiously.

RAY (CONT'D)

Wait! I said wait a fuckin minute!
Brandon! You can't see it? Let me go. It's near my son. It's near my son! Get your bitch asses off of me! Brandon!

Kendra starts to cry off screen and Brandon and Lina watch in horror as his raving father is carted off by the cops.

MUSIC: Joni Mitchell's Big Yellow Taxi plays out the scene

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF SHOW