

Ex-Scream Makeover

By

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An Original Screenplay

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INT. OFFICE--DAY

EMILY FRANKLIN(17)is seated at a table in a large office. She is alone. The sun is shining outside. From the twelfth floor she can see much of Seattle below. Musak is playing softly in the background.

The door opens and executive producers BOB JAMES (50's)and FRAN KELLSY (40's) enter the room.

FRAN

Emily Franklin, my partner, Bob James.

BOB

Glad to finally meet you, Emily.

Bob shakes her hand.

Bob takes a chair across from Emily. Fran sits on the edge of the table next to her. Fran sets some papers in front of Emily.

FRAN

Everything's ready to go. You just need to sign a few things.

EMILY

This is gonna be so cool.

BOB

You understand that your parents have to agree to the makeover or we can't move forward.

EMILY

Are you kidding? They'll be thrilled. I mean, who wouldn't want their house remodeled for free.

FRAN

We still need them to sign the paperwork.

BOB

Fran and I are really high on this show. This first episode is key. And you can not, under any circumstances, tell anyone. Not even your best friend. For this to

(MORE)

BOB (cont'd)
work it needs to be kept in the
strictest of confidence. Are we
clear on this?

EMILY
Absolutely. No problem. When do we
start?

FRAN
I'll have my assistant contact your
parents so we can get the ball
rolling. As soon as they sign, we
get to work.

BOB
Any questions?

EMILY
It's kind of embarrassing.

FRAN
I think I know what your concerns
are, but go ahead.

EMILY
What about like in the bathroom and
stuff.

FRAN
A network censor will be riding
shotgun during the whole filming
schedule. The cameras in those
rooms will be disabled temporarily
in the event he deems it necessary
for the privacy of your family.

EMILY
No shots of me on the toilet,
right?

BOB
I assure you we are not peeping
toms. We're just trying to create a
hit television program.

EMILY
Okay.

BOB
Just so I know we're all on the
same page, let me go over this one
last time. While we are remodeling
(MORE)

BOB (cont'd)

your parents home, your family moves in to our specially prepared house. We'll tell your parents it will take a month, but actually the filming will only take a week. Every room is equipped with cameras, microphones, and a number of high tech special effects. In order for you to act as natural as possible we won't be telling you what any of these effects are, where they're placed, or when any of them will be used.

EMILY

I understand. You want me to look scared too?

FRAN

Exactly. And our tech, Steve, will be on scene in case we have any malfunctions. He'll be hanging out in a soundproof room under the house during your stay. You ready to do some acting.

EMILY

I am so ready.

BOB

Then I think we're good to go.

Bob stands and shakes Emily's hand again.

BOB

Ms. Franklin.

EMILY

Can I tell my friends at the end of the week?

FRAN

We'd rather you didn't. We want to shoot all the episodes before anyone finds out what we're doing.

EMILY

I can keep a secret.

FRAN

I know you can.

INT. CAR--LATE AFTERNOON

BILL FRANKLIN (38) wife TERRI (37), son JEFF (11) and daughter SAMANTHA (6) are in an older, white SUV driving up a winding, tree lined, gravel road. They bounce over a narrow, one lane wooden bridge that spans a deep ravine and then continue up the mountain.

Emily is following behind in a black Honda Civic.

JEFF

I think I'm gonna hurl.

SAMANTHA

You're so gross.

TERRI

We're almost there. Just a few more minutes.

BILL

I hope so. This is gonna be a bummer of a commute. I'm not looking forward to driving up and down this mountain every day.

TERRI

Don't be such a baby. It's only for a month.

BILL

I just hope they don't screw up my garage.

JEFF (O.S.)

They better not touch my bike.

TERRI

I think your bike is safe. And as for the garage, I hope they sweep it all into the ocean.

BILL

That's my sanctuary. I do my best thinking in there.

TERRI

Right. That's where you drink beer with Paul.

SAMANTHA

I need to go to the bathroom.

JEFF
Here. Pee in this.

Jeff hands Samantha his baseball cap.

SAMANTHA
Mom. Jeff's teasing me.

TERRI
(To Bill)
You'd better hurry. The natives are getting restless.

BILL
You tease Samantha again and I'm gonna feed you to the first bear I see.

TERRI
Bill!

JEFF
There's bears here?

TERRI
You're father was just kidding.

As they come to the top of the rise the trees part and an old, slightly run down two story clapboard home can be seen in the late afternoon sunshine just ahead.

BILL
Home, sweet home.

TERRI
Well, this is not exactly what I was expecting.

BILL
That producer guy said the original house fell through. They're working on finding another one closer to town. In the meantime I guess we'll have to rough it. Besides, the change of scenery will be good for you.

TERRI
I guess.

SAMANTHA
I have to use the bathroom real bad.

JEFF
Number one, or two?

SAMANTHA
Mom.

BILL
Look, Dear. I think I saw a bear
over in the trees.

TERRI
That's not funny, Bill.

JEFF
Really?

Bill pulls the SUV to a stop in front of the house and parks. Emily pulls up behind them. She's talking on her cell phone.

INT. STUDIO--DAY

Bob and Fran are standing against the back wall watching as the effects tech -RICK (26)- is making last minute adjustments to the cameras.

The wall in front of them is filled with screens showing all the interior rooms and an exterior front porch shot of the house. PARKER (33)-the network censor- is seated next to him.

RICK
It's showtime, folks.

They all watch as the SUV and Honda pull up to the house and park.

Rick keys a microphone linked to STEVE(20's)-the tech who is on site in the basement of the house. Steve's face appears in one of the monitors.

RICK
Steve-o, do you copy.

STEVE
Loud and clear, good buddy.

RICK
The eagle has landed. I repeat. The eagle has landed.

STEVE

10-4.

BOB

Is all this jargon necessary?

Rick just shrugs.

EXT. HOUSE--DAY

They all climb out of the SUV and begin walking around. The view is spectacular. The house sits all alone a quarter mile from the top of the mountain, surrounded by a forest of tress.

BILL

Man it's quiet up here. Quite a change from the city.

SAMANTHA

Mom, I really, really need to use the bathroom.

TERRI

Bill, please tell me there's indoor plumbing.

BILL

All the comforts of home.

Bill walks up the wooden steps to the large porch and unlocks the door.

Samantha is fidgeting, hoping up and down with her legs crossed.

JEFF (O.S.)

I think she's gonna blow.

TERRI

Hurry, Bill.

Bill pushes open the door. The hinges protest with a loud, eerie squeak.

BILL

Welcome to my castle.

Bill laughs diabolically.

Samantha ignores his joke and runs into the house.

Bill walks back to the SUV. He knocks on Emily's window. She looks up. He lifts his hands in a "anytime now" gesture.

JEFF

Can I go explore?

TERRI

I guess it's okay. But do not go wandering into the forest. Understood?

Terri grabs the bill of his baseball cap and gives it a tug.

BILL

Is anybody going to help me unload. I still have to go back for more junk.

Suddenly Samantha's anguished cry comes from the house.

SAMANTHA (O.S.)

Mommmmm!

Terri runs up the steps and through the front door.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY--DAY

Terri quickly locates the downstairs hallway bathroom - across from the opening into the kitchen- and tries to open the door. It's locked.

SAMANTHA (O.S.)

(Louder)

Mommmmm!

TERRI

I'm here, Honey, are you all right?

SAMANTHA (O.S.)

There's no toilet paper.

TERRI

(Hollers)

Bill.

EXT. HOUSE--DAY

Bill is unloading the SUV.

TERRI (O.S.)
Toilet paper emergency.

Bill opens Emily's door and tosses a package of toilet paper onto her lap.

BILL
Make yourself useful. Take this to your mother.

EMILY
She's not my mother.

BILL
Don't start.

Emily shoots her father an irritated glance, gets out of the car and goes in the house with the toilet paper.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY--DAY

Still talking on the phone, Emily hands Terri the package and then wanders back outside.

Terri takes out a roll, and knocks on the door.

TERRI
You have to unlock the door, Honey.

SAMANTHA(O.S.)
O.k, but don't come in.

The sound of the lock being disengaged. The door opens a crack. A small hand comes out. Terri hands her the paper and the door is closed and locked again.

Terri begins to explore the house. She enters the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN--DAY

In the kitchen she is surprised to find a brightly lit, modern kitchen equipped with brand new appliances; microwave, stove, refrigerator and oven and dishwasher. She opens the refrigerator and finds it fully stocked. She opens the pantry closet and finds it jammed with dry and canned goods and toilet paper.

She sees a bottle of cooking Sherry on the shelf. She slowly reaches out and takes it from the shelf. She looks at it.

She hides it behind a few boxes of cereal and closes the door.

She continues through an opening into the family room.

INT. FAMILY ROOM--DAY (CONTINUOUS)

A comfortable, sized family room with a large sofa, a recliner, a modest television, a DVD player with a shelf full of DVDs, two floor lamps, an a oval rug covering the hard wood floor.

The sheer white drapes are open showing a beautiful view of the forest beyond through a large picture window bordered by two smaller single hung windows.

Samantha enters the room.

SAMANTHA

I don't like that bathroom at all.

TERRI

Why, Baby?

SAMANTHA

It smells funny, like something's burning.

TERRI

It's an old house. You'll get used to it. You wanna help me make some lunch?

Samantha nods her approval.

EXT. HOUSE--DAY

Bill finishes unloading the SUV.

BILL

(Hollers)

Jeff. I'm going back to the house. You wanna take a ride with the old man?

JEFF (O.S.)

I'm catching a lizard.

Terri and Samantha are on the front porch. Bill gives them both a kiss.

TERRI

Don't forget my book. I left it by the front door.

BILL

You think I'm going to let you read
a book on the first night in our
new place?

TERRI

You'll be snoring on the couch by
nine.

Bill takes a deep breath, puffing up his chest.

BILL

I don't know, this clean mountain
air is making me a little frisky. I
might make it until ten.

He pretends to stretch and ends in a muscleman pose.

TERRI

Stop it before you hurt yourself.

BILL

Come on, Terri. You know you like
it.

BILL

(To Samantha)

Don't let mommy get too tired out.

SAMANTHA

I won't.

Bill heads for the SUV.

SAMANTHA

Bye, Daddy.

BILL

Bye, Punkin.

TERRI

Don't forget my book.

BILL

Oh, I'll get your book. But I think
you'll be too tired to read it.

TERRI

Honey, I think men from outer space
have kidnapped your father and
replaced him with some kind of
alien life form.

Samantha giggles.

Bill starts the SUV and drives down the gravel road and quickly disappears.

TERRI
(To Emily)
You want to go upstairs and pick a room?

Emily impatiently waves her away, still talking on the phone.

TERRI
You ready to rustle up some grub?

SAMANTHA
Do I like grubs?

Terri smiles.

TERRI
Let's go see what there is to eat.

Terri puts her arm around Samantha's shoulder and the two re-enter the house.

INT. STUDIO--DAY

Bob and Fran are standing by the door talking quietly. Rick and Parker are also deep in conversation.

BOB
(To Fran)
We're going to make history here. I can feel it.

FRAN
If this doesn't fly we're going to be history.

BOB
Ye of little faith. There is no way this isn't a hit. What's not to like? All American family, spooky house...

FRAN
I hope you're right.

Rick and Parker begin bickering.

RICK

The show is three minutes old and you're already buttin' in!

PARKER

It's not my fault the girl had to pee. Is she supposed to hold it until it's time for a commercial? In a reality series people don't pee on cue.

RICK

I met a guy on set once that had a dog that would pee on cue.

PARKER

You're kidding?

BOB

I hate to interrupt this fascinating discussion, but Fran and I are going out for a bite and then back to the office. Do not, and I'll repeat it in case you're hard of hearing, do not do anything until we get back. We want to be here when the action starts.

RICK

Not even a creepy sound?

BOB

Are you going to be able to follow directions? Because if you can't...

RICK

No problem.

EXT. FOREST--DAY

Jeff looks at the house from the edge of the forest. The sun is beginning to go down and the shadows are getting deeper. He hears his father's car go down the hill. Except for a few birds chirping it is totally silent.

He carefully enters the forest a few yards and stops. He looks back. He can still see the end of the trees and the slight rise of dirt that leads up to the house. He slowly moves in deeper.

He hears a noise to his left and freezes. He watches a squirrel as it clings to a tree only yards away. Being as stealthy as possible he makes his way towards the animal.

The squirrel quickly scampers around the other side of the trunk before Jeff has gotten three steps closer. Giving up on stealth, he stomps through the thick layer of dead vegetation covering the forest floor, jumps around the tree and nearly falls over.

A dried up carcass of a deer is lying before him on the ground, the empty sockets of it's eyes blankly staring at him. He scrambles away. He gets up and begins to inspect it more closely.

Suddenly a noise comes from close by. He spins and sees the squirrel a few yards away, eyeballing him warily. He slowly bends down and picks up a rock. The squirrel seems frozen in place. As he lifts his arm to throw the squirrel bares its tiny, yellow teeth and lets out a low growl. Jeff backs away.

The squirrel is suddenly running towards him. Jeff turns and runs all out for the clearing. But it's taking too long. All he sees is forest around him. He goes deeper into the trees. He slides to a stop. A look of panic begins to appear on his young face. He anxiously looks around. The squirrel is gone.

TERRI (O.S.)

(Faintly)

Jeffrey. It's time to come in please.

The sound comes from behind to his left. He turns and can now just barely make out the dirt beyond the edge of the trees. He sprints for the clearing and then up the slope to the house.

Emily is still on the phone, sitting on the porch swing. She ignores him as he dashes through the open front door.

INT. KITCHEN--DAY

Terri and Samantha are in the kitchen looking in the pantry. Jeff rushes in.

JEFF

I'm hungry.

TERRI

Go wash your hands. Sam and I are going to whip something up.

JEFF

My hands are clean.

Jeff shoves his hands in his pockets. Terri points towards the bathroom.

TERRI

Wash.

Jeff runs around the corner and into the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM--DAY

The bathroom is small, with a curtained tub/shower combo ala "Psycho" on the left, a cabinet-less, free-standing sink attached to the wall in back with two chrome legs in front on the right. No medicine cabinet; an oval mirror mounted over the sink. The toilet is set back in its own open alcove to the left.

Jeff steps up to the sink and turns the cold water on. He looks at himself in the mirror. The reflection of the shower curtain behind him billows slightly. He spins around. It isn't moving. He turns back around. It billows way out this time, touching the back of his legs. He spins again. Fear creeping into his boyish features. He faces the shower, frozen in place. He slowly reaches out his hand and touches the still curtain.

Samantha suddenly appears in the doorway.

SAMANTHA

Mom says to hurry up.

Jeff jumps.

JEFF

Take a hike, butt breath.

SAMANTHA

Mom, Jeff called me butt breath.

Jeff ignores his sister's tattling, and tentatively reaches again for the curtain. He yanks it open. There's a small sliding window in the wall above the tub. It's open. The wind blows again. The curtain moves.

TERRI (O.S.)

Jeffery Franklin, you get in here, now!

JEFF
Just a second.

TERRI (O.S.)
Now, mister!

INT. KITCHEN--DAY

Jeff shuffles into the kitchen. Terri and Samantha are at the stove.

TERRI
I want you to apologize to your sister.

JEFF
Why?

TERRI
You know why.

Samantha is smiling at Jeff. He glares back at her. Terri grabs him by the arm a little harder than necessary.

TERRI
I'm waiting.

Jeff appears close to tears.

JEFF
That hurts.

TERRI
No more teasing.

JEFF
Okay. I'm sorry.

TERRI
Do you want some mac and cheese?

JEFF
I guess.

TERRI
Look in the cupboards and see if you can find some bowls.

As Terri turns back to the stove, Samantha sticks her tongue out at Jeff. He flips her off using his ring finger.

SAMANTHA
Jeff gave me the finger.

JEFF
I did not. This is the finger.

Jeff flips her off again using his middle finger.

JEFF
I went like this.

He does it again using his ring finger.

Terri slams the box against the counter-top and spins around.

TERRI
(Yells)
I'm not going to put up with this.
this. Go to your room!

JEFF
(Yells)
I don't have a room.

TERRI
Go upstairs and pick one, then stay
there until I call you.

Jeff leaves the kitchen. Terri rubs her temple. Samantha looks a little frightened.

From the kitchen they hear Jeff stomp loudly up the stairs.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY--DAY

Jeff pauses at the top of the stairs and turns left down the hall. The first door is a bathroom. The door is open. He peeks in.

JEFF
There's only three bedrooms.

TERRI (O.S.)
You'll have to bunk with your
sister.

JEFF
No way.

TERRI (O.S.)

Do I have to come up there?

Jeff opens the first door and peaks in. The pink walled room has unicorns and fairies stenciled all over. The two single beds have white, lacy comforters and lots of decorative pillows. The shelf is lined with China dolls. He closes the door.

He moves on to the next room and opens the door. It's a light blue room with a closet, two single beds and two dressers. The bed comforters have images of baseballs, footballs etc. Sports trophies are lining a single shelf across from the beds. Posters of basketball and baseball teams are tacked to the walls. A single window overlooks the front of the house.

He crosses the hall, opens the door and looks into a slightly larger, sandy-colored room. A single queen sized four poster bed with a green comforter sits to his left under a window. Straight ahead is the master bathroom. The door is open.

He sees his reflection in the bathroom mirror staring back at him. Suddenly a dark shape is moving behind him in the mirror. He screams as the door slams shut in his face.

INT. STUDIO--DAY

Rick and Parker are laughing hysterically. They watch the screens as Jeff runs frantically down the stairs into the kitchen.

PARKER

My God, did you catch the look on his face?

RICK

That was priceless. No actor could cop that.

PARKER

Were you filming?

RICK

Hell no. I don't wanna lose my job.

PARKER

This has got to be the coolest show I've ever worked on.

INT. ENTRY--DAY

As Jeff flies down the stairs as Emily comes through the front door. They collide.

EMILY
Hey, Dufus, why don't you watch
where you're going.

Jeff ignores her and runs into the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN--DAY

Jeff skids to a stop in the kitchen.

TERRI
I told you to stay in your room.

Jeff is out of breath.

JEFF
There's a ghost up there.

TERRI
There's a ghost in your room?

Jeff shakes his head vigorously.

JEFF
Uh uh. It's in your room.

SAMANTHA
I'm scared, mom.

TERRI
I've about had it with you.

JEFF
You think I'm lying?

Emily enters the kitchen.

EMILY
Lying about what?

JEFF
There's a ghost upstairs.

EMILY
Really?

TERRI
You're not helping at all.

Emily's eyes light up.

EMILY
I'll go check it out.

TERRI
Thank you.

JEFF
I'm not going back up there.

EMILY
O.k, Chicken Little. I'll go by myself.

JEFF
It's in mom and dad's room.

Emily walks out of the kitchen and up the stairs to the second floor.

INT. KITCHEN--DAY

A loud, chilling scream comes from upstairs. Jeff's face goes pale, Samantha gabs Terri around the waist. Terri pry's her off.

TERRI
Stay here with your sister.

Terri rushes from the kitchen and up the stairs.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY--DAY

Emily is standing in the doorway of the first bedroom.

TERRI
Honey, what's wrong? You scared us half to death.

EMILY
I think Barney threw up in my room.

Terri moves passed her and enters the room. Emily follows.

JEFF (O.S.)
(Hollers)
Are you okay?

TERRI
 (Hollers back)
 Everything's fine. Your sister was
 just playing around.
 (To Emily)
 This room isn't that bad.

EMILY
 If you're a friggin' Smurf.

TERRI
 I'd appreciate it if you watch your
 language around the children.

EMILY
 I'd appreciate if you'd stay out of
 my business.

TERRI
 Look, can we call a truce while
 we're here? There's enough stress
 already.

EMILY
 I'm not sleeping in here.

TERRI
 Fine. You can take the other room
 if you like.

EMILY
 I think I will.

EXT. BILL AND TERRI'S HOUSE--NIGHT

Bill is carrying the last load of clothes to the SUV. His
 next door neighbor PAUL (40's) strolls over and opens the
 door for him.

BILL
 Thanks, Paul.

PAUL
 You are one lucky slob. I wish
 somebody would give my house a free
 overhaul.

BILL
 Pretty cool, huh? What amazes me
 the most is that Emily actually
 thought of somebody besides herself
 for once.

PAUL

An unselfish teenager. The end must be near. How's things going between the kids and Terri?

BILL

Jeff seems to have settled in, but Emily's still fighting it. Teenage rebellion and all that. Terri's trying to win her over, but Emily's pretty much anti-step mom.

Bill crams the armload of clothes into the backseat and slams the door.

PAUL

Where's the new place?

BILL

In the boonies above North Bend, on Mount Si. Up the damn mountain all by ourselves.

PAUL

You're kidding? Did you know Mount Si was considered sacred to the Indian tribes that originally lived in the area? It was used for some kind of religious ceremonies. Meet with ancient spirits and stuff.

BILL

News to me.

PAUL

A lot of strange sightings up there. National Enquirer kind of shit. Bad JuJu my friend.

BILL

For some reason I've never pictured you as the superstitious type.

PAUL

Ever since the alien abduction I've never been the same.

Bill chuckles.

BILL

You know I'd love to hear about it some other time, but I really need to on the road.

PAUL
Suit yourself. You got any
protection?

BILL
The kids are still pretty small, I
think I can take 'em.

PAUL
Very funny. I'm taking about
protection from the local wildlife.
There's all kinds of nasty critters
running around up there.

BILL
We'll be fine.

PAUL
I sure the hell wouldn't go up
there without something.

BILL
I think Jeff has a BB gun somewhere
in the garage.

PAUL
Hold on. I'll loan you one of my
rifles.

BILL
I don't know...

PAUL
I'm serious. I wouldn't go up there
unarmed.

BILL
You wouldn't go to the grocery
store unarmed.

PAUL
One can never be too careful.

BILL
And besides, I know absolutely
nothing about guns.

PAUL
Give me five minutes and I'll have
you loaded for bear.

BILL

Bear?

PAUL

Figure of speech. I've got a Thompson .22 semi-automatic with a five shot magazine and a Leupold 3X9 scope. It's sweet.

BILL

I didn't understand half of what you just said.

PAUL

That's okay Just point and shoot, buddy. Easy as pie. It'll be great for you and Jeff. You can go out and have a little father and son time. Nothing like a good firearm to bring a family closer together.

BILL

Somehow I don't think Terri's gonna buy that.

PAUL

I suggest you show her how to use it too. She's gonna be spending a lot of time alone up there while you're at work.

BILL

I know, and I'm a little concerned about that.

PAUL

How's she doing? Nancy and I haven't really talked to her much since, you know, her brother and all.

BILL

She seems to be doing all right most of the time. Some days are better than others. The doctor said it might take a while.

PAUL

So, shall I get the rifle?

BILL

I guess it would be okay.

PAUL
Better safe than dead, I always
say.

INT. STUDIO--NIGHT

Bob and Fran are sitting in chairs at the back of the room.

Rick and Parker are fiddling with the cameras. They can see Terri, Jeff and Samantha in the family room trying to get a DVD going.

Emily -on another screen- is up in the the room with the sports motif, laying on the bed, and talking on the phone.

Steve is microwaving a TV dinner in the basement.

Rick keys the microphone.

RICK
(To Steve)
Hungryman, eh?

Steve walks over to the camera and sticks his face up close.

STEVE
When this is all over I'm heading
straight for McDonalds, and you're
buying.

RICK
It's showtime.

STEVE
Call me if you need me.

RICK
Will do. Over and out.

BOB
Are you finished playing around?

RICK
Ready to go, Sir.

Rick salutes Bob.

Bob turns to Fran and shakes his head.

BOB
Where do you find these guys?

FRAN

Relax. He knows what he's doing.

BOB

(To Rick)

Let me remind you that subtly is what we're going for. Think Hitchcock, not Friday the 13th. This is going to be an hour long show. Let's make the suspense build.

RICK

Damn. Now what are we gonna do with the horse's head?

Rick high fives Parker. Fran smiles. Bob shakes his head in disgust.

INT. FAMILY ROOM--NIGHT

Jeff and Samantha are sitting on the couch in the family room. Terri hits the remote. A Disney movie begins.

JEFF

Don't we have any real movies?

TERRI

This is a real movie.

JEFF

This is a baby movie.

SAMANTHA

I like this movie.

JEFF

That's 'cause you're a baby.

TERRI

You don't have to watch it. There's lots to do. You could help me unpack.

JEFF

No way, Jose.

TERRI

You're real close to having a bar of soap for dessert. I suggest you button the lip and watch the movie.

Jeff folds his arms across his chest and sighs.

TERRI
Good choice.

INT. STUDIO--NIGHT

They are all staring at the exterior camera view as a shadowy figure approaches the house in the darkness.

BOB
Who the hell is that?

RICK
Nobody I know.

PARKER
I hope we're not going to be
filming a real life slasher movie.

FRAN
Don't be silly.

They watch in silence as the dark figure walks up the steps to the porch.

BOB
Can you turn the porch light on?

RICK
That wouldn't be much of a special
effect, now would it?

BOB
We spent thousands of dollars
rigging up the house and you can't
even turn the damn porch light on?

Rick shrugs.

INT. FAMILY ROOM--NIGHT

Suddenly there's pounding on the front door. Terri jumps. The kids both look to her, anxiety all over their faces. Footsteps come racing down the stairs.

EMILY (O.S.)
I'll get it.

INT. ENTRY--NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Terri races through the doorway and intercepts her in the dark entry.

TERRI
(Whispers)
I didn't hear a car.

EMILY
So what.

TERRI
So what? We're in the middle of
nowhere, and it's not your father.

EMILY
What's the big deal?

TERRI
The big deal is, we're all alone up
here, and I'm not expecting
company.

The pounding comes again. They both jump. Terri pulls the curtain aside and peeks out the long window running the length of the door. Suddenly she's blinded by a light shining in her face. She stumbles back.

RANGER (O.S.)
Hello inside. I'm the forest
ranger. Just checking in. Never
seen seen any lights up here
before.

Terri flips on the exterior light, removes the chain, unlocks the door and opens it.

A bearded, RANGER (30's) dressed in khaki is standing on the porch, smiling.

RANGER
Didn't mean to frighten you folks.
I left my truck down the hill.

TERRI
That's okay We just weren't
expecting any visitors.

JEFF (O.S.)
Mom?

TERRI

Everything's all right. Watch your movie.

RANGER

Sorry to bother you, ma'am. Just making sure nobody's messing around. Kids like to come up here some times. I didn't know anyone had moved in.

The ranger turns to Emily and smiles; eyes moving around a bit too much. She smiles uncomfortably.

TERRI

We'll only be here for a month while our house is being remodeled.

RANGER

Well, I won't take up any more of your time. You have any pets?

TERRI

No, why?

RANGER

Good idea to keep them in at night.

Jeff is suddenly standing next to Terri.

JEFF

Are there bears?

The ranger chuckles.

RANGER

Not too many.

He winks at Jeff. He gives a sideways glance at Emily again.

RANGER

I'm up here quite a bit. If you need anything, just flag me down.

TERRI

We appreciate that. Thanks.

Terri closes the door, re-locks it and draws the chain.

EMILY

That was creepy.

TERRI
He seemed harmless enough.

EMILY
So did Ted Bundy.

Emily goes back up the stairs.

JEFF
Who's Ted Bundy?

TERRI
I think it's bath time.

JEFF
Dad's not even home yet.

TERRI
Then you'll be nice and clean when
he gets here.

INT. CAR--NIGHT

Bill flicks on his high beams as he comes to the road leading up to the house. There's a green truck parked on the side of the gravel road. He slows down. He sees the forest ranger insignia on the door.

He turns his eyes back to the road and slams on his breaks. The SUV slides across the gravel, stopping a few feet from a man in khaki. He rolls down his window.

BILL
Damn, I'm sorry. I didn't see you.

The ranger has his hand over his heart and is laughing.

RANGER
I guess I had it coming.

BILL
Pardon?

RANGER
Payback. I was just up at the house. I think I might have given your family a little scare.

BILL
You sure you're all right?

RANGER

Nothing a few beers won't cure.

BILL

What brings you way out here?

RANGER

The old house has been empty since I came to work here. I come by every now and then to chase the kids away. They like to party up here. I saw the lights, thought I ought to check it out.

BILL

Thanks for the concern.

RANGER

No problem. I'd better get going.

EXT. HOUSE--NIGHT

The SUV drives up the hill.

The ranger stands on the dark road and watches until the taillights disappear over the top of the hill. He reaches into his jacket pocket and removes a chrome flask. He unscrews the top, takes a healthy pull, recaps it, and returns it to his pocket.

He walks over to the truck, opens the door, and grabs a pair of binoculars off the seat. He quietly shuts the door, walks across the road into the trees, and disappears into the darkness.

INT. STUDIO--NIGHT

Bob, Fran and Brad are standing behind Rick and Parker. They're all staring at the screens.

BOB

I told you this was gold.

RICK

This is nothing. Wait till we start using the effects.

FRAN

That was so freaky. It had me on the edge of my seat.

PARKER
Here's daddy.

They watch the headlights crest the hill and the white SUV come to a stop in front of the house.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY--NIGHT

Bill climbs the stairs to the second floor, arms loaded with suitcases. He stops at the first room. The door is open.

INT. SAMANTHA AND JEFF'S ROOM--NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Bill enters the room, looks at the way it's decorated, shakes his head, and drops off two suitcases.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY--NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

He moves on to the next room. The door is ajar. He pushes it open with his foot.

Emily is on the bed reading a magazine and listening to music with earphones. She's dressed for bed in a white t-shirt and underwear.

INT. EMILY'S ROOM--NIGHT

Bill enters and tosses a suitcase on the unused bed. He taps her on the foot. She pulls off her earphones.

BILL
There's a lot of stuff still in the car. I could use a little help.

EMILY
I'm not dressed.

BILL
Who's gonna see you?

EMILY
The bears.

BILL
I'm sure they've seen it all. Get going. Where's your mom?

EMILY

If you're referring to your wife,
she's scrubbing the brats.

Bill shakes his head.

BILL

Don't you think it's time to bury
the hatchet?

Emily ignores the comment, gets up and leaves the room.

EMILY (O.S.)

If a wild animal gets me it'll be
all your fault.

BILL

I guess I'll have to live with it.

Bill re-enters the hallway.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY--NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

The hallway is empty.

BILL

Where's everybody hiding?

TERRI (O.S.)

In the bathroom.

EXT. FOREST--NIGHT

The ranger is laying on a large outcrop of rock, binoculars against his eyes. He watches as Emily walks down the steps, pauses at the back of the SUV, cautiously looks around, and then leans into the open back of the truck; her t-shirt hiking up, exposing her underwear. The ranger smiles.

Suddenly the binoculars go blurry. Something is blocking his line of vision. He lowers the binoculars.

There's an ancient, wrinkled face with a mouthful of wickedly sharp teeth inches from his. He lets out a strangled scream, back-pedals away. His feet slip over the edge of the rock. He waves his arms to try and keep his balance. He disappears over the edge. A meaty thud comes from the darkness. The forest is silent.

EXT. HOUSE--NIGHT

Emily jerks around as a strangled cry comes from the dark forest. She drops the clothes she's picking up and runs for the house.

INT. STUDIO--NIGHT

Bob, Fran and the other two are glued to the screens.

BOB
What the hell was that all about?

RICK
Something must have scared her.

FRAN
I didn't hear anything.

RICK
We don't have any mikes out there.

BOB
Why the hell not? What an I paying
you guys for?

RICK
Look, all our effects are inside.
What's the point. We can always dub
in the crickets.

PARKER
I don't know why you even bothered
with the effects. That place is
creepy enough as it is.

FRAN
She really looked frightened.

BOB
That's the whole point. This isn't
a comedy.

FRAN
I know, but I was thinking of more
fun scary. We don't want to
traumatize anyone.

RICK
We didn't do anything yet.

INT. ENTRY--NIGHT

Bill and Emily are standing at the bottom of the stairs.

EMILY

I'm telling you I heard something out there.

BILL

Can you be a little more specific.

TERRI (O.S.)

What's going on? Who slammed the door?

BILL

Everything's all right. Just the wind.

EMILY

So you don't believe me?

BILL

Keep your voice down. You wanna scare the whole family? I'll go check it out.

TERRI (O.S.)

Check out what?

Bill and Emily look up and see Terri standing at the top of the stairs. She walks down and joins them.

BILL

Emily thought she heard something outside.

TERRI

Something like what?

EMILY

I don't know. Like a weird screamy noise.

BILL

I'll go look around.

TERRI

Oh, no you won't. You don't know what's out there.

BILL

You guys have seen too many horror movies. It's probably just an animal looking for food.

EMILY

Yeah, and we're the food.

TERRI

It's too dark now. You can look around in the morning.

BILL

I still need to finish unloading the truck.

TERRI

(To Emily)

You go watch your brother and sister. I'll help your father.

BILL

(To Terri)

If the monster get us both, who'll raise the kids?

EMILY

You are so not funny.

BILL

We've all had a long day. I just want to get the truck unloaded. Please go watch the kids while your Terri and I get the rest of the junk.

EMILY

All right, but I'm not reading to them.

Emily turns and walks up the stairs.

TERRI

Do you think there's something out there?

BILL

Don't you start.

Bill opens the front door and they go outside to the SUV.

EXT. HOUSE--NIGHT

Bill reaches in the back of the SUV and starts loading Terri's arms with clothes. They hear a rumble in the distance. They both look up at the sky. Dark clouds are drifting over.

TERRI
Looks like it might rain.

BILL
Great. The drive's bad enough as it is.

TERRI
What's that?

Terri points to a black nylon bag under a pile of clothes.

BILL
A fishing pole.

TERRI
You are such a liar. That's a gun, isn't it?

BILL
Let's just call it family protection.

TERRI
Let's call it dangerous as hell. We have young children.

BILL
I'll only let them borrow it on the weekends.

TERRI
Is that supposed to be funny? You know how I feel about guns.

BILL
Come on, Terri. Johnny was sick. We all knew it. Besides, Paul said...

TERRI
I should have known. I'll bet if he took his family to Disneyland he'd be packing some sort of weapon.

BILL

This isn't Disneyland, and you guys will be up here alone everyday while I'm at work. What if Bigfoot comes around? You wanna let it carry off one of the kids?

TERRI

There's no such thing...

BILL

Paul said there's all kinds of nasty creatures in these mountains.

TERRI

If you mention Paul's name one more time, you'll get a big foot right in the butt.

Terri peers into the darkness around them.

TERRI

Are you trying to scare me?

BILL

Of course not.

Bill takes the clothes from Terri, sets them back in the truck and puts his arms around her. Terri doesn't respond.

BILL

I just don't want to have to be worrying about my family while I'm at work. It's just for emergencies.

EMILY (O.S.)

Are you two makin' out or unloading.

They look up and see Emily hanging out her bedroom window.

TERRI

We'll discuss this later. We need to get the kids in bed.

Bill pulls her closer. Terri yields a little.

INT. EMILY'S ROOM--NIGHT

Emily steps back from the window. Jeff and Samantha are sitting on the bed. Suddenly a gust of wind slams the bedroom door shut. They all jump.

EMILY
(Giggles)
Shit.

JEFF
I'm telling. You said a bad word.

EMILY
You do and I'll squish you like a bug.

Samantha pulls her legs up and hugs her arms around them.

SAMANTHA
I don't like this house. I wanna go home.

JEFF
You are such a baby.

EMILY
Looks who's talking. You're the one seeing ghosts.

JEFF
That was real. I swear.

EMILY
(Whispers)
Oh, I believe you. As a matter of fact I think this place is haunted.

Samantha nervously looks around the room.

SAMANTHA
Can I sleep in here with you?

EMILY
You gonna make Chicken Little sleep all alone with the freaky dolls?

JEFF
You're just trying to scare us.

EMILY
Why would I...

Suddenly the door slowly creaks slowly open. They all turn and stare nervously at the door. Terri, arms full of clothes, pushes the door open with her foot.

TERRI
Time for bed.

SAMANTHA
Can I sleep in your room?

TERRI
I don't think so, Honey. Not tonight.

JEFF
Emily's trying to scare us.

Terri looks sternly at Emily. Emily shrugs innocently.

TERRI
There's nothing to be scared of.
It's just an old house. You'll get use to it.

EMILY
Yeah, it's just an old, creepy haunted house.

TERRI
That's enough out of you.

EMILY
(Sarcastic)
Just trying to help, **Mom**.

TERRI
Right.

INT. SAMANTHA AND JEFF'S ROOM--NIGHT

Terri sits down on the edge of Samantha's bed. Jeff is in the next bed leaning on his elbow. A loud rumble comes from the sky outside.

SAMANTHA
How long do we have to stay here?

Terri gently brushes the hair from Samantha's forehead.

TERRI
Not long, Sweetie. It'll be over before you know it.

SAMANTHA
Did daddy bring the night light?

JEFF (O.S.)
Why, you wanna see the monster
before it eats you?

TERRI
One more word out of you and you'll
be sleeping in the car.

Jeff's eyes light up.

JEFF
Really?

Terri ignores Jeff.

TERRI
I'll leave the door open and the
hall light on in case you need to
use the bathroom.

Bill walks in the room.

BILL
Everybody tucked in?

JEFF
Mom said I could sleep in the car.

TERRI
That is not what I said.

BILL
That's not fair. You said I could
sleep in the car.

TERRI
I'm sorry. Simple misunderstanding.
I meant the couch.

Bill winces comically.

SAMANTHA (O.S.)
Can I sleep with you on the couch?

BILL
Mommy was just kidding, I think.

Terri kisses Samantha and Jeff goodnight. Bill does the same.

TERRI
 (To Jeff)
 No fooling around.

Bill and Terri leave the room.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY--NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Bill tries to close the door.

SAMANTHA
 Mom!

TERRI
 Sorry.
 (To Bill)
 We forgot the nightlight.

Bill opens the door halfway.

BILL
 This okay?

Samantha, lips pursed, nods.

The door closes.

INT. SAMANTHA AND JEFF'S ROOM--NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Another rumble, even louder this time, interrupts the quiet.

Jeff stares nervously up at the shelf on the wall. The row of China dolls stare blankly into the gloom. Jeff pulls the covers up over his nose exposing only his eyes. Samantha mimics his move.

Suddenly one of the dolls on the shelf turns its head toward Jeff.

JEFF
 (Screams)
 Dad!

As the word leaves his lips the doll returns to its original position.

Footsteps hurry up the stairs. Bill's silhouette appears in the hall outside the door way. He pushes the door open.

BILL
Your mom said no fooling around.

Samantha has her head under the covers.

SAMANTHA (O.S.)
The doll moved.

JEFF
I'm not sleeping in here.

Bill looks at the shelf of dolls. They're all staring straight ahead.

BILL
They look the same to me.

JEFF (O.S.)
I'm not lying.

INT. SAMANTHA AND JEFF'S ROOM--NIGHT

Bill enters and walks over and picks up one of the dolls and inspects it. He puts it back.

BILL
It's just a doll. You want to come look?

Samantha pokes her head out and shakes it.

JEFF
You sure?

BILL
Old houses are funny sometimes.
You're just not used to it. You
want me to stay here until you fall
asleep?

They both instantly nod their heads. Bill sits on the edge of Samantha's bed.

TERRI (O.S.)
Everything all right?

BILL
First night jitters. I'll be down
in a bit.

INT. KITCHEN--NIGHT

Terri is sitting at the kitchen table, writing. She looks towards the pantry closet. She hears footsteps in the entry hall.

TERRI

If you're trying to scare me, it's not funny.

There's no reply. Footsteps start again.

TERRI

I'm serious. If you jump out I'm gonna kick your...

High pitched, girlish giggling comes from around the corner. Terri freezes. Very slowly and quietly she stands up and inches toward the opening. As she reaches the opening into the hallway the light in the kitchen suddenly goes out.

A swirling greenish light slowly drifts passed her towards the front door. She stumbles back into the kitchen. The lights blink back on again. She anxiously looks around.

A few seconds later Bill enters the kitchen from the opening to the family room.

BILL

Honey, I'm home.

Terri spins towards him.

TERRI

You bastard.

BILL

That wasn't exactly the greeting I was hoping for.

TERRI

How did you do that?

BILL

Do what?

TERRI

You scared the crap outta me.

BILL

Well, I know I'm no Brad Pitt...

TERRI
That's wasn't funny at all.

BILL
What are you talking about?

TERRI
You know what I'm talking about.
The giggling...the lights.

BILL
Are you okay?

Bill moves towards her as if to take her in his arms.

TERRI
Nothing that a stiff shot of vodka
won't cure.

Bill just stares at her.

TERRI
It was a joke.

BILL
I don't find that very amusing.

Terri shakily sits down at the kitchen table.

BILL
That's part of our life is over,
right? I can't go through that
again. I won't.

Terri lowers her face and nods.

BILL
What happened?

SAMANTHA (O.S.)
Moooooooooooo!

Terri is instantly up and out into the hallway taking the stairs two at a time; Bill close behind her.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY--NIGHT

They reach the bedroom door. It's closed. Terri grabs the knob. It won't open.

SAMANTHA (O.S.)
Mooooooooooooo!

TERRI
Honey, the door is locked. Open the door.

Bill pounds on the door.

BILL
Jeff, come open the door.

Emily is suddenly behind them.

EMILY
What's going on?

TERRI
Jeff. You open this door right...

Suddenly the knob turns in her hand and the door opens.

INT. SAMANTHA AND JEFF'S ROOM--NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

The room is shrouded in darkness, only the meager light from the hallway. Terri and Bill enter. Samantha has her head beneath the covers again.

TERRI
What's going on?

Samantha pokes her head out.

SAMANTHA
Something bit me.

BILL
Don't be silly.

Samantha begins to cry.

Bill suspiciously looks over at Jeff's bed. His head is turned towards the wall as if he's sleeping.

BILL
Keep your voice down. You'll wake your brother.

Bill looks at Terri and gestures for her to be quiet. He walks between the beds and suddenly yanks the covers of Jeff's bed. On the bed next to Jeff is a toy shark's head whose jaws open and close with a plastic lever on the end of a stick.

Bill snatches it up and bites Jeff's ear with the toy.

JEFF

Ow.

BILL

If you tease your sister one more time, your ear won't be the only thing hurting.

TERRI

We might need to separate them. I don't want to be coming up here every five minutes.

JEFF

Can I sleep in the car?

BILL

We'll re-evaluate the sleeping arrangements tomorrow. If I hear another peep out of either one of you, I'm calling the hospital and trading you both in for some nicer children.

SAMANTHA

I don't wanna go to the hospital.

Emily appears in the doorway.

EMILY

Can I pick my new brother and sister?

TERRI

Everybody in bed. Now.

BILL

You heard the boss.

INT. FAMILY ROOM--NIGHT

Terri is sitting on the couch with her arms crossed staring blankly the the wall. Bill is in the kitchen. He looks through the open doorway.

BILL

I'm kinda hungry. I think I'll make a sandwich. You want something?

TERRI

I'm still not talking to you.

Bill walks over, sits down next to her and tries to put his arm around her. She scoots away.

BILL

Look, I'm sorry I tried to scare you, o.k?. Truce?

TERRI

Oh, so you finally admit it?

BILL

No, but I don't want to fight.

TERRI

Where's my book?

BILL

On the night stand, next to the bed.

Terri stands and leaves the room.

TERRI (O.S.)

Make sure everything is locked up.

BILL

I'll be up in a few.

TERRI (O.S.)

Don't hurry on my account.

BILL

(Under his breath)

Maybe I'll put on my Bigfoot suit and attack you after you're asleep.

TERRI (O.S.)

I heard that.

INT. KITCHEN--NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Bill goes back into the kitchen. He opens the refrigerator. A huge rumble comes from outside, followed by a flash of lightning. He begins removing sandwich fixings from the refrigerator and placing them on the counter. He freezes as a tapping sound comes from the window over the sink behind him.

He slowly opens the drawer, reaches in and wildly spins around clutching a butter knife in his hand. There is nothing at the window but rain drops. As he watches a few more drops hit the window causing the tapping sound. He looks at his reflection in the window, laughs and shakes his head.

A flash of lightning suddenly lights up the night outside. A blurred form races past the window. Bill runs to the window, pressing his face to the glass, but it's too dark to see anything. He hurries over and turns off the kitchen light and goes back to the window. He is squinting into the darkness.

TERRI (O.S.)

What are you doing?

Bill jumps and drops the knife on the floor. Terri is standing in the doorway, dressed in a robe, arms crossed.

BILL

Damn, girl. You must be practicing your Ninja moves.

TERRI

Why are the lights out? Were you planning on scaring me again?

BILL

It's raining.

TERRI

That's a pretty lame answer.

BILL

I was making a sandwich.

TERRI

In the dark?

Terri flips on the lights. Bill nervously glances back at the window.

BILL

You want half?

TERRI

Why were you staring out the window?

Bill bends down and picks up the knife and brushes it off.

BILL
I was...eh...

TERRI
I'm waiting.

BILL
What's with the third degree?

TERRI
Is that what you think this is?

BILL
That's what it feels like.

TERRI
I'm sorry. I don't want to fight
with you. It's been a long, hectic
day...this new house...the kids...

Bill walks over and takes her in his arms. She doesn't
resist this time.

BILL
I'm sure it won't take long to get
back in the old routine. You'll
see.

TERRI
You're probably right. Are you
ready for bed?

BILL
What about my sandwich?

TERRI
I think I can make you forget about
food.

Terri steps back and opens the robe revealing sexy lingerie.

INT. STUDIO--NIGHT

Bob is standing with Fran at the back of the room. Parker is
leaning back in his chair, stretching. Rick is making notes.

BOB
Next episode I want cameras
covering every inch of the
exterior.

FRAN

I agree. And microphones too. Some of the creepiest footage is the stuff we didn't plan.

RICK

Got it.

BOB

Let's call it a day.

RICK

We just started. It's not even midnight.

BOB

If you scare them out of the house on the first night we have no show.

Parker taps Rick on the shoulder. He looks up from his notes.

PARKER

I think it's time to cut camera four.

They all look at the screen. Bill and Terri are in the bedroom now, locked in a passionate embrace. Rick takes his time before pushing the button to kill the camera.

BOB

We'll meet back here at eight p.m. tomorrow.

INT. KITCHEN--MORNING

The rain has stopped, but it's still overcast outside.

Terri is at the stove scrambling eggs. Jeff and Samantha are at the table eating.

TERRI

(To Jeff)

Save some bacon for your sister.

Jeff reaches for another slice of bacon.

JEFF

Get up late, loose your plate.

Emily walks into the kitchen.

EMILY
Touch it and die, weasel head.

Terri turns to Emily.

TERRI
(To Emily)
Could you tell your father
breakfast is ready. He's on the
porch.

Jeff looks at the bacon, and then back at Emily. He smiles wickedly.

Emily grabs the plate of bacon and leaves the room.

Jeff rests his chin on his hands

JEFF
I'm bored. There's nothing to do
around here.

TERRI
I could use some help with the
dishes.

JEFF
I'm not that bored.

Bill and Emily enter the kitchen. Emily sits down at the table, takes two slices of bacon and sets the plate out of Jeff's reach. Terri places some eggs on Emily's plate. Bill walks up behind Terri and puts his arms around her waist and nuzzles her ear.

BILL
There's something about the smell
of bacon...

EMILY
Please, I'm trying to eat.

As she turns her head Jeff grabs a slice of bacon off her plate and dashes out.

EMILY
You little pig!

Samantha giggles.

Bill sits down next to Emily, grabs a slice of toast, and takes a bite.

BILL
(To Emily)
Any big plans for today?

EMILY
Well, I was planning on going
downtown to meet Michelle, but I
don't think I have enough gas.

Emily looks at her father with sad eyes. Bill sighs, takes out his wallet and gives her a twenty. She leans over and kisses him.

EMILY
Thank you, Daddy.

TERRI
(To Emily)
Can you teach me that face? I need
some new furniture.

Emily gives Terri a sarcastic smile.

BILL
Be extra careful going down the
mountain. It's still pretty wet out
there. And be back before dark.

EMILY
I will.

Emily gets up, puts her arms around Bill's neck from behind and kisses his cheek again.

Jeff comes back all excited, clutching the rifle.

JEFF
This is wicked. Where'd you get it?

Bill jumps up and quickly takes the gun from Jeff.

BILL
Whoa, partner. This isn't a toy.

TERRI
Damn it, Bill, I knew this would
happen. I thought you were going to
hide it?

BILL
I thought I did.

TERRI

That's great. This is exactly why I don't want any guns around.

BILL

It's not loaded.

TERRI

Famous last words. Why not give Samantha a switchblade to play with while you're at it.

JEFF

Can we go shoot it?

EMILY

Yeah, Rambo, why don't you go kill Bambi.

SAMANTHA (O.S.)

Don't kill Bambi.

TERRI

Bill?

BILL

We're not going to kill anything. This is just for protection.

JEFF

Aw...man...

Terri points the egg covered wooden spoon at Jeff.

TERRI

(To Jeff)

And you, Mister, are not allowed to even look at that gun without your father.

EMILY

I'm leaving, if anybody cares.

SAMANTHA

I care. Can I go with you?

Emily pats her sister on the head.

EMILY

Not today, Beansprout. We'll do something together when I get home, all right?

Samantha nods happily.

JEFF
Let's go hunting.

TERRI
They only thing you'll be hunting
is some rusty old tin cans.

JEFF

Dad.

BILL
Can I at least finish my breakfast?

JEFF
I'll help you.

Jeff grabs a slice of bacon off his plate. Bill looks expectantly at Terri and raises his hands.

Terri shrugs.

TERRI
Get up late, loose your plate.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY--DAY

Bill is standing in front of the door to Samantha and Jeff's room. He's wiggling the doorknob. Terri comes up the stairs.

TERRI
What are you doing?

Bill shuts the door and re-opens it again.

BILL
That's weird. There's no lock on
this door.

TERRI
It's an old house. Probably just
got stuck.

BILL
It's not sticking now.

TERRI
Shall I add it to my honey-do list?

BILL
I think it's fine. Probably just
got stuck.

TERRI
Thought so.

Jeff calls from downstairs.

JEFF (O.S.)
(From downstairs)
Dad, are you ready yet?

TERRI
The wilderness awaits.

BILL
You wanna come? A beautiful woman
with a rifle is a sexy combination.

TERRI
I'll pass. I need a shower.

BILL
Ooo, I like the sound of that even
better.

JEFF (O.S.)
Dad!

TERRI
Go play with your gun.

BILL
I love it when you talk dirty.

TERRI
Just do me a favor. Do not come
back with any holes that aren't
standard equipment.

EXT. FOREST--DAY

Bill and Jeff are walking through the forest of trees. Bill has the rifle slung over his shoulder, Jeff is carrying a plastic grocery bag full of empty cans. The sky is still packed with angry dark clouds. The forest is eerily silent.

JEFF
When are we gonna shoot something?

BILL
We have to find a good spot. Paul
said these bullets go a long way.
We don't want to accidentally kill
somebody.

JEFF

Who we gonna kill? There's nobody out here.

BILL

Nobody we can see.

They approach a slope in the forest floor ahead.

BILL

This looks good. Take the cans and set them up in front of that hill.

JEFF

Can I shoot first?

BILL

I think not, my man.

JEFF

That's not fair.

BILL

We could just go home.

Jeff stomps across a damp forest floor littered with dead vegetation, bends down, dumps the empty cans from the plastic bag onto the ground, and then begins to meticulously set them side by side.

Bill uneasily scans the forest around him. It's dead quiet. Too quiet.

Jeff hustles back over to where Bill is waiting. Bill takes the magazine from his pocket and locks it in place.

BILL

Stay behind me, please.

JEFF

I can't see.

BILL

Just watch the cans and prepare to be amazed.

Bill raises the rifle to his shoulder, looks through the scope, squeezes the trigger... and nothing.

BILL

Whoops.

JEFF

Nice one, Dad. Did you take off the safety?

Bill lowers the rifle and turns to his son.

BILL

How do you know so much about guns?

Jeff grins.

JEFF

Video games.

Bill raises the rifle again, clicks off the safety, aims and squeezes. The crack of the rifle shot echos through the forest as a puff of earth explodes five feet up the slope from the cans.

The sound of something very close by, and very large, crashes through the forest. Both turn their heads and follow the sound. It stops close by.

JEFF

What the heck was that?

BILL

I don't know... a deer maybe.

JEFF

I guess you scared it away.

BILL

I guess so. You know, maybe this wasn't such a good idea.

JEFF

You said I could shoot the gun.

Bill once more looks anxiously around.

BILL

I think that's enough for today.

Bill clicks on the safety, and slings the rifle over his shoulder.

JEFF

This is a bunch of crap.

BILL

Just go get the cans.

Jeff turns stomps away.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM--DAY

Terri is in the master bathroom blow drying her wet hair. Samantha is sitting on the bed playing with a doll.

TERRI (O.S.)
What do you want to do today?

SAMANTHA
Ride my bike.

Terri comes into the bedroom.

TERRI
Your bike's at home, Honey. You wanna take a ride into town and see if we can find a new nightlight?

SAMANTHA
I guess. When is Emily coming home?

TERRI
Not until later. I guess you're stuck with mom.

SAMANTHA
Can I go watch t.v.?

TERRI
Sure. I'll be down in a few minutes.

Samantha hops off the bed and leaves the room.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY--DAY CONTINUOUS

She walks down the hallway and continues down the stairs.

INT. ENTRY--DAY (CONTINUOUS)

She stops at the bottom near the front door, looks into the family room and appears to be talking to someone. She silently opens the front door and goes outside.

EXT. HOUSE--DAY (CONTINUOUS)

The sky is full of dark, angry clouds. The wind is beginning to pick up.

She walks down the steps and goes around the side of the house. Twenty yards away the forest begins.

She walks closer to the forest and stops at a small boulder. She climbs on top, sits down and begins playing with her doll and talking softly.

EXT. FOREST--DAY

We see from a different vantage point deep in the trees. A strong wind is moving quickly through the forest rustling branches and leaves as it goes. It draws closer and closer to the voice until we see the child from its vantage point at the edge of the trees. No more than fifty feet of open ground separates them. A soft, guttural growl comes.

EXT. HOUSE--DAY

Samantha turns toward the sound.

EXT. FOREST--DAY

Suddenly from the forest we see Terri standing on the porch.

TERRI

Samantha!

EXT. HOUSE--DAY

Terri runs down the steps and hurries over to the boulder. Samantha glances at her her mother, and then looks back. There's nothing there.

Terri kneels down in front of Samantha, grabs her by the shoulders and begins to shake her violently.

TERRI

I don't ever want you out here
alone! Do I make myself clear? Do
I?

Samantha begins to cry.

SAMANTHA

I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry...

Terri stops shaking her. She looks at her daughter.

Samantha is terrified.

Terri puts a hand over her own mouth, a look of anguish on her face.

TERRI
Oh, my God.

Terri begins to cry. She uses her hands to wipe Samantha's tears and brushes the hair from her face.

TERRI
Oh, baby. I'm so sorry. Mommy's not mad. I just got scared when I couldn't find you. Are you all right?

Samantha nods.

Terri takes her into her arms and hugs her tightly.

TERRI
I love you so much.

Samantha's body is stiff; her face void of emotion.

SAMANTHA
Can we go now?

EXT. FOREST--DAY

Bill and Jeff are walking back towards the house. Thunder rumbles. A light rain begins to fall.

JEFF
What's the use of having a gun if you don't shoot it?

BILL
I brought this up here for protection, not entertainment.

Jeff's eyes light up.

JEFF
Protection from what?

BILL
You sound like your mother.

JEFF
What if you're at work and a bear gets Samantha. Shouldn't I know how to use it?

As they walk towards the clearing Jeff suddenly runs off into the forest near a large outcrop of rock, bends down and picks something up off the ground.

BILL
What is it?

Jeff turns towards Bill and holds up a pair of binoculars.

JEFF
Finders keepers.

Jeff puts them up to his eyes and begins scanning the forest.

Bill walks over and joins him.

BILL
Let me see those.

JEFF
No fair. I saw 'em first.

Bill holds out his hand. Jeff reluctantly hands them over.

BILL
These look expensive. Probably
belong to a hunter.

Bill puts them up to his eyes and turns in a slow circle, scanning the area.

Suddenly a dark, shadowy figure appears in the trees. Bill anxiously searches the treeline again. There's nothing.

JEFF (O.S.)
I can keep 'em right?

BILL
What? No, I'd better hold on to
these in case someone comes looking
for them.

JEFF
This really sucks.

Jeff punctuates his anger by throwing a tin can. It disappears behind the outcrop of rock.

BILL
Go get the can, now!

Jeff, arms crossed, leans against a tree and pouts.

JEFF
I found them fair and square.

BILL
If no one claims them, they're
yours, all right? Now go get the
can.

Jeff begins a painstakingly slow trudge towards the rise.

BILL (O.S.)
Any day now.

Jeff turns towards Bill and makes a sarcastic face. Without warning the clouds let loose with a down pour. Jeff turns back toward the outcrop.

BILL (O.S.)
Forget it. We'll find it later.
Lets get back to the house.

As Jeff spins around and runs towards Bill, we see the wet body of the ranger, dead, clouded eyes open towards the sky, his head smashed against a rock, a pool of bloody water beneath it.

INT. CAR--DAY

Terri and Samantha are in the SUV heading down the hill from the house. The wipers are losing the battle against the heavy downpour. They reach the bottom of the road. Terri slows the SUV and wipes the fog off the drivers window and looks at the green pick-up parked on the side of the gravel road as they go by.

TERRI
I guess the rangers work rain or
shine around here.

SAMANTHA
Can I have a cat?

Terri looks over at Samantha, a puzzled look on her face.

Samantha doesn't meet her gaze, but just stares at the doll in her hands.

TERRI
I thought you wanted a goldfish?

SAMANTHA
I changed my mind.

TERRI

We'll have to discuss that when we
get back to our own house.

INT. GROCERY STORE--DAY

A bell above the door jangles as Teri and Samantha enter the small, slightly dingy "mom and pop" grocery store. A T.V. can be heard in the background. FRANK-(60's), gray bearded, blue jeans and flanneled pot belly, shuffles out from a door leading to the living quarters behind the counter where his WIFE (60's) is watching television.

FRANK

Well what brings you two lovely
ladies out on a nasty day like
this.

WIFE (O.S.)

Don't annoy the customers, Frank.

Frank chuckles, and gestures towards the back room.

FRANK

(Whispers)

She's mean as a snake and jealous
as the day is long.

WIFE (O.S.)

That's a laugh.

Terri, Samantha and Frank all chuckle.

Frank walks over and closes the door to the back room.

FRANK

I'd divorce her but the store's in
her name.

Frank winks at Samantha and lifts his hand to Terri.

FRANK

Frank McVey at your service.

TERRI

Nice to meet you, Frank.

Terri shakes his hand.

TERRI

I'm Terri Franklin, and this is my
daughter, Samantha.

Frank tips his head at Samantha.

FRANK
And who might this be?

He gestures at the doll Samantha is clutching.

Terri is staring at the row of liquor bottles behind the counter.

SAMANTHA (O.S.)
Her name is Tina.

FRANK (O.S.)
And a fine name it is. Well, what
can I talk you two into buying?

She quickly looks at Frank.

TERRI
Well, we just moved into town for a
month or so, and we seemed to have
forgotten the night light. I don't
suppose you have one around?

FRANK
Only have one.

Frank hobbles over to a rack and grabs the night light and hands it to Terri.

She looks it over. It's a cartoon caricature of an alien's face. She laughs and shakes her head.

TERRI
Aliens?

FRANK
Don't laugh. This is UFO country.
Next to Bigfoot, it's my best
seller.

TERRI
Oh, I'll bet.

FRANK
If it's too scary for the little
one you can take the front off.

Terri holds the nightlight out to Samantha.

TERRI

What do you think, Honey?

Samantha nods.

SAMANTHA

I like it.

FRANK

There you go. Who doesn't love aliens. Anything else I can get you?

TERRI

No, the house was very well stocked already.

FRANK

So, I pretty much know everyone in these parts. Don't recall any houses for rent.

TERRI

Well, you practically need to follow a trail of bread crumbs to find it. It's near the top of the mountain, all by itself in a little forest clearing.

Frank easy going demeanor changes. The smile is gone now.

FRANK

You wouldn't be talking about Mount Si, now would you?

Terri shrugs her shoulders.

TERRI

I don't know. Maybe. Why?

Frank leans over to Samantha.

FRANK

(To Samantha)

Over in the freezer by the wall I've got a great ice cream selection. If your mom doesn't mind?

Samantha smiles and looks expectantly at Terri. Terri nods her approval. Samantha walks over to the freezer.

TERRI

Is there something wrong with the house?

FRANK

Not exactly. But it does have a history. Now the only reason I bring it up is because you'll probably run into a few old busy bodies in this town who like to gossip a bit.

Terri smiles.

TERRI

And what would they say?

FRANK

Oh, you'll hear all sorts of hooey about UFO's, weird lights, Bigfoot and the like. Most of it is pure nonsense. The truth, although tragic, is somewhat less supernatural.

TERRI

And the truth is?

FRANK

Long before we came here the local Indians used to bury their dead up the top of that mountain. According to the few elders that are still around it's a very sacred, mystical place. They say their ancestor's spirits still roam around up there. Most natives won't go within a mile of it.

TERRI

I'm not very superstitious.

FRANK

Well anyways, back in the early twenties the forest service took over the land and built a fire lookout on top of Mount Si, and a house for the employees. In the spring of 1924 the two men assigned to watch for fires were Quinlan Hardy and Jack Dugan. They always had two men on account of it was a twenty four hour a day job. Mr.

(MORE)

FRANK (cont'd)

Dugan shared the house along with Mr. Hardy, his wife, and their young daughter, Mary.

To cut to the chase, Mr. Dugan was on the night shift, and admittedly had been drinking, but anyways, he saw flames coming from the general direction of the house and called it right in. By the time he got down the mountain most of the house was totally engulfed. He found his partner sitting on a rock out front of the house in the rain.

TERRI

What happened to his wife and child?

FRANK

The authorities found the remains after the rain put the fire out. They'd both been shot and placed in the bathtub. He never said a word after that. Lawyer tried to plead insanity, but they convicted him of murder. They hung him later that winter.

TERRI

That's horrible.

FRANK

Yes, Ma'am. The forest service rebuilt the house that summer, but they abandoned the Mount Si fire lookout a year or so after that. Nobody would take the post.

TERRI

So the house has been empty all this time?

FRANK

A few folks have moved in over the years. Most never stayed more than a few days. There was some hippies back in the sixties. I believe they were the last. There were some rumors of strange lights, and animals that weren't behaving themselves, but but nobody paid it much mind.

TERRI

And this story is supposed to make me feel better?

FRANK

Would you rather hear about alien fly-bys and Bigfoot camping in the woods? Got plenty of those too.

TERRI

I guess not, but still...

SAMANTHA (O.S.)

Can we get this?

Terri turns and sees Samantha dragging a huge bag of cat food across the floor.

FRANK

Well, you must have one hungry cat.

TERRI

We don't have a cat. And I said we'd discuss the pet situation when we get back to our house. Please put it back.

Samantha turns and drags the bag back down the aisle.

TERRI

Well, Frank, I'd say this has been quite a day. How much do I owe you for the night light and the ice cream.

FRANK

Just consider those a couple house warming gifts.

TERRI

No, really...

FRANK

If you take out your wallet you'll make a grown man cry.

Samantha walks up, ice cream bar in hand.

SAMANTHA

Don't cry.

FRANK

Now you two get on back up the hill
before it starts raining again.
Doesn't take much water to make
that a mess of a drive. Don't want
to be stuck here all night with me.

TERRI

Thanks for the gifts, and the
story.

FRANK

My pleasure.

Terri and Samantha open the door. The bell jangles as they
go out.

Frank closes his eyes and says a quick prayer.

FRANK

Lord, please keep that family safe.
Amen.

WIFE (O.S.)

You about done out there?

Frank gives the finger in her direction.

INT. FAMILY ROOM--NIGHT

The family room is softly lit and cozy. The wind is howling
outside. The house occasionally creaks. Samantha is huddled
on the couch under a blanket watching a DVD.

Bill and Jeff are sitting cross legged on the floor with gun
cleaning supplies between them. Bill is cleaning the rifle.

Terri pokes her head into the room from the kitchen.

TERRI

Do you have to play with the gun in
the house? I'm not real comfortable
with that.

BILL

Paul read me the riot act about
keeping his gun clean. A clean gun
is a happy gun.

TERRI

Please be careful.

JEFF
Can I help?

BILL AND TERRI
No.

INT. STUDIO--NIGHT

The room is in shadows, the only light from the monitors on the wall above the control console.

Fran and Bob are sitting at the back of the room. Bob is drinking coffee. Fran is making notes on a legal pad.

Rick and Parker are watching Terri bending over to load the dishwasher. Rick zooms in on her rear end.

FRAN (O.S.)
Men are such pigs.

RICK
Just making sure the gear's working properly.

FRAN (O.S.)
Right.

They all watch as Jeff stands up and leaves the room. They follow his movements in the different cameras as he walks down the hall to the bathroom. He reaches in, flips on the light, and cautiously looks around inside before he enters. He closes the door behind him.

They watch in silence as Jeff warily inspects the small room. He slowly approaches the closed shower curtain.

Jeff quickly grabs the curtain and yanks it aside.

Fran jumps.

The tub is empty. Jeff laughs nervously and slides the curtain back in place.

FRAN
Who needs special effects. This is creepy as hell.

BOB
Damn it. Why don't we have something in the tub? You know, like blood or something.

RICK
Oh, you haven't seen nothing yet.

INT. BATHROOM--NIGHT

Jeff walks into the toilet alcove and relieves himself. He flushes the toilet. He walks over and opens the door.

TERRI (O.S.)
Don't forget to wash your hands.

JEFF
(Under his breath)
Shit.

He goes to the sink and turns on the water. He checks himself out in the mirror, rubbing his face as if feeling for beard growth. He makes a few silly faces at himself. He looks down and quickly touches the water with his fingertips. He looks back at his reflection.

There's a ghostly white, dark haired little girl with deep, dark circles around her eyes standing beside Jeff. The girl suddenly opens her mouth wide as if screaming. The mirror appears to crack.

Jeff instantly back-pedals away from the sink, the back of his legs contact the tub and he falls in butt first dragging the shower curtain down around him. He begins to flail and scream.

Before Jeff can extricate himself from the shower curtain Bill and Terri are in the room.

Jeff is still flailing around in the plastic curtain and screaming.

Bill grabs his arm and pulls him to his feet.

TERRI
Oh my God. Sweetie, are you all right?

Bill holds Jeff close to his chest to try and calm him.

BILL
Calm down, partner.

TERRI
Bill, is he okay?

Terri turns Jeff around and begins running her hands over his head.

TERRI
Baby, did you hit your head?

Jeff turns and stares at the mirror over the sink. His panicked reflection stares back at him. The crack is gone. So is the little girl.

JEFF
Crap!

TERRI
Jeffrey Franklin!

Bill laughs.

BILL
I guess it's safe to say there's no permanent brain damage.

TERRI
Since when is foul language any indication...

JEFF
I saw a ghost in the mirror.

TERRI
Again? Was it a little girl?

Bill looks at Terri and then at Jeff, his face showing bewilderment.

BILL
Would someone mind telling me what the hell is going on?

Emily pokes her head in the doorway.

EMILY
Awful lot of cussing going on in here.

TERRI
Mind your own business.

EMILY
Soorry.

Emily disappears around the corner.

INT. FAMILY ROOM--NIGHT

Samantha is still huddled under a blanket on the couch, only her eyes peeking out at the T.V. screen. She hears a creaking sound behind her. She looks back at the window.

It slowly begins to open. The sheer white curtains begin to blow wildly in the wind. She says something unintelligible. She shakes her head, and then goes back to watching her movie.

Bill, Jeff and Terri enter the family room.

TERRI

(To Samantha)

Sammy, honey, we need to keep the windows closed. It might rain.

SAMANTHA

I didn't open it.

TERRI

What did I tell you about lying?

SAMANTHA

But, I'm not lying.

Terri puts her index finger to her lips.

TERRI

No buts, no lying. Got it?

SAMANTHA

Mary opened it.

BILL

Who's Mary.

SAMANTHA

She used to live here. She's my friend.

Terri looks suspiciously at Samantha.

TERRI

Were you listening when I was talking to Frank today?

Samantha shakes her head.

BILL

Who's Mary and Frank?

TERRI

I'll explain in a minute.

Terri walks over and begins to close the window. Suddenly a large black bird smacks into the window before disappearing into the darkness. Terri screams.

JEFF

Awesome.

TERRI

Shit, that scared me.

Samantha and Jeff look at their mother, eyes wide, and then start laughing. Terri soon joins in.

BILL

Would someone mind telling me what's going on?

Emily yells from upstairs.

EMILY (O.S.)

The house is haunted, Dad.

Bill hollers back to Emily.

BILL

If you want to be part of the family discussion, then I suggest you drag your little butt down stairs, please.

EMILY (O.S.)

Sorry, you're breaking up.

Bill rubs his forehead.

BILL

Where did you find these kids?

TERRI

A troll left them on our doorstep.

EMILY (O.S.)

Funny.

JEFF

Can I sleep in your guy's room tonight?

BILL

We'll discuss that in a minute.
Your mother and I need to have a
little pow wow.

TERRI

(To Jeff)

Will you be all right in here with
your sister?

JEFF

Sure. If the ghost comes back I ask
her if she wants to have some
popcorn and watch a kiddie movie.

BILL

(To Terri)

He's fine. Care to join me in the
kitchen?

INT. STUDIO--NIGHT

Bob jumps up from his chair and stands behind Rick. They all
stare at the front porch monitor. A yellow Volkswagon bug
pulls up and parks. Three shadowy figures walk up to the
porch.

BOB

What is up with this place? I've
seen less foot traffic at
Starbucks.

(To Fran)

Make a note. I want lights with
motion sensors out front for the
next episode.

FRAN

Got it.

INT. FAMILY ROOM--NIGHT

Suddenly loud pounding comes from the front door. Bill and
Terri jump.

They walk to the front door.

INT. ENTRY--NIGHT--CONTINUOUS

Terri turns on the outside light. Bill opens the door.

MICHELLE (17), TRAVIS (18), and JUSTIN (18) are huddled together; the cold wind attacking their meager clothing.

Michelle is shivering. She lifts her hand.

MICHELLE

Hi, Mrs. Franklin, Mr. Franklin.

BILL

Hi, Michelle.

TERRI

Honey, what are you doing way up here?

BILL

You gonna let them in?

TERRI

Sorry. Come in before you freeze to death.

The three teens file into the entry. Terri closes the door.

EMILY (O.S.)

Who's here? Is it that cute ranger again?

BILL

(Hollers back)

It's Michelle and a couple friends.

MICHELLE

This is Justin and Travis.

Bill and Terri shake their hands.

Emily appears at the top of the stairs, eyes narrowed, a scowl on her face.

TERRI

Let's go in the family room.

Bill and the teens follow her.

INT. FAMILY ROOM--NIGHT--CONTINUOUS

BILL
(To Michelle)
Must be pretty important to drive
all the way up here.

Emily enters the room.

EMILY
Yeah, you must have a real good
reason.

MICHELLE
I left my purse in Em's car. House
keys and everything. My parents are
out of town until tomorrow. I can't
get in the house.

EMILY
Oh, really?

TERRI
Emily!

MICHELLE
Em and I had a little fight today.

Bill roles his eyes at Terri.

EMILY
I'll get my keys.

Emily leaves the room and runs up the stairs.

JUSTIN
Do you think it would be all right
if I used the bathroom?

Bill and Terri exchange a quick look of concern.

JEFF
Sure, down at the end of the hall.

Justin picks up on their expressions.

JUSTIN
(To Bill)
Is it okay?

Bill shrugs.

BILL

Why not.

Justin goes into the entry, and turns left down the hall.

The room goes into a uncomfortable, nervous silence. No one is saying a word. Emily returns with her keys. The toilet flushes. The bathroom door opens. The spell is broken. Justin re-enters the room.

BILL

Well, it was nice meeting you boys.
Be careful going down the mountain.

(To Michelle)

Say hello to your folks for us.

MICHELLE

I will.

EMILY

Let's go get your purse.

The four teens leave the room and exit the front door.

EXT. HOUSE--NIGHT--CONTINUOUS

The four teens huddle around Emily's car, arms crossed to try and keep warm.

EMILY

(To Michelle)

So what the hell is going on here?

MICHELLE

Lighten up, Em. We just wanted to be on t.v. too.

JUSTIN

You know, like our fifteen minutes of fame.

EMILY

I swear, you guys are gonna blow the whole thing for me. I gave my word. If you screw this up...

TRAVIS

We won't tell anyone else. Scout's honor.

EMILY

(To Travis)

Oh. Like the way you didn't tell anyone about my step-mom's little stay at the crazy farm?

Travis looks down at the ground, embarrassed.

MICHELLE

(To Emily)

I'll call you tomorrow.

The three teens climb into the car and drive away into the darkness.

INT. KITCHEN--NIGHT

BILL

Now where were we?

TERRI

I don't suppose you know anything about our new home, do you?

BILL

Should I?

TERRI

Well, let me give you a little gruesome history lesson.

INT. CAR--NIGHT

Justin is behind the wheel of his Volkswagon Bug. Michelle is in the passenger seat, Travis in the back. They reach the bottom of the drive. The green truck is still parked at the side of the road.

JUSTIN

(To Michelle)

You think they'll keep us in the show?

MICHELLE

I don't know. Maybe.

TRAVIS

She's still totally pissed at me, She'll probably have them cut me out.

Justin gives it too much gas as they turn left onto the main road. The car fishtails off the gravel into the mud on the side of the road. He puts it in first and gases it. The car doesn't move, but the tire is spinning.

TRAVIS

Nice one, Slick. Now we're stuck.

MICHELLE

This is just great. I was suppose to be home an hour ago. My parents are gonna be so mad.

JUSTIN

Hey, Trav, get out and stand on the back bumper. I need some traction.

TRAVIS

You owe me for this one.

Michelle opens the door and leans the seat forward. Travis gets out and goes around the back of the car. Michelle shuts the door. As Rick starts to roll down his window a clap of thunder ushers in the rain.

TRAVIS (O.S.)

This sucks, man.

JUSTIN

Just get on with it.

Justin rolls the window up.

The car suddenly bounces as Travis steps onto the back bumper. Justin turns and can barely see Travis through the rear window as the rain begins to come down harder. Justin gently rocks the car forward and back a few times. When he feels the tires bite the gravel he guns it. He looks back and Travis is gone.

Suddenly two muddy hand prints appear on the drivers window. Justin wipes the condensation from the window and Travis is standing in the down pour, his face and shirt covered in mud. Justin and Michelle start to laugh.

Travis slaps his hand on the roof of the car.

TRAVIS

This isn't funny, dickweed. Let me in.

JUSTIN

As soon as you get a good washing.

TRAVIS

I gonna kick your...

As Justin and Michelle laugh, Travis is instantly gone as if he suddenly stepped into a hole. Only the smeared muddy fingerprints on the window are left to say he was ever there.

Michelle screams.

MICHELLE

Where is he?

In a panic, she looks back and forth through the foggy windows.

JUSTIN

I don't know.

Slowly the top of a head begins to rise up next to the window.

MICHELLE

You asshole. That wasn't funny at all.

Justin laughs nervously.

JUSTIN

I thought it was pretty good.

A face comes into view, but it isn't Travis. It's a blond little girls face covered in soot, muddy water and blood. She pounds the window with her fist. The window explodes inward showering Justin and Michelle with glass.

Both Michelle and Justin scream in unison.

MICHELLE

Go, go, go, go...

Justin stomps on the gas, the wheels throw gravel before finally catching.

He shifts into second, looking back in the rear view mirror.

MICHELLE

Is something coming?

As Justin looks forward again, the little girl appears in the head lights in the torrential rain. He hits the brakes hard.

EXT. CAR--NIGHT--CONTINUOUS

The car begins to slide to the right towards the wooden bridge. He over compensates and jerks the wheel hard right. The tires bite. The car begins to roll. It hits the wooden safety rail as it rolls, taking out most of the left side rail before plunging over the edge and disappearing into the ravine.

It lands fifty feet below on the roof, punctuated by the sound of rending metal and exploding glass as windows instantly blow out. A torrent of water rushes into the vehicle. The tail lights stain the water a bloody red before winking out.

INT. STUDIO--NIGHT

Bob and now seated directly behind Rick and Parker. They are all glued to the monitor as Terri finishes her tale of the house.

FRAN

(To Bob)

Did you know that place had a history?

Bob shrugs.

BOB

I might have heard a little something.

Fran punches Bob on the shoulder.

FRAN

You jerk. Why didn't you tell me?

Bob grins.

BOB

It must have slipped my mind.

FRAN

Anything else you'd care to divulge? Bodies in the basement? Severed heads in the broom closet?

BOB

My conscience is clear. Let's break
for dinner. We'll meet back here at
midnight.

INT. KITCHEN--NIGHT

Bill and Terri are still in the kitchen.

BILL

I'll call the guy from the makeover
thing tomorrow and see if they have
somewhere else we can stay. We
don't want anybody traumatized.

TERRI

I agree. But it's kinda cool, don't
you think? I mean, it's not like
she's trying to hurt us or
anything.

BILL

You are quite the ghost buster. So
who told you all this?

TERRI

Frank.

BILL

And who is this mysterious Frank?

TERRI

He runs the grocery store in town.

BILL

Well, I'm glad it came from a
reliable source.

TERRI

Lets get the kids ready for bed.
It's been a long day.

INT. FAMILY ROOM--NIGHT

Terri comes down the stairs into the dark family room. The
light is on in the kitchen. She hears Bill talking. She
enters.

INT. KITCHEN--NIGHT--CONTINUOUS

Bill has his back to her.

TERRI
Saying goodnight to your secretary?

Bill turns around and slips his cell phone into his pocket.

BILL
That's not fair, and you know it.

TERRI
Do I?

BILL
What gotten in to you. One minute
everything's going smooth and the
next...I don't deserve this.

Bill shakes his head.

BILL (CONT'D)
And you're fully aware that she
doesn't even work at my office
anymore.

TERRI
How is our Janice? Is she still
pining over you?

BILL
Do you really want to cast the
first stone? We both had our little
indiscretions, didn't we?

TERRI
Yes, we did. But I wasn't screwing
my bartender while you were locked
up in a rubber room.

BILL
This is bullshit. I'm going to bed.

Terri shrugs.

Bill leaves the room and goes upstairs.

INT. STUDIO--NIGHT

Bob and Fran are sitting behind Rick and Parker. The monitors show all the rooms in green semi-darkness except for the kitchen and the master bedroom.

FRAN

(To Bob)

You know we might have picked the wrong family for this.

BOB

Why? Audiences love conflict. And they love gritty reality. The dirt is what keeps them watching.

FRAN

This is different. Would you really want to air your dirty laundry in front of the whole world.

BOB

Hey, we can always edit that out.

INT. KITCHEN--NIGHT

The kitchen is dark. Terri is sitting at the kitchen table. She looks at the pantry cabinet. She gets up and walks over to the pantry cabinet and opens the door. She slides the cereal boxes away revealing the Sherry. She looks back towards the family room. She takes the Sherry from the closet and quietly closes the door. She gets a glass from the cupboard. Clutching the bottle and glass protectively against her chest, she walks to the opening that leads to the bathroom.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY--NIGHT--CONTINUOUS

She pauses at the closed bathroom door, a puzzled look on her face. The light is on in the bathroom. She softly knocks. No answer. She opens the door.

INT. BATHROOM--NIGHT

Inside is a young, disheveled, pale man, tears rolling down his cheeks. He's dressed only in white jockey underwear. He's cradling a semi-automatic pistol in his hands.

Terri freezes. Tears well up in her eyes. Her face is full of anguish.

TERRI

No...Johnny...please...no...

The man raises the pistol under his chin and pulls the trigger. The tile behind him is sprayed with blood. His body slumps to the floor.

Terri drops the bottle and glass to the floor and screams.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY--NIGHT

The children are huddled in the hall as Bill rushes towards the stairs.

BILL

(To Emily)

Take the kids in your room. Stay there.

INT. STUDIO--NIGHT

Bob, Fran, Rick and Parker are watching the scene play out on the monitors. They watch as Bill rushes down the stairs, then moves to a different monitor as he enters the downstairs hallway.

They can also see Terri in the dark kitchen, sitting on the floor, her back against the wall, knees pulled up to her chest, head down, rocking back and forth. The light from the bathroom illuminates the hallway.

BOB

(To Rick)

What the hell was that all about? I didn't see anything.

Rick raises his hands up.

RICK

Don't look at me.

FRAN

This isn't right. I think we need to shut this down.

BOB

Are you nuts? I've got a ton of cash invested in this program.

FRAN

We're screwing with people's lives here. The idea sounded good...but...

BOB

Nobody twisted your arm. You can bail anytime.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY--NIGHT

Bill rushes down the hallway to the bathroom and looks in. He see's the broken glass and Sherry bottle, the syrupy red liquor spreading across the white tile floor. He goes into the kitchen and turns on the light.

INT. KITCHEN--NIGHT--CONTINUOUS

Terri frantically scoots herself into the corner.

Bill rushes over, kneels down and touches her shoulder.

BILL

Honey...

Terri blindly lashes out with her hands, slapping Bill repeatedly. He manages to grab her wrists. She struggles for a moment, and then goes limp. Bill lifts her in his arms and walks down the hall towards the stairs.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY--NIGHT

Bill walks down the upstairs hallway, cradling Terri in his arms. The children are peaking out the door. They come out of the room. They are all visibly shaken. Emily, disgust on her face, shakes her head.

JEFF

Is mom all right?

BILL

Everything's fine. Go back to bed.

Samantha is crying.

SAMANTHA

Is mommy going back to the hospital?

BILL
 (To Emily/Stern)
 Get them in bed, please.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM--NIGHT

The room is in semi-darkness, the only light comes from the bathroom. Terri is asleep on the bed.

INT. MASTER BATHROOM--NIGHT

Bill is sitting on the edge of the tub talking quietly on his cell phone to Terri's doctor.

BILL
 I don't really know what happened,
 she wouldn't tell me. As far as I
 can tell she's okay. I doubled her
 medication so she's pretty much
 out. I'll call your office in the
 morning and make an appointment for
 her. I really appreciate your help.
 Thanks again.

Bill places his cell phone on the counter. Reaches over and starts running water into the tub.

INT. MASTER BATHROOM--NIGHT

The lights are off. The only light from a candle on the counter. The room is full of steam. The only sound is a semi-constant dripping from the tub spout. Bill is lying back in the tub, eyes closed.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
 How apropos.

Bill eyes snap open, he hits the back of his head against the tile, splashing water as he tries to sit up. He sees no one through the thick steam.

BILL
 Terri?

JANICE (20's) appears in the fog.

JANICE
 Surprise.

BILL
What the hell are you doing here?
How...?

JANICE
I'm ready for a little dic-ta-tion,
Sir.

Janice peeks over the edge of the tub at Bill's naked body.

BILL
You've got to get out of here. What
if someone sees you.

JANICE
Heads or tails, Bill?

BILL
I'm serious. If Terri or the kids
wake up...

Bill reaches up and pulls a towel off the towel bar and wraps it around himself as he stands up. He steps out of the tub.

Janice begins to giggle.

Bill grabs her by the shoulders.

BILL
What's wrong with you?

JANICE
Heads or tails.

Her hand moves down to the towel. He pushes it away.
Janice's lips pout.

BILL
It's over, Janice. No more games.

JANICE
Heads it is.

Her hand moves from behind her back. She shoves something in Bill's hands. He looks down. It's Terri's bloodied, severed head. He screams.

Bill wakes up in the tub, arms flailing, gasping for air.

INT. STUDIO--NIGHT

Bob and Fran are sitting behind Rick and Parker. The monitors show all the rooms in green, semi-darkness.

The house is quiet, only the sounds of the storm, the occasional creaks of the house settling, and soft rock music come through the monitors.

Terri and Bill are asleep. Bill is snoring softly.

Emily is lying on her bed in the dark, headphones on, music cranked.

Jeff and Samantha are sleeping. The rumble of thunder comes from the near distance. Lightning illuminates the China dolls on the wall shelf a moment later.

BOB

It's time to rock and roll, people.

Rick rubs his hands together gleefully.

RICK

Let's do it.

Fran lets out a gasp and then pats Rick on the shoulder.

FRAN

That's amazing. How did you do that?

RICK

I haven't done anything yet.

BOB

Then who the hell is that?

Rick looks up at the screens. A young blond girl dressed in a long white sleeping gown is walking down the upstairs hallway.

RICK

How'd she get out of bed so...

Parker shakes his head.

PARKER

That's not Samantha.

All eyes move to the bedroom monitor. Samantha and Jeff are both still asleep.

BOB
 (To Rick)
 If you're screwing around with me,
 it'll be the last time.

Rick throws his hands up.

RICK
 I'm not doing anything.

Suddenly, as they watch, the little girl's face slowly turns to the camera. But it's not the face of a little girl. The extreme closeup face of an ancient, wrinkled, Indian complete with warpaint fills every monitor, instantly turning into a evil mask of malevolent hate. All the monitors go blank at once.

FRAN
 Damn it, somebody better tell me
 now if this is a joke.

RICK
 I'm telling you I didn't do a damn
 thing.

BOB
 What happened?

RICK
 The power went out in the house.

BOB
 Get Steve to do something.

Rick picks up the phone and punches in Rick's number.

BOB
 Put him on the speaker.

The phone is ringing.

STEVE (O.S.)
 Taco bell, may I take your order?

BOB
 Are you trying to be funny?

STEVE (O.S.)
 Eh...No, Sir.

BOB
 All the cameras are down. We're all
 sitting on our thumbs watching
 blank screens. This is not good.

STEVE (O.S.)

The powers out. I told you this might happen. We're pulling too many amps. Probably tripped the breakers.

BOB

And...

STEVE (O.S.)

The box is outside. It's pouring rain.

BOB

Get your ass out there right now and fix this!

STEVE (O.S.)

What if someone sees me?

FRAN

Everyone's asleep, Steve.

STEVE (O.S.)

Hey, Fran.

BOB

We're burning money here, Steve.

STEVE (O.S.)

I'm on it, Sir. Give me five minutes.

Steve hangs up.

BOB

(To Fran)

Where do you find these goofballs, Idiots R Us?

INT. SAMANTHA AND JEFF'S ROOM--NIGHT

Thunder shakes the house. Samantha's eyes fly open. She stands up on the bed and looks out the window. She hears a noise below. She sees the silhouette of a man in a baseball cap emerge from a door in the side of the house. A flashlight blinks on. He lowers his head, hugs the shadows, and hurries through the pouring rain towards the back of the house. Samantha quietly gets off the bed, opens the bedroom door, and exits into the hallway.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY--NIGHT--CONTINUOUS

Samantha shuts the door quietly behind her.

EXT. HOUSE--NIGHT

The rain is coming down in sheets as Steve reaches the back of the house. He finds the breaker box and opens it. He shines the light inside, finds the tripped breaker and tries to reset it. Nothing happens. He curses under his breath, takes a screwdriver from his pocket and pries off the metal cover. He sticks the screwdriver into the open boxes and tries to see if there is a loose wire. He senses something behind him. As he turns he sees movement in the rainy darkness. Steve wipes his glasses with a shirt sleeve. In a flash of lightening he sees a ghostly white little blond girl in a white sleeping gown, standing under a tree ten feet away. Startled, his hand slips on the screwdriver and shoves it further in the box. Suddenly his body is shaking violently, sparks are flying from the box. In a moment it is over and his body crumples to the ground. The screwdriver is still stuck in the box and smoke and flames begin pouring from the box.

EXT. HOUSE/PORCH--NIGHT

Samantha is leaning over the porch peeking around the corner. Suddenly something grabs her from behind.

Emily sets her sister down, and spins Samantha around to face her.

EMILY

What do you think you're doing out here?

SAMANTHA

Looking for the man that lives under the house.

INT. STUDIO--NIGHT

Bob is pacing the room. Fran lights up a cigarette.

RICK

You really shouldn't be smoking in here. Not good for the equipment.

FRAN
Shut the hell up, Rick.

BOB
Where's Steve? That idiot. They
must have seen him. Get him on the
phone.

Rick hits redial on the speaker phone. No one answers.

INT. SAMANTHA AND JEFF'S ROOM--NIGHT

Emily puts Samantha her back in bed.

EMILY
(Whispers)
There's no man under the house,
understand? You were just having a
bad dream.

SAMANTHA
(Whispers)
No I wasn't. I saw him. He's real.

EMILY
(Whispers)
I wouldn't say anything to anybody.
They might put you in the crazy
house like your mom.

A frightened look comes over Samantha's face. Emily points
at her and does a zipping gesture across her mouth.

INT. STUDIO--NIGHT

Bob is furiously pacing now. The rest are just staring at
the monitors.

BOB
I swear to God, Fran, Steve is off
this production.

RICK
He probably locked himself out.

BOB
Well, then he's got a long walk
home.

FRAN

Don't be such a hard ass, Bob. It was an accident. We need to send someone up there to get him.

RICK

If anybody cares, I can open the door from here.

BOB

Why didn't you say something?

Rick just shakes his head and punches a button on the console.

BOB

Well, where is he? We need the power back on.

RICK

I don't know.

PARKER

Give him a minute. He's probably fixing it now.

Bob leans over Rick.

BOB

Lets see the footage right before the cameras went down.

Rick punches some buttons. The monitors go fuzzy for a moment. He hits another button and the screens are again filled with green images of the sleeping family. It stays that way until the monitors go blank.

BOB

Where's the little girl and the damn Indian?

RICK

How the hell should I know. That wasn't my bit.

FRAN

We need to go up there, Bob. Tonight. Right now.

BOB

What's got into you?

FRAN

Something strange is going on. You heard Rick. He's not controlling this. What if something happens to the family, or even one of the kids?

BOB

You know how much money I've got tied up in this? I will not pull the plug on this thing.

FRAN

You want to get sued for every penny you have?

PARKER

People, You are not going to believe this.

Parker points at the monitor showing Steve's basement room.

The LITTLE BLOND GIRL in the white sleeping gown is sitting on Steve's bed. They can hear her softly singing something unintelligible.

BOB

What the hell is going on? Why aren't the other monitors working?

RICK

How the hell would I know.

As they watch, she turns to face the door. She smiles.

LITTLE BLOND GIRL

Momma?

The door flies open. But it's not Steve.

A bearded man (30's), dressed in simple twenties clothing; rain soaked clothing and hat, clutching a rifle, stands in the shadowy doorway, the rain pouring down on him. His face suddenly morphs into the face of a wrinkled old Indian. He raises the gun and fires.

The little girl screams and instantly all the monitors begin randomly turning on and off.

PARKER

We've got to do something.

BOB
This can't be happening. Not on the
first episode.

Fran is furiously digging through her briefcase. She pulls out a small notepad.

FRAN
(To Bob)
You are a cold-hearted bastard. Get
the hell out of the way.

Fran shoves Bob aside and grabs the phone. She punches in some numbers. A ringing comes through the monitors.

RICK
(To Fran)
Don't bother.

Fran looks up at the screen. Emily's room monitors flashes on for A second then goes blank. Emily is lying in bed, eyes closed. The headphones are in place.

FRAN
Shit. I'm going up there. Who's
with me? Bob?

Bob is staring dumbstruck at the flashing screens.

PARKER
I'll go. We'll take my SUV. It's a
four wheel drive.

Fran and Parker hurry out the door.

INT. EMILY'S ROOM-NIGHT

Emily is lying on the bed, headphones still in place. Her door is open a few inches. She sees a small figure go passed the door. She yanks the headphones off and gets up.

EMILY
(To herself)
That little brat.

She steps toward the door and opens it wider. The little blond girl is outside the door. Emily smiles and shakes her head. The little girl turns and her face is pure evil. She growls and Emily screams and suddenly the door slams shut. She struggles to open it but it won't open.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM--NIGHT

Bill and Terri are both asleep. The rain is coming down hard, the wind is howling. Samantha enters the room and goes to Terri's side of the bed. She grabs Terri's arm and begins to pull her from the bed. Terri's eyes open, but she is out of it from the medication.

TERRI

Sammy, is that you? Baby, what's wrong?

Terri tries to stay awake but her eyes keep closing. The girl keeps pulling on her arm. Terri wakes again and forces herself out of bed. She struggles to her feet. Samantha guides her through the darkness towards the door. Terri, her wrist in Samantha's grip, staggers behind.

INT. EMILY'S ROOM--NIGHT

Emily is crying as she begins pounding on the door.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM--NIGHT

Bill's is sleeping on the bed. A pounding sound comes from the hallway. His eyes open. The pounding continues. He reaches for Terri but the bed is empty. He gets out of bed and hurries into the hallway.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY--NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

The hallway is beginning to fill with smoke. Bill reaches Emily's door. The pounding continues. Bill tries the knob. The door won't open.

BILL

Open the door, baby.

EMILY (O.S.)

Daddy, please, let's go home.
Please. It's all my fault.

BILL

Are you hurt?

EMILY (O.S.)

No.

BILL
Get away from the door.

EMILY (O.S.)
Okay.

Bill raise his foot and tries to kick the door open. he can't do it.

BILL
(To himself)
Shit.
(To Emily)
Em. I want you to get far away from
the door. You understand?

EMILY (O.S.)
Yes.

Bill hurries back to the master bedroom.

INT. SAMANTHA AND JEFF'S ROOM/CLOSET--NIGHT

The closet is dark. The windows in the room let in meager light. Wind is howling. Jeff sits crouched in the closet, peeking out through a crack in the door. Suddenly the dolls on the shelf all turn towards him. Jeff yanks the door shut.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY--NIGHT

Bill is back standing at Emily's door clutching the rifle in his hands. Smoke is clouding the hallway.

BILL
You away from the door?

EMILY (O.S.)
Yes, Daddy. Hurry, please.

Bill lowers the barrel until it is nearly touching the door next to the knob. He pulls the trigger. The sound is deafening in the empty hallway.

INT. SAMANTHA AND JEFF'S ROOM/CLOSET--NIGHT

Jeff jumps as he hears the crack of the gunshot. He begins to cry.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY--NIGHT

Bill lifts his foot and kicks the door. It flies open. Emily rushes from the room into his arms.

EMILY

I'm so sorry, Daddy. it was just
for fun. It's all my fault.

Bill ignores her apology and slaps the car keys in her hand.

BILL

Listen to me. I want you to get the
kids and wait for me right here.
You got that? Do not go down
stairs.

Emily nods.

Bill rushes back into the bedroom and into the bathroom.

INT. MASTER BATHROOM--NIGHT

The bathroom is dark.

BILL

Terri? Damn it, are you in here?

He steps up to the tub and yanks back the curtain. The bloodied bodies of a woman and a little blond girl are in the tub. Bill gasps and back pedals away. The woman's eyes fly open and look straight at him. She screams. Bill runs from the room.

INT. SAMANTHA AND JEFF'S ROOM--NIGHT

Emily pushes the door open and enters. The beds are empty.

EMILY

(Whispers)
Jeff. Samantha.

The dolls on the shelf all turn towards her. She screams. The closet door flies open and Jeff comes running out and throws his arms around her.

EMILY

You okay?

Jeff just nods his head.

Bill appears in the doorway. Emily and Jeff are huddled together in the middle of the room. The heads of the China dolls on the shelf are now twisting back and forth in unison as if to say "no you won't be leaving here". The closet door slams shut.

BILL
Where's Samantha?

JEFF
(Crying)
I don't know.

Bill drags the kids into the hallway.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY--NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

The smoke is getting thicker.

BILL
(To Jeff and Samantha)
I'll be right back. Stay with your
sister. Do not move from this spot.
Understood?

Frightened, they both nod.

Bill moves passed them toward the stairs. He cautiously moves down the stairs into the entry.

INT. ENTRY--NIGHT

The walls seem to move as the light from the flames dances across them. A single voice, chanting in some strange language rises above the crackle and roar of the fire. Smoke begins to roll across the ceiling above him.

The fire is burning up through the family room floor.

BILL
(Yells)
Emily. Let's go. Hurry.

Emily leads Jeff down smoke filled stairway and Bill leads them out the front door. The family room is completely engulfed in flames.

INT. BATHROOM--NIGHT

Smoke is pouring under the bathroom door. Samantha is huddled in the tub. Terri still groggy is laying on the floor. She begins to cough. The door suddenly opens filling the room with smoke. Terri struggles to her feet. She grabs Samantha's arm and pulls her from the tub.

EXT. HOUSE--NIGHT

They hurry off the porch to the SUV. Bill opens the doors and makes Jeff and Emily get inside. He hands Emily the keys.

BILL

No matter what, do not leave the car. Understand?

Emily nods.

TERRI

And if something should happen ...

Bill's voice begins to choke. The kids begin to cry.

BILL

Take the car and get down the mountain. Go to the little store in town. Just bang on the door and tell them what happened.

Emily shakes her head adamantly.

EMILY

(Crying)

I'm not leaving. No way.

JEFF

Dad, don't go in there, please.

BILL

I don't have time for this. Just do it!

Bill slams the car door shut and rushes towards the house. He pauses at the edge of the steps. The heat is intense.

Suddenly the family room windows explode outward from the heat. He instinctively covers his face as the glass flies all around him. Blood begins to run down his forehead. Flames begin to crawl out the window frames and roll up the front of the house. He takes a last look back at

the SUV and can see the terrified faces of his children through the flames reflecting off the windshield. He lifts the collar of his t-shirt over his nose and mouth and rushes through the door clutching the rifle in his free hand.

INT. HOUSE--NIGHT

With the flames licking the entry door jamb, Bill, face half covered, charges through the open door. Down the hallway, near the opening to the kitchen, he sees a blurry flash of white.

Bill-eyes watering and blurry from smoke-struggles to keep moving. He sees movement ahead at the end of the hallway. A silhouette begins to form in the bathroom doorway. Bill rubs his eyes. The form takes shape as he moves closer. The chanting begins again, growing louder with each forced step until all other sounds are blocked out.

INT. BATHROOM--NIGHT

Terri can see a shadowy figure approaching down the hall through the dense smoke. The figure of a man dressed in twenties style clothing clutching a rifle.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY--NIGHT

The medicine man, his face a mask of malevolent hate, smoke swirling around him, appears in the bathroom doorway. Bill raises the rifle.

INT. BATHROOM--NIGHT

Terri sees the man raise the rifle.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY--NIGHT

The medicine man dissipates in a swirl of smoke as Terri charges through the door.

Bill squeezes the trigger.

Terri slams into Bill as the crack of the gunshot fills the hallway. They go down in a heap on the floor.

TERRI
(Screams)
Run, baby.

Samantha dashes passed them and out the front door.

Terri is up first and struggles after her.

EXT. HOUSE--NIGHT

Terri reaches the porch as Samantha reaches the car. The door opens. Samantha is pulled inside. Terri stumbles down the steps.

INT. HOUSE--NIGHT

Bill is on all fours, coughing. Using the rifle, he pushes himself to his feet. Disoriented, he squints through watery eyes and trudges towards the front door.

EXT. HOUSE--NIGHT

Bill staggers onto the front porch. Terri is nearly at the car. Their eyes make contact. He raises the rifle.

TERRI
(Screams)

Noooo.

He spins left as the rifle comes up. The crack of the gunshot echos through the forest as the mountain lion leaps over the rail and collides with him.

Terri rushes to the porch. Bill is laying beneath the dead animal.

The house is totally engulfed in flames.

Bill opens his eyes. A large crow lands the porch rail. Bill makes a gun with his fingers and mock shoots the bird. It flies off into the darkness.

Headlights can be seen in the distance, moving up the mountain road.

FADE OUT