

TIME CAPSULE

Written by

Michael L. Fawcett

1861 9TH STREET, UNIT B
Los Osos, CA 93402
mfawcett@calpoly.edu
(805) 534-1229

FADE IN:

EXT. TOWN - DAY

Attractive buildings and homes nestle among rolling hills.

EXT. LARGE PARK - DAY

Two kids with backpacks cross the park.

ASH WORTH (11) and his sister ARIEL (almost 16). Both are very bright; he's cautious, she, daring.

ARIEL

Mom's probably not coming back. Get used to the idea.

ASH

Some days I don't even miss her.

ARIEL

She regretted having you, and she certainly never wanted to have me.

(looks at Ash)

I was a mistake.

ASH

I thought women wanted to be mothers.

ARIEL

She wasn't happy with us. She wanted another life.

ASH

What'd we ever do to her?

ARIEL

Obviously not the right thing or she would never have left us.

ASH

She didn't look unhappy to me.

ARIEL

Things aren't always what they seem, Ash

ASH

Tell me about it.

ARIEL
Let's stop by the building.

EXT. REMAINS OF RECENTLY RAZED BRICK BUILDING - DAY

Ash and Ariel stand looking at the rubble.

ARIEL
Dad remembers when this was the
library.

ASH
Why'd they tear it down?

ARIEL
Something's old tear it down. Lots
of people think like that.

She walks to the edge of the rubble.

ASH
You can't go in there.

ARIEL
Says who?

She walks quickly into the rubble.

Ash follows her reluctantly.

They poke around.

Ariel picks up an old floppy hat, holds it to her head, and
makes a funny face.

Ash heaves a brick as if it were a shot.

He bends over.

Works at something.

Then stands.

ASH
Look at this!

He holds up a brass canister.

ASH (CONT'D)
Under some bricks.

Ariel looks around them.

ARIEL
Quick. Put it in your backpack.

ASH
But it's not ours.

ARIEL
It is now.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

A modest two-story house but of noble design on an attractive street.

INT. HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM - DAY

The room shouts that an interesting, intelligent and curious family lives here.

A microscope stands on a carpenter's table surrounded by mineral specimens, plants, etc.

A globe has its own stand as does an unabridged dictionary.

Books line wall shelves or fill stand-alone cases.

On the wall are prints of expressionist paintings among which is, say, Franz Marc's 1911 Blue Fox.

Ash retrieves the canister from his backpack and places it on the carpenter's table.

ASH
A policeman knocks on our door I'm
telling him you told me to put it
in my backpack.

ARIEL
A coward dies a thousand deaths.

ASH
I'm not a coward, and people only
die once.

ARIEL
Never mind.

Ariel takes the canister in her hands and looks at it carefully.

ARIEL (CONT'D)
I bet this is a time capsule!

ASH
Like they put in new buildings?

ARIEL
We should open it.

ASH
We don't know what could be in
there.

ARIEL
You're such a chicken, Ash.

She raps the lid on the table.

ARIEL (CONT'D)
Should twist off.

She tries, without success, to unscrew it.

Ash opens a drawer of the table and takes out a propane
torch.

ASH
(trying to be game)
We'll heat the lid. It'll expand.

He lights the torch with a striker.

Applies the blue flame to the lid.

Ariel places a folded cloth over the lid.

She gives a big twist and it comes loose.

The kids' excitement is palpable.

Ash looks warily into the canister.

Ariel gently shakes it and a number of items slide onto the
table.

She reaches into it and pulls out a roll of photos, a
newspaper, etc.

As Ariel sorts through the contents, Ash positions them
neatly upon the table.

SMALL VIALS

ARIEL
Look like seeds.

ASH

Stupid thing to put in a time capsule.

NEWSPAPER

ARIEL

A March 1917 edition of the Fairview Morning Star. Has an article about World War I.

LETTER

ARIEL (CONT'D)

A letter "From the people of Fairview to the people of Fairview." Might prove interesting.

SMALL AMERICAN FLAG

ASH

Another stupid thing to put in.

Ash fits its little staff into a crack in the table so that the flag stands erect.

Both kids suddenly put their hands mockingly over their hearts as if about to say the Pledge of Allegiance.

COINS

ARIEL

Indian head pennies.

ASH

I want pieces of eight not pennies!

PHOTOS

The 8 x 10 photos are curled tight from being in the canister.

Ariel flattens one against the table.

INSERT PHOTO

Three men stand in front of the newly-erected building, now razed, that held the time capsule.

ARIEL'S VOICE

Bet one of these men was the mayor of Fairview.

BACK TO SCENE

DRAWSTRING BAG

Ariel picks up the bag.

ARIEL
God this thing's heavy!

She hands it to Ash.

ASH
Whoa!

He gives it back to Ariel.

She opens the bag and takes out a metallic item shaped like a small boomerang.

ARIEL
This was important to someone or they wouldn't have put it in the time capsule.

ASH
Seeds and a flag were important?

INT. CARPENTER'S TABLE - DAY

PAUL WORTH (40), reliable, principled, sits holding the metallic "boomerang" in his hand.

Ash and Ariel stand on either side of him.

PAUL
Ya got me, kids. I've no idea what this is. Appears no one knew there was a time capsule in the Franklin building.

He holds up the photo of the three men.

PAUL (CONT'D)
The building went up in 1920. Newspaper of that era would no doubt have an article about it and perhaps reference the time capsule. Tell us who these three gentlemen are. Even solve the mystery of this boomerang thing.

ARIEL

The library has the Morning Star on microfilm.

PAUL

I'll take a look before I head over to campus.

Ash takes a step toward his father.

ASH

Mom's not coming back is she?

Paul looks at Ash for a long moment.

PAUL

I don't think so.

ARIEL

Couldn't she at least write? It's been six months.

PAUL

Her letter said she wanted a clean break. She probably has a job in Chicago by now.

ARIEL

(sarcastic)

Teaching pre-World War I German Expressionism?

PAUL

Your mother is a resourceful woman, Ariel.

ASH

I hate her sometimes.

PAUL

We'll be okay. We're a little shaky now. Like a three-legged table.

ASH

You mean we could tip over.

PAUL

We'll be okay.

INT. DINING ROOM - TABLE - DAY

Paul, BILL LANDING (50), African-American, a brilliant physicist, and JACK WONG (22), his able Research Assistant, sit at the table.

Bill holds the boomerang before his eyes.

BILL

Damned if I know what this is.

JACK

Its weight/size ratio tells me its a solid piece of carbon steel, Dr. Landing.

PAUL

Then why place it in a time capsule? Carbon steel was being produced during World War I.

JACK

So were seeds and little American flags.

BILL

No indication of a seam.

PAUL

(droll)

So it could fold out like a Swiss army knife?

Jack takes the boomerang.

He pores over it with a magnifying glass.

JACK

I'm no metallurgist but this looks like an incredibly high quality carbon alloy.

BILL

Seems heavier than steel.

JACK

Run that file over it again, Dr. Worth.

Paul picks up a file.

Jack hands him the boomerang.

Paul draws the file over it and holds it out for everyone to see.

Bill cranes his neck for a close look.

BILL
Hardly a scratch.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

HAMBURGER PATTIES

SIZZLE in a skillet.

Ash empties a bag of potato chips into a bowl.

Ariel slices a tomato.

PAUL
Who wants a cheeseburger?

ARIEL
Oh, yeah.

ASH
Me too.

Paul places a slice of cheese onto each patty.

PAUL
Found two articles on the Franklin building. FYI librarian says they have another newspaper from back then as well.

Ariel places sliced tomatoes and onions alongside toasted buns on a platter.

PAUL (CONT'D)
The three men in the photo are Mayor Otis Pendleton and city fathers Cletus Gifford and Cyrus Bowers.

INSERT - PHOTO

ASH'S VOICE
City fathers?

ARIEL'S VOICE
Mucky-mucks.

BACK TO SCENE

ASH
Mucky-mucks?

ARIEL
(impatient)
Important people.

PAUL
Miss Pearl's a fount of information
about Fairview history. Says a
descendant of Cletus Gifford still
lives here.

ASH
She hissed at me the last time I
was in the library studying.

ARIEL
Talking non-stop I bet.

INT. DINING ROOM - LATER

The kids serve themselves baked beans from a bowl.

Ariel holds up a jar of pickles to Ash, as she always does
this when they have hamburgers.

ARIEL
Pickles?

ASH
(vomit gesture)
Earp!

Paul looks at notes beside his plate.

PAUL
Editor and publisher of the Morning
Star was C. Stephen Peters. No
descendants in the area according
to Miss Pearl.

ARIEL
What about the time capsule?

Paul runs a finger down his notes.

PAUL
(re: notes)
Article mentions the capsule and
that it contained a letter from the
people of Fairview to the people of
Fairview. And...

He looks at Ariel and then at Ash.

Holds up photocopy and reads from it.

PAUL (CONT'D)

"Just before the time capsule was sealed in the foundation, Victor "Goosey" Vandever came forward to place into the canister one of the metal objects he recently found along Silver Creek."

ASH

Goosey?

PAUL

Seems he was the town eccentric.

ARIEL

Like J.J. "Loonie" Loomis who dances in the park.

ASH

Metal objects. So he found more than one.

ARIEL

Ash Worth, pre-teen detective.

PAUL

I calculate Goosey found our boomerang in late February of 1917.

ASH

A hundred years ago.

ARIEL

So we're keeping it?

PAUL

I'll drop off the capsule at City Hall on Monday. We'll hang onto the boomerang until we figure out what it is.

ARIEL

We might never. Bill and Jack didn't have a clue.

PAUL

Well get this. Miss Pearl said Victor "Goosey" Vandever has a great, great grand daughter lives not far from town.

ARIEL

Maybe she'll know something about
the boomerang.

PAUL

Paying her a visit tomorrow.

ASH

Can we come? Tomorrow's Saturday.

ARIEL

If you eat a pickle.

Ash gives her a face.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - GRAVEL ROAD - DAY

Paul stops the car off on the shoulder.

He and the kids look through the car windows.

They see a well-maintained house with a spill of lawn.

Paul pulls the car into the driveway.

On the lawn are pink flamingos and jigsaw-cut pieces of 1 x
12's brightly painted to look like a sow and three piglets
chasing after her.

Other gizmos like windmills and weather vanes move slowly in
the breeze.

Ash and Ariel run their eyes over the lawn.

ARIEL

This woman could be crazy, dad.

EXT. HOUSE - FRONT DOOR

Paul knocks softly while the kids examine the kitschy
eccentricities of the yard.

No answer.

PAUL

Go around back.

EXT. BACKYARD

There's more lawn and a garden.

A WOMAN (35) kneels by a row of plants, her back to them.

Paul and the kids approach her.

PAUL
Ms. Vandevere?

The woman starts.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Sorry, I didn't mean to --

The woman stands up.

MS. VANDEVEER
Never you mind, it's all right.

She's tall and even though she wears overalls, a large-brimmed sun hat and a handkerchief tied around her neck, she's sexy.

She takes her gloves off and extends a hand.

MS. VANDEVEER (CONT'D)
Cherise Vandevere.

She speaks with a country twang.

PAUL
Paul Worth. My kids Ariel and Ash.

Looks the kids in the eye when she shakes their hand.

CHERISE (MS. VANDEVEER)
I bet you two are the smartest in your class.

ASH
My teacher said I had --

PAUL
Not now, Ash.

ARIEL
What are you doing in your garden?

CHERISE
Diggin' potatoes to fry for breakfast.

ASH
Could we help?

CHERISE

If you stay and eat 'em.

INT. HOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY

The four eat breakfast at a large table.

The walls and bureaus of the room are covered with all manner of found "things"--rocks, bones, reeds, pine cones, etc.

Here and there sit quartz crystals, piles of books, etc.

On a sideboard stand Vandever family photos.

On the walls a mishmash of art reproductions among which is a beautiful oil painting of a vase of flowers.

ASH

Fried potatoes, eggs, sausage, biscuits, and orange juice. A real country breakfast.

CHERISE

Come into the country of a mornin' you're apt to run into a country breakfast.

PAUL

Neglected to tell you why we're here.

CHERISE

Reckoned you'd get to it sooner or later.

Cherise accidentally knocks over the salt shaker.

She quickly takes a pinch of spilled salt and tosses it over her shoulder.

Ariel and Ash can't take their eyes off her.

CHERISE (CONT'D)

I know it looks silly. But if I didn't do it it'd be on me like a sunburn for the rest of the day.

Ariel indicates a painting on the wall.

ARIEL

Did you paint that vase of flowers?

CHERISE

I did.

ARIEL

It's beautiful. If you aren't a professional artist, you should be.

CHERISE

Guess I'm a low output artist.

ASH

How do you make your living?

PAUL

Ash...

CHERISE

My daddy left me comfortable when he died.

ASH

You married?

PAUL

Ash...

CHERISE

It's okay, Paul.

Cherise takes a sip of coffee.

CHERISE (CONT'D)

No.

ARIEL

Why not?

Paul shakes his head, giving up.

CHERISE

'Cause I don't like cities and the menfolk of Fairview County got narrow minds and pointy heads.

She looks at Paul.

CHERISE (CONT'D)

Present company excluded.

ASH

Our mother ran off to Chicago.

ARIEL

Ash Worth!

CHERISE

I'm sorry.

PAUL

Let's just say it's been a trying
time for all of us.

CHERISE

I understand.

(nibbles toast)

So what brings you three city
fellers out to the country.

PAUL

The kids found a time capsule in
the ruins of a recently razed
building in Fairview.

CHERISE

My stars!

Paul takes the drawstring bag from his pocket and puts it on
the table.

PAUL

This was in the capsule. Your
great, great grandfather Victor put
it there almost a century ago.

Cherise regards the bag intently for a beat.

Then quickly opens it and takes out the boomerang.

She stares at it in disbelief.

ARIEL

Something wrong?

She abruptly gets up and goes into another room.

Paul and the kids exchange questioning looks.

Cherise returns with a decorated tin container.

She opens it, takes out something and places it on the table.

An identical boomerang.

No one says anything for several beats.

CHERISE

Goosey found nine of these along
Silver Creek.

PAUL
Know where exactly?

Cherise takes a folded paper from the tin.

She unfolds it onto the table.

CHERISE
This is a photocopy of a map he
drew.

ASH
Our friend Bill's a physicist he's
got no idea what it is.

ARIEL
D'you know what it is?

Cherise hesitates for a couple of beats.

CHERISE
We're all in the dark about this
thing.

She gets up, gathers some plates, and starts to head for the
kitchen.

Stops and turns.

CHERISE (CONT'D)
Looks like it's gonna be a group
effort.

LOUD KNOCKS on the kitchen door.

MAN'S VOICE
Do I smell breakfast in there?

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

Cherise returns to the dining room followed by TOMMY (30) and
RAY ANN CROWLEY (29). Tommy is lank and wiry. Ray Ann on the
heavy side. The couple is hard-core country.

RAY ANN
Didn't mean to butt in on ya'll's
breakfast.

CHERISE
My neighbors Tommy and Ray Ann
Crowley. Paul Worth and his
children Ariel and Ash.

Tommy comes over and pumps Paul's hand.

TOMMY (MAN)

Honor to meet any friend of
Cherise's.

RAY ANN

Brung you another dozen eggs,
darlin'. And we got your mower in
the truck. We're on the way to the
hardware.

TOMMY

Ours gotta cross-threaded plug.

RAY ANN

Tommy's puttin' in some floorin'
needs to get him a come-a-long.

TOMMY

Before you say anything about
breakfast, Cherise, we're shit and
fed and rarin' to git on down the
road.

EXT. PICKUP - DAY

Paul and Tommy lift the lawn mower from the back of the
truck.

A cigarette dangles from Tommy's mouth.

TOMMY

Bass bitin' up at Dawn Lake.
Thought we'd go up later. You fish,
Paul?

PAUL

Only for compliments.

TOMMY

(oblivious)
Have any luck I'll drop a couple
off on the way back, Cherise.
(squints through smoke)
Gut 'em for ya of course.

CHERISE

That'd be nice, Tommy.

EXT. PICKUP - DAY

Tommy and Ray Ann are in their truck.

Tommy fires up the engine and the tailpipe emits a blue cloud.

TOMMY

Nice meetin' you folks.

Ray Ann waves her fingers.

Tommy drives off.

They watch the truck raise dust on the gravel road.

CHERISE

Simple couple. Nice as can be.

INT/EXT. CAR - DAY

Paul heads back to Fairview over the gravel road.

The kids sit quietly in the back seat.

The car turns off the gravel road onto a paved road.

ASH

Potatoes just out of the ground are better than supermarket potatoes.

ARIEL

Cherise is a cool woman. Paints. Curious about everything. She's her own person for sure.

PAUL

I detect a seed of doubt.

ARIEL

There's something not right about her.

ASH

Farm eggs're better than city eggs too.

PAUL

glances at the rearview mirror.

His expression says Ariel's as perceptive as he believes her to be.

EXT. RETIREMENT HOME - DAY

A sign reads "HARTFORD ARMS".

Paul quickly goes up the steps and into the building.

EXT. PATIO AREA - DAY

Paul sits near a wrought iron table.

A nurse pushes a wheelchair out onto the patio and over to him.

In it sits a very old man, a blanket around his shoulders.

He has a canula.

NURSE

This is Randall Gifford, Dr. Worth.

At the mention of his name, the old man seems to jerk to life.

The nurse goes back into the building.

PAUL

Pleased to meet you, Mr. Gifford.

Gifford looks stiffly back over his shoulder.

Produces a pack of cigarettes and a small plastic lighter from underneath the blanket.

GIFFORD

Damn scold of a nurse.

His shaky hand lights a cigarette.

PAUL

You're not going to catch fire I hope.

GIFFORD

(waving cigarette)

Only thing I'll catch is hell she sees me.

PAUL

A question, Mr. Gifford.

GIFFORD

Randall. Nurse said you wanted to know something about Cletus Gifford.

PAUL

Found a photo of Cletus, Cyrus Bowers, and Mayor Otis Pendleton taken during the Franklin Building dedication back in 1920.

GIFFORD

Cletus was my great grandfather. Never laid eyes on him. Only thing sticks in my mind's my dad telling me he died in an insane asylum.

PAUL

Name "Goosey" Vanderveer mean anything?

Gifford emits a gargle-y laugh, blows smoke, and looks very pleased.

GIFFORD

"Goosey" Vanderveer. I can see him still. Always walked kinda crooked. Like he was looking for something off to one side.

(beat)

I was just a kid.

PAUL

Found some weird metal things along Silver Creek.

GIFFORD

You're too young to know that.

PAUL

His great, great granddaughter told me about them.

GIFFORD

He'd show one of them things to any kid willing to risk a long-winded account how he come by it.

PAUL

Ever tell you what he thought they were?

GIFFORD

He showed me one I said it musta
come out of the old smelter used to
be out on Banning Road.

He flicks ash onto the patio.

GIFFORD (CONT'D)

"Smelter my ass,' Goosey said.
"Found them out on Silver Creek."

PAUL

How old was he then?

GIFFORD

Old. Died soon after. Don't think
he knew what them things was. But
he thought they was real special.
Used to say "bring me a piece a
metal looks like this give you a
silver dollar."

PAUL

Anything else?

GIFFORD

Kid asked him where on the creek he
found them. Said he wouldn't go out
there anymore.

(leans toward Paul)

Swore last two times he did someone
or some thing was watchin' him.

INT. HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM - DAY

Paul, in coat and tie, prepares to leave for campus.

Sorts papers, putting some in his briefcase.

DOORBELL RINGS.

INT. VESTIBULE - FRONT DOOR

Paul opens the door.

Cherise stands at the threshold.

She wears jeans and a flannel shirt with the sleeves rolled
up above her forearms.

Her head is bare.

Hands Paul a paper bag.

CHERISE

Potatoes.

(beat)

Hope you don't mind my dropping by.

Paul's face lights up.

PAUL

What a pleasant surprise! Come in.

CHERISE

(flirty)

I wasn't in the neighborhood. Drove straight over from my house.

Cherise enters.

They walk down the hall to the family room.

CHERISE (CONT'D)

Classes today?

PAUL

How do you know I have classes?

CHERISE

You're all over the internet.

PAUL

Don't leave for a quarter of an hour. Coffee?

CHERISE

Please. Cream and sugar.

Paul goes into the kitchen.

Cherise takes in all the items of the family room.

Paul returns with the coffee.

She takes the cup and walks over to the time capsule on the carpenter's table.

CHERISE (CONT'D)

So this is where Victor put one of his shiny things...

PAUL

Strange damn things.

CHERISE

Can we keep the boomerangs among ourselves?

Paul gives her a two-finger salute.

PAUL

Loose lips sink ships.

CHERISE

Thanks.

She turns and begins to study the Expressionist paintings.

CHERISE (CONT'D)

Everyone adores the Impressionists. Expressionism is edgier.

PAUL

My wife's crazy for Pre-World War I German Expressionism. Even taught a couple of classes at the university.

CHERISE

(re: Blue Fox)

I love the color and simplicity of this one.

PAUL

Blue Fox. Franz Marc. 1911. Her favorite.

CHERISE

Not to pry, Paul... are you all going to be okay?

PAUL

Time will solve this and eventually reveal its inevitability.

CHERISE

She's working in Chicago?

PAUL

We don't know for sure.

CHERISE

No word from her?

PAUL

Constance looks out for Constance.

Cherise leans back against the table.

CHERISE
You teach anthropology.

PAUL
Perspectives on Human Evolution and
Anthropological Theory to be exact.
Also a Fieldwork seminar.

CHERISE
Ph.D.

Paul nods his head.

PAUL
You on a typical day?

CHERISE
Putter around the house, in the
garden. Always have two books
going. A heavy one and a light one.
A little cooking. And, I'm afraid,
even less painting.

PAUL
How is it I've never seen you in
town?

CHERISE
I'm here once or twice a week.

PAUL
Not at a movie, a concert or a
lecture on campus, at Trader Joe's
or any other --

CHERISE
Oscar nominee Gordon Brady lived in
Fairview for two years. I never
once saw him. Did you?

PAUL
Gordon Brady would be easier to
overlook than you.

Cherise walks along the carpenter table and runs her fingers
over the items there.

She turns to Paul.

CHERISE
You and your kids, me, we like
dragging stuff into the house.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - GRAVEL ROAD - DAY

Paul, Ariel, Ash, Bill Landing and his R. A. Jack Wong walk along the road.

Jack rests a metal detector on his shoulder.

Ash clutches a fold-up army shovel.

Bill's SUV is parked in the b.g.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

The group wends its way through a forest of large trees.

BILL
Got a map you say.

JACK
Streams change course over a
hundred years.

PAUL
Outcrops don't move.

ARIEL
Dad, think we'll find more
boomerangs?

PAUL
Six of us we might.

ASH
Bet Goosey Vandever never had a
metal detector.

BILL
Metal detector shortens the odds.

ASH
Mr. Gifford said some thing or some
one was watching Goosey last time
he came out here.

JACK
(pointing)
There's the stream

EXT. STREAM - DAY

The group stands by the stream.

It's moderately wide and gurgles through a bed of rocks.

Paul studies the map.

PAUL

Outcrop's a hundred yards upstream.

Ash looks around him, a worried expression on his face.

ARIEL

No one's been waiting a hundred years for you to come looking for a boomerang.

ASH

We can't figure out the boomerangs which probably means they're important to someone we don't know who.

BILL

Ash may have something there.

JACK

How long were the boomerangs here before Goosey found them?

BILL

Were they lost, discarded or placed here?

PAUL'S VOICE

There it is.

Across the stream looms a large outcrop.

EXT. STREAM - DAY

One by one the group begins to cross the stream, carefully stepping from one rock to another.

Bill loses his footing and steps momentarily into the stream, drenching his legs above the knee.

BILL

Damn that's cold!

JACK

Am I responsible for you, Dr. Landing?

BILL

Can you carry me on your shoulders?

EXT. STREAM BANK - DAY

The group is safely across the stream.

Paul shields his eyes from the sun and aligns his sight with the outcrop.

PAUL

Goosey wants me to align the cleft
in the outcrop with the highest
point of that mountain further
west.

(beat)

There I've got it.

Paul takes out a compass and holds it in front of him.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Follow me until we're thirty yards
from the rock.

He walks quickly toward the outcrop, glancing at the compass every few seconds.

The others follow.

EXT. OUTCROP - DAY

The group stands near the outcrop.

Jack walks along slowly waving the metal detector in front of him.

PAUL

Looks to be an area, oh, thousand
yards square.

Ash shadows Jack unfolded shovel at the ready.

EXT. SEARCH AREA - LATER

Jack walks more slowly as he continues to wave the detector.

Ash dogs him but now rests the shovel on a shoulder.

DETECTOR begins to BEEP LOUDLY.

Jack stops and indicates where Ash should dig.

Ash quickly uncovers something.

Sound of the SHOVEL STRIKING METAL.

He stoops down.

Holds something up.

It's a badly rusted revolver.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

The group, discouragement in their step, has crossed the stream and is returning to the SUV.

Ash holds the revolver, brandishing it at times as if he were going to fire it.

BILL

Did anyone really expect another boomerang?

ARIEL

Goosey must of gone over the area with a fine-tooth comb.

JACK

Say... Looks like a boomerang maybe it is a boomerang.

Ariel removes the boomerang from the pocket of her jacket.

ARIEL

Want me to give it a toss?

PAUL

Not too far. Let's not lose the only one we have.

Ariel executes a slow, exaggerated windup and throws the "boomerang."

Suddenly, in a flash, the small mass turns into a wasp-like drone that hovers for a second, then flits over to Jack, shooting him between the eyes.

Jack falls like a sack of potatoes.

The others run for the closest trees

BILL

Get behind a tree!

As each person finds a tree, the drone fires several times, just missing them.

The drone flits around the tree where Ash is hiding and shoots, hitting him in the upper arm.

As this happens Paul comes up behind the drone and throws his jacket over it.

Unable to "see" the drone veers this way and that.

Everyone takes advantage of the drone's momentary inability to fulfill its duty as a killing machine.

They make a mad dash for the SUV.

EXT. SUV - DAY

Everyone reaches the SUV and clambers in.

Bill fires up the engine and roars off kicking up a rooster tail of gravel.

INT. SUV

Every one AD LIBS their consternation at the same time.

Ash grimaces and holds his injured arm.

ARIEL

Be quite! Let me look at Ash's arm.

Suddenly it's totally quite in the SUV except for the RACING ENGINE and TIRES MASHING through GRAVEL.

Ariel looks at Ash's arm.

ARIEL (CONT'D)

The ray or whatever just went through the fleshy part of his upper arm. Don't think it hit anything vital.

PAUL

You okay, son?

Ash quickly realizes his special status as a casualty of The Drone Wars.

ASH

Stings like the devil... but I'll be okay.

He holds a stoic expression to his face.

BILL

What in God's name will I tell
Jack's parents?

ARIEL

Blink of an eye the boomerang
becomes a killer drone.

BILL

Jack never knew what hit him.

PAUL

Thank god for the trees or we could
all have been killed.

ARIEL

Dad, the jacket on the drone was so
James Bond.

INT. SOMEWHERE - DAY

A hand holds a cellphone.

A message on the cellphone reads: "A personal defense DRONE
has deployed. 10/10/16 10:39 a.m. PST 4 24.2029, 2 10.4418."

An unintelligible oath registers the MYSTERY PERSON'S
reaction to the message.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Paul and a DEPUTY SHERIFF stand in the trees where the drone
attack occurred.

Close by lie Jack Wong's remains in a body bag.

Three ambulance attendants heft the bag into a rescue litter.

They lift the litter and head quickly back toward the road.

Deputy takes out his field note pad with evident reluctance.

DEPUTY

Like something outta those low
budget sci-fi films on late-night
TV.

(beat)

Drones? I know you're a professor
and all... But this --

PAUL

A drone wasp, size of a basketball.

DEPUTY
(looking around)
So where is it? If it couldn't see
it couldn't got far.

PAUL
(losing patience)
Maybe it switched to automatic
pilot.

DEPUTY
Mr. Wong's wound appears consistent
with that of a round from a .22
rifle. Forensics'll give us a
better idea.

PAUL
A stray bullet hits Jack smack
between the eyes while he's
surrounded by trees?

DEPUTY
Which cause of death sounds more
logical, Dr. Worth?

PAUL
What about my son's wounded arm?

DEPUTY
I'll get a copy of the Fairview
Police report.

PAUL
Look. If this is going to the local
paper I'm fine with saying damage
was probably due to errant hunting
rounds. We don't need the citizens
of Fairview thinking there's been
an alien invasion.

Deputy is glad to drop the topic of drones.

PAUL (CONT'D)
But there's something you need to
do, Deputy Davis.

DEPUTY
What is that, Dr. Worth?

PAUL
Tell the wing commander at the
airbase my version of the drone
attack. A Colonel Martin.

(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)
Fair enough? Let him take it from
there. Talk to me if they want.

DEPUTY
Yeah, guess that's the smartest
thing to do under the
circumstances.

He weighs a thought; decides to go with it.

DEPUTY (CONT'D)
Say, that Billings boy lives way
out yonder with his mother builds
drones.

PAUL
Ever kill a person with one?

DEPUTY
Just hobby drones. Though he got
cited once for flying too close to
the dam reservoir --
(chuckles)
-- the reservoir dam.

PAUL
I'll give a holler.

DEPUTY
Real weird fella. Ma's even
weirder.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - GRAVEL ROAD - DAY

Paul gets out of his car.

EXT. HOUSE - GRAVEL DRIVEWAY

It has a decidedly neglected look.

Paul crunches up the driveway.

EXT. DOOR

He knocks.

The door opens.

CORA BILLINGS (50), dowdy and eccentric, wears, say, camo
pants, a Nehru jacket and a baseball cap.

Has a milk shake in her hand.

CORA

If it's about the electric check's
in the mail.

PAUL

I'm here to see Edward.

CORA

(amused)

He fly one of his drones through
your window?

PAUL

Some questions about drones.

She holds out the milk shake.

CORA

There's more in the blender.

PAUL

Just had breakfast.

CORA

Acorn squash shakes. Drink 'em all
through the fall.

PAUL

Where is Edward, Mrs. Billings?

CORA

Cora.

PAUL

Cora.

CORA

Edward can be smart as what was his
name?

(beat)

Einstein. Smart as Einstein.

PAUL

Understand he builds drones.

CORA

Social-wise an odd ball. Couldn't
hold a job mucking out horse
stalls. Don't know where he gets
that. His daddy was a pretty normal
guy.

PAUL
Was?

CORA
Tractor rolled on 'im March'll make
it two years.

PAUL
Sorry.

CORA
Live one step ahead of the wolf
ever since.

PAUL
Is Edward about?

CORA
Flyin' a drone in the field behind
the house what else is new.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

EDWARD BILLINGS (25), tall, thin, nerdy, holds the flight
controller for a drone.

The drone hovers one-hundred feet in the air.

As Paul approaches him, Edward lands the drone expertly
between them.

Edward is shy and twitchy.

EDWARD
Ever seen a drone before?

PAUL
This is the second one.

EDWARD
Quad-copter.

The drone looks like a four-propeller helicopter.

PAUL
You built it?

EDWARD
I did.

PAUL
How much you don't mind my asking?

EDWARD

Seven-hundred dollars builds a really nice platform.

PAUL

I've taken a keen interest in drones of late.

EDWARD

Drones is all I do.

PAUL

I wasn't aware hobbyists fly them.

Edward relaunches the drone.

EDWARD

Technically drones are UAVs. Unmanned Aerial Vehicles. You know one in every three U.S. Air Force aircraft is now a UAV?

PAUL

The drone I saw was small and shot a laser beam of some sort.

Edward now looks at Paul out of the corner of his eye, as if trying to ascertain who this person is and what he may be full of.

EDWARD

First targeted killing by a drone was in Afghanistan 2002.

(changes subject)

I abhor violence.

PAUL

Me too. Especially when I'm the target.

EDWARD

Hobby drones date back to the Ninties.

PAUL

Can't fly a drone just anywhere, right?

EDWARD

Keep it within eyeshot and below four-hundred feet. At least five miles from an airport.

PAUL
How fast?

EDWARD
Maybe fifty knots.

PAUL
Yours have a camera?

EDWARD
Most of them.

PAUL
How many you got?

EDWARD
Twenty.

PAUL
(droll)
Starting up a surveillance company?

EDWARD
Your drone got a camera you can't get closer than two-hundred feet to a person or a building. Nor within four-hundred feet of congested areas, you know, concerts, sporting events.

PAUL
How small do military drones get?

EDWARD
Drone they call a Raven. Launch it from your hand. Sends back video of where ever it goes.

PAUL
But it's not armed...

EDWARD
(re: his drone)
Military has drones armed and dangerous the size of mine.

Edward quickly pilots the drone toward the field.

He's now convinced Paul's on the level.

EDWARD (CONT'D)
I'm Edward.

PAUL
Paul Worth.

They shake hands.

EDWARD
Come back to the house with me?

EXT. WORKSHOP - DAY

A recently remodeled workshop stands behind the Billings's house.

Edward leads Paul up to the door.

They enter.

INT. WORKSHOP

An extended work bench runs along three walls.

Drones and their attendant equipment are everywhere.

Tools hang on racks, materials are neatly stacked, etc.

Paul is impressed.

PAUL
This is Drone Central!

Edward is unused to praise.

EDWARD
Always got a new one in progress.

PAUL
You're basically an aerial
photographer who stays on the
ground.

Edward snorts a laugh.

EDWARD
Here's what I do.

Puts a DVD into a large monitor.

A video begins to play.

INSERT VIDEO MONITOR

On the monitor a video, with musical accompaniment, shot from a drone piloted by Edward:

E.g. We soar above a town.

Orbit a flag high on its pole.

Drop down into a city park and cruise along a pathway at eye level, passing beneath trees, and then back into the sky.

Hover over the checkered pattern of buildings.

Then begin a slow spin that turns the buildings into a kaleidoscope.

And so on until the end of the video.

BACK TO SCENE

Paul registers a newly-found respect for Edward.

PAUL
You're an artist!

Edward wears his pride awkwardly.

EDWARD
I call it "Aerial Ballet No. 4".

DISSOLVE:

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

A WOMAN in an overcoat comes out of a store.

She begins to walk down the street.

TALL MAN

across street on cell phone watches her.

TALL MAN
The brown overcoat.

SHORT MAN

standing near store puts cell phone in his pocket.

He catches up to the woman.

SHORT MAN
(holding up purse)
Excuse me, ma'am. This yours?

The woman turns and sees the purse.

WOMAN
No, it's not mine.

The woman continues walking.

The man catches up to her again.

She turns, annoyed.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
I said it's not --

He sticks her with something through the sleeve of her coat.

The woman looks at him perplexed and teeters for a minute.

SHORT MAN
Let me help you.

He takes the woman by the arm.

She doesn't resist but walks along with the man somewhat unsteadily.

The man guides her into a coffee shop.

INT. COFFEE SHOP

The man helps the woman sit at a table.

The woman looks at him in apparent euphoria.

WOMAN
What did you --

SHORT MAN
Don't talk.

The woman breathes slowly. She's been walloped with something.

WOMAN
You sound far away.

SHORT MAN
Right here beside you, ma'am.

WOMAN
(carefully)
Am I getting a colonoscopy?

SHORT MAN
 (smiles)
 Sit a moment.

SOUND of a CAR STOPPING in front of coffee shop.

EXT./INT. COFFEE SHOP

A late model sedan waits at the curb.

SHORT MAN'S VOICE
 Our ride's here, Mrs. Worth.

INT. VESTIBULE - FRONT DOOR - DAY

Paul enters his house.

Ariel meets him in the hall.

ARIEL
 (hushed)
 A man's in the living room.

PAUL
 From the airbase?

ARIEL
 S'what he says. Right out of a spy
 movie.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Paul enters the living room.

He sees a man, GRUNDY, (60) slouched in an arm chair, wearing
 a rumpled trench coat.

His overweight, phlegmatic persona belies a quick mind.

As introduction he flops open a wallet badge.

MAN
 Grundy. Investigations. U.S. Air
 Force.

Paul sits opposite him.

PAUL
 How do you do, Mr. Grundy.

Grundy speaks slowly as if his words are heavy on his tongue.

GRUNDY (MAN)

Read Deputy Davis's report. Didn't disabuse the Deputy of any doubts he has about what happened. No reason to alarm the fair citizens of Fairview.

(beat)

Recommended he enroll in a remedial spelling class.

PAUL

What can you tell me about all this?

GRUNDY

That a few of us knew of these strange metal objects. But we didn't know what they were.

PAUL

Ever see one?

GRUNDY

Not one.

PAUL

Then how do you know about them?

GRUNDY

Mr. Worth, I came to ask you questions.

He unwraps a stick of gum and puts it in his mouth.

GRUNDY (CONT'D)

You damn well know the rock we're up against. Something a hundred years old deploys into a weapon out of a sci-fi film.

PAUL

Obsessed with killing us all.

GRUNDY

Lucky there was only one casualty.

Grundy leans toward Paul.

GRUNDY (CONT'D)

Got anything to drink?

PAUL

Name it.

GRUNDY
Three fingers of scotch would be nice.

PAUL
(calling)
Ariel! Bring Mr. Grundy a half glass of Glenfiddich.

GRUNDY
Can't tell you more than I already have. Now tell me everything you know about the gizmo.

PAUL
You know about the time capsule?

GRUNDY
Yeah.

PAUL
Know who found the boomerangs?

GRUNDY
Yeah.

PAUL
Know where?

GRUNDY
Yeah.

PAUL
That Vandever thought he was being watched at Silver Creek?

GRUNDY
The hell d'you hear that?

PAUL
Randall Gifford at the Hartford Arms retirement home.
(beat)
Take along a pack of Marlboros.

Ariel comes in with Grundy's drink followed by Ash, his wounded arm in a sling.

Grundy accepts it from her with some urgency and takes a sip.

GRUNDY
Thank you.

ARIEL

I'm Ariel. This is Ash.

GRUNDY

I'm Grundy. Son, I understand you were wounded when the drone deployed.

Ash relishes another appearance in The Drone Wars.

ASH

Yes, sir. But I'm fine now.

GRUNDY

Anything to add to this drone business your Daddy perchance overlooked?

ARIEL

Well, Mr. Grundy. Ash and I were thinking about how the drone erupted when I threw the boomerang.

ASH

We think the boomerang's a high-tech hand grenade. Throw it and it kills everyone who is threatening you.

GRUNDY

But not the person who threw it.

ARIEL

(ominous)

It only kills humans.

GRUNDY

Mr. Worth, Paul, can I rely on your kids not to talk the drone with their friends?

PAUL

I assure --

ARIEL

We would never utter a word about this to anyone.

ASH

Not a soul so help us, Mr. Grundy.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Cherise washes the last of her breakfast dishes and puts them in the drainer.

Pours herself another cup of coffee, leans against the sink.

Her PHONE RINGS twice.

She looks at it.

Takes a sip of coffee as she continues to look at it.

PHONE RINGS again.

Answers it after the third ring.

It's on speaker phone mode.

MALE VOICE

Fox Trot here.

CHERISE

(without country accent)

Cha Cha reads you Fox Trot.

Like old friends.

FOX TROT (MALE VOICE)

You've got your damn speaker phone on.

CHERISE

Not a soul within a mile. Relax.

FOX TROT

Cha Cha got news?

CHERISE

More pics of the O'Hanlon's. I'll send them along.

FOX TROT

My O'Hanlon album is about full.

CHERISE

Stronger suspects than Katie Slater or Willie Whitmore.

FOX TROT

Maybe.

(beat)

Hear back from Whitmore's ex-girlfriend?

CHERISE

Not yet.

(beat)

The O'Hanlons were off-loading boxes from their pickup. Putting them in their garage. I could get in there after midnight. See what's in them.

FOX TROT

Are you crazy?

CHERISE

Just messing with you, Fox Trot.

FOX TROT

What about Paul Worth?

CHERISE

He's cute.

FOX TROT

Be professional, Cha Cha.

CHERISE

Dropped by his house.

FOX TROT

Jesus, be careful.

CHERISE

He's not one to chat up Goosey's discovery. A full professor in Archeology.

FOX TROT

How's your weather?

CHERISE

Nice.

(beat)

Hey, Fox Trot?

FOX TROT

Yeah?

CHERISE

Saw the time capsule where Goosey put his widget.

FOX TROT

Chatting too much. Later.

CHERISE

Later.

INT. FRONT DOOR - DAY

HARD KNOCKING at the door.

Cherise walks to door.

Opens it.

Paul stands holding a wooden box.

He speaks before Cherise can open her mouth.

PAUL

Bring me Victor's thingamajig and
carefully as if it were unstable
nitroglycerin.

CHERISE

Why so urgent?

PAUL

Please, just do it, Cherise.

She hurries off.

Paul comes in and places the box on the dining room table.

He sees, near the box, a series of black and white 8 x 10s of
an old couple lifting boxes from the back of a pickup.

Nearby lay two color 8 x 10s.

One of a young woman walking in a parking lot.

Another of a young man putting coins in a parking meter.

BACK TO SCENE

Cherise returns with the tin container.

She looks at Paul as if he's lost his mind.

Paul removes the boomerang from the container and wraps it in
a length of cloth, wraps it with duct tape, and places it
gently into the box.

CHERISE

Hello, Paul. Nice to see you, too.

Paul ignores her as he puts the lid onto the box.

He produces a screwdriver from his pocket and quickly secures one corner of the lid with a screw.

CHERISE (CONT'D)
What the hell are you doing?

PAUL
Throw this cute piece of metal, and
it becomes a killer drone.

Cherise is speechless.

INT. KITCHEN - TABLE

Cherise and Paul have coffees in front of them.

Cherise is much affected by what Paul has told her.

CHERISE
(shaking head)
Unbelievable.
(beat)
Poor Jack Wong.

PAUL
Not a word about this to anyone.

CHERISE
Oh? Just leave it to the Fairview
County Sheriff's department.
They'll have it all cleared up in,
say, what?, twenty years?

PAUL
The Air Force is working on it.

CHERISE
The Air Force?

PAUL
Guy named Grundy came by our house.
Wouldn't tell me anything. Wanted
me to tell him everything.

INT. DINING ROOM

Cherise accompanies Paul toward the front door.

PAUL
(re: photos on table)
Working surveillance when you're
not puttering?

Cherise is momentarily put off her guard.

CHERISE

Oh, those... Girl friend of mine enjoys sneaking pics of people going about their daily business.

PAUL

Hope she has a friend who owns a gallery.

EXT. HOUSE - FRONT YARD - DAY

As they walk toward Paul's car, Cherise unexpectedly takes Paul's hand in hers.

CHERISE

Be careful, Paul.

PAUL

You okay with the new news?

CHERISE

I'm okay.

PAUL

Call me if...

CHERISE

I will.

A pickup comes to a stop in a wave of gravel in front of the house.

The Crowleys.

Cherise and Paul go down to the truck.

Ray Ann hands Cherise a jar through the window.

RAY ANN

Meant to drop this off on the way to town.

Tommy squints through tobacco smoke.

TOMMY

Hey, Paul.

PAUL

Hi ya, Tommy. Ray Ann.

RAY ANN
Blackberry jam.

TOMMY
Seedless too.

CHERISE
Thank you so much.

TOMMY
Gotta go.

The truck lurches forward and turns onto the road leading up to the Crowley house.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Cherise lights a cigarette, takes a puff, then quickly stabs it out in self-disgust.

CHERISE
Shit!

She hits a button on her phone, listens a moment, hits the button again.

Waits a moment.

CHERISE (CONT'D)
Cha-Cha.

Listens.

CHERISE (CONT'D)
Do we know a Grundy?

Listens.

CHERISE (CONT'D)
Paul. Been picking Paul's brain.

Listens.

CHERISE (CONT'D)
Air Force.

Listens.

CHERISE (CONT'D)
You and me both.

Listens.

CHERISE (CONT'D)

Beats me.

Listens.

CHERISE (CONT'D)

Okay. Bye, Fox Trot.

She lays her phone by the ashtray.

Picks up the cigarette stub, lights it.

Goes to the sink.

Crosses her arms.

Blows smoke at the hills framed by the window.

INT. LIBRARY - MICROFILM READER - DAY

Ariel threads a roll of microfilm.

ARIEL

The Fairview Weekly goes to 1925,
so it may have an article about the
time capsule.

ASH

Start at December 1920 and go
backward.

Ariel hits a button

On the screen the weekly issues of the newspaper flash and
WHIR by.

INT. LIBRARY - MICROFILM READER

Ariel's face as she studies what she sees on the screen.

Ash stands just back of her peering intensely.

ARIEL

If there's an article it should
come up any second.

INT. LIBRARY - MICROFILM READER

Over Ariel and Ash's shoulders we see librarian MARY PEARL
(70), strict and old-school, talking with an elderly patron.

She looks toward Ariel and Ash with annoyance.

ARIEL
Here it is! "Time Capsule Buried in
Franklin Building"!

Puts a finger to her lips.

MISS PEARL
Shhhhhhhhh!

Ariel lip reads a portion of the article.

ARIEL
(whispers)
Same ol', same ol'.

INT. LIBRARY - MICROFILM READER

Ariel continues to scroll.

She comes across something.

Quickly jots down several notes.

Hits a button labeled "COPY".

INT. LIBRARY - PRINTER

Ariel retrieves three photocopies.

INT. COUNTER

She and Ash come to the counter.

MISS PEARL
Three copies. Forty-five cents.

Ariel tosses her a dollar.

EXT. LIBRARY - ENTRANCE - DAY

Ariel and Ash quickly exit the library and descend the steps.

Ariel holds the photocopies in one hand.

Ash keeps pace with his sister, obviously anxious to hear what she saw.

ASH
New information?

ARIEL
Not sure.

ASH
So tell.

Ariel reads a moment from one of the pages.

Begins to walk even faster.

Ash struggles to keep up with her, gesturing with both hands for the information.

ARIEL
An item several days after the ceremony caught my eye.
(beat)
There was a fight in a bar. Two brothers and a cousin had returned to Fairview County after serving in the American Expeditionary Force in France during World War I.

ASH
Why a fight?

ARIEL
Two other cousins said the two brothers and the cousin weren't who they said they were. They just looked like them. The article said everyone was pretty drunk.

ASH
Nice story for when we have your cake tonight.
(beat)
What does it mean?

Ariel walks a little before turning to Ash.

ARIEL
I'm not sure.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Cherise has her phone to her ear.

CHERISE

She said Willie was always spacey.
Now... almost clueless.

Listens.

CHERISE (CONT'D)

No. Said she wouldn't see him
again.

Listens.

CHERISE (CONT'D)

Told her the same thing. She said
there was no way we could make it
worth her while.

Listens.

CHERISE (CONT'D)

Worst thing was Willie's memory of
their relationship. Full of holes
like Swiss cheese she said.

KNOCK at the kitchen door.

CHERISE (CONT'D)

Gotta go.

Cherise puts the phone on the kitchen table and answers the
door.

Edward Billings stands holding a drone and its flight
controller.

EDWARD

Hi, Cherise.

CHERISE

Young Man with a Drone!

He comes in and puts the drone and controller on the table.

EDWARD

Thought I'd come by see what we're
doing when next week.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

Cherise and Edward walk beside the garden.

CHERISE

Time to clear out the garden.

EDWARD

Lawn could use one last cutting
before the first frost.

CHERISE

Tool shed needs painting.

EDWARD

Don't do white again. Something
closer to the color of the sky or
the fields.

CHERISE

Mr. Bates is bringing two cords of
wood Wednesday need stacking.

EDWARD

And I'll get those two drones out
of your shed.

CHERISE

Think about what I said about
school?

Edward reaches into his shirt pocket and pulls out a pink
piece of paper.

He waves it at Cherise.

EDWARD

Have two design courses at Foothill
next term.

CHERISE

That's a big step, Edward.

She hugs him.

CHERISE (CONT'D)

It's called nurturing your forte.

He's proud and embarrassed.

EDWARD

My forte, you say...

CHERISE

Let's go fly the drone!

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Bill Landing leans against the mantel of the fire place where
a sign is taped that reads "HAPPY BIRTHDAY, ARIEL!"

A small fire flickers on the grate.

Crumb-coated dessert plates and forks sit here and there.

Ariel and Ash sit in adjoining chairs, Paul and Cherise on a sofa.

Ariel is unwrapping a present.

From the way Ash watches her, it's obviously from him.

BILL

What does Sweet Sixteen mean in today's world, Ariel?

ARIEL

(rote)

I can get my learner's permit. Hold an adult job. Drop out of school. Enjoy the right to privacy laws surrounding O.B.G.Y.N. practices. Get married with parental consent. Withhold or offer my sexual consent. And drink martinis in Germany, Switzerland, and Italy.

Paul listens in comic alarm to what Ariel says.

PAUL

Thanks for that question, Bill.

Bill grimaces.

Ariel holds up her present from Ash -- a cashmere scarf.

ASH

May need to borrow it from time to time.

ARIEL

Thank you, Ash.

ASH

Hey, tell them what you found.

CHERISE

Yes, tell us.

She takes a sip of her drink.

ARIEL

You'll think I'm crazy.

ASH
They already know that.

ARIEL
Back around the time of the
dedication of the Franklin building
there was a fight in a local bar.

BILL
Where's this from?

ASH
Old newspaper.

ARIEL
Two brothers and their cousin are
back from the war in France. Two
other cousins say they aren't their
relatives even though they look
like them. That starts a fight.
Maybe everyone was drunk. Still, I
had a dark inkling when I read
about it.

CHERISE
An inkling about what?

ARIEL
That it could be related to the
drone.

CHERISE
(half to herself)
Jesus!

PAUL
What is it, Cherise?

CHERISE
(covering herself)
Drones, drones every where. My
neighbor Ed came by my place this
afternoon with one.

PAUL
Edward Billings?

CHERISE
You know Edward? Lives over the
hill from me. Been working around
my place for the last year.

PAUL
(amused)
I've seen "Aerial Ballet No. 4" for
Christ sake.

CHERISE
His "Vandever Farm" video is even
better.

INT. KITCHEN - BREAKFAST NOOK - DAY

Paul, in coat and tie, sits with Ariel and Ash at the
breakfast table.

Looks at his watch.

PAUL
Call you when I get to Chicago.

ASH
What do you do at American
Anthropological Association
conferences? Watch old black and
white movies about Africa?

ARIEL
Ever meet a hot anthropologist at a
conference?

Paul gets up.

He takes his plate and cup to the sink.

PAUL
We yawn during the day's
presentations, then spend the
evening in the hotel bar. Hot
anthropologists? The only ones I've
met were on the equator.

Ariel begins gathering dishes.

ARIEL
Dad, you're just too funny.

EXT. DRIVE WAY - CAR - DAY

Paul puts his suitcase in the trunk.

Ariel and Ash have backpacks on ready to go to school.

PAUL

Come straight home after school.
Keep the doors locked. You've got
Bill and Cherise's numbers by the
land phone and in your cells.

ASH

Think we'll get to the bottom of
this drone thing?

PAUL

We may not. So don't get your hopes
up.

Paul hugs Ash and then Ariel.

He gets into the car.

ARIEL

You really think the Air Force
knows more than we do?

Paul begins to back the car out of the drive.

PAUL

Grundy may be snapping cuffs on
little green men as we speak.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Except for the interior lights that are on the house is
cloaked in darkness.

INT. DINING ROOM - TABLE - NIGHT

Ariel and Ash share a bowl of popcorn as they do their
homework.

They are obviously bored.

ASH

What're your favorite homonyms?

ARIEL

A triple one. Adds, ads, and adze.

ASH

(thinking)

The student adds the numbers. There
are too many ads on TV.

Ash can't come up with the third one.

ASH (CONT'D)

I give up.

ARIEL

You need an adze to shape a log. A -
D - Z - E.

ASH

Never heard of an adze.

ARIEL

(suddenly prim)
Nor have I seen one in my sixteen
years.

A strong knock at the front door.

ARIEL (CONT'D)

Who's that this late?

ASH

We better both go.

INT. VESTIBULE - FRONT DOOR

They approach the door with caution.

Ariel looks through the peephole, Ash almost scrunched
against her.

She quickly unlocks the door and opens it.

CONSTANCE WORTH (40), a rather ordinary woman in a long coat,
stands holding a suitcase.

ARIEL

Mother!

ASH

Mom?

The woman walks by the children and into the house.

She sets her suitcase down.

MOTHER

Children!

She hugs Ariel and then Ash.

Ariel and Ash stand in disbelief.

ARIEL
You're back?

MOTHER
Where's your father?

ASH
A conference in Chicago.

ARIEL
Back tomorrow.

Constance looks at Ash.

She sees his arm in a sling.

She starts to say something but holds her tongue.

Then,

MOTHER
Let me look at you. I think you've
both grown.

ARIEL
(reproachful)
It has been a while, mother.

The kids follow their mother into the family room.

Constance runs her eyes around the room as if to verify that
everything is still as she remembered it.

She lingers over the expressionist paintings and approaches
Blue Fox.

She regards it almost with curiosity.

MOTHER
This was always my favorite.
(beat)
The Fox.

Ariel and Ash exchange glances.

ARIEL
Blue Fox.

MOTHER
(correcting herself)
The Blue Fox!

ASH
It's just Blue Fox. Not The Blue
Fox.

Constance turns around quickly.

MOTHER
I'm famished. Why don't I find us
something to eat.

ARIEL
I was going to make hamburgers.

MOTHER
I'll make them. You two probably
have homework.

INT. KITCHEN TABLE - LATER

The three take their seats at the kitchen table.

Constance has placed a plate with a hamburger, potato chips
and baked beans on each place mat.

Ariel and her mother reach for a slice of tomato.

Ash peeks under his bun as if there might be a scorpion
lurking there.

No scorpion.

Just pickles.

Ash quickly removes them to the side of his plate.

He and Ariel exchange glances again.

INT. KITCHEN TABLE - LATER

They are coming to the end of their supper.

Constance has her hand on the stem of a glass of red wine, a
kind of absent half-smile on her face.

ARIEL
Did you find a job in Chicago?

MOTHER
Ran into an old classmate. I stayed
with her.

ARIEL
Why did you leave us?

MOTHER
I thought I explained that in the letter.

ASH
Why did you come back?

MOTHER
I had time to think some things over.

ARIEL
You could have written us. At least to say you were okay.

MOTHER
Now Ariel, don't be so quick to judge. I had a long trip today. I want to go to bed. We can talk this through in the morning.

INT. STAIRCASE

Constance, coat over her arm and suitcase in hand, is ready to go upstairs and to bed.

MOTHER
Even though tomorrow's Saturday don't stay up late.

ARIEL
Oh, we won't.

She bends down to give the kids a kiss.

ARIEL (CONT'D)
Welcome home, mother.

ASH
Sleep well.

With wine-weary steps, Constance begins to climb the stairs.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SHORTLY THEREAFTER

Ariel and Ash sit in the adjoining easy chairs.

ASH
Pickles?

ARIEL

She never asked about your arm.

They look at each other for several beats.

Frowning looks.

They slowly shake their heads.

ARIEL/ASH

That's not our mother.

INT. FIRST BEDROOM - BEDROOM DOOR - NIGHT

The doorknob turns.

The door is slowly pushed open.

Constance enters.

She carries a gun with a silencer.

Looks straight ahead.

Sees the slope of Ariel's back under the coverlet.

BACK TO SCENE

Aims and fires THREE SHOTS in quick succession.

Hurries to the bed to discover there's no one there.

CONSTANCE

Shit!

INT. SECOND BEDROOM - BEDROOM DOOR

Constance bursts through the door.

She runs to the bed.

Discovers there's no one there.

EXT. WINDOW - SHRUBBERY - NIGHT

Ariel and Ash peek through a window into the living room.

ARIEL

That sounded like a silencer!

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

Constance lurches down the hallway to the stair landing.

CONSTANCE
Ariel? Ash? We have to talk.

She reins in her anger and moves carefully down the stairs her gun at the ready.

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)
Really, kids. This is no way to act
my first night home.

She comes down to the vestibule.

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)
(losing it)
Ariel, you little bitch. Where are
you?

EXT. WINDOW

ASH
Let's run up to Main and call Bill.

CONSTANCE'S VOICE
(distant)
Ash, you little shit. Come out!

EXT. WINDOW

The kids bolt across the yard and out into the street.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

They run along the street.

EXT. PARK - PICNIC TABLE - NIGHT

They run up to the table.

They are out of breath.

ASH
Call from here!

Ariel stabs her cellphone.

She listens for a few beats.

ARIEL
(listens)
Doesn't answer!

Ariel stabs her cellphone again.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Paul is awakened by his CELLPHONE RINGING.

He looks at his watch and puts the phone to his ear.

PAUL
This is Dr. Worth.

Listens.

INTERCUT - TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

PAUL (CONT'D)
What is it, Ariel?

ARIEL
Mom came back tonight.

PAUL
She --

ARIEL
But it wasn't mom.

PAUL
What do you mean?

ARIEL
She just tried to kill us.

PAUL
Kill you! How?

ARIEL
She has a gun with a silencer.

PAUL
Jesus Christ! Where are you?

ARIEL
In the park. Ash is with me. Called
Bill there was no answer.

PAUL
I'll call Cherise. Right back to
you. Stay out of sight.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Ariel takes Ash by the hand.

They run over to a hedge and crouch down.

ARIEL
Cherise's coming for us.

ASH
That woman will come looking for
us.

Ariel hugs Ash.

ARIEL
We keep our heads, we're okay.

CELLPHONE RINGS.

ARIEL (CONT'D)
Hello.

Listens.

ARIEL (CONT'D)
Okay.
(beat)
We love you, daddy.

She clicks off.

ARIEL (CONT'D)
Cherise'll pick us up at the
northwest corner of the park. Dad's
leaving for the airport.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Ariel and Ash stand behind a tree near the intersection where
Cherise is to pick them up.

Ariel takes a quick look down the street.

She sees the lights of a fast approaching car.

BACK TO SCENE

ARIEL
Here she comes.

Ariel readies her hand on Ash's shoulder to indicate when
they should emerge.

ARIEL (CONT'D)

Now!

They run to the curb just as the car screeches to a stop beside it.

It's Constance.

ARIEL (CONT'D)

Run, Ash! Run!

They run in the opposite direction along the sidewalk.

Constance, driving in reverse, quickly comes alongside them.

She sticks her gun though the window and snaps off two rounds.

The kids head into the park.

Constance is quickly out of the car and after them.

Ariel and Ash run side by side.

ARIEL (CONT'D)

Circle back around to the intersection.

Constance runs with determination.

She snaps off two more rounds at the distant figures of the kids.

Then she begins to flag.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

The kids approach the intersection just as a truck pulls to a stop there.

It's Cherise.

Ariel looks around.

She sees Constance in the distance.

ARIEL

(to Cherise)

She has a gun!

CHERISE

Get in!

The kids scramble in.

Constance has come to a panting halt fifty yards away.

She raises her gun.

Cherise guns the truck, burning rubber across the intersection.

Constance manages to get off two shots that make METALLIC CLUNKS when they strike the truck.

INT. TRUCK CAB - NIGHT

Cherise is looking in the rearview mirror.

She drives at a normal speed.

From now on she speaks without a country accent.

CHERISE

I think we're rid of her.

(beat)

You two okay?

ASH

Pretty good considering someone who looks like our mother but's not our mother just tried to kill us.

ARIEL

We should call the police.

CHERISE

Let's wait on that. Trust me. I know what I'm doing.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Cherise carries in a tray with three mugs.

She hands mugs to Ash and Ariel who sit on a couch.

CHERISE

Hot cocoa.

She sits opposite them.

CHERISE (CONT'D)

When did you realize the woman wasn't your mother?

ARIEL

Before she came in the door I
sensed something odd about her.

ASH

She didn't know the name of her
favorite picture.

ARIEL

She put pickles on Ash's hamburger.

CHERISE

Pickles?

ASH

Our real mom would never do that.

ARIEL

You're not just an eccentric
country girl who tends a garden and
paints, are you?

Cherise looks at Ariel for a long moment.

CHERISE

No, I'm not.

ASH

Your country accent's gone.

ARIEL

You work for Grundy?

CHERISE

No. But I know who he is.

ARIEL

This is all about the drone, isn't
it?

CHERISE

I'm pretty sure it's all about the
drone.

ASH

Mom -- the woman -- wants to kill
us because we know about the drone.

CHERISE

The drone will lead us to the bad
guys.

ARIEL

Who do you work for?

CHERISE
I'm not at liberty to say.

ASH
Did someone do something to mom to
make her want to kill us?

ARIEL
Or is she more like a replicant?

CHERISE
I think someone was able to change
your mom.
(beat)
I'm sorry.

Both children bow their heads and weigh the tragic dimension
of what Cherise just said.

EXT. GRAVEL ROAD - DAY

Cherise leads a sober Ariel and Ash up past her house.

CHERISE
Your father will be here soon.

ARIEL
We're talking ETs, aren't we?

CHERISE
At least someone with an advanced
technology whose intentions appear
anything but benign.

ASH
What's benign?

ARIEL
Whoever these people are they're
not harmless.

Off to their right is the Crowley house.

They look in its direction.

See Tommy coming out of the root cellar.

Ray Ann pins laundry on a clothes line nearby.

The Crowleys spot Cherise and the kids and wave.

TOMMY
(cups hands)
Bring the kids over.

Cherise takes Ash and Ariel by the hand.

They start across the grass to where Tommy and Ray Ann now stand.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Come with me, son.

He takes Ash by the hand.

Ray Ann takes Ariel's hand. Cherise is close behind.

On the back porch stoop is a large wicker basket.

In it is a dog with newly born puppies.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Okay, Dolly, gonna borry one of yer
pups.

He picks up a puppy and hands it to Ash.

Ash and the puppy nuzzle each other.

ASH
Wish grown dogs smelled this sweet
and new.

ARIEL
You once smelled sweet and new.

ASH
I assume you once smelled this
sweet and new.

He hands the puppy to Ariel

RAY ANN
Cherise, come into the kitchen. I
got your pie pan.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Breakfast utensils and dishes sit here and there.

Ray Ann's big drawstring purse sits on the counter.

She takes a pie pan from the dish rack and hands it to Cherise.

Picks up the purse to put it on the table.

RAY ANN
What a mess. I apologize.

The purse spills part of its contents onto the table.

RAY ANN (CONT'D)
Damn thing's like a laundry bag.

Cherise immediately notices among the spilled items one of the metallic boomerangs.

She turns to Ray Ann.

CHERISE
(country accent)
You needn't have. It's just a pie pan.

RAY ANN
One less thing in my kitchen's what it is.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

Cherise joins the two kids and Tommy.

CHERISE
Best move along, kids.

TOMMY
Bring 'em up we'll do hotdogs and chili one of these days.

ASH
Chili dogs. Yum.

ARIEL
Thanks, Tommy, Ray Ann.

EXT. GRAVEL ROAD - DAY

Cherise leads Ariel and Ash back toward her house.

She wears an expression of alarm.

The kids look back toward the Crowley house.

They see Tommy and Ray Ann go into the root cellar.

ARIEL

How come we're going back so soon?

CHERISE

To be at the house when Paul arrives.

ARIEL

What's wrong, Cherise? You look like you've seen a ghost.

CHERISE

If only.

INT. KITCHEN - TABLE - LATER

Ariel and Ash work on a jigsaw puzzle.

So far they've connected only a few pieces.

A large plate on the counter is stacked with sandwiches.

Cherise leans against the sink.

She smokes a cigarette.

ARIEL

Our dad used to smoke.

She fits a puzzle piece into another.

Cherise, absorbed by what she saw in Ray Ann's purse, says nothing.

The SOUND of a CAR causes all three to turn in its direction.

ASH

It's dad!

EXT. GRAVEL ROAD - DAY

Paul and Bill get out of the car.

Bill wears a holster and pistol.

They quickly walk up the lawn to where Cherise and the kids stand.

Paul hugs the kids.

And then Cherise.

PAUL
Still in a daze.

Cherise hugs Paul.

CHERISE
It gets worse.

Paul gives her a worried look.

Everyone heads for the house.

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

The plate of sandwiches is passed around.

Also big bowls of chips and baked beans.

PAUL
Left a message on Grundy's machine.
(to Cherise)
Grundy --

CHERISE
I know about Grundy.

ASH
Maybe the Air Force'll come to the
rescue.

BILL
(to Cherise)
Your doctor just show you something
bad on your x-ray?

CHERISE
I need to say something.

ASH
Dad, she's not --

PAUL
Let her speak.

CHERISE
I've been undercover for Homeland
Security the last five years.

Everyone reacts in stunned silence.

BILL
Investigating what?

CHERISE

Ringers.

BILL

Ringers?

CHERISE

Back in the day ringers were athletes who took the place of other athletes.

(beat)

Imposters.

PAUL

You're losing me.

CHERISE

"Goosey" was intrigued by some Fairviewers accusing others of not being who they said they were.

ARIEL

Like the fight in the bar!

BILL

The fight in the bar.

ASH

The drone people make a person be them without changing his appearance.

ARIEL

But they're still Beta versions. We noticed something odd about mother from the very first.

CHERISE

Exactly.

(beat)

There may have been generations of these ringers in this county.

PAUL

How many ringers at any one time?

CHERISE

Wild guess? Ten.

ASH

You know any ringers?

CHERISE

Looking at a Katie Slater and a Willie Whitmore. And an older couple.

PAUL

They're ringers?

CHERISE

Pretty sure Willie Whitmore is.

Cherise leans in to the table and looks at everyone.

CHERISE (CONT'D)

Two hours ago I discovered my neighbor has a drone in her purse.

No one utters a word.

They try to process what Cherise has said.

CHERISE (CONT'D)

The Crowleys... Last people I would suspect.

BILL

When the drone deployed it must have alerted all the ringers in the area.

PAUL

Ergo the drone in Ray Ann's purse. For protection.

ARIEL

D'she know you saw the drone?

CHERISE

Don't think so.

PAUL

Constance, excuse me, Ringer
Constance gets rid of the kids,
Bill and me.

(to Cherise)

Crowleys kill you. Problem solved.
The drone never deployed, never
existed. The Martians retain their
cover.

INT. DINING ROOM - LATER

A plate of cookies sits on the dining table.

Ariel and Ash drink hot cocoa.

Cherise pours coffee for Paul and Bill and then herself.

ARIEL

How do they turn people into
ringers?

BILL

An incredibly complicated
technology administered very
simply. Some kind of "ray" maybe.
Just get close to whomever and zap
'em. Might not even hurt.

Ariel's deep in thought.

She looks over at a bureau.

Sees a small flashlight standing by a stack of books.

BACK TO SCENE

Looks at Ash and makes an expression that says "I need to
talk to you later."

Turns to her father.

ARIEL

When did these people come here?

PAUL

We know they were here during the
First World War.

BILL

(to Cherise)

Homeland Security have ideas on
this? Or can you talk about it?

CHERISE

Everything's compartmentalized at
Homeland. I just I.D. ringers.

ASH

Where did these people come from?

PAUL

Not from Earth.

(beat)

Can't believe I just said that.

CHERISE

Paul, dear, not from Earth. I agree.

ARIEL

So why did they come?

BILL

Undercover for a hundred years at the least. Sounds like a grand, long-term plan.

ASH

Like taking over the planet?

PAUL

Could be ringers in every county across America.

Outside, the ENGINE of a TRUCK CRUNCHING GRAVEL on the road that goes by the side of the house.

ASH

There go the Crowleys.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Cherise clears the table.

Bill washes the dishes.

Paul dries them.

Ariel and Ash head for the kitchen door.

ARIEL

We'll be in back.

EXT. SHED - DAY

Edward, on a ladder, is carefully painting one of the shed's eaves.

SCREEN DOOR SLAMS.

Edward looks.

He sees Ariel and Ash come out into the yard.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

Ariel takes Ash's hand.

They walk toward the gravel road.

ARIEL

I wanna see what's in that storm
cellar.

ASH

Are you crazy?

ARIEL

You saw how they went in and out.

ASH

They could be back any minute!

ARIEL

You were shot by a drone. A peek in
a cellar is nothing compared to
that.

Ash's face weighs the pros and cons of this new episode of
The Drone Wars.

ASH

A really quick peek.

EXT. CROWLEY HOUSE - DAY

Ariel and Ash walk along the gravel road past the Crowley
house.

Once past they dart into a stand of trees.

They crouch among the trees and study their surroundings.

See only the road, the house, the backyard. No sign of a
person.

Leave the stand of trees and approach the cellar from the
rear.

EXT. STORM CELLAR - DAY

They kneel behind the cement dome of the cellar.

Quickly move around to the cellar door.

Lift it back and enter.

INT. STORM CELLAR

Ariel holds the small flashlight.

They are in a small, cement room.

Bins along one wall hold potatoes.

On the opposite wall stands a shelf of garden tools.

Ariel begins fiddling with the shelf.

They speak in hushed voices.

ARIEL

Bet you this is a door.

The shelf swings out, attached to a heavy wooden door.

ARIEL (CONT'D)

Told you.

ASH

You got us ankle-deep in shit.

They enter total darkness.

ARIEL'S VOICE

Just a sec.

SOUND of LIGHT SWITCH

Suddenly the room is brightly lit.

INT. HIDDEN ROOM

There is a desk and a chair.

On the desk sits what looks like a hi-tech ham radio.

Beside it is a yellow legal pad and some pens.

Along the opposite wall stacks of boxes and other items.

Ariel walks over to the desk, Ash almost stepping on her heels.

He is terrified.

Ariel takes out her cellphone and begins taking pictures.

ASH

We gotta get out of here now!

A faint sound of CAR TIRES on GRAVEL.

Ariel and Ash both freeze, listening.

A CAR DOOR OPENING and CLOSING.

ASH (CONT'D)
They're back!

ARIEL
Close the cellar door!

INT. STORM CELLAR

Ariel and Ash manage to pull the cellar door down.

INT. STORM CELLAR

Slivers of sunlight coming through the door fall on their faces as they stand listening.

Two indistinct voices grow louder.

MAN
Not a good idea coming here.

WOMAN
Can I help it our radio's gone
screwy? I'm two days late as it is.

MAN
Tommy'll be pissed we just dropped
in.

WOMAN
Screw Tommy and his whole damn
operation.

The cellar door opens.

INT. HIDDEN ROOM

Total darkness.

A LIGHT SWITCH is turned on.

Constance Worth walks into the room.

A man, WILLIE WHITMORE (30), lingers in the doorway. We saw his photo on Cherise's dining table.

CONSTANCE
Show more initiative, Willie.

WILLIE
Make it short and sweet.

Constance sits at the desk and begins turning some dials on the radio.

There is an electric hum and then silence.

She takes a note pad from her purse and begins reading into the microphone.

What she says sounds like Swedish played backward on a reel to reel recorder.

She turns off the radio and puts her note pad back into her purse.

She looks slowly around the room.

CONSTANCE
There's someone in this room.

WILLIE
(bored)
I'm outta here.

He turns and heads for the stairs.

Suddenly Ariel is next to Constance, a length of 2 x 4 in her hands.

She hits Constance in the face.

Stunned by the blow, Constance falls from the chair.

Ash appears and the two kids run from the room.

INT. STAIRS

Willie is halfway up the stairs of the cellar.

The two kids blow right by him and out the open door.

EXT. GRAVEL ROAD - DAY

Ariel and Ash run down the gravel road toward Cherise's house.

Coming up the road in their truck are the Crowley's.

The kids run past the oncoming truck.

INT. TRUCK CAB

Ray Ann is amused by the sight of the running kids.

RAY ANN
(to Tommy)
Someone's house on fire?

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Paul, Cherise and Bill sit at the table.

BILL
What happens next?

CHERISE
Couldn't tell you if I knew.

PAUL
The Crowley's aren't a direct
threat long as they think their
cover's intact.

CHERISE
Ringer Constance is a threat to you
and your family, and we have no
idea where she is.

BILL
Maybe closer than you think.

INT. KITCHEN - DOOR - DAY

The kitchen door suddenly opens and Ariel bursts into the
room, Ash on her heels.

ARIEL
The Crowleys' root cellar's a radio
room! Mom saw us in there! I hit
her in the face with a board!

The three adults can't believe what they're hearing.

ASH
Told you we shouldn't of gone in
there.

ARIEL
That Willie guy is with her.

CHERISE
 Call Grundy, Paul. They'll be on us
 like flies within minutes.

Paul punches his cell.

Listens for several beats.

 PAUL
 Paul Worth. It's two p.m. Five of
 us are under attack by four drone
 people. 3214 Country Lane. Hurry.

He punches in another number.

 PAUL (CONT'D)
 Phone's dead.

Cherise tries her cell.

 CHERISE
 They've jammed the phones somehow.

 ARIEL
 I'm sorry, daddy.

 PAUL
 Even daring and curiosity have
 their limits, Ariel.

 BILL
 What's done is done.

 ASH
 I told her not to.

 PAUL
 You're as culpable as your sister.

 ASH
 What's culpable?

Suddenly, three bullets crash through the window near the
 kitchen table.

 CHERISE
 A rifle! Get on the kitchen floor.
 It can penetrate the exterior
 walls.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Everyone lies in the middle of the floor.

Cherise crawls in from the dining room with a rifle and a hand gun.

She hands the gun to Paul.

CHERISE

The four of them are behind the truck just up the road. Probably figuring out how to best come at us.

(re: hand gun)

It's a Glock. Holds thirteen rounds. Mind, there's no external safety. Squeeze, don't pull, the trigger.

ARIEL

Be careful, daddy.

PAUL

I get a badge?

CHERISE

We plink a shot at the truck every minute or so. Keep them hunkered down. Buy time.

BILL

I'll take your bedroom window.

He reaches for the rifle.

CHERISE

Are you sure --

BILL

I was in the Marines.

CHERISE

(handing him rifle)

Shoot to kill. You only got six rounds.

Suddenly another BLAST hits the window, spraying wood and glass over everyone.

CHERISE (CONT'D)

Shotgun!

Bill heads for the bedroom.

INT. KITCHEN WINDOW - DAY

A good-sized hole has been blown in the window and the screen.

Suddenly a drone appears near the opening.

It flits about as if angry.

Can't quite fit through the opening.

It slowly backs away.

Aims and blasts the edges of the hole several times, enlarging it.

PAUL

That thing gets in we're in
trouble.

Ash crunches up to a cabinet, his back to the drone.

CHERISE

The cabinet to your left. Garden
trellis netting. Throw it to me.

Ash manages to get the netting.

He unfolds it.

DRONE

passes through the now enlarged opening.

It darts about as if elated.

Then stops just above Ash's head.

Fires as Cherise roles across the floor.

Ash tosses the netting back over his head.

Instantaneously it is shredded by the drone's props.

But the drone flies apart, with an ENORMOUS WHIR, PIECES
RICOCHETING off the counter tops, etc.

INT. KITCHEN

Everyone is stunned by the explosion of the drone.

PAUL

Anyone hurt?

Ariel's cheek has been cut. Paul, Cherise and Ash have small abrasions here and there.

Cherise examines Ariel's wound.

 CHERISE
 Nothing serious.

INT. KITCHEN WINDOW

In a quick effort, Paul upends the table against the shattered window.

INT. BEDROOM WINDOW

Bill scrunches against the wall close by the window.

He glances out the window.

A SHOT RINGS OUT from the kitchen.

He sees Willie Whitmore, gun in hand, dart from behind the truck and run in a clockwise loop around the back of the house.

He gets up and runs from the room.

INT. FRONT DOOR

Bill opens the front door, sticks his head out and makes a quick survey of the yard.

EXT. FRONT YARD - DAY

He exits the door.

Moves to the corner of the house.

Willie comes running from around back.

Bill goes down on one knee, raises the rifle and fires.

Willie cuts toward the house as if to evade the round and falls.

Bill returns to the front door.

Another SHOT RINGS OUT from the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - DOORWAY

Bill crouches through the kitchen doorway.

BILL
Ringer Whitmore's down.

CHERISE
(beat)
Nice work.

EXT. PICKUP - DAY

Tommy stands with Ray Ann and Constance at the rear of the truck.

Constance's face is cut and bruised from the blow of the 2 x 4.

TOMMY
Cherise, ya'll should know
somethin' 'fore someone gits
killed.

He waits for a response. Gets none.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
We're government agents.
Commissioned to identify Middle
Eastern terrorists who we believe
are operating in the environs of
Fairview County.

Again, no response.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Understand what I'm sayin'?

CHERISE'S VOICE
You're full of shit, Tommy.
(beat)
Whoever you are.

BILL'S VOICE
Where are you from?

RAY ANN
You wouldn't understand if we told
you.

PAUL'S VOICE
Your only choice is to surrender to
authorities.

BILL'S VOICE
We mean you no harm.

CONSTANCE
Oh, but we certainly mean to harm
you.

INT. BEDROOM WINDOW

Bill takes quick aim at the truck through the bedroom window.

BILL
Eat this.

He lets off a round.

The three stall for time by measuring their shots.

SERIES OF SHOTS

Paul squeezes off a round through the space between the window and upturned table.

Kneeling, Cherise fires quickly around the jamb of the back door.

Bill fires his pistol from the bedroom, the now empty rifle by his side.

Paul squeezes off another round.

Cherise fires again around the door jamb.

Bill fires again.

INT. KITCHEN WINDOW - LATER

Paul tries to squeeze off another round but his pistol clicks empty.

He lays it on the floor.

Bill crouches into the kitchen.

BILL
I'm out.

PAUL
Me too.

CHERISE
 (re: her gun)
Seven.

INT. LIVING ROOM - WINDOW - DAY

As quickly as a rock thrown through a glass window a drone fills the room with a sound like that of a giant wasp.

Cherise snaps off a quick shot at it around the jamb of the door damaging one of the its props.

The drone dances erratically as if trying to recover its default poise.

 CHERISE
 Into the basement!

The two kids, Paul and Bill run behind Cherise.

The erratic drone opens fire, hitting Paul and Bill.

INT. BASEMENT

Emergency lights flood the small space with bright light.

Ariel holds Ash close to her.

Paul has been hit in his right side, Bill in the upper right shoulder.

Cherise examines their wounds.

 CHERISE
 They hurt like hell, I know, but
 they're not serious.

 BILL
 Doubt they have many drones or
 they'd of deployed them by now.

A loud blast comes from the basement door.

 CHERISE
 Christ, the shotgun!

INT. BASEMENT - DOOR

The door has a ragged four inch hole in it.

Another shell blasts a second hole near the first.

Cherise fires twice at the door.

Someone cries out.

Another shotgun blast creates an opening for a hand that quickly reaches in and unlocks the door.

Three beats of silence.

CONSTANCE'S VOICE
Paul, you're endangering the kids.
Start using your head.

CHERISE
(to the men)
Four rounds left.

PAUL
I won't hesitate shooting you.

CONSTANCE'S VOICE
(hurt)
I'm your wife. The mother of your
children.
(beat; matter of fact)
BTW your empty weapon's on the
kitchen floor.

Ariel suddenly steps forward.

ARIEL
(yelling)
I don't know who you are, but you
are not our mother.

CONSTANCE'S VOICE
Ariel, does your father know what a
little bitch you've become?

PAUL
You're one to talk about malignant
transformations.

The five stand motionless, alert.

Cherise takes a quick peek up the stairs.

She sees that Constance is quietly already halfway down them.

Startled, Constance lets go with a blast from the shotgun.

Cherise immediately pops off two rounds.

Constance does a header down the remainder of stairs.

She lies still eyes closed for a beat.

Then slowly raises up on her arms.

Her eyes suddenly open wide.

CONSTANCE
(herself)
Where am I? Paul?

She collapses in death.

Cherise puts two fingers to her neck.

CHERISE
Upstairs before Tommy gets in the
house!

INT. HALLWAY - BASEMENT DOOR

Ray Ann's lifeless body lies against the hallway wall as the
five file past into the house.

INT. KITCHEN

Cherise, Ariel, and Ash crouch in the kitchen.

Paul tapes a gauze pad to Bill's shoulder wound.

SOUND of a DAMAGED PROPELLER.

Everyone turns.

They see the damaged drone just in the doorway to the
kitchen.

It appears to struggle with itself to fire at the five
combatants.

Cherise quickly takes aim and brings the drone thrashing down
with her last two bullets.

BILL
Let's hope that's the last of the
drones.

Paul looks out the window over the sink.

PAUL
Sorry. Another one just flew by.

CHERISE

(to kids)

Run to the clump of trees in the field in back. Hide there 'til you see help has arrived.

ASH

What about the drone?

CHERISE

We're out of ammo. Ringer Tommy will be coming for us. Your chances are better outside.

ARIEL

(grabbing Ash's hand)

She's right.

Ariel and Ash are quickly out the front door.

EXT. YARD - DAY

They circle around to the rear of the house.

They look toward the house and see the drone flying slowly around it in the opposite direction.

ARIEL

(whispering)

The shed!

EXT. TOOL SHED - DAY

Ariel and Ash sit with backs to the shed wall, their knees folded to their chest.

They look into the distance.

See a fence and an adjoining field with clumps of trees.

They speak in hushed voices.

ASH

Gotta get to those trees.

ARIEL

Not until we know where the drone is.

Just at that moment the drone drops slowly into the line of their sight, five feet in front of them.

With what appears sadistic relish, it makes several graceful bobs as it aligns itself for the kill.

Suddenly a WHISH and an EXPLOSION.

The drone writhes about on the ground like a dying giant insect.

EDWARD

crouching behind a bush, holds a flight controller. He is smiling ear to ear.

Just knocked out a frigging alien drone with one of his own drone models!

EDWARD

Suck on that!

EXT. TOOL SHED - DAY

ARIEL

Run for the trees!

Ash and Ariel take off running.

EXT. FIELD

Now on the other side of the fence, Ariel and Ash head for clump of trees. Edward is not far behind.

CUT TO:

EXT. PICKUP - DAY

Tommy lights a cigarette; squints against the smoke.

TOMMY

(yelling)

Ray Ann! Constance! Gimme a sign!

He's pissed.

He empties the clip of his pistol at the house.

Then puts in a new clip.

Puts three rounds in the lever action rifle.

Puts an extra clip for his pistol in a pocket.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Guess you folks are plumb outta
ammo. Plumb outta time too.

He sticks the pistol in his belt.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
(yelling)
Time to pay the piper!

He begins to walk slowly toward the house.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Not to worry. I'll make it quick.
(chuckles)
Then again, the day is young.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Paul holds a butcher knife as does Cherise.

Bill fingers a baseball bat.

TOMMY'S VOICE
(yelling)
Done gone made a huge mess a
ever'thing, my friends.

EXT. YARD - DAY

Tommy continues walking toward the house.

He'll soon be at the kitchen door.

Suddenly a LOUD REPORT as a bullet takes off the top of his
head.

He drops without making a sound.

RACK FOCUS

to a military sniper kneeling some distance away.

EXT. GRAVEL ROAD - LATER

Two ambulances, a sheriff's car, an unmarked dark sedan and a
military jeep are parked on the gravel road.

Paul, Cherise, and Bill sit in folding chairs, attended to by
two medics.

Ariel and Ash talk animatedly with Edward.

ASH
Dude, I thought we were goners.

ARIEL
You saved our ass, Edward!

Circumstance has offered Edward a fortuitous cameo in The Drone Wars and he relishes it.

EDWARD
Never imagined I would have to go
drone on drone.

Deputy Davis stands note pad in hand, not knowing quite what to do.

Grundy walks by him.

GRUNDY
Deputy... Davis, in future I
suggest you leave room for the
Flexibility Factor. Something looks
like a duck, something quacks like
a duck, may be something else
altogether.

Deputy Davis nods and stirs gravel with the toe of his boot.

Grundy lumbers up to the group.

PAUL
How many ringers left in Fairview
County, Grundy?

GRUNDY
More than we know.

Cherise rolls down a sleeve and buttons it.

CHERISE
Bring 'em on.

GRUNDY
You gentlemen now walk on the path
with young Master Worth.

Ash stiffens and grows slightly taller in yet another episodic cameo.

BILL
(re: his wound)
Does feel like a giant wasp sting.

Grundy rests his hands on Ariel and Ash's shoulders.

GRUNDY

You three did yourselves proud.

ASH

We'd do it again in a heartbeat,
Mr. Grundy.

INT. HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM - DAY

Everyone appears fully recovered from their ordeal with the ringers.

Paul takes down the reproduction of Franz Marc's Blue Fox and hands it to Ariel.

She and Ash study it in sorrowful remembrance of their mother.

Cherise hangs her original oil painting of the vase of flowers in its place.

PAUL

Enough excitement for a while.

Cherise hugs him warmly.

CHERISE

Unless some ringers have other ideas.

ARIEL

What did Ray Ann mean when she said we wouldn't understand where they were from?

ASH

What if Whitmore and the Crowleys were just nut cases from Kansas?

CHERISE

Whoever embodied the ringers isn't from Earth.

ARIEL

We never will know what they did to mom.

PAUL

At least her old self came back at the end.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - LATER

Everyone stands admiring the painting of the flowers.

Paul has one arm around Cherise, his other around Ash.

She leans her head on his shoulder and has an arm around Ariel.

CHERISE

Flowers betoken positive futures.

PAUL

Every cloud has a silver lining and
so does every sorrow.

ARIEL

Were it not for hope the heart
would break.

CHERISE

Life can only be understood
backwards but we must live it
forwards.

ASH

(country accent)
Want country eggs ever mornin',
Cherise.

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END

