

Bedbugs

by
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"Good Night, Sleep Tight, don't let the bedbugs bite."

SMASH IN:

EXT. SMALL TOWN - NIGHT

Moonlight creeps in between neatly-kept houses and stores. It's quiet. *Too quiet.*

A sign, "Point Pleasant, Population 10,000" stands by a dark road. Dirt and leaves SWIRL against it as...

... TWO UNMARKED HUM VEES speed past. They're followed by a black Rhino Runner and Stryker Tank.

EXT. MAIN STREET - CONTINUOUS

The vehicles round a corner and stop on a dime.

WHAM!

Doors swing open. BLACK ARMOR-CLAD OPERATIVES, wearing night vision goggles, leap out, assault rifles ready to engage. Others rush from building-to-building, high-tech flame throwers extended.

An Operative barks into his shoulder mic -- a barrage of: "Weapons hot. We are clear to engage. I need eyes. Etc."

Flame throwers shoot arcs and streams every which way.

TEAM LEADER, MAJOR REID, 35, rugged, lifts his goggles, then fires up a big fat stogie -- almost too big for his round pock-marked face. He grunts into his shoulder mic.

MAJOR REID

Perimeter is secured.

WIND KICKS up as a black MH 60-G helicopter lands. Before the blades can stop spinning, the door slides open.

PRISTINE POLISHED BLACK SHOES crush a fleeing ant underfoot and stride toward the team. Perfectly creased dark pants kiss infallibly tied black shoe laces. The pants disappear under a wrinkle-free black trench coat.

All belonging to fedora wearing PROFESSOR NOAH THORN, 50s, grim, coke bottle glasses which give him a bug-like look. He stops at Reid. The two take in the town.

MAJOR REID

Well Professor, I'm guessin' you can classify your test a success.

Thorn does a 360 scan of the area, taking in open doors leading to mysteriously vacant houses. Lights left on. Driverless cars with engines still running. His canvassing stops and focuses on an unrecognizable mound. *Bodies?*

Reid's shoulder mic *CRACKLES*.

OPERATIVE (ON MIC)

Major, hostiles are on the move --
Ten clicks!

Gunfire and operatives' *YELPS* of "*Hold your position!*" come through loud and clear over the mic.

Concern and fear cascade down Thorn's face.

THORN

Begin extraction.

Reid's eyes dart to Thorn.

MAJOR REID

What about search and rescue?

THORN

Now.

Reid barks into his shoulder mic.

MAJOR REID

Bermuda Triangle this town!

Thorn rushes back to the helicopter. Two F-16's *SCREAM* overhead. The Stryker and Earth Mover *RUMBLE* ahead.

LATER

A helicopter whirls to safety. Thorn stares down at a mass grave. Flames reflect off of his thick lenses. A man-made fire-storm engulfs the town...

SMASH CUT TO:

INT/EXT. BING HOUSE - NIGHT

SUPER: NORMAL, ILLINOIS

A modest Tudor. A name plate hangs proudly underneath the mailbox -- "*THE BINGS.*" Spring flowers bloom in front.

... *AND A YOUNG GIRL SHRIEKS FROM INSIDE.*

MASTER BEDROOM

Traditional. CHRIS BING, 40, handsome and weathered, sits upright. He looks past his police badge on the night stand to a clock. 3:00 AM.

Chris tries not to stir his sleeping wife JILL, 39, lovely and mensa smart... then rushes to the door.

HALL - CONTINUOUS

Dark. Chris flips on the light... squints.

CHLOE, 6, cute, in pj's, freezes by a bathroom door.

CHRIS
(whisper)
Chloe, it's 3 AM.

Chloe raises a frightened arm; points to a corner. Chris' groggy gaze follows -- a BUG halts inside the door frame. Chris' face pinches.

CHRIS
Wow, that is ugly.

CHLOE
(angry whisper)
It's Max's.

Chris glances over his shoulder at a bedroom door which is covered by yellow police tape. "Police Do Not Cross."

CHLOE
It's moving!

Chris springs into the bathroom, grabs some toilet paper. And crushes it. *CRUNCH*. Tan bug juice oozes out.

Chris hurries to the toilet. *Bombs away*. And flushes.

CHLOE
What if it comes back?

They watch the roach spin around in the whirlpool.

CHRIS
When I kill a bug, it stays dead.

Chloe hugs Chris. He smiles.

CHLOE
Thank you, Daddy Chris.

CHRIS
Back to bed, 'K?

Chloe closes the door. Chris pauses at the "Police" door. Cracks it...

MAX'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Light shines into what resembles a junior mad scientist's lab. Wires, beakers, computers. Chris spies a large jar of skittering INSECTS. His frown extends down to his neck.

CHRIS
 (whisper)
 Max? You up?

Self-proclaimed outcast and geek, MAX, 16, shields his eyes from the hall light.

MAX
 Am now.

CHRIS
 I've told you about keeping bugs in the house.

MAX
 They're for biology.

CHRIS
 Yeah-well, school's out tomorrow.

MAX
 Not for me.

CHRIS
 Look, they scare your sister... and you know how I feel about 'em.

MAX
 Yeah...

Awkward pause. *Chris wants to say more... but doesn't.*

CHRIS
 Let's try keeping them in the garage. Okay?

No answer. Chris starts to close the door. He spots a pile of wires connected to a digital timer.

CHRIS
 Is that your mom's--

MAX
 I'll replace it tomorrow. Now can I go back to sleep?

Chris shuts the door. Max rolls over; smiling. *He won.*

INT/EXT. RHINO RUNNER - (TRAVELING) NIGHT

Inside, nerves are high. A DRIVER, 20s, focuses on the road. His shotgun PASSENGER, just as alert.

Highway lights tide in and out through steel blinds, allowing us to see nervous operatives bunched together near the front. Silent. FORREST MARTIN cuts his eyes toward --

-- Several mattresses, some newer than others, piled near the back doors.

The Runner exits onto to a dark, back road.

INT/EXT. DELIVERY TRUCK - (TRAVELING) NIGHT

A Sleep Tight Bedding Delivery truck barrels down the dark, curvy road.

A bottle of JACK DANIELS dances haphazardly on the seat between TWO TRUCK DRIVERS, 40s, one fat, the other skinny -- a hillbilly Laurel and Hardy. Meet EARL and GUS. GUS, the skinny one, looks at the dashboard clock.

GUS

Tamuburri's gonna be pissed.

EARL

That's why we're going this way. So he's not.

GUS

He's gonna be pissed.

Earl shifts his eyes toward his partner, then back to the dashboard radio. He lifts the bottle to his mouth...

INT/EXT. RHINO RUNNER - (TRAVELING) NIGHT

The vehicle angles on its inside wheels as it speeds down the same dark road. Inside...

CLICK... THWICK... TICK...

The operatives turn in unison toward the mattresses.

More rustling... Eyes steel... Something moves in one of the mattresses... Martin and the operatives slowly pick up their assault rifles...

INT/EXT. DELIVERY TRUCK - (TRAVELING) NIGHT

Earl steps on the gas...

INT/EXT. RHINO RUNNER - (TRAVELING) NIGHT

More movement from the mattresses... like ping-pong balls bouncing around inside. The operatives aim...

BWOOSH!

From outside, all we see are flashes of *GUN BURSTS...* all we hear are men's agonizing *SCREAMS*.

INT/EXT. DELIVERY TRUCK - (TRAVELING) NIGHT

Gus turns to Earl.

GUS
Maybe you're right -- I'm just
worryin' about nothing.

EARL
Of course I'm right. We'll be right
on time. Collect our money and--

His eyes widen--

-- The Rhino Runner SOMERSAULTS toward the truck.

Earl swerves out of its way, just missing it. The Runner
SKIDS to a steaming, upside down stop.

Doors from both vehicles fly open. Mattresses spill onto
the road.

The Drivers, tumble out of the cab... take in the mess.

EARL
Jesus-H-Christ!

Gus looks at the smoking Runner.

GUS
I'll check on them.

EARL
Fuck that. I'm already a DUI past
the no tolerance for DUI's. Pack
this shit up, before the cops get
here.

Gus scratches his head, taking in all of the mattresses.

GUS
Which ones?

EARL
Who cares -- just pack'em all!

The two drivers hurry, picking up and loading various
mattresses... Earl climbs back into the cab.

Gus inches near the Rhino Runner. He looks inside its
tipped compartment. Dark Hell... He covers his nose,
holding back GAGS. And pokes his head in.

GUS
Hey! I think we oughta call for--

Something makes a sound. *Gnashing?*

SQUEEEEEEEEEAAAAAAAAAAAAA.

Gus runs to the truck. Wheels spin as the truck speeds away.

INT. BING HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY (MORNING)

Busy. Max sits at the table, reading *Popular Mechanics*.

Jill, phone cradled in between her cheek and shoulder, inspects dangling wires in her expensive oven.

JILL

No, Lauren, I don't hate you.

Chloe drags a rolled sleeping bag across the floor.

JILL

Lauren, hold on. (to: Chloe) Honey, what are you doing?

CHLOE

Packing.

JILL

We have time. Put it back.

Chloe starts to protest; Jill points to the garage door. Chris, now in a police chief's uniform, enters. He grabs a pancake, rolls it up and shoves it into his mouth.

ORION, a small sheepdog, begs for a bite. Chris gives him what's left. He helps Chloe with her sleeping bag.

JILL (ON PHONE)

Seriously, if I can't handle five seven-year-old girls on one overnigher then I don't deserve to be Daisy leader.

Jill hangs up. Chris kisses Jill.

CHRIS

Lauren backed out?

JILL

I knew she would. She hates nature.

CHRIS

You should talk.

JILL

As should you.

There's a *KNOCK* at the back door. Chris and Jill throw each other curious looks. Chris moves to open.

RACHEL MILLER, 16, smart, athletic and striking, a "good girl," stands in the doorway, shouldering a back pack.

CHRIS

Rachel?

RACHEL

Mornin', Chief "B."

Chloe pounces on her. Rachel tussles Chloe's hair.

RACHEL

Cutie Smurf!

Max's eyes rise over the top of his mag, then lowers. Jill turns to Rachel.

JILL

Thanks for watching Chloe last night. I know it was short notice.

RACHEL

N.P., Mrs. B. I had to finish my acceptance speech anyway... which is the reason for me showing up at the crack of dawn. I forgot my jump drive. It's kinda on there.

Chris spots the drive on the counter. As does Max. Chris reaches. Max races to it and hands it to Rachel.

MAX

Here.

RACHEL

Gracias.

Awkward. Chris and Jill throw rolled eye glances.

CHRIS

Hey, how would the future class president like a police escort?

RACHEL

Sure. I'll be outside.

Chris grabs his keys.

CHRIS

Max, you coming?

Max returns to his moody self.

MAX

Pass.

CHRIS

Last day of school. Showing up with your class 'prez' might not be a bad way to end the year... considering...

Max turns red. Jill intervenes.

JILL

Just go with your dad.

MAX

My dad's in Philly.

Chris finishes his coffee, visibly hurt.

CHRIS

I shouldn't keep Rachel waiting.

He kisses Chloe and Jill. Walks out the door. Jill pounces on Max.

JILL

After everything he did for you last night!?! When will you think about someone other than yourself? Get in that jeep right now, Mister.

Max rises like molasses; heads for the door.

JILL

And when you get home, I want my oven fixed.

INT/EXT. POLICE JEEP - NORMAL STREETS - DAY (TRAVELING)

The jeep cruises past a sign, "WELCOME TO NORMAL -- LIFE AS IT SHOULD BE." Enters a "Norman Rockwell" village.

Planters with blooming flowers hang from old fashioned street lamps. Banners sway in and out, announcing the 3-day Strawberry Festival and Carnival. Others feature a smiling middle-aged man with his wife and kids -- Mayor Lewis Williams. "Re-elect Mayor Lewis Williams to stay Normal."

The jeep passes by a vacuous -- save for a lone store, hidden by grand opening banners -- upscale brick strip mall. In a word - *obnoxious*. It totally wrecks the flavor of the Normal.

Chris drives. Rachel's shotgun. Max sits in the back behind the partition.

CHRIS

So, Rachel, big summer plans?

RACHEL

Just trying to find a job. Baby sitting's nice, but it won't cover my trip to Spain. And that's a year away. My parents are only paying airfare.

Chris nods.

RACHEL

What about you, Max? How are you going to spend your first summer in Normal?

Chris takes a deep breath.

MAX

Summer school.

Rachel pauses; nods. Remembers...

RACHEL

Oh. Right. The paper.

CHRIS

Well, it could've been worse.

Max frowns. Chris comes to a stop in front of the school. A large carnival is being set up on the grounds.

CHRIS

Here we are.

Rachel climbs out.

RACHEL

Thanks for the ride.

CHRIS

Anytime.

Max glares at Chris as he slides across the seat.

MAX

I don't need you to run "D" for me.

Max *SLAMS* the door extra hard. Chris spots a tiny bug on his side. Pushes the power button causing the window to glide up. He frowns as it climbs with the rising window.

Kids notice the two climbing out of the police jeep -- especially a hot blonde girl walking hand-in-hand with an African American jock.

MAX

Good luck... speech and all.

RACHEL

Thanks. See you there.

I hope.

Max shifts and walks in the other direction. Chris drives off, passing the Sleep Tight Bedding Truck as it lumbers down the street. It turns a corner stopping at...

INT/EXT. SLEEP TIGHT BEDDING STORE - CONTINUOUS

The truck backs into a loading dock. A corrugated garage door rolls up. A PISSY MANAGER -- Tamburri -- rushes out as a worn Earl and Gus climb out of the cab.

TAMBURRI

You guys are like five states south of late.

EARL

Had brake problems.

Gus opens the truck doors. Tamburri looks at the mattresses piled haphazardly.

TAMBURRI

What the hell happened?

EARL

BRAKE problems.

The Manager turns to two WAREHOUSE GUYS.

TAMBURRI

Get these in, like yesterday. We have a shitload of deliveries.

The warehouse guys move into the truck...

INT. NORMAL HIGH SCHOOL - GUIDANCE COUNSELOR OFFICE - DAY (AFTERNOON)

Max slouches across from a typical GUIDANCE COUNSELOR, 30s, MALE, etc.

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR

Consider yourself lucky, Max. Expulsion is a lot worse than summer school. Your dad made a good case to the board.

Max frowns.

MAX

He's not my dad.

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR

Right. Well, if you keep your grades up and do well this summer, plus your SAT's, I don't think college'll be a problem. We'll just chalk this up to a learning experience.

MAX

Can I go now?

The Counselor leans forward across his chair.

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR

You know Max, you've been here seven months and I don't think you've made a single friend. Maybe that should be your goal this summer.

Max rises; takes his paperwork.

MAX

(sarcastic)

Good idea, Mr. Berger. I'll put that at the top of my list.

EXT. NORMAL HIGH SCHOOL - PICNIC TABLES - DAY (AFTERNOON)

Excited kids rush about, hugging and saying good-bye, signing yearbooks etc.

Rachel sits at a picnic table typing notes into her cell. Someone snatches it out her hand.

RACHEL

Hey!

Rachel turns to face the bra-enhanced, tight, torn jean wearing, gum-chewing blonde with tons of curly product-enhanced hair. The girl returns the cell phone and sits across from Rachel.

TEEN GIRL

Explain to me why my sister left me "breakfastless" this AM, hitched a ride with the new police douche and his psycho step son? Without so much as a tweet?

Her name is ALEXANDRA THERESA MILLER, 15, otherwise known as "ATM." She lights a cig. Rachel waves the smoke away.

RACHEL

He offered. And we had Frosted Flakes, ATM. They go in a bowl. Now if you don't mind, I need some quality alone time to --

Before Rachel can finish, a pair of African American male hands reach over ATM and cup her boobs. She *SHRIEKS*. Rachel rolls her eyes. JEFF TAYLOR, 17, good looking, strong and confident, drops down next to ATM.

ATM

Hate you.

JEFF

What? Just inspecting for breast cancer. You're straight.

Jeff kisses his fingertips. ATM playfully slaps him.

ATM

Whatev'.

JEFF

Don't hate. Not everyone gets to have their titties groped by the hands that provided the winning touchdown for the state championship.

They giggle. Rachel rolls her eyes.

RACHEL

If you two could go Kamasutra somewhere else, I'd really appreciate it.

JEFF

What's with her?

ATM

Oh, she's just pissed that I caught her catching a ride with her crush.

JEFF

I thought you were asexual.

ATM points. Jeff looks. Max carries a packet of envelopes and sits under a tree.

JEFF

The "uni-boy-mer!?! " For real?

RACHEL

It was a science paper--

ATM

-- on how to make a bomb.

JEFF

Loved when Homeland Security
checked his locker.

RACHEL

Exit stage left to the library.

Rachel rises. They are joined by another pretty teen girl,
BRIDGET CARPENTER and her muscular football player BF, WES
RANDALL. The two football players chest bump each other.

JEFF

HA!

He turns to Bridget and ATM.

JEFF

Your turn.

WES

In glorious porno, slo-mo.

BRIDGET

Yeah, you'd love to see that.

JEFF

Yeah, I would. That's why I asked.
What uuuuup!?!

He bangs knuckles with Wes. Bridget turns to ATM.

BRIDGET

Year-end soiree at your house?

RACHEL

Absolutely not.

ATM

Who left you in charge?

RACHEL

Mom and Dad. Remember them? No
parties until they're back from
Cape Town. That's the rule.

ATM salutes.

RACHEL

And don't forget the delivery guys
come at three. I'm passing out
resumes.

Rachel walks away.

ATM

There's no way we're from the same uterus.

The four remain silent.

BRIDGET

What delivery?

ATM

I don't know -- parents ordered a new mattress.

EXT. ROAD - SAME TIME

Tow trucks pull the Runner right side up. White sheet-covered, red-stained bodies line the road. A grim Reid takes in the mess. White-faced operatives and doctors go about their duties.

MAJOR REID

What do I tell their families?

THORN

We'll let the Department handle that.

MAJOR REID

They were good men--

THORN

-- And their families will be well compensated. Right now you have one charge and one charge only -- find those mattresses.

Thorn storms off. Reid fumes.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY (AFTERNOON)

Resembles a ski lodge more than a station. Several cops yuck it up as Chris' jeep parks. He jogs to the group who quiets down.

CHRIS

What's so funny?

The cops shift uncomfortably.

CHRIS

Ray?

Chris focuses on country OFFICER RAY BOWENS, 27. He shifts.

RAY

Merlotti was just giving me shit.
Hick humor. You city guys probably
wouldn't get it.

Chris manages a fake smile. Two of the cops look away.

CHRIS

Have fun.

He heads in. The officers return to laughing...

POLICE STATION - CHRIS'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Chris sits at his desk staring at an iChat screen on his
computer. Jill's on the other end.

CHRIS

They hate me.

ON SCREEN: Jill sits in their bed.

JILL

They don't hate you, Chris.

CHRIS

Of course they do. And Ray's not
only a member. He's the president.

JILL

They're just townies. We're out-of-
townies. It always takes a while to
warm up to us city folk. We bring
evil things like sushi and Warhol.

CHRIS

People took to you pretty fast.

JILL

I'm nicer. Besides, I can't issue
speeding tickets.

Chris smiles. It disappears when a fly lands on his desk.
He CRUSHES it with a binder. *Dead.* Smiles again.

CHRIS

What are Chloe and Max doing?

JILL

Chloe's packing... again. And Max
is doing what Max does.

CHRIS

Hey, I was thinking, maybe you
should go easy on the whole dad
thing. I mean he does have one.

JILL

Babe, in the three years we've been married, you've acted more like a dad to him than that sperm donor ever did.

CHRIS

I just wish I could reach him.

Jill smiles.

JILL

You always seem to find a way out of no way.

Chris smiles.

INT/EXT. RACHEL/ATM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Lots of money here. Art, expensive furniture.

FAMILY ROOM

Rachel and ATM, large bowl of popcorn between them, sit in surround sound watching credits roll on a flat screen.

ATM

That was HIGH-larious.

RACHEL

Hello -- 'The Exorcist?' No asustado?

ATM

Big sister, the only thing that scares me is a late period.

Rachel yawns and rises.

RACHEL

Hey, thanks for staying in and watching a movie on your first night of summer freedom.

ATM

What are sisters for?

RACHEL

I'm going to listen to my Spanish Tutorial. No smoking.

ATM

K. Hey...

ATM nods. Rachel bounces upstairs. ATM listens to her walking, then the door closing. She lights up a cig.

Something rustles outside...

ATM springs from the couch. The ash drops on her leg. She jumps, blotting it out. More MOVEMENT in the bushes. Something tracks her. She opens the front door. Looks...

ATM

Hello?

Nothing. Something MOVES off to the side of the house. ATM steps outside. She wraps her arms around herself.

SOMETHING POUNCES... ATM SCREAMS... Jeff.

JEFF

Boo!

Jeff, Bridget and Wes come out of the shadows. ATM slugs him.

JEFF

What -- It's eleven. I know you think Black people are tardy, but I'm never late for practice or pussy.

She hits him again. The teens go in the house.

HALL

BURP!

Bridget slaps Wes. ATM "shushes" them. Tiptoes up the stairs. ATM points at one door; shakes her head.

ATM

(whisper)

Rachel.

The couples look around.

ATM

(whisper)

Parents. New mattress. Foreign DNA on their bed is a BIG no-no.

BRIDGET

We'll do it on the floor.

The couples smile at each other.

ATM

Nighty-night.

Jeff shoves ATM into her bedroom, leaving the other couple in the hall. Wes pushes Bridget into...

MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Bridget's nails grip and scratch Wes's back. She rolls him underneath her. And in her best lusty, cowboy voice...

BRIDGET
(unstraps bra)
Giddyup.

She jiggles her boobs causing Wes not to notice A DROP OF BLOOD as it rolls down his back and into the...

INT. MATTRESS - CONTINUOUS

THE DROP lingers under the surface of the mattress like a water drop from a faucet. It plummets.

AND AWAKENS SOMETHING HORRIFIC...

Finished, Wes rolls over. Bridget tries to wake him.

BRIDGET
Wes... Wes?

He replies with a *DRUNKEN SNORE*. She frowns. Wes *FARTS*. She pulls on her underwear and bolts to the bathroom.

In between snores, Wes scratches his crotch.

Something rushes through the foam layers... springs... to Wes.

Wes flashes a stupid sleeping 'guy' smile as the sheets move beneath him.

WES
You want some more? What's my name?

BRIDGET (O.C.)
Wes!?!

Lights flip on. Wes sits upright. Bridget stands in the doorway staring at him, terrified.

RACHEL'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Bridget's *SCREAM* jolts Rachel. She throws off her headphones and opens her door...

HALL - CONTINUOUS

Storms down the hall. The *SCREAMING* continues. She stops at *MOANING* from...

ATM'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

ATM rides Jeff. Rachel throws the door open. Livid.

RACHEL

I knew it!

Jeff rolls over and covers himself.

ATM

Hey, beeyatch!

More *SCREAMS* interrupt.

RACHEL

You did not let Wes and Bridget...

She turns and raids the bedroom...

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Chris rises from his chair as Ray enters. He looks at the clock. It's past midnight.

RAY

Sorry.

CHRIS

Eh, only five minutes. No blood, no foul

The phone *RINGS*. Chris and Ray look. Chris answers.

CHRIS

Police...

He writes down an address.

CHRIS

We'll have a car out there shortly.

He hangs up.

RAY

What?

CHRIS

Noise disturbance. I'll take it.

(as he leaves)

Hey, Ray...

RAY

Yeah?

CHRIS

Look, I know it's not the chief gig, but I was thinking of talking to the mayor. Maybe there's something we can do -- a second-in-command or something.

Awkward situation.

RAY

Yeah... maybe.

Chris quickly smiles, nods and leaves.

INT/EXT. POLICE JEEP - (TRAVELING) NIGHT

Chris listens to the navigation system.

NAVIGATION SYSTEM

Next right turn.

CHRIS

(sotto)

A second in command what were you thinking? You took his promotion. He hates you. Simple.

He glances at his navigation system.

NAVIGATION SYSTEM

You have reached your destination.

Chris squints looking from house-to-house. He parks.

CHRIS

(sotto; whisper)

Where's the party at... ho!

WHAM!

A blood-splattered Rachel collides against his window. Chris rushes out and grabs her. She's surrounded by a blood-drenched ATM and Jeff. Bridget stands on the lawn... resembling Carrie at the prom. She faints.

LATER

Crowded. Two more squad cars, a fire engine and ambulance are parked at the scene. Neighbors gawk. Bridget's PARENTS accompany her as she's loaded into an ambulance.

A shaken Rachel, ATM and Jeff, wrapped in blankets, sit on the steps.

Chris speaks into his shoulder mic. Ray approaches him.

RAY
State Police called. They'll have
an MCAT here in the AM.

Chris nods.

CHRIS
They'll have plenty to investigate.
Just scrape the ceiling and walls.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Chief?

Chris and Ray turn. MAYOR LEWIS WILLIAMS, 40s, uber
political, in sweats, approaches Chris. He CLICKS a
Montblanc Skywalker pen repeatedly.

CHRIS
Mr. Mayor.
(to: Ray)
Contact the kid's parents.

RAY
Don't think I'll have to.

TWO PARENTS, 40s, distraught, hasten through the crowd.

WES' MOM
Where's my boy!?! Where is he!?!

Tears roll down her face as a white sheet-covered, red-
stained lump is carried down the stairs. The mother falls
on top of it, staining her with blood. The crowd GASPS.

Chris moves. Ray stops him.

RAY
Let me -- I know them.

Chris looks at Lewis, who nods in agreement.

LEWIS
My god.

Chris bites his lower lip; looks at the teens.

CHRIS
Lewis, I need to--

LEWIS
-- Yes-of course. Thank you.

Rachel watches the action. ATM lights up a cigarette.

Chris stoops down in front of the three.

CHRIS
How are you holding up?

No response. Jeff fights back fear.

FEMALE AFRICAN AMERICAN VOICE
Chief?

Chris turns to Jeff's parents -- 40s, African American.

JEFF
(relief)
Mom... Dad!

Jeff leaps to his parents. Loving arms tow him in.

JEFF'S DAD
Can we take him home?

Chris nods.

CHRIS
We'll get his statement later.

They lead Jeff away. Chris turns back to the girls.

CHRIS
What about you two? Anyone I can
call? Relatives? Family friend?

Rachel shudder/shakes her head. Chris thinks...

INT. BING HOUSE - ENTRANCE - DAY (SUNRISE)

Jill opens the door. Chris stands in between Rachel and ATM. They shoulder backpacks. Jill ushers them in and up the stairs. Max and Chloe watch from the second floor.

INT. BING HOUSE - MAX'S BEDROOM - LATER

Jill tears down Max's yellow tape and leads the girls in. Max stands behind her. Chloe looks at him.

CHLOE
(whisper)
Your girlfriend's here.

Max holds up a fist. Chloe runs to Jill.

JILL
Max hit me!

Jill turns to Max... ATM SCREAMS. Max's jar of bugs sits on the night stand. Jill's hands lands on her hips.

MAX

I know-I know. The garage.

He rushes to the bed, grabs the jar. He and Rachel make eye contact. Jill turns to the girls.

JILL

I'll get pillows and blankets.

Jill leaves. ATM sits down on the bed. She brings out a cigarette. Rachel notices and rushes over.

RACHEL

Put that out!

She snatches it.

ATM

I need one.

RACHEL

You need a lot of things. A cigarette isn't on the list.

ATM

I-I can't get Wes out of my head.

FLASH CUT TO:

INT/EXT. RACHEL/ATM'S HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - FLASHBACK

Wes' face is ripped apart quickly.

REAL TIME

Rachel sits down on the bed next to her.

RACHEL

We'll get through this.

ATM

You're not going to yell at me?

RACHEL

At some point. But not right now. Come on. I'll get some hangers.

KITCHEN - DAY (EARLY MORNING)

Chris talks on a cordless phone. Max sits with a coffee... summer school books off to his side.

CHRIS

Tell Nathan don't start without me.

Chris hangs up the phone.

MAX
So, what happened?

CHRIS
Can't talk about it right now.

MAX
You could at least give me a hint
since you turned my room into a
Holiday Inn.

Chris stops at the door. Orion circles.

MAX
Well... hopefully it'll turn out as
good as last time. Oh right, that's
why we're here in Bum-fuck.

Chris opens the door. Orion stops at the edge.

CHRIS
Orion, out.

Orion looks outside and *GROWLS*.

MAX
See? I'm not the only one.

Max rises. Grabs Orion by the collar.

MAX
Come on, boy.

CHRIS
Max?

His stepson turns.

CHRIS
I'm trying.

Max leads a whimpering Orion out the door.

INT. HOSPITAL - AUTOPSY SUITE - DAY (MORNING)

Typical. Country coroner, DR. NATHAN KANE, 50s, smarmy,
knows it all, stands over a porcelain table, lowers his
clear face shield. Chris and Ray, in scrubs, lower theirs,
as well. Nathan nods at the DIENER.

NATHAN
Brace yourselves.

The Diener tugs back the sheet. Ray flinches. Chris closes
his fists; presses them into his legs.

Wes' body resembles something caught in a harvester. Separated ribs point toward fluorescent lights. Skin hangs from bone. One leg is torn away. Organs are missing. His eyes sockets are black and his mouth is contorted.

NATHAN

Mastication happened pre- and postmortem.

RAY

Jesus.

NATHAN

We'll skip opening the trunk as it's already been manipulated.

The three look inside the cavity.

NATHAN

You'll see the stomach, spleen, liver, lungs are gone. Not to mention much of the Epidermis and Dermis. Some Hypodermis remains.

Wes' torso is a bloody cave.

NATHAN

He's missing approximately 5 liters of blood.

CHRIS

Anything else?

Nathan looks up.

NATHAN

Why, yes -- I wish I hadn't eaten that breakfast burrito.

He lifts his face shield. Chris and Ray do the same.

CHRIS

Nathan... guesses?

NATHAN

How hungry was his girlfriend?

CHRIS

You're a real dead-people person, Nathan.

NATHAN

Given the ferocity of the tears... the amount of bites. Our area... a wolf... possibly a cougar.

Chris blinks.

CHRIS

A wolf or a cougar -- did this?

RAY

Big cougar?

CHRIS

With all due respect, I've never seen mutilation like this. And in 18 years, I've seen a lot.

Ray and Nathan look at each other.

NATHAN

But not around here. You city people see a fat squirrel and run for your panic rooms. Animal attack. You can file that on black, Chief.

Before Chris can answer...

DIENER

Doctor Kane? I found something.

The three return to the table. The Diener points inside the chest cavity. He hands Nathan a magnifier.

DIENER

Against the spine.

Nathan peers through the magnifier. His face pinches.

NATHAN

Forceps.

The Diener hands him a pair of toothed forceps. He reaches inside and wrestles something free. He removes a gooey, grey, acorn-shaped thing.

CHRIS

What the hell is that?

EXT. BING HOUSE - PORCH - DAY (AFTERNOON)

Max, with school backpack, sets his bike down. Rachel sits on the porch swing, annoyed. Her laptop to the side.

MAX

Problem?

RACHEL
You mean other than being
traumatized? Yeah, rushing out of
my house, I forgot my power cord.

MAX
So... feel like talking about it?

RACHEL
Maybe to my therapist for the next
20 years. If I had a therapist.

MAX
Can't you get it-your power cord?

RACHEL
I think your dad would frown upon
that -- crime scene and all.

Max looks at Rachel tapping the keys on her dead laptop.

MAX
Let's go.

RACHEL
Where?

MAX
To get your power cord.

EXT. RACHEL/ATM'S HOUSE - DAY (AFTERNOON)

Max and Rachel stop their bikes a block away from the
house. A squad car remains outside.

RACHEL
There's no way.

Max watches.

MAX
Observe.

INT/EXT. POLICE CAR - MOMENTS LATER

One of the COPS, 50s, overweight, from earlier sips a
coffee in his car.

WHAM! The Cop jumps, almost spilling it.

MAX
Hey, Officer Wareham!

OFFICE WAREHAM
Max! You startled me.

MAX

Sorry.

Max motions with his eyes for Rachel to move into the house. She runs across the lawn...

MAX

So this is it -- the crime scene?

OFFICE WAREHAM

Yep. Your stepdad wants me to keep the gawkers away.

INT/EXT. RACHEL/ATM'S HOUSE - VARIOUS - SAME TIME

Rachel climbs in through an open window. She looks around the living room; then dashes up the stairs...

(INTERCUT)

Max smiles at Officer Wareham.

MAX

Pretty gruesome, huh?

Wareham turns up his nose.

OFFICE WAREHAM

Not for weak stomachs.

... Rachel stops at her parents' door; then sprints to her room. She searches quickly; spots her power cord and grabs it. She runs back down the hall.

She stops at her parents door. Nudges it open. And stops.

In the daylight, it's a bloody nightmare. Dried blood paints every surface. She turns to leave.

WHAM!

Walks into Max.

MAX

Sorry-He left.

RACHEL

Let's go.

MAX

Shit.

Max steps into the room. He takes in the horror. A light goes on in Rachel's head.

RACHEL

You used me.

MAX

Well, you weren't going to tell me what happened. And you did need your cord.

RACHEL

I'm out of here.

They rush out the door. And stop. Chris is standing by his jeep. Arms folded. Max and Rachel are busted...

INT. DINER - DAY (AFTERNOON)

A WAITRESS writes down Ray's order on a pad.

RAY

Medium, black.

MAN (O.S.)

Make that two.

Ray turns. Standing beside him is a shorter, rounder man in his 40s. He smiles at Ray...

INT/EXT. JEEP - (TRAVELING) DAY

Chris parks in front of his house. Rachel slides across the seat.

RACHEL

I'll be inside.

CHRIS

Grab your sister and Jeff. I need to ask you guys some questions.

Rachel nods. Max goes for the door handle.

CHRIS

Wait.

MAX

I know what's coming.

CHRIS

Max, I can't keep protecting you.

MAX

Then don't.

CHRIS

What you did -- that was tampering with a crime scene.

(MORE)

CHRIS (CONT'D)

You put me in an awkward position.
Do you get that?

MAX

Sorry.

Max goes for the door. Chris sighs.

CHRIS

I know you hate it here. And I know
you blame me. But can't you meet me
half way? For your mom and Chloe?

Their eyes meet. Max opens the door. *Maybe.*

INT. BING HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY (AFTERNOON)

Chris sits in front of Jeff, ATM and Rachel. Max listens in
the dining room. Jeff's parents lean against the sink.

CHRIS

So tell me about last night.

INT. RACHEL/ATM'S HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - FLASH BACK

FLASH. A nightmare. Wes *SCREAMS*. Blood sprays in different
directions. Ribs burst through skin. Loud *CHEWING*...

PRESENT TIME

The three remain silent. Tears roll down Rachel's face,
then ATM's. Jeff shakes his head.

JEFF

Just blood, dawg. (Mom slaps the
back of his head) I mean, sir. Lots
of blood.

Max swallows. Something catches his eye on the dining room
table. Chris' case file. He opens it. Takes out the pic of
the acorn-shaped thing...

CHRIS

Did you see anything else? An
animal?

RACHEL

It wasn't an animal.

ATM lurches forward and *VOMITS* on the table. Jeff and
Rachel jump. Chris rushes past Jeff's parents for the paper
towels. His cell *RINGS*. Jeff's mom takes the paper towel.

CHRIS

Bing. The mayor? Okay. What's the word from MCAT? Canceled? On who's authority?

EXT. THE NOR-MALL - DAY (EVENING)

Sun is just beginning to set. Lewis, now in a suit, leads a group of INVESTORS. Chris parks and approaches. Lewis points to a large empty space.

LEWIS

... And we'll make sure Starbucks moves in right next door to you.

Lewis turns, displays his best politician smile.

LEWIS

Ah, Chief Bing.

(to: the group)

May I introduce you to Normal's new police chief, Chris Bing. His hiring is the first time we've ever looked outside our hamlet for help.

Chris nods and smiles. Through his smile...

CHRIS

Hello. (to: Lewis) Can we talk?

LEWIS

If you'll excuse me. Maddie?

MADDIE, his red-hot 20-something assistant, steps forward.

LEWIS

Show these fine people the inside. You're going to love the fountain. It's a replica of Buckingham Fountain-- the one in Grant Park in Chicago. Thank you.

Maddie smiles and turns back to the group.

MADDIE

This way please...

Chris squints into the sun. Lewis brings out his pen...
CLICKING non-stop.

CHRIS

Why did you call off MCAT?

LEWIS

Don't want to waste tax payer dollars bringing in a major case assistance team... especially when this doesn't warrant them.

CHRIS

Doesn't warrant -- Lewis, I have a bedroom painted floor-to-ceiling with Wes Randall's blood. Not to mention a vic in the hospital. And of course there's the two girls staying with us.

LEWIS

That was very generous. And very typical of our community.

Chris frowns.

LEWIS

Did you call Animal Control?

Silence.

LEWIS

Chris, here in Normal I like to further an atmosphere of collaboration. Take Maddie, for example -- she's just an aide. But I make her feel a part of things. Now I know in the city it's necessary to take the proverbial football and run with it. But you don't have to do that here. Call Animal Control. Get some help and finish this.

CHRIS

But--

LEWIS

-- People 'round here need closure, Chief. Not on-going investigations.

Chris looks at the Ferris Wheel being constructed.

LEWIS

Thank you for understanding. Now I have an anchor store to secure.

Chris turns back to his jeep. His Cell Phone *PINGS*. He looks down. E-mail. No return address. He opens it.

ON SCREEN: A Photo of Forrest Martin in his officer's uniform. A headline: "Private First Class Commits Suicide."

INT/EXT. DEERWOOD HORSE FARM - STABLE - NIGHT

Dark. Moist.

BANG!

A terrified horse rears against a stall door and kicks it.
More horses join in. Stomping dirt. Ears pinning backwards.

INT. FARMHOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Muffled horse cries cause BILL NOLLMAN, 51, and his wife FAITH, 49, to twist and turn in bed.

FAITH

(sleepy)

Bill, go see about them.

BILL

Huh?

FAITH

Bill, you hear me? Go check on the horses. Something's wrong.

BILL

Okay.

Bill sleeps. Faith nudges him with her elbow.

BILL

WHAT!?!

FAITH

The horses.

BILL

What about 'em?

INT. BING HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jill and Chris sleep soundly. Chris' eyes roll open. He throws the blanket off...

INT. DEERWOOD HORSE FARM - STABLE - NIGHT

Bill enters. Silent. He looks around.

BILL

What's wrong with you guys?

Bill GAGS. He searches the wall for the light switch and flips it.

Bill's eyes widen. He covers his mouth and slides down the feed door to the floor. He runs...

INT. BING HOUSE - DEN - NIGHT

Chris opens the door. He stops. Max sits at his desk.

CHRIS

Max, what are you doing up-don't you have school tomorrow?

MAX

Oh sorry.

Chris approaches the desk. He sees his case file and photos spread out. He and Max make eye contact.

CHRIS

What is this?

MAX

I--

Chris closes the file. Max rises.

CHRIS

Max, I thought we said--

MAX

I just wanted to... whatever.

Max goes to the door. He turns.

MAX

That thing you found?

Chris looks at the acorn-shaped thing pic.

CHRIS

Yeah?

MAX

I think it's an egg.

Max leaves. Chris looks at the photo.

INT. DEERWOOD HORSE FARM - FARMHOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

A panicked Bill rushes into the bedroom.

BILL

Faith! Jesus Christ, the horses!

The light from the hall outlines Faith, sleeping.

BILL

Faith?

Bill walks to her... SLIPS, hitting the hardwood floor. He reaches for the night stand lamp. And turns it on.

Bill lies in a sea of blood.

BILL

Oh dear god! Faith!?!

He reaches up for his wife's arm and pulls...

A very dead Faith rolls over, revealing her half-eaten, bone revealing face. Her scalp is torn away, allowing blood-drenched brains to hang loosely.

Bill is YANKED under the bed. He clings to the bed rail. Whatever is beneath the bed, forces him to let go. Amid loud GNASHING, a tide of blood explodes from under...

DAY (SUNRISE)

Police cars, from several different counties, converge.

Chris jumps out of his jeep. Ray joins him. Chris yawns.

RAY

Son found him. (notices how tired Chris is) Get any sleep?

CHRIS

No.

A POLICEMAN, 30s, in a different uniform, rushes next to Chris and Ray.

POLICEMAN/TIM

Chief Bing, Tim Janowick, Mount Prospect. Thought you could use a hand.

CHRIS

Welcome aboard.

The three continue to the farmhouse.

MAN (O.S.)

Chief?

Chris turns. A Man, from the coffee shop, waits behind them. MARK PAUL, a '60 Minutes' wanna-be crime reporter for the Normal Courier. Chris sighs.

CHRIS

Mark... not now.

MARK

Just a question or two... before I go to press.

Chris stops...

CHRIS

We'll issue a statement later.

MARK

(smirks)

C'mon, Chief this isn't a high school DUI story or someone breaking into a garage. Wes Randall was brutally killed. Now the Nollmans. Are they related? What about the talk of a wolf or bear? A person of your stature from the city should be used to answering questions from the media.

CHRIS

We'll issue a statement... later.

Chris jogs to the house. Mark speaks to his mini-recorder.

MARK

The chief, somewhat unnerved at the mention of wild animal, leads this reporter to believe that we may all be in danger. Lock your doors, Normal.

He clicks his mini-recorder off. He turns, as if sensing he's being watched. Thorn observes from a distance...

INT. FARMHOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Bustling. Forensics takes photos of the death scene. Patterns of blood blot the walls. The Nollman couple lies on the ground, barely recognizable. Chris enters.

Ray turns to Chris.

RAY

MCAT is here this time.

CHRIS

Did you talk to Mark Paul about the Randall case?

RAY

What? No.

CHRIS

He seems to know an awful lot.

RAY

This is a small town. People talk.

CHRIS

Let's make sure we keep our talking
to a minimum.

Chris shakes his head and walks to one of the BLOOD
SPLATTER GUYS. Ray frowns.

CHRIS

Any thoughts?

BLOOD SPLATTER GUY

Other than someone is a Picasso
fanboy, no.

Chris notices something on the dresser. Yellow papers in a
plastic sleeve. He turns to another FORENSICS GIRL.

CHRIS

Do you have a pair of tweezers?

She nods.

FORENSICS GIRL

Yeah, sure.

She hands them to him. Chris picks up the sleeve --
receipts from the Sleep Tight Bedding Store. Chris looks
back at the mattress...

EXT. BING HOUSE - PORCH - DAY (AFTERNOON)

Rachel types on her laptop. Something still frustrates her.

RACHEL

Dammit.

Max watches through a window. He comes out.

MAX

So, on a scale of one to total tool
how would you rate me?

RACHEL

I'm a little busy here. Ugh.

Max sits down. Takes her laptop.

MAX

Here.

He works on it. Rachel watches.

RACHEL
That was pretty douchey.

MAX
I'm sorry. Was just curious I
guess.

The sound of e-mail being sent *WHOOOSHES*.

RACHEL
What did you do?

MAX
Just needed a password.

They smile at each other. It's quickly interrupted as a large flock of birds escape above. The kids watch with concern...

INT. POLICE STATION - LATER

Busy. Policemen work the phones. A concerned Chris pours over photos of Wes and The Nollmans on a bulletin board.

JILL (O.S.)
You look like you could
use a good nap.

Chris turns. Jill holds Chloe's hand. He smiles and blocks the photos. Picks up Chloe.

CHRIS
I could use a good two weeks. (to:
Chloe) How's my fave girl?

ABBIE, 20s, RECEPTIONIST rushes to Chris.

ABBIE
I have Animal Control on three.

CHRIS
Thanks, Abbie.

He turns to Jill.

JILL
Chloe wanted to say, "hi" since we
were at the camping store.

CHRIS
Right.

ABBIE
Mayor's town meeting is on for
three-thirty.

Chris holds up a finger. Mouths the word, "great." Turns back to Jill.

CHRIS
Listen. About that Daisy trip...

JILL
You want us to hold off.

CHRIS
I'm sorry.

JILL
S'mores have a tendency to make anyone forget that they're camping in the backyard.

Chris kisses her forehead.

CHRIS
You are a keeper.

JILL
I do think you should take her for ice cream therapy before the meeting.

He looks at Chloe. She beams back. Chris nods. Jill kisses Chloe and leaves. Abbie rushes in.

ABBIE
Sleep Tight Bedding store called. Vandalism.

CHRIS
Ji--

She's gone. Chris looks at Chloe, who smiles back.

INT/EXT. SLEEP TIGHT BEDDING STORE - DAY (AFTERNOON)

Chris and Chloe walk through the store with Tamburri.

CHRIS
You recently sold mattresses to the Millers and the Nollmans?

TAMBURRI
Yeah, they're-were good customers.

Chris picks up Chloe; sets her down a princess bed.

CHRIS
A princess bed for a princess.

CHLOE

Ice cream after? You promised.

Chris kisses her. The smile disappears after he joins Tamburri. Chloe crawls onto the little girl dream bed...

STOREROOM - CONTINUOUS

Chris and Tamburri enter.

TAMBURRI

I mean look at this shit.

They stop in front of a wall of torn mattresses.

(INTERCUT)

Chloe rolls around on the princess bed... stirring something inside the mattress...

... Chris runs a hand along the tears.

CHRIS

Any disgruntled employees?

TAMBURRI

You kidding? All of them.

... Chloe tumbles on the bed... Whatever is inside the mattress RUSTLES and moves slowly around the springs... like it's tracking prey...

... Chris pulls back a flap of the mattress.

CHRIS

What about security footage?

TAMBURRI

Never saw the need for a camera back here. Stealing a mattress isn't the most conspicuous thing to do...

... Chloe continues to play... Something picks up speed inside the mattress...

... Chris inspects another mattress.

CHRIS

Where do you receive your mattresses from?

TAMBURRI

All over...

Tamburri notices something.

TAMBURRI

That's funny.

He moves next to Chris...

... Chloe flops down on the bed. Something BURSTS through the foam...

... Tamburri points to the bottom of the mattress.

TAMBURRI

No label. Every mattress has one.

Chris looks around the other side. No label there...

... Whatever is inside the mattress reaches Chloe...
Something *SQUEALS*...

Chris lifts Chloe off the bed to safety.

CHRIS

How's bout that ice cream?

CHLOE

Yay!

Chris puts her down and turns to Tamburri.

CHRIS

Come down to the station and file a report. I'll get someone on it.

Tamburri nods. Suddenly smiles. Chris turns. Makes eye contact with Chloe. Her eyes plead...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - AUDITORIUM - DAY (AFTERNOON)

Filled. Chris drinks a large coffee. Jill is in shock.

JILL

A bed? You bought her a bed?

CHRIS

I felt bad about the camping trip.

JILL

She really does have you wrapped around her finger.

CHRIS

Yeah... Would you look at that?

Jill turns. Max enters followed by Rachel and ATM. ATM finds Jeff standing by a window in the back. She goes to him. Lewis approaches the podium. Jill takes a seat.

LEWIS

Thank you for coming on such short notice.

Chris sits next to Ray on the stage. He smiles at his wife and kids. Maddie, his aide, watches from the sidelines. He *TAPS* his pen lightly against the podium.

LEWIS

I believe the strength of a community, no matter how big or small, is the ability of its citizens to come together at anytime to solve an issue.

RESIDENT ONE

(yells)

Three deaths isn't an issue, Mr. Mayor.

People nod in agreement. Lewis manages a smile.

LEWIS

No, you are correct, Warren. Which is why we must consider ourselves blessed to have someone like Chief Bing in charge. Perhaps, he can make you feel more comfortable than I right now. Chief? Thank you.

Chris rises and approaches the podium. He looks over at Jill, smiles. He finds Max in the back.

CHRIS

We've reached out to the State Police's Forensics Department, Animal Control as well as neighboring police departments.

Mark blurts out.

MARK

Is it a wolf or something worse?

TOWNSPERSON

Maybe it's Big Foot.

The room *CHUCKLES*.

WES' MOM

You wouldn't be laughing if it was your child.

The Townsperson feels small. The door opens. Thorn enters.

CHRIS
We're still waiting for the
coroner's report on the Nollmans.

The town *MURMURS*. Lewis stands.

LEWIS
Nathan, if you would? Thank you.

Chris looks at Nathan, who turns his head. Nathan faces the
Wes' mom and dad.

NATHAN
My prayers are with you, Pam,
Bobby. (to: group) I stand by my
original assessment --possibly wolf
or cougar attacked all three.

Concerned undertone again. Jeff shakes his head. Chris
notices; as does Max.

MARK
What about the report of finding
something attached to the Randall
boy's spine?

Chris throws a sharp glance to Ray. Nathan gulps.

NATHAN
We're still waiting for a report
from the hospital. But my first
guess would be tumors of some sort.

Wes' parents cry. Mark stands. *It's his moment.*

MARK
Then as of this moment, the Courier
would like to offer a \$10,000
reward to whomever can hunt and
kill this animal.

The room becomes electric. Chris speaks into the mic.

CHRIS
No.

The town ignores Chris. *One more time.*

CHRIS
No.

The group faces Chris.

CHRIS

Mark, thank you for the offer. But, the truth is we don't know what we're dealing with.

MARK

Are you saying you don't want help?

Before Chris can answer, Lewis steps in.

LEWIS

No-no-no. I think Chief Bing is just concerned for the town's safety. But as I said in the beginning, this is what makes a town strong -- teamwork. We would be more than happy to take the Courier up on its generous offer.

A WOMAN, mom type, raises her hand. Lewis notices her.

LEWIS

Yes, Kathleen?

KATHLEEN

What about Strawberry Festival? You know how much Normal depends on it.

Lewis smiles.

LEWIS

It's the day after tomorrow. Let's table our decision until then. Thank you.

The group disperses. Chris corners Lewis.

CHRIS

Are you kidding me? You'll have every would-be hunter with a BB gun trying to collect.

LEWIS

Chris, why not let Ray run point on this? He knows the hunters. Knows the woods.

Chris stands in disbelief. Lewis smiles.

LEWIS

Thank you.

Chris moves off stage. Mark blocks him.

CHRIS

Nice going.

MARK
Just trying to help, Chief.

CHRIS
You know, Mark, I know being a
journalist is a potential front row
seat to unemployment. But you
should still act responsibly.
You're frightening the town.

MARK
I like to think, through my
stories, that I'm bringing us
closer. Good-day, Chief.

Max, Rachel, ATM and Jeff head to the door.

JEFF
That's some bullshit.

ATM
Jeff.

JEFF
That was no an animal.

MAX
Then what was it?

Jeff turns.

JEFF
Hold up! The "Uni-boy-mer" Really?

Max frowns.

RACHEL
Jeff.

ATM shakes her head.

ATM
I want to see Bridget.

Rachel nods. The three move. Max stays. Rachel turns.

RACHEL
Coming?

Max, surprised, walks with them. Jeff stops him.

JEFF
You can come. But you walk like a
Islamic wife -- twenty paces in
back.

EXT. VILLAGE HALL - LATER

The throng leaves. Chris cuts a path down the middle; Ray on his heels.

THORN (O.S.)
Chief Bing?

Chris turns. Thorn removes his fedora and extends his hand.

THORN
Noah Thorn. University of Iowa.

CHRIS
University of Iowa?

THORN
Forensics contacted me.

Chris pauses as they reach his jeep.

CHRIS
Professor Thorn. Call me "stupid,"
but I don't really understand the
need for your services.

Thorn wipes his glasses with a cloth. He puts them back on and stares at Chris.

THORN
I so hope you will, Chief.

INT. HOSPITAL - AUTOPSY SUITE - LATER

Thorn works between two autopsy tables. Nathan, annoyed, folds his arms and observes.

THORN
Victim zero?

Chris nods. Thorn looks at Wes, then Nollman.

THORN
I'm going to need a full toxicology
report on him. My lab will do.

Thorn picks up the magnifier. He places it carefully back.

THORN
Are these the "tumors?"

Nathan nods. Thorn snaps his gloves off.

THORN
May I see their mattresses?

INT. HOSPITAL - BRIDGET'S ROOM - SAME TIME

ATM cracks the door. Wipes a tear as she notices how many tubes and monitors "mummy" unconscious Bridget. A solemn Jeff and Rachel enter. Max waits. Rachel turns.

RACHEL

C'mon.

MAX

I don't really know her.

Rachel grabs his hand, and lightly pulls him in. ATM pulls a chair next to Bridget. ATM brushes Bridget's hair.

JEFF

Damn.

ATM looks desperately from Jeff to Rachel.

ATM

I don't know what to do.

Jeff shrugs.

JEFF

I know how to read a playbook.
This...

MAX

Talk to her.

ATM

What?

MAX

Lots of studies say a familiar
voice can help.

ATM looks at Rachel. She shrugs. ATM touches Bridget's hand.

ATM

Hi honey. I don't know if you can
hear me, but I'm here. I'm going to
come everyday until you wake up.
You're my 'bestie.'

Bridget's pulse rises. It goes unnoticed. Jeff motions for her to continue.

ATM

Bridget... I'm here for...

WHAM!

Bridget ambushes ATM's wrist. Squeezes hard.

ATM
Holy fuck, Bridget!

Bridget's eyes roll open. Her readings go off the chart.

BRIDGET
Don't let them bite.

Nurses RUSH in.

NURSE
I need you to wait in the lobby.
We'll get you when there's news.

ATM springs as the attendants surround her friend.

BRIDGET'S MOM
No she won't. Get out. All of you.

Bridget's mom and dad stand in the doorway.

JEFF
Yo, Mrs. Carpenter--

BRIDGET'S MOM
-- Don't you 'yo' me. It's your
fault she's here. Now get out!

Rachel leads ATM out. She turns one last time to look at the attendants working on Bridget.

RACHEL
C'mon, Alex.

INT. POLICE STATION - EVIDENCE ROOM - LATER

Chris unlocks a gate. The shelves are mostly bare. Chris and Thorn approach the two bloodied mattresses.

THORN
Are you that thorough in solving
your crimes or you have none?

CHRIS
The latter.

Thorn stoops over the mattresses. *Gruesome.*

CHRIS
You said the state's forensics
contacted you.

THORN
My office actually.

CHRIS

I'm going to need a contact.

THORN

Of course. I'll touch base as soon
as we're done here.

He pulls back material, reaches a hand in. He pulls something out.

Another acorn shaped thing. Chris recognizes it...

EXT. POLICE STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Chris storms in. Thorn by his side. Abbie looks up from her computer as do other officers.

CHRIS

Abbie, get me Sleep Tight Bedding
Store. (to:Thorn) I need to find
out who else bought mattresses.

INT. BING HOUSE - FOYER - DAY (LATE AFTERNOON)

The doorbell *RINGS*. Jill answers. It's a Sleep Tight Delivery Man.

DELIVERY MAN

Delivery for a Chloe Bing...

INT/EXT. JEEP - (TRAVELING) DAY (LATE AFTERNOON)

Chris' Jeep, lights flashing, weaves in and out of traffic.

CHRIS

Help me understand -- bedbugs are
real?

THORN

Very real. In any given mattress
there are at least ten thousand of
them.

Chris looks at him; steps on the gas.

EXT. LEWIS' HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

What you would expect. Over the top. Chris parks. He and Thorn rush up the stairs. Chris *RINGS* the doorbell. HEATHER, Lewis' wife, opens the door.

HEATHER

Chief?

CHRIS

Heather. Is the Mayor home?

HEATHER

No, he's still downtown. What's this all about?

CHRIS

I need to see your bedroom...

INT. BING HOUSE - FOYER - SAME TIME

Jill supervises. Chloe watches with anticipation.

GRRRRRR! Jill looks down at Orion.

JILL

Orion, shut it.

The men pause at the bottom of the stairs. Orion's *GROWL* becomes more fearsome. Chloe turns to Jill.

CHLOE

Mommy?

Jill grabs Orion by the collar. The dog assumes the attack position. Teeth bare.

JILL

Bad boy. Stop it.

Orion breaks free and *LUNGES* at one of the delivery men.

DELIVERY MAN

Hey!

Jill pulls Orion off of his leg.

JILL

Orion! NO! Chloe, get out of here!

Orion runs into another room.

KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Orion skids on the floor.

CRAAAAAASH!

He jumps through the sliding glass door window. Jill steps through the shattered glass. Orion, bloodied, lies on the patio, whimpering. Jill covers Chloe's eyes...

INT. LEWIS' HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY (LATE AFTERNOON)

Chris is knee-deep in foam and stuffing. He puts his hands on his hips.

CHRIS

I don't get it. The store said he bought one.

THORN

Perhaps another room?

A horrified Lewis and Heather stand in the doorway.

LEWIS

Chris!?!

KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Lewis's hands supports his disbelieving head. In front of him is the bedbug egg. He *CLICKS* his pen. Chris ignores his phone *RING*.

LEWIS

You mutilated our mattress looking for a bedbug?

Heather, pissed, walks through with a shop-vac.

CHRIS

Not one bedbug, Lewis. Thousands.

LEWIS

Aside from the fact that Heather and I did not buy a new mattress, you expect me to believe that these horrific deaths is the work of a tiny insect?

THORN

Not a tiny insect in this case. Something much bigger.

CHRIS

I know how it sounds. The Randall kid. The Nollmans. Both new mattresses. When I saw your name on the list...

Lewis scrutinizes both of them...

... The front door *SLAMS* behind them. Thorn positions his fedora on his head.

THORN

Think he's angry?

CHRIS

L'il bit.

His cell phone *RINGS*. Lewis motions for him to answer.

ON SCREEN: HOME

CHRIS
Jill this isn't--

JILL (ON PHONE)
Chris, come home now!

INT. BING HOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT

Chris enters carrying Orion, who wears a cast on his right hind leg and is shaved and bandaged around his face. Jill, Max, Chloe, Rachel and ATM rush him.

CHRIS
Go easy on him. He's sedated.

The group follows as Chris carries him to...

LAUNDRY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Chris gently places the dog on his bed.

CHRIS
There you go, big guy.

Chloe crouches over him. Chris turns to Max.

CHRIS
Max.

MAX
Yeah?

CHRIS
You were right by the way. It was an egg.

Max musters a smile. This doesn't go unnoticed by Rachel.

HALL

Chris props a leg against the wall. Jill mimics him on the other side.

JILL
It was like he snapped.

CHRIS
Yeah.

JILL
I'm sure the delivery guy is going to sue.

CHRIS

Delivery guy?

JILL

Chloe's bed. Remember?

Chris turns; cracks open the door. Looks at the assembled bed. Feels for the knife in his pocket. Thinks. Closes the door.

EXT. PORCH - NIGHT

Max, Rachel and ATM sit quietly. ATM brings out a cigarette. Goes to light it.

RACHEL

Hey.

ATM stops. Rachel goes for the pack instead of her cigarette. Takes one. Thinks. Then puts it back. ATM looks at Max.

ATM

Hey, "uni-boy-mer" what did your dad mean when he said it was an egg?

Rachel mouths, "stop calling him uni-boy-mer."

MAX

It's nothing. And he's not my dad.

ATM's phone *PINGS*. She reads a text. Brightens.

ATM

Jeff says the football team's holding a memorial tonight for Wes and Bridget.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Major party. A DJ spins. Hot teen guys and girls dance, drink, make out and have sex.

Jeff leads ATM to a more secluded spot. Beer spills from their plastic cups as Jeff throws her against a tree.

JEFF

Told you this is just what you need.

ATM

Maaaaaybe.

Something *RUSTLES* in the branches above... watching...

Max brings Rachel, who sits on a log, a filled plastic cup.

RACHEL

Oh I don't--

MAX

Water.

She takes it. He sits next to her. He raises his cup.

RACHEL

Football team seems real broken up.

MAX

Life goes on. I read some people
were partying the day after 9/11.

Rachel wasn't expecting that answer.

RACHEL

You read a lot.

MAX

Distracts me from my situation.

RACHEL

And the jar of bugs?

MAX

To be a pain in the ass.

A DRUNKEN TEEN GUY collapses in front of them. He laughs.

RACHEL

So, Max. Want to see something
really distracting?

He nods. She grabs his hand.

INT. HOSPITAL - LAB - NIGHT

Thorn works at a lab table. Chris "googles" on a computer.

ON SCREEN:

A BEDBUG (our first real look at one) fills the screen.
It's nasty. Flat body. Mouthparts stretched outwards. Tiny
eyes. A reddish-brown translucent back.

Chris taps on another page. He reads... studies photos of
bedbug attacks... flinches at the welts on a woman's back.

THORN

Not a fan of insects?

CHRIS

Oh no I love them. Dead mostly, but
I love 'em.

(MORE)

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Having your brother stuff you into a playground tube filled with spiders can have a profound affect on your outlook.

THORN

A great sense of reverence led me to study them. They've survived earthquakes, meteors, volcanoes the dinosaurs and man. Who would think these mini-beasts would be stronger than almost any of the Earth's other inhabitants? We could learn a lot about survival from them.

CHRIS

Just give me a can of Raid.

THORN

Chief.

Chris rolls his stool over to Thorn who looks down at a dish. Chris whistles. Thorn has dissected the egg. A larger-than-usual nymph (baby bedbug) lies under the light.

CHRIS

Big bug.

THORN

At least 100 times larger.

CHRIS

What are those?

THORN

Its mouthparts. From here is where Cimex Lectularius inject a small paralyzing fluid into their prey.

Chris takes a scalpel. Lifts a gooey mouthpart. He explores down below.

THORN

Her highness is quite a specimen.

CHRIS

Her highness?

THORN

This one is a queen.

CHRIS

Of course it is. And how many eggs does the royal one lay?

THORN
Normally, two to three a day.

CHRIS
That's not too bad.

THORN
Thousand, Chief.

Chris returns to looking at the bug. Concern growing...

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Jeff opens ATM's shirt. Something watches. Jeff freezes.

ATM
What?

JEFF
Do... not... move.

ATM
What is it?

Jeff smiles.

JEFF
A... very... wild... animal.

ATM grows frightened.

JEFF
GRRRRR!

He moves in on her. She slugs him. They resume kissing...

... Max shines a flashlight over rocks as he helps Rachel climb.

RACHEL
So why'd you skip my acceptance
speech?

MAX
Who said I did?

RACHEL
Did you see it?

MAX
No.

RACHEL
See? Now back to my original
question -- why?

MAX

I know it was good. Probably about looking forward to next year. And... I'm not planning on being a part of next year's graduating class.

RACHEL

Gonna stay back a year?

MAX

No. I'll be back in Philly.

RACHEL

At last you have a plan. Tah-Dah.

Max's is amazed by an ancient aqueduct opening.

MAX

Wow.

RACHEL

I'd to come here as a Barbie-hating tyke and explore. I'd pretend monsters lived inside and I'd save the town.

Max shines a light down its black mouth.

MAX

Not too ambitious.

RACHEL

Perhaps before you go back to Philly, you'll explore all that Normal has to offer

Max smiles. *SOMETHING MOVES*. The two teens turn.

RACHEL

What was that?

Max grabs her hand. More movement. Something closes in.

MAX

Come on!

The they run...

... Back at the party, ATM has wrapped a legs around Jeff's. *SOMETHING MOVES*...

ATM

Wait!?!

JEFF
 (out of breath)
 What?

ATM
 Didn't you hear that?

JEFF
 No.

Something moves around them. Jeff's eyes widen.

JEFF
 Shit!

... Max and Rachel trip over trees, rocks etc...

... Jeff rushes to the DJ, who is absorbed in mixing. ATM looks for her shirt.

ATM
 Where the hell's my shirt!?!

JEFF
 Yo, kill the music!

DJ
 What!?!

Jeff pushes all the mixer levels down. Silence.

DJ
 Are you nuts--

The teens turn to the DJ Table. Complain. Jeff quiets them.

JEFF
 Listen!

LOUD MOVEMENT can be heard everywhere. ATM finds her shirt.

... Max and Rachel reach the clearing. The noise surrounds them. The teens circle in toward each other, facing outwards...

The *CRUNCHING* stops.

Ray, in hunting gear, emerges. As do other hunters. Ray lifts his night vision goggles. The teens relax.

RAY
 Oh for crying out loud!

More hunters emerge from the thick. Ray takes in the group... lets his gun drop to his side.

RAY
 You guys know better than this.
 (to: Max)
 Especially you, Max. What would
 your dad say?

Max starts to say something... then doesn't.

MAX
 We were just blowing off steam. You
 know it's been pretty intense since
 school let out...

ATM *SCREAMS*.

Ray turns to his men.

JEFF
 ATM!

HUNTER 1
 Over there!

RAY
 Let's go!

Max looks at Jeff and the rest of the teens. They join the
 hunters.

Ray leaps over rocks, fallen trees. The Hunters follow. ATM
SCREAMS one more time. Then nothing.

Ray comes to a stop. He searches.

WHAM! ATM lands in his arms, surprising him.

Before he can react, something *MOVES* in the bushes. Ray
 turns and *FIRES* repeatedly.

THUD!

RAY
 Stay here.

Ray dashes into the darkness.

RAY
 Got him! I got him!

The group turns. Ray stands triumphantly.

EXT. VILLAGE HALL - DAY (MORNING)

Electric. A large BLACK BEAR rolls off the back of a pick
 up truck. Chris makes his way through the sea. Mark Paul
 blocks his way.

CHRIS

Mark, you mind?

MARK

Not at all. Genius move putting
your deputy in charge. Your idea?

Chris moves next to Lewis who has positioned himself next
to Ray. Maddie hands Lewis the mic.

LEWIS

It is a proud day in Normal when I
can proclaim one of our own a hero.
And today is that day. Deputy Ray
Bowens, you are a hero.

Ray feigns shyness. The crowd applauds.

LEWIS

Yes, our prayers are with the
Randalls, Carpenters and Nollmans.
But today, we can now take a step
forward. And that begins with the
our Strawberry Festival.

The crowd *APPLAUDS* again.

THORN

They're wrong you know.

Chris turns to Thorn. Lewis walks down the stairs with Ray.
Mark Paul blocks their way.

MARK

Deputy, an interview?

RAY

(beams)

Sure.

Chris blocks Lewis. Thorn steps forward.

THORN

That bear... did not kill these
people.

Lewis' face turns red.

CHRIS

C'mon Lewis, that bear would have
to be pretty damn light on its feet
to crawl in and out of windows and
leave not so much as one print.
Think about it.

Lewis motions for Chris to join him.

LEWIS

I gave you a chance when no one else would, Chris. You need to think about yourself, your position on the force. Your family. You don't want them to be the butt of jokes. Do you? Don't upset the apple cart. Thank you.

Lewis storms off. Chris' cell phone *PINGS*. He looks down. Another e-mail.

He opens it.

ON SCREEN: A PHOTO OF A TOWN. POINT PLEASANT.

INT. BING HOUSE - DEN - LATE NIGHT

Chris sits at his computer. He studies tourism sites for Point Pleasant. Small resort.

JILL

Need anything?

CHRIS

Some sleep would be lovely.

Jill rests a hand on his shoulder.

JILL

Even if the entire state of Illinois thinks you're crazy, I know different.

CHRIS

What -- I'm certifiable?

JILL

Exactly.

Jill kisses him on the cheek.

JILL

Don't take too long, Chief.

She leaves. He clicks on the story about Private First Class Martin's suicide. He notices in a side-column: Most Viewed.

Chris clicks on another suicide story. Another Private. He sees another. And another. Chris goes back to the first story. Looks at the date. He cross-references it with the other suicide soldier stories.

All the same date. Chris sits back in his chair.

CHRIS

What does it mean? Got an answer.

He's looking at Orion, who's curled in a corner...

EXT. MOTEL - DAY (SUNRISE)

A MAID exits a room. Pushes her car to the next. She looks for her keys and opens the door.

AND SCREAMS.

LATER

Mount Prospect police cars *SHRIEK* to the scene. Chris' jeep *SQUEALS* to a angled halt. He and Thorn jump out. Tim Janowick, the cop from earlier, rushes to the car.

CHRIS

Thanks for calling me, Tim.

TIM

Seemed way too similar to what was going on in Normal. And considering we're only five miles apart...

CHRIS

This is Professor Noah Thorn.

Tim shakes his hand.

CHRIS

What did your forensics boys say?

They reach the doorway.

TIM

Not much. I think they're still vomiting. But I can tell you this -- it's no animal.

Chris and Thorn enter. Room is filled with Forensics and Cops. Definitely a bigger operation than Normal.

Chris works his way to the body. His eyes widen with recognition.

Maddie is split like a wishbone. An eyeball dangles from its socket down the side of her face. Most of her skin is gone, exposing muscle. Thorn grimaces.

Chris notices something sticking out from under the bed.

A PEN...

He picks it up.

INT. VILLAGE HALL - DAY (MORNING)

Chris storms in. Lewis' SECRETARY looks up from his desk.

SECRETARY

The Mayor asked to not be disturbed.

Chris doesn't answer; opens the door.

MAYOR'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Photos of Lewis in various events adorn wood panels. Lewis, deep in thought, sits behind his large wooden desk. A gold framed photo of himself dwarfs the framed photo of his family.

LEWIS

Chris?

Chris tosses his pen down on the desk.

CHRIS

Don't bother with, "what are you talking about?" Just get to the story we both know you're going to tell me.

Lewis shakes his head.

LEWIS

Maddie and I had been meeting since the last election. I-I bought a new mattress because she hated sleeping on the motel's. It made her feel dirty.

Chris rubs his forehead.

LEWIS

There's something you need to know -
- everything I do, I do for the town.

CHRIS

Don't give me that, Lewis.
Everything you do-you do for you.
But what really pisses me off is
that you made me think I was losing
my mind.

LEWIS

Chris, you can't implicate me in
this.

CHRIS
 Lewis, you're already implicated.
 You are an eyewitness, the only
 eyewitness, to an on-going
 investigation.

Lewis *POUNDS* his open hand on the desk.

LEWIS
 But I didn't kill her.

CHRIS
 But you saw what did.

LEWIS
 No, I didn't. Chris one minute she
 was lying in bed waiting for me.
 The next minute--

Chris looks out the window. Lewis comes up behind him.

LEWIS
 Chris, you owe me.

Chris turns.

LEWIS
 I gave you a chance when no one
 else would. Lead detective who
 cries wolf in a grisly killing.
 Wrongly accuses high-ranking
 official... Fired.

CHRIS
 So that's your bargaining chip?

LEWIS
 Chris, please. Something like this
 will devastate the fabric of this
 town. The mall. You saw their
 reaction when Ray caught that bear.
 It was relief. In this economy,
 something like this will make
 Normal tank. Don't make me stand
 contrite at a podium. Just give me
 until after Strawberry Festival. A
 weekend. Look in your heart and do
 what you think is right.

Chris thinks...

EXT. BING HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY (AFTERNOON)

Jill follows Chris out to his jeep. Max and Rachel follow.

JILL

I don't understand why you have to go.

Chris throws his bag into the back seat. Max comes outside with Rachel. Chris notices.

CHRIS

I told you -- it's a hunch.

MAX

Want me to come?

Chris shakes his head.

CHRIS

No. You've been through enough. Go to the carnival. Have a fun date.

Rachel and Max look at each other.

RACHEL

We're so not--

MAX

-- Dating.

Chris looks at the two. Then Jill.

CHRIS

I've called The Bedding Store. I want that mattress out of here.

JILL

I'll follow up.

Jill kisses him. Chris starts the jeep and pulls away.

INT/EXT. HIGHWAY TRUCK STOP - DINER - DAY (MORNING)

Earl sips coffee, eating breakfast. As he leans back, we see Thorn sitting next to him. Earl's surprised.

EARL

You shocked a pint of blood outta my ass.

Thorn takes a white envelope out of his pocket. He slides it to Earl.

THORN

This concludes our agreement.

Earl happily stuffs it in his pocket. Thorn rises and tips his fedora. Earl searches for something to say.

EARL

Hey, if you ever need me to--

THORN

-- I won't. Good day.

Thorn leaves. Earl takes the envelope out and opens it. It's filled with hundred dollar bills.

INT/EXT. TRUCK CAB - MOMENTS LATER

Earl climbs into the cab; throws the envelope down.

EARL

We are going to Sizzler. Yes, sir.

Earl starts the truck. He doesn't notice that the bed in back has flowered outward. He works the clutch. Just as he is about to pull out, he glances into the rear view mirror.

Something converges on him. Earl *SCREAMS* as he's torn to bits within seconds.

A smiling Thorn gets back into his car. And drives off...

-- SERIES OF SHOTS AROUND NORMAL --

The Strawberry Fest is in full preparation. It's like main Street in Disney World.

-- MUSICIANS in the parade tune up.

-- OPERATORS test drive a baby roller coaster.

-- VENDORS/FARMERS set up their various booths.

-- TOURISTS pour into town.

INT. BING HOUSE - FOYER - DAY (LATE MORNING)

The door bell *BONGS*.

JILL

Max, get that!

Max answers. Parents and FIVE DAISIES, stand smiling at the doorway. They charge past Max.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY (AFTERNOON)

Very Americana. Framed photos of Forrest, at different ages, with his family adorn the room. MRS. MARTIN, 51, carrying a little extra weight brings Chris a coffee. MR. MARTIN, 60, rugged, crew cut, probably a soldier, sits across from Chris.

CHRIS

Thank you.

Chris watches an ancient clock tick away on the mantle.

MRS. MARTIN

We were so proud of Forrest. He did two tours in Irag. And he was going to go to Afghanistan... but...

Her husband looks away. Chris sympathizes. Mr. Martin brings out a medal case.

MR. MARTIN

They gave us this...

He hands it to Chris, who opens it. A medal.

MRS. MARTIN

For heroism.

Chris traces a finger over it.

CHRIS

Did he ever mention anything about a Point Pleasant?

The two parents look at each other... shake their heads.

MRS. MARTIN

No. He called two weeks before it happened. He was so proud. He told us he'd been assigned to a special task force.

CHRIS

Did he say anymore?

They shake their heads.

CHRIS

Would you mind if I had a look in his room?

MR. MARTIN

Help yourself.

FORREST'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Chris enters. Eyes dart around, taking in Forrest's teenage memories.

Chris walks to a desk. A ladybug crawls across it. He goes to kill it, but it's a pretty ladybug. He flicks it.

The ladybug lands on a photo of a group -- Forrest's company.

Chris picks it up.

IN PICTURE: Forrest's smiling company. Among them is Thorn, standing off to the side. Chris turns as raindrops splatter against the window...

EXT. CARNIVAL - BOOTH - DUSK

Max wins Rachel a small penguin at a booth.

MAX

Kinda tiny.

Rachel brushes her hair behind her ear. Smiles.

RACHEL

Yeah, it is.

Rachel wiggles her hand into Max's. He picks up another backpack as they explore another booth. Max notices rain clouds rolling in.

INT/EXT. JEEP - (TRAVELING) DUSK

The rain comes down harder. Chris' cell phone rings. He picks it up.

GARY (ON PHONE)

Chris, how the hell are you?

CHRIS

Gary, it's been awhile. How are they treating you?

GARY

Oh you know. What do they say, "trying to make a dollar out of fifteen cents.

Chris laughs.

GARY

Hey, so anyway, I got your message.

CHRIS

Great.

GARY

Well, not so great. No one from this office contacted the University of Iowa. Let alone any entomologist named Thorn.

CHRIS

Okay... um, thanks, Gar.

GARY

Wish I could be more help.

Chris hangs up. Tosses his cell on the seat.

INT/EXT. JEEP - (TRAVELING) NIGHT

The rain comes down harder.

NAVIGATION SYSTEM

You have reached your destination.

Chris looks through the wiper blades at the desolate town. Then looks back at the navigation system. It clearly says Point Pleasant, Wisconsin.

Chris taps the gas and drives slowly forward. He comes to a stop. Grabs a flashlight out of the front seat and jumps out. Mud splashes up from his boots.

EXT. POINT PLEASANT - CONTINUOUS

The headlights from the running jeep cast an eerie glow as Chris searches. He pulls his yellow hood over his head.

The town is non-existent. Burned out and leveled. Chris continues to walk.

Chris shines his flashlight onto what's left of the bombed out buildings. Stops.

His flashlight focuses on the framework of a mattress. Tattered material hangs on the springs. He takes a step forward and falls...

Chris tumbles into a muddy ditch. He searches for something to grab onto the side with. He picks up a branch.

It's not a branch.

Shocked, Chris throws the skeleton's arm. He sinks deeper into the mud, pushing out more floating bodies. More skulls float to the surface... some with decaying, eaten flesh attached.

Chris claws his way against the muddy wall, but tumbles back into the dead pool. Body parts weigh down on him, pushing him under. Chris springs from the watery mass grave, spits mud out and takes a deep breath.

He sees part of the wall has now become more sloped. He belly-crawls up the to the top.

Chris rolls on his back. Relieved.

Something inhuman *ROARS*. *He understands...*

Chris grabs his flashlight and bolts for his jeep. He takes one last look at the mattress. Something chases after him.

INT. BING HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

The rain comes down harder.

JILL

Come on, girls! Everyone inside.

Five *SCREAMING* and dripping DAISY GIRLS, 7 or 8, all races and sizes, led by Chloe rush in. One hefty, but cute girl whispers in Chloe's ear. Chloe beams at her mom.

CHLOE

Hot chocolate?

JILL

Dry off, first.

INT/EXT. JEEP - (TRAVELING) NIGHT

The rain continues to pour as Chris turns onto the highway.

NAVIGATION SYSTEM

Next right onto I-90.

Chris holds his phone against his ear.

CHRIS

C'mon.

JILL (ON PHONE)

Hello?

CHRIS

Jill! Pick up.

JILL (ON PHONE)

You've reached The Bings. New to Normal. Leave a message.

CHRIS

Jill, get the kids out of the house! Get 'em out now!

Chris steps on the gas...

INT. BING HOUSE - CHLOE'S ROOM - NIGHT

The Girls, now dry, bounce on the bed. One girl cartwheels onto Chloe and scratches her. Chloe *YELPS*. A drop of blood lies on the mattress.

Things move inside the mattress...

KITCHEN - SAME TIME

The tea pot whistles. Jill brings the pot to six mugs; pours hot water...

JILL

(yells)

Girls!

CHLOE'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

... The girls play in the room. Laughing, dancing etc. They don't notice the bulges forming in the mattress...

... Jill stands at the bottom of the stairs. The girls continue to *WHOOO IT UP*.

JILL

Girls! Hot chocolate!

... The mattress expands more. Chloe turns. She notices...

... Jill walks up the stairs. She sees the door is closed. The girls continue to *YELL*...

JILL

Chloe... hot--

She opens the door and stops. The girls crouch together.

The mattress continues to expand and *RIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIP!*

RUST-COLORED BUGS, about the size of acorns, rush out of Chloe's mattress, mouth-parts snapping open and shut.

Jill grabs the girls as thousands of bugs cover every surface in the room.

Jill *SLAMS* the door. The bugs flatten themselves and squeeze under and around it.

The six flee down the stairs. They lunge for the front door as the bugs converge on the bannisters, steps and walls.

JILL

Come on!

Her hand goes for the knob. The door flies open... Chris.

CHRIS

Move!

Jill leads the girls. The hefty girl trips.

BLAM! BLAM!

Chris *FIRES* into the mass of bugs. He picks up the girl. Sighs at her weight. Throws her on his back. The bugs continue to pursue.

He leads the shrieking group. Jill reaches the jeep, throws the door open. And jumps back.

SQUEEEEEEEEEAAAAAAL!

A bug, probably from Point Pleasant, about the size of a dog *CLAPS* its sharp mouth pieces at the girls. Ooze dripping down its tips.

Chris stops, *FIRES*. The bug explodes.

CHRIS

Get in!

JILL

How do you know there aren't more in there!?!?

CHRIS

I made it here didn't I!?!?

JILL

Good point!

Jill shoves the girls in. Chris leaps into the front seat... more bedbugs converge on the windshield. He turns on the wipers, sweeping them away.

Chris starts the engine. Chloe leans forward.

CHLOE

Orion!

As if to answer, Orion charges out the door. He *CHEWS* on the bugs angrily. Chris opens the door.

CHRIS

Orion!

The dog runs/hobbles to the jeep. Chris scoops him up and places him on the girls' laps.

Thousands pour out of the Bings' doors, windows etc.

Chris guns the jeep in reverse, squashing bedbugs under its tires.

JILL

I told you not to buy that bed!

CHRIS

No you didn't! You smiled about it.

JILL

Read beneath smile, Chris! Read beneath the smile!

NAVIGATION SYSTEM

Next right. Then left turn.

JILL

Shut up!

CHRIS

Shut up!

Chris *SLAMS* on the brakes. The Daisies fly forward. Chris' e-mail *PINGS*. He goes for his cell.

JILL

You're checking your e-mail now!?!

Chris holds up his finger.

CHRIS

Oh shit.

JILL

Hey... language!

The Daisies giggle. Chris guns the engine. He drops his cell phone into Jill's lap. She picks it up.

JILL

Oh shit.

ON SCREEN: A heat-sensitive satellite photo of the carnival grounds. Something massive is about to attack...

The jeep peels down the rainy street...

EXT. CARNIVAL - SAME TIME

Max and Rachel stop at the Ferris Wheel line.

MAX

Whadd'ya think?

RACHEL

It's raining. Do I really want to be closer to the clouds?

MAX

No line.

RACHEL

Because they're not 'tards like us.
Sure let's do it.

Thorn watches the two teens... Max shifts his backpack.

Chris' jeeps *SLAMS* to a stop. He turns to Jill.

CHRIS

Find their parents.

Chris, races through the crowd toward a Ray.

CHRIS

Have you seen Max?

RAY

Yeah-on the Ferris Wheel.

CHRIS

Thanks. Round up who you can. I
want you to shut this all down.

RAY

Are you sure that's a good idea? I
mean I know how--

CHRIS

Yeah-yeah I know you know how
they'll react. Just shut it down.

LEWIS

On who's authorization?

An angry Lewis and Investors eat corn dogs.

INT. BRIDGET'S HOSPITAL ROOM - SAME TIME

Bridget sleeps.

Tiny mouthparts emerge from the sink drain...

... Two nurses make small talk at the info desk...

... The sink is now reddish brown with squirming bugs...

... A doctor joins the nurses...

... A waterfall of bugs spill over the sink, forming a
squishy, bloody pool on the floor. BRIDGET still sleeps...

... The doctor and nurses continue to laugh it up...

... BRIDGET WAKES UP... JUST AS THREE BEDBUGS (THE SIZE OF ROACHES) SQUEEZE THEIR WAY INTO HER MOUTH. HER EYES BULGE AS THEIR BODIES TWIST, TURN AND ENTER. SHE TRIES TO SCREAM.

THUMP!

The three look up from the info desk.

THUMP!

They rush to Bridget's room and open the door...

The group enters.

SPLAT!

A wave of blood knocks the group backwards. The nurses SCREAM...

EXT. CARNIVAL - SHOOTING GALLERY - SAME TIME

Jill and Chloe join Chris, Lewis and Brian.

CHRIS

If you don't evacuate these people they're about to become a Denny's Grand Slam breakfast.

JILL

Listen to him, Lewis. I've seen what they can do.

Chris spots Thorn. He brushes past Lewis and grabs Thorn. Jeff and ATM see what's going on. Join the group.

THORN

What are you doing?

CHRIS

Tell them... tell them what you did.

RUMBLE...

The ground shakes violently, causing booths to sway... people fall to the ground. Chris braces himself, Jill and Chloe on a booth. Thorn's thrown. Jeff holds onto ATM...

... Up in the Ferris Wheel, Max and Rachel feel the quake.

RACHEL

Earthquake?

Then it stops.

Lewis rushes to Chris's side... catching his breath.

BOOM! WHOOSH! BOOM! WHOOSH!

Manhole covers ERUPT. Chris pushes Lewis to the ground, as one of the covers almost decapitates him. It crashes into a storefront glass window.

Silence...

THE BEDBUGS RUSH OUT OF THE SEWER HOLES.

Mayhem. People attempt to run, only to be pulled to the ground and eaten.

CHRIS

Run!

BEDBUGS feast on one screaming person after another, Guts fly. Mouthparts plunge into flesh. Blood sprays.

Jill dodges a larger bug. But lets go of Chloe's hand.

She runs.

JILL

Chloe!?! Chloe!?!

Jeff grabs ATM's hand. She sees Chloe.

ATM

Wait!

Chloe is about to become bug chow. She SCREAMS. ATM grabs her in the nick of time.

Chris *FIRES* repeatedly... blood sprays everywhere. A MAN jumps into his car.

The insects climb in the car with him and feast. As he drives away, he screams as their mouth parts sink into his neck.

We follow the yellow paralyzing fluid as it flows freely from the creature into the neck of its poor host... into his veins.

Other bugs attack. Blood flows back through the tubes. His skin peels back like an orange.

The car careens out of control and crashes into the Ferris Wheel Operator, crushing him and the control box.

THE FERRIS WHEEL SPINS VIOLENTLY OUT OF CONTROL.

SCREAMING. Max holds Rachel. A TEEN is tossed into the air.

The wheel spins faster and faster. Sparks fly from the control box. One of the supports BUCKLES.

Ray drops to the ground. The bugs converge and start tearing apart his boot then foot. Ray *SCREAMS*.

Chris spots an axe at a booth and grabs it. He rushes back to Ray. The bugs are about to move up from his ankle. Chris pauses.

RAY

Do it!

Chris brings the axe down repeatedly, lopping off Ray's ankle. Blood rushes out. Chris drags Ray to a funnel cake stand and rips the banner down. He wraps it around Ray's ankle.

BANNER: Tasty!

A frantic Jill finds Chris.

JILL

I can't find Chloe.

-- SERIES OF SHOTS --

This is the part we just love. The entire town is bug chow.

-- Patrons at an old-fashioned movie theater showing "THEM" and "THE BLOB" are attacked. *What an homage to see a mass of bugs rushing through the projectionist's window!*

-- A MAN smoking at a gas station is surprised by an onslaught of the bugs before he can get away. He trips into the pump and spills gas all over himself. His cigarette drops to the ground, lighting him on fire.

-- At the Sleep Tight Bedding store, it's pandemonium. CUSTOMERS are caught off guard as the mattresses they lie on, burst open with more hungry bedbugs. Tamburri stumbles out, his back a mass of squirming bugs.

-- Cemetery. Close on Wes' headstone. It moves. *Digging? CRAAAAACK!* What's left of Wes sits upright. Bugs rush out of his casket. Other bodies explode from their caskets as bugs rush out. *Guess the other two eggs lodged against Wes' spine weren't dead after-all. :O)*

INT/EXT. FUN HOUSE - SAME TIME

Jeff, ATM and Chloe run through the frightened crowd.

JEFF

Fuck. Blitzing bugs. In here!

The bedbugs follow them.

He lifts Chloe and grabs ATM her by the hand. They sprint.

Jeff, ATM and Chloe appear as different shapes and sizes as they run past the mirrors. Unfortunately, so do the bugs.

Jeff spots a door at the other end.

Locked.

Jeff kicks it with his foot.

ATM

Jeff, hurry!

The floor, ceiling and walls teem with bugs. She kicks it with Jeff. The door flies open.

EXT. MAIN STREET - SAME TIME

Mark Paul speaks into his mini-recorder as he's chased.. Bugs rush up his leg. He kicks them off and runs into a port-o-potty.

SLAMS the door shut. He cowers on the toilet...

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Door flies open. Jeff, ATM and Chloe tumble out. Jeff *SLAMS* the door. It catches ATM's jacket.

ATM

(yells)

Jeff, help me! Help me!

CHLOE

Help her!

The bugs rush O.S. Jeff pulls ATM. Zipper's stuck. Bugs squeeze out through the door frame.

ATM

Jeff, don't you let them eat me!

Chloe pulls the zipper and yanks ATM out.

Jeff grabs her hand, only to see that they are at a dead end. She drops her purse, then picks it up.

JEFF

Fuck!

CHLOE

Language! Do something!

The bugs spread out, emerging from every corner around the door. Jeff spots one of the open manholes.

JEFF

This way.

ATM

Like hell!

CHLOE

Teenagers.

Chloe climbs down the ladder. The bugs rush toward them. ATM and Jeff follow.

EXT. STREET - SAME TIME

Jill and Chris look frantically for Chloe.

JILL

Chloe! Chloe!

CHRIS

We've got to get to the high school!

JILL

Not without my baby! Chloe!

The bugs rush them. Chris grabs Jill.

CHRIS

No time!

They run across various intersections and railroad crossings as the bugs merge from all sides. Chris helps Jill up on a parked car.

CHRIS

Jump!

THE TWO LEAP FROM THE CAR TO THE NEXT ONE. THEY CONTINUE UNTIL THEY MAKE IT TO THE HIGH SCHOOL.

EXT. FERRIS WHEEL - SAME TIME

Rachel and Max look down.

RACHEL

What happened?

The supports *RUMBLE* and *BUCKLE*. Sparks fly. The Ferris wheel shifts; throwing them forward. Max looks down and gulps, realizing how high up they are.

MAX

We gotta get out of here.

RACHEL

How?

Max frowns...

INT. SEWER - MOMENTS LATER

Jeff, ATM and Chloe make their way through the muck. ATM takes in the towering stone walls and ladders. Tears roll down Chloe's face.

CHLOE

I want Daddy Chris.

ATM

We'll be okay, right Jeff?

Jeff doesn't answer. ATM's SLUGS him.

JEFF

Yeah, we're groovy, kid.

They continue on...

EXT. FERRIS WHEEL - SAME TIME

Rachel looks at Max like he's out of his mind.

RACHEL

We're going to what?

MAX

Climb down.

Rachel looks down at the disaster below.

RACHEL

You're kidding?

MAX

I'm a geek. I never kid.

She looks over the side. The rain comes down harder.

RACHEL

Let's go.

The two begin their descent...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - SAME TIME

Chris sticks an axe in the front door handles.

GYM - CONTINUOUS

People gather. Some are injured. All are freaked out.

Chris walks through the crowd looking for Max and Chloe.
Jill rushes to him.

JILL
I don't see them.

CHRIS
We'll find them.

RAY (O.C.)
(weak)
Chris...

Chris spots Ray propped against a wall. He runs to him.

CHRIS
How you doing, buddy?

RAY
Peachy.

Chris musters a smile.

RAY
Guess it wasn't the bear.

CHRIS
I'm sorry I was right.

RAY
For what it's worth, the mayor
chose the right guy for the job.

Ray bangs knuckles with Chris, who spots Thorn. Chris
shoves him against a wall. Jill watches.

THORN
You're hurting me.

Chris brings out his gun; takes the safety off. Lodges the
gun into Thorn's cheek.

CHRIS
I know about Point Pleasant. I know
about the mattresses. I just don't
know why?

Lewis joins them.

THORN
Don't blame me. Blame Al Quaeda.
Blame the ANO. The PLF.

CHRIS

This is about terrorism?

THORN

It's about keeping our interests safe. If you asked our congressional friends, we don't exist. During the Nixon administration, it was hiding cyanide pills in aspirin bottles or putting LSD on a car handles. But these are different times. We have to adapt...

Chris grits his teeth. *Is he going to punch him?*

JILL

My god.

THORN

The bedbug was a natural choice. It's a stealth swift hunter. Because they also carry blood, we could inject them with whatever disease imaginable at first. But its demeanor was too docile after feeding. So we cross-bred it with the Saifu -- an aggressive African flesh-eating ant.

Jill looks on in horror...

CHRIS

What about their growth?

THORN

An unexpected variable -- the Randall boy was on steroids.

EXT. FERRIS WHEEL - SAME TIME

Max and Rachel inch down. The rain comes down harder. Rachel slips.

RACHEL

Max!

Max quickly reaches for her. Wrestles with her wrist. Rachel clings with one hand. Max pulls her back to safety...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - GYM - SAME TIME

Chris and company listen to Thorn.

THORN

Point Pleasant was a quaint town. A town off the beaten path. A town no one would notice. For those reasons, it was chosen for our controlled study.

The group looks at Thorn stunned.

THORN

Don't demonize me. We have always challenged our ethical standards, as difficult as they may be, for the greater good. (ticks off) The Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment. Exposing Vietnam soldiers to Agent Orange. Sarah Palin.

CHRIS

Those were people. People with hopes. Dreams. Families. And you wiped them out with no remorse?

THORN

I do take some solace in knowing women and children went first.

JILL

You son-of-a-bitch. But why us?

THORN

One never draws a conclusion based on one trial.

CHRIS

Well, Professor, enjoy your study, because whether you like it or not, you're now one of your own test subjects.

And with that, Chris *CLOCKS* him.

EXT. FERRIS WHEEL - NIGHT

Rachel cries. Max sees her.

MAX

Almost there.

RACHEL

(frightened)

Can't move.

MAX

Didn't you say during your speech that nothing was impossible?

(MORE)

MAX (CONT'D)

That if you put your mind to something you can do anything?

Rachel nods. Max's eyes widen as he looks above Rachel.

MAX

Then put your mind to it. Fast.

Rachel slowly looks up and becomes horrified.

HUNDREDS OF BEDBUGS RUSH OVER THE TOP OF THE FERRIS WHEEL... APPROACHING THEM.

Max and Rachel climb down as the bugs chase them.

The Ferris wheel trembles more. Before the bugs can force their bloodied mouthparts into her, Max grabs Rachel's waist and they jump. Rachel *SCREAMS* as they land on the...

THUD!

Max helps Rachel up.

RACHEL

I thought you said you didn't go to my speech.

MAX

I lied.

THE FERRIS WHEEL CRASHES DOWN ONTO THE BUGS. A LARGE BUG SEAT FROM THE RIDE ROLLS DOWN THE HILL AFTER THEM.

Max grabs Rachel's arm. They run.

INT. SEWER - SAME TIME

Jeff and ATM make their way through the sewer. Chloe covers her nose.

CHLOE

Did you fart?

ATM

What!?! No!

They reach a point where the sewer divides into a "Y"

ATM

Which way?

JEFF

It looks lighter down there.

ATM grabs his hand. Jeff picks up Chloe.

CHLOE
You sure you didn't fart?

ATM
Shut up, kid.

Water bubbles behind them...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - GYM - NIGHT

Abbie runs to Chris.

ABBIE
Chief!

She hands him the phone.

CHRIS
Chief Bing...

EXT. HIGH WAY - SAME TIME

Mt. Prospect Police Cars race toward Normal.

INT. LEAD CAR - SAME

Tim sits next to a DRIVER. He speaks into a cell.

TIM
Chris, it's Tim Janowick, Mt.
Prospect. We heard all kinds of
craziness on our scanners. Thought
you could use some help.

(INTERCUT)

CHRIS
Tim, no.

TIM
No?

Others watch Chris on the phone.

CHRIS
Stay away! Too dangerous. Tim, do
you hear--

TIM
WHAT THE FUCK!?!

CHRIS
Tim!

GUNFIRE... SQUEALING... SCREAMS... NOTHING.

CHRIS

Tim!?! Tim!?!

Chris hangs up. His phone *RINGS*.

CHRIS

Tim!?

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - NIGHT

MAX

Dad!

Max and Rachel stand outside. Rachel yanks repeatedly on the door. Locked.

(INTERCUT)

CHRIS

Max!?!

Jill stands next to Chris.

MAX

Let us in!

CHRIS

Where are you?

MAX

Outside the high school.

Chris closes the phone and runs...

Rachel looks in the classrooms. An open window.

RACHEL

Max!

She points. Max hauls ass...

... Chris runs down the hallway to the front door. Passing the classrooms...

... Max stops. The bugs, now the size of small dogs, CHARGE. Rachel *SCREAMS*.

Max lifts Rachel; shoves her through the window.

The bugs near. Max now sees their clanging mouthparts. Max climbs...

... Chris opens the front door. No one is there...

... Rachel reaches out an arm to help Max. The bugs swarm around him.

RACHEL

Max!

A male hand grabs Max's arm and pulls him through the window. Chris.

The bugs swarm on the window. Tear at the frame. Wood peels away. Tempered glass cracks.

Chris *FIRES* his gun. Lights flicker.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - POWER LINES - SAME TIME

Bugs crawl and slither on the surface of a circuit breaker box.

SPARKS FLY.

INT. CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

Chris *SHOOTS* a bug that has squeezed its large flat body through a crack. Blood splashes on Chris.

CHRIS

This way!

Lights spark, then go out.

CRAAAAACK!

Bugs crash through the skylight. They're even larger.

Chris *FIRES*. Nothing. His face says it all, "shit."

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - GYM - CONTINUOUS

The door flies open. Chris hurries them in and *SLAMS* the door. Bugs *SLAM* the other side. Max and Rachel help Chris close it. Other "townies" help, too.

JILL

Max!

She smothers her son.

MAX

I'm okay-I'm okay.

JILL

Have you seen Chloe?

Max and Rachel look at each other. Shake heads. Chris looks to the *BANGING* door...

INT. SEWER - LATER

Jeff, ATM and Chloe make their way, waist deep in water.

ATM

Lighter my ass. This is just as dark.

CHLOE

I want to get out of here.

JEFF

Yeah we all--

JEFF and CHLOE are pulled under.

ATM

JEFF!?!

ATM frantically searches the water. Jeff and Chloe bob back up.

JEFF

Take her!

He shoves Chloe into ATM's arms. Jeff's pulled back under. ATM claws for him.

ATM

Jeff! Jeff!

Jeff bobs back up. Skin flaps down from his skull. Bedbugs clamor slither all over. An eyeball drops out followed by a bedbug. Chloe points and *SCREAMS*.

The walls... the ceiling... are now black and squirming.

ATM holds onto Chloe and the two run.

Jeff's death echoes off the walls... then stop abruptly. Tears rush down ATM's face. They round a corner.

AND SLIP

The sewer drops off at a 45-degree angle. ATM and Chloe glide down the nightmarish water slide, *SCREAMING*.

INT. DRAINAGE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A cavernous stone room with large circular openings on each side. Rusty catwalks climb the walls toward the ceiling.

The girls land with a gigantic *SPLASH*. Swim to the side.

ATM

Come on!

Bugs pour out of the openings.

The nest.

ATM and Chloe scramble for the catwalk. Chloe *SLIPS*. ATM grabs her.

ATM

I got you-come on!

The bugs chase. They reach the end -- where walk meets wall. ATM's purse drops.

ATM

Fuck!

Her purse opens, revealing hair spray and cigarettes. Shaking, ATM picks up her pack. Chloe notices.

CHLOE

Really!?! Now!?!

ATM clutches the lighter in one hand. Pack in the other. Mouthparts approach the top of the walk. ATM reaches in her purse and brings...

Hairspray.

WHOOSH!

She fires from her make-shift torch, setting the bugs on fire.

CHLOE

Die bitches die!

ATM looks at Chloe, who smiles back. She salutes...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - GYM COACH'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Max makes his way back through the crowd to Rachel and Jill.

MAX

I don't see her.

RACHEL

What about ATM or Jeff?

Max grimly shakes his head. Jill tries to keep her composure as Chris returns.

CHRIS

Those doors aren't going to last.

JILL
I need to find my daughter.

Chris silently looks over the terrified crowd. He spots Thorn wiping his glasses.

He rushes to the entomologist.

CHRIS
How do we destroy them?

THORN
You said you saw Point Pleasant.

Chris thinks; runs to Max, Rachel and Jill.

CHRIS
Max! That paper you wrote on
bomb-making--

MAX
-- household combustibles.

Chris nods.

CHRIS
Can you do it?

MAX
Do what?

CHRIS
Make a bomb.

JILL
Chris!

CHRIS
(to: Jill)
We don't have another choice.

MAX
I don't think it would be big
enough.

RAY
Chris.

Chris turns to Ray; who props himself up.

RAY
The sewers. The gas lines run
through them.

Max nods. Lewis intervenes.

LEWIS
You'll destroy Normal. The mall--

CHRIS
It's all gone, anyway. All we can
do is stop them from spreading.

MAX
I'll do it.

RACHEL
I'll help.

Max heads for the door they entered. Chris stops him.

CHRIS
That way's cut off.

The three run across the gym floor to the other entrance.
Chris cautiously opens the door. Clear.

CHRIS
Go.

The two teens bolt. Chris closes the door. Turns to Jill.

CHRIS
I'm going to look for a way out.

JILL
K.

CHRIS
Ray?

RAY
Yes sir?

CHRIS
You're still my second-in-command.
Keep an eye on him.

Ray glares at Thorn. Takes out his revolver.

RAY
With pleasure.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLS - MOMENTS LATER

Max and Rachel bolt. He passes his locker. "Uni-boy-mer" is
spray painted on there.

MAX
Crap. Really?

RACHEL

Come on.

INT/EXT. CHEM LAB - CONTINUOUS

Max tries the door. Locked. Max sets his backpack down. Looks around. He spots a fireman's axe on the wall.

RACHEL

So you never did tell me why you wrote it? The infamous paper.

MAX

Hemorrhoid.

Rachel pauses.

RACHEL

What... is... a pain in the ass?

MAX

Ding. Stand back.

He swings the axe at the door handle. It flies off.

They open the door and enter. It's a flurry of them grabbing chemicals, containers, hand torches, ripping text books, mortar and pestle. Max mixes, then fills flasks. Stops them with stoppers.

LATER

Max and Rachel load up the backpack. Max zips it, allowing wires to dangle out. He attaches Jill's oven timer.

RACHEL

You're mom is going to kill you.

MAX

Better her than the bugs. Let's go.

The two teens rush out.

BAM!

A vent cover flies off. Bugs, the size of fists pour out...

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - NIGHT

A door opens. Chris rushes out. Looks around. Safe. He spots one of the manhole covers at the base of the stairs.

Across the lot is an opening. He sees something else. Runs to it.

It's the school bus lot...

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - GYM - NIGHT

Bedbugs blanket the building.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - GYM - LATER

BANG! BANG! Jill

Runs to the door. Throws it open.

Max and Rachel lug a large duffel bag. A wire leads from the bag to the oven timer, tied around the handles. Jill starts to say something.

MAX

Mom-killer bugs. Do your part.
(looks for Chris)
Where is he?

JILL

I'm getting worried.

BANG!

Jill and Max look at each other. Jill cracks the door open. It's Chris. She hugs him.

CHRIS

CAN ANYONE HERE DRIVE A SCHOOL
BUS!?!

The group looks at each other.

CHRIS

Anyone?

RAY

I can, Chris.

Ray hobbles over.

CHRIS

Your foot.

RAY

I drive with this one.

Ray points to his other foot.

VOICE (O.S.)

We'll help too, Chief.

Chris turns. OLD MEN FROM THE VFW, with their rifles shouldered, salute.

OLD VFW GUY

The men of VFW post six six oh
seven have never run from danger.
And we won't now!

CHRIS

Thank you.

Chris finds Lewis in a corner. Runs to him.

CHRIS

You said everything you did was for
Normal. Here's your chance to prove
it. Lead them to the school buses.

LEWIS

I know how to handle pie eating
contests and budgets. This...

CHRIS

Lewis, if you keep these people
here you're signing their death
certificates.

Lewis looks down at his hands, then at the survivors.
Manages a smile.

LEWIS

It is an election year isn't it?

CHRIS

Pull this off and you don't have a
thing to worry about. By the way...

Lewis pauses.

CHRIS

You should watch the news. That
alderman confessed.

Chris turns to Jill.

CHRIS

You need to get on one of those
buses.

JILL

I'm not leaving without my
daughter. Or you.

RACHEL

And I'm not leaving without ATM.

CHRIS

Guess it's a party then.

Chris manhandles Thorn by the arm.

CHRIS

C'mon. Let's see what's growing in
your Petri Dish.

Lewis stands on a bleacher.

LEWIS

Can I have your attention? We're
going to leave via the buses.

Just as the townspeople begin to move...

CRAAACK! BOOOOOM!

VENT COVERS ALL AROUND FLY OFF. BUGS RAIN OUT OF THEM.

CHRIS

Get to the buses!

People run for the door. Some bugs, the size of dogs,
POUNCE. Ray and the VFW MEN *FIRE*.

CHRIS

The other way!

Chris leads Jill, Max, Rachel and Thorn out...

-- Legs and guts fly. Blood splatters.

-- Lewis runs to the center of the gym.

-- The VFW guys run to the bugs, rifles extended.

OLD VFW GUY

Take no prisoners, lads!

They *FIRE*. Bug parts fly.

LEWIS

Don't panic! Don't--

Lewis is cut off as the bugs swarm...

HALLS - SAME TIME

Chris, Max, Chloe, Rachel and Thorn bolt. Tortured *SCREAMS*
follow them.

STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Chris throws the door open. They run through.

As he closes the door, LEWIS' TORSO lands at the base of
the stairs.

PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Door flies open. The group tumbles out. Right behind them, comes Ray hobbling. He leads a group. Chris points.

CHRIS

There are the buses!

Ray nods. Chris helps him down the stairs. Townies pour out. Bugs make a buffet out of them. These bugs are way larger now. Like the size of wildcats.

CHRIS

Down here!

Chris leads his group down the ladder. A bug heads to the hole. Max *FIRES* his hand torch at it, setting it on fire.

INT/EXT. SCHOOL BUS - SAME TIME

Ray hobbles into the driver's seat.

RAY

Get on!

Screaming people tsunami in. The VFW guys continue *SHOOTING*. Two bugs leap on one of them. Tear him in half. Ray searches for keys. Finds them above. *SLAMS* the door shut, cutting a bug in half. He starts the engine, floors it and crashes through the gate...

INT. SEWER - CONTINUOUS

Chris climbs from the tunnel into the waist-deep water. He helps Jill down. The two teens follow. Chris shines the light. Thorn surveys the area.

THORN

This way.

MAX

You're sure?

THORN

(sniffs air)

I'm sure.

They go deeper into the darkness...

INT. SEWER - DRAINAGE ROOM - DAWN

THE BUGS close in on ATM and Chloe as her flame slowly dies... Chloe *SCREAMS*...

INT. SEWER - SAME TIME

The five stop. Chloe's *SCREAM*.

JILL

Oh my god, that's Chloe!

Chris stops her.

CHRIS

Jill, you can't go there.

JILL

My baby.

Chris looks at her, then at Max and Thorn. Chris spots a ladder leading to the street.

Chris drops the backpack and climbs up the ladder.

EXT. THE MALL - CONTINUOUS

Chris climbs out and looks around, stunned. He's in the middle of the mall parking lot.

CHRIS

Dammit, Tim.

Empty police cars fill the space. Tim's team lies dead in the street -- all levels of eaten. Chris sees other victims from the night before. He calls down.

CHRIS

Jill.

Jill reluctantly climbs out of the hole. In the middle of her ascent, she hears Chloe's distant *SCREAM*. She collapses in Chris' arms.

JILL

You save our baby!

CHRIS

I will. Rachel.

Max and Rachel look at each other.

MAX

What's the Spanish word for love?

RACHEL

El Amor.

They *KISS*.

Rachel zips up the ladder. Chris lifts her out of the hole.

Chris turns to Jill.

CHRIS
Find somewhere safe to hide.

They nod and run.

Chris runs over to a dead cop and pries his assault rifle loose, rushes back to the sewer opening.

INT. SEWER - MOMENTS LATER

Chris jumps down into the muck; stopping in his tracks.
THORN HOLDS MAX HOSTAGE WITH AN ARM AROUND HIS NECK AND A HAND TORCH POINTED AT HIS HEAD.

THORN
Put it down, Chief.

CHRIS
Don't do this.

THORN
They're magnificent. Think what we could do to our enemies. Besides killing me won't stop the plan. It never does. I'm just one of many.

Chris steps forward. Thorn tightens his grip on the teen.

CHRIS
What do you want?

THORN
We're going to climb out of the sewers and wait for my team to arrive.

CHRIS
You've had a team?

THORN
Of course I have a team.

BLAM!

Thorn *YELPS* and dropping away from Max as a bullet pierces his shoulder. Max runs to Chris, who looks up.

ON THE LADDER. Major Reid drops down to the two. And lights his cigar.

MAJOR REID
You've been traded. Chief Bing?
Major Reid. I take it you got my e-mails.

CHRIS

It was you?

MAJOR REID

(nods)

This piece of shit is no team player.

Chris picks up his rifle. Major Reid looks at Max picking up the duffle bag.

MAJOR REID

You're going to blow your sewer system... with that?

MAX

(defensive)

Yeah.

MAJOR REID

Good plan. I read your paper on the Internet.

ATM and Chloe *SCREAM*.

MAJOR REID

Let's make these bugs chow.

The three turn.

MAX

What about him?

Thorn lies in the water, grabbing his leg.

CHRIS

(sarcastic)

What about him?

The three continue on...

INT. DRAINAGE ROOM - SAME TIME

The bugs close in on the two girls. ATM fires her make-shift torch. Nothing. She grabs Chloe.

ATM

Cover your eyes!

She turns Chloe's face to hers...

... A rope tied to a railing, Chris, Max and Major Reid repel down the same drop ATM and Chloe fell down.

ATM *SCREAMS*.

MAX

That's not Chloe.

CHRIS

ATM?

Chris reaches the bottom. Max joins him. Then the Major.

MAJOR REID

This way.

The three make their way... Max placing filled flasks along the way.

... Nymphs creep onto ATM's shoe. She kicks them off...

... Chris, Max and Reid enter the nest... It's stunningly horrifying; on par with the nest in 'Aliens'...

MAX

If we get out of this I swear I'll never jar another bug again.

Chris looks around. He spots the gas lines.

CHRIS

When I get them, set the timer for three minutes.

(to: Max)

Stay here.

Max nods. Chris and Reid slide down the ladder. Max lights the hand torches...

... Thorn, clearly in pain, squints and pats the water searching for his glasses. He finds them. Just as he puts them on, he comes face-to-face with a massive bug. Thorn looks at it with reverence.

THORN

Come to me... my beautiful babies.

He closes his eyes, just as the bugs use their mouthparts to split Thorn in half. They enter his mouth... ears... dig into his feet and skin... eyeballs roll out...

... Nymphs ooze over Chloe and ATM. One bites through her shoe. She *SCREAMS*.

Chris descends faster. He's horrified by the thousands of eggs cemented to the wall.

One bedbug emerges out of the gooey egg.

Chris reaches the bottom rung. As Chris looks up his eyes widen in horror.

THE CEILING AND FLOOR SQUIRMS WITH BEDBUGS.

MAJOR REID

It's time for major payback!

Reid *FIRES* his weapon into the bugs. Bags of blood (their backs) create a sort of blood fireworks.

They wake and waylay the operative, but he fights them off. The bugs are too much for him as multiple mouth parts sink into him, his eyes roll white... As the bugs drink his blood, we see their backs turn reddish black... they stretch in size.

Chris runs to the catwalk with ATM and Chloe. Chris brings the rifle from around his back and climbs.

He kicks bugs off the girls.

CHRIS

I got you.

He grabs his stepdaughter and ATM.

Chloe flashes a grimy thumbs up. Chris smiles and sweeps her into his arms.

Chris looks over her shoulder. The bugs have amassed to the point where they have no escape.

They run.

Chris grabs her hand as they make it back over the catwalk to the platform.

CRASH!

The catwalk buckles from underneath and sends the section swinging down. ATM *SCREAMS*, dangling from the middle.

Max vaults to the edge. Chris dangles holding Chloe.

Chris starts to climbs.

CHRIS

Hold on, Chloe!

Chris struggles to make his way back up. Just as he reaches the top...

Max's hand pulls Chloe to safety. Max hugs Chloe tightly. Chris flops on his stomach and reaches down for ATM.

CHRIS

Grab my hand! Now!

More bugs converge on the catwalk, surrounding the two. ATM makes her way up.

Something large and very inhuman *ROARS*.

This adds a sense of urgency. Chris grabs ATM and pulls.

CHRIS

Now, Max!

Max picks up the duffel bag... sets the oven timer and sets then tosses it to Chris. Chris catches it and drops it to the floor.

Chris, ATM and Max run... fighting off more bugs...

The three stop at the ladder leading to the street. Chris shoves Chloe up the ladder... then ATM... then Max.

... The Oven timer counts down...

EXT. STREET - DAY (SUNRISE)

Max climbs through the manhole.

Jill, holding Orion, Rachel and Chloe spot him and jump out of one of the trucks.

JILL

Chloe!

Chloe and Jill embrace. Tears flow. Rachel spots ATM. The same thing. Uncontrollable tears.

RACHEL

Are you okay-are you?

ATM

I'm okay.

RACHEL

Jeff?

ATM cries harder. Rachel hugs her.

Max extends a hand to Chris who is climbing up the ladder.

MAX

Gimme your hand.

Chris reaches...

BOOOOOOOOOM!

Gas line upon gas line ruptures and *EXPLODES*. Bug parts fly. Walls collapse. Water rushes in...

Chris trips on the ladder. Turns to see a fireball rush down the tunnel. He dives under the muck as the flames race across.

BOOM!

It's like mini Roland Emmerich. The next explosion sends geysers of fire through the manhole covers. It rocks everything. The street buckles.

-- Mall glass shatters, sending shards flying into the street.

-- The high school is engulfed in flames.

-- Cars flip over.

-- Rachel turns to Max.

RACHEL

You really are the "uni-boy-mer."

-- The Welcome to Normal sign side splits in two. The half that lands on the ground proclaims the population at 25.

Quiet.

A dirty hand grasps the top of the manhole. Chris emerges. Chloe spots him. Runs to him.

CHLOE

Daddy Chris!

Max spins around and smiles. Chris waves weakly to them. He starts toward them...

BA-DOOM!

The center of the mall EXPLODES. Concrete and glass fly.

The queen bedbug bursts through the crumbled street.

AND ROARS.

CHRIS

There's a queen. Of course there is.

The giant bug *SQUEALS* at him. He tries to run, but a giant leg *SLAMS* down on the pavement, blocking him.

Huge mouthparts *SNAP...* trying to pierce his skin.

Max looks on in horror. He spots the jeep. Runs.

JILL

Max, no!

The keys are left in the engine.

The queen continues to *CLIP* Chris. A mouthpart tip scrapes his leg, ripping his pants and causing him to bleed more..

Max drives Chris's jeep down Main Street. It drives over an explosion-created crater and flips on its side, tossing Max around.

The jeep collides with one of the giant bug's legs, knocking it off balance. Chris rolls away.

Dazed, Max tries to get out. The door doesn't budge. The bug's head bursts through the windshield; trying to eat Max.

Rachel starts to run. Jill grabs her arm.

The creature leaps on top of the jeep. Crushes the roof.

Chris finds a rifle on the ground and something else. He fires at the creature.

CHRIS

Hey! Over here! Hey!

He continues to fire, until he gets the bug's attention. The bug stares at him. *SHRIEKS*.

THUD.

It leapfrogs through the mall... landing on a car.

THUD.

It crushes a street lamp as it lands. Chris *FIRES* again.

THUD.

It lands on a rooftop, causing the structure to buckle. The thing jumps off before it can fall in.

Chris kicks open the door to a store.

INT. STORE - CONTINUOUS

The bug flattens and shoves its giant head through the doorway, causing the wood to splinter and crack. Chris leaps over the counter and through the storeroom. He drops something on the floor.

The queen inches her way into the store.

Chris runs out the back to the alley, as the bug enters further.

As the dust clears, we see she's surrounded by chemicals.

A HAND GRENADE, with the pin pulled, lies on the floor.

Chris runs around the front of the store and stops. The giant bug's back end sticks out of the back.

We now see what the one store in the mall is -- TERMINEX. The grenade *BLOWS*, sending bug parts, wood, glass, and white clouds of chemicals flying.

CHRIS

Sleep tight.

Chris drops to the ground as Jill and the kids circle him.

MORNING

Normal is in ruins. Smoke rises from buildings everywhere. Paramedics, national guardsmen and reporters crawl all over the mall and streets. A REPORTER interviews Mark.

TV REPORTER

I'm here with an eye-witness to the Normal tragedy, Mark Paul. Can you tell us what you saw.

Mark smiles. *This is his moment.*

MARK

Well Katie, what was once a bedtime nursery rhyme becomes a nightmare for a small town.

Chris sits at the edge of an ambulance. Jill caresses his hair. He turns to Max, Chloe and Rachel.

CHRIS

Still want to leave Bum Fuck?

MAX

Only if you want to. Dad.

Chris smiles; grabs Jill's hand softly.

CHRIS

Think I'm going to get some shut eye now.

He closes his eyes as they load him into the ambulance. Chris relaxes. *Finally.* Jill takes Chloe and climbs in with him. The vehicle pulls away.

ATM, bandaged and arm in a sling, joins Rachel and Max. She leans her head on Rachel's shoulder.

ATM

Yeow!

The three look down. Chloe's slugged her.

CHLOE

Sorry Rachel, you're fired. ATM's my babysitter now.

The two sisters look at each other. Nod. Smile. *What are you gonna do?*

An airport limo parks. A MAN and A WOMAN, very aloof, very snotty, get out. They are stunned.

RACHEL

Mom, Dad!

Rachel breaks away from Max and looks up. She and ATM make their way to them. They hug.

RACHEL'S DAD

Rachel. ATM. We went through hell to get back.

Max joins them.

ATM

You... went through hell?

Rachel grabs Max's hand. The parents notice.

RACHEL

Mom, Dad. This is Max. He kills bugs.

Off their stunned faces... we pull back to reveal how decimated Normal is...

EXT. INTERSTATE HIGHWAY - DAY

Cars, single-file, drive out of smoldering Normal.

One minivan, loaded with suitcases, passes a HITCHHIKER.

INT. VAN - MOMENTS LATER

A FAMILY OF FOUR sits in the van. Their bags are everywhere. A TEEN GIRL leans forward.

TEEN GIRL

I hate Aunt Carol.

MOM

Be nice. Only family would take us
in this quickly.

TEEN GIRL

But her place smells.

DAD

Shh. We'll be safe there.

The van continues to drive.

CLOSE ON A VAN RUG. Amid all of the bags in the back, two
tiny mouthparts emerge from the carpet. A TINY FLAT RUST
COLORED BEDBUG skitters across the rug.

The van drives toward Chicago's skyline...

SMASH TO BLACK.