

MOONCHILDREN

Written by

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Based on the story "Children" by
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FADE IN:

EXT. CHESUNCOOK LAKE - DAY

It's a sunny summer's afternoon. A silent one-person wooden kayak makes its way through tranquil waters.

SUPER: CHESUNCOOK LAKE, MAINE, PRESENT DAY

MARVIN, 55, a middle aged African-American man, steers the boat. Naked from the waist up, he is a lean, strong man with chiselled features. His thick beard and unruly hair give him a rugged look; his expression is tense, restless.

As Marvin quickly rows the kayak, he nervously glances over his shoulder as if aware of a menacing presence behind him.

Long deep scratches on Marvin's left arm, his biceps are raked with bloody grooves.

Some moments later, Marvin stops paddling and lets the boat drift. He looks around him..

Everything seems quiet. He takes the oar out of the water and sighs, calmer now.

When the kayak stops, Marvin looks down at his injured arm and touches the wound; a grimace of pain on his face. He picks up a crumpled T-shirt, dips it into the water and wipes some of the blood from his left arm.

He dips again the T-shirt into the water..

An extremely pale hand with sharp nails bursts from the water and forcefully grabs Marvin's left forearm.

Terrified, Marvin tries to break free from the grip, but another claw-like hand comes up from the water and grasps the kayak's cockpit. The boat leans to one side..

Marvin quickly picks up the oar and starts hitting the hands and head of the unseen attacker. Soon the first hand lets go of his forearm.

Full of fury, Marvin keeps hitting the attacker. A few instants later, the second claw-like hand lets go of the kayak's cockpit.

A bald, cracked white head sinks into the water.

Still frightened and out of breath, Marvin stares down at the water.

A pool of blood floats on the surface.

FADE TO:

FLASHBACK - INT. WEDDING MARQUEE - DAY

A gospel CHOIR sings a lively worship song.

SUPER: LOS ANGELES, 1992

MARVIN, 30, healthier, clean-shaven and wearing a wedding suit, and CORINNE, 25, a nice African-American woman with short black hair and wearing a wedding dress, are seated in two white chairs next to each other facing an altar where a PASTOR, 70, stands.

Behind them, a large group of GUESTS watch the ceremony.

Marvin takes Corinne's hand and kisses her knuckles. They smile at each other.

EXT. MARQUEE ENTRANCE - DAY

Marvin and Corinne quickly walk through a corridor of guests throwing rice and confetti. They get into a small wedding car decorated with a "Just Married" license plate and tin cans and balloons in tow.

As the car moves away, the guests clap and cheer.

INT. WEDDING CAR - MOVING - DAY

TERRY, 30, a short African-American man with a light complexion, glasses and afro hairstyle, drives the car; Marvin and Corinne occupy the back seat.

MARVIN

Couldn't you get a bigger car? We weren't all born in Lilliput, you know?

Marvin and Corinne laugh.

TERRY

(irritated)

Very funny, man. Very funny indeed.

MARVIN

Sorry, Terry, I didn't want to hurt your feelings but this is tighter than a Chihuahua's ass.

TERRY

You wanted a car, didn't you? You got a car. Deal with it. I don't earn enough money to rent a damn Cadillac.

Corinne lovingly hugs Marvin while kissing him on the cheek.

CORINNE

Better this way, Marvin, so we're closer to each other.

Marvin rubs his shoulder in pain.

MARVIN

(to Corinne)

Your father almost dislocated my shoulder with his sasquatch-hug.

CORINNE

You're lucky. Last month, he fractured his neighbor's pinky with his "powerful handshake".

Terry turns on the car radio and tunes into a newscast.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

...freeway, and the chase continued through residential streets at speeds ranging from fifty to eighty miles per hour. By this point, several police cars-

MARVIN

-Hey, turn that shit off. We wanna hear some good music.

TERRY

Shut your mouth up! They're talking about Rodney King's case. Haven't you heard what happened this morning?

MARVIN

(smirking)

I had better things to worry about today.

Marvin kisses Corinne.

TERRY

Three of the cops were acquitted. There are riots everywhere.

MARVIN

Well, Mister King didn't behave like a boy scout either.

TERRY

What do you mean?

MARVIN

A hundred miles per hour through a residential area-

TERRY

-Eighty miles per hour, he said
fifty to eighty miles per-

MARVIN

(ignoring him)

-He could have killed a ton of
kids.

TERRY

It was 12:45 at night man. All
the fucking kids of L.A. were
sleeping in their homes!

MARVIN

What a son of a bitch...

EXT. WIDE STREET - DAY

The car abruptly brakes with a LOUD SCREECHING of tires.

INT. WEDDING CAR - DAY

Marvin and Corinne lurch forward in their seats.

CORINNE

Hey, look out!

Terry turns off the radio and turns towards Marvin.

TERRY

(angry)

What the hell are you saying?!
Those bastards didn't beat him
because he was a bad guy, but
because he was a black guy! A
nigger driving fast through
"their" fucking streets!

MARVIN

Calm down, man. I'm just giving
my opinion. Take it easy.

Terry returns his eyes to the road and clicks his tongue.

CORINNE

C'mon, don't argue. You agreed a
truce for twenty four hours.

Marvin makes a "zip-the-lips" gesture. Terry looks at him
through the rear-view mirror.

TERRY

Yeah, keep your big Uncle Tom
mouth shut or you'll make the
rest of the journey on foot.

Terry starts the car again.

EXT. HOTEL FAÇADE - NIGHT

Night covers the city. A small, cheap-looking hotel with red brick façade stands on a narrow street.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

A cockroach crawls along a flaking wall. A thrown shoe squashes it.

Marvin picks up the shoe and places it on the floor next to its mate. Then he turns towards Corinne, who lies in a double bed covered chest to foot in a blanket.

MARVIN

(unbuttoning his
shirt)

Maybe we should have looked for a more expensive hotel.

CORINNE

Remember we need to save money for our honeymoon.

MARVIN

Yeah, but I'm afraid I'll wake up tomorrow with my mouth full of cockroaches.

Corinne stretches her arms and yawns. She smiles.

CORINNE

I love it. It's like a challenge to test our love. It would be too easy in a luxury hotel.

Marvin takes off his shirt and unbuttons his pants.

MARVIN

It's clear you have an enviable ability to see the bright side of things.

(feeling his
pockets)

Oh, shit...

CORINNE

What's wrong?

MARVIN

I forgot to buy cigarettes.

CORINNE

(smiling)

Better for your health. Starting today, a new life begins for Marvin Jenkins.

Marvin buttons his pants again.

MARVIN
I'll be back in five minutes.

CORINNE
(serious)
Set a foot out of this room and
we'll break the Guinness World
Record for the quickest divorce.

MARVIN
Please, Corinne...

Corinne shakes her head from side to side.

CORINNE
Come here.

Marvin gets on the bed and lies next to her wife, face to face.

MARVIN
Please, honey. I promise-

Corinne silences him by placing a finger on his lips. She smiles.

CORINNE
I'll be your only vice tonight.

She kisses him.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT (A FEW HOURS LATER)

Another cockroach crawls along the room's window. Red and blue flashing lights come from the street...

POLICE SIRENS, SCREAMS, a LOUD COMMOTION.

From the bed, Marvin half opens his eyes and turns his head towards the window.

MARVIN
What's that?

CORINNE
(sleepily)
Riots... Terry said-

The room's window SHATTERS.

Startled, they quickly sit up in the bed. He lights a lamp on the bedside table and turns towards his wife.

MARVIN
You okay?

Corinne nods nervously. Marvin gets up from the bed and picks something up from the floor. It's a black rubber ball.

MARVIN

What the...?

Marvin drops the rubber ball, walks to the window and looks outside.

There are about twenty RIOT POLICE deployed along the street, firing rubber balls and tear-gas canisters, and arresting some young MEN and WOMEN.

Wearing her nightdress, Corinne approaches the window.

MARVIN

(pushing her
back)

Stay back! It's dangerous!

Something catches Corinne's attention down in the street, her expression changes to alarm.

CORINNE

Wait, it's... It's Ray! They've
caught him!

A POLICE OFFICER drags a young black boy, RAY, 13, by his coat toward a patrol car.

MARVIN

Ray? Who's Ray?

CORINNE

My cousin Angela's son! He's only
thirteen!

Corinne nervously runs back to the bed and sits on the edge of it.

CORINNE

I have to do something. I have to
help him.

With a brusque gesture, Corinne picks up one of her high-heeled shoes and breaks the heel off.

MARVIN

What're you doing?

CORINNE

I have to help him!

Corinne breaks the heel off her other shoe, turning her shoes into a pair of flats. She puts them on, stands up and takes her bridal coat from the coat rack.

MARVIN
(grabbing her)
Hey! Where're you going?

CORINNE
Let me go!

Corinne breaks free from Marvin's grip and puts her coat on.

MARVIN
Okay, wait a minute. I'm going with you.

Marvin picks up his suit pants and starts putting them on. Corinne opens the door and leaves the room.

MARVIN
Wait! Corinne!

Marvin trips on his own pants and falls on the floor.

MARVIN
Shit!

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Corinne runs through the street, clouds of smoke blinding her. There are burning cars, injured PEOPLE lying around, shop windows smashed..

CORINNE
Ray! Ray!

She abruptly stops running. A large group of RIOT POLICE approaches in tight formation from the end of the street.

Wearing his pants and unbuttoned shirt, Marvin exits the hotel and looks around. The smoke prevents him finding his wife.

MARVIN
Corinne! Corinne!

Marvin spots Corinne in the distance, on the opposite sidewalk. She remains paralyzed, bewildered.

MARVIN
Corinne!

Corinne doesn't hear him. Marvin looks beyond his wife and sees the riot police approaching her.

MARVIN
Corinne! Watch out!

Someone pushes Marvin from behind, sending him to the ground.

A couple of police officers start clubbing Marvin with their batons. He screams in pain.

A Molotov cocktail explodes nearby. The police officers stop beating him and leave.

Looking up from the ground, Marvin sees Corinne entering a narrow alley to avoid the riot police.

Bruised and stunned, Marvin tries to get up; a trickle of blood coming from his forehead.

MARVIN
(faintly)
Corinne..

A SMALL HUMAN FIGURE, perhaps a boy, wearing a red hooded parka jacket and gloves, enters the alley behind Corinne..

Marvin stands up and starts walking, staggering, towards the alley.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Marvin enters the alley. Nobody is there, only garbage cans, a few dumpsters and some cardboard boxes.

MARVIN
Corinne?

Nobody replies. Still dazed, Marvin walks deep into the alley, leaning against the wall.

MARVIN
Corinne? Are you there?

Marvin reaches the last dumpster at the end of the alley..

A woman's hand forcefully grabs Marvin's ankle.

Startled, Marvin looks down at his feet. There's a woman behind the dumpster, her body convulsing. It's Corinne.

MARVIN
Corinne!

Marvin quickly crouches down. She is dying; her throat ripped open as if with a clawed hand, fear and shock in her eyes, blood running down her breast. She tries to speak, but she can't. Blood bubbles burst from her lips.

MARVIN
(nervous)
Don't... Don't speak, don't move.
I'll... I'll call an ambulance.
Please, Corinne, don't-

Someone unseen presses a baton against Marvin's throat and drags him away from his wife.

A riot police officer bends down towards Corinne. He flips up his helmet visor and looks at her in surprise.

An empty look on Corinne's face, she is dead.

FADE TO:

EXT. CHESUNCOOK LAKE SHORE - DAY (BACK TO PRESENT)

Marvin paddles the kayak to shore and gets out of it. He drops the oar and walks across the lake's sandy bank.

A few yards on, he falls down, exhausted. Lying face down on the shore, he closes his eyes and exhales deeply.

BOY (O.S.)

Dad?

Marvin opens his eyes and lifts up his chin. There's a slender mulatto boy in front of him; blonde frizzy hair, wearing long swimming trunks and a Trail Blazers jersey. It's TROY, 15, his son.

TROY

(worried)

You okay, Dad?

FADE TO:

FLASHBACK - EXT. LOS ANGELES - CEMETERY - DAY (1992)

Corinne's RELATIVES and FRIENDS stand around a white casket, which slowly descends into an open grave.

Wearing a dark suit, Marvin cries bitterly. He and some relatives throw flowers onto the casket.

INT. CORINNE'S PARENTS' HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

After the funeral lunch, some relatives and friends help CORINNE'S MOTHER, 50, mature and elegant black woman, to return dishes and food to the kitchen.

CORINNE'S FATHER, 50, a man of strong build and imposing stature, gets three beers from the refrigerator and hands one to Marvin.

CORINNE'S FATHER

Anything new from the police?

Marvin shakes his head from side to side.

CORINNE'S FATHER

Keep the faith, son.

MARVIN
(irritated)
Yeah, they'll soon find some
scapegoat to blame.

Terry approaches them and Corinne's Father hands a beer
to him.

CORINNE'S FATHER
Let them do their job, Marvin.

MARVIN
Sure...

TERRY
Be reasonable, man. There's still
no evidence.

MARVIN
Fuck the evidence! I was there!

CORINNE'S FATHER
But you didn't see-

MARVIN
-If I had seen those cops killing
her, I'd be dead now. Believe me,
there was nobody except me and
them. They murdered her.

TERRY
You see them coming into the alley?

MARVIN
I don't remember, I was feeling
dizzy. I'd just been beaten.
(angrily)
Why... Why the hell don't you
believe me?!

Terry glances down and clicks his tongue. Marvin starts
getting red in the face with fury.

TERRY
Listen, man-

Marvin grabs Terry by the throat, pushes him into the
wall and draws his face close to his own.

MARVIN
-Who's the fucking Uncle Tom
now?! C'mon, Terry, answer me!
Who's the fucking Uncle Tom?!

Terry vainly tries to break free from Marvin's grip,

CORINNE'S FATHER
Hey! Stop!

Corinne's Father separates them. Terry coughs as he rubs his hand over his throat. People watch Marvin, astounded. He bows his head and closes his eyes, ashamed.

MARVIN

Sorry, I... I lost control.

EXT. CORINNE'S PARENTS' HOUSE - REAR PORCH - DAY

Leaning on the railing of a narrow balcony, Marvin smokes a cigarette.

MAN (O.S.)

(faking anger)

Who's the fucking Uncle Tom now?!
C'mon, answer me!

Marvin turns around and finds a smiling, slender black man wearing a long leather coat. It's DEMETRIUS, 50.

DEMETRIUS

That was good. Really good.

Marvin reluctantly smiles.

DEMETRIUS

I'm Demetrius, Corinne's distant
uncle. We met this morning.

They shake their hands. Demetrius takes some mints from his pocket and pops one into his mouth.

DEMETRIUS

Eucalyptus. Would you like one?

Marvin shakes his head, takes a puff from his cigarette and blows out the smoke. Demetrius puts the mints away.

DEMETRIUS

You should give that shit up.

Demetrius leans on the balcony railing and looks at a group of CHILDREN playing on the residential street.

DEMETRIUS

It's always the same old story.
Years go by and nothing changes.

MARVIN

What do you mean?

DEMETRIUS

I think she was murdered by the
cops as well. At least fifteen
people were killed by them during
the riots. Nothing but the same
old story...

Marvin leans on the railing and looks at the children too.

MARVIN

I feel so fucked up..

DEMETRIUS

Yeah, I'd feel the same way. But keeping all that anger inside ain't good. You should channel it in a positive way.

MARVIN

How?

DEMETRIUS

Maybe I could help you.

MARVIN

(suspecting)

Hey, wait, you... You're trying to sell me something, aren't you? Yoga classes or some shit like that?

DEMETRIUS

(laughing)

No, man, don't worry. It has nothing to do with that.

(serious again)

Well, some people have started to organize themselves. You know, self-defense groups. They're working hard. Maybe-

MARVIN

-Self-defense groups? What're they getting ready for? A racial war?

DEMETRIUS

Not exactly. It's not a question of bombing buildings or killing people like chickens.

MARVIN

What is it then?

DEMETRIUS

It's a question of fighting for respect. There was a time when we took up arms and we made history. Perhaps we should do it again.

MARVIN

You're talking to the wrong person. I'm not a man of action.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

A row of five beer bottles on a rock..

A GUNSHOT. The first bottle SHATTERS.

Another four GUNSHOTS. All the remaining bottles SHATTER too.

SUPER: REDWOOD FOREST, CALIFORNIA, 1992

Twenty yards from the shattered bottles, Marvin removes the magazine of a 9mm gun and the bullet in the chamber. Next to him, stand a short and athletic African-American girl who holds another gun, MICHELLE, 25, and Demetrius. The three of them wear dark clothes.

MICHELLE

(smiling)

Shit, Marvin, you're showing me up. Where did you learn to shoot like that?

MARVIN

A family of hunters. My father and grandfather were good shots. I haven't shot since I was a boy, but I guess it's in my genes.

DEMETRIUS

I can't even imagine what you could do with a sniper rifle.

Someone grabs Demetrius by the arm. It's FLOYD, 45, bald and sturdy African-American man. He looks worried.

DEMETRIUS

What're you doing here? You should be waiting in-

FLOYD

-We got a problem.

Demetrius and Floyd move away a few steps and start talking quietly. Marvin glances at them uneasily.

MICHELLE

(to Marvin)

My father is a hunter too, but I'm afraid I didn't inherit his skill.

MARVIN

Don't worry. It's just a matter of time and practice. You'll probably kick my ass in a few weeks.

MICHELLE
(skeptical)
Yeah, sure...

Demetrius comes back to them

DEMETRIUS
(worried)
Floyd's seen a bunch of cops
prowling around here. If they
find us.. Well, you already know.

MICHELLE
Okay, should we go now?

DEMETRIUS
No, you'll stay here. It'd be too
risky to come back all together.
We don't wanna put you in danger.

MARVIN
But what're we gonna do here?
When should we leave?

DEMETRIUS
You'll spend the night here. I'll
give you a tent, sleeping bags
and new clothes. Someone will
come to pick you up tomorrow
morning. If the cops find you,
just tell them you're a couple
camping. They have no reason to
suspect you of anything.

MICHELLE
What about you?

DEMETRIUS
Don't worry about that, Michelle.
It's not the first time Floyd and
I have had to escape from those
guys. Gimme your guns.

Marvin and Michelle hand him their guns.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

It's a starless night. A two person tent stands in a clearing. A camping lantern shines in it, lending it a ghostly quality.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

Marvin and Michelle snuggle into their sleeping bags. She pulls out a candy bar and starts eating it. As she does, Marvin gazes at her. Michelle notices his look.

MICHELLE

You want a bite?

Marvin shakes his head.

MARVIN

No, thanks. I was just asking myself a question.

MICHELLE

What question?

MARVIN

Why's a pretty girl like you involved in something like this?

MICHELLE

Are you trying to pick me up?

MARVIN

Just curious.

MICHELLE

The answer is in your question. I was tired of being the nice girl.

MARVIN

I don't believe you. Sure there's something else...

Michelle remains silent for a few moments.

MICHELLE

(sadly)

A cousin of mine was killed by the cops some years ago. We were like two peas in a pod. He wasn't a saint, but he didn't deserve to die like that.

MARVIN

What happened?

MICHELLE

He was caught stealing TVs, and he was jerk enough to threaten the cops with a blade. Twenty seconds later, he looked more like a colander than a man...

(beat)

And you? What're your powerful reasons? A police car ran over your dog? A white cop stole your girlfriend? C'mon, surprise me!

MARVIN

They murdered my wife.

Michelle's condescending smile freezes. Then, as she lowers her gaze, her expression grows sombre.

MICHELLE

(ashamed)

Sorry, I didn't know... I'm a complete idiot.

MARVIN

Don't worry. It happened five months ago, during the riots. Some cops cornered her in an alley and...

(beat)

They had no mercy on her. We had just got married.

MICHELLE

Fucking bastards...

They remain in silence for a few seconds. Then Marvin straightens up, startled.

MARVIN

Did you hear that?

MICHELLE

What?

Marvin puts a finger to his lips, asking for silence.

MARVIN

(whispering)

Footsteps... Footsteps nearby, about twenty yards from here.

MICHELLE

The cops?

MARVIN

Maybe.

Marvin straightens up again.

MARVIN

More footsteps. Haven't you heard them? They're coming closer.

Michelle nervously shakes her head.

MICHELLE

What... What can we do?

MARVIN

I don't know, lemme think... Yeah, I got it.

Marvin puts his arm around Michelle and tries to kiss her. Surprised, she stops him.

MICHELLE

What're you doing?

MARVIN

Demetrius said we should act like a couple, so they won't suspect anything. C'mon, they're already here, they're gonna come in.

MICHELLE

But-

Marvin tries again to kiss Michelle, who now consents. After a few seconds, Marvin starts to giggle. Michelle pushes him away and slaps him in the head.

MICHELLE

Damn asshole!

MARVIN

Sorry, it was just a joke.

MICHELLE

That was not funny at all.

MARVIN

We were getting too serious. I can't get to sleep if I'm sad.

Michelle wipes her lips with a handkerchief.

MICHELLE

If you wanted to kiss me, why didn't you just ask? You scared me to death.

MARVIN

Would you have accepted?

MICHELLE

Well... It wasn't bad at all.

They smile at each other. Then she places her hand on his arm.

MARVIN

(moving away)

Hey, wait, wait... It was just a joke, okay? I'm a widower. I was widowed just over five months-

MICHELLE

(scared)

-Did you hear that?

MARVIN

What?

Michelle puts a finger to her lips, asking for quiet.

MICHELLE

(whispering)

Footsteps.

Michelle smiles. Then she reaches over and turns off the camping lamp.

MARVIN

Hey, wait! Please, Michelle!

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT (LATER)

The tent in the clearing. SCRATCHING NOISES and BRANCHES SNAPPING...

INT. CAMPING TENT - NIGHT

The lamp is turned on. Marvin, with Michelle sleeping on his naked chest, wakes up and listens to the NOISES.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Wearing tracksuit pants and an undershirt, Marvin comes out of the tent. The noises stop abruptly.

After zipping up the tent, he switches on a flashlight and looks around. Everything seems quiet. Marvin starts walking deep into the forest.

EXT. FOREST - PATH - NIGHT

Fifty yards from the tent, Marvin reaches a narrow path and approaches a tree to inspect its branches. There is nothing strange up there. He lowers the flashlight...

The tree's upper branches start shaking. Startled, Marvin illuminates them...

A SMALL DARK SHADOW makes its way through the top of the tree. Soon it disappears among the leaves.

Marvin starts walking around the tree, trying to see the dark figure again...

He steps in a puddle of yellow slime.

Marvin glances down in surprise. Then he crouches down, takes a sample of the slime with his finger and smells it. He wrinkles his face, the slime stinks...

The SMALL DARK SHADOW appears briefly behind him and a SCRATCHING NOISE is heard.

The back of Marvin's undershirt is shredded, four bloody scratches on his skin.

Marvin falls with a SCREAM to the ground; the flashlight slips from his grasp and turns off. He writhes in pain and touches his back, finding blood on his fingertips.

After a few seconds, Marvin stands up and looks around, panicked..

There's nobody. He picks up the flashlight and nervously tries to reinsert the 9 volt battery into it.

A DISTANT BREATHING, harsh and agitated..

Marvin raises his head..

A bony DARK FIGURE about five feet tall is at the end of the path, twenty yards from him. It seems to be watching him. Marvin slowly stands up.

The dark figure starts walking hunchbacked towards him. Terrified, Marvin runs away along the path.

EXT. FOREST - GROVE - NIGHT

Marvin enters a grove. He keeps running, avoiding some trees and looking back in fear. As he does, he tests the flashlight repeatedly. Finally, it turns on.

EXT. FOREST - PRECIPICE - NIGHT

Marvin arrives at the edge of a precipice and abruptly stops. There's no way forward. He looks back again..

Nobody.

He places the flashlight on the ground and moves away from the precipice.

Marvin hides behind a thick tree, some yards away from the precipice's edge. Then he glances down at his feet, where he finds a football-size rock.

The hunchbacked dark figure approaches the edge of the precipice and picks up the flashlight.

Holding the rock, Marvin cautiously walks toward the dark figure. When he arrives at its back, he stops..

The dark figure turns toward him with a growl and glares at him with his shiny white eyes.

Marvin hesitates. Then he lifts the rock over his head and hurls it at the creature, hitting it in the face.

The dark figure goes over the precipice.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Dawn is breaking in the forest. The tent's door is now unzipped.

INT. TENT - DAY

Marvin wakes up. After sitting up, he touches his back, a grimace of pain on his face. He turns to his left...

Michelle is not there.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Marvin gets out and looks around. No trace of Michelle.

MARVIN
Michelle? Hello?

He hears no response. Then he puts on his hiking boots and starts walking deep into the forest.

EXT. FOREST - PATH - DAY

Marvin reaches the narrow path and approaches some trees.

MARVIN
I don't wanna see you relieving
yourself, Michelle, but it'll
happen if you don't answer me.

There is no answer.

EXT. FOREST - PRECIPICE - DAY

Marvin arrives near the precipice and stops by the thick tree behind which he hid last night.

MARVIN
Michelle!

Nobody answers. Marvin looks around.

MARVIN
Michelle!

The whipping of the wind is the only answer he receives.

A large black fly lands on Marvin's hand. He looks down at the fly and hears a BUZZING NOISE coming from nearby. He turns around and looks up at the tree trunk...

Dead and bloody, Michelle is tied around the tree at a height of about eight feet, her arms and legs stretched out in an X-shape.

A swarm of flies hovers around her belly, open and eviscerated.

Marvin stares at the corpse in horror.

FADE TO:

EXT. CABIN FAÇADE (CHESUNCOOK LAKE) - DAY (BACK TO PRESENT)

A hundred yards from the shore, a nice two-story cabin, built with rustic hand-peeled logs and stones, stands at the top of a slope.

INT. CABIN - LIVING ROOM - DAY

A cozy living room with comfy couches, a coffee table, a brick fireplace and a TV.

Seated in a chair, Marvin drinks a beer while looking out of a window. Standing beside him, his son Troy cleans his scratched arm with alcohol-soaked cotton balls.

TROY

I once had a similar wound. I cut my foot on a sharp rock and spent a week limping around.

MARVIN

When did that happen? I don't remember it.

TROY

It was a couple of years ago. I was swimming in the lake near Andy's house and... Well, forget it.

MARVIN

(surprised)

Andy's house? Did I say you could go there?

Troy doesn't answer. He stops cleaning the wound.

MARVIN

I'm asking you a question, Troy. Did I allow you to go there?

TROY

(ashamed)

I lied to you. I told you I was going on a school trip, but I spent the day at his house.

MARVIN

Were his parents with you?

TROY

No, they were out all day.

Marvin sighs, worried.

MARVIN

Why did you lie to me?

TROY

If I had told you the truth, you
wouldn't have let me go.

Marvin rubs his hands over his face with another sigh.

MARVIN

Yeah, now I remember that day..
How stupid of me.

TROY

I'm sorry.

MARVIN

A little late to apologize, isn't
it? Anyway, the most important
thing is that you don't do it
again. Promise me?

Troy nods.

TROY

But I still don't understand why
you never let me-

MARVIN

I've told you a thousand times,
you'll understand when you get
older. And then you'll thank me.

TROY

But-

MARVIN

-When you get older, Troy.

Troy stays silent. Then he grabs some medical gauze and
wraps it around Marvin's arm.

TROY

Does it hurt?

Marvin shakes his head.

TROY

You're a fucking tough guy.

MARVIN

Don't swear.

TROY

Sorry.

Troy finishes bandaging his father's arm and secures the gauze with surgical tape.

MARVIN

I've had many wounds during my life. I guess I'm almost immune to pain.

TROY

Why?

MARVIN

Why what?

TROY

Why so many wounds? You have scars everywhere.

MARVIN

Well, I've always been a bit adventurous.

Marvin smiles at Troy, who smiles back at him.

FADE TO:

FLASHBACK - EXT. COTTAGE FAÇADE - DAY

SUPER: JACKSON COUNTY, WISCONSIN, 1993

Surrounded by leafy trees, a two-story cottage stands in a clearing in the forest. A porch covers the entrance.

INT. COTTAGE - KITCHEN - DAY

It's a spacious rustic kitchen. Seated around a wooden table, drinking from a bottle of liquor, are Marvin and his GRANDFATHER, 80, an African-American man with a surly manner, grey beard and bald forehead.

A few feet away, a chubby black woman, GRANDMOTHER, 75, finishes washing dishes at the sink.

GRANDFATHER

(to Marvin)

Well, despite everything you should consider yourself lucky. You've not been booked by the police, and those wannabe Black Panthers would dig their own grave if they reported you.

MARVIN

(ironically)

Yeah, sure, I feel like I've won the lottery.

GRANDFATHER

Don't be a crybaby. It could have been much worse.

Grandfather grabs the bottle and pours himself another drink.

GRANDFATHER

Tell me about that girl.

MARVIN

Michelle? I can't tell you much about her. We had just met that day. She was a nice girl, cute...

GRANDFATHER

And you...? Well, you...

(beat)

Did you screw her?

MARVIN

(surprised)

What?

Grandmother turns off the sink faucet and turns towards the table.

GRANDMOTHER

(ironically)

As romantic as always...

(to Grandfather)

What the hell's it to you?

GRANDFATHER

You keep your big nose out of this. I'm not talking to you, this is man talk.

Grandmother shakes her head and sighs with resignation.

GRANDFATHER

Tell me, Marvin, did you?

MARVIN

Why do you ask me that? It doesn't make sense.

GRANDMOTHER

(drying her hands)

One month ago, I burnt by mistake his last erotic magazine in the fireplace. It seems he's seeking new sources of "inspiration".

GRANDFATHER

Shut up! Shut your damn mouth!

GRANDMOTHER

Okay, calm down, Mister Grumpy.

Grandmother approaches the table and drops the dishcloth on it.

GRANDMOTHER

Dry the dishes when you finish your man-to-man chat. I'm gonna watch TV.

She leaves. Grandfather empties his glass of liquor in one gulp and gazes at Marvin seriously.

GRANDFATHER

Did you do it or not? Answer me, it's important.

MARVIN

Okay, you win. Yes, we did it. We made love for hours. Happy now?

GRANDFATHER

I thought so.

Grandfather pulls a wood pipe from his pocket and lights it. He slowly inhales and expels the smoke.

GRANDFATHER

It was probably a clear enough sign of affinity. Perhaps they-

MARVIN

(confused)

-They? What're you talking about, grandpa? Who're they?

GRANDFATHER

Don't play dumb with me, Marvin.

Marvin stares at Grandfather, perplexed.

GRANDFATHER

Do you expect me to believe you haven't seen them yet?

EXT. FOREST - DAY

A small bloody handprint stamped on the trunk of a tree. Someone takes a blood sample with his fingertip.

Surrounded by lush woods, Marvin and Grandfather stand near the marked tree. Grandfather examines his fingertip and takes a puff from his pipe. Marvin watches him.

GRANDFATHER

It's still wet. They have been here recently.

MARVIN

Does it belong to one of them?

Grandfather nods.

GRANDFATHER

Sometimes they leave signs like this. It's like a game for them. I wonder which one of us they want.

Grandfather takes another puff on his pipe.

GRANDFATHER

It's getting late. Let's go home.

They take a path back through the woods.

MARVIN

You sure they killed Michelle?

GRANDFATHER

Why does it surprise you? You yourself have told me that one of them attacked you a few hours before.

MARVIN

It's hard for me to believe.

GRANDFATHER

I'm afraid that girl wasn't the only victim you knew.

Marvin stops and stares at Grandfather, who nods.

GRANDFATHER

I should have told you then. It was clear to me from the first moment, the pieces all fitted together: just married, bloody crime...

MARVIN

But those cops...

GRANDFATHER

Cops don't kill people by cutting their throats, Marvin. I should have told you then. I should have done.

MARVIN

I thought I saw someone following Corinne a few moments before she was murdered. I was dazed, but I saw someone. Perhaps a kid...

MEMORY FLASH - EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Someone enters the alley behind Corinne, a small figure wearing a red hooded parka jacket.

EXT. FOREST - DAY (BACK TO 1993)

Grandfather relights his pipe and puffs. They resume their walk along the path.

GRANDFATHER

They appear for the first time when one of us, a male of our family line, marries his first wife; and they stay with him until he dies. The first thing they do is murder her, then they go after you. If you kill one of them in self-defense, they kill someone close to you, someone beloved, preferably a woman. Then they resume their pursuit of you.

MARVIN

Does it never end?

GRANDFATHER

No, unless you sacrifice your own life. Sooner or later, they come back and the "eye-for-an-eye" game starts again. If you kill one of theirs, they kill one of yours; if you don't kill them, they kill you. Either way, you lose. It's been like that for generations.

MARVIN

What do they want from us?

GRANDFATHER

I haven't had the chance to ask them. But they've been there ever since I married my first wife.

MARVIN

Your first wife? I didn't know-

GRANDFATHER

-I don't like to talk about it...

(beat)

Tina Wood, a lovely girl. They murdered her on our very wedding night. I left the rooming house for five minutes to buy some cigarettes. When I came back, I found her dismembered on the bed. Just five damn minutes.

Grandfather takes another deep puff from his pipe.

GRANDFATHER

I haven't touched a cigarette since then. They make me retch.

MARVIN

You said it's been like that for generations...

GRANDFATHER

I'm sure that at least my father and my grandfather lived this same nightmare. I remember some strange things from my childhood; they didn't behave like normal people. Unfortunately, they had no time to warn me. As in the case of your father, they were unable to stand the strain.

MARVIN

You think my father...?

Grandfather nods.

GRANDFATHER

Maybe he was right. Blowing your brains out is probably the best option.

MARVIN

Why didn't you tell me this before?

GRANDFATHER

I thought it had ended. Though your father said it wasn't a good strategy, we killed many of them. They seemed defeated, you know? But as you can see, I was wrong. Just a few years ago, they came back. Stronger than ever.

MARVIN

What're they?

GRANDFATHER

Children.

MARVIN

Children?

GRANDFATHER

Yes. Just children.

FADE TO:

INT. CABIN (CHESUNCOOK LAKE) - KITCHEN - NIGHT (BACK TO PRESENT)

It's a small kitchen-dining room adjoining the living room. Seated at a table, Marvin and Troy eat pizza for dinner. Marvin devours a slice while Troy, lacking appetite, uses a fork to make holes in his portion.

MARVIN

Why aren't you eating?

TROY

I don't feel like it.

MARVIN

I thought pizza was your favorite food. It tastes really good. You should think about studying to be a cook.

TROY

The weirdest thing happened while I was kneading the dough, just after you went out canoeing.

MARVIN

What?

TROY

I don't know if I should tell you, I don't wanna worry-

MARVIN

(uneasy)

-Tell me, Troy. Tell me what happened.

TROY

Nothing really... I heard a noise coming from the door. I thought it was you coming back from the lake, but when I turned around...

(pointing at the
glass entry door)

There was something out there. I saw only it for a second, but-

MARVIN

-What was it?

TROY

It looked like an ape, an ape with no hair on its body. It was as high as me, very thin, and walking stooped. Its skin was white, bright white. I didn't see it very well because it ran away at once. Weird, huh?

Marvin doesn't answer; silent, he just stares at Troy.

TROY

Dad, are you listening to me?

Marvin still doesn't move; his eyes seem to look straight through his son.

TROY

Dad!

Marvin abruptly recovers.

MARVIN

Yeah, sorry, I was just trying to remember something...

(beat)

A couple of days ago, I heard on the local radio about an exotic animal which had escaped while being transported to the zoo. It was a rare monkey, one brought from somewhere in Asia. But don't worry, it's harmless.

Marvin takes another slice of pizza.

TROY

(unconvinced)

You sure?

MARVIN

(chewing)

Absolutely.

TROY

We'll have to call the police. They may be looking for it.

Marvin looks at his watch.

MARVIN

It's a bit late. I'll call them tomorrow. Besides, nothing's gonna happen if the animal enjoys some hours of freedom before being captured.

TROY

Okay, if you say so...

MARVIN

C'mon, eat that slice before it gets cold. By the way, what does this have to do with your lack of appetite?

TROY

When the monkey left, I found a small puddle of a viscous and yellowish slime on the porch. I had to wash it. It stank.

Troy glances down at his slice of pizza with a look of disgust.

TROY

It looked like melted mozzarella cheese.

Troy drops his fork on the plate.

TROY

I'm afraid pizza won't be my favorite food for quite a while.

Marvin smiles at Troy, trying to hide his worries.

FADE TO:

FLASHBACK - EXT. COTTAGE (JACKSON COUNTY) - PORCH - NIGHT (1993)

Night falls on the forest. Comfortably seated in rocking chairs, Grandfather and Marvin drink beer on the porch. Grandfather keeps smoking his pipe.

MARVIN

You ever tried letting them be?

GRANDFATHER

What do you mean? If it wasn't for my good aim, I wouldn't be talking to you right now.

MARVIN

I mean escaping from them instead of confronting them. This way, they wouldn't have a chance to take revenge on someone close to you.

GRANDFATHER

I guess my father tried something like that. He often disappeared from home for days or weeks at a time, without notice, as if the devil was after him. It didn't work. Sooner or later, you're forced to kill one of them.

MARVIN

It might be a good strategy. We-

GRANDFATHER

(irritated)

-We aren't gonna make the same mistake. It leads nowhere. And besides, it's cowardly. I've never hesitated shooting at those demons. I've had to pay a high price, but I'll keep fighting until my last breath.

MARVIN

And what about grandma? By acting this way, you're putting her life in danger.

Grandfather takes a deep puff on his pipe, as if getting ready to say something important.

GRANDFATHER

There's a way to protect her from them, a little trick.

MARVIN

How?

GRANDFATHER

Female friends.

MARVIN

I don't get it.

GRANDFATHER

There are a few clubs along the nearest road where you can meet women. I try to visit them. As time goes by, some girls become fond of you, and you also become fond of them.

Grandfather finishes his beer and crumples the can.

GRANDFATHER

When I kill one of the children, I stay right next to grandma for several days. It's as if we were the First Lady and her bodyguard. Once they realize that she won't be an easy target, they look for another victim, someone close to me, someone beloved... As I told you, it seems they perceive sex as a deep sign of affection.

MARVIN

(perplexed)

Do you use prostitutes to...?

GRANDFATHER

I've got no other choice. Your grandmother is the only person I care about in this fucked up world. I'd do anything for her.

MARVIN

Don't try to excuse yourself.

GRANDFATHER

(annoyed)

You think I don't feel sorry for those poor girls? The fact that the children kill them means I do. Otherwise, they wouldn't do it. Besides, they aren't the only people I've had to sacrifice. My best friends were murdered too.

They remain in silence for a few seconds.

MARVIN

Does grandma know anything about this?

GRANDFATHER

No, I've never told her about it. It'd only complicate things.

Marvin sighs deeply.

MARVIN

We should go to the police.

GRANDFATHER

I already have, several times. The last time they threatened to send me to the madhouse. Nobody can help us, Marvin. We're alone in this war.

Marvin drains his beer and crumples the can.

MARVIN

This is crazy.

GRANDFATHER

Yeah, but we got a better chance together than we do by ourselves.

MARVIN

You think we can defeat them?

GRANDFATHER

Einstein said that only two things are infinite: universe and human stupidity. I guess we'll have to kill them all.

MARVIN

But they could be hundreds or even thousands..

GRANDFATHER

It makes no difference. I don't wanna die fleeing like a rat.

MARVIN

Maybe they have a weak point, something that might-

GRANDFATHER

-There is something peculiar in those children's faces, above all when they're dead. I wouldn't dare to call it innocence, but their empty looks make me feel uncomfortable, almost sorry for them. It's probably just a trick to weaken my resolve and will to resist, but sometimes..

Grandfather takes another deep puff from his pipe.

GRANDFATHER

Sometimes I think they hide some kind of secret, one which will only be revealed when we defeat them, a big surprise that will turn our victory into the worst defeat. I'm often afraid of that day coming. Perhaps this is much more complex than-

A CHORUS OF HOARSE HOWLS coming from the woods. They, frightened, stand up.

GRANDFATHER

They're here.

MARVIN

There seem to be a lot of them.

GRANDFATHER

They just do it to scare us. You will never be attacked by a pack of them.

MARVIN

Why?

GRANDFATHER

They're not pack hunters. They follow rules. Now go down to the basement and bring up a couple of deer rifles, the biggest ones. Hurry!

INT. COTTAGE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

A bare bulb hanging from the ceiling is turned on, revealing a small and dusty basement.

Marvin opens a wooden closet to find a bunch of rifles on a rack. He checks them one by one and finally chooses a couple. After picking up some shells, he leaves.

EXT. COTTAGE - PORCH - NIGHT

Marvin steps out to the porch. There's nobody there. His grandfather has disappeared.

Nervously, he leans one of the rifles against a wall and loads the other one. He brandishes this rifle and looks around in fear.

MARVIN

Grandpa? Are you there?

Nobody answers.

A TAPPING SOUND on the roof..

Grandfather's pipe falls onto the porch stairs from the roof.

Startled, Marvin slowly walks towards the pipe, crouches down and picks up it. Then he stands up and scrutinizes the gloomy forest.

MARVIN

Grandpa?

There is no response. Marvin turns around..

A body swings down on a rope from the roof and hits him.

Marvin falls backwards to the ground. Soaked in blood, he stares up at the body in shock..

It's Grandfather, hanging upside down, beheaded, blood streaming from the neck stump.

FADE TO:

INT. CABIN (CHESUNCOOK LAKE) - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (BACK TO PRESENT)

A hand moves a black pawn on a chessboard. It takes a white pawn. A younger hand moves another white pawn and it takes the black pawn.

Seated at the coffee table, Marvin and Troy play chess.

MARVIN

Pawn for pawn. Good.

TROY

Pawn for pawn, knight for knight,
bishop for bishop... Why are you
playing like that? You play like
a kamikaze.

MARVIN

Chess is like life. Sometimes you
need to sacrifice some pieces in
order to win the overall game.

Marvin moves his queen on the chessboard.

MARVIN

Checkmate.

He smiles proudly. Surprised, Troy returns his eyes to
the chessboard.

TROY

I'm afraid you're wrong.

Troy moves a bishop, taking Marvin's queen.

TROY

Checkmate.

Marvin's smile freezes. He looks back at the chessboard,
his expression grows serious.

MARVIN

You were lucky.

TROY

(smiling)

Some call it talent.

Troy shifts his eyes towards one of the open windows.
Raindrops slap against the glass.

TROY

It's starting to rain.

Marvin turns around. Then he stands up, approaches the
window and looks at the sky.

MARVIN

A hard rain's gonna fall.

He closes the window and walks towards a second one also
open.

TROY

Leave that one open, it's hot in
here.

Marvin obeys and walks back to the table.

MARVIN
How about a rematch, little Bobby
Fischer?

TROY
(smiling)
It'll be a pleasure to beat you
again.

MARVIN
Let's see if you-

A THUD coming from somewhere in the cabin.

MARVIN
(uneasy)
Did you hear that?

Troy nods.

TROY
It came from the basement, didn't
it?

Marvin nods. Silence for a few seconds.

MARVIN
Well, let's start the game.

Marvin sits down and picks up some chess pieces...

Another THUD, louder now...

Marvin springs to his feet.

TROY
It might be the monkey..

Marvin hesitates, worried.

MARVIN
What did that monkey look like?

TROY
I told you before, it was very
thin, its skin white as snow-

MARVIN
-Did it have hair?

TROY
No, I told you it looked like an
ape with no hair on its body.

MARVIN
I mean on the head. Did it have
hair on its head?

TROY
 (hesitating)
 Well... Yeah, I think so. It had
 some locks of black hair on its
 head. Is it important?

Marvin's expression turns to fright.

MEMORY FLASH - EXT. CHESUNCOOK LAKE - DAY

Marvin, from the kayak, stops hitting his attacker. The bald, cracked white head sinks into the water. No locks of black hair.

INT. CABIN - KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (BACK TO PRESENT)

Someone grabs two kitchen knives from a knife block.

Marvin enters the living room and hands one of the knives to Troy, who stands next to the coffee table.

MARVIN
 Follow me.

He heads to a door at the back of the room. Troy walks after him.

MARVIN
 Stay here and don't move. I'm
 gonna take a look down there.
 (opening the
 door)
 If you see that creature, just
 shout out loud, okay? I'll come
 back to help you.

TROY
 Dad.

Marvin turns toward Troy, who looks at him in confusion.

TROY
 You said that monkey was
 harmless.

Marvin remains in silence for a second.

MARVIN
 It might be scared. A frightened
 animal is always dangerous.

Brandishing his knife, Marvin slowly starts to go down the stairs leading to the basement.

FADE TO:

FLASHBACK - INT. CHURCH - DAY

SUPER: CHICAGO, 2002

Wearing a cutaway coat, MARVIN, 40, kisses ALICE, 35, a white woman with curly blonde hair wearing a splendid wedding dress. They smile at each other.

INT. HOTEL - SUITE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

TV SCREEN - A series of television stations: A home shopping network selling kitchen appliances, a boxing match, a scene from the movie "Village of the Damned"...

It's a modern and luxurious hotel bedroom with a big television set. Lying in a spacious bed, still wearing her white wedding dress, Alice uses a remote control to compulsively change channels.

MARVIN (O.S.)

Are you gonna spend the whole
night channel surfing?

Marvin places his cutaway coat on a chair and sits on the edge of the bed with his back to Alice. He wears a black shoulder holster over his shirt.

ALICE

(smiling)

It would be great! You know I
love TV! The remote control is
probably the best invention since
the wheel.

Marvin glances at her and starts untying his shoes.

MARVIN

The best way to watch everything
and nothing at the same time. I'm
sure it was invented by someone
who hated television.

ALICE

And you? Are you gonna spend the
whole night carrying your gun?

MARVIN

Maybe. I like to feel safe.

Alice sits up and crawls over to his back. She embraces him from behind and starts kissing his neck while lightly touching his gun.

ALICE

I'm starting to feel jealous of
this little bitch. This would be
a good time to get rid of it.

MARVIN

You'll have to wait.

Marvin stands up, takes off his holster and puts it on the nightstand.

MARVIN

Maybe I'll do it someday, but not yet.

A KNOCKING is heard. They turn towards the living room and remain in silence for a few moments.

ALICE

What're you waiting for? Go and open the door.

MARVIN

I hung the "Do not disturb" sign.

He hesitates. Then he shifts his eyes to the holster on the nightstand. Alice watches him.

ALICE

C'mon, open it. It could be an emergency.

Marvin leaves the bedroom.

INT. HOTEL - SUITE'S DOOR/HALLWAY - NIGHT

Marvin cautiously approaches the door.

MARVIN

Who is it?

Nobody answers. He hesitates a few seconds. Then, slowly, he reaches out and grasps the door knob with his hand.

Marvin's right hand clenches into a tight fist.

He forcefully opens the door...

Nobody.

The hallway floor, long and broad, is empty. Marvin steps out of the suite and looks around.

Just next to the door, he finds a drinks trolley with an ice bucket containing a couple of champagne bottles. He picks up a white card from the trolley.

It's a congratulations card. It reads: HAPPY WEDDING NIGHT! WALDORF ASTORIA CHICAGO.

Marvin smiles.

INT. HOTEL - SUITE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Marvin comes back to the bedroom. Lying in the bed, Alice keeps watching television. He walks towards her with his hands behind his back.

ALICE

Who was it?

Marvin doesn't answer. He stops in front of the bed.

MARVIN

I think it would be a good idea
to buy another gun for you.

ALICE

(surprised)

What?

MARVIN

So you could defend yourself from
an unexpected attack...

(smiling)

Just like this one!

With a quick movement, he pulls out a champagne bottle from behind his back, uncorks it and sprays champagne over Alice, who screams.

Marvin laughs as he gets on the bed and lies over her, facing her. Soaked in champagne, they kiss.

INT. HOTEL - HALLWAY - NIGHT

The "Do not disturb" sign is hanging on the knob. Then the CAMERA pans up to reveal something on the upper corner of the door...

A bloody handprint stamped.

FADE TO:

INT. CABIN (CHESUNCOOK LAKE) - BASEMENT - NIGHT (BACK TO PRESENT)

A floor lamp turns on, revealing a basement with stored food and a workshop bench.

Brandishing the kitchen knife, Marvin walks through the room. As he does, he looks around. Once he reaches the far corner of the basement, he turns on another lamp. There is nobody there.

Marvin drops the knife on a shelf and picks up a shotgun. After checking it, he looks around again. Then something catches his eye...

A window high in the back wall. It's been opened.

Marvin uses a step stool to reach the window and looks outside. Everything seems quiet. He closes the window.

INT. CABIN - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Carrying his shotgun, Marvin comes back to the living room and closes the door leading to the basement.

MARVIN

It was nothing, false alarm.

Marvin turns towards the living room. Troy stands next to the coffee table, his expression is fearful; he nervously holds the knife with both hands.

MARVIN

(worried)

What's wrong? Are you okay?

TROY

(nervous)

There's... There's something..
There's something in the kitchen.

INT. CABIN - KITCHEN - NIGHT

A small bloody handprint is stamped on the upper part of the refrigerator. A hand takes a blood sample with his fingertip.

Marvin and Troy stand near the fridge. Marvin examines his bloodstained finger as Troy watches him.

MARVIN

It's still wet.

TROY

Whose is it?

MARVIN

(angry)

I told you to stay near the
basement door.

TROY

I was thirsty. I came here to
drink water and-

MARVIN

-Why didn't you shout when you
found this?

TROY

You told me to shout only if I
saw the monkey.

Marvin clicks his tongue. Then he grabs Troy by his shoulders and stares at him.

MARVIN

You must obey me, Troy. You must obey me to the letter. Always!

TROY

But-

MARVIN

-We aren't playing a game. We're facing something dangerous, much more dangerous than you could ever imagine. It's a matter of life and death. You understand?

Troy nods, intimidated.

FADE TO:

FLASHBACK - INT. GUN SHOP (CHICAGO) - DAY (2003)

A rolling shutter door is pulled up. The morning light comes streaming in.

Marvin and Alice, several month pregnant, open a glass door and step into a little gun shop.

MARVIN

(smiling)

Welcome to our future.

A large smile crosses Alice's face. She looks around...

The shop walls are filled with shotguns and rifles, boxes of ammunition are piled up on a long glass counter.

ALICE

Wow! I see you spent every last cent my father gave you.

MARVIN

You like it?

ALICE

You're crazy, absolutely crazy... But yes, I like it.

Marvin smiles proudly. Then he puts his arm around his wife's waist and kisses her on the cheek.

MARVIN

(joking)

I'm seriously thinking about leaving you and going off with him.

ALICE
(smiling)
You'd make a good couple. Your
love of guns would keep you
together for a lifetime.

Marvin kisses her again. Then Alice approaches the glass counter and looks at some pistols.

ALICE
My heart bleeds for the poor guy
who tries to mess with you. What
an arsenal!

MARVIN
You've not seen anything yet. Let
me show you my best weapon...

Marvin whistles loudly.

ALICE
What is it? A nuclear warhead?

MARVIN
(smiling)
Something even more lethal... The
ultimate weapon.

A German Shepherd dog comes running from the back of the shop and approaches Marvin, who strokes him.

ALICE
I stand by what I said:
absolutely crazy.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - DAY

Marvin quickly walks through a hospital corridor, looking around as if he were looking for something...

A Caucasian man with a chubby build and white hair grabs him by the arm. It is ERNEST, 65, Alice's father.

MARVIN
(worried)
Hi, how's Alice?

Ernest doesn't answer. He stares at Marvin with serious eyes.

MARVIN
Is she all right?

Ernest smiles widely and embraces him effusively.

ERNEST
Congratulations, Marvin.

INT. HOSPITAL - ROOM - DAY

A hospital room. Alice rests on the bed. Beside her, a white woman of thin build daintily dabs her face with a napkin. It is KAREN, 60, her mother.

Ernest and Marvin stand next to them. Marvin holds a bi-racial BABY in his arms. They smile happily and proudly.

KAREN

(to Alice)

He looks like your brother Charles when he was born, the spitting image. A bit darker, sure.

ALICE

I hope he doesn't end up being such jerk. I'm still waiting for his call.

KAREN

Don't be grumpy, Alice. I'm sure he's busy working.

Marvin gives the baby back to Alice and kisses her on the forehead. They smile at each other.

ERNEST

(to Marvin)

He weighs ten pounds. It seems he'll not only bear my name, but also...

Ernest pats his fat belly and smiles. Marvin, confused, looks at him, then at Alice.

ALICE

Change of plan, Dad.

ERNEST

Huh?

ALICE

We've decided he'll be called Troy.

ERNEST

(surprised)

What?

ALICE

Troy. He'll be called Troy.

ERNEST

Troy? Where did you get that name from? It sounds like a gang member's name.

KAREN
Ernest, it-

ERNEST
(annoyed)
-I refuse to accept it, Karen. I don't want my grandson to end up selling crack on a street corner.

KAREN
Please, Ernest, it-

ERNEST
-Am I wrong? Am I lying?

ALICE
It was Marvin's grandfather's name, Dad.

Ernest's expression freezes, his mouth gaping open, his eyes looking straight through his daughter.

ALICE
We thought it would be a nice tribute to him.

Ernest lowers his gaze. Then he coughs a couple times and rubs his chin.

ERNEST
(awkward)
Well, on second thoughts... Yes, it's a nice name, rather exotic but it sounds good, very good.

Ernest pats Marvin on the shoulder and smiles at him.

ERNEST
Good choice, Marvin.

Marvin diplomatically smiles back at him.

FADE TO:

INT. CABIN (CHESUNCOOKLAKE) - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (BACK TO PRESENT)

Seated on the living room couch, Marvin and Troy watch a basketball game on TV. They remain silent, still, their eyes glued to the match. Outside it's raining heavily, the RUMBLING of thunder is heard.

The shotgun rests on Marvin's thighs while his fingers nervously tap its butt.

Without taking their eyes off the TV, Marvin and Troy start to talk.

TROY

That story about an escaped monkey... You made up it, didn't you?

MARVIN

Yeah.

TROY

What was that thing then?

MARVIN

It's not just one thing. There's quite a few.

TROY

But what are they?

MARVIN

Something that has haunted our family for a long time.

TROY

Why?

MARVIN

It doesn't matter anymore. The only thing we have to worry about is killing them. I think there are just a few of them left. We must kill them all.

TROY

Are they the reason why you have always protected me so much?

MARVIN

Yes, they're dangerous.

They hear a THUD coming from somewhere in the cabin.

MARVIN

(standing up)

Hear that?

Troy worriedly nods his head.

TROY

Now it's coming from the attic.

Marvin heads to another door at a corner of the living room. From the couch, Troy nervously watches him. He puts his ear to the door and listens intently. Another THUD is heard.

MARVIN

Yeah, it's coming from up there.

The cabin lights go out. The living room goes dark.

MARVIN

Fuck!

TROY

The electrical system again...
Didn't you rewire it after the
last storm?

MARVIN

Of course I did!

FADE TO:

FLASHBACK - INT. GUN SHOP (CHICAGO) - NIGHT (2003)

A rolling shutter door is pulled down. The gun shop is now closed.

Marvin strokes his dog and walks behind the counter. He takes off his jacket and his holster, places them on the counter and unbuttons his shirt.

He picks up a nearby phone and dials. As he waits for an answer, he checks some delivery notes.

MARVIN

(on phone)

Hi, honey, it's me again. How's everything going there?

(beat)

No, this is only the second time I've called you today.

(beat)

I'm sorry to be so tiresome, but I like knowing that everything is okay at home.

A CRASHING SOUND of boxes and crates falling. It comes from the back room of the gun shop. The dog barks and heads towards it.

MARVIN

(on phone)

No, don't worry. I was piling up some boxes this morning in the back room and... Well, you've just heard it.

The dog BARKING in the distance. Then silence.

MARVIN

(on phone)

I'm gonna try to sort out the mess back there. I'll be home in a couple hours. I love you.

Marvin puts down the phone and lights up a cigarette.

MARVIN
(to the dog)
Is everything okay, Tyson?

No response. Marvin heads to the back door.

INT. GUN SHOP - HALLWAY/BACK ROOM - NIGHT

Marvin walks through a dark, narrow hallway towards an open door at the end of the corridor..

A DOG WHINE is heard.

Marvin, surprised, stops abruptly. Then a strange CHEWING NOISE. Both sounds come from the backroom.

Marvin crushes his cigarette against the wall and slowly approaches the back room's door..

The middle of the back room is occupied by some fallen crates and boxes. Next to them, he sees something that freezes his blood with horror..

The dog convulses on the floor, covered in blood. Next to him, crouching down and wearing just dirty underpants, a bony and very pale-skinned CHILD with his back to Marvin is devouring him.

Marvin, shocked, slowly drops his hand to his side.. The gun holster is not there, he left it on the counter.

He hesitates and takes a step back. His feet tread on a small box, causing a faint CRUNCHING NOISE..

The child quickly turns around and glares at him with his slit-pupil white eyes.

Marvin gasps in fear. Then the child smiles, showing off sharp, yellowish teeth as a stream of blood runs from his mouth.

The child wipes the blood with his hand and slowly stands up. Marvin nervously looks around for something to defend himself..

A corded circular saw rests on a small worktable. Marvin notices it and takes a step forward.

MARVIN
What do you want from me? Why do
you do this to me?

The child answers with a deep and guttural roar. Marvin shifts his gaze again towards the circular saw..

The saw's power cord is plugged in.

The child starts walking towards him, his gait stooped, shaking his dirty black hair like a lion as he growls quietly. Marvin stares at him again.

MARVIN

You little son of a bitch, come here... I'm the one you're looking for. C'mon...

The child draws closer, watching Marvin like a predator watching its prey...

Marvin rushes to the crate, grabs the circular saw and tries to turn it on, but the child pounces on him with a roar before he does.

They both fall to the floor and struggle, Marvin lying on the ground with the child seated astride him.

Marvin puts the unplugged saw on the child's face and presses the trigger switch...

The saw doesn't run.

As the child reaches to strangle him, Marvin puts the saw down and looks to his right.

The cord has unplugged from the wall socket.

Marvin grabs the plug and stretches his arm out to insert it into the wall socket. He doesn't manage it. The socket is too far away.

The child furiously roars as he keeps squeezing his neck hard. Marvin's face starts to turn red.

Marvin keeps stretching his arm out to plug the circular saw into the socket. Five inches... Three...

The plug's pins slightly touch the socket's holes...

Marvin's face starts turning purple due to lack of air. His expression freezes, his eyes roll back...

The plug inserts into the wall socket.

Making a last effort, Marvin reaches out his left arm towards the child, grabs him by his nape and pulls him down.

MARVIN

Give the Devil my regards.

He picks up the circular saw with his right hand, puts it on the child's face and presses the trigger switch.

As the SCREECHING NOISE of the saw and the child's HOWLS of pain are heard, blood gushes onto Marvin's face.

After a few seconds, the child's hands loosen their grip on his throat.

The dead child collapses on the floor with his face split in two by the circular saw.

Covered in blood, Marvin crawls away from the corpse and leans his back against the wall. He coughs as he rubs his hand over his throat.

INT. GUN SHOP - NIGHT

Marvin, already clean and dressed, picks up the phone from the counter and dials. He waits in silence, still shocked and confused.

MARVIN

Hi, it's me again.

(beat)

No, this time it's serious. Tyson has become ill, he's coughing up blood.

(beat)

I don't know, but it doesn't look good. I'm gonna try to find a vet.

(beat)

Yeah, I'll be late home.

INT. GUN SHOP - BACK SHOP - NIGHT

Marvin removes a small serrated knife from Tyson's neck. After staring at the bloody knife for a few seconds, he drops it and covers the dog with a blanket.

FADE TO:

INT. CABIN (CHESUNCOOK LAKE) - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (BACK TO PRESENT)

The living room is still in darkness. Marvin flicks a Zippo lighter to see.

MARVIN

(worried)

Are you there, Troy?

TROY

Yeah, I'm standing next to the couch.

A RUMBLING of THUNDER is heard as a flash of lightning illuminates the living room. Marvin approaches Troy.

MARVIN

I'm gonna take a look in the attic. Stay here. You got the knife?

TROY

It's here on the table. But I'd prefer to go with you.

MARVIN

It'd be too dangerous. I might shoot you by mistake.

TROY

But they might attack me while you're up there.

MARVIN

That won't happen. If there's one of them in the attic, no one will come down here. They're not pack hunters. They follow rules.

TROY

You sure?

MARVIN

Absolutely.

Another RUMBLE of THUNDER is heard, another flash of lightning lights up the living room.

MARVIN

Okay, listen to me. If I'm not back in a couple minutes, run away from here as fast as you can.

TROY

And where do I go?

MARVIN

Just run and don't stop till you find people. You understand?

Troy nods. Marvin checks his shotgun.

MARVIN

You remember when you learned by heart that excerpt from Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" speech?

Troy nods again.

MARVIN

You still remember it?

TROY

I think so.

MARVIN

All right, I want you to recite it loudly as soon as I start going up.

TROY

Why?

MARVIN

Well, the Reverend was somehow a saint and these creatures are somehow demons. Maybe his words will frighten them away.

TROY

You really think so?

Marvin hesitates.

MARVIN

No, but at least this way I'll know you're okay. Remember: a couple of minutes.

Marvin walks back to the door leading to the attic and slowly opens it.

TROY

Dad.

Marvin turns around to his son.

TROY

Thanks.

MARVIN

Thanks for what?

TROY

Thanks for protecting me all these years.

Marvin nods with a smile and starts ascending the stairs.

TROY (O.S.)

(loudly)

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."

FADE TO:

FLASHBACK - EXT. PARK (CHICAGO) - PATH - DAY (2004)

Dressed for chilly weather, Marvin and Alice take a walk through a green and leafy park where children run free and old people play chess.

Marvin pushes a baby stroller where a one-year old TROY plays with a toy truck.

MARVIN

(to Alice)

Don't you think you're a bit old to start a degree course?

ALICE

I would like to be something more than a housewife for the rest of my life.

MARVIN

Who'd take care of Troy? I'm too busy with the gun shop.

ALICE

I might sign up for the evening shift.

MARVIN

Evening shift? It sounds a little dangerous, doesn't it?

ALICE

Dangerous? Why dangerous?

MARVIN

Can I remind you that we live in Chicago, the murder capital of the country? Death lurks here at every corner.

ALICE

You talk like Dirty Harry.

MARVIN

Some call it prudence.

The toy truck slips from Troy's grasp and falls to the ground. They stop. Marvin crouches down to pick up the truck and puts it into the stroller pouch.

MARVIN

(to Alice)

Okay, I'm sure we'll come to an agreement of some kind. In other words, you'll get your way.

Alice smiles, proudly. They resume their walk.

EXT. PARK - LAKE - DAY

MARVIN'S VIEWFINDER POV

Crouched down next to the stroller, Alice smiles at the camera as Troy plays with a rag doll; a bluish lake behind them.

MARVIN (O.S.)
His nose, Alice, scratch his
nose! It'll make him smile!

She gently scratches Troy's nose, who giggles. A CAMERA CLICK is heard.

MARVIN (O.S.)
That's it! Do it again!

Alice keeps scratching Troy as more CAMERA CLICKS are heard.

MARVIN (O.S.)
Move aside, dear! You're blocking
my view of him!

After sighing resignedly, Alice steps aside.

MARVIN (O.S.)
That's it! Don't move!

BACK TO SCENE

Marvin, crouched down fifty feet away from his family, keeps taking photographs. More CAMERA CLICKS.

MARVIN
Great! Keep scratching him!

A CHILD wearing a red hooded parka jacket and gloves passes by Marvin, who doesn't get to see his face, and walks toward Alice and Troy.

The child quickens his pace. Worried, Marvin sets the camera on the ground and stands up.

Marvin furiously glares at the child, who keeps coming closer to his family.

MARVIN
Son of a bitch...

Without losing an instant, Marvin slips his hand into his coat and starts to run towards the little boy...

The child stops just in front of Alice and Troy. Alice, confused, looks up at him.

Marvin draws his gun from his holster...

The child slowly unzips his parka jacket...

Marvin reaches the child, grabs him by the shoulder, forcing him to turn around, and points the gun at his face.

MARVIN

Damn-

It's a normal child.

Terrified, the child looks up at him with shocked eyes as he holds Troy's toy truck in his hands.

CHILD

The... The... The truck...

ALICE

(scared)

Marvin!

Marvin, ashamed, puts down his gun and lets go of the child, who drops the toy truck and runs away in terror.

FADE TO:

INT. CABIN (CHESUNCOOK LAKE) - STAIRCASE - NIGHT (BACK TO PRESENT)

Guided by the light of his Zippo lighter, Marvin keeps climbing up the narrow stairs, slowly, step by step...

TROY (O.S.)

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

Marvin reaches the closed attic door, stops and takes a deep breath. He blows out the Zippo lighter and puts it in his shirt pocket.

TROY (O.S.)

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

Marvin takes up the shotgun and reaches for the door knob as he puts his finger on the shotgun's trigger. Then he slowly turns the knob...

TROY (O.S.)

I have a dream that my four
little children will one day live
in a nation where they will not
be judged by the color of their
skin but by the content of their
character. I have a dream today!

INT. CABIN (ATTIC) - NIGHT

All of a sudden the attic door flies open. Waving his
shotgun, Marvin enters the small and dirty room and
scrutinizes the darkness attentively..

There is nobody in there. Marvin takes a candle from a
shelf and lights it.

TROY (O.S.)

I have a dream that one day, down
in Alabama, with its vicious
racists, with its governor having
his lips dripping with the words
of "interposition" and
"nullification"...

Marvin slowly approaches a closed wardrobe, nervousness
visible on his face. He throws it open...

It's empty, nobody is there.

He steps aside and throws open a second wardrobe..

It's empty too.

TROY (O.S.)

One day right there in Alabama
little black boys and black girls
will be able to join hands with
little white boys and white girls
as sisters and brothers.

Marvin puts down his shotgun and sighs, releasing his
tension. Then something catches his attention..

A small window in the back wall of the attic is slightly
open. He approaches it...

Troy's voice is heard no more.

MARVIN

Is everything okay down there?!

No response.

MARVIN

(worried)

Are you alright, Troy?! What's
wrong?!

TROY (O.S.)
I have a dream today!

Marvin sighs, relieved. Then he opens the window and peers out into the night. He sees the long and dense climbing plant that grows up the front of the house.

TROY (O.S.)
I have a dream that one day every
valley shall be exalted, and
every hill and mountain shall..

Marvin sees something that freezes his blood..

Small bloody fingerprints stamped on the windowsill, as if somebody had leaned on it to go down the plant.

MARVIN
Shit..

Marvin quickly runs back towards the stairs.

FADE TO:

FLASHBACK - EXT. WASTE GROUND - NIGHT (2005)

A hole recently dug in the ground. Somebody tosses a corpse into the pit, a pale child torn in half at the waist, her bloody guts hanging out.

An instant later, a thin cut-off leg is thrown into the hole; then the other one.

Marvin stands next to the pit, now sporting a short beard and holding a spade in his hands. He's in the middle of a vast waste ground, his white shirt torn and dirty.

After staring at the corpse for a few moments, he spits into the grave and starts covering it.

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

NEWSPAPER- A missing advertisement occupying the upper right quarter of a newspaper's page, it reads: "Terry Jones is still missing." There is a personal profile with a photo of a black man with light complexion and glasses. It's Terry, Marvin's friend.

ALICE (O.S.)
Do you know him?

It's a modern and spacious living room. Marvin, seated on a couch, is reading Los Angeles Times newspaper. Alice, behind him, holds a two-year old TROY in her arms.

MARVIN
No, just... Morbid curiosity.

Marvin turns to the next page of the newspaper as Alice places Troy on the couch next to him.

ALICE

I'm going to a classmate's house.
I just realized I've lost some
notes for tomorrow's test.

MARVIN

(surprised)

You're going now? It's a bit
late, isn't it?

ALICE

(putting her
coat on)

I have no choice.

MARVIN

Take your cell phone with you.

ALICE

It's charging.

Marvin stands up and picks up Troy.

MARVIN

Then we'll go with you. It'll be
a pleasant evening walk.

ALICE

(irritated)

Marvin, don't be tiresome. She
lives just three blocks from
here. I'll be back in less than
ten minutes.

MARVIN

Okay, don't get angry...

Marvin places Troy back on the couch. Then he takes his holster from a small table and hands the gun to Alice.

MARVIN

Take it.

Alice stares at the gun, astonished.

MARVIN

C'mon, take it. You know how to
handle a gun, right? C'mon, don't
be afraid, it's on safety. Do it
for me.

Alice clicks his tongue. She takes the gun and puts it in her purse. Then she leaves.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - ENTRANCE HALL - NIGHT

Alice comes out of the building's elevator and walks through the entrance hall.

As she draws close to the wall mailboxes, she opens her purse and pulls out the gun. Then she unlocks a mailbox and puts the gun into it.

ALICE

Paranoid..

Alice locks the mailbox and leaves.

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Seated on the couch, Marvin watches a golf tournament on TV. He seems uneasy. Next to him, Troy sleeps deeply.

As he nervously taps his fingers on his knee, he looks at his watch. Then he stands up and looks down at Troy with a smile.

MARVIN

Time for bed, little boy.

Marvin picks up Troy and leaves.

INT. APARTMENT - TROY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

It's a child's bedroom decorated with pink and sky blue wallpaper. Marvin tucks in Troy, who sleeps in his crib.

After giving him a goodnight kiss, Marvin opens a window and peers out into the night. He looks at both sides of the street... Nothing.

He looks at his watch and closes the window.

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Seated on the living room couch, Marvin looks through a photo album. The golf tournament in the BG.

PHOTOS - Black and white photographs of a youthful Marvin posing alone and with his grandparents.

He stares at the photos, as if they had a secret to tell.

PHOTOS - Hunting pictures of Marvin's grandfather and a younger man, Marvin's father.

Marvin turns a few pages in the photo album.

PHOTOS - Some pictures of Marvin and Corinne's wedding.

He gently runs a finger over the photos.

Sadness wells up in Marvin's eyes. He closes the photo album, sinks back into the couch and sighs. Then he closes his eyes and relaxes.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (AN HOUR LATER)

Marvin remains seated on the couch, but now asleep. In the BG, the golf tournament ends.

A DOORBELL RING.

He doesn't react. Another DOORBELL RING.

Marvin wakes up all of a sudden. Confused, he looks at his watch and quickly stands up.

INT. APARTMENT (HALL) - NIGHT

Marvin approaches the apartment's main door and reaches for the handle.

MARVIN

(uneasy)

Who is it?

MAN (O.S.)

Police. Is this Alice Miller's residence?

Marvin grows pale, his eyes opened like saucers.

EXT. BLIND ALLEY - NIGHT

It's a dark and narrow blind alley. It's raining heavily. A small circle of POLICE OFFICERS wearing yellow slickers stands around a covered corpse.

Accompanied by a POLICE INSPECTOR, 60, Marvin draws close to the group. The circle breaks to let him approach the body. A police officer uncovers the corpse.

After staring at the body's face, Marvin solemnly nods twice. Then he falls down on his knees and cries.

FADE TO:

INT. CABIN (CHESUNCOOK LAKE) - STAIRCASE/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (BACK TO PRESENT)

Carrying his shotgun and the lighted candle, Marvin hurries down the stairs; his face contorted with panic.

TROY (O.S.)

...the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight...

MARVIN

Troy!

Marvin reaches the living room doorway and nervously holds up the candle to look around.

MARVIN

Troy? Are you there?

Nobody answers.

A RUMBLE of THUNDER. Then a long flash of lightning illuminates the living room for several seconds...

Troy remains seated on a chair in the middle of the living room, his eyes filled with fear, a bony HAND covering his mouth, a switchblade against his throat...

The CAMERA moves up to reveal a deathly pale GIRL with dirty red hair, slit-pupil eyes and evil smile.

GIRL

(mimicking
Troy's voice)

...and the glory of the Lord shall
be revealed and all flesh shall
see it together.

Completely shocked, Marvin stares open-mouthed at his immobilized son.

FADE TO:

FLASHBACK - EXT. PARK - LAKE - DAY (2006)

Early in the morning. Seated on a bench at the park's lake, with a shaved head and with his beard now grey, Marvin holds a sleeping and blanketed Troy in his lap.

An expression of deep sadness on Marvin's face, tears start rolling down his cheeks.

He slips his hand into his coat and draws his gun from his holster. With his eyes filled with tears, he looks down at his son.

MARVIN

I love you. I will always love
you.

Marvin slowly places the barrel of the gun into his mouth and closes his eyes...

A strange GIGGLE is heard.

Surprised, Marvin opens his eyes and removes the gun from his mouth. Then he turns to look over his shoulder...

About thirty feet away from the bench, he sees a lanky and ivory white CHILD who stares at him while giggling like a hyena.

Marvin slides his gun into the holster. Holding Troy in his arms, he stands up and walks towards the child.

MARVIN

So it wasn't enough for you to kill her... Now you want him. You want him too, right?

The child doesn't answer. He stops giggling and glares at Marvin with his evil eyes. About fifteen feet from him, Marvin stops walking. Then he carefully places Troy on the ground.

MARVIN

Okay, he's all yours. C'mon, take him away.

Marvin steps back from his son.

MARVIN

I'm tired of fighting you, I'm already too tired... Take him away and do with me what you want.

Without looking away from him, the child slowly starts approaching the baby. He walks like an ape, crouched down, and growling. Marvin keeps stepping back towards the bench.

MARVIN

C'mon, don't be afraid. The game is over. I surrender.

The child stops next to Troy and stares down at him. A thick thread of yellowish slime trickles from his mouth as he sadistically smiles. He reaches out a sharp-nailed finger towards Troy's face...

A LOUD SHOT rings out. The child falls back as blood sprays into the air.

Next to the bench, Marvin slips the gun back into his holster and approaches his son, who is now awake and crying. Holding him in his arms, he leaves.

INT. DINER - DAY

It's a typical American diner with red vinyl booths and vintage advertisements.

Seated at a diner booth table, Marvin is sipping from a cup of coffee. Next to him, Troy pushes a toy car across the table.

A square-jawed mulatto man with a thin build, one blind eye and wearing a black wool watch cap, sits down at the booth with them. This is RON, 40.

Without removing his lips from the cup, Marvin looks at him in surprise. Ron takes a sip from his coffee and a bite of his doughnut. As he chews, he gazes at Marvin with a smirk.

RON

Great shot. Yeah, right between his eyes. Who taught you to shoot, man?

Perplexed, Marvin doesn't answer. He slowly sets the cup of coffee down on the table as Ron takes another bite of his doughnut.

RON

I've never got anything like that. I usually need three or four shots to kill one of them. You gotta teach me your skills.

MARVIN

Who... Who are you?

RON

Did you really think you were the only guy in the world hounded by those motherfuckers?

MARVIN

You also...?

Ron gives a wink to Troy, who giggles. He takes a last bite of his doughnut and finishes his coffee.

RON

C'mon, let's go. It'll be better to continue this privately. By the way, my name is Ron.

Ron holds his hand out to Marvin, who shakes it.

MARVIN

Marvin.

INT. RON'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

A projection screen with tripod base is pulled down.

It's a cramped and cluttered room; stacks of books, magazines and newspapers are piled up everywhere.

Seated in an armchair, Marvin watches Ron turning on a slide projector and placing a few slides into it while Troy plays on a rug with his toy cars.

RON

Okay, the show begins. Lights out!

Ron turns off a light switch and the living room is left in darkness. Then a CLICK is heard.

PROJECTION SCREEN - A disturbing sepia illustration appears on the screen: a thick forest from behind whose trees some naked and evil-eyed children lean out.

RON (O.S.)

The children of the moon... This is one of the less known legends in American folklore, but maybe one of the most bloodcurdling. Its origin dates back to the end of the eighteenth century. You know, slavery at its very peak. And it probably was born in some of the Deep South states.

Another CLICK.

PROJECTION SCREEN - Another frightening picture in sepia appears on the screen: a deathly pale girl attacking a black woodcutter in a creepy forest. Perched on his back, the child furiously scratches the man's neck with his long and sharp nails.

RON (O.S.)

According the legend, all these apparent children are actually demonic creatures whose main aim is to murder the males of one particular black family. They appear for the first time when one of these men takes his first wife.

A third CLICK is heard.

PROJECTION SCREEN - The third sepia illustration depicts a shadowy bedroom where a ghastly child devours a woman's innards from her open belly.

RON (O.S.)

If the chosen man kills one of these monsters, another child will take revenge by killing one of his relatives or friends, usually women. Once the circle is closed, the children resume the pursuit of their target.

Another CLICK.

PROJECTION SCREEN - A fourth sepia illustration: a family keeping a vigil for a departed little girl whose body rests in coffin. At the back of the room, a couple of smiling pale children look in through the window.

RON (O.S.)

This endless nightmare is, apparently, due to a curse formerly pronounced upon the victim's family. Causes can be a quarrel between families, some horrible crime, or simply a sadistic punishment received from a slaveholder family.

A fifth CLICK is heard.

PROJECTION SCREEN - This last picture depicts a desperate man knelt down in the middle of the woods, his head in his hands, crying. Smiling children peep at him from behind the trees.

RON (O.S.)

Eventually, the victim must choose between his life and his family's, so he often sacrifices himself to save his people. But the curse doesn't end here...

(beat)

If the man had male descendants, they'll inherit the curse from the day they get married. The complete extinction of a whole lineage - final aim of the curser - seems to be always the ending.

Ron turns on the light switch.

RON

That's it. Did you know the legend?

MARVIN

So-so. I'm not the only one in my family involved in this, but the only one alive to tell it.

Unexpectedly, a last CLICK is heard.

PROJECTION SCREEN - A slide of a young and smiling black woman appears on the screen.

Surprised, Ron turns toward the slide projector, next to which Troy is standing. After giggling, Troy runs to his father's arms and hides his face.

Marvin and Ron smile at each other.

INT. RON'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

It's a small and untidy kitchen with cracked white tiles. Seated at the kitchen table, Marvin sips a glass of wine. Standing next to him, Ron lights a cigar.

RON

You sure you don't want one of these?

Marvin shakes his head.

MARVIN

I quit smoking a few months ago.

RON

Yeah, smoking kills. No doubt about it. But maybe it's better to be killed by a good cigar than by one of those...

(beat)

Well, I mean, if they were able to kill.

Marvin, confused, looks up at him. Ron pours himself a glass of wine.

RON

You really think they're able to kill us?

MARVIN

It seems quite obvious, doesn't it?

RON

I wouldn't bet on it.

Ron sits at the table and takes a long drink from his wine.

RON

Have you ever been wounded by them?

MARVIN

Yeah, at least twice, the first one in the woods... Well, it was just a few scratches, but-

RON

-It could be some sort of wild animal. I mean seriously wounded.

MARVIN

I've never given them the chance to do it.

Ron finishes his glass of wine.

RON

They can't hurt us in any way, Marvin. Do you know why? Cause they are not real. They don't exist. I'm convinced they are just illusions of our minds.

MARVIN

That doesn't make sense. Can you prove it?

Ron pours himself another glass of wine and puffs his cigar.

RON

It was a few months ago the last time I met with one of them. I was armed, but too desperate and tired to keep fighting. I blew it all to hell and knelt down before him. I closed my eyes and got ready to die... But death didn't come. About a half minute later, I opened my eyes again. Nobody. He was gone.

MARVIN

That's ridiculous.

RON

Ridiculous but true. They've not come back since then.

Marvin sips from his wine, a long sip.

MARVIN

(irritated)

Okay, let's suppose what you're saying is true. What, then, about our murdered relatives and friends? Who killed them?

RON

Well, there's no doubt we live in a violent country where murders are the order of the day.

MARVIN

Oh, man, that sounds so-

RON

-Yes, I know, but... Have you seen any of the murders with your own eyes? Have you seen any of those creatures killing someone?

Marvin hesitates.

RON
Neither have I.

Ron empties his glass of wine in one gulp.

RON
Illusions in our minds, Marvin.
Therein lies the curse.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - DAY

Carrying a sleeping Troy in a baby carrier, Marvin steps out of Ron's apartment. From the doorway, Ron holds his hand out to him. Marvin shakes it.

RON
Just try it and you'll see I'm
right. I'm completely sure they
can't do anything against us.

MARVIN
Well, I guess I have nothing left
to lose. Okay, I'll try.

RON
Glad to hear that. Come see me as
soon as it happens. Together we
can make a great team.

Marvin nods with a half smile. Ron smiles back at him. He starts closing the door, but Marvin holds it open.

MARVIN
Wait, just a last question. The
last slide... Who was the woman?

Ron's smile fades from his face.

RON
Jackie, my wife... My late wife.

MARVIN
They...?

RON
Murder with robbery. Some psycho
son of a bitch cut her throat and
stole her belongings, including a
key ring with that picture on it.
She was gonna give it to me as a
gift. It happened many years ago,
just after we got married. The
murderer was never caught.

MARVIN
I'm sorry, I thought-

RON
-Believe me, Marvin. Just
illusions.

EXT. SECONDARY ROAD - DAY

It's a cold but sunny afternoon. A sedan type car travels along a deserted secondary road.

INT. CAR - MOVING - DAY

Marvin is at the car's wheel. Seated in a baby car chair on the back seat, Troy plays with his toy trucks. Marvin looks back at him and smiles. Then he turns on the radio CD player and presses play. Bill Withers' SONG "Lovely day" fills the car.

Marvin begins tapping on the steering wheel to the rhythm of the music. He smiles, relaxed.

MARVIN
(singing)
"When I wake up in the morning,
love, and the sunlight hurts my
eyes..."

Troy stops playing and looks at him in surprise.

MARVIN
(singing)
"...and something without warning,
love, bears heavy on my mind."

Marvin turns around to look at his son.

MARVIN
(singing)
"Then I look at you. And the world's
alright with me."

Troy giggles. Marvin returns his eyes to the road.

MARVIN
(singing)
"Just one look at you. And I know
it's gonna be... A lovely day..."

EXT. SECONDARY ROAD - DAY

The car keeps travelling along the empty road.

MARVIN (O.S.)
(singing)
"A lovely day..."

INT. CAR - MOVING - DAY

Marvin keeps singing at the steering wheel.

MARVIN

(singing)

"When the day that lies ahead of
me seems impossible to face..."

Joyfully, Troy slaps the anti-rebound bar of the car seat.

MARVIN

(singing)

"When someone else instead of me
always seems to know the way..."

Marvin looks back at Troy again.

MARVIN

(singing)

"Then I look at you. And the
world's alright with me..."

Troy laughs like crazy. Without losing his smile, Marvin turns his attention to the road ahead.

MARVIN

(singing)

"Just one look at you. And I know
it's gonna be..."

A THIN HUMAN FIGURE rolls across the hood of the car and crashes into the windshield.

MARVIN

Shit!

After controlling the steering wheel, Marvin abruptly brakes the car. Then he gets his breath back and looks at the motionless pedestrian lying face down on the hood.

Although we don't get to see the face, it seems to be a girl by her small head with long red hair.

RADIO CD

"A lovely day..."

Marvin turns off the radio CD player and worriedly looks back at his son.

MARVIN

You okay?

Troy nods, scared. Then Marvin returns his eyes to the windshield...

The GIRL, pale and wearing just dirty underpants, is now staring at him through the glass; an evil smile pasted on her bloody mouth.

Unable to move, as if paralyzed by fear, Marvin stares in horror at the creature.

The girl lifts her right fist and punches the windshield, cracking it a bit more.

Marvin, startled, recovers and starts the car, swerving from side to side. The girl grabs the wipers to avoid falling from the hood and keeps beating the windshield. Terrified, Troy cries uncontrollably.

Marvin steps on the gas pedal.

MARVIN
(enraged)
Dirty bitch...

Marvin turns back and checks Troy's baby car seat. Then he checks his seat belt and inhales deeply. As the car accelerates, he glares at the girl with more anger.

MARVIN
Have a nice flight.

Marvin steps on the brake pedal.

EXT. SECONDARY ROAD - DAY

The car slams on its brakes, SCREECHING to a halt. The girl is thrown from the hood and lands on the pavement.

INT. CAR - DAY

With the car stopped, Marvin deeply sighs and worriedly turns back to Troy.

MARVIN
You okay?

Troy nods, tears still rolling down his cheek.

MARVIN
Don't worry, Troy, that thing is dead. You understand? The monster is dead.

Troy nods again.

MARVIN
Be right back.

EXT. SECONDARY ROAD - DAY

Marvin gets out of the car and pulls out his gun as he walks towards the motionless girl. She is lying on her back, her eyes closed; a puddle of blood spreading under her head.

Marvin cautiously looks at her. Then he crouches down and takes her carotid pulse. There is no pulse. He stands up.

Unexpectedly, the girl half opens her eyes; blood bubbles bursting from her lips. In the throes of death, she lifts up her arm.

Marvin rolls up his left sleeve, slightly bends down and lets her grab his arm. She faintly growls.

The girl's long nails sink into the flesh of Marvin's arm. Soon blood starts running down it.

Bearing the pain, Marvin stares down at the girl, who giggles like a diabolical clown.

The girl's nails rip the flesh of Marvin's arm.

Unable to stand it anymore, Marvin points his gun at the girl and SHOTS her twice in the head.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Taking Troy by the hand, Marvin arrives at Ron's house door and rings the doorbell. As they wait, Marvin softly touches his left arm, now bandaged with white gauze. His face wrinkles in pain.

Marvin rings the doorbell again and makes a funny face at Troy, who smiles. Then something catches his attention...

The door is open.

INT. RON'S HOUSE - HALL/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Marvin, taking Troy by the hand, cautiously enters Ron's house. There's nobody in the hall.

MARVIN

Hello? It's me, Marvin. Are you there, Ron?

Nobody answers.

MARVIN

I'm afraid I bring bad news. I did what you told me, but you were wrong, man. Are you there?

There is no response.

MARVIN

(whispering)

Shit...

Marvin quietly closes the door and crouches down next to Troy.

MARVIN

(whispering)

Stay here at the door and don't
move. Just a minute, all right?

Troy nods.

MARVIN

Good boy.

Marvin stands up and starts walking through a narrow
hallway with several open doors on both sides..

He discreetly pulls out his gun and looks into the first
room on his left, the kitchen... Nobody is there.

A few feet ahead, Marvin looks into a small bathroom on
his right... There is nothing there.

A toy car slips from Troy's grasp and falls to the floor
with a CLANK.

Startled, Marvin turns around. After seeing the toy on
the floor, he raises his finger to his lips in a hushing
motion.

Troy picks up the car while Marvin looks into a second
room on his left, the living room... Empty too.

Finally, he approaches the open door at the end of the
hallway, a small bedroom. He enters...

Ron is there, lying face down on a double bed..

...and ripped open like a roast suckling pig and lying in a
big puddle of blood.

On the wall, just above the headboard, there is written
in blood: JUST ILLUSIONS. Next to the words, there is a
"smiley face" drawn with blood.

Marvin stares at the scene in shock.

FADE TO:

INT. CABIN (CHESUNCOOK LAKE) - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (BACK
TO THE PRESENT)

Nervously aiming his shotgun at the pale girl, Marvin
takes a step forward. More ROARING THUNDER is heard as
successive flashes of lightning keep illuminating the
living room.

MARVIN

(to the girl)

Get your fucking hands off my
son! Get them off him right now!

The girl sinisterly smiles and keeps hold of Troy. Marvin takes another step forward.

MARVIN

I said get your hands-!

A creepy GIGGLE coming from somewhere in the living room is heard. Marvin turns to his right...

Without giving him time to react, a slim and dark-haired BOY jumps on Marvin and knocks him down.

With the candle now out and no more bolts of lightning, the living room is left in darkness...

SHOUTS, GROWLS, BLOWS, stuff BREAKING against the walls, the SOUND of RAIN...

MARVIN

Get out of the house, Troy! Run away! Run!

A new RUMBLE of THUNDER. A bolt of lightning illuminates the living room for several seconds.

Marvin and the boy struggle on the floor.

Marvin's hand picks up a nearby kitchen knife.

Armed with the knife, he starts stabbing the creature in the face. The boy howls in pain. A few seconds later, he stops moving and dies. The darkness reigns again.

MARVIN

Troy? Are you still here? Can you hear me?

A new RUMBLE of THUNDER breaks the silence and a flash of lightning illuminates the room for a few seconds.

Crouched down next to the boy's body, Marvin looks around for his shotgun...

The GIRL appears behind him and grabs him by his hair.

The darkness returns. More STRUGGLING NOISES and GROWLS. Instants later, more THUNDER rocks the house as bolts of lightning illuminate the room.

A young hand picks up the shotgun.

Marvin and the girl are now struggling next to a closed window. Perched on his back, she furiously scratches his face with her long and sharp nails.

Some feet away from the window, holding the shotgun, Troy stares in shock at the fight...

Marvin sees Troy while trying to break free from the girl's grip. The creature sinks her fangs into his neck. He screams in pain.

MARVIN
(to Troy)

Shoot!

Troy raises the shotgun and aims it at the girl's head. The weapon trembles in his hands.

MARVIN
Go on, shoot! Shoot now!

Troy hesitates. Then he shoots.

The powerful shot hits Marvin and the girl, propelling them back through the window.

Knocked down by the shotgun recoil, Troy looks at the shattered window open-mouthed.

EXT. CABIN SURROUNDINGS - NIGHT

About ten feet from the cabin's façade, Marvin is lying face up on the ground; his eyes wide open, his breathing troubled, blood pouring from a serious bullet wound in his neck's left side..

Next to him, there is the girl's lifeless body, her face destroyed.

Carrying a lighted candle, Troy nervously runs out of the cabin and kneels down next to his father. He places the candle on the ground.

TROY
I'm sorry. I'm very sorry, Dad...
I... I tried to aim right at her,
but-

MARVIN
-You... You did very well, Troy...
You did what you had to do..

Marvin tries to sit up, but the pain in his neck is so great that he gasps. Troy takes off his t-shirt and tries to plug the wound, but the blood seeps through it.

TROY
Don't move, just stay still. I'll
call an ambulance.

Marvin firmly grabs Troy by the arm.

MARVIN
Wait. You sure they're dead?

TROY

I think so...

(beat)

They were those things you told me about, weren't they?

Marvin nods.

TROY

Maybe they were the last two of them. Maybe we won.

MARVIN

I hope so... They... They have never attacked in pairs before, always alone.

TROY

Maybe they were afraid 'cause they were the last ones...

MARVIN

(smiling)

Yeah... And we kicked their asses, didn't we?

Troy nods and smiles back. Marvin takes him by the hands and coughs harshly.

MARVIN

I'm afraid this is the end...

TROY

(worried)

No, it isn't. You're gonna be okay, Dad. You have to be. I'm gonna call an ambulance right-

Marvin covers Troy's mouth with his hand.

MARVIN

I... I need to ask you a favor, something... something really important... Will you do it?

Troy nods. Marvin uncovers his mouth.

MARVIN

It's simple... I guess one day... you'll meet a woman who'll be everything you ever dreamed of... You'll want to be together for... the rest of your lives... You'll think of getting married...

Marvin coughs harshly again, a trickle of blood coming from his mouth. He gasps.

MARVIN

Don't do it. Whatever happens,
don't do it. Don't marry her.
Don't ever marry.

Troy looks at his father in surprise.

MARVIN

So they'll never come back... You
promise me?

Troy nods.

MARVIN

You sure?

Troy nods again.

MARVIN

Good boy.

TROY

I guess it won't be hard to keep
that promise.

MARVIN

(confused)

What do you mean?

TROY

(embarrassed)

Well, I... I should have told you
before, but I didn't know how... I
was afraid you'd get mad at me.

MARVIN

(worried)

What's it about?

TROY

I'm not completely sure, but I
think... I think I don't like girls
very much.

Marvin knits his brows in puzzlement. Troy lowers his
eyes.

TROY

I knew you'd get mad...

Marvin stares at Troy seriously and in silence, his son
avoiding his look.

MARVIN

Look... Look at me.

Troy keeps his eyes on the ground.

MARVIN

Look at me, Troy.

Troy slowly raises his gaze.

MARVIN

So you don't like girls?

Troy timidly shakes his head, fear all over his face.

MARVIN

I never... I never thought hearing
that... would make me so happy.

(smiling)

Things will be easier that way,
Troy, much easier...

Marvin reaches out to place a hand on Troy's cheek. Troy smiles back at him. They smile at each other. Then they laugh.

After a few instants, Marvin stops breathing, a smile of contentment on his face.

TROY

Dad?

Marvin doesn't answer, his lifeless face still smiling at his son. Troy grabs him by his shoulders and slightly shakes him.

TROY

C'mon, dad, speak to me...

Marvin doesn't move; his cold eyes seem to look straight through his son.

TROY

C'mon, you're scaring me!

Troy nervously cups his father's face with his hands.

TROY

Please, Dad! Dad, don't do this
to me... Please, don't go away...

Troy lays his head on his father's chest and bitterly cries.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CHESUNCOOK LAKE - DAY

The first rays of sunlight streak the sky over the calm waters of Chesuncook Lake, promising a sunny summer's day. The birds are up, foraging for food.

EXT. CABIN SURROUNDINGS - DAY

Troy slowly wakes up and kneels down beside Marvin's body. He stares at his dead father as tears slide down his cheeks.

After wiping his tears, Troy covers his father's face with the t-shirt and stands up. Then something catches his attention..

Where last night there was the corpse of the girl, now there is a HUMAN GIRL dressed in rags. Perplexed, Troy cautiously approaches her..

GRANDFATHER (V.O.)

There is something peculiar in those children's faces, above all when they're dead.

The girl is motionless and bloody. Troy stares at her.

GRANDFATHER (V.O.)

I wouldn't dare to call it innocence, but their empty looks make me feel uncomfortable, almost sorry for them.

FLASHBACK - EXT. FOREST - PRECIPICE - NIGHT

The dark figure picks up the flashlight and checks it. Holding the rock, Marvin cautiously walks toward him.

MARVIN'S POV

The dark figure turns toward him..

Not a moonchild, but a WHITE BOY carrying a backpack.

WHITE BOY

(scared)

Please, sir, can you help me? I was looking for a place to camp with my group and I got lost. I saw you before in the path when that lynx attacked you, but-

Marvin hurls the rock at the boy's head. He goes over the precipice.

FLASHBACK - INT. GUN SHOP - BACK SHOP - NIGHT

The very pale-skinned child knelt down beside the dead dog; a small serrated knife stuck in the dog's neck.

MARVIN'S POV

The child turns around and stands up..

Not a moon child, but a normal WHITE CHILD.

WHITE CHILD

(nervously)

I'm... I'm sorry. I didn't wanna do
it, it leapt on me and...

Marvin notices the circular saw on the small worktable
and takes a step forward.

MARVIN

What do you want from me? Why do
you do this to me?

CHILD

I just came in to take a look. I
thought the shop was closed... It
was an accident, I'm very sorry,
sir. Please, don't call the cops...

The child slowly walks towards us.

FLASHBACK - EXT. PARK - LAKE - DAY

Marvin carefully places the sleeping Troy on the ground
and raises his eyes...

MARVIN'S POV

About fifteen feet from our position, there is a HUMAN
BOY, not a moon child, who looks at us in surprise.

MARVIN

Okay, he's all yours. C'mon, take
him away.

Marvin steps back from his son.

MARVIN

I'm tired of fighting you, I'm
already too tired... Take him away
and do with me what you want.

Intimidated, the boy slowly approaches the baby as Marvin
keeps stepping back.

MARVIN (O.S.)

C'mon, don't be afraid. The game
is over. I surrender.

The boy stops next to Troy and stares down at him. Then
Marvin pulls out the gun and aim at him.

FLASHBACK - EXT. SECONDARY ROAD - DAY

Marvin crouches down and takes the carotid pulse of the
evil girl lying down on the road.

MARVIN'S POV

It's a normal WHITE GIRL. She half opens her eyes and lifts up her arm.

WHITE GIRL
(dying)
Please, help me...

Marvin rolls up his left sleeve, slightly bends down and lets her grab his arm.

WHITE GIRL
Please, it hurts very much...

Filled with tears, the girl sinks her long nails into the flesh of Marvin's arm. He points the gun at her face.

INT. CABIN (LIVING ROOM) - DAY (BACK TO PRESENT)

Troy cautiously enters the living room. Everything is in a mess: knocked over furniture and objects spread out on the floor.

After looking at the damage, Troy walks along the room and something catches his attention again...

Now it's a HUMAN BOY. He's lying in the same spot where the first creature died last night. Troy approaches him...

GRANDFATHER (V.O.)
It's probably just a trick to weaken my resolve and will to resist, but sometimes...

The normal boy is dead, a puddle of dried blood under his stabbed face.

GRANDFATHER (V.O.)
Sometimes I think they hide some kind of secret, one which will only be revealed when we defeat them, a big surprise that will turn our victory into the worst defeat. I'm often afraid of that day coming.

Troy, shocked, looks at the corpse.

FLASHBACK - INT. CABIN - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Carrying his shotgun, Marvin nervously looks around. A RUMBLING of THUNDER is heard and a flash of lightning illuminates the living room.

Marvin sees Troy seated on a chair, a switchblade against his throat...

MARVIN'S POV

A HUMAN GIRL, not a moon girl, dressed in rags is behind Troy, covering his mouth with a hand.

HUMAN GIRL

I just want the money. Gimme the money and I'll leave.

Aiming the shotgun at the white girl, Marvin takes a step forward.

MARVIN

Get your fucking hands off my son! Get them off him right now!

GIRL

Just gimme the money and...!

Marvin takes another step forward.

MARVIN

I said get your hands-!

A GASP is heard. Marvin turns to his right...

A scared HUMAN BOY jumps on him.

INT. CABIN - KITCHEN - DAY (BACK TO PRESENT)

Still shocked, Troy enters the kitchen and approaches the fridge...

The small bloody handprint stamped on the upper part of the refrigerator has disappeared.

Astonished, Troy gently runs a finger over the spot where the handprint was...

A THUD is heard. Troy raises his eyes to the ceiling.

INT. CABIN - ATTIC - DAY

Brandishing the shotgun, Troy enters the attic and hears a SQUEAKING NOISE coming from inside a wardrobe whose door is ajar. He slowly approaches...

The wardrobe door flies open and a squirrel jumps out, knocking onto the floor a small aluminum case containing some trinkets.

Startled, Troy watches the squirrel running away through the window. Then he crouches down to examine the objects. He picks up a key ring with photo frame and looks at it.

It's the photo of Jackie, Ron's late wife.

RON (V.O.)

Murder with robbery. Some psycho son of a bitch cut her throat and stole her belongings, including a key ring with that picture on it. She was gonna give it to me as a gift.

DISSOLVE TO:

FLASHBACK - INT. UNDERGROUND PARKING - NIGHT

It's an empty underground parking. A younger MARVIN, 30, his eyes rolled-back as if in a trance, holds Jackie's key ring in his hands.

At his feet, a woman is lying on the ground, her throat cut from ear to ear. It's JACKIE, 30.

RON (V.O.)

It happened many years ago, just after we got married. The murderer was never caught.

Marvin tucks the key ring into his pocket and leaves.

FLASHBACK - EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Corinne, her eyes filled with fear, a big hand covering her mouth and a serrated knife cutting her throat...

RON (V.O.)

They appear for the first time when one of these men takes his first wife.

The hand belongs to Marvin's Grandfather, eyes rolled-back, as if hypnotized.

FLASHBACK - EXT. FOREST - DAY

Michelle's body tied around the tree. A man with his back to us is slashing her abdomen with a saw blade.

It's a YOUNG BLACK MAN, 25, with short Mohawk hairstyle. Drops of blood spatter his ghostly white eyes.

GRANDFATHER (V.O.)

If you kill one of them in self-defense, they kill someone close to you, someone beloved, preferably a woman.

FLASHBACK - EXT. COTTAGE - PORCH - NIGHT

While Marvin is in the basement, Marvin's Grandfather steps out of the porch and onto a path.

RON (V.O.)

Did you really think you were the
only guy in the world hounded by
those motherfuckers?

A "blind" man holding a sharp ax appears behind him. It's
Ron.

FLASHBACK - EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Alice is being strangled from behind with a rope by
another unknown WHITE-EYED MAN, 40.

GRANDFATHER (V.O.)

Either way, you lose. It's been
like that for generations.

FLASHBACK - INT. RON'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ron lying face down on his bed, ripped open and lying in
a big puddle of blood..

The CAMERA moves up to reveal MARVIN, his eyes rolled-
back, writing "JUST ILLUSIONS" in blood on the wall above
the headboard.

RON (V.O.)

Have you seen any of the murders
with your own eyes? Have you seen
any of those creatures killing
someone?

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LAKE'S SHORE - MORNING (BACK TO PRESENT)

Troy walks near the shore, confused, his head bowed. When
he reaches the kayak, he sits and stares at the horizon.

FADE TO:

FLASHBACK - EXT. FOREST - DAY

SUPER: CASCADE MOUNTAINS, WASHINGTON, 1967

A snowy forest filled with tall, leafless trees...

A SHOT is heard.

Someone collapses on the ground. It's a MOON CHILD; a
grimace of pain on his face, his slit-pupil eyes open in
shock and looking directly at CAMERA.

FOOTSTEPS coming closer...

MAN (O.S.)

Come here, Marvin.

A sturdy black man wearing a hunting coat and holding a deer rifle stands beside the motionless body. It's MARVIN'S FATHER, 40.

Soon a child wearing warm clothes, MARVIN, 5, approaches the corpse and looks at it. There is a bloody hole in the creature's back.

MARVIN'S FATHER
I'll only tell you once, so
listen carefully..

Marvin's Father unloads the rifle and puts the shells into his coat pocket.

MARVIN'S FATHER
If you ever meet one of these
things again, don't kill him,
don't even harm him. Just run
away. Run away from him as fast
as your legs can carry you. You
may not save yourself, but you'll
save a lot of others. Do you
understand, Marvin?

Marvin's Father looks down at his son, who nods.

MARVIN'S FATHER
Okay, let's go then. After today
the score will be even.

GROUND-LEVEL SHOT - The moon child's lifeless pale face. In the BG, Marvin's father takes his son by the hand as Marvin turns to take a last look at the corpse. Once they disappear from frame, a thread of blood trickles from a corner of the moon child's sharp-teethed mouth.

FADE OUT.

BLACK SCREEN

But suddenly..

GROUND-LEVEL SHOT - The moon child opens his mouth and screams wildly.

THE END