

Your Own Personal Haunting

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

Enter JEAN (40s), a real estate agent, and LAWRENCE (39), shaggy hair, beard and mournful eyes. Lawrence limps.

The house is outdated and not stylish but not in disrepair.

Lawrence eyes an old electric clock on the wall as he enters.

JEAN

Now you would be responsible for mowing, or hiring someone. There's a mower in the garage, but the owner says she will be hands off.

Jean motions to an old table. Lawrence winces and sits.

LAWRENCE

I like hands off. Out of curiosity, why doesn't the owner just sell?

JEAN

Good question. Honestly can't tell you. She hasn't lived here in at least four years but doesn't want to sell. Someone has been doing the upkeep so the house hasn't been neglected, but she can't afford to continue that anymore. Are you *hoping* to buy?

LAWRENCE

No. Nothing so... permanent. Jean, I'm good with the terms we discussed earlier. I'm easy. Let's do it.

JEAN opens folder, shuffles papers. They finalize the rental.

INT. HOUSE/BEDROOM - DAY

Lawrence removes a folded stack of shirts from a cardboard box on a made bed and places in an open drawer of an old dresser. IMMEDIATELY he removes the stack and places on top of dresser then IMMEDIATELY returns them back. Staring at the shirts, Lawrence works to slow his rapid breathing. He reaches in the drawer, obsessively taps the shirts, and pulls one from the middle of the stack and places on top of the others. SLAMS drawer shut. He's okay now.

Lawrence scans room, turning a complete circle. As he turns, a barely noticeable shapeless SHADOW moves along the wall behind him, always just out of his vision.

He looks at the window, dusk approaching and gathers the empty boxes.

INT. HALLWAY

Lawrence looks at an old fashioned fluorescent ring light on the ceiling. He limps down the hall. The light buzzes unpleasantly.

EXT. - HOUSE - DAY

Lawrence exits onto a deck with railing. A few rusty lawn chairs. A plant potter with nothing but weeds.

A scan of the surroundings show isolation, woods beyond the yard on one side, lonely road the other. Dusk approaches.

Lawrence drops the boxes by the garage and walks to a TENT by the house. He's not sleeping in the house tonight.

EXT. TENT - DAY (MORNING)

Lawrence emerges, hunched over, stiff. He leans over, resting both hands on his hurt leg.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Lawrence eyes the house blankly. He turns to the tent.

LAWRENCE

I don't think I can do another
night on the ground.

Lawrence zips up tent, stands back, begins to unzip it partially, then holds both hands out, palms outstretched, breathing deeply. He zips the tent closed.

Lawrence limps to the front porch and enters house.

The house is lonely. Quiet. Still.

INT. HOUSE/BATHROOM - DAY

Lawrence looks in the mirror. Picking up a hairbrush from the left side of sink, he moves to brush his hair, then sets brush down on the right. Picks brush back up, moves to the left, taps the brush on counter twice, and sets it down. He then picks up and brushes his hair. Not helping. He sets the brush down.

LAWRENCE

Forget it.

Lawrence leaves bathroom.

INT. HALLWAY

Lawrence heads to bedroom.

INT. BATHROOM

Lawrence walks back in, a hat on. He smiles at himself in the mirror. Problem solved.

As he begins to leave, Lawrence eyes the hair brush. He shakes his head.

EXT. DINER - DAY

A car parks at a small town diner. Lawrence steps out and walks to diner door.

INT. DINER - DAY

Lawrence enters. A few people talking. Lawrence is greeted by WAITRESS (20s) carrying a coffee pot.

WAITRESS

Sit where you want.

LAWRENCE

Thanks.

Lawrence goes to two seater by the window.

WAITRESS

(From across the diner)

You want some coffee?

LAWRENCE

Yes. Coffee would be great.

Lawrence picks up menu. The waitress returns, turning over a coffee cup on the table and pouring.

WAITRESS
I like your hat.

LAWRENCE
Thanks.

WAITRESS
You need a minute?

LAWRENCE
No, number 3, no toast is fine.

WAITRESS
Sure! Haven't seen you before. You visiting?

LAWRENCE
No, Just moved here.

WAITRESS
How cool! You live in town?

LAWRENCE
I'm in that house just outside of town on Miller, on the hill.

WAITRESS
Ohhh. The Pittinger place. Did you buy that house?

LAWRENCE
Renting.

WAITRESS
With your family?

LAWRENCE
No. Just me.

WAITRESS
Hmmm.

LAWRENCE
What?

WAITRESS
You're renting a whole house by yourself?

LAWRENCE
Yeah.

WAITRESS
That house?

LAWRENCE
Why? What's wrong with that house?

WAITRESS
Nothing. I guess.

Leans in.

WAITRESS (CONT'D)
(whispering)
Some people say it's haunted.

LAWRENCE
Really? Is it?

WAITRESS
That's what I heard. Never been
there. You into ghosts?

LAWRENCE
I am. I guess I'll find out if
they're into me.

WAITRESS
(flirtatiously)
They should be if they have any
sense! I'll get your food.

Waitress walks away. Lawrence looks around the diner
uncomfortably and drinks his coffee.

INT. HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY (LATER)

Lawrence surveys counters, walls, unopened boxes. Looks at
electric clock and shakes his head.

Moving to the basement door he opens to reveal a landing atop
stairs. Steps through.

INT. STAIRWELL

Lawrence looks at stairwell for a long time. He touches the
wall.

Lawrence grabs the railing and descends. Grunting with pain,
he pauses, rests both hands on his sore leg.

At the bottom Lawrence yanks a light chain which clinks on an exposed incandescent bulb. He taps the wooden pull on the bottom of the chain twice, pauses, taps again.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

Lawrence explores. Not much to see -- older model washer and dryer, ironing board, a few shelves, furnace, water heater.

He slowly walks the entire basement, running his fingertips gently across the walls.

Lawrence pulls another chain light and leans against the washer. The light casts his shadow on the floor. He remains in thought.

Doorbell RINGS from upstairs.

Lawrence limps to the stairs, failing to turn off light by the sink.

INT. STAIRWELL

Lawrence turns off stairway light, tapping the light pull the same as before, two taps, pause, tap, then pulls the chain. The light from the interior of the basement now casts a deep shadow of the stairwell bulb and pull chain on the wall.

Lawrence struggles up the stairs.

INT. BASEMENT

The same shadow originally cast of Lawrence leaning against the washer is STILL THERE, motionless, as if etched on photographic paper.

Lawrence's uneven footsteps in the distance grow fainter.

The person shadow changes, as if cast by someone standing up.

The shadow shrinks to child size and slides across the floor to the stairs. The shadow's arm reaches up, stretching, to just reach the bottom of the shadow of the chain pull. The shadow child taps the shadow pull in the same rhythmic compulsion as Lawrence did: two taps, pause, tap.

EXT. HOUSE - SAME TIME

KING (30), a trans man, moves off the front porch after ringing the doorbell.

His clothing, expressive face and bouncing impatience give an air of vibrancy and positive energy.

The door opens.

LAWRENCE

Hello?

King smiles from the yard.

KING

Hey, hope I'm not interrupting. I heard someone had moved into mom's old house and just stopped by to say hi and see if you needed anything.

LAWRENCE

Hi. No interruption at all. I'm Lawrence...

KING

Hey. I'm King!

LAWRENCE

King. Nice to meet you. You want to come in?

KING

(looking at the house)
Nah. I'm good.

LAWRENCE

Okay. Let me come out, then. It's a nice day.

KING

Sure is!

Lawrence steps onto the deck, limps to a rusty deck chair and flops down. King approaches and leans on the railing.

King turns his head toward the tent.

KING (CONT'D)

Camping?

LAWRENCE

Oh. Just last night. I'm getting settled.

KING

Sure.

King looks at the house.

KING (CONT'D)
So what brings you to this house? A little lonely for one person. It's just you, right? That's what mom said.

LAWRENCE
Yes. Just me.

Lawrence smiles awkwardly.

KING
So?

LAWRENCE
I've been living in Cincinnati. Wanted to get away from city life for awhile.

KING
Do some camping.

LAWRENCE
Yeah. Well...

KING
Just kidding, man. Your business. I'd sleep outside, too.

LAWRENCE
Really? Why?

KING
Ehh, house has weird vibes.

LAWRENCE
Is that why your mother doesn't live here?

KING
You'd have to ask her. She has a strange relationship with this house.

Lawrence turns to look at the house.

LAWRENCE
A house can have an effect on you, I suppose. You sure you won't come in?

KING

No, I've got to roll. Let me give you my number in case you have any issues. It's difficult to reach mom. She lives downtown but doesn't pick up the phone much.

Lawrence struggles to his feet and hands his cell phone over the railing.

LAWRENCE

Thanks. Here. Put your number in my phone. You want mine?

KING

Sure. Why not.

Phones are passed and numbers entered.

LAWRENCE

Nice meeting you, King. Honestly it was nice getting a real visitor.

KING

Well, it's nice seeing a new face. Maybe we'll meet up again.

King turns and leaves. Lawrence again looks at the house. He goes inside.

INT. HOUSE/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Lawrence finishes wiping the counter. Kitchen is more set up, boxes gone, coffee maker unpacked, etc.

He steps back, admiring his unpacking and cleaning. His eyes drift up to the CLOCK from the beginning.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

INT. HOUSE/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Same clock, same wall different paint color. We see the clock from a lower angle, as if from a child's perspective. LOUD ELECTRIC BUZZING. Air is hazy.

END FLASHBACK:

INT. HOUSE/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Lawrence looks away from the clock. He is shaking. He shuffles out of the kitchen.

INT. HOUSE/BATHROOM - NIGHT

Behind a shower curtain bathwater is running. Lawrence enters, no shirt, towel around his waist, a box of Epsom salts. He pulls back the curtain, reads the box label, then shakes his head and pours in most of the box.

INT. HALLWAY

Sound of Lawrence shutting off the water and getting into the tub. The florescent light ring buzzes and flickers. A vague shadow figure of a child materializes seated on the ground, hugging its knees, rocking, rocking, rocking. The figure gradually fades away.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Almost every light is on in the house, visible through the windows. The tent is dark.

INT. HOUSE/BEDROOM - DAY

Lawrence sits in bed. Nodding, he gets out of bed, turning off the lights.

LAWRENCE

All right.

INT. HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

Lawrence sits at the table, jeans and a fresh t shirt, hair almost combed. A cup of steaming coffee on table. He holds a pen, tapping on a blank pad of paper.

He draws, then circles, a large question mark.

LAWRENCE

What am I doing?

Draws an X through the question mark, tossing down pen.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

Stupid.

He finishes his coffee and exits.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - DAY

Lawrence's car pulls in. He gets out, button down short sleeve, combed hair. Grabs bags of groceries.

The lawn is becoming overgrown.

Lawrence's cell phone rings. He sets down groceries and answers.

LAWRENCE
(to caller)
Hello? Jean, thanks for calling me
back!.....

Lawrence leans against his car.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
Yes, already a week. (pause) No, no
problems. (pause) For sure, a lot
different than the city. (pause)
Listen, you had said the owner had
someone who mowed. I know it's
hands off, but do you have his
number? I couldn't get the mower
started.

Lawrence looks at the lawn.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
That's great. Yeah, just text me
that number. Thanks, Jean.

Lawrence hangs up and brings groceries into the house.

EXT. HOUSE/GARAGE - DAY (FOLLOWING DAY)

RODDY (75), a grizzled, oily man, tough even in his age, sits
on a riding mower. He turns the key -- starts.

RODDY
Well, don't feel too stupid. Hard
to see that shut off valve tucked
up under there.

LAWRENCE
No, it's embarrassing. You want
something to drink? Some iced tea?

Roddy turns off mower and gets off.

RODDY

Sure.

Lawrence leaves. Roddy scowls at the house.

Lawrence returns passing an iced tea to Roddy, who leans against the mower.

RODDY (CONT'D)

So what'd you do to your leg?

LAWRENCE

Car accident. Pretty bad one. I'm full of pins and plates. Metal detectors love me.

RODDY

Tough break. You do okay here with the washer and dryer in the basement, then?

LAWRENCE

Not ideal. Stairs are rough.

Roddy continues to look at Lawrence.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

A wreck like that gets you thinking about your life. Came out to the country to sort things out.

RODDY

Lots of space for thinking. You picked a strange house to think in though.

LAWRENCE

Really? How so?

RODDY

Something off about it. I don't want to rattle you. Either you'll feel it or won't.

LAWRENCE

Nothing ever happened here, though, did it? I mean, nobody died or anything?

RODDY

Not that I know of. Why, think it's haunted?

LAWRENCE

I dunno. Hey, did you know any of the owners before the Pittingers? I find the whole haunted thing interesting.

RODDY

You mean the Lances? They had it before. I knew Charlie Lance. Odd guy. He's passed on, though. So's his wife. Before them was a cute young couple, well, young back when, but never met 'em. I wonder if old Maxwell is still alive. He'd be a bit older than me. He built this place.

LAWRENCE

Did you know him?

RODDY

A long time ago. Hippie. Used to have parties up here with his wife. The real deal. Even had a VW van. I didn't get the whole 60s peace love thing, though.

LAWRENCE

Listen, if find out if he's still around, let me know, okay? I'd love to talk to him.

RODDY

Fair enough. Glad to help a fellow research a little local history.

The two silently drink their teas.

EXT. FRONT YARD - DAY

Lawrence finishes a second pass on the riding mower. The mower is loud, an uncomfortable roar blocking out other sounds. Lawrence stops but keeps mower running, looking around as if he's heard something. Nothing.

Lawrence continues. Another pass he again stops to look. Still nothing. Continues.

Lawrence stops again, shutting mower off completely, angrily turning key. Mower sound stops but LOUD ROAR matching the sound behind the mower sound, indistinct, angry, continues, sustained. Lawrence touches mower. Not running. He whips head to the side, then the other.

With difficulty lifts leg off the mower. Noise gets louder, more disorienting. Louder. LOUDER.

The yard is empty, lonely, alone. The sound is deafening.

Suddenly SILENCE. Painful silence, as if all sound was sucked away.

Lawrence taps his hand. A slapping sound.

LAWRENCE

Phew.

Lawrence shakes. He looks at the unmowed lawn, then at the house.

Lawrence touches the mower, his chin, the mower twice, acting out his compulsions. He pants.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

Damn.

Lawrence gets back on mower, looking all around before turning it back on. He again looks around, then continues mowing.

INT. HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

Lawrence enters kitchen tugging on a fresh shirt, hair wet.

On the kitchen table is now a laptop, but also pad of paper from last week. He sits.

He picks up pad and looks at the circled question mark with the X. He rips off and crumples the page, then draws a large question mark.

Lawrence tosses down pen. He sighs and tosses up hands in a "what do I do now" gesture.

Lawrence abruptly stands, moves the laptop compulsively two times, then leaves.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - DAY (NEXT MORNING)

Lawrence has dark circles under his eyes. He opens his car's trunk. Leaning in deep he wrangles out a cane. Brushing off dust, he looks around. Alone, of course.

Using the cane Lawrence walks to the BACK YARD.

EXT. BACKYARD

A rusty swing set, a raised flower bed overgrown with weeds, a rotting wooden bird feeder. No joy here.

Beyond the yard lies a deep tangle of thicket separating the yard from the woods.

Lawrence explores the back yard. He turns his head quickly to look behind him. Nothing. He makes his way to the thicket, seeking a way into the woods.

Lawrence pushes brambles away with his cane.

EXT. WOODS

Beyond the brambles the woods open up, dark and quiet. Trees look unhealthy, barren and misshapen. Everything is slightly off.

Sound is dull and deadened, even the occasional bird cry muffled. Lawrence limps aimlessly through the woods, his expression blank and distant.

A HUMMING SOUND, like electricity, but then gone.

The woods increasingly look WRONG. Colors, light and hue are off. The air is hazy.

The woods end in a deep thicket of thorns. In the distance a wild animal (BOBCAT?) CRIES an almost human sound. Lawrence tilts his head. Silent now.

Lawrence continues aimlessly through the woods, looking up, down, around.

Lawrence comes to the woods edge on the other side and another thicket. He again looks for an opening, but the thicket is dense. He pulls thorns back with the rounded handle of his cane and pushes through. He bleeds from the scratches.

On the other side of the thicket is an open area with an empty expanse of gravel stretching off in either direction. An abandoned RAILWAY RIGHT OF WAY.

EXT. RAIROAD RIGHT OF WAY

Lawrence stumbles down a slight rise to the gravel. His movements show walking the incline hurts his leg. The railraod tracks are long gone.

A few railroad ties lie off to the side, rotting. He is exposed, flanked by woods on each side and a lonely expanse of gravel emptiness.

Lawrence slowly walks, difficult with his leg. The gravel crunches, loud against the quiet. The cane slips in the gravel. For the second time, we hear a distorted bobcat cry, a bit louder.

Lawrence looks to woods on each side. Where did the sound come from?

Again the cry, even louder, even stranger.

LAWRENCE

The hell?

Lawrence looks to the woods where he came from. PIERCING FELINE EYES and the shape of a bobcat head stare through the brambles. Lawrence startles. The eyes are gone.

Animal cry again, louder. He looks to the woods on the other side of the gravel. A bobcat face, indistinct, peers at him. The animal cry again, then again, the sound all over.

Lawrence looks at the brambles and woods. Bobcat eyes and faces seem to appear and disappear - there, then not. Lawrence brandishes his cane like a club.

Lawrence is alone in the emptiness of the right of way. Exposed.

He begins limping down the gravel, unable to go fast because of his leg. Animal sounds grow louder as if approaching.

Lawrence is alone, crippled, fearful.

An animal cry, behind him, DEAFENING.

Lawrence spins around only to barely catch a glimpse of a crouching bobcat before it leaps and dissipates into nothingness.

A bobcat cry sounds in the woods.

Lawrence breathes heavily, struggling to compose himself. He looks around. Nothing but brush, gravel, trees.

Lawrence looks at the woods. He limps walking down the lonely right of way, his cane slipping. He tries to run but he can't.

The outline of Lawrence grows smaller and smaller as he limps off down the gravel into the distance.

EXT. TOWN (MAIN STREET) - DAY

Lawrence emerges onto a road where the railroad tracks once would have crossed. His limp is even more pronounced.

A stray cat walks by, startling Lawrence. The cat scurries off.

The town is quaint but failing. Empty businesses, peeling paint, store fronts once housing general stores or hardware stores now occupied by tax services, fast food, etc.

Lawrence makes his way down the sidewalk. Someone ahead approaches, waving. It's King.

KING

Lawrence?

LAWRENCE

King? Hi. Hey.

They meet up. King looks at Lawrence. Lawrence is out of breath, bleeding, wild eyed.

KING

Dude, what happened to you? Did you walk all the way from the house?

LAWRENCE

Yes. I don't know. I was hiking where the tracks used to be.

KING

And you walked all the way to town?

LAWRENCE

Yes. I wasn't planning to. I got spooked. Thought I saw something, maybe.

KING

You saw something? What?

LAWRENCE

Maybe. I don't know. Hey, you think you could give me a ride home?

KING

Sure. You kind of look terrible. I'm just saying. Why don't we have a cup of coffee? Or, maybe no caffeine for you?

LAWRENCE

No, coffee would be good. I'll buy.

INT. BAKERY - DAY

A small coffee shop, a few tables. A young man cleans behind a counter but otherwise empty. King and Lawrence are seated.

Lawrence dabs at his scratches with a wet paper towel. An almost empty bottle of water and full cappuccino in front of him, a plate of cookies between him and King. King sips from a giant mug. Lawrence stops dabbing and sips the cappuccino.

Lawrence reaches for a cookie, but instead moves the plate to the right an almost unnoticeable amount, then moves it a bit over to the side. He pulls his hand away as if with effort. He picks up his cup and drinks.

LAWRENCE

Yum. Good.

KING

Did you just say "yum"? You know people don't actually say "yum" right?

LAWRENCE

Yummy.

KING

Better.

Lawrence sets cup down, then moves it over slightly.

LAWRENCE

What a coincidence meeting you.
What are you up to?

KING

Was actually coming here to get some coffee. I'm a simple guy, but I just don't do pre-ground. My one weakness.

LAWRENCE

Nothing wrong with a little fancy now and then.

Lawrence again moves his cup, changing the direction of the handle slightly. Then again. It's subtle.

KING

What was that?

LAWRENCE

What?

KING

The cup thing.

Lawrence is obviously caught off guard by the question.

LAWRENCE

Nothing.

King looks at Lawrence.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

Really. Just a thing I do.

KING

Like a nervous thing?

LAWRENCE

Yes. Something like that.

KING

Sorry. I pick up on stuff like that. Not trying to make you feel weird.

Lawrence picks up the cup and drinks, then set the cup down with deliberate intent.

LAWRENCE

No worries. Was much, much worse when I was a kid. Sometimes getting upset triggers it more, for me at least. That's not always the way it works for everyone. Sorry.

KING

Nothing to be sorry about. I shouldn't have pointed it out. No filter, you know?

LAWRENCE

Yeah, I can tell! Actually I like that. Not the way it was when I was growing up. Nobody dealt with anything, except to yell at me to stop.

KING

Isn't that how it works? Just stop.

LAWRENCE

Right! Sometimes I could stop actually moving things or clearing my throat or whatever by replacing them with stuff in my head.

KING

In your head? What do you mean?

LAWRENCE

Doing addition or picturing shapes, stuff like that. It was still obsessive but nobody could see it. I could only do that when I was away from home. At home, full on freakiness.

KING

Whoa. How old were you?

LAWRENCE

I started, at least from what I remember, somewhere around nine or ten.

KING

Dude, you know I'm not making fun, right? I don't hide from things. I mean, being a sexy, sexy lady and turning into a sexy, sexy man meant facing and accepting a lot. People can't always handle my tell-it-like-it-is attitude.

LAWRENCE

Well, you have no idea how welcome it is to me.

KING

Cool. So what kind of animal did you see?

LAWRENCE

I don't know. A bobcat, I think.

KING

Do we even have bobcats? Maybe you saw a big stray cat or something.

LAWRENCE

Makes more sense. The whole thing was weird. Hey, thanks for helping me.

(MORE)

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

The thought of limping home wasn't too appealing. Anyone even drive Uber out here?

KING

Just one crazy old farmer with a pickup and a chainsaw. Maybe you'll meet him out in the woods next time you go hiking.

Lawrence drinks from his cup.

LAWRENCE

Yum.

EXT. HOUSE/DRIVEWAY - DAY

King is driving away down the driveway. Lawrence waves. He turns to go into the house, but stops, looking it over.

LAWRENCE

What?

Lawrence looks at the tent. He laughs.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

Like I thought I'd be safer there.

Lawrence goes inside. A moment later he emerges with laptop, notebook, a small stack of clothes, his cane. Goes to his car.

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

Lawrence's car is in a parking lot. We see his cane in the backseat. The car is at a small motel.

INT. HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

Lawrence sits at table, head in hands. A half eaten sandwich is on a plate and his laptop is open to a page on bobcats.

He slaps his head three times and rubs his temples. Lawrence hears a scampering sound in the ceiling -- squirrel or mouse? He continues reading. He hears the scampering again.

Lawrence picks up the pad of paper with the question mark. He writes WOODS TRACKS BASEMENT YARD.

Lawrence looks up at the ceiling.

LAWRENCE

Fair enough.

Lawrence writes ATTIC on the pad, circles it, and puts a question mark next to it.

INT. GARAGE - DAY

Lawrence struggles with a large ladder he is placing below to an attic door at the top of the garage wall. He then picks up a large metal flashlight.

Lawrence grunts with pain as he gets his legs onto the first rung. The flashlight is difficult to hold while climbing. He sticks it under his armpit - nope, doesn't work. He finally jams it in his back pocket, where it barely fits.

He continues the climb, every few rungs stopping and resting.

Nearing the top, the flashlight, which has worked its way out of his pocket by the climb, clatters to the ground.

LAWRENCE

Dammit!

From Lawrence's POV, the ground looks a long way down. Too painful to go down and retrieve the flashlight. He slaps his pockets, checking for a cellphone. Lawrence shakes his head.

Lawrence opens the door and crawls in.

INT. ATTIC - DAY

The cramped attic is dark, a few beams of light shining through a vent. Exposed rafters with boards across them allow for crawling. Not enough headroom to stand.

Boxes and milk crates are stashed around, indistinct in the murkiness. Lawrence allows his eyes to adjust then begins crawling. This hurts -- a lot.

He strains to see. Not much interesting. An acorn. He continues forward on hands and knees.

His hand hits a knothole. Something else -- the texture of an arrow carved into the board next to the knot hole. The arrow is barely visible. He rubs his hand across it.

Lawrence moves to the side and tilts the board with the knothole and arrow -- it is not attached. He pulls out a small box.

Lawrence looks at the box and begins to lift the lid when
SOMETHING SKITTERS TOWARD HIM

He yells out as a SQUIRREL scurries away. He gives a nervous laugh, now seeing how the vent is loose, allowing easy squirrel entrance.

As he looks at the vent, the light beams, more visible from the kicked up dust from the squirrel, seem to cut off midway across their descent as if they are hitting something solid, but there isn't anything there. Or rather...

There is a SHADOW, round and indistinct. As Lawrence stares, the shadow darkens. The round shadow LIFTS A SHADOW HEAD, revealing itself to be a silhouette figure of a man on hands and knees.

The shadow ADVANCES toward Lawrence. Lawrence moves backwards, forgetting the box. The shadow speeds up and Lawrence frantically shimmies backwards to the attic door, difficult because of his leg.

At the door the shadow lunges forward and SCREAMS, a guttural, angry, violent sound. As Lawrence covers his head the shadow explodes silently into wisps of darkness merging with the floating dust, which floats around him.

Lawrence is shaking, stifled noises of fear escaping his lips. After a moment he uncovers his head. There is nothing but dust.

He carefully, painfully steps onto the first rung.

INT. BAKERY - DAY

Lawrence is at the coffee shop again. Holding a spoon, he sets it down, picks it up, moves to the right, the right again. He's not trying to control his compulsions.

King sits across from Lawrence.

KING

Hey. What's going on, brother? You sounded batshit on the phone.

LAWRENCE

Hi, King. Thanks for coming. I didn't know who else to call.

KING

Sure man. What's up?

LAWRENCE

I got to talk about the house. Do you think its haunted?

KING

Whoa. Right to the point.

LAWRENCE

Well, I'm trying the no filter thing. Seems to work for you.

Lawrence forces a smile, nervous but sincere.

KING

Good choice, man. Haunted, huh? Yeah, maybe. So what's going on?

Lawrence fidget and looks around before answering.

LAWRENCE

I saw something again.

KING

Another animal?

LAWRENCE

Well, yeah, I saw a squirrel--

KING

Feather duster tails. Scary. As. Shit.

LAWRENCE

Right. Thanks. I saw something else. Something really ... I don't know. In the attic.

KING

You were up in mom's attic? Why?

LAWRENCE

I heard a squirrel, and I went up to look around.

KING

You went up because you heard a squirrel?

LAWRENCE

I was just looking around. This thing was a shadow or something. Really angry.

KING

I don't know what you saw,
Lawrence. I've never seen anything
like that. I mean it. That house
has always creeped me out, but I've
never seen anything there. Okay
man, what are you doing in that
house?

LAWRENCE

What do you mean?

Lawrence begins moving the spoon around, tapping the cup, two
taps, the rim, one tap.

KING

You can barely walk and it's fairly
obvious that you hurt, yet the
first night you're sleeping on the
ground. A few days ago, limping
through the woods. You rent a house
with a washer and dryer downstairs.
Now a ladder. Seriously? A ladder,
with your leg? Come on. Be straight
with me.

LAWRENCE

Is that a gender identification
command?

KING

Absolutely. Now what's up?

King looks up as a couple comes in and takes seats at another
table.

LAWRENCE

Okay. I feel stupid saying this. I
grew up in that house. My folks
sent me away when I was 13 because
my OCD was causing arguments. I
haven't been back since.

KING

I wondered if you had some history
there. So why the big stinkin'
secret?

LAWRENCE

Not a secret...

King sighs.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

Okay. Not so much a secret as I didn't want anyone to ask me to explain why I was back, because the truth is I'm not sure. King, do you know something about that house?

KING

There's something off about that house for sure, some kind of bad energy. I'm telling the truth, though, Lawrence. I have no idea what you've been seeing. I've never seen anything there.

Takes a sip of tea and bites a cookie.

KING (CONT'D)

I don't mean this the wrong way, but you sure you're seeing these things? Maybe it's some repressed childhood ... thing. What do I know? I'm no doctor.

LAWRENCE

I asked myself the same thing, but this was so real. Look I have OCD, depression, even a sprinkling of dissociative disorder--

KING

Keeping it fresh!

LAWRENCE

--But I don't suffer from hallucinations or schizophrenia. If anything, I tend to be hyper-aware of my reality. Look, let's change the subject. Tell me about yourself.

KING

Not going to be that interesting compared to your story. I'm actually pretty well balanced. Oh, I didn't, no offense--

LAWRENCE

None taken. Go on.

KING

Cool. Well, I grew up in Akron then moved out to the suburbs. Was a girl, so there was that.

(MORE)

KING (CONT'D)

Knew early on, though. I always had a good sense of who I was.

LAWRENCE

How'd your parents and friends handle it?

KING

Well, not much if there isn't drama, and you don't go from being a girl to a boy without drama, right? The people who mattered were there for me. The others weren't. Can't please everyone.

LAWRENCE

No, definitely can't. Sometimes people just aren't there for you. Do you live in town?

KING

I do.

LAWRENCE

Hmm.

KING

That surprises you?

LAWRENCE

Kind of. Small towns aren't known for being open.

KING

Dude, you think? But here's the thing. I don't care. My folks bought your house back in, let's see, 2010. Dad had always wanted to live in the country but they didn't when I was young because they worried about how I would handle being out here. Ironical that I ended up moving here.

LAWRENCE

But you don't stay at the house? That seems odd.

KING

You're in the house, man. You know. It's not right. Like I said, I don't hide from things.

(MORE)

KING (CONT'D)

My folks always pretended it was fine, but I'm not into pretending. There's something bad about that house.

LAWRENCE

Maybe. So you got a job?

KING

I'm a warehouse shipping manager. I drive a mean fork lift. What about you? You work?

LAWRENCE

Kind of. I'm a graphic designer, specializing in getting laid off. I've been laid off in Chicago, Portland, Cleveland and Miami.

KING

Wow. You must be good. I mean at getting laid off.

LAWRENCE

Funny. I keep a few freelance clients, and otherwise I'm living off a settlement from an accident I was in. I have simple tastes.

KING

Is that what's up with your leg?

LAWRENCE

Yes. A truck driver fell asleep at the wheel on the highway. I was unconscious for days. Took me almost six months to learn to walk.

KING

You get around pretty good, all things considered then.

LAWRENCE

I suppose. It's the accident that brought me back here. I think.

KING

How so?

LAWRENCE

It's going to sound crazy.

KING

More than bobcats and shadow
monsters?

LAWRENCE

Oh man. I do sound unstable. Okay,
I lived in the house until I was
13, but I don't remember a ton of
details, just that I was really
scared of this place and that my
OCD was off the hook. When I woke
up in the hospital I kept thinking
about the house and started getting
flashes of memories. I hadn't
thought about it in more than ten
years.

KING

Okay, but why come back if you were
afraid of the place?

LAWRENCE

So I'm looped out on meds in the
hospital. I get angry. Really
angry. Not about the accident, but
everything, my depression, getting
sent away as a kid because of crap
I couldn't control, having an
overall shitty childhood, and it
comes out of nowhere. King, you
don't know me, but I don't dwell on
the past. Over and over, I picture
the house, and I get this feeling
there's something I have to do
there.

KING

Like find some kind of resolution?

LAWRENCE

Exactly. This feeling wasn't just a
passing thought, it was a
directive, like a feeling I had to
do this no matter what.

KING

Did you talk to anybody about it?

LAWRENCE

I've never talked about the house.
My mom, dad, sister, even my aunt
all died a long time ago. Human
connections to my past are gone.

KING

Sorry to hear that, man. How did you possibly know mom's house was for rent?

LAWRENCE

I didn't. Since I was laid up in bed and was getting all these thoughts about the house, I began researching online, looking for anything weird, deaths, tragedies, whatever.

KING

Okay. There's got to be something that happened there, for sure. What did you find?

LAWRENCE

Nothing. The house isn't even old, built in the 60s. Nobody died there. Really, I didn't find anything interesting. But I punch in the address one day and boom, for rent. Felt like fate.

KING

Maybe it is.

LAWRENCE

Maybe. But I came with no plan. I needed a place to stay, had some cash, so thought, why not? I'll come back, wander around and wait for...something. That was my great plan. Wander around. Made more sense in the hospital.

KING

So you weren't looking for anything specific in the attic?

LAWRENCE

No. My big sister and I would hide up there as kids when my parents fought, which was a lot. Those are some of the last memories I have of my sister, so it made sense to look up there. Speaking of which, I've got a HUGE favor to ask you.

KING

A favor?

LAWRENCE

Could you grab something out of the attic for me?

INT. HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY (FOLLOWING DAY)

Lawrence is working on his laptop at the kitchen table. Dark circles under his eyes, hair unruly. The doorbell rings.

I/E. HOUSE/FRONT DOOR - DAY

King is standing outside with Chinese food. Lawrence comes to the door.

LAWRENCE

Hey, look at you. Actually standing on the porch instead of hiding in the yard. I wasn't sure you were going to come by.

KING

I'm not chicken, and I brought the food, as promised. You going to let me into your freaky ass house?

Lawrence opens door.

LAWRENCE

It's not my freaky ass house. It's *your* freaky ass house.

King steps inside, following Lawrence to the kitchen.

KING

Not my freaky ass house. My mom's. Dude, you look terrible. You look worse than when you were chased by fake bobcats.

LAWRENCE

Yeah, thanks. Didn't sleep well. Here.

Lawrence gestures to kitchen. They walk in and Lawrence gestures to the table while he goes to the cupboard. King sits.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

I could hear every little noise.

Standing at the cupboard, he turns to King.

(MORE)

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

I heard a goddamn cricket from the front of the house. That's how it was when I young.

KING

What do you mean?

Lawrence turns back around, getting cups and napkins from the cupboard. He answers King while his back is turned.

LAWRENCE

I would hear everything. Like once when I was sleeping, I heard this tapping noise in regular intervals from the front of the house. I walked all the way from my bedroom to the family room. You know what it was?

KING

A squirrel doing crochet?

Lawrence comes to the table and sits.

LAWRENCE

Yes. She knitted me a little cap. Scary. As. Shit. No, it was a watch. A stupid wristwatch. I heard it ticking from the other side of the house. Shit like that happened all the time.

KING

Did you see anything weird again last night?

King starts taking out the food from the bags.

LAWRENCE

No, nothing. My nerves are all jacked up though. I don't want to be here anymore. Maybe my whole come back here thing was pain pills or head trauma.

They start dishing out food.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

I do appreciate the help, though. I mean, sincerely. These aren't your issues, and I really should be dragging you into my damage.

King digs into the food.

KING

Well, 'd be lying if I said it wasn't interesting. Plus, work was a pain today and it's nice to be part of an adventure. One of the tow truck drivers dropped a crate--

LAWRENCE

What was in it?

Lawrence heaps food on his plate.

KING

Decorative planters, or, as I prefer to call them now, pottery shards. So you're sending me up in the attic, huh?

LAWRENCE

I would do it, but it's hard with my leg.

KING

Right.

LAWRENCE

I would!

KING

Hey listen, I wasn't going to fess up, but like I think I said, I'm upfront. I looked you up online yesterday after we talked, just to be safe. The whole hey go up in the attic thing is a little creepy.

Lawrence sighs.

LAWRENCE

Don't blame you. I would have, too. I suppose you want to know about my wayward youth, then?

KING

I don't know. That's a long time ago. Still, you don't seem like someone who would have done jail time.

LAWRENCE

Well, it was stupid, King. I was an angry kid. My mom sent me away to live with my aunt because of my OCD.

(MORE)

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

I was pissed because I couldn't help it, and it didn't seem fair. Even after my dad died--

KING

What happened to your dad?

LAWRENCE

He died in a car wreck when I was almost 14.

KING

No shit. My dad died in a car wreck when I was 22. He had a temper, though, and would get all pissed and drive like an a-hole.

LAWRENCE

Really? Mine too. We got some common ground there.

KING

Yeah, we do. Not common ground I want. Anyway, you were saying about jail...

LAWRENCE

So even after my dad died, mom didn't want me back even though my OCD mainly pissed off dad. I turned 18 and got messed up with these kids who stole a car. I'd never stolen anything ever in my life, before or since. I was the oldest, though. Did almost two years.

KING

Rough, man.

LAWRENCE

Gets worse. When I got out my mom was already dead from cancer. My sister had watched her die and that messed her up and she got hooked on my mother's pain pills, I guess. She died of an OD two days after I got out.

KING

That's way too much for anyone to process.

LAWRENCE

Well, I felt so damn guilty that I wasn't there for them and then angry they hadn't been there for me. Not a good time. House went into foreclosure. Mom hadn't been paying the mortgage, I found out, and my sister and I didn't have any money.

They eat in silence.

KING

You know what you need?

LAWRENCE

Not really. What?

KING

Another egg roll.

King pushes an egg roll towards Lawrence. Lawrence takes it, smiles. They continue to eat in reflective but comfortable silence.

INT. GARAGE - DAY

Lawrence is holding the ladder as King begins the climb.

LAWRENCE

Don't drop your flashlight.

King looks down at Lawrence.

KING

Really?

LAWRENCE

Sorry. Carry on.

King climbs the ladder.

KING

I'm going in.

King climbs into the attic. Below, Lawrence has begun a rhythmic OCD pattern on the ladder.

LAWRENCE

See anything?

Lawrence begins to speed up in his tapping.

KING (O.S.)

Woah!

LAWRENCE

What? What do you see?

KING (O.S.)

That Santa decoration from when I was a kid. He looks stoned!

LAWRENCE

Nothing weird, though?

KING (O.S.)

A stoned Santa is pretty weird, Lawrence. (pause). Okay, I see your box. Got it.

Lawrence sees a figure coming from the attic. The air is hazy and blurry and Lawrence rubs his eyes. The figure is an adult shadow. It's head whips around and SCREAMS.

Lawrence lets go of the ladder, staggers back, and falls.

Panting, he looks up to see King hurrying down the ladder.

KING (CONT'D)

What happened?

LAWRENCE

Did you hear it? The scream?

KING

Dude, no, I didn't hear anything. You're shaking.

LAWRENCE

Get me out of here. Please, help me, King. Get me out of here.

King scurries down the ladder and over to Lawrence, still sitting on the ground, rocking.

KING

Whoa. Come on.

King helps Lawrence to his feet.

KING (CONT'D)

Come on. Let's go to my apartment. Get out of here for awhile.

King and Lawrence leave garage.

INT. KING'S APARTMENT - DAY

The apartment is colorful and eclectic, full of life. Chill electronic music is playing.

Lawrence slouches, head back, in a colorful comfy chair. Across from him sits King. A small coffee table is between them with two coffee cups and the box from the attic. Lawrence raises his head and runs his hands through his hair.

LAWRENCE

Rhetorical question. How can I move forward when things are happening that can't happen? I don't know what to believe. You didn't see anything?

KING

No, man. I didn't.

LAWRENCE

Shit, I'm delusional. It wasn't there.

KING

You're not crazy, Lawrence. I didn't see it. But I felt something dark, something really, really angry. I did. Not just saying that, either. Maybe you see things that other people only feel.

LAWRENCE

Then why haven't I seen them before? I lived in that house from three years old until I was thirteen. How come now?

KING

I don't know. Maybe because you're looking for them. Here.

King passes him one of the cups.

KING (CONT'D)

Mint tea. Hard to be ramped up when you're sipping mint tea, bro.

Lawrence sighs a tired laugh.

LAWRENCE

Thanks, King. I don't know what I'd do if you weren't helping me. I owe you.

KING

No. Life is interconnected. I don't believe that anything is random, or, well, maybe it's random but at the same time interconnected. Too mystic? Listen, I have a connection to that house too. Not like you, but my mother won't sell it, and that's weird. Maybe we should talk to her?

Lawrence takes a deep inhale of the tea.

LAWRENCE

Smells good. Maybe we should talk to her, but not until I get my shit together.

KING

Good idea. So. I know you just got the crap scared out of you, but are you going to open the box? If it's private, I get it.

Lawrence looks at the box. He rubs his jaw.

LAWRENCE

It would be pretty lousy to send you into a haunted attic and not show you what's in the box. I remember this now.

KING

The box?

LAWRENCE

Yes. My sister and I would swap out putting stupid things in it. What the hell did we call it? The memory box. We called it the memory box.

KING

Wow. Seems significant.

Lawrence looks at the box and goes to open it.

KING (CONT'D)

Hold on. You know, I'm thinking. Maybe it's not safe to open it here.

LAWRENCE

What?

KING

I don't know. Just thinking if there's scary stuff in there, maybe we don't want to let it out here.

LAWRENCE

That's a weird flippin' thought, King. Wait, you'd be willing to go back to the house just to open a box?

KING

Umm. Yeah. Definitely. But, you know, not yet.

LAWRENCE

I'm definitely not ready, either. Can we just chill here for awhile. Drink tea?

KING

Most certainly. You want to play a board game?

Lawrence looks at King incredulously. King shrugs.

LAWRENCE

Jesus, King. What games to do you have?

EXT. HOUSE/FRONT DOOR - DAY

Lawrence and King are standing looking at the door.

LAWRENCE

Here we are.

KING

Yup.

LAWRENCE

Hey, if you stay out here on the deck, that's cool. After all, this whole place seems to be haunted. I had the animal thing in the woods, and then the lawnmower noise thing out there.

KING

You never told me about a lawnmower noise thing.

LAWRENCE
Oh. Yeah. Had one. Fucking
terrifying.

KING
Great.

Lawrence shrugs.

LAWRENCE
Your call. Want to go in or stay
out?

KING
Okay, let's go sit at that swanky
kitchen table.

LAWRENCE
Not mine. Your mother left it.

KING
Yeah, I know. Come on.

King and Lawrence enter the front door. They walk through the
LIVING ROOM to the KITCHEN, both looking around side to side
as the walk.

INT. HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

Lawrence and King sit. Lawrence sets the box down. He turns
around and looks at the clock on the wall.

LAWRENCE
You hear that clock buzzing?

KING
Yeah, barely. Why?

LAWRENCE
That clock was here when I was a
kid. I can't believe nobody got rid
of that ugly thing since then.
That's a long time. I'd hear this
loud, awful buzzing at night, and
I'd come out in the middle of the
night and it was that damn clock.

KING
Maybe it's a clue.

LAWRENCE
I don't think that's how it works.

KING
Yeahh. And how does it work?

LAWRENCE
You're right. I have no idea.

Lawrence pulls his chair under the clock and tries to step up, but can't.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
Dammit.

KING
Let me help.

King gets up and steps onto the chair, unplugging and removing the clock. He looks it over.

KING (CONT'D)
Just a vintage clock.

King passes the clock to Lawrence.

LAWRENCE
No panels, no messages.

King steps down from the chair.

KING
Maybe the house is angry nobody has
chucked that ugly clock yet.

LAWRENCE
Actually this was good. I'm
remembering how I hated that clock.
Any memories are useful, right? You
know that damn clock sound would
trigger my OCD for some reason.

King and Lawrence sit back down.

KING
How's that stuff been?

LAWRENCE
Getting worse. Wasn't much of an
issue for me as an adult but now
that I'm back, it's awful.

KING
I haven't really noticed it that
much.

LAWRENCE

That's good. With OCD it's not just compulsions but thoughts.

KING

I don't really know much about OCD.

LAWRENCE

Here's a primer. I get an awful thought first and then, instantly, need to do something to stop the thought from happening. Usually I can muscle through or use logic, but this place sucks me into these loops. Having OCD is like having your own personal haunting, so having OCD in an actual haunted house is sweet. That's living.

KING

Maybe there's some connection? Between, you know, the way your brain works and the house?

LAWRENCE

Interesting idea. Come on, let's see what's in this box.

Lawrence reaches over. Lawrence and King look at each other. Lawrence takes a deep breath and flips open the box. He removes a plastic toy man. A smile flickers over his face.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

Oh my god, I remember this. Adventure Guy.

KING

Adventure Guy?

LAWRENCE

Yeah. Some lady gave it to me when I was at a garage sale with my mom. This was my favorite toy. I'd make up stories about Adventure Guy and tell my sister.

Lawrence looks at King, his face amazed.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

I remember this toy completely. It's so great to remember something that isn't horrible or sad. Let's see what else is in here.

Lawrence pulls out and unfolds a sheet of paper. On it we see a kid's drawing of a terrified child pointing at a black shadow man with an angry face. A growling lion face is on the side. An adult guy is looking at the child with question marks over their heads. They don't see the shadow.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

I drew this. Look, King. I must have seen these when I was a kid. I don't remember seeing them, but I did.

KING

Whoa. You must have put that in the attic.

LAWRENCE

I don't think I did. I gave this drawing to my sister. I remember now.

KING

So your sister hid it? Why?

LAWRENCE

I don't know. Maybe she knew I'd come back. Maybe she stuck Adventure Guy in there because it's something I would definitely remember. I don't know.

KING

Kind of cool, in a spooky kind of way. This might be anticlimatic, but I need a potty break.

King heads off while Lawrence turns the toy over in his hands, lost in thought. He looks at the drawing, examines the box.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

King emerges from bathroom. Out of the corner of his eye he sees movement. He turns. Nothing.

King continues to look. A shadow materializes, unsubstantial, difficult to see. As King watches the shadow takes form - a child, on the ground holding its knees, a sound of whimpering.

The shadow takes on more details, features becoming visible, the black shadow shifting to become more blue, more ethereal. The ring light about the shadow child buzzes loudly.

As the child rocks, it reaches out, as if tapping the walls, continuing to rock.

The shadow, now more ghostlike, looks up at King. The face is completely visible, a child of 8 or 9. It emits a heart wrenching sound, half cry, half white noise.

King turns and runs.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

King looks horrified at Lawrence.

KING
Oh no. Oh no. Oh no.

LAWRENCE
What happened?

KING
Oh no.

Lawrence stands up and King takes a step back.

LAWRENCE
What? What did you see?

KING
This is bad. Pictures. I need pictures. Do you have any? When you were a kid?

LAWRENCE
I don't...yeah, maybe. Why?

KING
Just get them. Meet me on the porch.

LAWRENCE
Okay. Okay. Don't leave though, okay. Please?

KING
Meet me on the porch.

King leaves. Lawrence shuffles to his bedroom.

LAWRENCE
(To himself)
What the fuck?

EXT. HOUSE/FRONT DOOR - DAY

King is standing on the porch, clutching himself.

KING
No no no no no.

After a moment, Lawrence emerges with a photo box.

LAWRENCE
I wasn't able to get a lot of
photos before we lost the house,
but....

King is not paying attention.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
King? You okay.

KING
Just show me a picture of you as a
kid.

LAWRENCE
What? Fine.

He rifles through the box, grabbing a photo.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
Here.

King looks at the picture, gasps, and steps back.

KING
It's you. You're dead. You're a
ghost.

LAWRENCE
What the hell?

KING
Oh man, you're dead, Lawrence. I'm
sorry. I saw you in the house, you,
this kid.

King points to the photo.

LAWRENCE
I'm not dead, King!

Slaps hands together.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
I'm very much real.

KING

No, man, you're all Sixth Sense.
You don't know you're dead. That's
why you're back. You died here.

LAWRENCE

Then how can I have been in a car
wreck?

KING

I don't know. You must have died in
that car wreck.

LAWRENCE

That doesn't even make sense.

KING

I don't know, man. I just saw a
ghost of little you in there.

Lawrence holds up his hands, palms facing King.

LAWRENCE

All right, all right. This house is
weird and something's going on, but
I'm not dead. Dead guys don't smell
mint tea, King. Please, calm down.

KING

I'm trying, but....

LAWRENCE

I know. I know. I'm scared too. But
I'm not dead, and if I am dead, I'm
not dangerous.

King is nervously moving around, looking back at his car.

KING

Maybe you're a zombie.

LAWRENCE

What?

KING

Joke. I'm trying to joke. Best I
can do under the circumstances.

Kings eyes are wide as he stares at the window. Lawrence, his
back turned to the house, notices.

LAWRENCE

You see me, don't you. I mean, kid
ghost me?

King nods yes.

Looking out the window we see a ghostly child, and then it's gone.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
Well. Okay. Didn't see this coming.

King slowly nods his head no.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
Well. Good news.

KING
That would be?

LAWRENCE
It's not just me. That means I'm not delusional.

KING
I am so glad I saw ghost you *after* I went to the bathroom.

LAWRENCE
Um. Count your blessing where you can.

Lawrence looks at the house.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
I've got to go back in there.

KING
No offense, but I can't.

LAWRENCE
None taken. I kind of feel sick, but I've got to go in. Will you wait for me? Please? I'm really, really flippin' scared. Plus, who knows. Maybe you're dead, too and we're both ghosts.

KING
OH, you didn't! All right, buddy. I'm going to go wait in my car.

LAWRENCE
Fair enough. I'll be back.

Lawrence stands at the closed door. His hand goes to the handle, then pulls away. He looks behind him at King walking away. He opens the front door.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

Hello?

Lawrence walks into the house.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

LAWRENCE

Hello? Am I in here?

The house is quiet. Normal.

Lawrence moves around the house, looking in closets, cupboards, etc. Nothing.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

(to himself)

How can I be afraid of myself?

INT. HALLWAY

Lawrence walks to the SAME PLACE where the shadow that frightened King had sat. Lawrence drops to the ground, sitting. He gently touches the wall. He hugs his knees.

Lawrence sits there for a long while.

EXT. DRIVEWAY

King is visible through the window of his car. He exits and slams the door. From O.S. the house door shuts.

Lawrence walks toward King in the car.

KING

You all right? You don't look all right. Did you see anything?

LAWRENCE

King, I'm sorry I dragged you into this and laid all my childhood drama on you. You should head home. Whatever's happening here is my baggage.

KING

No, man. Listen, I'm sorry I freaked out. I never saw a ghost before.

LAWRENCE

You've got nothing to apologize for. I really, really thank you. You've been a lifeline.

KING

No, don't.

LAWRENCE

King, I don't have friends. I've hardly ever talk about my OCD. I've had more human interaction with you this week than I've had with anybody in ten years, unless you count nurses, therapists and doctors. You've made me laugh, and I haven't done that in forever. Thanks, King, but this whole thing is fucked up. You gotta go.

Lawrence gives a half wave and turns.

KING

Man, don't sleep in that place tonight.

LAWRENCE

I'll be fine. I think it's been waiting for me to come back.

Lawrence limps off to the house. King watches as he goes. Lawrence enters the house, and King continues to watch the house. He watches from his car and eventually drives away.

INT. HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Lawrence, coming from outside, moves to the kitchen, returning with a bottle of water and can of soup and a spoon. He plops onto an old chair.

He opens the can with the pull top and eats the soup cold out of the can. He lays his head back on the chair and closes his eyes.

INT. HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Lawrence is still in the chair. He wakes up, blinking as he looks around. In the dark, he sees a small shadowy figure move in the distant.

Lawrence physically startles. He grabs his bottle of water, compulsively setting it down, moving it once, twice, over, before taking the bottle and following the figure.

INT. HOUSE/HALLWAY

Lawrence looks down the hallway where the figure went. Gone. Lawrence turns...

And THE FIGURE IS THERE.

The spectral boy King saw, faintly glowing. Lawrence steps back. The figure remains motionless.

LAWRENCE

Can you hear me? Are you actually me?

The specter begins compulsively tapping on an unseen wall, an uncomfortable unnatural pattern. A sound begins of a child clearing his throat, rhythmically, compulsively, in patterns.

No other sounds but the throat clearing, over and over and over, the same pattern repeating.

Lawrence reaches out to the specter. A FLASH and

INT. HOUSE (1989) - DAY

YOUNG LAWRENCE (9) sits at the table, clearing his throat in a strange, repeated pattern, a plate of uneaten food in front of him. WILLIAM (33), Lawrence's father, is behind him.

WILLIAM

Dammit, Lawrence! Please stop that damn noise!

FLASH OF BLOOD SPLATTERED ON THE WALLS

Young Lawrence at table clears his throat.

FLASH OF FLAMES and DEMONS

Young Lawrence at table clears his throat.

FLASH OF DARKNESS AND THE SOUND OF SCREAMS

Young Lawrence at table clears his throat.

FLASH OF SHADOWS EVERYWHERE, HOWLING

INT. HOUSE/HALLWAY - NIGHT

Lawrence is alone. The figure is gone. He clears his throat compulsively, but abruptly stops.

LAWRENCE

I did it to protect them. I did it
for them, not for me.

Lawrence holds his head and SCREAMS.

Behind Lawrence, a black shadow figure holds its head and screams a silent scream mimicking the same motions that Lawrence just did and explodes into nothingness.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

(whispering)

What do you want from me? I was
just a kid.

(louder)

I needed help. I needed you to
understand what it was like. What
it was like living with THAT.

(shouting)

These shadows are NOTHING compared
to the fear I lived with.

(to the house)

Fuck you! I've lived with fear my
whole life. I'm not afraid of you.
You wanted me back? I'm here. Come
and get me.

Lawrence steps back, his footing uneven. Moonlight casts half his face in shadow.

Goes to bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM

Lawrence digs through a backpack for a prescription pill bottle. He shakes out a small pill, then another and breaks it in half. He takes the pills, closes the bottle, and sets it on the dresser.

He climbs into bed, fully clothed, and props a pillow behind him, leaning back.

INT. HALLWAY/KITCHEN/STAIRWELL

Throughout the house, shadows appear and disappear, flowing in a rhythmic pattern, indistinct, unpleasant, and silent.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

King is standing over Lawrence, shaking him.

KING
Hey. Hey, wake up.

LAWRENCE
What? What time....

KING
Hey, Lawrence. You okay? Can you hear me?

Lawrence sits up and rubs his eyes.

LAWRENCE
King? What the fuck are you doing here?

KING
Hey, man. I was worried about you. You weren't right yesterday. Sorry I let myself in but the door was open. I saw you laying here still dressed with a bottle of Xanax on the dresser and I thought maybe, you know....

LAWRENCE
That I decided to really become a ghost? No, not yet. I'm groggy, though.

Lawrence rubs his eyes.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
Shouldn't you be at work?

KING
I have so many PTOs stored up. I hardly ever take off, so I'm good.

Lawrence reaches for his water bottle.

LAWRENCE
You wasted a day off on me? King, you need a hobby.

KING
Dude, ghost hunting is super hot right now. I'm thinking we could do a balls to the wall YouTube channel on this house alone.

LAWRENCE

I'm sure we could. I gotta pee. Did you eat breakfast?

KING

Yeah, like four hours ago. I wouldn't mind getting lunch, though.

Lawrence gets up, stretching his back and grimacing.

LAWRENCE

What time is it?

KING

Almost 11:30.

LAWRENCE

Wow. Okay. I'm glad you came back. I really want help but I don't want to bring you into something bad. I don't seem to bring anything good to anyone.

KING

Shake it off, man. It's cool.

LAWRENCE

Let me clean up and brush my teeth and we can go. I kind of crashed a little last night.

KING

You're gutsier than I am.

Lawrence walks out of the room.

LAWRENCE (O.S.)

I doubt that. Hey, I saw ghost me last night.

KING

No way.

LAWRENCE (O.S.)

Yeah. I was a cute little bastard, wasn't I?

KING

Ohhh. Too soon, man. Too soon.

The sound of the sink running O.S.

KING (CONT'D)
You need a shower?

LAWRENCE (O.S.)
Yeah.

KING
You going to take one?

LAWRENCE (O.S.)
No.

Lawrence comes back in the room.

KING
I didn't think you were going to talk to me at all. Seemed like you were shutting off yesterday. Was afraid you were dead when I came in and then I'd be chased by two Lawrence ghosts.

Lawrence enters.

LAWRENCE
This is such an effed up conversation. Listen, I'm a little better now, I think. I'm sorry I was kind of jerky. I'm used to doing things alone. Nice to have a friend to drag into these horrors.

KING
Aww, thanks. Ready?

LAWRENCE
Yeah. I'm thinking bacon. I don't generally eat meat, but after yesterday, I need bacon.

King leaves the room.

KING
Shh. I don't want to see a pig shadow coming my way. After the last few days, anything is possible.

LAWRENCE
You aren't foolin' there.

INT. DINER - DAY

King and Lawrence are finishing their breakfasts. Lawrence looks worn, shoulders hunched. He is fully listening to King.

KING
... and nobody even considered
there was no way it was getting
through the door!

Lawrence laughs.

KING (CONT'D)
Everything seems so normal here,
doesn't it?

LAWRENCE
Yeah. Light years from the house.
The other day doesn't seem real.

KING
Well, I did some thinking.

LAWRENCE
About?

KING
Maybe you should approach this as a
puzzle. That's how haunted house
stories usually go, right?

LAWRENCE
I guess so. I don't really do ghost
stories much.

KING
Well, you're in one now. So the big
question of this puzzle is how can
you be here and there at the same
time? I'm going on the assumption
that you aren't dead. That is still
a possibility, though, no offense.

LAWRENCE
None taken.

KING
A ghost is generally a dead person
with unresolved issues, right? But
that doesn't work here. I have a
theory.

LAWRENCE
Okay. Let's hear it.

KING

Okay. So, you said the ghost in the attic was angry, right?

LAWRENCE

Yeah. It definitely was.

KING

How did you know?

LAWRENCE

I felt it.

KING

Yes, but how? If I got angry right now, you'd know by what I say, how I say it, how I look, all that stuff. You interpret the sights and sounds. But in the attic, you felt it, right?

Lawrence pauses.

LAWRENCE

I felt it. I began feeling it first, then I saw the shadow, and it got stronger. But I could feel that anger whether my eyes were open or not.

KING

Exactly. When I saw little Lawrence, sure, seeing a ghost kid was freaky, but that wasn't the main part. I felt it, I mean, completely. So sad and scared and confused, like an emotional hypercharge.

LAWRENCE

Emotional Hypercharge?

KING

Gonna be my band's name.

LAWRENCE

I still don't get how there can be a ghost of me if I'm not dead.

KING

Well, that's just it. Maybe these shadows aren't ghosts exactly. I've always felt emotions in that house, and never good ones.

(MORE)

KING (CONT'D)

That's why I never liked visiting.
Maybe that place holds emotions or
something.

LAWRENCE

Why don't I remember seeing these
things, then? That drawing I made
suggests I saw them before. How do
you forget something like that?

KING

You might not remember the shapes,
but you remember being scared or
sad, right?

LAWRENCE

So?

KING

So, what if these things are like
distilled emotions? We can't ever
fully remember our emotions, can
we? We remember that we were once
really happy or really sad, but it
takes a lot to re-experience those
emotions again. Maybe these things
fade because they are literally
tangible emotions.

LAWRENCE

Honestly that's a better band name.
Tangible Emotions.

KING

It is. Dude, you need to play like
drums. Ghost drums. So meta.

LAWRENCE

So you got to feel my emotions as a
little kid?

KING

Yeah, dude. Sorry. Kind of
invasive. That's rough you had to
feel that way as a kid.

LAWRENCE

I don't go around moping about it.
I'd get these intense fucking panic
terror attacks.

KING

I know. Little Lawrence gave me a full blast of terror and sadness, and it was brutal.

LAWRENCE

I'm sorry.

KING

Well what did you feel when you saw your own ghost?

WAITRESS TWO (42) comes by and Lawrence stops talking. She is looking curiously at King and Lawrence.

WAITRESS TWO

More coffee?

LAWRENCE

Thanks.

Lawrence waits for the waitress to leave before he resumes talking.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

It was different than the attic ghost or wood animal things. I was back for a second or two to when I was a kid. Not like a memory, but like back. My dad was yelling about my OCD, and I got these vivid flashes of umm, sorry, I don't mean to sound clinical, but my obtrusive thoughts.

KING

I'm sorry. I don't fully get it.

LAWRENCE

Okay, I have never talked to anyone about this, not even with therapists, so this feels awkward. With my OCD, I get really awful thoughts, like, if I don't clear my throat my dad goes to hell, or I'd stab him. I don't even like saying it out loud. This is a real thing, okay? People deal with this shit. Not just me.

KING

Dude. Seriously. Chill. I'm not judging.

LAWRENCE

I know. So, these fucked up ideas are called obtrusive thoughts, and they are lightening fast, like emotional blasts--

KING

Emotional hypercharges?

LAWRENCE

Yeah, I guess so. But in the vision I had yesterday, they weren't just the words and emotions, but I saw the awful things, vividly, like they were real.

KING

Wow. That can't be a coincidence, right? I'm telling you, the way you process connects with the house. If the house is all about emotions and making emotions more solid and you have this emotion compulsion thing, maybe there's something there. That's as good as I got.

LAWRENCE

Jesus. I've just tried to cope with OCD and put it behind me. My condition pretty much destroyed my life. I don't generally think about it. It's a nuisance.

KING

I'm thinking maybe the house has a different take. Maybe it wants something from you.

LAWRENCE

Hey, I got an idea. If your theory is true, we should go back to the house and I can scare you really bad. Then we can make a ghost copy of you.

KING

So many, many shades of wrong. Not even a ghost copy of me wants to stay in that butt ugly house.

Lawrence laughs.

LAWRENCE

Let's go see your mother.

INT. LINDA'S APARTMENT - DAY

King and Lawrence are seated at a kitchen table in a cheery but nondescript kitchen. MEREDITH (64) joins them, sitting down.

MEREDITH

So, you wanted to talk about the house? Are you having problems with the plumbing? Well water, you know.

LAWRENCE

Umm. No. Plumbing is great. No, nothing like that. I wanted to ask you about more, I'll just say it, supernatural things.

MEREDITH

Oh. I don't believe in those type of things.

MEREDITH smiles.

KING

Mom, this is really important. We really need you to be honest.

MEREDITH

Oh, darling, it's just a house. It's just a house.

LAWRENCE

Mrs. Pittinger--

MEREDITH

Please. Meredith.

LAWRENCE

Meredith. Why don't you sell the house? You haven't lived there in years, right?

Meredith shifts in her seat but continues to smile politely.

MEREDITH

Oh, it was my husband's dream house. I thought Sheil--my daughter, could have it one day.

KING

Mom, you know how I feel about that house.

LAWRENCE

I don't mean to pry, but I've had a few ...

(choosing words carefully)

Experiences in the house. I really need to know. Have you ever seen or felt anything unusual there?

MEREDITH

No, it's just a house.

LAWRENCE

Not even--

MEREDITH

Nothing. There's nothing there.

LAWRENCE

I see. Well, thanks, anyway.

MEREDITH

Certainly. I wish I could help more.

LAWRENCE

Well, if you've never seen or felt anything, maybe it's just me.

MEREDITH

Maybe. Has my daughter been putting ideas in your head?

KING

Mom, why would I do that?

MEREDITH

Well dear, you've always made up things about that house and how it felt.

LAWRENCE

No, I promise my experiences there have nothing to do with King.

MEREDITH

King. Never can get used to that name.

LAWRENCE

I should get going. Thanks, again. Meredith.

MEREDITH

Of course. Sorry I can't be of more help. Glad the plumbing is good.

Lawrence makes eye contact with King and they stand. King goes to Meredith and gives a kiss.

KING

Bye, mom.

MEREDITH

Goodbye, dear. Tell Lawrence there isn't anything in that house.

King and Lawrence exit.

EXT. MEREDITH'S APARTMENT - DAY

King and Lawrence are walking away.

KING

I'm sorry. I thought she'd talk to you.

LAWRENCE

It's okay. Honestly, I didn't see anything until I started looking. Maybe some people can just not be affected by that house.

KING

Maybe, but I don't believe that. Sometimes people just refuse to accept things they don't understand, or won't even try to understand.

King's expression is hurt.

KING (CONT'D)

I however, choose to accept that others can't always accept. It's them. Not me.

Lawrence pats King on the back.

INT. HOUSE/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lawrence sits on bed, looking at a photo of two children, himself and a little girl. Photo box sits next to him.

LAWRENCE

Is there a version of you here,
too, Iris?

Lawrence looks around the room. Nothing stirs.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

Wherever you're at, I hope you can
forgive me. I wish I could have
been there for you.

Lawrence sets photo down and picks up box, sorting through
pictures until he removes one.

A picture of a man and woman in front of the house. The woman
holds a toddler. The man, smiling, points at the house.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

Hey, Dad. Forgot you could smile.

Lawrence puts photos back in the box and puts on the lid. He
removes the lid, then touches a photo, then, another photo,
then closes the box.

From somewhere in the house, a large BANG, like something
falling.

Lawrence stands, a look more of annoyance than fear on his
face. He grabs a flashlight from the dresser.

He exits bedroom, searching the HOUSE for the sound. In the
kitchen, the bang sounds again. The basement.

Lawrence laughs, tired, sad.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

Of course the basement. You do
understand spooky, don't you? Damn
house. What happens if I decide to
not go down, huh? You can't make
me.

A BANG from downstairs again.

Lawrence opens basement door. He flips on the light switch at
the top of the stairs and turns on the flashlight. Looking
down the stairs, he stands still, then definitively flips off
the light switch and shuts off the flashlight.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

Screw you.

Lawrence limps down the stairs in the dark. We hear labored
breathing from his pain.

He taps the wooden pull on the light chain twice, pauses, taps again. The chain clinks eerily in the shadows. He pulls the chain.

A MEMBRANE of unpleasantness is inches from his face. Upsetting, abstract, asymmetric, not quite a vision, not quite real.

Lawrence recoils, staring. The membrane remains. He tentatively reaches out, pulling his hand away, moving in rhythmic compulsion. He touches the membrane.

An audio onslaught of intermingled sounds -- yelling, arguing, crying, distorted echoes of repeating words HELL HELL HELL, ear blistering, as unpleasant auditorily as the membrane was visually.

An emotional painting of flashes.

Through it all flashes of a child Lawrence uttering HELP ME HELP ME HELP ME HELP ME HELP ME morphing to:

Lawrence rocking at bottom of stairs

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
Help me help me help me help me.
No.

Lawrence pulls back.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
No.

Lawrence is staring ahead.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
NO.

Lawrence swipes at the membrane.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
No, I DON'T need help! NO!

The membrane, the sounds, in a swirl of sound and dirty colors, disappear.

Lawrence stands, panting. He starts to retch.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
Is that it?

Lawrence begins to tap the wall and stops. He walks into the interior of the basement.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Lawrence enters the basement, flipping a light switch. A large banging. Lawrence looks at the water heater.

He laughs.

Lawrence walks over the water heater. Touching the tank, it bangs again. Normal house noise.

LAWRENCE
You think I'm still afraid of the
dark? You don't rule me.

Lawrence goes to light pull. He yanks it definitively, no compulsive routine. He goes to light switch.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
You're nothing.

Lawrence flips off the switch. Darkness. The water heater bangs.

Lawrence shuffles to the stairs.

INT. STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Lawrence struggles with even more difficulty than usual. He moves with worn confidence, not fear.

At the top he looks down, smiles, then turns away.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY (DAYS LATER)

Lawrence is seated at the table, working on his laptop. He clicks the mouse solidly, and sits back. Done.

A knock at the door.

LAWRENCE
Come in!

Lawrence closes the laptop and smiles as King walks in. Lawrence stands,

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
You couldn't have had better
timing. I literally just sent off a
job for a client. I am officially
done!

KING

Perfect. So this is a celebration,
huh?

LAWRENCE

Yes. With your help, I think I've
done what I needed to do in the
house. I'm going to change my
shirt, and we'll go. Cool?

KING

Go do it!

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Lawrence and King are seated at a hipster restaurant
obviously out of the small town. Food on the table is largely
done, and they obviously have been talking and laughing for
some time.

LAWRENCE

And what? They never knew?

KING

No, I'm telling you people are
really dumb!

They both laugh.

KING (CONT'D)

Lawrence, I got to ask. So we're
celebrating your conquering your
fear of that house, but one thing I
don't get. Why would you possibly
have gone down the stairs the dark?

Lawrence laughs.

LAWRENCE

I know. Sounds stupid.

KING

Kinda does.

LAWRENCE

Okay. I'll try to explain. When I
was a kid, my compulsions weren't
just to touch or move something or
clear my throat. Sometimes they
were to do something horrifying,
like stick my head under the bed at
night.

KING

That would mess up any kid.

LAWRENCE

Yeah. So like I mentioned last week, I'd have these panic attacks. The only way to explain it is raw fear. I'd get them a lot. I used to sit in the hallway under that horrible light and try to wait it out.

KING

Where I saw the ghost you?

LAWRENCE

Right. Well one of the main compulsions, probably the worst, was if I was really stressed after a huge fight between my folks, I'd need to walk down the stairs in the dark and turn the light on at the bottom.

KING

Wow. So yesterday you went down in the dark because of your OCD?

LAWRENCE

No. I mean yes. I mean yes, but not in the way you think.

KING

Whaaaat? Go on.

LAWRENCE

Listen, as a 39 year old guy--

KING

You're 39? You don't look 39.

LAWRENCE

Thanks. But as a 39 year old guy who doesn't look 39, I'm not afraid of the dark, or wasn't until I got back and starting having the shit scared out of me. Going downstairs, though, I remembered the intense fear of being compelled to go down in the dark. Willingly going down in the dark was kind of my way of flipping the bird to my OCD and to the house.

KING
I kind of get it.

LAWRENCE
Really?

KING
Yeah. It's not the same, but when I was beginning to transition, my dad would force me to go out to stores or places. I hated it. People stared, made their stupid jokes, whatever. Now, I go where I want. People still talk, but I'm choosing to meet it head on. It's why I live out in the sticks. It's easier to live in the city, but I like the open space and choosing to deal with small town life makes me feel like I have control. I'm doing the choosing.

LAWRENCE
That makes a lot of sense. Or at least as much sense as me walking down in the basement in the dark.

KING
Whether it makes sense or not, at least we get each other.

LAWRENCE
Yes. That's a cool thing. Can't say I've really had that before.

KING
That basement thing sounds really messed up.

LAWRENCE
It was pretty bad. But going up the stairs was okay, not like when I was a kid.

KING
What do you mean?

LAWRENCE
Oh man. When I was a kid, I would go downstairs, and I'd need to turn off the light at the bottom of the stairs with this certain stupid pattern thing. I'd walk up those stairs, but I wanted to run so bad.
(MORE)

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

So bad. I had a feeling if I ran, though, something would get me. I was so scared I couldn't even look behind me.

KING

And the crazy thing is, you might have actually saw something.

LAWRENCE

That honestly messes with me. The whole thing of childhood terrors is they aren't supposed to be real. I can't really know what was real or wasn't. I don't think the house caused my OCD or put those images my head. I'm not even sure all the arguments and fighting and broken dishes caused it. Maybe I was just wired that way. I do think, though, that the arguments and the house fed it and encouraged it. Who knows? I just know I'm not afraid anymore.

KING

That's cool. Do you really think that's what you were called back for?

LAWRENCE

I don't know. Like I didn't really solve anything, exactly, but it does feel satisfying to have squared off with that house.

KING

So what now?

LAWRENCE

Good question. I don't know. I mean I might have conquered my fear of it, but that house is still a bad place. I'm not sure I want to stick around there anymore. Don't forget the bobcats in the woods?

KING

You mean the stray cats?

LAWRENCE

Come on, with everything you've seen, you have to admit it's not as farfetched as it first seemed.

KING

Maybe. But at least the other stuff kind of makes sense. What do bobcats have to do with anything?

LAWRENCE

Look. I've thought about that. So if you're right and that land sucks in raw, primal emotions, then it makes sense that maybe it snagged some raw animal terror, too.

KING

What's a bobcat afraid of?

LAWRENCE

Who knows? A hunter? Maybe it's the energy it puts out when it hunts, I don't know. I do know I've heard a sound, a raw, energy sound. I think it's some kind of weird ass vibration, and I think it's probably really old, from before that house.

KING

Probably were bobcats running around a long time ago.

LAWRENCE

Right. That's what I mean.

KING

Dude, you might have been chased by a dinosaur or caveman or something.

LAWRENCE

That actually would have been cool.

KING

Instead of a couple of stray cats.

LAWRENCE

Okay! That's enough! So what about you mother, King? What's her deal with that house?

KING

I don't know. She says she wants me to have a place for a family some day.

LAWRENCE

Nothing says happy family then
raging shadow ghosts.

KING

Well, I've never seen those, but
right. She can't accept the house
is, what do we call it? Haunted? I
don't know, whatever it is. She
won't acknowledge anything is wrong
in the same way she won't
acknowledge I'm King now. She's
always been about denial.

LAWRENCE

That's too bad. Why do you think,
really, though, she won't sell that
place?

KING

I really, really don't know. It's
not like she had good times there.
I don't want to talk bad about the
dead, but honestly, my dad was... I
feel terrible saying this. He was
controlling and borderline abusive.
Mom always acted like everything
was fine. Still does. Everything
was just fine.

LAWRENCE

Well, it sucks going through life
hurt, but it can be just as bad, if
not worse, going through life
pretending you aren't.

KING

Like I told you when we first met,
I don't pretend. It's when you deny
the reality of things when
everything goes bad. Life's too
short for that.

Lawrence smiles.

LAWRENCE

Amen. Life's too short.

INT. HOUSE/BATHROOM - DAY

Lawrence puts away his toothbrush. He is clean shaven with an
air of relaxation he hasn't had since arriving. He looks at
himself in the mirror.

LAWRENCE

I'm okay.

Lawrence exits.

EXT. TOWN (MAIN STREET) - DAY

Lawrence is walking down the side walk along main street with his cane. Ahead of him DEIDRA THOMSON (68).

DEIDRA

Lawrence? Lawrence Kaplan?

Lawrence walks to the woman.

LAWRENCE

Yes, I'm Lawrence. Do we know each other?

DEIDRA

We haven't met before. I knew your mother, Annie.

Lawrence slightly starts.

LAWRENCE

Oh. I see. How did you recognize me? I was a kid when I moved away.

DEIDRA

I know. Annie told me. She always carried a picture of you, well a couple of pictures of you.

LAWRENCE

Really?

DEIDRA

She did. All the time. It's what kept her going.

LAWRENCE

How did you know my mother?

DEIDRA

We were in a group together. For cancer patients. Can I buy you a cup of coffee?

INT. CAFE - DAY

Lawrence and Deidra are seated at the same cafe where Lawrence sat with King.

DEIDRA

Now I met your sister Iris. I'm so sorry. I heard.

LAWRENCE

Yes, thank you. I unfortunately didn't see much of mom or my sister before they passed away.

DEIDRA

I know. Iris was always around, helping your mother during...I'm Sorry. I didn't mean you weren't--

LAWRENCE

I wasn't. I was living with my aunt and then was away when my mom got sick. I couldn't be here. It just wasn't possible.

DEIDRA

Your mother missed you so much. She said that all the time.

LAWRENCE

Did you know my father?

DEIDRA

No, I didn't. He had already died when your sister started bringing Annie to our sessions. She was devastated by his death. She felt so alone.

LAWRENCE

I'm glad my sister was able to be there for her.

DEIDRA

Yes, but that wasn't easy on Iris.

LAWRENCE

No. I know.

DEIDRA

Annie or Iris never blamed you. Annie, at the end, kept saying they had to send you away.

LAWRENCE

Really? Did she tell you why they sent me away?

DEIDRA

No. She would only say over and over that she had to. She said you had troubles and needed to get better. I hope this isn't upsetting to you?

LAWRENCE

No. It was a long time ago. It's nice to talk to someone who knew my mother.

DEIDRA

I need to run, but it was nice seeing you and meeting you finally. I miss her.

LAWRENCE

Yeah. So do I.

INT. HOUSE/HALLWAY - DAY

Lawrence sits on a kitchen chair in the hallway under the ring light where King first saw the specter Lawrence. At his feet is the box of photos. Lawrence holds a photo.

It's a photo of Lawrence and his sister as children holding Easter baskets. Annie is to their side, smiling. In the picture, young Lawrence's face is somber, his expression haunted.

Lawrence drops the photo in the box and sits, staring ahead.

From an indistinct place in the house, the buzzing, angry noise, but faint.

Lawrence closes his eyes. He is not afraid. He opens his eyes and continues to stare ahead, focused on nothing.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Lawrence looks at himself in the mirror, running his hand over face, tracing the faint age lines. Stubble is beginning to form on his face.

LAWRENCE

(to his reflection)

Nothing resolved. I'm still me.

He looks around. He again looks at the mirror. He looks down and picks up a tube of toothpaste. He sets it down. Compulsive moves it the right. He again moves it but as he is moving it he looks at the his reflection in the mirror, his face, as he compulsively moves the toothpaste.

Lawrence leans forward and touches his forehead to the mirror glass. He remains there.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lawrence lies in the dark on his bed, arms outstretched, looking at the ceiling.

LAWRENCE

I'm not done, am I ? I can feel
you're one step away from taking
me. Why did it have to be like
this?

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Lawrence sits at table working. His beard is coming back.
Cell phone rings.

LAWRENCE

Hello? (pause). King, hi! (pause)
Yeah, all good. (pause) No, just
been. (pause) Yeah. (pause) How are
you? (pause). That's great.
(pause), No, not too much. I've
been working to keep my mind still.
I think you can trigger things in
this place by getting keyed up.
(pause) Right. We'll connect this
weekend. Cheers.

Lawrence looks around the room.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

You can almost be a normal house if
nobody was here to rile you up.

He returns to working.

INT. HOUSE/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Storming outside, rain pounding on the roof. Lawrence sits on his bed, photo box next to him. He is looking at a photo of his sister Iris at around age 16.

LAWRENCE
Iris? Are you here?

No sounds but the rain.

Lawrence sits back in bed. He closes his eyes, breathing as if meditating, and opens his eyes. He picks up the photo of Iris and stares at it.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
Iris. I want to see you. If I'm in
this house, you must be too.

Lawrence looks around the room. Nothing.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
Iris!

Lonely sound of the rain. Lawrence bows his head and gently sobs.

INT. HOUSE/BEDROOM - DAY (FOLLOWING DAY)

Lawrence is still dressed from the night before. Sun is streaming in. KNOCKING at the front door.

Lawrence listens but makes no effort to get up. The knocking stops. Lawrence gets out of bed.

INT. LIVING ROOM

A sound of a car driving away. Lawrence opens the door.

A folded note falls out.

Lawrence reads the note, steps back, considers. He shoves the note in his back pocket and briskly heads to his room.

EXT. MAXWELL'S HOUSE - DAY

Lawrence's car drives up to a small, rundown farmhouse. An old rusty pickup is in front. Weeds, a rusting bicycle against a shed, forsaken.

Lawrence gets out and walks to the door. He knocks and waits. No answer.

Lawrence looks around, and eventually walks around the house. MAXWELL (76) is in a small garden plot pulling weeds.

LAWRENCE
Hello? Mr. Hanes?

Lawrence walks toward the man.

The man looks up, then returns to his garden.

MAXWELL
Weeds pull up better after a good
rain.

MAXWELL continues pulling weeds, eventually standing and
wiping his hands on his overalls.

LAWRENCE
Hi? Are you Maxwell Hanes? My name
is Lawrence. Lawrence Kaplan. I'm
living in your old house.

MAXWELL
Kaplan. Kaplan. You related to the
Kaplan's that bought the house from
me?

LAWRENCE
I am. I'm their son. I was hoping I
could talk to you about the house
and the land.

MAXWELL
Hmm. Interesting. Why don't you
come in and we'll talk?

INT. MAXWELL'S HOUSE - DAY

Maxwell sits in an old, overstuffed chair drinking a beer.
Lawrence, drinking a cup of coffee, sits on an old couch. He
takes a sip and sets the cup on a cluttered end table.

MAXWELL
You're the first to ever ask me
about the house. I take it you've
experienced some unexplainable
things.

LAWRENCE
I have. I can't say that house has
been particularly kind to me, Mr.
Hanes. Might have even ruined my
life. I'm not sure.

(MORE)

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

I don't mean to sound accusing, but how could you have knowingly sold such an evil place to my parents, my parents who had two young children?

Maxwell's expression softens. He shows no shock at the reprimand.

MAXWELL

I'm sorry if that house hurt you, son. It wasn't always bad. I built my house because that land was magical.

LAWRENCE

Magical? That's one way of looking at it. How was it magical?

MAXWELL

Those grounds are powerful. I used to go hunting back in those woods as a kid, before there was a house. You ever see anything out in those woods, Lawrence?

Lawrence is taken back by the direct question.

LAWRENCE

I did. I saw the ghosts of bobcats.

MAXWELL

And you remember them, too? That's something. Few people can see them, and even fewer can remember them after seeing them. I've seen them, too. Bears also.

LAWRENCE

You know, most people would think me crazy for saying what I just said.

MAXWELL laughs, remembering.

MAXWELL

Most people are idiots, unable to feel and see what's all around them. But they're not ghosts. They're something else.

LAWRENCE

More like echoes, right? My friend thinks they might be tangible emotions.

MAXWELL

Tangible emotions? That's good. Real good. Yes. Powerful emotions get captured and reverberate around that place. Don't know why. Your friend is perceptive. But there's another part. An important part I didn't get at first.

LAWRENCE

What other part?

MAXWELL

Those emotions don't just replay like a recording. They take on a life. They move around, seem to choose when to appear, and they can even get into people's heads, but always only within the emotion they encompass.

LAWRENCE

So an echo of sadness is always going to be sad.

MAXWELL

Right. You might find it anywhere in the house, maybe once in awhile outside, even, but that echo will always be sad.

LAWRENCE

You said it was magical. Help me understand why anyone would build there. It's been a bit on the hellish side for me.

MAXWELL

I was one of the few who saw the animals, every once in awhile even a person. I saw an American Indian once, just for a second. I believed it was ancient magic. Was the 60s, a lot of drugs, and we were all into mystical shit. I was 22 and married. Unlike most of my friends I had worked and saved for a down payment, and bought this scruff land nobody wanted.

(MORE)

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

We built a lot of it ourselves.
Poured the foundation myself. Man,
we had parties ... so much laughter
at the beginning. There were no bad
echoes in that house. Then it all
changed.

LAWRENCE

What changed?

MAXWELL

I got drafted. Vietnam. I was in
for three goddamned years. I came
back bitter, and more than
anything, angry. The house picked
up on it, sucked those emotions in,
used it against me.

LAWRENCE

What do you mean used against you?

MAXWELL

Didn't notice at first, I was such
a fucking wreck. When I got back I
stopped seeing things. My openness
was gone. The house picked up on my
anger and hatred, amplified it.
When I realized that, I moved out.
My wife lived there for awhile,
then she split. I was not a good
person to be around. Even so, I
couldn't stand the thought I might
pollute the land.

LAWRENCE

Maxwell, do you know what causes
it?

MAXWELL

That's beyond us. Like I said, that
land is powerful, full of energy.
Lines of energy, confluence of
dimensions, who knows. More
importantly, don't know what
controls the echoes, if anything at
all. Maybe the land just got a
taste for pain, got hooked on it. I
don't know.

Lawrence leans back, rubbing his face.

MAXWELL (CONT'D)

What you thinking, son?

LAWRENCE

Do you think someone can
intentionally call specific echoes?

MAXWELL

You don't want to mess with that.
That's messing with dangerous,
powerful things.

LAWRENCE

Maybe. But there may be echoes
there that can tell me things
nobody else can. You know I saw
myself there? Like a little ghost
me.

Maxwell is noticeably impressed.

MAXWELL

Then you're in deep, son. You're
tuning in to it, and it's tuning
into you. It's a two way street. It
will suck you right in if you're
not careful.

LAWRENCE

You know what's even weirder? A
friend of mine saw child me? Felt
it.

MAXWELL

Yes, that's a danger. Sometimes
they don't even know they see it.
That other you is connected to you,
feeding off of you. That's some
risky shit.

LAWRENCE

How come I see things and other
people don't?

MAXWELL

I used to ask myself that, too. I
think it's like a TV antennae.
You're too young, but the old days
you had to adjust an antennae to
get a TV station. Most people in
that house don't even pick up a
signal, or, if they do, it's just a
faint feeling. Get that antennae in
tune, you see shadows. Really get
in tune, the shadows take form.
That's when things get rough.

LAWRENCE
Rough in what way?

MAXWELL
Well, like you friend said, you're dealing with tangible emotions. You don't connect unless you let you mind go to painful places and that has a cost. Once you connect, that house might not let you go. Don't mess around there, son. You're obviously deeply connected, and it could drain you dry.

LAWRENCE
Maybe it already did. One more question before I go. You were surprised I remembered the animals. I don't remember ever seeing the shadows as a kid. Why not?

MAXWELL
Emotions, man. You don't remember them the same as events.

LAWRENCE
Damn, King is good.

MAXWELL
What's that?

LAWRENCE
Nothing. Just a friend of mine seems to really get this house. I Probably should get going.

Lawrence stands and MAXWELL does, too. They shake hands.

MAXWELL
I'm truly sorry the house has been a curse for you. That place was supposed to be a blessing.

LAWRENCE
Thanks. My family might have haunted it with their own pain. They didn't have the sense to move out, though. Take care, Maxwell.

INT. HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Lawrence sits in the dim light, illuminated by candles. He holds a picture of his sister Iris. In his other hand he rubs Adventure Man like a good luck charm.

He closes his eyes.

LAWRENCE

Iris?

Looks around. Silence.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

How can I connect with you when I wasn't here? I didn't feel what you felt. What do I do, Iris?

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY (FOLLOWING DAY)

Lawrence asleep in the chair, candles burned low. He wakes.

LAWRENCE

Oww.

Stands. Limpes to the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Makes coffee.

LAWRENCE

(To the house)

Why do you need to be difficult?
Now that I'm asking, you go silent?
Screw you house.

Lawrence looks a little unbalanced.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

Mom? Iris? You here? Hey house, can you let Mom and Iris out to play?
COME ON! Talk to me. I'm not leaving until you talk to me.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Another night. Candles. Photos. Lawrence staring.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Lawrence is unshaven, looking a little crazy. He's looking around.

LAWRENCE
I know you're here. I can feel
everyone's pain. How about this?
How about I relive a little family
harmony?

Lawrence turns to look at an empty chair at the table.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
(in a mocking tone)
Lawrence. Stop that damn noise.

Lawrence looks around. Nothing.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
Why's that kid need to touch
everything. Goddamn it, Annie, stop
babying that kid.

Throws coffee cup against the wall.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
I swear to god, Annie, one of these
days I'm going to blow my brains
out. I can't take this shit
anymore.

Lawrence looks at the house, motioning with come-at-me hand
gestures.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
Want me to play some more greatest
hits, house? I know you fucking
remember them all.

Lawrence become more agitated as he plays out family scenes.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
Hey? Remember this one?
(shouting)
Why in the hell did you move us to
this fucking nowhere town?

Lawrence is remembering. He looks at the stove, the counters,
and he is far, far away.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
It's for the best, Lawrence. Your
aunt will know how to help you.

Lawrence goes to counter and swipes everything off. Glass and porcelain goes crashing.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
FUCKING COME ON!! YOU DIED OF
CANCER, MOM. IRIS...IRIS. YOU
BECAME A JUNKIE. I KNOW YOU HAD TO
LEAVE SOMETHING HERE! WHERE ARE
YOU?

Lawrence goes room to room, raving, knocking things over.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
I know. I wasn't there for either
of you because I was in FUCKING
JAIL. And why was I in Portland?
Because you sent your kid away
because of a fucking mental
disorder, that's why. WHO FUCKING
SENDS THEIR KID AWAY FOR THAT?? I'M
SORRY I INCONVENIENCED YOU!!!!

Lawrence limps back into the kitchen.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
Hey Maxwell. Thanks for the fucking
magic house.

Lawrence sinks down onto a chair and holds his head.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT (LATER IN THE SAME DAY)

Lawrence is still sitting at the table, blank eyes.

From somewhere in the house CRYING, a woman's sob. Lawrence looks around. The sound comes from everywhere and nowhere.

Lawrence tries to follow the sound. He is lead to the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM

A cry, then nothing. Lawrence looks in the mirror, seeing his crazed look for the first time.

A sob from behind.

Lawrence turns. The faint outline of a woman, but unclear. He turns back to look at the mirror and the image is more clear. The reflection of a woman, gaunt, sick, pale. An image of ANNIE (44), Lawrence's dead mother.

LAWRENCE

Mom?

The house is BUZZING.

ANNIE

Lawrence.

LAWRENCE

Mom? Can you hear me?

The specter's eyes are glossed over, her image fading between shadow and substance.

Lawrence turns back but the vision is less substantial behind him. He returns his gaze to the mirror.

ANNIE

Lawrence. Lawrence. Lawrence.

Lawrence. Lawrence. Lawrence.

LAWRENCE

I'm sorry, mom. I'm sorry I got
angry. I'm sorry I wasn't there.

A NOISE, static, pain and anger. Annie is gone. The house is buzzing like an electric fence.

The light all around flickers like a faulty fluorescent bulb. An electric sound, yet under it, a DISEMBODIED VOICE

DISEMBODIED VOICE

Stop it! Stop that damn
toooooouching. Sttooopp. Touching.

The voice distorts, twists, slows, speeds, a hateful, horrible sound.

Lawrence is turning. Glimpses of shadows moving but never in focus, never clear.

DISEMBODIED VOICE (CONT'D)

STOP STOP STOP STOP STOP

Lawrence begins to exit. He, struggles but then tap tap pause taps the light switch, his hand moving in an awkward, unnatural compulsive pattern.

The lights are disorienting. Lawrence clears throat in an uncomfortable, disturbing compulsive pattern.

As Lawrence stumbles out of the bathroom into the hall, he sees the specter child version of himself, but this time it's not sad and sullen, but hateful, fiery, crazed. Lawrence turns his head, but then looks at the specter child, NOW CLOSER. The child reaches out.

FLASHES OF DISTURBING IMAGERY, FIRE, DEMONS, BLOOD. Lawrence limps down the hall, touching and tapping the wall. The images subside, then begin again, more vivid, more vile. As he does his compulsions, they stop, then begin again.

VILE IMAGERY FLASHING

Lawrence staggers around, barely audibly muttering as the hellish imagery flashes grow in intensity.

LAWRENCE

(incoherent mumbling)

I couldn't help it. I did it for you. You sent me away but I did it for you. I didn't kill you. What parent doesn't help his kid? You sent me away because of something I couldn't help.

Lawrence is performing OCD rituals throughout the house. Angry, hateful shadows scream, and he is moving unthinking towards the stairs.

DISEMBODIED VOICE

STOP IT STOP IT STOP IT

INT. STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Lawrence steps into the stairwell. Horrible imagery flashes, he taps the walls, stopping the images. At the bottom of the stairs he sees specter child Lawrence, rocking, surrounded by shadows.

Lawrence half trips, half falls down the stairs to get to the ghostly child, protect him. He throws his arms out as if to wave away the shadows surrounding the boy, but they are ethereal, unsubstantial.

LAWRENCE

Make it stop make it stop make it stop

Lawrence taps the light in the usual two taps, pause tap pattern and pulls the cord. Shadows writhe and scream in the light.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
It's got to stop. Got to stop.

Lawrence taps the wall, first with one hand, then with two. The tapping is slow, concentrated.

As the sound grows in intensity with occasional flashes of hellish imagery, Lawrence begins tapping in a slightly more rapid pattern.

As the imagery and static anger sound intensifies, so does Lawrence's compulsions.

He is now slamming his hands into the wall. His left hand hits a protruding nail, tearing open his hand. He continues to pound the wall in a frenzied, unnatural ritual of OCD, blood from his hand splattering and smearing.

Faster, faster, more frantic. Lawrence is like a puppet, no longer in control of his bizarre movements.

DISEMBODIED VOICE
GO GO GO GO GO GO GO GO

Lawrence continues to pounds, the gash in his hand deep, blood dripping down his hand, smearing the wall. Lawrence slams his head into the wall, staggering backwards.

Lawrence covers his eyes but the screaming, yelling noises continue. His face is smeared with blood. He removes his hands and looks to the back of the basement.

A shadow is forming, bigger than any other, filling the space, rolling towards him like smoke.

Like a man possessed, Lawrence taps the light chain, two taps, pause, tap and pulls it. The light is extinguished. He turns to the stairs.

He tries to go fast, but his leg gives out and he stumbles. The monstrous shadow is behind him, becoming more solid, darker than the night. Lawrence again tries to move fast, but his leg is beyond working, He falls again. He is tapping the stairs compulsively, then slamming his hands together, blood smearing everyone. Unable to stand, he begins CRAWLING up.

Lawrence struggles, wild eyed, crazed with fear, as he continues his OCD movement, the shadow behind.

The shadow is raised up looming over Lawrence. A third up the stairs. He taps the stairs with his left hand, reaching to the railing with his right to help him pull himself away from the shadow behind him.

He makes it to the top stair, his OCD rituals at a frenzied pace. The shadow nearly engulfs him.

Lawrence, with a final effort, pulls himself to his feet and STOPS the ritual. He SCREAMS a guttural cry of pain and sorrow, every ounce of pain in his life coming out.

Lawrence spins to face the shadow.

LAWRENCE
THIS BELONGS TO ME, NOT YOU! IT'S
MINE, NOT YOURS!

The Shadow roars and then explodes into shadowy fragments.

Lawrence's leg gives out.

He FALLS, sliding and tumbling downwards into the dark.

Hurt, Lawrence looks toward the light peaking out from the door at the top.

The anger sound is gone, but now there is a sobbing, more human, more real.

Lawrence looks up. It's Annie, crying. She looks almost solid.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
Mom?

Lawrence reaches a bloodied hand up to Annie and is back in 1989.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY (1989)

Annie speaks to someone but the edges of the vision are blurred so the other person is unclear.

ANNIE
I don't care if you believe me. I really don't, William. The house is bad for him. It's taking Lawrence whether you believe it or not. It's destroying you and it will destroy him. I'll do anything to keep him safe. Anything.

The vision blurs to:

INT. BATHROOM - DAY (1991)

The vision of gaunt Annie sobbing in the mirror, the same image Lawrence saw earlier in the day.

ANNIE

Lawrence. Lawrence. I'm sorry. I'm sorry I wasn't there for you. I know you think we sent you away because we were angry but we sent you away because we were scared. The house had taken hold of you, it was feeding on you. I couldn't let that happen. Your dad didn't believe, not consciously, but he knew on some level. Are you there, Lawrence?

The room image flickers to NOW, with Lawrence on the floor in the basement. Lawrence is reaching out.

LAWRENCE

I'm here, mom.

ANNIE

I hope this gets to you. I hope this fucking house can save this one thing for you. You didn't deserve any of this, Lawrence. None of us did. Are you there? I love you Lawrence, your sister loves you, your dad loved you. He couldn't keep the house out. I couldn't let you be next. Forgive me, Lawrence. I did the best I could. The house is erasing everything from me, Lawrence. It can't help itself, though. It won't be able to erase this. I won't let it. Be well, Lawrence.

Annie collapses as the vision disappears.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Lawrence is alone. He's bloody and torn. Dim light reflects off tears streaming down his face.

LAWRENCE

(looking up to the ceiling)

Let's call a truce. We're even.

Lawrence tries to stand but can't. He sits for awhile, checking his injuries.

Lawrence pulls out his phone. Dials. The phone rings.

KING (O.S.)
Hello? Lawrence?

LAWRENCE
Sorry to bother you at this hour,
King. Last favor to ask you, I
promise. I've fallen, and believe
it or not, I actually can't get up.

KING (O.S.)
Shit, are you hurt? Should I call
an ambulance?

LAWRENCE
No, I'm actually good. I just need
a little help up the stairs.

KING (O.S.)
Thank god you're not in the attic.
I'll be right over. Are you sure
you're not ambulance hurt?

LAWRENCE
Take your time. I'm okay. For the
first time in a long, long time.
I'm okay.

KING (O.S.)
Be right there.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (LATER THE SAME NIGHT)

King is helping Lawrence to a chair. Lawrence now has his
cane. King helps him to sit.

KING
Dude, are you sure you don't want
me to take you to the hospital?

LAWRENCE
No. Nothing rebroken, I don't
think. King, you've saved my ass
one more time. I've racked up a
pretty big debt to you.

KING
Hell yeah you have, dawg.

Lawrence looks up, blood covered. He smiles.

King looks at the smashed up house.

KING (CONT'D)

I see you've been doing a little
decorating. You'll have to tell me
about it sometime.

Lawrence smiles again. A real, sincere, warm smile.

LAWRENCE

Some time.

King smiles and gently laughs.

KING

I'm going to get some towels. I
think you need to clean up those
cuts.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Lawrence is shaved and groomed, hair cut, fresh shirt. We can see beyond the living room the kitchen is cleaned. Everything is tidy. The old clock in the kitchen is visible back on the wall. Mrs. Pittinger is nervously sitting at a couch with King as Lawrence sets down two teas.

Mrs. Pittinger is furtively looking around.

LAWRENCE

Thanks for accepting my invite,
Meredith. It can be challenging to
return to a place with memories. I
really know. I used to live here.
Did you know my parents owned this
house before you and the previous
owners?

Mrs. Pittinger is astonished.

MRS. PITTINGER

Oh! I didn't know.

LAWRENCE

I didn't say anything before. I
came back to make peace with my
past. Do you want sugar?

MRS. PITTINGER

No, thank you. Did you? Find the
peace you were looking for?

Lawrence sits.

LAWRENCE

I did. Sometimes you want to ignore the past, sometimes fix it, sometimes just remember it, but I needed to accept it. This house truly is one of a kind.

MRS. PITTINGER

Yes. That is very, very, very true.

Mrs. Pittinger looks at King, and looks Lawrence. She takes a careful sip of tea.

MRS. PITTINGER (CONT'D)

There really are

Mrs. Pittinger motions to the house.

LAWRENCE

There are. I used to be afraid of them.

MRS. PITTINGER

Not anymore?

LAWRENCE

No. Not anymore.

King sips his key, watching the interaction between his mother and Lawrence.

MRS. PITTINGER

Then your stay was a good one?

Lawrence laughs.

LAWRENCE

Let's just say a productive one. Doesn't mean it was easy or fun.

Mrs. Pittinger looks hard at Lawrence.

MRS. PITTINGER

Then you've done an amazing job, Lawrence. I Don't know I could have done what you've done.

LAWRENCE

I can't honestly say I recommend it.

King laughs.

KING

Not exactly a relaxing bed and
breakfast get away.

Lawrence laughs.

LAWRENCE

I'm turning 40 next week. Who needs
relaxing?

MRS. PITTINGER

40 is still young. So where are you
going after this?

LAWRENCE

I really don't know. The world's
open, I guess.

MRS. PITTINGER

Well, I hope you keep in touch with
... King.

KING

Did you....

Mrs. Pittinger smiles.

MRS. PITTINGER

You know that ugly old clock in the
kitchen was here when I moved in?

Lawrence shoots a knowing glance at King.

LAWRENCE

No kidding? I bet it's vintage.

MRS. PITTINGER

You know you asked me why I
wouldn't sell this house? It's
because I could feel him still
here. It was the bad him, the
drunken him, but it was him. He
wasn't always bad. It's hard to let
go, Lawrence. Even of the horrible
things.

Lawrence reaches over and pats her arm.

LAWRENCE

Yeah, it is. I don't think you can
ever fully let go of some things.
You can accept them, though and
make peace. You don't have to be
like this house. You can move on.

There is a tear in Mrs. Pittinger's eye. King goes to his mother and hugs her.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

A campfire blazes, 60s music plays. A cooler of beers and sodas, lawn chairs scattered around the fire. Lawrence, King, Maxwell, a few random people of varying ages laugh, smile, and enjoying the late summer air.

Maxwell looks up and smiles. Lawrence nods.

In the distant, the faint sound of a wild cat cries.

FADE OUT.