

RURAL MOUNTAINS

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FADE IN:

EXT. HIGHWAY - ATLANTA - DAY

A parking lot of cars, trucks, and SUVs SQUEEZE inside six lanes traveling one way on a highway. Vehicles jockey for position bumper to bumper but only inch forward.

A PRIUS is vehicle-locked in the middle of the lanes. Its blinker flashes its intention to move to an exit lane. The Prius attempts merging right. As if it were invisible, the surrounding vehicles do not yield.

The Prius' attempt is aborted and it backs off.

INT. PRIUS - HIGHWAY - DAY

ANA (40s), driving, keeps her eye on WARREN (40s), her husband, sitting on the passenger side. If anxiety were a person, it would be Warren. On edge. All the time. He darts his eyes nervously as he scans the surrounding vehicles. He points --

WARREN

Watch out for the blue car, he's getting too close to us.

Ana's reaction reveals her annoyance, more at his anxiousness than the traffic.

ANA

Why don't you close your eyes? It'll make you feel better.

WARREN

(ignores her)

We even left an hour early and look at this mess.

(tensing hands)

Just look at it!

ANA

Stop acting like a tourist. You should be used to traffic jams by now. Like everybody else is.

WARREN

I'm--I can't--I'm not. Get off--take the exit. Take it!

Ana sighs but does what she can to ease out of her lane.

Ana moves into the right lane and cuts in front of a shiny CADILLAC CIEL, which refuses to yield.

INT. CADILLAC - HIGHWAY - DAY

The MALE CADILLAC DRIVER stares hard at Warren, who is the first one the Driver sees in the car, and SHOUTS through his open window --

MALE CADILLAC DRIVER
Fuck you think you're doing?!

Male Cadillac Driver BLASTS his horn and motions for Warren to roll down the window.

INT./EXT. PRIUS - HIGHWAY - DAY

Warren slowly shakes his head "no," sweat immediately beading on his forehead.

Warren's eyes then dart to the tire of the Cadillac, which is barely moving, but the Prius is getting closer to it. He spins his head in panic to Ana --

WARREN
Ana... Ana! They're not budging. What are you doing? Stop. You're gonna hit them!

ANA
They'll let us in. Look at their car. They don't want us to ding it.

Ana continues to wedge the Prius to the right, inching closer to the Cadillac.

INT. CADILLAC - DAY

Cadillac Driver glares at a frantic Warren gawking at him through his window. The driver's FEMALE PASSENGER is steaming. She leans across the driver, and to Warren --

FEMALE PASSENGER
Hey shit-for-brains, you fucking for real?

Cadillac Driver motions to his passenger like Warren does not want to mess with her.

INT. PRIUS - DAY

Warren cowers, staring ahead as though trying to become invisible. His breath quickens, his heartbeat hurries.

WARREN

Did you hear him yelling at me? I'm feeling dizzy, Ana, I--

ANA

He's harmless. It's all bark and no bite. Try meditating.

He looks at Ana like she's completely mad. She chuckles to herself --

ANA

Oh, lighten up, Warren.

EXT. PRIUS AND CADILLAC - DAY

The cars come within inches of each other.

INT. PRIUS - DAY

Warren side-eyes the Cadillac Driver to see his head is turned away now. Warren looks further to see the Female Passenger open the glove box and pull out a huge handgun.

INT. CADILLAC - DAY

The Cadillac Driver looks like he's upset, but instead, he takes it from her and looks at Warren with a shit-eating grin.

INTERCUT

Warren freezes. Eyes wild in fear.

Male Cadillac Driver then shifts the gun and lowers the barrel at Warren's face as his smile disappears.

Warren just may have shit his pants --

Ana is oblivious, looking forward to see if there is any traffic movement happening.

WARREN

R-r-road rage! He's got a gun--HE'S GOT A GUN!

Ana almost rolls her eyes --

ANA
Warren, enough--

As soon as she sees there's in fact a gun, her mouth stays open in shock --

Warren is hyperventilating. He may pass out --

Female Passenger leans in over the driver's shoulder as though to enjoy the show.

FEMALE PASSENGER
Pop 'em, baby... we got room to blow through the berm.

Warren is panic-stricken, can't move, can't look away from the barrel --

WARREN
(through choppy
breath)
He's ai... aiming... at... my... h--h--
-h--h--head...

He grimaces and clutches his chest.

Ana thinks quickly and TURNS the car back into the lane she was trying to escape from.

Cadillac Driver holds Warren's gaze until Ana is all the way back in her lane. He then kisses the air at Warren, offers a sly grin, tucks the gun away, and crawls forward.

But this does not make Warren any better. He closes his eyes, tries to catch his breath - HE CAN'T - he clutches his chest and PASSES OUT --

ANA
Warren! WARREN!

She checks his pulse, reaches to feel his breath from his nose, not a heart attack, but she's taking no chances --

She SLAMS on her horn and PUSHES her way through the traffic until she gets onto the shoulder lane and speeds ahead to the exit.

INT. CORRIDOR - OFFICE COMPLEX - DAY

Ana and Warren walk past numerous offices through a hallway. Warren's still shaken up. His gait's a bit wobbly.

ANA
 Hey, you did well for your first time
 back in the car.

Warren knows he did not. He doesn't respond.

Ana looks like she takes that personally but she shrugs it off and tries to put on a brave face.

They stop at a large door with a tiny sign reading, "ALLIED PSYCHIATRY." At the top of a list of doctors is "THOMAS LANGLEY, PSYCHIATRIST, MD."

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Ana sits in a chair, checking her cell phone.

Warren sits next to her, his eyes manic, hypnotically watching the desk computer screen where the name "THOMAS LANGLEY, PSYCHIATRIST, MD" floats across the screensaver.

A door opens and in walks DR. LANGLEY (60s).

DR. LANGLEY
 Sorry for the delay.

He sits at his desk and opens a notepad. Reads a few things, then looks to Warren.

DR. LANGLEY
 Okay, so, it's been a couple months now since the incident, how you holding up? Working on what we agreed?

WARREN
 I got back in the car today.

DR. LANGLEY
 That's a big step after the anxiety attack.

WARREN
 Yeah... but... it was a disaster.

ANA
 I've never seen him pass out before.

Dr. Langley looks to Ana with a quick glance and her eyes seem to show *everything*. She looks quite exhausted.

WARREN

I can barely meet deadlines at work,
and I used to breeze through tax
returns. It's like... everything
seems to be a trigger.

DR. LANGLEY

Tell me about the triggers.

Dr. Langley types as Warren speaks while he taps his foot.

WARREN

People. People are the worst. They're
rushing around, knocking into you
like a pinball machine.

(taps faster)

Streets are not streets, they're
obstacle courses. Even the sidewalks,
people move like bulldozers, no
respect for personal space --

(grows more manic)

And the downtown? Go downtown only if
you want to be robbed or killed! And
look at the price of gas! I just want
to--

Dr. Langley spins from his computer to Warren.

DR. LANGLEY

Okay, okay. I get it. *Everything's* a
trigger. But, Warren... you've been
dealing with your general anxiety
disorder for almost a year now. Why
do you think this morning's incident
on the highway created such a
roadblock for you?

Warren taps his foot faster.

WARREN

Shouldn't you be telling me that?

(off Langley's look)

Maybe I need another doctor.

Langley smiles but he interrupts Warren by slapping the
notepad on the desk.

DR. LANGLEY

I'm your *third doctor*. You're running
out of doctors, and if you change a
doctor and nothing with you changes,
then the work being done needs to be
bigger.

Warren's tapping stops.

DR. LANGLEY

You've been treated by desensitizing eye movement, cognitive behavior and exposure therapies. We've tried different drug-cocktails -- Benzos, Serotonin, Beta-blockers, nothing helps.

ANA

Maybe a higher dosage?

Langley shakes his head "no," and he sees her face fall.

DR. LANGLEY

There's a risk of going higher with these, and you are very close to the maximum. Of each.

WARREN

I just want to be normal.

This breaks Ana a bit and she puts her hand on his thigh. Dr. Langley leans back, considering next steps.

DR. LANGLEY

I could put you in in-patient treatment, but you would have to take a medical leave from work.

WARREN

I can't... I can do remote, possibly, but... We need the money.

DR. LANGLEY

Anxiety over money is another factor, of course.

Langley takes a moment to think. He then swivels to Ana --

DR. LANGLEY

Ana... I want you to answer, "better," "same," or "worse" to the following questions.

Ana nods her head.

DR. LANGLEY

Difficulty breathing?

ANA

Worse.

DR. LANGLEY
Rapid heartbeat?

ANA
Worse.

DR. LANGLEY
Overwhelmed with daily tasks?

ANA
Worse.

DR. LANGLEY
Trouble sleeping?

ANA
Worse.

DR. LANGLEY
Sexual performance?

Ana grimaces, grits her teeth, her expression indicates "not so good." The doctor nods his head knowingly. Warren's not thrilled by the implication.

DR. LANGLEY
From everything you've observed and I've heard, it appears to me that Warren's heading into a full blown crippling anxiety disorder. It's time for something drastic.

ANA
How... drastic?

He types a few more thoughts in his files as Warren and Ana nervously wait for more.

DR. LANGLEY
You have to make a severe change in environment and routine. Find a place entirely different from where you're living. A place where Warren's completely removed from current surroundings. Some place remote would be best. And a *project*. Something he can sink his soul into.

Warren's eyes grow wet and his mind races a million miles a minute.

ANA (V.O.)
I have a teenager... it'll be hard to turn our lives upside down.

DR. LANGLEY (V.O.)
 Unless you want Warren to end up in
 the hospital, you'll have to make
 sacrifices. It's serious, Ana. He's
 on the brink.

Tears heavily well in Warren's panicked eyes.

HAYDEN (PRE-LAP)
 No fucking way!

INT. LIVING ROOM - HOUSE - DAY

On a beige sofa in a modest home, Ana sits opposite of her
 defiant son, HAYDEN (15), his face flooded red with anger --

HAYDEN
 You're not moving me to the middle of
 nowhere!

ANA
 Language. This is your mother you're
 speaking to.

HAYDEN
 Yeah, and you're the one who married
 the nut job!

ANA
 He's not a nut job, and quit calling
 him that. He's going through a
 difficult period in his life.

HAYDEN
 Yeah. He's a schizo on the rebound.
 Dad says you felt sorry for him
 because he's a charity case.

ANA
 Your dad doesn't know anything about
 me. And clearly doesn't know that
 when you marry someone, you *stick*
with them and do *anything* for them.

A heavy beat of eye contact.

Just outside the living room, Warren stands where he can't be
 seen and listens in.

HAYDEN
 It's my junior year!

ANA

I know. But maybe you'll meet new friends.

HAYDEN

Sure, a bunch of pigs and chickens. Hey, maybe I'll take a cow to the homecoming dance!

She sighs and her expression shows she feels bad.

ANA

The only other option is to move in with your father.

HAYDEN

You know that's not happening, not with his new fucking floozy there.

ANA

Hey. She's your stepmother. You should respect her.

HAYDEN

Like the respect you have for *me* by not even letting me have a fucking say in this?

Ana sees Hayden's out-of-control. She suppresses her temper.

ANA

I wish you didn't use that type of language.

HAYDEN

Dad says fuck all the time.

ANA

Yes, I'm aware. But this is happening, no matter how much you swear about it.

HAYDEN

Well if you're waiting for that guy to become *normal* somehow, you'll never come back to civilization. YOU TWO DESERVE EACH OTHER!

He bolts and stomps off leaving Ana distressed --

HAYDEN

FUCK FUCK FUCK FUCK FUCK!

Warren slinks into the living room, jittery.

WARREN

I didn't think he hated me *that* much.

ANA

Why didn't you say something? Defend yourself.

WARREN

We just... need to find common ground. Maybe at this place I found, we can possibly find some.

ANA

You found a place? Already?

He hands her a printout of a little town, quaint, out of a Hallmark movie.

WARREN

It's called Holmes Township. It's near the Appalachians.

Ana frowns. She doesn't seem to like Warren's choice but holds her tongue.

WARREN

I know, but... it's small, quiet. And this isn't forever. Just... for now. I promise you I am going to take this opportunity and prove to you that I *am* the man you need. That you *both* need. I promise.

She's not so sure, but she kisses him and pulls him in for a hug.

As his head goes over her shoulder, any bravado and confidence he just displayed is washed away by the anxiety flooding from his eyes.

INT. HAYDEN'S BEDROOM - DAY

In his classic "messy-teenager" room, including leftover food, Hayden has his cellphone to his face --

HAYDEN

(into phone)

Hey man, you think I could stay at your place, just for the school year?

Laughter from the other end --

MALE FRIEND #1 (V.O.)
 (from phone)
 My parents don't even want me to
 hangout with you.

ANOTHER CALL AND REACTION --

FEMALE FRIEND #2 (V.O.)
 (from phone)
 Ewww, you're joking right?

ANOTHER CALL AND REACTION --

MALE FRIEND #3 (V.O.)
 (from phone)
 HaHaHa, good one dude.

Hayden throws his phone on the floor and face-plants on the
 bed, SCREAMING into his pillow.

EXT. HOLMES TOWNSHIP - DAY

A car enters the town, passing a sign reading, "WELCOME TO
 HOLMES TOWNSHIP, EST 1836, POP 1048."

PERRY (O.S.)
 Have you ever seen an area so
 beautiful?

INT. CAR (MOVING) - DAY

A rough country road jiggles a stone-faced Hayden trapped in
 the back seat while a gung-ho real estate agent, PERRY (50s),
 drives, using his best pitch on Warren and Ana.

PERRY
 You're just going to love the next
 home. The town is peaceful and quiet.

Hayden mimics Perry silently while an oblivious Warren sits
 next to him. Warren's eyes dart around the town and his
 fingers tap on the back of the front seat.

Ana sits on the passenger side beside Perry, barely
 tolerating his spiel.

ANA
 Remember, Perry, we need a house
 within our budget.

PERRY

I understand exactly where you're coming from, Ana. But you might fall in love with the next one and can't help yourself.

ANA

I believe I can.

The vehicle pulls into the drive of a two-story colonial that looks expensive. This doesn't thrill Warren or Ana.

ANA

Look, Perry, you're wasting our time. We are not upsizing to the ninth degree. Take us to something small, and inexpensive, or drop us off at our hotel.

Warren is impressed with Ana.

Perry thinks of a property that will keep the deal alive.

PERRY

Okay, I understand. There's one property that fits that description, but it's a bit out of town.

WARREN

That's what we're looking for.

Ana and Hayden share a look before Hayden looks away.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

The vehicle negotiates twists and turns, winding through the countryside.

INT. CAR (MOVING) - DAY

Warren and Ana are getting listless and fidgety. Hayden is seething.

HAYDEN

Where is this place, Siberia?

PERRY

HaHa, that's good one Peyton. It's just a little further.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

The vehicle circumvents a COWS CROSSING as they make their way through a hilly zigzag. The hills grow bigger. No houses. A forest looms ahead. The car is swallowed up by dark woods.

EXT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - DAY

Perry pulls into a dirt driveway leading to THE SAD HOUSE.

The big house appears in terrible disrepair: loose shutters hanging; peeling, chipping, fading paint; loose drains coming apart at their seams...

A nearby colossal mountain dwarfs the house. The peak of the mountain is obscured by clouds.

The car parks and Ana and Hayden are appalled and rendered speechless as they exit the car -- Warren sees something different. Something about it seems to give him peace. The size of it, the seclusion, the mountain and amazing view?

Ana notices, and when she does, she alters her expression and grabs his hand.

PERRY

Welcome to the gem of the Appalachians: RURAL MOUNTAINS. Water flows from them, so the well is always fresh.

ANA

Rural Mountains?

PERRY

It's a play on words around here. You know, the house in the mountains, out of town, rural?

ANA

Of course. Such fun word play.

Her face belies her words on it being "fun."

ANA

You've only brought us here because you're about to lose your commis--

PERRY

The cornstalks are included.

Perry walks across to Warren. Warren curiously gazes at the dry and dead cornstalks.

Hayden grabs his mother by the arm.

HAYDEN

Seriously? You're moving us to a
fucking haunted house?

She shushes Hayden. Warren cautiously approaches the house to inspect it.

WARREN

It's... so peaceful out here...
(now unsure)
But it's going to need a lot of
work...

ANA

If it's too much, hun, we can walk.

HAYDEN

Thank the Lord.

WARREN

I... no, I can do the work... Done
this kind of thing before, right?
(stares at house)
Besides. The doctor said I need a
project.

ANA

Well, you're not in this by yourself.

He gives her a smile before examining the sides and back of the house.

WARREN

The roof might be leaky, the outside
needs a lot of work.... But the
foundation seems solid. Bigger
project than I expected, but... this
feels right.

ANA

As long as it has internet for our
work, it's your call.

HAYDEN

Hey, what am I? A silent partner?
Don't I get a say-so? I vote no
fucking way.

ANA

You have to be eighteen to vote.

Hayden throws up his arms in disgust and heads to the door. As he grabs the doorknob, it falls off in his grip.

He turns to Warren --

HAYDEN

You might need this.

He throws it like a baseball at Warren -- Warren surprisingly catches it before it hits his face. Hayden chuckles and heads inside. Warren looks to Ana, holds up the doorknob --

WARREN

Bonding.

BEGIN MONTAGE: WORKING ON THE HOUSE

-- On a small section on the outside of the house, Warren meticulously patches cracks with putty while Hayden slops paint on the patched areas on the other side.

-- Buckets of paint, repair supplies, and tools are scattered on the patchy lawn.

-- The garden next to the house is just a plot of land recently dug-up.

A FEW WEEKS GO BY

-- CLASSICAL MUSIC PLAYS on a portable CD player between them. Warren appears peaceful.

Hayden's grumpy disposition shows the music bugs him. Warren thanks him for his work, Hayden responds with a grunt.

-- Renovating the INTERIOR is a work-in-progress. Cobwebs have been removed.

The furniture, including the beige sofa, from their former house has been set up.

The drooping wallpaper is being replaced with a fresh coat of paint.

A COUPLE MORE WEEKS PASS

-- Ana teaches Warren yoga positions. She corrects his Warrior I pose. Watches him adoringly.

He's a willing student. Warren finishes his pose, drops to the floor and crosses his legs on a mat.

-- Half of the front of the house has been painted. Hayden's technique has improved by painting more carefully.

-- Hayden pulls out a CD from his backpack, switches CDs in the player and MUSIC PLAYS: HIP-HOP. Hayden bobs his head to the beat and goes back to work.

The music grates on Warren but he does not complain. He attempts to hip-hop dance. Hayden smiles at him for the first time, only because he's looks like silly idiot.

END MONTAGE

EXT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - DAY

The exterior of the house appears surprisingly refurbished, habitable, and nearly complete.

Warren helps Hayden finish painting the exterior.

Ana walks out of the house holding two cups of lemonade and hands one to Warren. Hayden notices Ana moving his way.

HAYDEN

Don't come over here with that hillbilly juice. How about a beer?

ANA

Drinking age is twenty-one.

HAYDEN

Dad lets me.

ANA

Not even gonna comment.

HAYDEN

Which is an actual comment.

Hayden pouts, returns to his job. Ana returns to Warren.

ANA

(to Warren)

I'm sorry Hayden's heart isn't into it.

WARREN

He's actually doing pretty well. I thought he'd fight it by now when you asked him to help me.

ANA

I didn't ask him.

Warren pauses at Ana's comment. He seems surprised.

INT. DINING ROOM - MOUNTAIN HOUSE - DAY

The family is in the midst of eating dinner.

ANA

We need to go into town for groceries tomorrow.

HAYDEN

I can come. Will you let me drive? I have my temps.

Ana is unsure...

ANA

The roads are a bit--

WARREN

'Course you can. I'll ride shotgun, give you some tips. If you need them.

Hayden is surprised, and for the first time, it seems Warren's interested in hanging out with Hayden.

HAYDEN

That would be co--

WHABOOOOOM -- BA-WABOOOOOM -- THE SOUND WAVE SHAKES the entire dining room. They immediately stop, look to each other, concerned, and rush to the door.

EXT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - DAY

The family bolt out of the house to witness a stream of smoke billowing toward the sky from a high area in the mountains.

ANA

Is there a fire?

For the first time since they arrived, panic and irrational fear floods Warren. Ana sees it.

WARREN

A forest fire? God I hope not, it could burn our home!

She steps to him, lays a hand on his arm.

ANA

Don't overreact, Warren. It doesn't look like fire. Just smoke. Our home is fine. Nothing to worry about.

But he's already sunk into the panic --

WARREN

Nothing to worry about? A powerful forest fire can burn through a thousand acres of trees in a day. How can we not be worried?

Ana notices that Hayden is being affected by Warren's anxious reaction.

ANA

Let's just stay calm... I'll call the Sheriff.

As she heads inside, Warren listens to the ECHOING CRACKS of rock from above. And what is that? Does he hear... SCREAMS OF SOME SORT? He raises an eyebrow. Hayden hears it, too.

EXT. COMPOUND - MOUNTAIN FOREST - DAY

Deep in the mountain forest, smoke ascends into the clouds as SOUNDS OF CHAOS -- MUFFLED SCREAMS -- MUTED SHOUTS -- SCAMPERING FOOTSTEPS CAN BE HEARD, but not seen, through the swirling smoke.

As the wind pushes the smoke, it reveals what almost looks to be a concrete fortress enclosing a village of several small buildings...

Barbed wires are embedded atop concrete walls.

The walls are scorched and display chunks of crumbling cement with jagged cracks. The front gates have been blown apart, displaying a huge gap with loose wires dangling.

Fires FLARE and smoke WAFTS through the grounds of the severely damaged village.

Numerous mangled crates jut out from inside buildings that are rendered in embers and flames.

Motionless bodies dressed in torn black uniforms litter the grounds, many of whom have been mutilated -- FACES AND BODIES BLOODIED, but not from the explosion. But from...

SCRATCHES AND BITE MARKS.

FLESH CLAWED AND TORN.

Other types of bodies different from the rest are scattered on the ground. They appear smaller, darker, bloody, and naked.

EXT. BUILDINGS - COMPOUND

Inside burning buildings, MOVEMENTS OF SHADOWS can be detected. The SOUNDS OF GRUNTS, GROANS AND UNINTELLIGIBLE VOICES emanate from the rubble.

EXT. MEDICAL OFFICE - COMPOUND

In the center of the compound, one white brick building stands out.

INT. MEDICAL OFFICE - COMPOUND

Inside the office, an UNRECOGNIZABLE MAN in a blood-soaked white lab coat is utterly torn to pieces. However, his watch, with AN IMAGE OF AFRICA on its face, is intact...

EXT. OUTSIDE THE COMPOUND

Impenetrable woods surround the walls and gate of the compound. The foliage is a canopy of trees, plants, bushes...

It appears in pristine condition except -- it begins to shift and sway...

The foliage is PUSHED ASIDE by something unseen. The path of the movement travels away from the compound.

NOISES ARE HEARD -- SCAMPERING footsteps on the undergrowth -- SWISHING through bushes and plants -- SNAPPING small trees -- BREAKING limbs -- FORGING through the thick woods.

EXT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - DAY

The level-headed SHERIFF BARNES (50s) leans against his cruiser. He listens to Warren and Ana while viewing the smoky area in the mountains, which has subsided.

WARREN

You're not writing any of this down.

SHERIFF BARNES

Would that make you feel better?

WARREN

I think so.

Sheriff Barnes doesn't move to write anything down.

ANA

What do you suppose happened?

SHERIFF BARNES

Mountain Folk most likely. Maybe a still blew up.

HAYDEN

A still?

Sheriff Barnes looks to Hayden.

SHERIFF

For making moonshine. Booze.

HAYDEN

Got it.

WARREN

No one told us about *mountain people*. They still have stills?

HAYDEN

(chuckling)

Stills have stills...

SHERIFF BARNES

We don't know what's up there. But you'd need plenty of alcohol to live in these mountains.

WARREN

Aren't you going to do anything about them?

SHERIFF BARNES

No one goes up these mountains except for billy goats and snakes.

WARREN

Someone has to go up there and make sure we're safe.

SHERIFF BARNES

Safest option is to leave them as they are. They don't want to be found. And maybe... you'd be sorry if you did.

The sheriff opens the door to his cruiser.

SHERIFF BARNES
And I don't want to file a missing
person report. Way too much
paperwork.

As he leaves, Warren and Ana share a look at the sheriff's
flippant attitude.

WARREN
He wasn't very comforting.

HAYDEN
I think he's bad ass.

INT. OFFICE - HOUSE - DAY

Warren types on his laptop in a converted home office. He
starts and stops, holds his head, struggling a bit. Ana
enters.

ANA
You're up early.

WARREN
I'm trying to play catch-up on some
of these reports. It's going a little
smoother. It's a good time to do it
while I wait for Hayden to get up.

ANA
I'll catch up later, too. Breakfast?

WARREN
I'll tell you what, give me a moment
and I'll make breakfast.

Ana smiles broadly as Hayden appears behind her --

HAYDEN
Did someone say breakfast?

INT. PRIUS (MOVING) - HOLMES - DAY

Hayden drives the car into town, white-knuckled on the
steering wheel, as Warren looks anxious in the passenger
seat, a white-knuckled hand gripping the "oh-shit" bar.

EXT. PRIUS (MOVING) - GROCERY STORE - DAY

Hayden pulls into the parking lot. Hayden climbs out of the Prius, lets out what seems like a long-held breath.

Warren gets out and comes around. He sees Hayden looking off.

HAYDEN

Dude, it wasn't that bad.

WARREN

Next time, you can drive with your mother.

Warren heads to the store and Hayden sniggers at his discomfort. Hayden then eyes the gas station on the corner. He heads there as Warren enters the grocery store.

EXT. FRONT OF HOUSE - MOUNTAIN BASE - DAY

As Warren is caulking windows, Hayden hands a couple of bags of groceries to Ana. Hayden saunters to Warren and just stands behind him, watching Warren work.

HAYDEN

Looks like you got a handle on this.
I guess you don't need me today.

He starts to go inside the house.

WARREN

I have a job for you, if you want to work.

Hayden doesn't want to, but listens.

WARREN

You could chop the weeds between the rows of corn with the hoe. We need a clearing to walk through.

HAYDEN

Sure.

Hayden walks to the garden.

EXT. GARDEN - FRONT OF HOUSE - DAY

Hayden picks up the hoe beside the garden and proceeds to the rows of corn. He begins hacking away haphazardly at the cornstalks and they begin to fall.

Warren notices Hayden chopping the stalks and runs over to Hayden.

WARREN
I said chop the weeds, not the
cornstalks!

HAYDEN
Oh, I thought they were weeds.

Warren shakes his head, perplexed.

WARREN
Don't worry, I'll do it myself.

Hayden drops the hoe, walks off, chuckling.

EXT. FRONT OF HOUSE - MOUNTAIN BASE - NIGHT

At dusk, Warren finishes reconnecting the seams on the gutters. Hayden sits against the house, engrossed in scanning texts. Tools, supplies, and trash are scattered around them.

Hayden's face falls when he sees an invitation on his phone for the HOMECOMING DANCE.

WARREN
I think I'll call it a night and grab
a shower. Can you put all the
supplies away for me?

Hayden mumbles an Mm-hmmm as he stares at the invitation. He clicks on another message from a friend inviting him to a party after Homecoming. He's devastated.

Warren goes inside. Hayden sulks as he walks around to the side of the house, leaving the supplies and trash outside.

He looks at his phone, opens the contact for DAD and taps it. He waits as it rings.

BRENT (V.O.)
(from phone)
Kinda late, kid.

HAYDEN
(into phone)
Hey Dad, how's it going?

INTERCUT with

INT. BRENT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Brent holds his phone while taking off his clothes in his bedroom. His wife, HALEY (30s), watches TV in bed. Brent continues the call outside of the room.

BRENT

Living the dream, Son. How's it going out there?

Hayden picks at a piece of the house siding.

HAYDEN

Same junk. I wondered if you got a chance to think about, you know, getting together, do something?

BRENT

Actually, I googled where you live and couldn't fucking find it.

HAYDEN

That's a shock. We could meet some place in between? Have dinner, maybe golf?

BRENT

Tell you the truth, Hay, I'm really busy right now with work and everything.

HAYDEN

By everything, you mean Haley?

BRENT

Gimme more of that shit and I'll hang up right now.

Hayden sighs, kicks the foundation.

HAYDEN

I'm stuck out here in the boonies, bored out of my skull, and you can't take the time to see me?

Brent closes his eyes. Doesn't want to be a dick, but then sees his wife looking at him, waiting for him to hangup.

BRENT

Just for right now. Maybe when things settle down. What about your friends?

HAYDEN

All busy with Homecoming. Which I don't get to do.

BRENT

Well, you know, fucking teenagers. At least you get to stay home for school now.

HAYDEN

Home school's a joke.

BRENT

Too bad. Alright... gotta go. Take care of yourself, okay?

His father hangs up. Hayden holds the phone but doesn't hang up until he can't stand it any longer.

He squeezes the phone so hard his knuckles go white. He then reaches up and wipes the tears away that are trying to creep from his eyes.

He sniffs them away and heads inside, right past the supplies Warren asked him to put away. He closes the door behind him.

As the sun has gone down, the dark of the woods takes over.

At the edge of the darkened woods near the house, the leaves SWAY in the wind.

It's silent at first, until...

The tranquil evening is interrupted by CRACKLING FOOTSTEPS BREAKING TWIGS as something approaches the house.

The NOISE GROWS LOUDER, coming closer to the edge.

Through the windows outside the house, the family shuts off the lights, moving to other rooms.

The noise in the woods stops.

The motion of the swaying leaves is halted by a dark hand pushing them aside.

HEAVY BREATHING breaks the silence.

A dark figure SHIFTS in the shadows.

Moonlight reflects on a PAIR OF EYES PEERING at the house.

INT. HAYDEN'S BEDROOM - HOUSE - NIGHT

Hayden's lying in his bed, watching a mixed-martial-arts match on his tablet. His room is messy and disorganized. His backpack hangs on the door. Ana appears at his doorway.

ANA

I heard you talking to your dad.

Hayden doesn't break his concentration to see Ana's sympathetic expression on her face.

HAYDEN

He doesn't give a rat's ass about me.

ANA

I'm sorry--

HAYDEN

(motioning to phone)

Can't you see I'm in the middle of watching this? Just leave me alone.

Ana wants to continue but she turns to walk out the door. Her shoulder hits his hanging backpack as she leaves -- CLINK CLINK. The sound alerts Ana. Pause.

ANA

What's in there?

HAYDEN

Just my stuff. Don't go messing around with it.

Ana opens its flap and pulls out two bottles of beer.

ANA

Where did you get the beer?

Hayden knows he's busted.

HAYDEN

Gas station. Duh. I told you not to go messing around in my backpack. What are you going to do, ground me? I'm already in solitary confinement.

ANA

I'm not grounding you. I'm just disappointed you hid something from me.

HAYDEN

You don't have to tell numb-nuts, do you?

ANA

No. But I'm starting to see how Warren feels now.

She waits a moment then exits his room.

Hayden gets up from his bed, walks to the backpack...

HAYDEN

Please, please...

He reaches in and finds a metal tin of Altoids. He opens the lid to reveal several small green pills with LIB 5 printed on them. Relieved.

But he thinks a moment, his expression changes --

His mother's comment sticks with him.

INT. WARREN AND ANA'S BEDROOM - MOUNTAIN HOUSE - DAWN

At dawn, Warren pops out of bed and stretches while Ana sleeps. CRICK -- Warren rubs his sore back. He brushes it off, sneaks out of the room.

INT. HALLWAY - MOUNTAIN HOUSE - DAY

Warren, dressed, anxious to get to work, passes Hayden's bedroom with its door cracked open -- he doesn't dare wake him up. Tiptoes away. He proceeds outside.

EXT. FRONT OF HOUSE - DAY

Warren stands stunned on the porch, outrage and worry taking him over. The supplies he left outside are ransacked. TORN TO PIECES. Scattered throughout the front yard.

Remnants of shredded trash are strewn about with them.

The gutter work Warren fixed the night before is pulled apart, bent, and thrown on the ground.

Warren steps closer to inspect the damage and is shocked to see the rows of corn are also ravaged, with only some straggling stalks remaining.

His expression changes from distress to concern to panic. He dashes back inside.

INT. WARREN AND ANA'S BEDROOM - MOUNTAIN HOUSE - DAY

Warren abruptly awakens Ana.

WARREN

Ana! Wake up! Wake up!

She darts up, scared -- eyes wide --

ANA

Oh shit, what's going on? Is it Hayden? Wh--

WARREN

Someone ransacked our supplies! The corn's ripped apart! Everything's ruined!

ANA

Slow down Warren.

WARREN

I left some supplies out last night. Someone tore them up while we were sleeping. I asked Hayden to pick them up... I...

(then)

I also asked him to chop the weeds in the garden... and he started chopping the cornstalks and I got a bit mad at him. Do you think he--

ANA

Oh come on, Warren. Hayden wouldn't have destroyed the supplies. Did you even ask him?

Warren looks afraid at the idea of confronting Hayden.

WARREN

No... I didn't. I, I guess, I'll check with him.

ANA

Do you want me to ask him?

Ana is not happy about it but she pulls herself out of bed and puts a robe on.

INT. HAYDEN'S BEDROOM - MOUNTAIN HOUSE - DAY

A KNOCK on the doorframe wakes Hayden. He sees the two adults as the door opens. He turns away to go back to sleep.

HAYDEN

Go away.

Warren waits for Ana to talk. She gives Warren a pissy look.

ANA

Hayden, did you put the supplies away last night like Warren asked you?

HAYDEN

I dunno. Forgot I think.

ANA

Well something's happened to them--

HAYDEN

I didn't touch his precious supplies.

ANA

And the corn? Did you destroy the corn?

HAYDEN

Oh no, we're all gonna starve now.

Now Warren's pissed. He steps in front of Ana --

WARREN

I asked you to throw away the trash.

HAYDEN

I forgot.

ANA

Trash attracts animals.

Talking half into the pillow --

HAYDEN

News flash, Warren. We live in the woods. *Animals* live in the woods. We're *living* with animals. I doubt they ripped up your freaking sandpaper and played with your putty.

But then Hayden sits up. Looks at Warren. Weighs him out.

HAYDEN

Wait. You really think I'd destroy our stuff? Ya think I'd waste my time and energy to work *more*? And then give myself more to do by fixing it?

Warren's stumped.

HAYDEN

You just basically think I did it because you think I'm a prick.

Silence.

HAYDEN

Thanks for that. Let the door hit you on the way out.

Hayden rolls back over and pulls his blankets over his head. Warren storms out. Ana, torn between them both, takes a moment before leaving.

EXT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - DAY

The Sheriff finishes listening to Warren and Ana. Hayden stands off to the side and listens.

SHERIFF BARNES

I don't mind coming out here, but it's not like it's spitting distance from my office.

ANA

Don't you have deputies?

SHERIFF BARNES

I have a few part-timers, but for such a small town, there's barely a need for *me*, unless it's serious trouble. I'm definitely not your own personal sheriff.

WARREN

You don't think this is *serious*? It could be the mountain people.

SHERIFF BARNES

It's probably some bored teenagers cruising around, drinking beers, causing mischief.

(motions to corn)

Looks like animals got what was left of that sad crop, though.

(MORE)

SHERIFF BARNES (cont'd)

I would suggest you get a dog, or put
in a security camera.

Warren's anxiety level peaks at the idea of needing cameras.

WARREN

You think we need cameras? A whole
security system?

SHERIFF BARNES

You chose to live out here in the
middle of nowhere. Let me know if
something serious happens. And don't
call me at night. Any perps'll be
gone before I get here and I can deal
with it in the A.M.

The Sheriff gets in his car and leaves. Warren sighs.

WARREN

I guess I found my next project.

Hayden perks up.

HAYDEN

We're getting a dog?

WARREN

No. A security system.

Hayden's face drops.

ANA

Can we afford that? We've already put
so much into this place. And with the
second mortgage...

WARREN

It'll be cheaper if I do it myself.

ANA

It's not the same as fixing up an old
house, Warren.

WARREN

They sell kits. And I don't think it
takes a brainiac to hook one up.

LATER

A camera, two lights, a few motion sensors, and a panel are
scattered on the ground. Warren is hooking up the system.

Ana carries speakers into the house. Hayden follows with a monitor.

EXT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - NIGHT

Warren is all alone when he finishes the system. He inspects the connections and appears satisfied. He enters the house.

INT. WARREN AND ANA'S BEDROOM - HOUSE - NIGHT

Warren and Ana sleep peacefully until -- **SCREEE-EEEEEEEE-EEEEEEEE!** The SHRILL SOUND of the siren abruptly goes off and immediately wakes up the couple.

Warren JUMPS out of bed, BOLTS to the window as the siren continues to BLARE -- he only sees darkness -- the security lights are not functioning.

INT. KITCHEN - HOUSE - NIGHT

Warren and Ana burst into the kitchen, look out the window, see nothing, then run to the monitor -- the screen displays snow -- a disconnect signal.

The sight on the screen alarms Warren.

As Warren shuts off the siren, Hayden joins them.

Warren pushes buttons, clicks on links, and reboots the system, but nothing happens --

Frustration sets in. Warren SLAPS the side of the monitor and SHOUTS IN ANGER so loudly that Ana jumps back in fear into Hayden who wraps his arm around his mother's shoulder.

WARREN

I thought I had it! It's a simple system!

Warren sees that Ana is afraid.

WARREN

Sorry. For shouting. You were right... I shouldn't have done it myself. There's probably nothing even out there.

HAYDEN

Shouldn't you go outside and check, though? In case?

Warren looks afraid at the thought. He looks to the monitor.
No feed -- only snow.

WARREN

Maybe we should call the sheriff?

ANA

The sheriff said not to call him at
night.

WARREN

But... it's technically morning.

ANA

It's three A.M., Warren.

Hayden stares at Warren. The look on his face: *Do you even
have balls, dude?*

It dawns on Warren who he needs to be in this moment. He
takes a breath, calms himself...

WARREN

Right. We don't need the sheriff.
Ana, you stay on the couch, Hayden
and I will check every room, doors
and windows.

Warren's actions catches Ana's attention.

WARREN

We can check *outside* in the daylight.
Let's do this.

Hayden listens to Warren and follows him. Hayden offers a
raised eyebrow at his surprise. He and Ana share a smile.

EXT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - DAY

At daybreak, Warren, Ana, and Hayden stand in the front yard,
surveying area. The security system is demolished -- broken
lights -- twisted panel door -- smashed camera -- stripped
connections.

WARREN

Look at what they did to my security
system! We got nothing!

ANA

Wait, did you check to see if maybe
the backup recording at least worked?

They look at each other. Duh.

INT. KITCHEN - HOUSE - DAY

Warren stands by the monitor and Warren clicks a few buttons, Ana and Hayden behind him. A grainy image of the backyard appears. Blurry but viewable.

They all lean in as an indistinct figure enters the screen, pauses, examines the security equipment.

On the video, the motion detector is set off: LIGHTS COME ON. SIRENS SCREECH.

The figure is startled -- PULLS the lights down -- FLINGS parts haphazardly, wildly. Repeatedly BATTERS THE CAMERA with his hands before the screen goes to snow.

The family stares at the monitor screen, flabbergasted.

HAYDEN

What the hell was that?

WARREN

I... don't think it was... a person.

Heavy silence.

ANA

I think the sheriff might agree this is something serious.

SHERIFF BARNES (PRE-LAP)

I'd say this is pretty serious stuff.

EXT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - DAY

Sheriff Barnes inspects the damage as the family stands behind him.

WARREN

So? What do you think?

SHERIFF BARNES

Looks like you have some nasty neighbors.

Warren is a bit edgy as his eyes dart around the area as though what was there may jump out at them at any moment.

SHERIFF BARNES

And I think you put in a pretty shitty security system.

WARREN

(annoyed)

I mean... what do you think was on the screen?

SHERIFF BARNES

It was so muddy, I couldn't tell if it was a human or Sasquatch tearing up this bunch of junk.

HAYDEN

You've seen Sasquatches out here?

Sheriff gives Hayden a look to not be so stupid. Hayden grimaces at him.

WARREN

What are you going to do, then?

SHERIFF BARNES

What do you want me to do, arrest some blurry blob walking around town?

(then)

There's nothing I can do without a clear video of who's doing this stuff.

ANA

Should we install a better system?

SHERIFF BARNES

You mean Warren?

(scoffs)

No. Get a professional. Give Karl a call, he does those state-of-the-art systems. Then we'll know what we're dealing with.

ANA

We only have so much money to spend.

HAYDEN

Which explains the shithole town you moved us to.

SHERIFF BARNES

Watch it, kid, this is my home.

He goes back to his vehicle.

SHERIFF BARNES

Since you've already put money into this place, I wouldn't try cutting corners on security. But if you're on the cheap, get a dog.

LATER

A pickup sits in the driveway. The imprinted words, "KARL'S SECURITY SYSTEMS," are displayed on the side panel.

The family waits for the security installer, KARL (50s), to examine the house. He pokes numbers on a cell phone to determine the estimate.

KARL

This isn't some easy-peasy job.

WARREN

Why do you say that?

KARL

The whole house's crumblin', and there's no existin' system. I have to wire the entire place.

WARREN

Alright, *Karl*, how much?

KARL

Since I have a gap in my schedule right now, I can squeeze you in. I'll cut you a break, say around 20K.

WARREN

20 grand? Does it come with it's own 401K?

KARL

(shrugging)

It's up to you. It's not *my* family needing protection.

WARREN

(seething)

Give us a moment, *Karl*.

Warren takes Ana off to the side.

ANA

20 thousand dollars?

WARREN

Yeah, you know how much dog food we could buy with that?

Hayden overhears --

HAYDEN

A dog! Yes! I got dibs on naming him.

INT. DOG RESCUE - DOWNTOWN HOLMES TOWNSHIP - DAY

A woman, CYNDI (20s), stands up when Warren, Ana, and Hayden enter the building.

CYNDI

What are you looking for?

Warren looks around at all the dog posters and paraphernalia.

WARREN

Umm, a really big scary cat.

Hayden chuckles. Cyndi shoots him a look. He stops.

CYNDI

Very funny. What kind of *dog*?

WARREN

A family dog who looks imposing, barks loudly, one who can protect its family.

Cyndi marches them down a hall aisle with crated dogs on both sides.

HAYDEN

(to Ana)

I'm not cleaning up dog crap, if that's what you're thinking.

ANA

We're all going to take care of the dog. *And* its crap.

She stops. Points at an imposing adult German Shepherd mix. The dog BARKS at the family.

CYNDI

You think you can handle this one? His name is Brutus.

HAYDEN

I was gonna name him Gary.
 (then)
 But Brutus is pretty cool.

WARREN

Will he scare off unwanted intruders?

Cyndi unlatches the wire crate door to let the dog out.

CYNDI

Dogs are the *only* real deterrent to intruders.

The dog proceeds with caution straight to Warren. Warren stoops down, holds out his hand out to allow the dog to sniff it. The dog sniffs, looks up to Warren.

Warren touches the dog's face with the back of his hand, then gently strokes his face. The dog wags his tail. Licks Warren's hand.

Warren looks to his family who are staring at him like he's an alien.

WARREN

What? I love dogs. Always wanted to be a vet.

Ana's eyebrows raise at this new piece of information.

WARREN

What do you think?

HAYDEN

He'll do.

Warren rubs the dog's head and face.

WARREN

Hear that, Brutus? You'll do.

EXT. DOWNTOWN HOLMES TOWNSHIP - DAY

The family heads to their vehicle with Brutus on a leash. As Hayden opens the back door, Brutus jumps up. They all get in and Warren drives them down the street.

As they pass a side street that leads to a mountain road, Hayden catches sight of a woman walking down the road. He tries to get a better look but Warren takes a corner and she's gone.

As the woman, TARA (30s), gets close to the main street, it's clear she is limping more than walking, and is disoriented. She wears a dirty tattered uniform. Her face and arms show scratches and bruises. Her glassy eyes are vacant, hair's a tangled mess.

As she enters town square, TOWNSPEOPLE see her just as she COLLAPSES in the street.

The people rush over and hover around her. One person sprints down the street and into the Sheriff's office -- a second later, Sheriff Barnes rushes out with him and back to Tara.

TOWNSPERSON #1

(while running)

She just collapsed right in the street. Looks like she's been through hell.

The Sheriff's visibly shaken since it rarely happens in town.

SHERIFF BARNES

Who is it?

TOWNSPERSON #1

Don't know. Never saw her before.

The Sheriff finds the woman semi-conscious. Just then, PARAMEDICS arrive, jumping out of their vehicle.

The crowd parts to allow them to examine Tara. Sheriff Barnes watches with concern as they examine her.

Barnes makes note of her torn and dirtied clothing.

SHERIFF BARNES

(to Townsperson #1)

Did you see which way she came from?

They point to the side road. Barnes rushes over and looks where it leads, right up into the mountain, and the direction where the explosion and smoke came from.

PARAMEDIC #1 (O.S.)

She's dehydrated. Let's get her in the truck.

Paramedic #1 checks Tara's pockets for credentials. Hands over her wallet to Sheriff Barnes as he comes back over.

As they scramble to get her on a stretcher, Tara mumbles --

TARA

...others... Did... Did they...

The Sheriff gets closer to hear better.

SHERIFF BARNES

Others?

TARA

Did... others... make...

She slips into unconsciousness. They get her on the stretcher. The Sheriff searches her wallet and finds her driver's license.

SHERIFF BARNES

Tara Watts. From New York?

(to Paramedic)

I'll meet you at the hospital.

EXT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - DAY

Brutus watches Hayden throw a ball in the front yard as Warren and Ana observe. Brutus ignores Hayden and lies down next to Warren.

HAYDEN

This is our protection?

ANA

It's his first day. Give him time.

In the woods, FOOTSTEPS AND BREAKING TREE LIMBS prompt Brutus' ears to pop up. He gets up. Stares in the direction of the sound.

The family notices Brutus' reaction. They direct their attention to where Brutus is staring. Brutus slowly creeps forward. Scruff standing on its end -- he DARTS into the woods.

The family CHASES Brutus.

Warren catches him from behind. Holds Brutus in place. He swings around and stands in front of Brutus.

Brutus struggles to free himself from Warren's grip. Warren drops down to his knees. Speaks softly to him. Brutus sits. Warren pets Brutus behind his ears. Brutus wags his tail. Warren hugs him.

The FOOTSTEPS TRAIL OFF deep into the woods. Warren looks up to Hayden.

WARREN

Does that answer your question?

HAYDEN

Yeah, but I have another question,
what the hell was in the woods?

INT. DINING ROOM - HOUSE - DAY

The family eats dinner while Brutus sits beside the table, staring at the food.

HAYDEN

Your pal is staring at our food.

Warren notices.

WARREN

It's a form of begging.

HAYDEN

Well, shit, he can have mine and he doesn't have to beg.

WARREN

Okay. But only after all of us are finished.

Warren gives Brutus a look and Brutus' ears go back and he shuffles backward.

ANA

Why haven't you ever shared your knowledge or love of dogs? We could have gotten you one to help with your anxiety.

WARREN

I'm not sure it would help. As much fun as it is to own a dog, it's one of the biggest losses you face in life.

INT. ROOM - APPALACHIAN REGIONAL HOSPITAL - DAY

The Sheriff speaks to a DOCTOR (60s) while a NURSE (50s) tends to a semi-conscious Tara lying in bed. Bandages cover parts of her arms and face.

Beside the bed, bags of fluid hang above her head as IVs drip into her arm. Monitors check her vitals.

DOCTOR

She'll be okay. She's severely dehydrated.

(MORE)

DOCTOR (cont'd)

She's lucky she didn't run into any animals in the mountains.

SHERIFF BARNES

Can she talk?

DOCTOR

Nothing intelligible. She only mumbles every now and then.

SHERIFF BARNES

You mind if I try asking her a few questions?

The Doctor gestures with his head and the Sheriff walks to her bedside. She opens her eyes.

SHERIFF BARNES

Tara?

She nods.

SHERIFF BARNES

I'm the sheriff from Holmes Township. Do you remember what happened to you?

Tara whispers, still weak.

TARA

No... not really...

SHERIFF BARNES

Do you remember anything at all?

TARA

There was... terrible... explosion...

Her one word strikes him --

SHERIFF BARNES

Explosion?

TARA

I ran and ran... through... woods... It wasn't safe... dead... dead bodies...

SHERIFF BARNES

Bodies? How many bodies?

TARA

I... I... did anyone make it out...

SHERIFF BARNES
Who are you talking about?

TARA
The... Th...

Tara closes her eyes. She's unable to speak anymore.

DOCTOR
Sheriff... I think you should come
back tomorrow.

Sheriff Barnes nods and leaves the room, puzzled, watching Tara until he can't anymore.

EXT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - NIGHT

Brutus lies on the deck by the front door, enclosed by a fence made of discarded parts from the house.

He paces back and forth, appearing jittery by the new surroundings. He HOWLS constantly.

INT. WARREN AND ANA'S BEDROOM - HOUSE - NIGHT

The HOWLING ECHOS inside the darkened room while Warren and Ana try to sleep.

ANA
Why don't you let him in our room
until he gets comfortable.

WARREN
We got him to watch the outside, not
the inside.

ANA
I won't be able to sleep all night
with his howling.

WARREN
Won't be forever. He'll get used to
it.

ANA
Yeah, but will I?

Ana puts her pillow over her head.

LATER

The howling has stopped. Warren and Ana sleep peacefully --
Until -- BRUTUS BARKS. And he isn't stopping.

Warren wakes up, gets out of bed, goes to the window. He only sees Brutus barking at the moon. Warren sighs.

Warren is about to go back into bed when the barking escalates to GROWLING which escalates to HOSTILE SNARLING. And then --

A SQUEAL!

Warren jerks back at the spine-tingling sound. Ana is jolted awake.

WARREN

What in God's name is--

They hear the sound of SNAPPING pieces of wood and CRASHING to the deck.

Because of the darkness, Warren can barely make out a FLURRY of FIGHTING MOTIONS between Brutus and another animal. He RUSHES out.

INT. FOYER - HOUSE - NIGHT

Hayden is waiting for Warren at the bottom of the steps. They nod to each other and rush toward the front door.

INT. WARREN AND ANA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ana stands at the window trying to figure out the cause of the commotion. She can hardly see the SCUFFLE --

ANIMALS TWIST AROUND AND AROUND IN CIRCLES.

WOOD BREAKING.

VICIOUS SHRIEKING AND GROWLING.

EXT. DECK - HOUSE - NIGHT

Warren flicks the outside light on. He pulls open the door -- Brutus is right there, his back end to them, his teeth GRIPPING an animal by the jugular and VIOLENTLY SHAKING IT.

WARREN
BRUTUS STOP!

Brutus turns to them and the animal in his jaws can now be seen --

A BABY MONKEY.

The baby monkey has bloody gray fur with a white marking in front. Her pink face has no fur. She is bleeding from punctures caused by Brutus' teeth.

Warren's flabbergasted and needs a moment to believe what he is seeing is real.

Hayden follows Warren and is floored.

The Baby Monkey continues to SQUEAL and never stops.

Ana arrives in her robe, eyes and mouth wide open beyond belief. She covers her mouth in shock.

ANA
Is that... a monkey?

Warren tries to calm Brutus. He talks and behaves calmly.

WARREN
Come on, boy, let her go. She's a baby. Come on, buddy.

Brutus will not UNCLENCH his teeth, continuing to SHAKE the Baby, crushing the baby monkey.

Ana retreats back inside the house.

Warren attempts to hold Brutus' head still. Brutus will not relent. Warren tries to calm down Brutus but avoids getting near his teeth.

WARREN
Let go Brutus. Let her go. Come on. Brutus... ya idiot, release the thing.

Warren gently strokes the dog's back.

Ana emerges from the house and DUMPS A BUCKET OF WATER ON BRUTUS, THE BABY MONKEY, AND WARREN.

Brutus IMMEDIATELY releases his teeth, releases the monkey, backs off, whimpers, shakes off, drenching Warren again.

The Baby Monkey is still SCREAMING and scared, breathing heavily, lying on her side, writhing.

WARREN

Hayden, quick, take Brutus inside.

Hayden grasps Brutus by the shoulders and gently directs him inside.

The baby monkey's punctured neck is now bleeding profusely. Slowly, Warren picks up the wiry monkey but struggles to hold her in his arms.

WARREN

How did you know to pour water on Brutus to let the monkey go?

ANA

I had a dog or two myself growing up.

The baby slowly calms down and stops fighting and screaming but is still scared. Her chest convulses, blood oozes.

Warren tries to clamp down and suppress the bleeding but the monkey starts squirming and squealing, out-of-control again.

Warren uses low and soft tones to talk to the Baby.

WARREN

Everything's going to be okay. I have you. I'm not going to hurt you...
Where did you come from?

Ana is stunned by everything happening at once.

WARREN

We're gonna need some bandages.

Ana runs in to get them.

As he waits, Warren watches the little creature as she finally opens her eyes and looks at him. She looks at him like he maybe is trying to save her and not hurt her.

She squirms a bit and nuzzles into him more. He is melted by her and doesn't care about the blood marking him.

In the doorway, Ana is back with the first aid kit and pauses as she watches Warren. She sees Warren in a different light, marveling at how Warren has taken charge of this unbelievably bizarre situation.

INT. UTILITY ROOM - MOUNTAIN HOUSE - DAY

Blood drippings trail from the closed door to a crudely-made crib in which the baby monkey is strapped by towels.

The baby lets out constant SHRIEKS as she fights Warren's every attempt to patch her up.

The room is completely disheveled. Walls are scratched and blood stained. Supplies and clothes are scattered.

Bloody bandages have been tossed everywhere.

Ana and Hayden gape at the surreal scene.

WARREN

I don't know what to do. She rips off the bandages as soon as I put them on.

A KNOCK at the door interrupts them. Hayden opens the door to reveal the Sheriff with a cat carrier in his hand.

SHERIFF BARNES

Sorry I'm late, we had a situation in town...

His eyes widen and mouth gapes when he sees the monkey.

SHERIFF BARNES

Holy Christ! It's one thing to hear it over the phone but seeing it in person, that's another thing. Especially when it's a freaking monkey.

WARREN

It's a *Rhesus* Monkey.

SHERIFF BARNES

I'll take your word for it.

Warren tries to apply another bandage to the the baby's neck.

WARREN

Why is there a monkey in these mountains? And do you think there could be more?

SHERIFF BARNES

I've never heard of monkeys in the Appalachians before.

(MORE)

SHERIFF BARNES (cont'd)

First monkey I've ever seen in my life outside of a zoo and there isn't a zoo around here for miles. It's probably someone's pet in the county.

WARREN

It doesn't look like a pet. This animal is wild.

HAYDEN

Monkeys are primates.

They look to him.

SHERIFF BARNES

Thanks for the science lesson, kid.

HAYDEN

Biology, actually. And it needs a real doctor.

SHERIFF BARNES

All we got around here is a *large* animal vet. For like horses and cows. But I'll make some calls.

WARREN

She won't make it much longer if she doesn't stop squirming. Can you get me some sedatives at least?

ANA

Didn't you bring any?

WARREN

No. I decided to go cold turkey.

Warren's comment takes Ana by surprise.

Hayden looks guilty... He appears to be reluctant to speak out, hiding some information. Swallows hard. And then --

HAYDEN

I think I have something.

Everyone turns to Hayden, including the sheriff.

HAYDEN

I have some Benzos. I stole them from Warren before we left home.

The Sheriff notices the dynamics. He deliberately turns his back to them.

Ana's crestfallen. She stares at Hayden with sad eyes.

ANA

Hayden... If you're having a problem, you can tell me. We'll deal with it. Benzos are dangerous. They're addictive.

Hayden drops his head.

HAYDEN

I'm not addicted to them. I take them every once in a while.

ANA

Why did you steal them?

HAYDEN

I don't know, maybe out of spite for making me leave everything...

Ana's heart sinks farther. She embraces Hayden.

ANA

I'm sorry, hun.

Warren stands and steps toward to Hayden. Hayden looks up. Warren touches his arm.

WARREN

Don't worry about it, Hayden.

The kid is so surprised by their reaction that he doesn't even know what to do.

INT. ROOM - APPALACHIAN REGIONAL HOSPITAL - DAY

The Sheriff tucks his phone in his pocket as he enters Tara's room. She is awake and looks to him. Slowly nods for him to come in. He walks to her bed.

SHERIFF BARNES

I'm glad you're feeling better. Maybe now you can shed some light on what happened. And hopefully help me connect what happened to you, and a wild baby monkey we've found.

She strains to speak. Her voice is raspy but she's more alert.

TARA

You found... a monkey? A baby?

Her mention throws the Sheriff for a loop.

SHERIFF BARNES
You don't seem surprised.

TARA
Is she alive?

SHERIFF BARNES
How did you know it's a she?

No response. Sheriff Barnes pulls up a chair. Sits. Speaks in a soothing way...

SHERIFF BARNES
Look... you're not in trouble. To me, you seem to be a victim. So why don't you tell me whatever story it is you're trying not to tell me.

Still nothing.

SHERIFF BARNES
Tara, something serious is going on here and only you can help. I don't know if you know much about small towns but we trust each other. Even strangers.

The Sheriff's words prompt Tara to open up --

TARA
I worked at a facility... it conducted experiments on Rhesus Monkeys... in the mountains...

Tara's assertion grabs the sheriff's attention. A grave expression forms on his face.

SHERIFF BARNES
Rhesus Monkey, that's the type we found...

EXT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - DAY

Hayden makes another attempt to play with Brutus in the front yard. He tosses the ball. Surprisingly, Brutus retrieves it.

The feat amazes Warren and Ana.

Hayden bends down and pats Brutus on the head, offering some sweet words.

He throws it again and paces Brutus to the ball but Brutus narrowly beats him. Hayden's overjoyed, looks to Warren and Ana.

HAYDEN

Did you see that?

WARREN

Did you teach him on your own?

HAYDEN

Yeah, we've been practicing.

Warren and Ana share a smile.

WARREN

I better check on Baby.

ANA

You mean, *the* baby?

He stops, looks to her with a slight smile.

WARREN

No, I decided to name her. Baby.
Seemed to fit.

ANA

Baby... well I definitely can't
forget her name. Why don't you stay
in the fresh air and take a moment.
I'll check on Baby.

Ana heads back to the house. Hayden is about to follow when Warren puts his hand on Hayden's shoulder. Hayden turns to Warren. They look at each other face-to-face for a long moment, neither one giving way.

WARREN

Hayden... about the pills.
(then)

I don't think you have a drug
problem.

Hayden raises his eyebrows at the trust.

WARREN

I think you have a 'Warren' problem.
You stole them before we came here in
spite of me. You don't have to like
me, I wouldn't like me either with
the nutcase I've been... but can we
we make the best of the situation?
For your mother?

Hayden weighs Warren's question. And then he finally nods yes. As Hayden is about to leave --

WARREN

And just... if you feel like you want to take a pill, any pill, can you come to me and talk about it first? I won't lecture you or get pissed. We can just chat. Yeah?

Hayden doesn't give him any sort of response. Warren takes it and heads to the door. Before he clears the doorway --

HAYDEN

Warren.

Warren pauses and turns. It's like the word Hayden is about to say is too hard to speak. But finally --

HAYDEN

Thanks.

Warren nods and smiles and heads in. Hayden and Brutus share a look. Brutus tilts his head in confusion and Hayden laughs at him.

HAYDEN

Right?

INT. WARREN AND ANA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Brutus lies beside the bed as Ana finally sleeps. But Warren is wide awake, on his back, staring at the ceiling, tapping his fingers on his chest a mile a minute. And then --

He bolts up --

WARREN

What if Baby has parents?

This wakes Ana and she looks to him in confusion?

ANA

Huh?

WARREN

What if Baby has parents, out there in the mountains?

ANA

You've been enough of a savior today. Go to sleep.

His speech increases in speed and sound a bit neurotic as he goes on --

WARREN

I'm serious. If she does--and they've lost her--what if they sniff her out--come looking--end up here?

She lays her hand on his forearm, sensing him growing more and more anxious --

ANA

Oh Warren, you've been doing so well lately. You heard the sheriff, she's probably someone's pet. Just take a moment. Do your breathing--

WARREN

I'm not taking any chances. She's just a baby, but adult monkeys are fierce.

Warren pulls a treat out of a drawer. He holds it out to entice a reluctant Brutus to move.

ANA

What are you doing?

WARREN

Putting out our security system.

They leave. She sighs, lays back down.

EXT. FRONT DOOR - HOUSE - NIGHT

Warren leads Brutus out and gives him the treat inside the newly reinforced fence.

Warren scans the woods, sees nothing. He's about to reenter the house when he hears a sound coming from the woods.

Brutus stops chewing on the treat. Eyeballs the woods.

Warren hesitates. His eyes search the woods.

The wind is still but the LEAVES RUSTLE.

SWISHING limbs and bushes cause alarm.

SNAPPING twigs -- MOVING toward them.

FOOTSTEPS on the undergrowth loom closer.

Warren does not see anything in the dark woods. Keeps quiet.

Brutus is ready to pounce, growling.

The sound in the woods subsides.

Warren feels his heart palpitating, he GRASPS his chest, looks deeply concerned --

ENCROACHING SOUNDS START AGAIN --

FROM DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS --

Warren's eyes move back and forth -- can't detect where the sound is coming from when Brutus BUSTS through the fence and DARTS toward the woods.

WARREN

Brutus! Brutus! Come back!

Brutus disappears deep into the woods.

Warren takes a step toward the woods but decides better. He waits and listens --

FOOTSTEPS AND BROKEN TWIGS AND RATTLING BRANCHES from all directions converging to the area where Brutus entered.

BRUTUS GROWLING. SNARLING. CONFRONTING SOMETHING.

SHRILL SCREAMS. SCUFFLING. SQUEALING.

A SICKENING YELP.

The sounds fade away into the distance.

Warren waits, calls out Brutus' name repeatedly, but Brutus does not return.

Warren goes back inside --

INT. FOYER - HOUSE - NIGHT

Warren shuts and locks the door behind him. He's greeted by Ana and Hayden.

HAYDEN

Where's Brutus?

Warren tries to gather his thoughts.

WARREN

I--I don't know. He went after something in the trees.

ANA

What was it?

HAYDEN

Did you see anything?

WARREN

I--It could be monkeys--

ANA

No, Warren. Listen to yourself. There's no possible way other monkeys are in these woods.

HAYDEN

Yeah, they couldn't survive in this type of wilderness.

ANA

Think about the logistics. It sounds absurd.

Warren is hurt by Ana's reaction. She notices it on his face. She tries to comfort him.

WARREN

I know there's something out there in the woods.

ANA

It could be mountain lions... we don't know. Please Warren, no more talk of monkeys. Let's wait for Brutus to come back.

They stand quietly and wait for the possibility of Brutus returning. Warren attempts to hide his red eyes, holding back his emotions.

WARREN

I'm not sure if Brutus is coming back. An animal got him out there. He could be de--

HAYDEN

Don't say that!

Hayden pushes past Warren to the front window, sits, and parks himself for the night watch.

INT. FOYER - HOUSE - FOYER - DAY

Dawn breaks. Hayden's awake, still waiting in the chair. He hears Warren's voice and steps into the living room to see what's going on.

INT. LIVING ROOM - HOUSE - DAY

Warren and Ana sit on the sofa as Warren talks into his phone
--

WARREN

(into phone)

Nobody? I can't keep on feeding her Librium. And there're wild animals right next to our house. Our dog went after them and hasn't been seen since.

SHERIFF BARNES (V.O.)

(from phone)

Stay inside then. Most animals are afraid of humans. Well, maybe not mountain lions... Do you have a firearm? Rifle?

Warren gives Ana a furtive glance then looks away.

WARREN

No. We aren't that kind of family.

SHERIFF BARNES (V.O.)

(into phone)

Then I don't know what else to tell you. Go buy yourself one and protect your family while I figure this out.

The call ends on the other end. Warren pulls the phone away from his mouth.

HAYDEN

Was that the sheriff? Did you ask him to send his deputies to find Brutus?

ANA

He's trying to find a veterinarian.

WARREN

I don't think it's smart to send anyone into those mountains.

HAYDEN
 (to Ana)
 How's Baby doing?

ANA
 (yawning)
 Sleeping.

WARREN
 I tried patching her up while she was asleep. It only woke her up. That little rascal fought me tooth and nail, but she settled down after I gave her another pill. At least her wounds look like they're healing.

Ana stares directly at Hayden.

HAYDEN
 I'm starting to hate this place. Really, really hate it.

WARREN
 It's my fault. We did everything because of me.

ANA
 I'm not blaming you, Warren. We decided to do this together.

WARREN
 It's still on me. We moved here because of me, bought the cheapest piece of crap because of my chintzy salary because I can't get a better job for you guys.

Hayden refrains from a dig at Warren.

WARREN
 As soon as we get Baby off our hands and find Brutus, we'll go back home. Both your safety is my number one priority. No more messing around.

Hayden walks to his room. After a moment, Ana stands --

ANA
 I'll look in on Baby.

She leaves him and as soon as she's gone, Warren lets out a breath, breathes fast and harried from thinking about going back to life at home. And then... something in him shifts. He steels himself. His eye focus. And --

WARREN

(calls out)

Hayden! You and I are going into town. YOU CAN DRIVE! Lock the door behind you!

(then)

And Ana, stay inside!

He gets up, grabs his keys, and heads out.

INT. HARRY'S GUN AND AMMO SHOP - HOLMES TOWNSHIP - DAY

Warren leads Hayden into the store. Hayden is pumped but also leery.

HAYDEN

Dude, mom is not gonna let you bring a gun in the house. Do you even know her?

WARREN

I'll keep it out on the front porch.

Warren approaches the guy at the gun case, waiting to serve.

Hayden watches Warren as though he thinks in this moment that Warren is kind of bad ass.

Warren lays his hands on the glass counter --

WARREN

I'm gonna need a rifle that can take down something the size of a mountain lion if need be. Or... a large monkey...

INT. ROOM - APPALACHIAN REGIONAL HOSPITAL - DAY

Barnes holds a glass of water as Tara drinks from a straw. When she's done, he sets the water down and sits back down to listen. After a moment...

TARA

When I was hired as an Associate Director... at the Edmund Medical Institute... I didn't realize what... I had got myself into...

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

EXT. COMPOUND - DR. ELLIS' OFFICE - DAY

A white brick medical office stands out from the other buildings in the compound.

TARA (V.O.)

The Director of the facility was a renowned Primatologist -- DR. ROLAND ELLIS. No one told me about his unorthodox methods... I was naive and only employed for a few days when Dr. Ellis called me to his office.

INT. DR. ELLIS' OFFICE - COMPOUND - DAY

Tara waits in front of DR. ELLIS (50s), wearing a white lab coat, as he makes an entry on his laptop at his desk.

She observes a pregnant Rhesus female, JENNY (3), with gray fur and a white marking in front. Jenny sits on the ground next to him.

Jenny plays with a puzzle on a board by adeptly moving two red dice through a network of pipes, like a maze.

She pokes sticks into holes in the pipes to change the direction of the dice until they fall into an exit chamber.

Jenny looks up to the doctor and appears to be proud.

TARA

I've seen chimpanzees perform such puzzles but not Rhesus Monkeys.

DR. ELLIS

Most chimpanzees could not solve that puzzle.

Dr. Ellis tears himself away from the laptop.

DR. ELLIS

Did you notice Jenny's reward is not Brazil nuts but a feeling of satisfaction from solving the puzzle?

TARA

That's even more impressive.

DR. ELLIS

Tara, I want you to see something.

He gets up, takes away the puzzle from Jenny. Jenny appears peeved.

DR. ELLIS
 (points to cabinet)
 Jenny. Keys.

Jenny stands and waddles to a file cabinet, opens a drawer, pulls out a set of keys. She waddles back to Dr. Ellis and hands them to him.

Dr. Ellis nods his head to Jenny in approval.

TARA
 Quite amazing, Dr. Ellis.

DR. ELLIS
 You think so? Come with me.

He proceeds through the door. Jenny and Tara follow him.

EXT. COMPOUND - DAY

They walk side-by-side down a pathway between buildings, row-after-row. The area is marked, "RESEARCH STATION."

The buildings have huge windows that display LAB RESEARCHERS conducting various experiments on monkeys.

TARA
 Are all the monkeys captive?

DR. ELLIS
 All of them except Jenny. She's free to roam anywhere in the compound.

SERIES OF SHOTS - TARA OBSERVES EXPERIMENT AND EFFECTS --

-- Researchers injecting vaccines on semi-conscious monkeys.

-- Unconscious monkeys lying on cots as LAB SURGEONS perform surgeries.

-- Monkeys crammed inside small 4x4 crates.

-- LAB ASSISTANTS in black uniforms cart off dead monkeys with open incisions on their foreheads.

-- Brooding monkeys glaring at humans.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

Tara feels a strong gust of wind whipping her hair into her face accompanied by a WHIRLING, CHOPPING SOUND.

She spins around to find a helicopter hovering over a pad on the far side of the compound.

Hanging on cables below the helicopter, a large wooden box with long vertical slits is lowered onto the pad.

Lab Assistants meet the helicopter and unfasten the cables. One Assistant pockets a key on the box.

DR. ELLIS

They make weekly deliveries of all our supplies. There isn't a single nut or bolt in this compound that wasn't delivered by helicopters.

TARA

It must cost a fortune.

DR. ELLIS

We make a fortune.

They watch the Assistants remove the slats from the box.

DR. ELLIS

That must be the new arrivals.

TARA

More Rhesus monkeys?

DR. ELLIS

We must constantly replenish our inventory. I just hope not too many died in transit.

Tara chooses her words carefully. Jenny then jumps from Ellis' side to hers. She smiles at Jenny but then looks bothered... looks back at the crate.

TARA

I understand their journey from Africa to the U.S. is a terrible shock to them...

DR. ELLIS

They will adapt.

An Assistant approaches the doctor, excuses himself, hands him the key to the box while Tara surveys the compound.

TARA

This location is highly unusual. You certainly didn't find it by accident.

DR. ELLIS

The Edmund Medical Institute attempted to build the facility outside of small towns. But the towns were less than welcome.

TARA

I'm certain they didn't want a lab experimenting on monkeys in their own backyard.

DR. ELLIS

They objected to misconceptions: The smell, noise, lower property values, upsetting animal rights people...

TARA

I understand. But on the top of a mountain?

DR. ELLIS

An employee at Edmund grew up near the Appalachians. He knew of a remote place that had been long forgotten. And here we are, out of sight out of mind, unconstrained by nosy, officious neighbors.

The doctor proceeds down the path. Tara and Jenny follow.

They enter an area marked, "PROCREATION STATION."

Tara sees a postpartum mother listlessly clutching a stuffed doll inside of a cage. Outside her cage, a Researcher monitors a camera that records the mother's behavior.

DR. ELLIS

She's been doing that for days.

Tara finds it hard to watch.

TARA

Where is her baby?

DR. ELLIS

The baby's involved in another experiment. The mother's being documented on how long she will grieve for the loss of her baby.

They move on to another building when -- BAM -- a petrified and excited MALE MONKEY BURSTS out of a building, RUNNING around in circles in a chaotic state.

Several frantic Assistants CHASE after the monkey. They have the monkey in their grasp but he TWISTS and SWINGS wildly at them, breaking free.

The monkey spots the doctor and Tara. He slows down to a stop when he sees Jenny. Jenny makes a sound and gesture to the monkey.

The Assistants SNATCH the monkey, who RESISTS and SCRATCHES an Assistant's face. They WRESTLE until he's under control.

Tara looks nervously to Dr. Ellis as one Assistant, breathing heavily, approaches Dr. Ellis.

ASSISTANT

I'm terribly sorry, Dr. Ellis, he refuses to have sex like the others. We've tried everything you suggested.

DR. ELLIS

Not to worry. We've done all we can. Send him to the Research Station.

The Assistants redirect their way to the Research Station.

TARA

Just like that?

DR. ELLIS

Tara... what do you think is the purpose of this facility?

TARA

I'm sorry doctor, I--

DR. ELLIS

Let me show you what Jenny is capable of...

Tara's miffed by the doctor's dismissal but cools down.

Dr. Ellis proceeds with the others to the front gate and stares at Jenny. He holds out the keys.

DR. ELLIS

Jenny. Unlock.

To Tara's amazement, Jenny takes the keys, waddles to the gate, finds the key, unlocks the gate, the gate opens.

Jenny returns the keys to the doctor. The doctor nods his head in approval. Jenny's pleased.

TARA

I never knew they could perform such a difficult task.

DR. ELLIS

I personally trained Jenny to perform those tasks.

They head back to his office. (FLASHBACK ENDS.)

INT. ROOM - APPALACHIAN REGIONAL HOSPITAL - DAY

The Sheriff stands quietly. He's perplexed but a bit skeptical.

SHERIFF BARNES

You're asking a lot for me to believe. I've never heard nor seen anything that would lead me to believe a compound of that size and nature could be here.

The Nurse enters the room with an empty bottle.

NURSE

Sorry, I'll need you to step out for a few minutes, Sheriff. You can wait in the hall.

The Sheriff nods and leaves the room, his face showing how blown away he is.

EXT/INT. PRIUS - MOUNTAIN HOUSE - DAY

Hayden exits the car and makes a beeline for the door, leaving Warren with the rifle box.

HAYDEN

I am gonna go hide under my bed after Mom sees what you did.

WARREN

(from inside the car)
Wow, thanks for the support.

Hayden turns before going inside.

HAYDEN

Thanks for taking me with you.

He heads in. Warren smiles and turns to get out of the car -- he doesn't notice his cell phone slip from his pocket onto the driver's seat before he closes the door.

He pulls the rifle box out of the back seat and heads to the house.

INT. KITCHEN - HOUSE - DAY

Warren stands before the box on the table. Ana walks in --

ANA

Where did you guys go? Hayden is being overly obnoxious for some...

She freezes when she sees the odd-shaped box.

ANA

Warren?

WARREN

Ana?

ANA

What is that? If it's what I think it is--wait, is that what you meant when you said to the Sheriff that we're not that kind of family? He asked if you had a gun? And you bought one? What happened to *we're not that kind of family?*

Warren opens the box to reveal the rifle.

WARREN

It's not some AR-15, or even a handgun. It's a hunting rifle. Just in case.

ANA

I put up with a lot around here but I won't put up with having a gun in the house.

WARREN

But we don't know what those wild animals'll do. We have no way of defending ourselves out here.

The tense moment grows as she stares daggers into him.

ANA

Put the gun in our room so it's
nowhere near Hayden.

WARREN

Ana, we haven't talked about it since
we moved to this house, but maybe
now's the time to bring it out in the
open -- You want me to be more
present, right? Put you and Hayden
first, yeah? Well I can do it by
protecting my family.

Ana's taken aback by Warren's reaction, appearing as if it's
a side of Warren she hasn't seen for a long time. She softens
her tone as she leaves --

ANA

Then go check on the new addition to
the family you brought into this
house, who is the reason you have to
bring a gun in here to protect us.

He looks at the gun in the box after she's gone. He thinks
for a moment, then closes the lid.

INT. ROOM - APPALACHIAN REGIONAL HOSPITAL - NIGHT

The Sheriff sits down next to Tara again.

SHERIFF BARNES

You okay if we...?

Tara appears deeply troubled. But she nods...

TARA

About a week later... we were making
the rounds...

BEGIN FLASHBACK

EXT/INT. SURGERY CENTER - COMPOUND - DAY

*The doctor leads Tara into a building marked, "SURGERY
CENTER." Inside the building, experiments are being prepped.*

TARA (V.O.)

*He showed me one particular
experiment I never expected... and
one I'll never forget...*

They pass rows of stations with monkeys inside crates and cages lined against the walls behind surgical tables.

Tara pays attention, unsure of what she's about to see.

DR. ELLIS

You are about to see the beginning of a year long experiment that will monitor the responses of a mother and a newborn after they are separated.

They arrive at a cage surrounded by Surgeons and Assistants. When the staff notices the doctor, they defer to him and step aside to reveal what's inside the cage --

Tara's aghast -- She cannot believe what she sees --

JENNY AND HER NEWBORN FEMALE BABY CLINGING TO HER.

Jenny sees the doctor as a welcome sight. Her eyes light up.

TARA

Jenny's part of your experiment? But she's--

DR. ELLIS

Please. We'll discuss this later.

TARA

I have to discuss this now.

Dr. Ellis pulls her off to the side.

TARA

What are you doing? Jenny's your--

DR. ELLIS

Jenny is a non-human primate.

TARA

I thought you loved her. You cannot be so callous.

DR. ELLIS

Jenny's different than the rest. She's much more advanced. We cannot lose this opportunity.

TARA

You deliberately trained her for this experiment?

DR. ELLIS

She will help us understand how a super intelligent Rhesus mother will respond to being separated from her newborn.

The SOUND OF UNLATCHING THE GATE distracts them. They watch two Assistants move inside the cage. ONE ASSISTANT points a Taser at Jenny.

Jenny and the baby are confused. Jenny clasps her baby tighter.

The OTHER ASSISTANT injects Jenny with a sedative. She looks back to the doctor.

The doctor remains stoic.

Jenny glares at him. Becomes drowsy. She fights to stay awake, still clinging to the baby. She lets out a doleful MOAN.

Tara has to force herself to watch.

Jenny's eyes close, her arms fall helplessly to the side. The baby continues to cling to Jenny.

The Other Assistant enters the cage again, approaches the baby with the sedative as it CRIES OUT to a motionless Jenny. She jumps up, SHRIEKS at the Other Assistant approaching her.

She scoots and hides behind her mother and WAILS.

Tara struggles with wanting to do something -- object -- scream -- grab the needle -- but she's powerless.

The One Assistant restrains the baby while the Other injects her with the sedative. She squirms, flailing her arms, but finally succumbs to the injection.

TARA (V.O.)

Rhesus Monkeys have 92% DNA of a human... but not Jenny... she learned how to trust, to be devoted, to be a friend... I swear she knew how to love... I feared all of that will change.

(then)

This was not the profession I signed up for...

Dr. Ellis leads Tara to another station and surgical table. Instruments, syringes, and supplies rest on a steel tray.

Behind the table is a barren cage -- no toys -- nothing...

DR. ELLIS

*Consider the experiment a learning
experience for you.*

*Tara braces herself as the Assistants carry the limp baby to
the table. They lie the baby down and strap her in.*

DR. ELLIS

*After they suture her eyes shut, she
will go into isolation.*

TARA

*Suture? She'll be blind for the next
year?*

*Tara surveys the other cages near the station and sees infant
monkeys with their eyes sutured shut. They act like zombies.*

*At a nearby cage, the doctor points out an Assistant wearing
a welding mask feeding a sutured baby monkey.*

DR. ELLIS

*Even the Assistants must wear masks
to ensure there's no social contact.*

*A Surgeon (60s) and two Assistants arrive at the station. The
Surgeon inspects the curved needles and suture material on
the steel tray then hovers over the baby.*

*The sight leaves Tara in shock. She's about to explode when
he grips a needle and holds it over the baby's one eye --*

TARA

NO! NO! STOP IT! STOP IT!

*The Surgeon freezes. They all stare at Tara as if she's going
berserk.*

*The doctor grabs her arm and pulls Tara away from the
station.*

DR. ELLIS

*Tara! You've become too close to the
subject.*

TARA

She's not a subject!

DR. ELLIS

You must think in terms of a primatologist -- this unique experiment goes beyond previous standard tests.

TARA

At what price?

DR. ELLIS

At the price of saving humans.

TARA

The baby's part of Jenny. If you go through with it, they'll never be the same. You may never be the same. I see how you look at her, play with her. She not just a non-human primate to you.

The doctor shifts his eyes, he appears uncomfortably persuaded.

DR. ELLIS

Alright... I'll hold off today and... reconsider.

The doctor brusquely turns away from her, returns to the station. Tara releases a held breath.

INT. DR. ELLIS' OFFICE - COMPOUND - DAY

Tara enters the doctor's office. He seems to be busy.

The doctor nods to her but does not say morning salutations. Tara knows something is amiss when she looks at Jenny --

Jenny sits brooding in the corner of the room. She's not playing, appearing distant.

TARA

Where's Jenny's baby? You said you reconsidered.

DR. ELLIS

I've made an amendment.

TARA

What do you mean?

DR. ELLIS

I will not suture the baby's eyes...

Tara waits for the other shoe to drop...

DR. ELLIS

However, I decided to proceed with the experiment on their reactions to separation.

Tara's stunned by the doctor's deceit.

TARA

That's almost as bad as suturing her eyes.

DR. ELLIS

Not at all. The baby and Jenny will get human social contact. We will monitor their reactions, but Jenny and her baby will not see each other for a year.

(then)

I've been documenting Jenny from day one since I started training her. I cannot waste that effort.

TARA

Wait... Jenny... she was meant for this experiment from the start?

DR. ELLIS

You're not working at a Day Care Center! I have a job to perform. And so do you.

TARA (V.O.)

After that day... I learned not to get in Dr. Ellis' way.

INT. DR. ELLIS' OFFICE - COMPOUND - DAY

Tara watches Dr. Ellis trying to motivate an apathetic Jenny to play with the puzzle.

Jenny refuses to play the game. An unattended stuffed doll lies beside Jenny. She simply observes the doctor's movement. The doctor finally gives up on the puzzle.

DR. ELLIS

It's natural that Jenny isn't motivated this soon.

TARA

She doesn't want the doll either.

DR. ELLIS

She'll adapt.

Dr. Ellis places the puzzle on his desk, opens his top drawer, pulls out the key to the cage of new arrivals, pockets it.

DR. ELLIS

We're going to take a little walk. I believe Jenny will want to walk with us. Right, Jenny?

He looks down at her as he starts toward the door, but she doesn't move, she simply stares at him. He extends his hand. She looks at it but doesn't take it.

The doctor forcibly takes her hand, pulls Jenny to her feet. Jenny turns away, squirms. She eventually relents.

EXT. DR. ELLIS' OFFICE - COMPOUND - DAY

They exit the office to find two Lab Assistants in black uniforms carrying Tasers, waiting for them.

At the sight of the group approaching the cage, the monkeys JUMP UP AND DOWN, fight to get to the front. They reach out, SHRIEK, SALIVATE.

The doctor studies the monkeys. Tara is tight-lipped.

One young FEMALE LONER comes to the front gate while the others dance around her. Dr. Ellis spots her.

DR. ELLIS

(points)

That one.

The doctor reaches into his pocket and finds the key. He unlocks the cage.

DR. ELLIS

The others want food. She wants attention. She's unafraid of humans. She'll be the most adaptable of the troop.

The doctor opens the gate slightly. The Assistants get prepared for action. The Loner slips through the gate into the arms of the doctor. She squirms in his arms.

DR. ELLIS

She will be Jenny's successor.

Tara holds her tongue, pulls out a tag and attaches it to the Loner. The doctor puts her back into the cage and locks it.

All the while... Jenny keeps her eyes on the doctor.

The group heads back to the doctor's office.

INT. DR. ELLIS' OFFICE - DAY

The doctor puts the key to the box in his drawer and glances at his designer watch with the image of Africa on its face.

DR. ELLIS
 Researchers are waiting for me to
 start a new experiment.

The doctor turns to find Jenny planted on the floor. She stares him down.

DR. ELLIS
 Move, Jenny. Come.

The doctor coerces her by making gestures, but she's adamant.

DR. ELLIS
 I'm not in the mood for coddling.

The frustrated doctor grabs his laptop and stomps out. Tara heads to a building across from the doctor's office.

After they leave, Jenny rises and finds the key in the drawer and wobbles out the door...

EXT. CAGE - COMPOUND - DAY

The cage of monkeys is tranquil until they view Jenny approaching them. They get excited, PUSHING AND SHOVING.

Jenny inserts the key into the lock of the cage. She follows Dr. Ellis' exact procedure to UNLOCK THE GATE. The monkeys RUN in circles, CLIMB the bars, hundreds of hands PUSHING AND PULLING on the gate --

THE GATE SPRINGS OPEN.

The Monkeys LEAP -- BURST out of the cage -- until the cage is completely empty -- the monkeys SCREECH as they RUN AMOK through the compound.

A Lab Assistant spots the monkeys. Before he can pull out his Taser, several monkeys BLINDSIDE him, POUNCING on top of him. They SMOTHER, CLAW, BITE him repeatedly.

The monkeys BELLOW OUT SQUEALS as he CRIES out for help -- it alerts other Lab Assistants. They run to the chaotic scene and whip out their Tasers.

INT. BUILDING - COMPOUND - DAY

Tara hears the screaming and commotion with the others inside. She rushes to a window to view the chaotic scene.

EXT. GROUNDS - COMPOUND - DAY

The Assistants FIRE their Tasers and JOLT some of the monkeys, but they're OVERWHELMED.

Monkeys crammed in cages and crates go berserk after SEEING AND HEARING SOUNDS OF THE MELEE. They SHAKE and BEAT on the gates, rocking their housings.

Using their immense strength and intensified adrenaline, they PRY open the doors and POUR out of their dwellings in droves.

INT. SURGERY CENTER - COMPOUND - DAY

The doctor observes the Surgeon cut an incision on the monkey's forehead when a SHRILL ALARM sounds off. Dr. Ellis looks displeased by the disruption. He stomps to the door.

He opens it and GAPES in astonishment -- his compound is being torn apart. His face changes to extreme concern. He pulls the door closed, turns to the surgical staff --

DR. ELLIS

The monkeys are loose! Someone alert
EHS!

The doctor takes off running to an exit door on the opposite side of the building. With great caution he opens the door, sticks his head out, looks both ways.

EXT. SURGERY CENTER - COMPOUND - DAY

He sees a clear path to his office, dashes toward it. The doctor approaches his office with great caution.

INT. DR. ELLIS' OFFICE - COMPOUND - DAY

He enters the backdoor, zeros in on his laptop. He begins to type quickly on the keyboard when he freezes.

He slowly steals a glance to his left -- JENNY is right there, crouched on all fours -- she looks pissed.

He keeps typing.

DR. ELLIS

*Jenny. I'm glad you're in here.
Everything's okay.*

He then notices how everything isn't okay as the anger in her eyes chills him to the bone...

DR. ELLIS

*We're friends, Jenny... Right?
Friends? Family...*

She creeps forward. Her stony detachment scares the doctor. He's startled when another monkey slips into the room from a window.

DR. ELLIS

*Jenny do you hear me? Friend...
game... friend... Jenny... Jenny...*

Another one climbs through the window -- the sight petrifies the doctor. But Jenny sitting there immobile, glaring, scares him the most.

He realizes he's trapped. He has no other choice than to furiously type on the keyboard -- JENNY AND THE MONKEYS POUNCE ON HIM.

INT./EXT. BUILDING - COMPOUND - DAY

Tara peeks out a door when --

DR. ELLIS (O.S.)

AHHHHHHHHH! JENNY! NO!

The scream sends chills down Tara's spine. But her own survival is more important. She searches for a way out. Notices the fighting nearby has subsided.

Tara exits the building when a wave of monkeys RUSHES toward the LABORATORY.

INT. LABORATORY - DAY

The sound of the siren inside the lab stops the SCIENTISTS from performing their work.

An open container marked, "ACETONE" and "CLEANING AGENT" sits on a table.

A LOUD POUNDING NOISE outside the lab alerts the Scientists. One curious Scientist opens the door -- A TROOP OF MONKEYS LUNGE AT HIM. They SCATTER wildly throughout the lab.

They HOP on tables, KNOCK over instruments, beakers, test tubes, flasks... The Scientists make a feeble attempt to fight them off but they are unarmed and helpless.

The monkeys SCRATCH, BITE, PUSH the Scientists to the floor.

Another troop of monkeys RUSH into the lab -- They TIP OVER THE ACETONE AND IT FALLS TO THE FLOOR. The acetone flows in all directions.

Monkeys JUMP from table to table, LEAP to the wiring above, and CLIMB on it hand-over-hand -- A wire SNAPS from the weight of a monkey --

The monkey and the exposed wire FALL to the ground --

The exposed wire HITS the ground --

SPARKS FLY --

THE ACETONE IGNITES --

THE FLAME GROWS HIGHER AND HIGHER AND PICKS UP SPEED --

THE STREAM OF FLAMES HEADS DIRECTLY TO AN OPEN CABINET --

EXT. BUILDING - COMPOUND - DAY

Tara is trying to find her best way out of the compound -- KA-BOOOOOM! A blinding ball of fire renders the lab white and Tara flies twenty feet across the compound and lands in a crumpled heap. (FLASHBACK ENDS.)

INT. ROOM - APPALACHIAN REGIONAL HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Tara buries her face in her hands, sobs, agonizing over the indelible scene in her mind.

SHERIFF BARNES

You might have been the lucky one.

TARA

But the others...

SHERIFF BARNES

I get it now, when we found you, you were asking if any of the others survived the blast.

TARA

Some were still alive... They still might be... in the woods right now.

Barnes stands up. Walks to the window. Looks out at the not too distant mountains.

INT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Warren steps to the fridge. He opens it, pulls out a turkey baster already filled with milk. He heads to the utility room.

INT. APPALACHIAN REGIONAL HOSPITAL - ROOM - NIGHT

Barnes, still at the window, pulls out his phone.

SHERIFF BARNES

We'll find them. I just hope we get to them before the animals do. I'll notify the Operation Center at the EHS. They have to find some helicopters. It'll take a while.

TARA

Just warn them.

He turns back to her, not having dialed a number yet.

SHERIFF BARNES

Warn them?

TARA

Some of them have been tested on... almost tortured... at least in their minds. Humans... if they find a human aggressive, they may attack. Please beg them to only use tranquilizers. It's not their fault.

INT. UTILITY ROOM - MOUNTAIN HOUSE - NIGHT

Warren gently cradles the heavily sedated Baby in his arms. He touches her hand, then moves his hand to her neck and feels her temperature.

TARA (V.O.)

They are territorial. If they feel threatened... or are pushed... to be aggressive... they may be dangerously vicious.

Baby squirms a bit but becomes submissive. Warren strokes her shoulders. Baby stares at him, then COOS. He holds the turkey baster to her mouth and feeds her.

SHERIFF BARNES (V.O.)

So if... they felt one of their babies were in trouble?

INT. ROOM - APPALACHIAN REGIONAL HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Tara flicks her eyes to him, alert.

TARA

Where is the baby?

The sheriff's eye fill with worry and he is immediately up and pulling out his phone. He dials. Waits. No answer. He dials again. Nothing...

INT. PRIUS - NIGHT

Warren's misplaced phone vibrates on the seat.

INT. APPALACHIAN REGIONAL HOSPITAL - ROOM - NIGHT

The Sheriff tenses his mouth.

SHERIFF BARNES

Shit!

He storms out of the room.

INT. UTILITY ROOM - HOUSE - NIGHT

Warren still cradles Baby while she paws at his face.

WARREN

What do you think, huh? Think maybe you could be a part of this family? Emotional support animals are pretty popular right now. Maybe we could make it work--

A THUMP on the exterior wall behind him startles Warren. He turns and stares at it.

THUMP. It has moved a foot to the right.

THUMP THUMP -- now on the exterior of the space on the other side of the wall.

ANA (O.S.)
(from kitchen)
What is that sound?

THUMP. THUMP. THUMP. LOUDER AND LOUDER.

WARREN
Hayden?! Is that you?!

The thumping RATTLES the products in the room. Warren puts the clinging baby back inside the crate.

Baby SQUEALS as Warren covers the crate with piles of blankets, dirty clothes, and towels to quiet her. He rushes out the door --

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Warren runs right into Ana and Hayden clutching each other in fear in the kitchen -- PPPPIISSSSHHHH -- GLASS BREAKS from the incredible force thumping the walls outside.

They all look at each other. All scared.

ANA
(quietly)
We have to call the Sheriff.

WARREN
(quietly)
What good will that do now? You know how far away he is.

INT. UTILITY ROOM

He pulls them into the room and closes the door. He paces a small circle as he tries to figure out what to do -- but then the panic hits him -- anxiety spiking through the roof.

WARREN
Come on--come on--come on--come on...

His breathing escalates and he has trouble taking deep breaths -- Ana is afraid --

Hayden is almost more scared at the sight of Warren cracking. He backs away and crumbles into a ball in the corner. Ana rushes to comfort him --

Warren sees this, and it does something to him. The sight of the scared teenager curling into a ball for protection while Warren, an adult, falls to pieces.

He takes a moment, begins to breathe. Count. Breathe. Count. Calm... calm... calm... And he manages to pull himself out of the anxiety attack and rise an inch taller in stature. He takes one last look at his family, grabs the door handle, slips out of the room, closing the door behind him.

INT. HALLWAY - HOUSE

Warren presses his back to the other side of the door. He shut down his attack, but he's an inch away from the looming anxiety overpowering and freezing him.

He hears SHUFFLING FEET wandering in the living room. He tries to control himself.

Then he detects MOVEMENT in the kitchen -- KNOCKING over pans, TOSSING kitchen gadgets, SCRAPING of furniture being PUSHED.

Warren is frightened but forces himself to keep calm. He takes deep breaths, squeezes his eyes shut, then opens them, and gathers his courage.

BAM -- BAM -- BAM -- appliances are KNOCKED over -- utensils and plates THROWN around, SMASHING against walls --

INT. UTILITY ROOM

The door opens and Warren slips back inside, locks the door and holds his body weight against the door.

WARREN
(whispering)
I think there's more than one.

Ana and Hayden are terrified.

DISTURBING SOUNDS OF BEATING COUNTERS, STRIPPING WOOD,
CRASHING GLASSES, TOSSING CHAIRS, CABINETS, TABLES, LAMPS...

Remarkably, the intruders cannot hear Baby as she groans and screeches under the blankets that are too heavy for her to remove.

The SOUNDS briefly subside except for FEET SCOOTING in different directions. Warren nervously unlocks the door.

Warren partially opens the door and peeks through the crack --

ADULT RHESUS MONKEYS completely fill the main level of the house. They are banging on the wooden doors. Jumping up and down. Agitated.

Warren shuts the door quickly. Sees Ana looking at him.

WARREN

You're not going to believe this, not in your wildest nightmares.

Warren points to Baby.

WARREN

There's a whole bunch of... *her* out there. Maybe thirty or more monkeys, full grown. They're trying to get into the rooms. It's just a matter of time before they get to this room.

Ana's in panic-mode. Hayden stares at Warren, that little boy inside him shaking in fear. Warren clenches his fists.

WARREN

Hayden.

Hayden shifts his body position, listens attentively.

WARREN

I can't do this alone. I need your help. I need *you*.

Hayden seems to have been waiting for someone to tell him this all his life, because he rises to his feet.

WARREN

But it's risky, if you're up to it.

HAYDEN

Try me.

WARREN

I need you to distract them.

Hayden's shivering has stopped. He steps toward Warren.

HAYDEN

How?

WARREN

They are all inside. You slip out the side door to the yard and throw the biggest thing you can into the woods... far away and deep, and don't stop. Maybe some rocks. Keep throwing them until it gets their attention. But be careful, don't draw attention to yourself.

Ana's concern for Hayden shows in her face.

ANA

You can't send him out there alone, I'll--

He stops her, taking charge --

WARREN

Ana, if they see you, you won't be able to fight them off. Hayden's young. Strong. He's fast.

Ana looks to Hayden, tears already in her eyes.

HAYDEN

Don't worry, Mom, I can do it. In this house...

(looks to Warren)

... we're in this all together.

Hayden hugs his mother then squeezes Warren's shoulder.

HAYDEN

I got this.

Hayden carefully opens the door. He gasps at the sight of a troop of monkeys wrecking the house to get inside rooms. But this teenager is growing up...

He pulls himself together then sneaks out the door. Ana turns to Warren, her face a mix of emotions.

ANA

That's *my* baby, Warren. What are you going to do?

WARREN

You have to trust me.

INT. VARIOUS ROOMS

The monkeys continue to destroy everything in view as they pound and scratch on closed doors, then --

WIIIISSHH -- POOOMMM -- PLOOPP -- STACCATO SOUNDS OF ROCKS SWISHING THROUGH LEAVES AND STRIKING TREES BEFORE PLOPPING TO THE GROUND REPEATEDLY.

The monkeys stop one by one after hearing the sounds outside.

The monkeys look at each other, confused. They cautiously move on all fours to the broken windows, begin to climb through them.

A few of the monkeys stay back and surround an adult female monkey who has plopped herself in the middle of the room. She has gray fur with a white marking. The pink skin on her face is smooth. That face...

It's JENNY.

The other monkeys wait with her, deferring to her.

INT. VARIOUS ROOMS/STAIRS

Unnoticed by the monkeys, Warren surreptitiously sneaks out of the utility room after seeing so many flee. He heads up the stairs.

When he reaches the top of the stairs, the last step CREAKS.

The sound alerts Jenny and her attention quickly shifts to Warren.

She stands and grunts and uses gestures with her hands.

The other monkeys spring toward the stairway on all fours and glide up the steps.

Warren watches in terror as the monkeys bounce after him. He dashes to the --

MASTER BEDROOM

and turns to SLAM THE DOOR -- but the monkeys BLOCK it from closing.

He PRESSES his shoulder against the door but the monkeys overpower him. He has no choice but to let it go and run to the --

MASTER BATHROOM

Inside, Warren SLAMS the door shut in front of the monkeys who are a second too late.

Warren quickly slips out of another door on the other end leading to the hallway.

The monkeys SCREAM and POUND and SCRATCH on the door. They inadvertently HIT the door latch several times but the door remains closed.

HALLWAY

Warren hurries back to the Master Bedroom -- beelines to the bathroom, SLAMS THE DOOR -- dumps the dresser on its side against it, locking the monkeys in the Master Bathroom.

Warren pulls at the bottom dresser drawer to reveal the RIFLE BOX. He rips it open and grabs the gun.

As the dresser jerks from the monkeys trying to get through the door it's blocking, Warren swiftly begins loading the gun.

The monkeys force the dresser to move and an opening is growing wider.

He tries to balance moving and loading the gun at the same time while keeping his eyes on the bathroom door.

He finally finishes loading the gun and darts from the room just as the bathroom door SPRINGS open.

INT. STAIRWAY

He FLIES down the steps. He gets to the bottom of the stairs to find Ana waiting for him.

The monkeys at the top of the stairs SCAMPER down the steps.

Warren and Ana see Jenny RISING to her feet. She MOVES MENACINGLY toward Warren and Ana, baring teeth.

Time slows.

Warren's torn over what to do.

Ana recoils, expressing dread at what is about to happen.

The monkeys on the steps are nearly touching them, Jenny's almost on top of them.

Warren lifts the gun.

Ana SCREAMS.

Warren FIRES -- BLAM -- BLAM -- into the ceiling. Plaster falls down on the monkeys and Warren and Ana.

The monkeys on the steps let out a LOUD SCREECH, HURDLE over the steps, SCURRYING away from Warren and his gun.

Jenny backs down and retreats. She climbs through the broken window with the others. They rapidly disappear.

Warren and Ana collapse in each other's arms. They kiss and hug. Ana suddenly lifts up her head.

ANA

Hayden! He's outside!

WARREN

I'll get him.

HAYDEN (O.S.)

Fuck if I'm going out there again.

Warren and Ana turn around to see Hayden standing behind them.

HAYDEN

They all ran into the woods.

(to Warren)

Good plan by the way.

Ana rushes him and envelops him in her arms.

ANA

Thank God you're safe.

HAYDEN

All I did was throw some rocks into the woods.

(then)

And believe me, there were plenty of rocks from the mountains.

Ana can't believe her eyes when she surveys the wreckage left behind.

WARREN

We've got to get out of here. They may come back. Grab anything you absolutely need while I get Baby.

Warren starts toward the utility room, stops, lies the gun on a broken table. Looks back at Ana. Ana nods her approval. Warren continues his way.

EXT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - NIGHT

The family and Baby leave the broken front door as it is and hurry to the car. They are halfway there when --

SCREEEEEECH! Jenny CRIES OUT from edge the woods.

On all fours, other monkeys emerge from edge of the woods.

The family REVERSES their direction and SPRINTS to the house. They almost make it to the deck when --

MONKEYS JUMP IN FRONT OF THEM --

SNARLING --

CRAWLING FORWARD --

The family makes a DASH to the road, but they're too late --

The monkeys BLOCK access to the road.

Warren is at a loss, his head swivels, looking for a way out.

WARREN

We need to get to the car!

But the monkeys CLIMB on top of the car, POUNDING on its roof.

Ana and Hayden are frozen in fear.

Warren abruptly stops and GAZES at their leader, Jenny.

The family cannot escape -- they are encircled by monkeys.

Warren STARES HARD at Jenny.

The monkeys TIGHTEN the circle as they CLOSE IN.

Ana and Hayden are clinging together.

Warren has an epiphany after staring at Jenny's markings.

WARREN

That's... the mother.

ANA

How do you know?

Warren bends down and gently places Baby on the ground.

Baby stands on her own. She looks at Warren.

Warren gently nudges her toward Jenny.

Baby outstretches her arms to Warren.

Jenny's stone-faced as she watches.

Warren nudges Baby again.

Baby turns around and looks at her mother. She drops to all fours and scurries toward Jenny, stops, looks back at Warren.

Warren stands still.

Baby finally goes to her mother. They hold each other gingerly. Jenny examines Baby. She touches the healed wounds on her neck.

She pulls Baby to her chest. Baby wraps her arms around her mother. They turn around and disappear into the woods.

The other monkeys follow Jenny into the woods, peacefully.

Warren drops to his knees and bows his head. Ana touches his shoulder. He looks up. She stoops and kisses him.

Hayden watches, tears form in his eyes, but smiles.

He then has something else to catch his eye at the entrance road -- Sheriff Barnes' SUV.

The Sheriff looks panicked until he sees them, alive and well, he finally relaxes and brakes the SUV to a stop. Out his window --

SHERIFF BARNES

Y'all okay?

WARREN

What? Are you our own personal sheriff now?

Barnes gives him a "don't even start" look.

WARREN

Just a few scratches from fighting off a wild primate attack, but other than that, we're good.

HAYDEN

Except Warren shit his pants.

Warren looks to Hayden in surprise.

WARREN

What kind of goofball remark is that?
You're grounded.

Ana watches with a smile on her face and thankfulness in her eyes as her two guys banter and tease each other.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - HOLMES - DAY

The sheriff looks beleaguered with an office full of government people dressed in dark suits and ties, peppering him with questions.

SHERIFF BARNES

I'm telling you the truth, I really
don't know anything. Why don't you
ask the monkeys?

As someone walks into the office, the door opens showing a gaggle of reporters, photographers and bloggers outside, YELLING out for interviews.

The Sheriff buries his head in his hands.

SHERIFF BARNES

I've got to find another job.

His phone RINGS. He looks at caller ID.

SHERIFF BARNES

Great.

He picks up.

SHERIFF BARNES

(into phone)
You back in town yet?

INT. HOTEL ROOM - HOLMES HOTEL - DAY

Warren and Ana stand at a window, gazing at the mountains when Hayden enters their room, appearing frustrated.

HAYDEN

Dad called. He was checking on me to
see if I was okay.

ANA

Is he coming?

HAYDEN

I don't think so.

(then)

I don't need him to babysit me anyway.

WARREN

He should at least be a friend.

HAYDEN

I have a friend.

Hayden extends his fist to fist bump Warren. Warren flinches. Hayden shakes his head at Warren like he can't believe this guy.

WARREN

I thought you were going to hit me.

They all laugh then Warren and Hayden fist bump.

ANA

How about dinner with us?

HAYDEN

I'm meeting some of my fans downtown.

ANA

Fans?

WARREN

(to Ana)

Don't you know? Your boy's blowing us off because he's a local celebrity.

(to Hayden)

Hey, before you go, can I get your autograph?

(slaps his own butt)

Right here.

Hayden rolls his eyes as Warren chuckles. Ana can't believe who he's turned into. Hayden heads to his room to get ready.

ANA

Really? I'm trying to get him to behave like a respectful human being.

WARREN

Then maybe you should have married one.

ANA

Nah... I have a funny feeling I married the right one.

KNOCK, KNOCK, at the door.

ANA

What now?

Warren wearily opens the door to reveal a man wearing dark glasses and a suit, RICK (40s), standing with a pad and pen in hand. Warren looks him up and down.

WARREN

Can't you guys give us a break? We already told you government people everything we know.

RICK

Government? Heavens no, I'm not from the government.

Rick looks down at his own clothes.

RICK

I dress like this to get people to talk for free. My name's Rick Franklin and I'm a reporter for the National Sentinel.

ANA

We just had an experience that would make your hair stand on end and you want us to spend hours telling you the story for free?

RICK

Who said you would do it for free? The newspaper pays quite a bit for a specialty story that becomes national news. And believe me, *this* is national news.

Warren and Ana share a look.

ANA

Well, in that case, come on in.

INT. LAMPOST CAFE - NIGHT

Warren and Ana eat dinner at the downtown cafe.

ANA

Are you ready to go back to civilization?

WARREN

I can't leave this place fast enough, but just because I fought off a bunch of monkeys doesn't make me ready to face the city again.

ANA

I don't know if it was the outdoors, the physical work, the project you took on, but your condition... *this version* of you, I'm falling in love with it.

WARREN

Yeah?

ANA

Yeah.

WARREN

(shrugs)

I'm taking baby steps.

ANA

Your baby steps are moving in fast forward. Look what you did -- dealt with problems, handled adversity, made decisions, you even talked to *people*...

WARREN

I do like my chances in overcoming this thing. I want to get back to helping *us*, not just me.

ANA

I would love that.

They share a smile and he reaches across the table to hold her hand.

WARREN

Maybe we can move to a quiet suburb, work full time from home, and ditch the three hour commute to the city. Give you the attention you deserve.

ANA

I don't think that's gonna work out..

Warren doesn't like the sound of this. He instantly floods with worry. Can't hide it.

WARREN

Wh... Why?

ANA

Because.... when you're ready... I think you should go back to college.

His face shows this is the last thing he expected.

WARREN

That's... out of the blue.

ANA

I think you'd be a *fantastic* veterinarian. Look how you took care of that helpless baby monkey.

WARREN

I'm too old.

ANA

You're never too old to do what you love.

WARREN

It's far too expensive. We can't take this crazy windfall and blow it on me.

ANA

You'll end up making more money than you do now. I'd say it's a win-win.

Warren ponders the possibility.

WARREN

I'll think about it. But if I give it a try, there's one caveat...

Ana listens attentively.

WARREN

No monkeys.

Ana smiles.

FADE OUT.

THE END