

KEPLER, NV

An original motion picture screenplay

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EXT. NEVADA ROUTE 375- DAY

A large, luxury RV rumbles down a desert highway. It's the only vehicle on the road.

It passes a sign signifying the street of conquest: NEVADA RT 375 - Extraterrestrial Highway.

INT. COOPER'S RV- DAY

DANIEL COOPER sits at the wheel. He is late 40's, looks stately and out of place driving an RV.

Beside him is his wife, SUSAN COOPER, same age. She blankly watches the desert pass by.

SUSAN

Do you want to stop and take a picture, Braden?

BRADEN COOPER, 18, reclines in the back, staring out the window. He's well built, like his father, but hair is darker. Like any disenchanted late teen, Braden's earbuds are nestled firmly in his ears, music blaring from his cell phone. He doesn't notice mom is speaking.

ANNA COOPER, his slightly younger sister, leans over and flicks Braden's arm. He glares at her. She points to mom. Braden takes an earbud out.

A rock-rap song hums through.

BRADEN

What?

SUSAN

E.T. Highway.

Braden returns his disaffected stare out the window

BRADEN

It's stunning.

SUSAN

(sighs)

This was one of your stops.

BRADEN

I only made the list because you made me.

DANIEL

C'mon now where's your sense of
adventure?

He leans forward, toward his father's driver seat.

BRADEN

I left it in Ft. Lauderdale. With
my friends who are throwing the
last parties we'll ever have
together.

DANIEL

You'll have plenty of time to party
once you're a Gator.

SUSAN

Besides, we agreed as a family.

BRADEN

No, we didn't. You kidnapped me two
days after graduation to drag me
across the country so that you two
can fix your marriage.

DANIEL

Braden!

BRADEN

(to Anna)

I can't wait to leave for
Gainesville. It's a shame it's only
300 miles away.

Susan turns, covers her eyes with her hand.

Braden leans back. Anna glares at him.

ANNA

Smooth.

BRADEN

What? You don't want to be here
either, Anna.

ANNA

But I'm trying. That's more than I
can say for you, dick bag.

Braden puts his earbud back in. Susan glares at her son.
Daniel catches her.

Daniel suddenly swerves and brakes. The RV screeches to a stop. Daniel aggressively shifts the RV into reverse, and they accelerate backwards to the E.T. Highway sign.

He brakes hard.

DANIEL
Braden. Braden!

Anna plucks a headphone from her brother's ear.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
Your mother would like a picture.

Braden lets out a sigh of frustration. He doesn't speak, just maneuvers around his sister and throws open the RV door.

SUSAN
I thought we agreed there'd be no electronics on this trip? No cell phones, no laptops. Wasn't it your job to enforce that, Daniel?

DANIEL
Don't look at me. I told him not to bring it.

ANNA
(proudly)
I don't have mine.

Neither parent acknowledges Anna.

DANIEL
(defeated)
My fault. Always my fault, Susan.

A tense moment passes. Susan steps out. Daniel forces a smile.

He turns on the radio, tunes to a classic rock station. They can't help getting into the music, and quickly, both are tapping their feet and singing along.

EXT. NEVADA ROUTE 375 - DAY

Susan strides a few paces past the sign where Braden is leaning.

SUSAN
You could try a little harder,
Braden.

BRADEN
So could you.

Susan fumbles in her purse and pulls out a digital camera.

SUSAN
I've been trying for 22 years.
Smile. Pretend like you're happy.

BRADEN
(Through clenched teeth)
Just like you.

She clicks a picture.

SUSAN
God, Braden, what am I supposed to do?

BRADEN
I don't know, be civil for a change? If you hate each other that much, just divorce like normal people.

SUSAN
We are going to be a family if it kills us, so help me God.

Susan rubs her forehead. The heat is sweltering, and both are already starting to perspire.

SUSAN (CONT'D)
Okay, a truce? I'll try harder with your father if you try harder to have some fun?

BRADEN
We'll go with that.

They trudge back to the RV. Susan wrinkles her nose.

SUSAN
Whew, what is that funk?

BRADEN
I think it's both of us.

Susan chuckles.

SUSAN
It's not. Smells like roadkill. Or worse.

BRADEN

Four nights in this thing. Really
might be me.

Susan laughs again.

SUSAN

You can get a good shower in Vegas.

INT. COOPER FAMILY RV - DAY

Susan and Braden climb back into the RV, where Daniel and Anna are just ending a tune.

Braden immediately plugs the headset back into his ears. Daniel drives as the next song starts - "Steppenwolf, Magic Carpet Ride (or other classic rock anthem)." Daniel cranks it up.

DANIEL

(singing slightly off key
and barely off tempo)
*"I like to dream yes, yes, right
between my sound machine On a cloud
of sound I drift in the night
Any place it goes is right
Goes far, flies near, to the stars
away from here."*

Daniel puts his hand on Susan's leg. He rubs. Anna leans in from the back. All three sing.

ALL

*"Well, you don't know what we can
find Why don't you come with me
little girl On a magic carpet ride
You don't know what we can see Why
don't you tell your dreams to me
Fantasy will set you free Close
your eyes girl, Look inside girl,
Let the sound take you away"*

Anna sits back again. Daniel looks at Susan. He rubs up her thigh and smiles.

She stares at him coyly, finally smiles back. Daniel grins wide, still gazing at his wife.

SUSAN

Honey!

A horn honks. Susan grabs the wheel and turns, narrowly avoiding a large military transport vehicle that seems to have come out of nowhere.

Daniel fights against his wife to correct.

EXT. NEVADA ROUTE 375 - DAY

Tires squeal. The Cooper RV fishtails on the road, then over-corrects. The RV careens off the road with a jolt, runs up a sand dune, then rumbles down the other side of it.

INT. COOPER'S RV - DAY

Braden and Anna are tossed in the back, both end up on the floor.

EXT. NEVADA ROUTE 375 - DAY

Daniel spins the wheel and stomps the breaks but the RV continues down the other side of the dune, descending into a small valley.

Sand and dirt are thrown out from under the skidding tires. The rear passenger tire suddenly blows, and the RV finally staggers to a halt.

Dust covers the RV, inside and out.

INT. COOPER'S RV - DAY

SUSAN

Jesus! Anna, Braden, you two all right?

ANNA

I'm okay.

BRADEN

Sure.

Daniel's white-knuckled on the wheel.

DANIEL

Everyone's good. Good.

SUSAN

"Good?" What the hell, Daniel?!

Susan hauls off and hits Daniel hard in the shoulder.

DANIEL
Me? Miss grab-the-wheel-and-jerk!

SUSAN
Like you didn't see the truck
coming straight at us.

DANIEL
Truck? What truck?

SUSAN
You were too busy feeling me up to
protect your children!

DANIEL
Oh, I get it. I start to make you
feel something other than
resentment so you pull us off the
road! Forgive me for lightening the
mood!

SUSAN
There hasn't been a mood in 10
years!

Daniel throws his door open and exits.

DANIEL
Right, and that's my fault too,
huh? Come off it! We bought the
house you wanted, the car you
wanted, everything you wanted!

He slams the door.

EXT. OFF NEVADA 375 - DAY

Susan stares from inside. Sand and baked dirt slide toward a
flat plain leading out to a ridge line stretching for a mile
or two.

INT. COOPER'S RV - AFTERNOON

Anna rubs her leg. Her shin is scraped and barely bleeding.

ANNA
Mom, do we have any gauze or Band-
Aids?

SUSAN
(without looking)
In the first aid kit in the
bathroom.

Anna stares longingly at the back of mom's chair. A tense moment passes.

BRADEN
For Christ's sake.
(sarcastically)
Don't worry, I'll get it.

INT. COOPER'S RV BATHROOM - DAY

He passes through an accordion door and opens a drawer. Braden returns and hands the white case to his sister. He pulls an earbud out.

BRADEN (CONT'D)
You hit the table?

Braden kneels beside her.

ANNA
I dunno. Probably.

BRADEN
It's not deep at all.

Anna takes the case. Braden mops his sister's leg with a gauze pad.

ANNA
Did you tell dad yet?

He unwraps a large band-aid as they speak.

BRADEN
Are you kidding?. It's all we'll
talk about for the next six days.
I'll wait until we're home.

Susan stares out into the distance. She sighs heavily.

Braden moves to the door, throws it open. He makes a point to hit the back of his mother's chair as he goes out. Anna scoots to the door, holds out her leg.

BRADEN (CONT'D)
Dad's trying to get us killed.

Braden fumbles with the wrapper for the bandage.

ANNA
Or mom. Same thing.

BRADEN
Big truck. Military Hummer. Ring a bell? No?

He sticks the bandage to her leg.

ANNA
No. Well I didn't see it.

Anna pulls her leg back.

BRADEN
Big surprise, what color was today's pill?

ANNA
Go to hell.

Anna slams the door on Braden.

EXT. OFF NEVADA 375 - AFTERNOON

Braden walks to his father. The hatch is opened and Daniel digs through a tool box.

BRADEN
Why are you two together?

DANIEL
I love your mom. God help me.
Think we can get back up to the road?

BRADEN
No. Too steep.

Daniel shuts the compartment and pulls the spare tire from its mount. He points into the distance.

DANIEL
There's a road there. All of these highways replaced local roads in the 60's and 70's. It'll reconnect somewhere. We just have to get to it.

Braden watches as his father hoists the tire. It leans against the RV.

DANIEL

Let me see your phone.

Braden hands it to his dad. Daniel peels open the back, pops out the battery. He rears back and heaves it deep into the desert.

BRADEN

Aw c'mon!

DANIEL

I'll buy you a new battery when we get back. I told you no cell phone. No distractions, just family.

Braden relents. His eyes scans the desert floor as he spots a two lane street, laden with vegetation in its brokenness. Heat streams off the sand and dirt.

The burnt-out shell of a Buick Century bakes in the distance, where it appears to have been for a long, long time.

INT. COOPER'S RV - DAY

Anna closes the first aid kit and slides it back toward the bathroom. She strums her fingernails on the sideboard.

ANNA

Should we go help them?

SUSAN

No. Your dad needs a moment to calm down.

ANNA

And you don't?

SUSAN

I don't appreciate your lip.

Anna looks out the window at the desert. Susan realizes how harsh she sounded.

SUSAN

So what's up with that boy you liked?

ANNA

Nothing.

SUSAN

You can talk to me about it.

ANNA

Jesus, mom, he dumped me for Skyler like a month ago. Thanks for paying attention.

Anna shakes her head and climbs out.

EXT. OFF NEVADA 375 - AFTERNOON

Daniel hoists the flat tire onto the rack on the back of the RV and holds it while Braden screws the nuts into place.

Anna approaches just as Daniel points to the front.

DANIEL

Anna, will you?

Anna climbs into the driver seat.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Ready?

Braden tucks the tire iron into the back of his pants. Daniel and Braden push. The RV rocks, but doesn't release.

INT-COOPER FAMILY RV - DAY

Susan finally breaks her stare.

EXT. COOPER'S RV - DAY

Susan throws open her door, and joins Daniel and Braden behind the RV.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

On three Anna, turn the wheel clockwise. One, two, three!

All three strain to push, and the RV finally starts to move, bounces off the rocks, lets loose and coasts down the hill.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Good! Brakes Anna!

Daniel glances at Braden.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Whaddaya think, wanna ride shotgun?

INT. COOPER'S RV - DAY

Anna and Susan slip into the back of the RV. As Braden climbs in, he realizes he's still got the tire iron. He tucks it under the seat.

EXT. COOPER'S RV - DAY

The RV rumbles over sand before coming onto the road.

INT. COOPER'S RV - AFTERNOON

Susan reaches out to her husband and rubs his shoulder. She strokes it lightly.

SUSAN

Sorry about earlier. I'm sorry about a lot of things.

There is an awkward silence.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Listen, I could resign, go back to just head finance or purchasing.

SUSAN

I guess.

DANIEL

(sternly)

Meaning you don't want the lifestyle change.

SUSAN

I didn't say that.

DANIEL

We agreed we need to make some sacrifices!

SUSAN

Braden's just starting college, Anna will go shortly...

DANIEL

I'm the one willing to sacrifice, you wouldn't dare consider stepping down from your post!

BRADEN

Christ! Can you two talk to each other once in a while!

Daniel glances in his mirrors, then out at the horizon.

DANIEL

Shit! We're getting further away
from it. This doesn't go back to
375.

Far in the distance, over small dunes, a white van rumbles
down Highway 375.

SUSAN

So where does this go?

BRADEN

You mean where did it used to go?

SUSAN

Great. So much for Vegas.

EXT. OFF NEVADA 375-AFTERNOON

The road curves slightly to the right, passing in between a
large ridge. They are no longer able to see Route 375.

INT. COOPER'S RV - AFTERNOON

As the family RV passes behind the slope, they enter a more
mountainous region. The ridges grow quickly, and the RV is
covered in shadows.

EXT. OFF NEVADA 375 - AFTERNOON

A sign warns 'Stop Ahead.' The marker is weathered -- rusted
and faded into dingy orange with brown splotches. The RV
continues around the bend. Another two-lane road directly
intersects the road they are on.

A semi-truck with no trailer is stopped at the intersection.
The truck turns right. The RV comes up on the intersection
with the rig still in sight. Daniel stops and hesitates for a
moment.

INT. COOPER'S RV - DAY

Daniel looks left, then right. He squints to scan straight
ahead. Another road sign reads KEPLER, NV. POP: 1,347.

EXT. OFF NEVADA 375 - LATE AFTERNOON

The RV moves through the intersection and down the hill behind the semi.

EXT. KEPLER, NV - LATE AFTERNOON

They pass a series of houses, and everything appears normal: lawns trimmed, flowers blooming. The entire community is nestled between a series of ridges, but the area is wide enough to let in sunlight. The sun, however, fades fast behind the hills.

The RV comes to a market area where a restaurant shares a lot with a motel. Across the street is a Florist Shop, and a Post Office - both large, sturdy, brick buildings from the 1940s expansion boom.

An alley runs between them, disappearing up the ridge.

The same semi-truck slows to a stop in front of the restaurant, announced by a large sign reading *McGuire's Family Restaurant*.

The Cooper's RV pulls into the lot beside the semi. Kepler appears to be a quaint, peaceful, boring town.

INT. COOPER'S RV - LATE AFTERNOON

Susan peaks over Daniel's head from the back. Anna sits forward. Braden opens his door and jumps out.

EXT. MCGUIRE'S FAMILY RESTAURANT - LATE AFTERNOON

They all exit.

DANIEL

Why don't you kids go in and get some pie or something and your mom and I will get the rooms for the night. Sound good?

BRADEN

Divine.

Anna and Braden walk toward the restaurant.

EXT. MCGUIRE'S FAMILY RESTAURANT DINING ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Early-90's country music plays in the distance.

KEITH, JEREMY, and JIMMY, all late teens, are loitering in front of the restaurant. Four grungy dirt bikes rest against the front wall of the restaurant and motel.

Jeremy is skinny with bleach-blonde hair and he wears a blue-jean jacket.

Keith, dark and handsome but also skinny, has multiple ear-piercings and has his shirt slung over his shoulder.

Jimmy, gangly, dangles his arms low like he's carrying something between his legs.

JIMMY

You have no marbles!

Keith and Jeremy laugh. Keith drags on his cigarette.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

He's like: knock it off. Say you're sorry. So I'm like: I'm sorry... that you have no marbles!

All laugh.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Then the bastard just left me there! I had to have Bobby give me a ride home.

All three ogle Anna. The young men exchange a glance and laugh awkwardly. Anna and Braden enter.

EXT. COOPER'S RV - DAY

Daniel strides around the RV, and takes his wife's hand.

DANIEL

You okay?

SUSAN

We were supposed to be in Vegas tonight. This is a far cry from the Strip.

DANIEL

What happened to your sense of adventure?

SUSAN

You did.

Daniel lets go of her hand.

DANIEL

The fact that you haven't had fun
in a decade is all on me?

SUSAN

Whatever.

Susan treads to the motel. Daniel looks around and his eyes fall on the SEMI-TRUCK DRIVER as he finishes paperwork on a clipboard.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - LATE AFTERNOON

The Semi-truck Driver exits his vehicle and walks to the motel. Daniel's eyes follow him. The sun beams through a pass, illuminating the parking lot with sharp light.

Daniel steps to the motel lobby door and opens it. He turns to hold it open for the Semi-Truck Driver. He glances back.

(beat)

Many of the cars in the parking lot are gone. The ones that remain are rusted and dusty. There are several cars in front of the motel, in the same condition, tires flat, windows busted.

A dim and grungy sign at the end of the lot says 'McGuire's Family Restaurant.'

The Semi-Truck Driver is somehow already inside, though he never passed by Daniel.

SEMITRUCK DRIVER

(to no one in particular)

Shit. Forgot my wallet.

Daniel breaks his stare as the Semi-truck Driver crosses in front of him. Daniel scans the parking lot. Nothing is abnormal.

INT. MCGUIRE'S FAMILY RESTAURANT - LATE AFTERNOON

Anna and Braden stand in the foyer. There are 20 or so people in the restaurant. Several townsfolk are seated on stools around the counter. Others are scattered around booths and tables.

HOSTESS, probably a teen, doesn't acknowledge the pair. She is a very short but petite younger woman, barely clearing 5 feet tall. She meanders from her post to the kitchen.

She grabs a whole pie and steps to a high-seated table at the end of the bar. Hostess delivers the pie to three men, MAN 1, BIG BIKER GUY and GUY.

Man 1 has a mustache and a cleaned-up mullet. Guy is common, average Joe.

Big Biker Guy wears a cut-off shirt and a vest. He nears middle age. A tattoo on his shoulder displays an eagle carrying an American Flag with USMC on the flagpole.

Braden diverts his gaze, realizing that he'd been staring at the pretty young Hostess.

Anna rocks uncomfortably. She itches at her nose. Her hand shakes slightly as she lowers it, her nerves over-stimulated. Braden doesn't notice.

ANNA

I'll be right back.

Anna proceeds toward the back, past the elevated seats.

MAN 1

(as he cuts the pie)
There's a cute one.

Anna doesn't acknowledge them, just charges toward the Women's room.

GUY

Jailbait.

MAN 1

Jailbait my ass. Even if she's not outta high school, that's legal in this state.

Braden sees a jukebox. Early-90's country music continues to play over the speakers. Braden searches his pockets and pulls out two quarters.

BRADEN

This music is gonna kill me.

INT. MCGUIRE'S FAMILY RESTAURANT HALLWAY - LATE AFTERNOON

Anna makes her way to the back. The hallway is narrow and NERDY BUSINESS MAN exits the men's room. He's wearing a pin-striped suit, sticks out amidst all of the plaid.

He doesn't side step at all for Anna, so she squeezes herself against the wall.

ANNA
 (to herself)
 Creep.

A voice booms behind her.

ALAN
 I know, right?

Anna startles. Turns. ALAN stands behind her.

ANNA
 Jesus.

ALAN
 Sorry. Everyone here is rude. We
 tried to get seats but no one even
 acknowledged us.

Alan eyes her. He is only a few years her senior. He is tall,
 a little lanky, but defined. He wears a similar riding suit
 as the teens from out front.

Anna smiles.

ANNA
 Small towns, right? Don't like
 tourists.

ALAN
 Nobody likes tourists. I'm Alan.

Alan offer his hand. Anna hesitates a second, but then shakes
 his hand.

ANNA
 Not from here, Alan?

He points to his crew outside.

ALAN
 Not even close. Me and the hoodlums
 are camping up the ridge out passed
 the Observatory.

ANNA
 This place has an observatory?
 You're kidding, its like 50 houses.

ALAN
 I know, right? We came to ride out
 here for something different.
 (MORE)

ALAN (CONT'D)

The goons actually cut through a fence with signs that said "Trespassers will be shot." It's very welcoming.

Anna laughs.

ALAN (CONT'D)

You have very pretty eyes.

ANNA

Anna. I'm Anna.

She smiles. He smiles back.

ALAN (CONT'D)

I'd, uh, love to stay and chat, but...

He points to the restroom.

ALAN (CONT'D)

I've gotta piss like a racehorse.

Anna steps to the door way of the Woman's restroom. She puts her hand on the door.

ANNA

Nice meeting you then.

ALAN

You too. See you around?

ANNA

Doubt it.

INT. MCGUIRE'S RESTAURANT RESTROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

She strolls to the end, then comes back, slowly pushing open each stall door. She is alone.

The overhead lights begin to flicker. Anna turns to the sink. Anna pulls up her purse.

A stall door creaks.

ANNA

Hello?

No answer.

Anna digs into her purse and withdraws a bag with a dozen pills. They are different colors, different shapes.

She picks one and puts it on her tongue. She cups some water from the sink and she drinks.

As she swallows the pill and stands up straight, she gags a little, then coughs. She swallows hard. Coughs.

The door on the last stall swings shut.

It creaks slowly as it opens. Anna can see the toilet in the reflection of the last mirror. No one is in the stall. The lights fail momentarily. Anna quickly picks and smooths at her hair.

The stall door slams shut. Anna startles.

She regains her composure and turns around. The door creaks. The lights continue to flicker and fail at intervals. Anna inches closer to the stall.

The door pulls inward again. Anna still watches the toilet in the reflection.

Again, the door slams shut, but Anna is prepared this time.

She strides directly in front of the door. This time, as the door spills open, someone lies on the floor.

INT. MCGUIRE'S RESTAURANT RESTROOM OTHER- LATE AFTERNOON

The restroom is in disrepair. The paint peels, many tiles are cracked or broken, and a pile of them are under the sink where they have collapsed off the wall.

The sinks are rusted, crusted with rust and lime. The stalls are decaying, door hinges on two have fallen completely off.

INT. MCGUIRE'S RESTAURANT RESTROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

In the flickering light, Anna sees a YOUNG WOMAN, maybe 25, lying on the floor, dark fluid spilling onto the tiles.

As the door swings back, droplets of blood splatter in a row. A figure stands over the girl, and he holds a chef's knife.

He turns slightly. It's Man 1 from just outside the bathroom. He doesn't acknowledge Anna, he simply slams the door.

Anna gasps and suddenly the lights buzz back to life. The stall lies empty. No one is on the floor.

Anna runs out of the restroom.

INT. THE MOTEL OFFICE - LATE AFTERNOON

The motel office is cramped, two chairs wait empty by the door. A well-used, soot-covered fireplace occupies the wall opposite the counter. BALDING MAN, 40s, sits behind the register, watching a vintage small 12-inch television.

The Yankees are playing the Angels. The game announcer chatters away.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Other scores from around the league, Cleveland tops Milwaukee four-to-three, those young Indians looking like a force to be reckoned with; the Mariners' and A's slug it out, six-to-six there in the seventh inning.

Susan waits impatiently at the counter. Balding Man doesn't turn. She glances at Daniel. He nods to her.

Susan studies the little room. The walls are adorned with several post-card-esque pictures. Recently-burnt wood scatters the bottom of the fireplace. A stoker rests in front of the fire gate. Susan's eyes are drawn to it.

Daniel meanders toward a display holding pamphlets. A placard tops the display - "Local Attractions." He scans them quickly - an Observatory, World's Largest Clown Motel, and Reisling's, a ghost town Copper Mine. Daniel grabs the Mine's brochure.

He turns to see that Susan still hasn't gotten any attention from the innkeeper.

DANIEL

Um, a little help here. We need a couple of rooms.

Balding man doesn't look up. Susan treads toward the end of the counter, trying to get a better view of the fireplace.

INT. THE MOTEL OFFICE OTHER - LATE AFTERNOON

Suddenly, the fireplace appears very old, dated, unused. The bricks are cracked and soot covers the front of the unit.

Susan takes another step. A voice booms behind her.

SEMITRUCK DRIVER

I was hoping to get a room for the night.

Susan jumps, startled. She spins around and sees Semi-truck Driver waits at the counter.

INT. THE MOTEL - LATE AFTERNOON

Daniel studies her, he's just as confused.

BALDING MAN

(doesn't turn away from the screen)
Twenty dollars, cash only. Keys are
on the peg board there on the end
of the counter.

Semi-truck Driver lays his cash down, grabs a key from the board at the end of the counter. It's marked # 6. Susan digs into her purse. She lays out \$40 and takes two keys, # 7 and #8.

She turns to leave. Daniel turns with her, and overhears from the television announcer.

ANNOUNCER

*We are three outs away from a
sweep. This may finally be the year
Mattingly gets to the big show!*

INT. MCGUIRE'S FAMILY RESTAURANT DINING ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Braden stands over the jukebox. He's flipping from page to page. Anna strides past him.

ANNA

Let's go.

Anna keeps walking. Braden scans the faces of the diners.

He turns back to the jukebox and finishes the pages, unwilling to commit to any of the songs. Braden steps toward the door, but pauses at a comment between two older men behind him.

OLDER MAN 1

Saw on the news that asteroid is
about to hit Jupiter. Gonna put on
quite a show.

OLDER MAN 2

Some of the boys at the observatory
are gonna watch it. I worked with
Ms. Shoemaker at one point. Proud
of her. Damn proud.

Braden turns and studies the men for just a moment. They don't seem to notice. He exits.

EXT. MCGUIRE'S FAMILY RESTAURANT - LATE AFTERNOON

The pair emerge into the waning daylight. Jimmy and Jeremy laugh loudly.

JEREMY

Then he says: My grandpappy was from West Virginia and he was a damn fine engineer!

Jimmy and Jeremy glance at each other and mock pulling the train whistle cord.

JIMMY AND JEREMY

WHOO WHOO!

The boys make eye contact with Anna.

KEITH

(to the guys)
Jailbait. I've done enough of 'em to know.

ALL LAUGH.

EXT. MOTEL - LATE AFTERNOON

Susan and Daniel pass under the awning that covers the path to the doors. Susan unlocks a door marked #7.

DANIEL

Are you sure about this?

SUSAN

(coldly)
About what?

DANIEL

Staying here.

Susan puts her hands at her side.

SUSAN

Can we press on to Vegas? The RV is jacked up thanks to you. And I'm tired, Daniel.

Anna and Braden are approaching from across the lot.

DANIEL

What was that back there? 'Twenty dollars, keys are at the end.' No receipt, no ID, and that other guy, I never heard the door open.

SUSAN

You were both distracted by the game. Typical.

DANIEL

Please, this has nothing to do with baseball.

SUSAN

You know what I think? You feel guilty. If you hadn't been up to your funny business we would have been on 375 and sleeping at a nice casino instead of this dump.

DANIEL

Funny business? Are you twelve? And you're the one who grabbed the wheel!

SUSAN

To keep us from slamming head on into that truck!

DANIEL

There was no truck! And... And... Maybe I wouldn't have had to grope you if you'd spent the last six months sleeping with me instead of Tom!

Anna and Braden stop approaching, after hearing the last part of the argument. Susan looks at the kids, then licks her teeth and scowls at Daniel.

SUSAN

Smooth.

Susan hands Daniel a key, steps into her room, and slams the door in his face. Room # 7.

DANIEL

Yeah.

He strolls to the next door and enters Room # 8.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - EVENING.

Braden and Anna are left on the front landing.

BRADEN

I'm gonna go get my bag. Want me to grab yours?

ANNA

Great. Thanks.

Braden turns his back to her and goes to the RV.

Anna watches for a moment, then takes a few steps toward the Motel office. Well behind her, three bike riders rev up and take off across the parking lot, onto the street and up the ridge.

INT. THE MOTEL OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Balding Man sits, still glued to the TV. Anna creeps in the door, careful to not let it shut behind her. She moves to the peg board at the end of the counter and takes the last key, marked #2.

She backs out of the door without Balding Man any wiser.

EXT. MCGUIRE'S FAMILY RESTAURANT - AFTERNOON

Alan mounts his dirt bike. He sees Anna emerge from the hotel office. She waves to him. He rolls idly to where she stands.

Anna smiles as he stops. She steps off the landing.

ALAN

I told you I'd see you around.

ANNA

Wanna see a lot more of me?

She hands him the key.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Meet me in two hours.

Alan smiles.

ALAN

Sure thing.

Anna points to Braden as he emerges from the RV.

ANNA

Brother. See you then.

ALAN

Wait, what about your parents?

ANNA

Dad is in the other room. And once
mom takes a xanax, she'd sleep
through Armageddon.

Alan revs and squeals tires before taking off across the parking lot and up the ridge.

Anna moves toward Braden, who carries two bags. She takes hers off his shoulder.

BRADEN

Who's the guy?

ANNA

Nunya. Can I tell you something?

They stroll toward the motel.

BRADEN

Sure.

ANNA

Sounds stupid. Promise you won't
judge?

Anna shakes her head.

ANNA (CONT'D)

I saw something in the bathroom.
Like a vision or something.

The wind kicks up, whips Anna's hair. She pulls it back.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT OTHER - AFTERNOON

Braden peeks over her shoulder. The houses behind Anna, across the way from the restaurant lot, have grasses overgrown, unkempt shrubbery.

Paint peels from the front of the shop across the street, where all the windows are broken.

EXT. MCGUIRE'S FAMILY RESTAURANT - AFTERNOON

The glimpse vanishes. Braden blinks rapidly.

BRADEN

Wha...What did you see?

ANNA

There was someone in the bathroom.
A man. He was murdering someone.

BRADEN

What?

Braden opens the door to his motel room. He haphazardly drops his bag inside the door.

ANNA

It wasn't real. I mean it was real,
like it really happened, but it
wasn't really happening right then.

BRADEN

Well of course it wasn't. What do
you expect with those pills you
pop?

ANNA

Shh! They can hear you! And it
wasn't that at all. I mean it felt
real. Looked real.

Braden closes the door.

BRADEN

That's what hallucinogens do.
Didn't you read *Go Ask Alice*?

She shakes her head and purses her lips.

ANNA

God, you know, I shouldn't have
said anything. I knew you wouldn't
take this seriously.

Anna pauses at the door that Susan entered.

BRADEN

Too much TV sis. *Shudder* has gotten
to your brain.

ANNA

You know I'm right. You wouldn't be
making fun of me if you didn't
think the same thing.

Braden laughs.

ANNA (CONT'D)
It's not normal.

BRADEN
Nothing about this trip is normal.
Or this family.

Anna scowls. Braden takes a few steps toward his sister.

BRADEN (CONT'D)
Sorry. Ya know, might have been a
trick of light.

ANNA
(nods)
Yeah. Might not have been.

Anna goes through the door, leaving Braden in the parking lot by himself.

He backpedals in front of his room, turns and studies the lot, examining the buildings that had been different. It looks like the same normal, dull little town.

EXT. MOTEL EDGE - LATE AFTERNOON

Braden wanders to the end of the walkway, reaches down and picks up a handful of rocks.

A wood pile clutters the end of the vacant lot. The stump hosts an ax, wedged deep into it's top.

Braden begins to absentmindedly throw them into the emptiness. A big gust of wind blows.

EXT. MOTEL EDGE OTHER - LATE AFTERNOON

The houses and Post Office and Doctor Office across the street: everything becomes overgrown, houses and shops rest empty. The road lies broken and pot-hole laden.

Grass and small plants grow in the sidewalk of the hotel.

The parking lot is littered with disused cars, dusty, rusted, and tires flattened. The family RV sits near a worn-out and broken semi-truck.

The flag pole at the end of the lot clangs as the flags flap. They are tattered, torn, faded.

EXT. MOTEL EDGE - LATE AFTERNOON

Braden blinks as the flag regains its shape and color. The parking lot cars are shiny and usable. The road returns to nice condition.

INT. MOTEL ROOM #8 - LATE AFTERNOON

Braden steps into the motel room. He grabs his bag and puts it on one of the beds.

The brochure for the mine rests on the dresser and catches his eye. He pulls it open and reads quickly.

INT. MOTEL ROOM #8 OTHER - LATE AFTERNOON

For a moment, the room around him shifts. The wallpapers tatters. The two beds are faded.

Cracks run in the walls and ceiling.

The mattresses are rotted and mold-covered. A trail of random brown stains on the sun-faded carpet runs between the front door and the closet.

Braden can't believe his eyes. He inches forward, timidly.

BRADEN

Dad?

There is no answer. Braden steps passed the first bed.

BRADEN (CONT'D)

Dad?

Still no answer. Braden notices the closet door rests slightly open. He continues toward it.

He reaches for the handle. He hesitates, reaches again, and swings the door open. A decayed body hangs from the closet.

A tattered garment - an apron - stained, torn, clings to the mess of brokenness that was once human.

Braden stares for just a second as the door behind him opens slowly. A figure moves behind Braden.

Braden gasps, jumps away.

INT. MOTEL ROOM #8 - LATE AFTERNOON

The room appears nice. Beds neatly made. The walls completely intact.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
What'sa matter dude?

Daniel rubs his hair dry with a towel. Braden looks frightened, stares at the closet.

Daniel sees his son's fixated.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
You been real jumpy all afternoon.
You all right?

Braden studies the closet again. Nothing in it.

BRADEN
You... You're in pretty high
spirits, all things considered.

DANIEL
Well I decided that I wasn't gonna
let your mother get to me after
all. Each day is an adventure,
whether we like it or not.

Braden sits beside his dad. Silence.

DANIEL
What's your impression of this
place?

BRADEN
It's a new definition of lame. The
most recent album in the diner
jukebox was Pearl Jams' Vs.

Dad laughs a little.

DANIEL
These small towns are all a decade
or two behind. Part of their charm
is not being so trendy.

Daniel lays down on his bed. Braden sits on the edge of the other bed. He finally lays down.

Silence.

BRADEN
We never did get any pie.

Daniel laughs.

DANIEL
Hey, you think the Marlins won
tonight?

BRADEN
With that bullpen? No way.

Silence for a moment. Daniel stands up, pulls on a shirt.

DANIEL
Walk with me.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - LATE AFTERNOON

Daniel strides toward the RV. Braden treads beside him.

DANIEL
Looking forward to a game at Dodger
Stadium? I've always wanted to go
there.

BRADEN
I know.

DANIEL
Glad we can experience it together.
Bond over it.

BRADEN
I guess.

DANIEL
I've done a lot of things wrong.
You're going off to college now and
it's like I'm losing you.

BRADEN
That's a little dramatic.

They reach the RV. Daniel enters the rear door. Braden stays outside.

DANIEL
Well, you'll be busy with football
and studying and partying and
chasing girls.

Braden smiles.

BRADEN

With any luck. Girls usually don't care that I'm even there.

DANIEL

Fear not, my son. You've got your dad's good looks and your mom's brain.

Braden laughs.

BRADEN

I think you've got that backwards.

Daniel picks up Braden's jacket off of the sofa.

BRADEN (CONT'D)

(puzzled) Wha.. What are you doing dad?

Daniel slows as he pulls a pack of cigarettes from the jacket pocket. Braden looks away.

BRADEN (CONT'D)

I can explain.

Daniel pulls out a lighter too and puts the jacket back down. He emerges and opens the top. Braden studies him, a little forlorn.

Daniel pulls out a stick, puts it to his lips, and lights it. He takes a long, satisfying drag.

BRADEN (CONT'D)

I didn't know you smoked.

Daniel exhales.

DANIEL

Haven't had one in over 18 years. Your mom made me quit when she got pregnant. She really does try to do what's best for you.

He offers Braden the pack. Braden pulls one out and lights it.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

It's a terrible habit, and I want you to quit too. Just with everything going on, I wanted one.

The pair treads back toward the hotel.

BRADEN

How did you know I had some?

DANIEL

I know more about you and your sister than you think I do.

BRADEN

Yeah.

DANIEL

Do you know how many pills she takes a day?

BRADEN

Um. Not sure.

DANIEL

Your mom knows too. She just won't admit it out loud, like talking about it makes it more real.

BRADEN

I'm surprised you're not mad.

DANIEL

Never mad. Concerned. I know what it's like to want to fit in or to just try something dangerous. I wasn't always an old man. I was a crazy party kid once too. You'll like college.

BRADEN

Yeah. I gotta admit I'm a little nervous though.

DANIEL

It's alright to be nervous. No shame in admitting it either. Its just not okay to be so nervous that you don't *try*. You can't let fear paralyze you.

Braden smiles. He takes a drag and coughs. Both laugh.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Practice makes perfect. Don't practice.

Daniel drops the butt and crushes it with his shoe. He then leans over and picks up the filter.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
More than anything, be responsible
about it. I mean college. Partying.
Be responsible.

He marches to the curb in front of Room #6 and throws the
butt in a trash can.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
And please don't try anything too
stupid.

BRADEN
Yeah.

Daniel walks over to his room. Braden picks his butt up from
the ground and strolls to the trash can.

As he steps up, he sees commotion in the room through the
front window. An arm swings forward and a splatter of blood
smacks the window. Braden is paralyzed.

Balding Man stands over top of someone on the bed. He reels
back again, swings an ax down. As his arm hacks forward, an
arm falls from the bed.

Balding Man bends to pick it up from the floor, revealing
Semi-truck Driver's dismembered body.

Braden finally convinces himself to move.

BRADEN (CONT'D)
Dad!

Daniel had just passed through the door. He returns to the
threshold.

DANIEL
Yeah?

Braden peers back into the room. Semi-Truck driver sits on
the bed reading a magazine. Braden glances back at his dad.

Suddenly an attractive young woman, NINA, 18, emerges from
the last room at the end of the walkway.

Daniel follows his son's gaze and smiles.

DANIEL (CONT'D)
Don't be out too late.

Braden smirks, but it fades. He looks back in the window at
Semi-Truck Driver.

EXT. MOTEL ROOM# 10 - DUSK

Nina rests against a support post at the end of the motel.

NINA'S MOTHER
It's not that easy, Nina!

NINA
Whatever, mom! (to herself) If
you'd stop drinking maybe we could
move out of this motel!

She has light brown hair and soft eyes. She wears stone-washed Silvertab blue jeans and a grey flannel shirt.

Braden watches for a moment.

He saunters around in front of her, leans on the post opposite her.

BRADEN
You okay?

NINA
(absently)
I gotta get out of this town. If
you can call it a town.

BRADEN
Yeah. What do people do here? Like
for fun?

NINA
Bunch of military bastards. So
called-scientists.

Nina does not look at Braden. She screams.

NINA (CONT'D)
Go back to your labs! And take this
piece of shit town with you!

Suddenly the door to Room #9 opens. Nerdy Businessman steps into the opening and glares at Nina.

She flips him off. He closes the door.

Down the walkway, Anna sneaks out of her room. Braden watches. Anna goes into Room #2.

Braden keeps his eyes down the walkway as he speaks.

BRADEN

I hear that. I'm stuck here with my family. Some vacation, right?

NINA

Maybe Vegas will help. Can't wait for UNLV.

Braden looks at her.

BRADEN

Going to school there? Nice. I'm off to Florida. I'm gonna be on the practice squad for their football team, as a red-shirt.

Nina doesn't appear impressed. Braden looks back down the walkway.

Alan enters room #2. Braden pretends not to notice.

BRADEN

What are you going into?

Nina doesn't say a word.

Nina steps off the curb and traipses into the parking lot. Braden follows.

BRADEN (CONT'D)

Or we could walk. It's Nina, right?
I'm Braden.

The door opens in the background. NINA'S MOTHER emerges. She is a fairly young woman herself, wearing a pink, worn out bathrobe.

NINA'S MOTHER

Where you going, Nina?

NINA

Where you won't find me.

NINA'S MOTHER

(calls after her)

It's not so easy! You'll see!
You'll be knocked up too with boys following you! You'll be just like me!

Nina's mother laughs. Nina turns and flips her mother off.

NINA

Everyone should just stay away from me. You can all go to hell!

Braden stops following behind her. He casts his gaze back to the motel.

NINA'S MOTHER

Already there, baby girl. Already there.

Nina continues down the road by herself. Braden stands alone. He decides to walk down the alley, back toward the Post-Office.

EXT. KEPLER POST OFFICE - DUSK

Braden tucks his hands into his pockets, the cool desert air settling in. The sun is completely behind the ridge, natural light all but gone.

A gaseous cloud forms in the distance, moving down the ridge.

Opposite the Post-Office, a LITTLE GIRL sits, brushing the hair of a baby doll. A WOMAN holds a TODDLER. Woman doesn't say a word, just ushers the little ones inside.

Braden turns with the alley way, comes back down the narrow road toward the Motel.

INT. MOTEL ROOM #2 - NIGHT

Anna and Alan are lying on a bed, kissing. Anna rolls him onto his back, she climbs on top of him.

ALAN

Ow.

Anna scoots back, embarrassed.

ANNA

I'm sorry. I'm too heavy.

ALAN

No, no. It's just a spring. This bed is lumpy.

Anna smiles, comes back for another kiss.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The last trace of sunlight leaves the valley.

Suddenly, the cars all honk, the fire alarms go off, the parking lot lights flicker in unison with the car lights flashing on and off.

Daniel emerges from his room. His eyes scan the parking lot.

EXT. POST OFFICE - NIGHT

Braden jogs to the edge of the lot.

INT. MOTEL ROOM #2 - NIGHT

Alan and Anna bolt upright, but the commotion has died down. Country music continues to play softly from the restaurant next door.

The night is unnaturally still.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

A gaseous fog hangs in the air. Daniel looks toward Room #8, concerned.

He strides to it, checks the door.

INT. MOTEL ROOM #8 - NIGHT

Daniel enters.

DANIEL
Sue? You okay?

He goes to her bed.

SUSAN
What's going on?

DANIEL
I don't know, but we're not staying
to find out. Get your things.

Susan doesn't move.

DANIEL
Where's Anna?

INT. MOTEL ROOM #2

Anna moves to the window, looks out. Suddenly Balding Man stands in front of it, gripping the ax. Anna backs away from the window just as Balding Man smashes the glass. Anna shrieks.

ANNA

AHH!

EXT. POST OFFICE - NIGHT

Braden hears Anna's scream. He bolts across the parking lot.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Braden tosses open door to Room #4.

BRADEN

Anna!

INT. MOTEL ROOM #4 - NIGHT

Wrong room!

Balding Man swings down, cleaving the chest of sleeping Semi Truck Driver. He doesn't even look at Braden. Just swings again! Braden darts back out of the room.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Daniel carries Susan. He lowers, leans her against the side of the RV. Daniel fumbles for a moment, finally unlocks the door.

DANIEL

Okay, come here.

Daniel stands Susan up as best he can.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

This is gonna suck but we need you alert, baby.

Daniel supports her, but leans her forward a little. He pushes his finger into her mouth until she gags.

Susan gags, chokes, finally she vomits.

INT. MOTEL ROOM #2 - NIGHT

Anna fixes her shirt, Alan re-buttons his jeans.

ANNA

We gotta go. Come back in a couple
of hours, okay?

Alan nods.

EXT. MOTEL ROOM #4 - NIGHT

Braden stumbles backward, watches through the window, just as
he had earlier. Balding Man dismembers Semi-Truck driver.

Anna emerges from Room #2 a few feet away.

ANNA

Braden? What's going on?

BRADEN

Let's go! Grab your stuff! Mom's
too!

They both sprint to their rooms.

Alan slips out of Room #2 and jogs to the edge of the
building. He fires up his bike and disappears into the night.

INT. MOTEL ROOM #8 - NIGHT

Braden throws belongings into both his and his father's bags.

INT. MOTEL ROOM #7 - NIGHT

Anna packs hers and mom's belongings hastily as well.

The glass window shatters. Anna shrieks again.

Balding Man stands outside the window holding the ax. He
glares through the glass, but then moves to the next window.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Balding man shatters the window to Braden's room.

Braden steps back, opens the closet door. He pulls the closet
pole off the wall, fumbles with it momentarily - as if it's
heavier than it should be.

Footsteps are rapidly approaching the room. Braden steps up, bracing himself against the wall, ready to swing.

He turns, stops the motion mid-air.

Daniel.

BRADEN

Oh! Dad!

Daniel takes a few deep breathes. Braden lowers the pole. Daniel sees the bags.

DANIEL

Thank God, you got everything?
Mom's already in the RV. On my
word, you get it started. I'll get
your sister. If anyone comes near
you, club 'em like a baby seal, you
got me?

Braden nods, throws a bag over each shoulder. Daniel glances at his son.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

Go!

Daniel flings the door open and Braden runs.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The fog has become thicker than before. It coats the valley.

Braden sprints across the lot. He reaches the RV but fumbles with the keys. He gets the side door open, throws the closet pole and bags into the back. He scrambles around the RV and climbs into the driver seat.

He adjusts the driver side mirror and sees Nina marching down the street.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Daniel passes the window where Anna is finishing.

DANIEL

We're out, let's go!

He pushes the door open and Anna exits. At the same time, several people scamper from the restaurant. A few of them are crying, some screaming.

GUY exits and moves to his car.

Daniel stops for a moment, watching as a HUSBAND drags his WIFE out of the diner.

Husband struggles with her limp, bloodied body. He turns and attempts to put his wife on his shoulder, his back to the door.

The restaurant door swings open again, and CHEF emerges, wearing a bloody apron. He holds a meat cleaver and steps toward Husband and Wife.

Several more people now run from the restaurant. Chef pulls back the meat cleaver and surges through the flesh between Husband's neck and shoulder.

The blade lodges between Man's shoulder blades. Wife falls from his other shoulder. Chef pulls the blade out. Husband falls, blood spilling onto the pavement.

As Husband falls, GUY pulls a gun from the glove box of his Chevy Nova.

Guy holds up the small revolver, aims at Chef, who is only a few feet away, and shoots Chef in the head.

Cars peel away from the restaurant. Older Man 1 and Older Man 2 emerge from the restaurant. Guy still holds his gun.

Daniel and Anna quickly make their way across the parking lot, side-stepping speeding cars. They can overhear the conversations.

Big Biker Guy steps up with the men.

Older Man 1 and Older Man 2 make their way to a car out in the lot.

OLDER MAN 1

She had just come back from a smoke break.

(points)

That girl there said she wasn't in the mood for ham tonight, asked if there were any specials.

OLDER MAN 2

And I saw it. Waitress looked right at 'er and stabbed the blade through. That's when the Chef came at 'em.

Guy gets in his car and drives out of the parking lot.

Across the lot, Daniel makes it to the RV with Susan and Anna. They pile in the back.

INT. COOPER'S RV-NIGHT

DANIEL
Let's go, Braden, go!

Braden is not in the driver's seat.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT-NIGHT

Braden has jogged to the end of the lot where Nina jaunts briskly toward the motel.

BRADEN
Hey, we need to get out of here,
something big is going down.

Nina doesn't respond. She keeps plodding forward. Braden quickens his pace to keep up.

BRADEN (CONT'D)
I know you don't know me but you
have to trust me. You can ride with
my family, we're heading down to
Vegas. You don't have to be here
for this.

Nina charges on.

As she steps up on the curb of the motel, there are ax marks hacked through the door. Nina's mother lies on the floor.

Nina strolls through the open door. Braden watches as she grabs a bottle of whiskey from the nightstand without missing a step, and stands over her mother.

NINA'S MOTHER
(moaning)
Too late...

Nina kneels down beside her mother. She swings the bottle over head and slams it into mother's head. And again. And again and again, more rapidly.

Braden's gaze remains unwavering as Nina bludgeons her dead mother.

Blood smatters Nina's face. Her hair is matted with the liquid.

Braden turns and throws up.

Nina turns her head.

Braden turns to run but nearly collides with a figure. He's face-to-face with Balding Man, who waits just outside of Nina's door.

Braden twists, misses the platform step and falls onto the pavement.

Nina approaches.

Braden crab-walks, backing away as fast as he can. Balding man rears back.

As Nina crosses the threshold, Balding Man unleashes a swing through the top of Nina's neck and into the door frame. Her head stays on the top of the ax as her body crashes to the ground.

Braden manages to get turned around and sprints to the RV.

INT. COOPER'S RV-NIGHT

Daniel moves to the driver's seat and turns the ignition on. Anna takes the front passenger seat. Susan doesn't object.

She has stirred enough to sit up.

ANNA

Mom, chug a bottle of water. It'll help.

Susan doesn't hesitate. She crawls to the mini-fridge, opens a water and chugs. She looks up to Braden sprinting to the RV.

Susan unlocks the back door and swings it open, just as Daniel gets the vehicle in gear.

Braden falls through the back door and onto the floor of the vehicle.

SUSAN

Go!

Susan reaches over him to close the door.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT-NIGHT

Daniel speeds through the parking lot and onto the road. It's silent for a moment. Braden suddenly inhales sharply and finally exhales in a heave. His breathing suddenly becomes rapid.

Susan reaches over, holds him.

SUSAN

Hey hey, come on. Breathe. Do it with me first, push all the air out.

She exhales. Braden huffs.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Then big one in.

She inhales. Braden gasps.

BRADEN

He... He... He.

She exhales.

BRADEN

He... Cut...

Braden exhales.

SUSAN

Big breath in.

BRADEN

(in between breaths)
Off. He cut her head... Off. Clean off.

Susan stares at Anna.

DANIEL

That's out there. We're in here, okay?

EXT. OFF NEVADA 375-NIGHT

The RV speeds down a two-lane road, surrounded by ridges and desert emptiness.

DANIEL

Music. Yes?

Anna turns on the radio. Static. She scrolls through the dial. More static.

ANNA

Maybe it's an electrical storm? Not lightning but like a power surge or friction in the tectonic plates.

DANIEL

Highly unlikely. There would be an earthquake with that kind of pressure. But good to know you're paying attention in science.

Braden still huffs, but his breathing improves.

BRADEN

She... three of 'em this year, dad. Earth Science, Biology, and physical science.

ANNA

And chemistry.

EXT. COOPER'S RV-NIGHT

The RV navigates between two ridges.

DANIEL

Really? You like science that much? I mean it could explain why the alarms went off and why the radio won't come in.

ANNA

A high electromagnetic frequency can cause feelings of delusion or paranoia, maybe it's why they're all going crazy.

SUSAN

Doesn't seem likely, honey.

Anna sits back. She goes quiet.

DANIEL

Sue, really?

EXT. OFF NEVADA 375-NIGHT

The RV zooms past the area where they first entered the road.

The road in front of them appears severely damaged.

The pavement is cracked, with grasses growing up through it. Whole sections of either edge have broken off, weathered by the wind and the basking sun.

INT. COOPER'S RV-EVENING

A hundred yards away, a single military Humvee blocks both lanes of the road.

The RV slows to a crawl.

EXT. OFF NEVADA 375-NIGHT

The Humvee looks remarkably like the one Susan swerved to avoid.

INT. COOPER RV - NIGHT

Daniel stops the vehicle and puts it in park, close enough they can see Rt. 375.

BRADEN

Dad, what do we do?

DANIEL

Shh.

A MAN WITH BULLHORN stands at the end of the lane, leaning against the side of the Humvee. He's wearing fatigues and a gas mask.

Daniel rolls his window down and leans out, expecting to hear the man with the bullhorn.

Suddenly Big Biker Guy crosses dangerously close beside the window.

Daniel jumps, pulls his head in.

Big Biker guy lets his Harley run idle as he studies the Man with Bullhorn.

A car approaches. It has somehow traversed the RV and stops behind Big Biker Guy.

A very distraught WOMAN DRIVER leans out of her beat-up 1982 Buick Century. The middle-aged housewife exits the car and approaches.

WOMAN DRIVER
(calls from behind)
What's he doing?

BIG BIKER GUY
He's blocking off the road. Waiting
to secure a perimeter.

Big Biker Guy turns his handle bars, and suddenly illuminates
Woman Driver. She has a substantial amount of blood on her.

WOMAN DRIVER
(shouts)
He tried to kill me.

BIG BIKER GUY
Who?

WOMAN DRIVER
My son. He was 12. He... he came in
from playing out back and grabbed a
kitchen knife. I... (sobs) It was
self-defense! You have to believe
me!

BIG BIKER GUY
After what I've seen already
tonight, I'd believe anything.

Suddenly, the man resting against the Humvee raises the
bullhorn.

MAN WITH BULLHORN
Please return to the town.

WOMAN DRIVER
(yells toward him)
We need your help! My baby tried to
kill me!

MAN WITH BULLHORN
An unknown toxin was detected in
this valley. Please stay indoors.

BIG BIKER GUY
We can't go back. They're ripping
each other apart! Listen, I'm a
veteran, this ain't normal. You
guys have to got to go contain
this.

Man with the bullhorn steps up aggressively.

MAN WITH BULLHORN
You need to return to your homes!

DANIEL
But we don't live here!

WOMAN DRIVER
This is bullshit!

She storms back to her car.

BIG BIKER GUY
How about you just let us just stay
here with you. No harm in that,
right?

MAN WITH BULLHORN
For the last time, I am telling you
to go home.

Man with bullhorn sits it down on the edge of the vehicle. He pulls up an M4 Carbine automatic rifle.

Woman Driver gets back in her Buick. She turns the ignition over, shifts into reverse, but only for a few feet. She slams the car into drive and accelerates, zooms past the Cooper family and Big Biker Guy.

She clears the group, speeding down a stretch of pavement that appears oddly fresh and complete. As she approaches the merge point with Route 375, the soldiers opens fire.

Big Biker Guy dives off his hog, crawls on the ground. The Coopers all duck. Hundreds of rounds blast through the Buick. The car rolls to a stop.

The light from the Harley blasts the car with light, alternately casting shadows and exposing blood-smattered windows and broken glass.

INT - COOPER FAMILY RV - NIGHT

Daniel puts the RV into drive and aggressively turns around. The RV bounces and rumbles.

SUSAN
Daniel?

EXT - COOPER FAMILY RV - NIGHT

The RV comes back onto the road, leaving only dust behind.

INT - COOPER FAMILY RV - NIGHT

The family sits quiet, a tense moment captures them.

ANNA

Now what?

Daniel stares at Susan.

SUSAN

You heard him. We just stay in town
until help comes.

Anna leans to look back.

ANNA

Mom, wake up and smell the
bullshit. We go back and we die.

SUSAN

Watch your dirty mouth.

ANNA

Yours has been in dirtier places
than mine.

DANIEL

(Sternly)

Anna! Apologize. Now.

Anna sits back.

EXT. COOPER'S RV - NIGHT

The RV starts up the ridge to the 4-way stop where they first
saw the semi-truck. They make a hard left and move up the
ridge.

INT- COOPER'S RV - NIGHT

BRADEN

He said there's something in the
fog? A toxin.

ANNA

That's obvious. What better weapon
than to turn ordinary people into
maniacs?

SUSAN

Now you're being ridiculous.

ANNA

(defensively)

Seriously? Think about it. You hunt for terrorists in some mountain cave we can't find - just blanket the area in this chemical and let 'em destroy each other.

DANIEL

But there are laws against chemical weapons. And our government is not the bad guy.

ANNA

The NSA heard that, dad. They approve of your message. The CIA, DARPA, there are a lot of organizations that could make it. Boeing and Raytheon would deliver it, no questions asked.

Daniel smiles.

DANIEL

You know about those things huh?

ANNA

The internet dad.

DANIEL

Fair enough.

Braden shifts forward, finally calm enough to talk.

BRADEN

I mean, they mine all of these mountains, right? Gold, silver, copper. Maybe it's a leak from a mine?

DANIEL

Possible. But they have meters on those things.

ANNA

Correction - they are supposed to have meters on them.

EXT. COOPER'S RV- NIGHT

The RV climbs higher, and finally crests of the ridge. There are several houses on fire on the west side of town.

INT. COOPER'S RV - NIGHT

The family bounces as the RV speeds along.

BRADEN

It's a natural hallucinogen?

ANNA

Like airborne peyote? Doubt it. But it could explain all the UFO sightings here. People breathe it in and then report what they *think* they saw.

DANIEL

And they would be susceptible to legend or lore.

ANNA

Exactly.

EXT. COOPER'S RV- EVENING

There are tail lights in the distance ahead of them. Daniel slows, stops.

A spate of gunfire roars in the distance, semi-automatic weapons. A handgun. The passenger door on the car swings open.

(beat)

Suddenly a GIRL, maybe 16, is dumped from the passenger seat, with the seat belt tied around her neck.

She fumbles at her neck for a moment, but the car's reverse lights shine as the car accelerates - directly at the RV.

INT. COOPER RV - NIGHT

DANIEL

Shit.

Daniel slams the RV into reserve and floors it.

EXT. COOPER RV - NIGHT

Cooper's RV comes by a convenience store adjacent to a gas station.

Daniel steers aggressively, whips the vehicle around past the pumps.

INT. COOPER'S RV - NIGHT

Daniel throws the gear shift into drive, and accelerates.

EXT. COOPER'S RV - NIGHT

The RV tires smoke as they change direction. The RV pushes back onto the road, front wheels falling from the sidewalk with a clunk.

The car dragging Girl has disappeared from view. Daniel drives aggressively back down the same road.

EXT. COOPER RV - NIGHT

The RV barrels through the 4-way stop and up the opposite ridge.

The RV navigates a curve. A sign that reads "Kepler Observatory" adorns a small access road.

ANNA

Dad!

The blue Chevy Nova has stalled out just ahead. Daniel twirls the wheel around it. They jostle aggressively.

DANIEL

(glances back at the kids)
Everyone okay?

Daniel's gaze comes back to the road, only to realize he's about to hit Guy, who's running away from the stalled car.

Daniel spins the wheel again, hoping to make the alley running down the ridge and back to McGuire's Restaurant.

It's too sharp of an angle.

EXT. COOPER RV - NIGHT

The RV slides off the road, fishtails onto the steep slope and careens out of the control down the ridge.

INT. COOPER RV - NIGHT

Daniel pumps the breaks. He aims for the space between the buildings.

The RV bounces over the last ridge, sending the RV slightly airborne off of a retaining wall.

The vehicles squeezes in between the walls of the Post Office and the Doctor's office. But the RV is too wide.

Sparks fly. Metal grinds.

INT. COOPER RV - NIGHT

The RV rapidly decelerates. Everything in the RV crashes forward. Daniel extends his arm in time to catch Anna as she's propelled forward.

With a loud bang and shattering glass, the First Aid Kit and tire-iron bounce from somewhere in the back and shoot through the windshield as the RV screams to a halt.

EXT. COOPER RV - NIGHT

The rear wheels are not on the ground.

INT. COOPER RV - NIGHT

They are directly in line-of-sight to the motel.

Anna collects herself first, sits up. Daniel has pushed himself back against the seat, turns to see his family.

SUSAN

Good catch.

Braden barely gets upright. A gash above his eye already seeps blood.

Susan clutches her hand. Her ring and pinky fingers are twisted, pulled out of socket and dangling at a bizarre angle. She shakes as she studies it.

BRADEN

Mom.

Braden leans forward to her.

BRADEN

Close your eyes.

Braden gingerly takes his mom's wrist.

BRADEN

Just trust me. You'll feel a sting
on three. Relax, breathe deep. One.
Two.

Mom takes a deep breath. Braden quickly wraps his fingers
around mom's distorted ones, pulls slightly and twists.

They make a sickening 'pop' and mom gasps. She convulses for
just a second, but then makes a fist.

BRADEN

They were dislocated. I put 'em
back in. Happens all the time in
football.

SUSAN

You said on three.

BRADEN

I know. I lied.

He smiles.

BRADEN (CONT'D)

But you're better now.

Daniel studies Susan. She nods. Braden raises his eyebrows.

DANIEL

That's amazing. How?

Braden rips the sleeve off of his shirt, dabs the gash above
his eye.

BRADEN

I worked with the athletic trainers
all last year during football
season. I didn't play one snap,
dad. But I loved the training
aspect. That's what I'm doing at
Florida.

DANIEL

But Chemical Engineering?

BRADEN

That's your idea. I'm not that
interested. Anna is though.

Nods at Anna.

DANIEL
Football - the practice squad?

BRADEN
I didn't make the team dad. I just
didn't want you disappointed in me.
After my Associates, I can work
with the team though as a student
trainer.

Daniel smiles at Braden. He puts the RV in reverse and accelerates.

The wheels spin, making an eerie hum as the tires rub against the walls. The RV barely moves.

ANNA
(hushed) Dad.

They all observe the motel.

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

Nerdy Businessman steps out from Room #9, still donning the same suit from before.

Now, he's also wearing a gas mask and a device on his back that appears almost to be a vacuum cleaner. A hose extends out to a small instrument in his right hand. In his left hand he carries a .9mm Beretta. He sweeps from left to right, glancing at a small screen attached to the hose.

Balding Man emerges from Room 4, where Semi-Truck Driver was staying, his dismembered body on the bed and floor.

Nerdy Businessman raises his hand and shoots Balding Man point blank in the head. Balding Man collapses and twitches on the ground.

INT. COOPER'S RV - NIGHT

Susan gasps at the site, covers her mouth. Tears fall down her face.

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

A YOUNG GIRL comes into view. She is 8 or 9 years old, wearing a long nightgown, clutching an object full of hair.

Nerdy Businessman blocks the front of the little girl. She runs a hairbrush over the perceived doll in her arms.

He puts the gun in the side pocket of his suit. He tucks the device in the other.

Young Girl continues to brush the hair. He saddles up even to Little Girl, who turns to face him.

NERDY BUSINESSMAN
Whatcha got there?

Young Girl lowers her arm and turns. Blood and chunks of flesh covered her nightgown. She clutches the remains of a mutilated Toddler.

Nerdy Businessman kneels down.

NERDY BUSINESSMAN
It's okay. Come here.

Little Girl strides forward. Nerdy Businessman reaches out like he's going to hug her, but then in a swift motion breaks her neck instead.

He lies her down, stands up, brushes off his suit, and retrieves the device. He sweeps left then right.

INT. COOPER RV - NIGHT

Susan weeps, trying hard to stifle her cries with her hands. Daniel cries too, but tries to hide it.

Anna and Braden sit and stare in disbelief.

Nerdy Businessman doesn't pay any mind to the RV, but starts back toward the motel.

Suddenly, out of the darkness, a shadow tackles Nerdy. Big Biker Guy, who now also wears a gas mask, comes out on top.

Big Biker Guy grabs the top of Nerdy Businessman's gas mask, and uses it to pound Nerdy's head off cement repeatedly.

Big Biker rips the gas mask from his foe, throws it into the darkness. Nerdy Businessman slumps, half conscious.

Biker Guy rips off and throws his own mask.

BIG BIKER
What did you freaks do?

Nerdy gasps for breath.

NERDY BUISNESSMAN
It wasn't us.

BIG BIKER
What's in the fog?

NERDY BUISNESSMAN
Not sure. It's why they sent me.

Big Biker slugs him.

BIG BIKER
I did not risk my life in
Granada...

Beats Nerdy's head.

BIG BIKER (CONT'D)
... or kill men in Columbia and
Panama...

Beats Nerdy's head.

BIG BIKER (CONT'D)
... To watch some little shit like
you kill children!

He grabs the device at the end of the hose and slams it into the cement, shattering it, leaving a long splinter.

BIG BIKER (CONT'D)
Don't know what your game is, shit
head, but I hate to tell you I
killed your guy by the freeway. You
aren't the only ones with guns!

Big Biker rears back and drives the splintered device through Nerdy's eye and deep into his brain. Big Biker then twists the device, sending a spasm through Nerdy's twitching body.

Big Biker Guy stands up.

BIG BIKER (CONT'D)
Semper Fi, motherfucker.

Big Biker stumbles, then turns around and staggers onto the motel walkway.

The lights around town all go out. Darkness covers the valley, save for the lights from the RV and a few random cars.

INT. COOPER RV - NIGHT

Anna leans forward.

ANNA
What's he doing?

From inside the RV, Big Biker stumbles up to the landing by Room #4 where Balding Man lies dead. He picks up the ax.

A dirt bike can be heard in the distance. It's coming from the ridge behind the RV.

Big Biker stares directly at them.

BRADEN
Time to go!

Braden points up. He steps back into the kitchen area. Anna moves back too, fighting against the downward gravity.

He hoists Anna onto the counter. She pushes open the hatch.

Daniel grabs the bag squashed behind the seat. He turns it over and empties the contents. Anna's clothes fall in disarray on the floor. A bag full of little pills spills out on top.

Daniel grabs it and glances up at Anna and she jumps through the opening. He tosses the pills at to the front of the RV.

Braden helps Susan onto the counter and she exits. Braden scoots out the hole in the roof.

Daniel tosses him the bag.

BRADEN
What's this?

DANIEL
Food and water!

Braden nods.

BRADEN
Dad, get the pole!

Daniel turns, scans the floor and then grabs the closet rod. He tosses it up to Braden.

EXT. COOPER RV - NIGHT

Daniel hustles down the ladder on the back of the RV, jumping down about 3 feet to the ground.

Broken pieces of bricks and mangled metal that used to belong to the RV litter the area.

The sound of the dirt bike draws closer.

Anna sees the biker zoom down the alley that Daniel had tried to navigate before he lost control of the RV. They family quickly scales the broken retaining wall, and hurries up the slope.

They cross the alleyway and top the ridge. As they pass the stalled-out Chevy Nova, Anna gazes back down into the valley.

The dirt bike rider does a leg plant and accelerates out of the parking lot, and away from Big Biker Guy who's now wielding the ax. The dirt bike disappears into the darkness.

EXT. THE OBSERVATORY - NIGHT

The family stays off the road and continues toward the Observatory.

As they approach the Observatory, it sounds of chaos. Breaking glass, screaming.

SUSAN

Jesus Daniel! You've led us right back into it!

DANIEL

Like I had a choice? Shit!

SUSAN

Well now our kids have to witness to all of this! Do you ever think of them?

DANIEL

I think about them plenty! I think about how Braden can't wait to go to college because he can't wait to get away from you! And Anna can't get away from you so she pops whatever pills she gets her hands on so she doesn't have to deal with it! And we all know that you know what that's like, huh!?

Braden pushes his parents apart.

BRADEN

Shut up! (whispers) This is not a good time to be yelling!

All look around for a moment.

Several houses are still on fire. There are a handful of bodies visible in the light, the Chef, Husband and Wife.

Balding Man still lies dead on the landing in front of the motel. Nerdy Businessman and Little Girl are curiously absent.

Big Biker Guy wanders in front of the motel. His clothes are tattered now. Lesions seep on his arms and the top of his head.

The ax pings and scrapes against the road, echoing in between the ridges, which only seem to amplify the sound.

A scream echoes from somewhere in the valley. Braden moves to the edge to glances down the ridge. Guy scales up the hillside. Guy smiles viciously, his grin bloody. Several teeth are broken or missing.

Braden moves quickly back to the family.

BRADEN

We have to move. Now.

All scurry toward the Observatory.

EXT. THE OBSERVATORY - NIGHT

The Observatory has two branches off of the main dome.

The majority of the building consists of the rotunda.

Daniel emerges onto the landing and the family follows him to the main entrance. He turns to hand Susan the closet rod. She is crying.

DANIEL

Hey. Shh.

Daniel embraces her.

DANIEL (CONT'D)

We'll get through this.

SUSAN

You're right. About me. You work so much and I'm so lonely. My own kids... My own kids avoid me like the plague. And I've pushed you away.

Daniel wraps his arms around her. Holds her.

DANIEL

We get inside and get safe. Then we can talk about this.

He pauses at the door for a moment, peering inside. He reaches toward the front door.

DANIEL

Wait here, just a few seconds. I'll make sure it's safe.

BRADEN

Hurry, okay? I'm pretty sure no one wants to give us a tour.

Daniel enters the Observatory. The overhead streetlamps provide just enough light to create Daniel's silhouette.

From outside, his form fades as he gets further inside.

Suddenly, Daniel turns and darts to the left.

SUSAN

Wait. Daniel!

Susan steps closer.

A shadow moves quickly across the lobby and down the same corridor where Daniel just went.

Two more figures scramble across and into the west corridor.

Susan throws the door open and enters.

BRADEN

Mom, no!

Braden grabs Anna's hand and drags her across the threshold.

INT. THE OBSERVATORY LOBBY - NIGHT

Susan has already marched halfway across the large lobby. She hurries on, determined.

Anna and Braden scramble to catch up to her.

There are noises down the corridor, something large was knocked over.

A determined Susan treads confidently into the darkness. The kids scramble to catch up.

INT. THE OBSERVATORY WEST WING - NIGHT

As Susan moves away from the light, her resolve weakens. She wraps her fingers tighter around the pole.

A long hallway with various stands for post cards, souvenirs, shot glasses greets her.

The emergency exit sign provides the only source of light in the hallway. The glowing red light barely hits a sign above a door. "Planetarium".

Braden and Anna are now directly behind Susan.

SUSAN

Stay close.

Braden nods. Anna holds his arm.

Susan reaches for the door and swings it open.

INT. THE OBSERVATORY PLANETARIUM - NIGHT

An audio track plays - the ANNOUNCER divulges information about the universe, even though the room appears empty. A backup generator sputters, randomly allowing the projector to spit out images of space.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Saturn, the second largest planet
in our solar system, is the sixth
planet from the sun.

The trio move into the auditorium. A series of stars are accompanied by a red arrow.

As they continue to search, they see two Exit signs, one on either side.

The family descends to the base platform.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Like Uranus and Jupiter, it is a
gas giant, composed of hydrogen,
helium, and other trace elements.

Noise erupts from the corner. Susan steps cautiously toward it.

Anna and Braden move behind her, down the previous row.

They approach the noises, and see in the shadow two figures on the floor.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

The moons of Saturn are among the greatest possibilities of life in our solar system.

An emergency exit door suddenly swings open and light spills into the arena.

Anna and Braden see the figures on the floor.

They are Older Man 1 and Older Man 2. Each has a violent tear in their pants' leg, and each man lies opposite the other, hungrily tearing at leg flesh with their teeth.

Older Man 2 sinks his teeth into Older Man 1. Older Man 1 barely whimpers, and returns to his own meal, Older Man 2's calf, which has been gnawed to the bone.

Anna and Braden back away, horrified. They rush out the door.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Scientists bitterly disagree about the probability of life on Titan and Rhea, and clashing research offers no answers, only more questions.

Susan quickly moves, Braden and Anna trotting behind.

EXT. THE OBSERVATORY - NIGHT

As the trio emerge from the planetarium, they hurry across an empty path leading to a storage facility several feet downhill.

Just beyond the storage shed rests an old mission-style church. It appears abandoned.

The bushes to the left rustle.

Susan steps off the pavement and onto the artificial turf. She stares in the direction of the noise.

A hand grabs her mouth and pulls her into the bushes.

She tries to scream, and thrashes frantically.

Braden and Anna are into the bush quickly.

It's their father. He motions them to get down. They oblige.

DANIEL

(whispers)

I didn't mean to scare you. I lost them.

SUSAN

Thank God.

She embraces Daniel.

BRADEN

(whispers)

Did you see the guys in there? They were eating each other!

DANIEL

(whispers)

I know.

Daniel peaks out from the bushes. He suddenly pulls back as someone passes by.

Guy. He's breathing heavily. He pauses for a moment in front of the bushes. Lesions bleed from his arms, face, neck.

Guy trudges on. He moves down the hillside and disappears from view.

Daniel takes Susan by the hand. Susan takes Anna's hand, and Anna takes Braden's. The four then rush quickly down the path to the storage shed, and across the lawn to the church.

EXT. KEPLER MISSION CHURCH - NIGHT

The door to the mission is covered with a lock, but it is not fastened.

Daniel pulls the lock out, then ushers the family inside and closes it behind him.

INT. KEPLER MISSION CHURCH - NIGHT

The doors close, but light spills in through the cracks.

Daniel uses the closet road to poke into the darkness. Anna flips a light switch, but nothing happens. There are still a few candles at the entrance, so Braden distributes them. He uses his lighter to get them going.

Several rows of empty pews lead to an altar.

Pieces of the ceiling are broken and collapsed.

It's clearly empty.

BRADEN

Okay.

They blow out their respective candles.

Now convinced they are alone, the family settles down. Anna and Susan sit, resting with their backs against a wall.

Daniel wedges the rod between the two swinging door's handles.

He sits between Anna and Susan.

Braden finally sits as well.

TIME LAPSE

INT. KEPLER MISSION CHURCH - NIGHT

Susan and Braden are asleep. Daniel fights the drowsiness.

Anna stirs. Daniel reaches over and caresses her shoulder. She moves closer, rests her head on his leg.

ANNA

What if someone finds us?

DANIEL

(whispers)

Shh. It's okay, girlie. No one will look here. Just have to stay quiet.

She relaxes.

ANNA

(whispers)

Dad.

She tilts her head up at him.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Do you love mom?

DANIEL

(smiles)

You know I do. And I love you and Braden too. You mean the world to me.

ANNA

Doesn't always feel that way.

DANIEL

I work hard so that you don't have to. You have friends who can't do sports or who have part time jobs. I want to give you options.

ANNA

Girls like me don't have that many options.

DANIEL

What do you mean 'girls like you?'

ANNA

I mean not real pretty and I'm not even great at school. I don't know that I can even go to college.

DANIEL

Oh, honey, you are brighter than you give yourself credit for. And you're not pretty, you're gorgeous. Is that why you take the pills? You think they'll help you be prettier?

ANNA

I heard that Adderall and Wellbutrin can make you study better. I want to be as smart as Braden. Then you and mom will be proud of me.

Daniel's face breaks. He cries.

DANIEL

I couldn't be more proud to have you as my daughter.

Daniel slinks down, Anna sits up. Father embraces daughter.

Anna settles in. She rests. Susan moves to Daniel.

SUSAN

Not bad.

DANIEL

Thanks.

SUSAN

You'd be pretty good at this dad thing if you were around more.

DANIEL

That would work if you'd want me around more.

SUSAN

Don't be obtuse. I always want you around. It's why I wanted to take this trip.

Both close their eyes.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

Do you remember the last time we were in a church?

DANIEL

Our wedding day? Could never forget.

SUSAN

I've always felt so safe in churches like this.

(beat)

More light fills the cracks around the door.

Suddenly, a series of painful, loud, and shrill screams fill the night.

EXT. KEPLER VALLEY NV - EARLY MORNING

It's fifty voices - male and female, young and old - crying in unison, echoing from the valley into the ridge and beyond. The voices fade away as the sun rises and light spills into the region.

INT. KEPLER MISSION CHURCH - EARLY MORNING

Braden and Susan both startle awake. The voices fade.

BRADEN

What the hell was that??

Daniel hushes him.

It's quiet outside. In fact, there are no noises at all.

The family sits huddled for an anxious moment.

Daniel unlocks the door and emerges into the early daylight.

Braden moves behind him. He picks up the closet pole.

EXT. KEPLER MISSION CHURCH OTHER - EARLY MORNING

(beat)

He gazes down the ridge at the town. Several houses have been gutted by fire. The charred remains stand still, appearing silent for decades.

No cars move below. Former cars sit rusted, broken, abandoned. Grass grows in the parking lot of the McGuire Family Restaurant - long abandoned.

The hotel rests empty and quiet, paint peeling, tattered flag flapping in the light breeze. Windows broken.

Daniel yawns a big yawn.

EXT. KEPLER MISSION CHURCH OTHER - EARLY MORNING

Suddenly, the town stands unscathed.

There are no bodies. No burned houses. In fact, no evidence of the night before.

Daniel steps back to the church doors. He shakes his head.

INT. KEPLER MISSION CHURCH - MORNING

Daniel rejoins his family.

DANIEL

Let's get some more rest. No one is moving out there. We'll save our energy and then get out of here.

EXT. THE OBSERVATORY - LATER

The family moves quickly across the artificial turf and back to the road that led to the Observatory.

The morning sun already starts to warm the valley.

The family makes it to the road.

DANIEL

We'll save the water until mid day. We hike out to the highway and hitch a ride. We were never here.

All nod.

TIME LAPSE

EXT. RIDGE OUTSIDE OF KEPLER - LATER

The Coopers hike in silence across the ridge. Trees dot the landscape, a welcome change from the desolation below them.

A long, weathered, chain-link fence runs a broad perimeter in front of them.

There is a clear break in the fence just to their left.

Several tents are pitched in the distance.

BRADEN

The bikers.

The family scurries through the fence and to the tents.

Things are orderly and mostly clean.

SUSAN

Do you think they got out?

A distant hum echoes up the ridge.

DANIEL

I think we're about to find out.

The hum revs and grows louder.

Susan inches closer to Daniel. He puts his arm around her.

JIMMY (O.S.)

Anna! Anna!

Anna backs away from the family.

JEREMY

Hey, Anna!

Jeremy, Jimmy, and Keith pull up, bikes surrounding her.

Jimmy takes his helmet off.

JIMMY

What the hell did you do to Alan?

ANNA

Oh, shit.

Anna backs against a tree.

JIMMY

What's 'oh shit' mean? He never came back last night. Said he was going to meet you.

The rest of the family stares at Anna.

DANIEL

Meet you?

ANNA

He was going to. Before the whole town went crazy.

JIMMY

What are you talking about?

ANNA

People just went nuts. Started killing each other.

JIMMY

Help us find him!

ANNA

This is my fault.

Anna steps forward and suddenly jumps on the back of Jimmy's bike.

The dirt bikes takes off before any of the Coopers can move.

SUSAN

Anna!

EXT. OFF RT. 375 - AFTERNOON

They speed off into the distance.

Braden shields his eyes from the blazing setting sun.

They ride and disappear down the ridge.

Daniel pulls away from Susan and starts jogging.

EXT. OFF RT. 375 - LATE AFTERNOON

The sun starts to settle behind the ridge.

The three jog down the ridge to the road. Daniel has the bag slung over his shoulder.

EXT. OFF NEVADA 375 - LATE AFTERNOON

They approach the intersection.

A semi-truck with no trailer pulls to a stop at the intersection when the now-too-familiar intersection.

Daniel stares. Braden stares.

The truck approaches from the northwest, and turns right, disappearing over a slight decline.

DANIEL

Same truck.

BRADEN

Same driver.

SUSAN

Impossible.

BRADEN

I saw him dismembered. The bald guy at the motel.

Daniel begins to run.

DANIEL

Let's go! And keep up!

They run toward town.

EXT. KEPLER NEVADA - LATE AFTERNOON

Kepler's houses all stand erect and calm. Normal.

The serenity of the small town is only broken by the sound of the footfall from the Coopers.

The family arrives at the parking lot of McGuire's Family Restaurant just as Semi Truck Driver exits his vehicle and walks to the motel. Daniel's eyes follow him.

EXT. MCGUIRE'S FAMILY RESTAURANT BATHROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Music plays in the distance, country music from the early-90's. It's the same song they first heard when they entered town.

The sun beams through a pass, the same sharp light.

BRADEN

I don't. I don't get it.

The same cars are parked in the lot. The same people are seated in the same seats on the edge of the restaurant.

DANIEL

No one shares the same delusions.

He glances to the restaurant. There are four dirt bikes sitting parked along the building.

Daniel crosses the lot. Semi-Truck Driver return from the motel to his truck.

Daniel holds a long gaze across the lot. Nothing changes.

INT. MCGUIRE'S FAMILY RESTAURANT DINING ROOM-LATE AFTERNOON

Braden enters, with Susan directly behind them.

Same people in the same places.

Once again, the hostess doesn't acknowledge the family. She jaunts from her post to the kitchen.

Four young men sit at a table that was empty the last time we saw the restaurant. Anna stands beside it.

Susan charges, embraces Anna. Daniel enters behind them.

ANNA

Dad, please don't be mad.

Daniel wraps his arms around his daughter.

DANIEL

Concerned, not mad. I was scared something happened to you.

ANNA

He could have died because of me. I was gonna sneak out to meet him.

Anna holds the embrace for a moment.

ANNA

I'm gonna take mom to the bathroom. Last time I went alone and it freaked me out.

The ladies step to the side and head back the narrow way to the restrooms.

DANIEL
I'll stand guard. You okay up here?
Stay in eyesight.

Braden nods. Daniel marches toward the back.

Braden's gaze falls on the table where the four young men sit.

KEITH
Dude, she's not coming over here.

JIMMY
She's scared of us.

JEREMY
I would be if I were her.
(points to Keith)
Have you seen his face?

The three laugh. Alan sits quietly.

KEITH
Haha. Funny. Funny. Fuck it. I'ma
go smoke.

Keith stands and goes outside.

Braden follows.

EXT. MCGUIRE'S FAMILY RESTAURANT-LATE AFTERNOON

Keith pulls a pack of cigarettes from his pocket. As he picks one out, he sees Braden.

KEITH
Need to bum one?

BRADEN
Yeah. Thanks.

Keith pulls a lighter out and lights his. He hands it to Braden.

Hands it back.

Braden (CONT'D)
Where'd you find your guy?

KEITH

He was hiding in a tool shed by the observatory. Won't talk about last night.

He takes a drag.

BRADEN

That's understandable. Doesn't make sense to any of us.

Keith smiles. Both drag.

Braden (CONT'D)

Have you noticed anything odd here. Anything wrong?

Keith glances at him.

KEITH

Other than the music?

BRADEN

People being hacked up, shot, going nuts?

KEITH

Sounds like you're having flashbacks. You're too young to do the hard shit man.

BRADEN

My family, we're worried about all of us getting out of here alive. Ask your boy about it.

Keith finishes his cigarette. He field strips it and puts it in the trash can.

INT. MCGUIRE'S FAMILY RESTAURANT-LATE AFTERNOON

Braden strolls back into the restaurant. The rest of the family leaves.

Braden hears Older Man 1 and Older Man 2 talking behind him.

OLDER MAN 1

Saw on the news that asteroid is about to hit Jupiter. Gonna put on quite a show.

OLDER MAN 2

Yeah. Some of the boys at the observatory are gonna watch it. I worked with Ms. Shoemaker at one point. Proud of her. Damn proud.

They all move back outside.

EXT. MCGUIRE'S FAMILY RESTAURANT-LATE AFTERNOON

No one speaks. The quartet file into the motel office.

INT. MOTEL OFFICE-LATE AFTERNOON

Balding Man sits in the same position we saw him yesterday, eyes glued to the ball game.

Daniel and Susan stand in front, with Braden and Anna behind them.

Daniel shifts the gym bag from his left shoulder to his right.

Susan speaks.

SUSAN

Excuse me.

ANNOUNCER 1

I think this is gonna wrap it up folks. These young California Angels continue to struggle, but Salmon and Snow are looking good.

DANIEL

We need two rooms please.

Balding Man doesn't acknowledge them. He doesn't stir or even turn his head.

ANNOUNCER 2

You're absolutely right. It might not even matter though, the way things are shaping up with the players' union.

Daniel studies the peg board holding the keys. Numbers 8 and 9 are missing. He slips his hand into his pocket and pulls out a room key.

ANNOUNCER 1

*Let's all keep our fingers crossed,
especially you Yankee fans who are
finally seeing a come around.*

He holds up the key.

DANIEL

We were definitely here last night.

EXT. THE MOTEL-LATE AFTERNOON

The family emerges from the office and storm to the rooms.
Daniel tries the door and it's unlocked. He glances at Susan.

Their room is also unlocked.

Braden gazes down the walkway.

SUSAN

It's like we were never here.

BRADEN

Dad. Last night we walked to the
RV. Talked. That girl came out,
Nina.

For a tense few seconds, the whole family moves down the
platform.

A loud noise from behind startles them. Each spins around.
The young men are on their dirt bikes.

Suddenly, a noise erupts from the opposite end of the
platform.

NINA

Whatever, mom! If you'd stop
drinking maybe we could move out of
a motel!

She rests against a support post.

Braden watches for a moment.

The dirt bike riders zoom out across the parking lot, leaving
a trail of dust. They holler and name call as each vies for
the lead.

The dirt bikes trail away.

Braden strides toward her, leans on the post before hers.

NINA (cont'd)
 (absently)
 I gotta get out of this town. If
 you can call it a town.

BRADEN
 That's what she said yesterday.

NINA
 Bunch of military bastards. So
 called-scientists.

Nina does not look at Braden.

She screams.

NINA (cont'd)
 Go back to your labs! And take this
 piece of shit town with you!

BRADEN
 (just before Nina)
 Maybe Vegas will help. Can't wait
 for UNLV.

NINA
 Maybe Vegas will help. Can't wait
 for UNLV.

Nina strides off the curb and trudges into the parking lot.
 Braden watches.

ANNA.
 Oh my God. She wasn't talking to
 you because she can't.

DANIEL
 What do you mean?

The door opens in the background. Nina's Mother emerges.

NINA'S MOTHER
 Where you going, Nina?

NINA
 Where you won't find me.

NINA'S MOTHER
 (calls after her) You think it's so
 easy! You'll see! You'll be knocked
 up too with boys following you!
 You'll be just like me!

Nina's mother laughs.

Nina turns and flips off her mother.

Anna steps to Braden.

ANNA

None of them know we exist.

Anna ushers her family into the motel room.

The sun has passed the crest of the ridge, darkness starts to fall.

INT. THE MOTEL-EVENING

Braden turns and locks the door behind them.

DANIEL

What do you mean, Anna?

Daniel lets the duffel bag fall onto the bed.

ANNA

Piece it together. Same events in the same order. The same people in the same place. Think about these ridges too. They have grooves, deep grooves and lots of them.

BRADEN

Okay.

We hear the dirt bikes come back through the parking lot.

ANNA

Everyone in this town is already dead.

Braden moves to the closet. The rod hangs exactly where it was the night before. He pulls it off, and grips it.

ANNA (CONT'D)

They're imprints. Look, you've watched those Ghost Hunters shows too. Intelligent spirits can interact. They communicate, knock, move things. Apparitions that go through the motions, the same thing over and over, they're imprints.

DANIEL

A recorded image.

ANNA

Played back by the grooves in the mountains. I don't know if it's the sunlight or the moonlight or a magnetic field or what, but they're going through the motions of what happened the night they all died.

SUSAN

Ridiculous. When did they all die?

(beat)

DANIEL

1994. Summer of '94. Don Mattingly's last year as a player. The Yankees were tearing up that year, closing in on their first pennant in two decades. Season ended with the strike. Like the TV said.

SUSAN

It's a coincidence. Maybe he was watching sports classics.

BRADEN

No, he's right. Pearl Jam's Vs. was the newest thing in the jukebox. It was released spring of 94.

ANNA

And the Shoemaker Levy comet hit Jupiter in six different pieces. They can't hurt us.

Anna is beaming. Braden stands beside her, holding the rod.

SUSAN

No more spaced out theories! We leave. Right now.

Anna's smile fades.

(beat)

Sirens blare, car horns go off, just as they did the night before.

ANNA

Some chemical or gas in the atmosphere. It was in the fog that night. Made them all crazy.

BRADEN

And it's making us crazy too. The longer we stay, the more real we start to believe it is.

SUSAN

You're really reaching.

Daniel speaks through his teeth, the anger showing on his face.

DANIEL

You always think we're wrong. This time she's right! Your daughter is brilliant and she's right!

Glass breaks in the distance.

DANIEL (cont'd)

I'll prove this to you!

Daniel steps to the window. He turns to face his family.

The shadow of Balding Man crosses behind Daniel. The ax swings. The window glass shatters around him. Balding man stares a moment and walks away.

Daniel turns around and peers out the window. He turns back to face them.

DANIEL (cont'd)

None of this is real!

A pair of hands dart through the window frame and grab him around his shoulders. He's pulled through the window and gone.

SUSAN

Daniel!

Susan jumps up and rushes out the door before Braden or Anna can move.

A dirtbike revs in the parking lot.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - EVENING

Susan bolts across the lot. Two dirt bike riders drag Daniel by his shoulders and hair. He crab-walks as quickly as he can to keep up.

INT. MOTEL ROOM #7 - EVENING

Braden and Anna head for the door. Just as they reach it, Alan steps in front of them.

Anna screams and recoils. Braden grabs him with both hands, lifting him from his feet, and slams him onto the bed like a professional wrestler.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - LATE AFTERNOON

Susan runs to catch up to them. They have made it almost all the way to the gas station.

SUSAN

Let go of my husband! Stop it!

She hustles.

SUSAN (cont'd)

I said stop it!

Susan reels back and delivers a blow to the rider's back. Nothing happens. She swings again to no avail.

Susan cannot believe it. Desperate, her eyes dart around, sees the RV wedged between the Post Office and the Doctor Office. The First Aid kit lies on the road. A few feet beyond is the tire iron from the RV.

Susan sprints to it, scoops it up, and rushes at the dirt bike riders. She swings with everything she has.

Jimmy falls. Jeremy stops and turns to face her. She swings hard upward at him, delivers a shot across his face.

INT. MOTEL ROOM #7 - EVENING

Braden pins Alan.

BRADEN

(Infuriated)What are your friends doing? Huh?

ALAN

I dunno! I dunno! We were on our way back to the camp ground when they just turned around. They've lost it man, completely! Sat outside of the room next to yours and watched the clerk dismember some guy!

Braden releases Alan.

Alan wheezes. He coughs and then huffs, noticeably struggling for air.

He pulls an inhaler from his pocket and takes a puff.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - EVENING

Susan helps Daniel to his feet. A dirt bike kickstarts close by.

Daniel and Susan pause to watch.

Keith circles to the edge of the lot, back where the rotting wood sits. He slows as he circles and grabs the ax from a stump.

Daniel and Susan sprint toward the motel.

Jimmy and Jeremy are in hot pursuit, and Susan turns. She twists and delivers a brutal blow across Jimmy's cheek.

Keith approaches the group.

Jeremy grabs a hold of Daniel again and pulls him back in a headlock.

Keith raises his arm preparing the blow.

Daniel suddenly drops to his knees, the weight pulling Jeremy off-balance.

Keith has already started to swing, too late for him to stop.

The ax blade drives through Jeremy's arm, but not all the way through his jean jacket.

The severed arm dangles loosely in the half-torn sleeve.

Jimmy has gotten back to his feet and sees the blood pouring from the wound. Jimmy chuckles and then laughs uproariously.

Daniel and Susan run again, but Keith spins around and speeds toward them.

Keith jumps the bike up onto the platform and accelerates.

Daniel and Susan duck into the open door, the last room on the walkway.

Keith swings at the figures, but they are just out of reach.

INT. MOTEL ROOM #7 - EVENING

Alan exhales. Braden and Anna glance at each other, then back to Alan. Jimmy laughs ecstatically in the distance.

A gun shot echoes through the valley.

Alan and Anna startle.

ALAN
Shit! What was that?

BRADEN
Happened last night too.

ANNA
Chef just went down.

BRADEN
How long did you say you'd been camping up there?

ALAN
Couple days. We came down here yesterday, early morning.

ANNA
About eight hours before us. That means if we don't leave, we're gonna...

BRADEN
Yeah.

ALAN
I mean, they didn't follow me back here last night when I came back to meet you.

Alan wheezes as he breathes.

ALAN (cont'd)
You weren't here. Thanks for that.

Braden shakes his head.

BRADEN
(concerned) Anna? Seriously?

Braden crouches and approaches the window. He peaks out as Guy jumps back in his car and speeds away.

ANNA

That's why I wasn't here to meet you. The crazy guy with the ax broke the window and then my dad grabbed us and we left. I heard you ride away.

A dirt bike revs.

Keith circles around in the parking lot and accelerates back toward the end of the parking lot.

ANNA

You came back?

ALAN

Of course I did. For you.

INT. MOTEL ROOM #10 - EVENING

Daniel and Susan dash through the open door. Nina's mother lies motionless on the floor. The pair step cautiously past her into the kitchen. Her legs are severed at the knee.

A shadow blocks the door way.

Susan and Daniel quickly duck into the closet area.

The figure moves into the room. It's Nina.

NINA

Too late.

Nina plucks the bottle and bludgeons. Nina sits atop her mother for a moment.

Nina moves to the door. Daniel and Susan peek out of the closet, just in time to see Balding Man decapitate Nina.

Glass breaks in the distance.

Balding man disappears from view.

Susan attempts to stand and bumps into the iron mounted to the wall. It jingles against the rusted metal holder.

Suddenly, another figure blocks the doorway.

INT. MOTEL ROOM #7 - EVENING

Alan looks up, panicked as Jimmy's laughing continues. Jimmy approaches the door way, eyes wide and ready for blood.

Braden darts to the door and slams it closed. He wrestles with the door lock for just a second and secures it.

The laughing stops. The door shakes violently.

It falls completely silent in the valley.

INT. MOTEL ROOM #10 - EVENING

Jeremy stands over the figure of Nina's mother but doesn't seem to notice her at all. Instead he picks up the whiskey bottle from beside her.

Jeremy moves to the edge of the counter and breaks the end of the bottle off.

Daniel stands up straight, pulls the closet rod off it's holder. He steps out of the closet and swings.

[INSERT FIGHT SEQUENCE]

Jeremy gains the upper hand. Susan watches, horrified as he gashes Daniel's arm.

Susan glances up and sees the iron on the wall. She plucks it from it's holder.

Susan stands immobile, frozen with fear and now tormented by the grimace on her husbands' face.

DANIEL

Sue! Run!

He turns to Susan, who is silent, unmoving. He falls to his side.

Susan screams as she lurches forward. She delivers the iron with both hands square across Jeremy's cheek. THUNK!

SUSAN

That's *my* husband!

Jeremy slumps onto his back. Daniel rolls over and pulls the bottle from Jeremy's hand.

He reels back on his haunches and thrusts downward, delivering the bottle into Jeremy's abdomen.

Daniel screams.

Susan grabs under Daniel's shoulders and pulls him to his feet.

He pushes out of Susan's embrace and steps to the body. With brute force he stomps on the glass, sinking it deep.

He draws a deep breath, and darts out of the room.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - EVENING

Darkness envelopes the valley. Daniel crosses out onto the walkway.

Keith waits outside of door #7. He still has the ax -- wheels back and swings hard into the door.

Daniel marches toward Keith. As he crosses by door # 9, the shadow moves, lunges, grabs Daniel and pulls him back through the door, disappearing into the darkness.

INT. MOTEL ROOM #10 - EVENING

Susan kneels over Jeremy's body and hesitantly grabs the top of the glass

Susan gulps as she grips and finally pulls. She twists the bottle and it finally lets go of Jeremy's innards with a suction-breaking slurp.

Blood drips from the bottle as she moves out the door.

INT. MOTEL ROOM #7 - EVENING

The door suddenly bolts inward, pieces of the plywood covering flies onto the trio.

He delivers another blow with a *thwack*. Then another.

Braden glances at the window. Alan notices his eyes.

ALAN

He's a fast runner. He'll catch you.

BRADEN

I'm not going.

Braden wraps his arm around Anna's shoulders and leads her to the window.

Braden (cont'd)

And besides, you're gonna let him in.

ALAN

What?

Another blow to the door. The frame around the edge splinters.

ANNA

Terrible idea! Please, this is bad!

BRADEN

You go out the window and go save mom and dad. We'll finish this guy.

ANNA

With what?

The door gives part way.

Braden grabs the night stand. The lamp crashes to the floor. He flips the stand over, using the legs to break out more of the glass from the frame leaving only a large shard protruding from the lower left corner.

The door flies open with a fatal blow from the ax.

Braden pushes Anna through the window frame.

Keith comes through and swings. Alan drops out of the way, and the ax falls hard onto the bed, splitting the mattress.

Braden glances out the window. Anna gathers herself and moves into the night.

Braden smacks Keith with the lamp. The tire iron falls from the back of his pants onto the floor.

Alan tries to pull the ax from the mattress. It's stuck.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - LATE AFTERNOON

Anna runs down the platform. Door #9 suddenly bursts open, Nerdy Businessman emerges right in front of her.

Anna shrieks.

Anna steps off the platform and watches as Nerdy sweeps back and forth, the screen on his device flashing numbers.

Nerdy moves down the platform.

He stops, suddenly pulls up. Balding Man exists. Gunshot.

Anna jumps. She wipes her palms on her pants, and then darts into Room #9.

EXT. MOTEL ROOM #10 - EVENING

Susan jolts as she hears the gunshot. She shyly moves out the door carrying the broken glass bottle.

INT. MOTEL ROOM #7 - EVENING

Alan swings at Keith.

[Insert fight sequence between Keith, Alan, and Braden]

Keith ends on the floor with Alan holding him down. Braden helps to immobilize him.

The noises outside grow louder. Something heavy drags on the platform.

Man 1 enters the room. He struggles for a second.

MAN1
(Grunts loudly)
Yeah.

Man 1 continues in, a long black object in his left hand -- the stoker from the fireplace in the motel office.

On the other end, the Hostess moans, the hooked metal corner wrapped under her rib cage.

The sound of tearing fabric accompanies a muffled moans. She is barely conscious.

Man 1 drags Hostess right through the middle of the room. He has lesions on his face and hands.

Keith and Alan become still as they watch.

For a moment, all eyes fall on her.

BRADEN
I don't remember this...

There are several lesions on her face and hands.

Man 1 drags her to the closet, throws open the door. He lets Hostess fall back for just a moment as he tears away the straps from her apron.

He fastens a noose of sorts, then uses the stoker to again lift Hostess off the floor.

Braden is unable to look away. Keith's hand stretches for the tire iron.

Man 1 loops the strap over the closet pole, and with downward heave, lifts Hostess' body off the floor.

Keith's hand falls on the hard metal. His fingers grip it.

She attempts one last breath, but it only resonates as a gurgle.

Braden catches motion from the corner of his eye, and then feels the punishing blow of the tire iron smashing into his face.

A mixture of blood and spit spray over Alan, mesmerized by the Hostess. She points her toes, trying desperately to regain her feet.

They dangle barely an inch off the floor.

Braden collapses in a heap off to the left side of Keith, separating him from Alan.

Hostess stops struggling.

Keith gets to his feet. Braden spits more blood. He crawls toward the closet.

Alan stares as Man 1 stands beside hostess, her panicked face relaxes. Braden closes the closet door.

Alan's wits return, just as Keith lunges at him.

They spin around.

Alan strains, and turns his head. He sees the sharp glass still in the corner of the frame.

With a primal groan, Alan releases, grabs Keith's uniform, and falls backward.

Keith cannot stop his own momentum, and with a single step, is dragged down.

Keith's neck meets the glass, the shears pierce through his throat and protrude from the back of his neck.

He twitches violently and then slumps against the frame, his own weight too much for the shard. The glass breaks and Keith falls awkwardly on top of Alan.

Alan frantically pushes the body off of him. He breathes in short shallow breaths.

Braden finally manages to stand. He breathes hard and in pain, swelling and bruising showing already.

Alan once more scrambles to his feet, grabbing the ax as he rises. He turns and throws it on the bed.

Braden dashes over and retrieves the tire iron from under Keith's body.

Braden turns and slowly steps back to the closet.

ALAN

That guy didn't leave.

BRADEN

No he didn't. None of them did. No one made it out.

A figure crosses behind them at the window. Neither notice.

ALAN

Dude, let's go. He's in the closet!

BRADEN

No. She died here in 1994. He's gone too.

Braden grabs the door and pulls it open.

It's empty.

ALAN

What the?! Seriously? No, you know what, I'm out!

Alan flashes a peace sign, turns.

His eyes go wide as he's met with a SLURP.

He stumbles back a step. Susan stands at the door. She has buried the broken glass bottle into Alan's sternum.

Alan staggers and falls into Susan, who doesn't catch him.

He thumps to the floor.

She stands calmly over the body. She glances at Braden.

BRADEN

Christ Mom! He wasn't one of them!

SUSAN

Not *my* son!

Braden kneels beside Alan. Air hisses through the bottle with every breath. He's shaking and his lips move like he's talking, but no words come out.

He gasps.

He slowly stops shaking.

Braden stands.

Braden (cont'd)

Mom.

He waves his hand in front of her. Her eyes don't move. She smiles. She chuckles softly.

Braden (cont'd)

Shit.

He kneels again, searching Alan's pockets and grabs the keys to his dirt bike.

INT. MOTEL ROOM #9 - EVENING

Anna's momentum carries her over the mattress. She crashes onto the floor beside her father.

Jimmy closes the door.

Anna studies Daniel, his face expressionless.

ANNA

Dad? Whadda we do dad?

Daniel jumps to his feet.

Each holds his position -- Daniel blocking Anna, and Jimmy blocking the door.

[INSERT FIGHT SEQUENCE]

Jimmy gets the upper hand and steps to Anna.

At first she backpedals, timidly. Abruptly, she swings, connecting on his jaw.

Anna instantly recoils.

ANNA (cont'd)

Ow!

She shakes her hand. Jimmy turns back, smiling widely.

Anna grabs at the door handle, but Jimmy lunges onto her before she can get it open.

He grips her throat.

Anna's arm knocks against the draw pulley for the curtains. The pulley sways and comes back to her fingers.

With the pulley in hand, Anna waves her arm over his head, sliding the cord over his neck.

Daniel crawls toward the pair.

The veins in Jimmy's neck and face bulge as Anna pulls tighter.

Daniel reaches them.

The pulley swings by him and he reaches up and grabs it.

Daniel uses it for leverage as he pulls himself to his feet.

Suddenly the curtain rod flexes.

The end of the rod drops off the wall, spilling the curtains onto the trio.

Anna reaches out for the dangling cloth. A curtain hook dangles within reach.

She pulls the sharp metal from the cloth, turns it over in her hand, and slams it into Jimmy's ear canal.

He twitches slightly and lets loose of Anna. She falls.

Daniel does not let go of the cord, even as Jimmy falls limp.

Anna wheezes, inhales, chokes and coughs.

She glares at Jimmy. His eyes bulge, his lips are purple. Dark blood oozes from his ruptured ear, and dribbles from his split lip.

Daniel holds the same pose, white knuckled, teeth clenched, drawing hard at the line around Jimmy's throat.

ANNA (cont'd)

Dad.

Daniel doesn't acknowledge her, continues to draw the line. The cord cuts into Jimmy's flesh.

ANNA (cont'd)
Dad! He's dead!

Anna stands. She moves to Daniel and pulls the cord from his hand. Jimmy's body slumps to the floor.

Daniel stands in a stupor.

ANNA (cont'd)
Oh God. C'mon dad, time to move!

Anna opens the door and steps behind her father. She pushes him to the door.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - EVENING

As they emerge awkwardly, Braden is already in the parking lot with their mother. He sees Anna.

BRADEN
Get the keys!

Anna stands for a second.

Braden (cont'd)
We're taking the dirt bikes!

Anna steps back into the doorway.

Jimmy's body lies awkwardly on the floor, the curtains are a mess behind him.

Anna nervously kneels beside him. She turns him to the left and digs at his pocket. Nothing in his pocket.

She rolls Jimmy to the right, and his face stares blankly up at hers. Finally she fishes out a set of keys.

ANNA
Oh God.

She swallows hard and let's Jimmy's body down.

She plods back to the doorway and to her father. He stares at nothing in particular.

Anna pushes him to where the dirt bikes are parked.

Braden has already gathered his mother onto the bike and started the ignition.

Anna pushes her father, guides him to the bike, but he won't sit.

BRADEN
You know how to shift gears?

ANNA
Yeah.

Braden points anyway.

ANNA (cont'd)
Thanks.

Anna tugs at her dad.

ANNA (cont'd)
He's too heavy.

Braden scans his mother.

BRADEN
Switch.

The two change places. Braden hits the back of his father's leg and he falls onto the bike.

Braden (cont'd)
Up and over the hill, back to the highway. I'll follow you.

Anna nods and revs the engine. Braden turns his on.

The pair move slowly across the parking lot, then Anna shifts gears and they pull out onto the road.

Daniel balances awkwardly on the bike. Anna has no issue keeping her mother centered.

They pull past McGuire's Family Restaurant, passed the now defunct RV and up the hill.

They continue up the ridge, through the four-way stop.

They zoom down the ridge and out the broken road.

They speed by Woman in a Buick and Big Biker Guy on his hog.

Without warning, Anna stops.

Braden, caught off guard by the stop, pulls past her and actually has to loop off the road to come back to her.

Braden (cont'd)
We need to keep going!

ANNA
Why didn't they let anyone out?

BRADEN
No idea.

ANNA
They both have it. We both have it.

Braden holds still for a moment.

Daniel and Susan are both unmoving.

BRADEN
We'll get help. There's got to be a
fix.

ANNA
Leaving was the fix.

BRADEN
What do you mean?

Anna points to Guy and Woman.

ANNA
We were only delusional after
having been in town first. We spent
most of our time out here, trying
to leave, sleeping in the church
and on the ridge.

BRADEN
Right.

ANNA
Alan too. Think about what we saw.
After night fell, there was no
other place than right here that
two people stood side by side
without killing each other.

Braden squints. The Buick becomes a bullet-riddled shell.

ANNA
They'll come back to us once
they've gotten it out of their
lungs.

BRADEN
Then why do we still see it?

ANNA

It was recorded here. Imprinted to
be replayed, to never be forgotten.

BRADEN

That's scary shit, sis.

Anna revs her bike.

ANNA

Yeah. I know.

She pulls her feet up and accelerates.

Braden follows, cutting between Big Biker Guy, the Buick, and
the Man with the Bullhorn.

The bikes tear at the desert sand and the two ride up the
hill.

EXT. NEVADA ROUTE 375 - NIGHT

Headlights blur as the two bikes slide by, finally popping up
and onto route 375.

They whip onto the highway into on-coming headlights.

The on-coming car swerves, over-corrects, and then slides
down the embankment.

EXT. NEVADA ROUTE 375, WEST - NIGHT

The Cooper's are none the wiser that the car went off the
side. They continue on. Suddenly Susan reaches for the
handlebar.

SUSAN

Where are we going?

Anna and Braden both slow their bikes to a stop.

DANIEL

Vegas.

BRADEN

You're alright!

Daniel inspect the hole in his arm.

DANIEL

That's an overstatement.

Braden hugs him across the shoulders with both arms.

Daniel recoils from the pain in his bicep. Anna squeezes Susan. They giggle.

ANNA

Told ya.

They rev the bikes and leave.

EXT. NEVADA ROUTE 375 - NIGHT

DRIVER, a mid 30's man exits. He wears glasses and a baseball cap to cover his bald head. His PASSENGER, his wife, is a late-20's redhead.

They step out of the car.

DRIVER

You alright?

PASSENGER

Okay.

She looks up the ridge.

PASSENGER (cont'd)

That's pretty steep. Can we make it back up?

DRIVER

Probably not. But there's an access road in the distance there. We can follow it to where it hooks back up with the highway.

Passenger shrugs.

PASSENGER

Sure. Everyday is an adventure, whether we want it to be or not, right?

They sit back in the car. The car drives across the sand and onto the broken pavement.

ROLL END CREDITS.

THE END.