

"DEADHEAD"

by

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EXT. CLUB (U.K) - NIGHT

The muted, rhythmic POUNDING of HEAVY METAL.

A fortress-like brick warehouse, smothered in gig posters.

Red neon and smog seep through double steel doors, like the entrance to Hell.

INT. CLUB - NIGHT

The MUSIC shifts to full volume.

A writhing MULTITUDE dance and fist pump. Black T-shirts, studded wrist bands, tattooed skin.

Some wear ghoulish masks and Gothic face paint.

ON THE STAGE

Multi-colored spotlights pulsate above a wall of amplifier stacks. A four piece band thrash inside a cloud of synthetic fog.

EMBER (18, singer, purple streaked emo hair) screams into her microphone. Vocalizing flawlessly, owning the stage.

She grimaces to sustain a high note, raspy, yet melodic, then spirals out of view.

JAX (18, guitarist) prances to the edge of the podium and launches into a guitar solo. He smirks at a group of girls below him, a confidence verging on egotism.

TRENTON (19, bassist) tall, crucifix necklace, grinds on a bass-line with precision. A classically trained convert, head-banging wildly.

STONE (20, drummer) blasts the beat, unleashing rapid-fire drum fills to punctuate their instrumentation. Sitting throne-like, his muscular, inked torso surrounded by an elaborate drum kit.

Ember reappears from beyond swirling smoke and belts out the final chorus, every lyric oozing passion.

Raised arms hold cell phone cameras aloft, jutting skyward from the ocean of bodies.

The spectators mosh. Some sing along drunkenly, out of key and out of time.

One audience member is still.

DEADHEAD (tall, stocky) stands rigid. We catch glimpses of him through the thrashing crowd, wearing a sewn balaclava and sleeveless denim jacket with a pentagram back-patch. Silver pyramid studs adorn his shoulders.

An overzealous patron SLAMS into him. Deadhead doesn't flinch - instead coolly rotates his view.

The culprit backs up, arms raised apologetically. Retreats from his death stare, swept away by the throng.

The hulking figure returns his gaze to the stage.

Time slows down.

The HISS of rapid breathing, muffled by his face mask.

Irregular, like he's sick. Or deformed. Rising in volume, overriding the music--

--until it's the only sound we hear.

Pyrotechnics EXPLODE. Blinding white light.

And he's gone.

The show ends with THUNDEROUS APPLAUSE.

Ember launches herself into the crowd. A panicked BOUNCER starts dragging her back to safety.

Jax and Trenton unstrap their guitars and share a high-five.

Stone rises from his drum seat, postures victoriously and hurls his sticks into the SCREAMING HORDE.

CROWD ROARING

EXT. FOREST ROAD - NIGHT

Quiet. Calm.

A lonely, desolate highway cuts through dense bushland.

The faint glow of twin headlights, growing in luminescence as they approach.

ENGINE NOISE swells.

A TOUR BUS is cruising toward us. High-tech and sleek, ferrying a BOX TRAILER behind it.

The coach layout is divided into 3 sections: At the front, the Drivers Quarters. In the middle, the Living Quarters. And at the rear, the Sleeping Quarters.

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - DRIVERS QUARTERS (MOVING)

Stone drives, sitting at the wheel behind a contoured, wood laminate dashboard. A protein shake wobbles in a cup holder.

He's midway through a call with JEMMA (19) his high-school sweetheart, cell phone propped on a mount.

STONE

...six more shows, then I'm back.

JEMMA (ON PHONE)

Until you leave again.

STONE

Have ya told your olds yet?

JEMMA (ON PHONE)

That's not confirmed. We don't really know yet, do we?

Stone slams a gear change to negotiate a turn, descending ever deeper into encroaching forest.

JEMMA (ON PHONE)

I have to go, they're listening at my door.

STONE

Can we ever talk about this without bein' interrupted?

JEMMA (ON PHONE)

(whispering)

Bye.

STONE

Call you tomorr--

END CALL

He stares at the dark, endless road ahead.

Curtains slide open. Jax enters, stoops behind the drivers seat.

Stone unmounts his cell, pockets it.

Jax slaps him on the shoulder.

JAX

Her parents are gonna love you.

STONE

Cheers.

JAX  
A haircut. Maybe a nice dress shirt  
to cover the tat's--

Stone half swings a punch. Jax recoils, chuckling.

JAX  
Yo, they're asking what age you  
started playing.

STONE  
Five, if ya count pots and pans.

Stone swerves to accommodate a curve in the road.

TYRES SCREECH

Jax regains his balance.

JAX  
Maybe someone else should take over.

Stone grips the wheel.

STONE  
Push off, it helps me think.

Jax leaves, unable to resist a parting shot.

JAX  
Don't *think* us into a tree trunk,  
mate.

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - LIVING QUARTERS (MOVING)

Lavish, opulent, with a lounge, kitchen and dining table.  
There's a strung up Union Jack flag reminding the world  
'punks not dead'

Ember and Trenton kick back on a sofa, in conversation with  
their fan-base via a webcam live-stream.

Questions, comments and emoji's scroll on a wall mounted TV.

Jax slumps with them.

EMBER  
...worst injury, crowd surfing at  
high-school battle of the bands. When  
I hit the ground, I shattered *this*  
rib, which I then had to pass using  
an enema every day for like... a  
week.

JAX  
 (face-palming)  
 Oh man...next.  
 (reading from the TV)  
 Nuka Girl 7 6, do you ever cringe at  
 old band photos?  
 (pause)  
 Yeah, Trenton misses his codpiece.

TRENTON  
 Leave it out--

EMBER  
 It's not necessarily that we're  
 abandoning that look. Just evolving,  
 growing as a band, and as people.

JAX  
 Some more than others.

Jax mimics playing the drums.

STONE (O.S.)  
 I can see ya, dickhead.

JAX  
 (chuckling)  
 Ok, we'll take...

Ember holds up three fingers.

JAX (CONT'D)  
 ...three more.

They scour the TV, sifting through messages of praise.

JAX  
 (reading)  
 Hey from the Netherlands. Trenton,  
 advice on learning the bass?  
 (pause)  
 Ask mummy and daddy to buy you  
 lessons.

TRENTON  
 The voice of envy.

Jax gives Trenton the middle finger.

TRENTON  
 Use a metronome. That'll build up  
 your internal sense of time. And play  
 every day.

JAX  
 Check this out.  
 (reading)  
 Hi Ember, it's me again...

Jax pantomimes a kiss. Ember scoffs like he's an idiot.

JAX (CONT'D)  
 ...why do you swallow so greedily at  
 the lies that flatter you? Tonight,  
 with great pains, truths will be  
 brought to light.  
 (pause)  
 Whatever, man.

Trenton eyeballs the cam, stern.

TRENTON  
 Who's truth? Yours?--

EMBER  
 Save the gallantry, Trent. There's  
 always one nutter.

TRENTON  
 Try this, Em.  
 (reading)  
 Ember, your songs have got me through  
 a lot of dark days alone in my room.  
 I get picked on for the way I look. I  
 want you to know, more than anything,  
 that you saved me. Literally. Where  
 does your inspiration come from?

EMBER  
 I don't know...

She's flustered by the previous question. Regains composure.

EMBER  
 I just take the tragedy of life, the  
 struggles we deal with and...try and  
 be philosophical I guess.  
 (pause)  
 I'm not so much anti-bullying, more  
 ...strength of self. Find a voice and  
 rise out of the difficulty you're  
 facing.

Trenton concurs.

TRENTON  
 We're all freaks, in our own way.

EMBER  
 (to webcam)  
 Ok, thank you so much everybody,  
 we're going to call it a night.  
 Remember, our live stream gig on  
 February seventeen. Check our site  
 for the links, you can watch on your  
 computer, phone, iPad--

The band wave and thumbs-up.

TRENTON  
 Bye--

JAX  
 See you--

Stone pipes up from the front of the bus.

STONE (O.S.)  
 Catch ya all later!

Jax flicks off the TV with a remote.

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - DRIVING QUARTERS (MOVING)

A dash mounted GPS loses its signal.

Stone THWACKS it.

STONE  
 My G P S isn't likin' me...

EMBER (O.S.)  
 Trees. It'll come back.

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - LIVING QUARTERS (MOVING)

Ember and Trenton chill on their cell phones. Jax packs up the webcam.

EMBER  
 A Beamer or a Benz?

TRENTON  
 Want true fulfillment? Relinquish  
 your riches to those in need.

Ember grins, caresses the shine on an extravagant bracelet.

EMBER  
 I'm in need.

Trenton scoffs. She takes a break from e-shopping, swipes to a banking app.



EMBER  
Still no account update.

Hovers her iPhone to regain a fading Wi-Fi connection.

TRENTON  
Patience. Takes time for installments  
to clear.

Gives up. Thumbs it off.

EMBER  
Yeah. It's just...I had another  
screaming match with Mum before we  
left.

Jax flumps next to her.

JAX  
Don't bring me down with a sob story,  
Em.

TRENTON  
What, and you think your bank balance  
will give you some kind of  
validation?

EMBER  
Just some peace.

She stuffs her phone in a carrier bag.

EMBER (CONT'D)  
She went ballistic. I have to take  
her call, every morning, just to  
remind her that, yes, I'm still  
alive, and I'm in quite capable hands  
with you three sweaty geezers.

Jax unzips his duffel, retrieves a fat marijuana joint.

Lights up with a Zippo, takes a toke.

JAX  
(blowing out smoke)  
Least she cares about you.

EMBER  
She tried to book a hotel room next  
to mine. She has our itinerary!

Trenton aims his phone out a window, waiting for a photo  
opportunity.

He gestures to the road behind them.

TRENTON  
She's not following us is she?

Ember frowns dismissively.

EMBER  
Pfft!

There's a break in the tree-line. Trenton takes a snapshot of a FARMHOUSE.

CLICK

Jax leers at the screen.

JAX  
Those things are called cows.

TRENTON  
I know, prat.

Trenton reclines, browses through a travel blog.

TRENTON  
Get this. Aberaeron, translated to mean mouth of the Aeron, derived from Welsh meaning *slaughter*...

The diesel engine GROANS - the tour bus is slowing.

EMBER  
Stone, what's up?

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - DRIVERS QUARTERS (MOVING)

Stone shifts into low gear, decelerates another notch.

STONE  
The pod's open!

In a rear-view mirror, the box trailers unlatched double doors CLANG wildly.

EMBER (O.S.)  
Why didn't you tell me earlier?

STONE  
I didn't know earlier!

EXT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - TRAILER (MOVING)

A crate topples out - hits the road with a CRUNCH.

Then another.

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - LIVING QUARTERS (MOVING)

JAX  
Just stop here!

STONE (O.S.)  
I aint gettin' nicked for blockin'  
half the road.

JAX  
I don't think this dead end route  
through Dullsville is a priority for  
the plod.

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - DRIVERS QUARTERS (MOVING)

STONE  
No? You fancy gettin' rear ended by  
some unsuspecting twat with bad  
headlights?

EXT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS (MOVING)

The bus veers into a rest area, an arc of dirt track just  
adjacent to the main road.

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - DRIVERS QUARTERS

Stone kills the ignition. Unlatches his seat belt.

Dashboard screens blink off, like some docking spacecraft.

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - LIVING QUARTERS

Stone enters.

STONE  
Load out, pack up, lock up. Is that  
too much for ya, Jax?

TRENTON  
You could've helped him--

JAX  
(giggling)  
There were a coupla fans in the car  
park. I got a little distracted.

STONE  
Girls.

JAX  
Uh-huh. Jemma wasn't available, so I  
had to make do with a few slappers  
who wanted a selfie--

Stone clenches a fist.

EMBER  
Don't let him wind you up.

Eases off.

STONE  
Key.

Jax stands wearily, wrests a key-ring from his jeans. Drops it into Stone's outstretched palm.

STONE  
(mock sincerity)  
Cheers. □

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - DRIVERS QUARTERS

Stone swings open the cabin door. A cold gust whistles inside.

Steps out onto the dirt.

DOOR CLOSES

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - SLEEPING QUARTERS

Four bunk beds with plush linen. Luggage, shoes, studded leather jackets on coat hangers.

Ember, Jax and Trenton are at the rear window, peering into pitch darkness--

--Stone emerges, warming his hands.

They watch his silhouette trudge down the motorway.

STONE (O.S.)  
Back in a sec!

Jax sees the ejected crate under a glare of moonlight.

JAX  
Sad Princess...

Ember rolls her eyes.

EMBER  
I'm sure she's fine. Naming your gear is getting lame. Find love.

Jax and Trenton stroll to their bunks. Ember stays.

JAX

I got no problem finding love.

TRENTON

Ten minutes in a lav cubicle doesn't count, bro.

Trenton CLICKS open a case, takes out a beat-up bass guitar.

Sits on his bed, starts riffing.

Jax plonks down in the berth adjacent. Takes a moment to style his jet black emo hair.

Takes a hit and offers the spliff.

TRENTON

I'm good.

JAX

Don't you wanna ascend to a higher plane? This skunk'll elevate your playing to the next level.

TRENTON

I'd argue it's a hindrance.

Ember joins them.

She takes the joint, has a puff. Coughs mildly.

EMBER

Numbers this evening good enough for you sods?

TRENTON

I reached a lot of souls tonight.

JAX

We all know who they came to see.

Ember shoves Jax, affectionate. Hands the weed back.

Trenton breaks into an 'Iron Maiden' song.

JAX

Blasphemer! Playing the devils music.

TRENTON

Don't put me in a box, dude. God said come as you are.

EMBER

Not again.

Ember leaves.

JAX  
Trent, I need to tell you something  
mate.

TRENTON  
You what?

JAX  
There's no easy way of saying it,  
but...

Trenton pauses, expecting the worst.

Jax leans in.

JAX  
(softly)  
God's not real.

Trenton scoffs, resumes playing.

TRENTON  
Yet you affirm the existence of  
Satan.

EMBER (O.S.)  
Guys.

JAX  
The worlds too messed up. Look  
around.

TRENTON  
Take an inward look at yourself.  
Temporary pleasures can only mask  
pain for so long--

JAX  
Sod off.

EMBER (O.S.)  
Guys!

TRENTON  
He wants to help you. Acknowledge  
him.

EMBER  
Hey! Assholes! Where's our drummer?

Jax stands, joins Ember at the back window.

JAX  
 (pointing)  
 Down there.

A sudden BANG-BANG-BANG makes her flinch.

Beat.

STONE (O.S.)  
 Someone wanna grab this?!

She exits.

JAX  
 It's the bus ghost! Ooooooh--

EMBER (O.S.)  
 Shut up.

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - DRIVERS QUARTERS

Ember opens the door.

Stone stands outside holding the crate, now scuffed with minor damage.

STONE  
 We dropped one effects rack. And this. Thought you'd wanna have a butcher's?

She takes it, exerting.

EMBER  
 Where are you off to?

STONE  
 Latch is busted. Looks like some knob-head's jimmy'd the padlock.

EMBER  
 So Jax did lock up.

STONE  
 Em...I'm gonna lay this on ya now, I'm out after this.

EMBER  
 I'll have a word to him--

STONE  
 No, no, it's...I got too much real world stuff to deal with.

EMBER  
We all do--

STONE  
I'm dead weight--

EMBER  
I need you! This time next year we  
could be killin' it in America--

STONE  
I'll stick around for a bit, help  
transition a replacement in.

Ember relents.

EMBER  
Stay in sync until we wrap up, yeah?  
(beat)  
Focus on the music. I'll hold off on  
breaking it to the lads.

Stone nods, heads back to the trailer.

DOOR CLOSES

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - LIVING QUARTERS

The crate SLAMS down on the dining table. Ember pushes aside  
a half empty wine bottle.

Unlatches the box and pry's out a self-powered stage light.

EMBER  
Chaps, testing out here.

Arcs it up.

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - SLEEPING QUARTERS

Multi-colored light shafts stream inside.

EMBER (O.S.)  
Bright check...incoming.

Trenton covers his face, Jax turns around.

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - LIVING QUARTERS

Ember turns away, eyes clenched.

CLICK

Blinding white light.



JAX (O.S.)  
Ok, it works, it works.

She stifles a smirk, powers it off.

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - SLEEPING QUARTERS

Ember brushes past the two guitarists.

At the window again.

EMBER  
She's a go, Stone!

Stone is TINKERING behind the trailer armed with a torch, a toolbox at his feet. He gives her a thumbs-up.

Trenton slings his bass on the mattress.

TRENTON  
We cracking on?

JAX  
You wanted to see the countryside.  
Well, here it is, savor the splendor.

EMBER  
Not just yet. Minor security issue.

TRENTON  
You what?

EMBER  
Nobody panic, everything is accounted  
for--

The trailer SHAKES on its suspension.

METALLIC SQUEAKING

Then stops.

The threesome assemble at the window, faces to the glass.

JAX  
Careful with my rig you big oaf!

The trailer is still.

Quiet.

EMBER  
Stone?

He's gone.

The flashlight is dropped on the ground. Items from the toolbox are strewn everywhere.

Then they see the silhouette of someone standing a few meters away.

Watching them.

JAX  
Stone, y-you there mate?

Silence.

Stones outstretched palm THUMPS into the glass. Everyone recoils.

His fingers slide down, smearing blood.

EMBER  
Oh my god!!

The figure is walking toward them now.

It's Deadhead, clutching a bloodied screwdriver. A lanyard hangs around his neck. On it, Stone's stage pass and bus key.

The band members look at each other in shock. Nobody knows what to do.

EXT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - TRAILER

Moonlight reflects off the screwdriver blade, dripping red.

Stone crawls in the dirt, punctured and bloodstained. In the bus window above, 3 terrified faces.

Deadhead straddles him, THRUSTS the tool into his torso.

SPLAT

Ember SCREAMS. The group gasp, wide eyed in terror.

EMBER  
(petrified)  
Stone!!

Deadhead steps over the body, disappears into the dark.

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - LIVING QUARTERS

Jax and Trenton scan the windows for their assailant, frantic.

He's nowhere to be seen.

Ember is catatonic.

JAX  
Lock the door!

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - DRIVERS QUARTERS

Trenton bursts inside.

Squats at the cabin door, presses the 'indoor lock' button.

BEEP

An LED display reads on 'on'

He steps back, quivering.

Outside, Stone's bus key inserts.

QUIET MECHANICAL SCRAPING

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - LIVING QUARTERS

EMBER  
(trembling)  
He's getting in...

JAX  
Uh-uh, not without the code.

EXT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS

The door won't unlock.

Entry is protected by an extra layer of security - a keypad requiring a 4 digit pass-code.

Deadhead WRENCHES the handle, enraged.

RATTLE-RATTLE-RATTLE

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - DRIVERS QUARTERS

TRENTON  
What do you want?!

Deadhead wants in.

RATTLE-RATTLE-RATTLE-RATTLE-RATTLE

Jax enters.

Trenton looks at him with dread.

TRENTON  
 (whispering)  
 He's got a lanyard.

They scan the door. Jax's eyes stop on the lever hinge mechanism above it.

He lifts up the front of his shirt, unclips a belt buckle.

Trenton looks at him.

JAX  
 Relax, you nancy...

Removes a studded, black leather belt from around his waist.

JAX (CONT'D)  
 ...saw this in a flick.

Reaches up, threads the belt through the hinge.

Locks the buckle. Loops the strap around one revolution.

Then another.

EXT. FOREST ROAD — TOUR BUS

Deadhead brings the stage pass to his eyes, wide and bloodshot through scissor-cut holes in his mask.

Tilts his head, like he's reading something.

BREATH HISSING

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS — DRIVERS QUARTERS

The keypad chimes. He's entering the code.

BEEP

Jax is still winding the belt, looping it around.

BEEP

And around.

TRENTON  
 Faster.

BEEP

BEEP

Job done, Jax tugs on the strap to tighten it.

Silence.

Heavy breathing.

The door BURSTS ajar with a CLANG.

JAX

Fuck!

EMBER (O.S.)

No!!

The thick, worn leather impedes the doors pneumatics from opening any further.

CLANG-CLANG-CLANG-CLANG-CLANG

They back away.

TRENTON

Don't come in here!!

Silence.

Deadhead's FOOTSTEPS saunter away.

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - LIVING QUARTERS

Ember is on the floor, still in shock.

Jax and Trenton equip their cell phones.

No signal.

Trenton paces, hunting for reception.

TRENTON

Ember, you with us?

No response.

Jax crouches, jolts her shoulders.

JAX

Your cell, where is it?

She points to her duffel.

Jax rummages inside. Hairspray cans CLINK under probing fingers. Lifts out a pair of headphones.

JAX

Where?

Ember stares blankly.

EMBER  
 (catatonic)  
 He k-killed him...

He finds her phone, hands it to her.

TRENTON  
 Anyone got a signal?

JAX  
 Still nothing.

Jax is losing it, panicking.

JAX  
 Why don't you just ask your God to  
 swoop in from above and save us?!

Trenton thwacks him on the shoulder, invigorated with hope.

He moves to the sunroof.

Reaches up, unlatches it. Raises the canopy open.

Moonlight creeps inside.

Signal gained.

TRENTON  
 I got one bar.

PSSHHH

The group freeze.

JAX  
 What's that?

Silence.

PSSHHH

The floor sinks.

TRENTON  
 He's letting the tyres down!

PSSHHH

Ember is motionless, clutching her phone.

Jax comforts her, resting his hand on her shoulder.

Trenton dials 999.

RING-RING

RING-RING

DISPATCHER 1 (ON PHONE)  
9 9 9, which service do you require--

TRENTON  
We need Police!

DISPATCHER 1 (ON PHONE)  
Connecting you...

DISPATCHER 2 (ON PHONE)  
Police emergency--

TRENTON  
We need help, we're on a tour bus,  
someone is outside, trying to get in.

DISPATCHER 2 (ON PHONE)  
What address are you at, sir?

TRENTON  
We're on the...what road are we on?

JAX  
I dunno! Let's ask Stone, huh?!

TRENTON  
Keep it together, dude!

DISPATCHER 2 (ON PHONE)  
Sir, calm down, you're calling from  
your vehicle, is that correct?

TRENTON  
Yes, there's four of us, but we lost  
our friend, he went outside,  
somebody's stabbed him--

DISPATCHER 2 (ON PHONE)  
Lock any doors or windows. Can you  
see the individual?

TRENTON  
Yes. I mean, no, he has a mask on,  
and--

DISPATCHER 1 (ON PHONE)  
He has a mask on?

END CALL

Signal lost.

Trenton's battery is nearly dead.

TRENTON  
Ember, charger.

She crawls to a USB cable curling out of a socket.

JAX  
Hold it up, man! Charge it later!

Trenton hovers his phone, praying for reception.

EXT. FOREST ROAD – TOUR BUS

Deadhead's gloved hand rips open an exterior hatch.

CLANG

INT. FOREST ROAD – TOUR BUS – LIVING QUARTERS

Trenton paces.

Signal regained. Jittery fingers redial.

RING-RING

RING-RING

DISPATCHER 1 (ON PHONE)  
9 9 9--

TRENTON  
We called before, we've got no signal  
out here!

EXT. FOREST ROAD – TOUR BUS

Deadhead is TINKERING at something inside the hatch.

INT. FOREST ROAD – TOUR BUS – LIVING QUARTERS

RADIO STATIC erupts from theater speakers.

DISPATCHER 1 (ON PHONE)  
Sir? I can't hear you...

The TV pops on, midway through a movie with SCREAMING and GUNFIRE. The barrage of overlapping audio assaults their senses.

DEAFENING RACKET

DISPATCHER 1 (ON PHONE)  
Is this a prank?



TRENTON

No! He has the bus key! He's--

DEAFENING RACKET

DISPATCHER 1 (ON PHONE)

Sir, there are serious penalties for making a--

END CALL

Signal lost.

The group cower, clutching their ears.

DEAFENING RACKET

JAX

What do you want?!

The audio ceases.

Silence.

TRENTON

What's going on? Who did we piss off?

Ember shakes her head, bewildered.

TRENTON

Jax?

JAX

What?

TRENTON

You shagging someone you shouldn't be? You know this guy?

JAX

No way, man.

EMBER

They can like, trace us...right?

JAX

Uh-uh, only to the nearest tower. From a landline, maybe--

EMBER

Try Yuri...

Jax and Trenton jostle for reception under the sunroof.

Signal regained.

RING-RING

RING-RING

YURI (ON PHONE)  
Hi, you've reached Yuri at Lethal  
Records, I'm unable to take your call  
right now, but if you leave a--

END CALL

Signal lost.

JAX  
This is bullshit.

Trenton redials 999.

RING-RING

TRENTON  
What's he doing? Can anyone see him?

RING-RI--

DISPATCHER 1 (ON PHONE)  
9 9 9, which service do--

The coach SHUDDERS. Interior lighting dies.

Wi-Fi disabled.

JAX  
(to himself)  
He cut the power, we're fucked.

Ember is shaking.

TRENTON  
Em.

No response.

TRENTON  
Ember! Look at me.

She complies through panic stricken eyes.

TRENTON  
If no one leads, we go nowhere.

He offers his hand.

She takes it. Rises to her feet.

EMBER  
Ok, w-what's around here?

JAX  
Fucking trees, Ember!

They gasp. Deadhead is standing outside the window, watching them.

JAX  
What about the weirdo in the chat?

TRENTON  
Who?

JAX  
The truth will come to light speech.

TRENTON  
The tosser in his mum's basement?

EMBER  
It c-could have been from a cell.

TRENTON  
(to Deadhead)  
Dude! Whatever your problem is, we've got no grouse with you--

Deadhead's fist THUMPS into the glass. They flinch.

THUMP

THUMP

The tempered glazing merely fractures - he's not getting in through the windows.

His hulking silhouette dissolves into the shadows.

TRENTON  
Can we take him? There's...

Trenton looks at Ember.

TRENTON (CONT'D)  
...two of us.

Jax backpedals.

JAX  
Uh-uh.

TRENTON  
We have to get help.

JAX  
Oh yeah? What do you suggest?

Trenton stands under the sunroof.

TRENTON  
Help! Someone, help us!--

EXT. FOREST ROAD

TRENTON (O.S.)  
Hello? Anyone!

His voice but a pitiful echo.

There's not a soul for miles.

EXT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS

Deadhead is inside the engine compartment, rear hood propped open on its struts.

DISMANTLING motor parts, tossing them over his shoulder.

CLINK

CLANK

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - LIVING QUARTERS

JAX  
What does this psycho want?

Trenton emerges from the Sleeping Quarters carrying a battery powered amplifier. Small, cube shaped.

Sets it on the floor.

Plugs in a long cable with a CLICK.

TRENTON  
I need your microphone Ember.

EMBER  
My Shure's are in the pod...

Trenton holds her shoulders.

TRENTON  
Em, your practice mic.

JAX  
Here.

Jax throws her duffel - Trenton catches it mid-air.

He takes out a pink, plastic microphone patched up with duct tape. Clearly an item she's retained from childhood.

Trenton connects it to the cable.

Arcs up the amp.

CLICK

The speaker HUMS to life. He taps the cap with his palm.

POP-POP

Adjusts the volume to maximum.

FEEDBACK SQUEALS

Trenton stoops, gestures for Jax to climb onto his shoulders.

TRENTON

This is going on the roof.

Jax looks hesitant.

TRENTON

You got a better idea?!

He places one foot on the pocket of Trenton's leg. Places both hands on his shoulders, pushes himself up.

Trenton holds his lower legs, securing him.

Ember picks up the amp, gives it to Jax.

He raises it up through the sunroof.

JAX

I need some slack.

Ember untangles the cord as it ascends.

Jax gathers up the excess length, jiggles the speaker outside onto the roof.

Trenton falters.

JAX

Don't drop me, man!

Task complete, he drops to the floor.

The group share a hopeful glance, huddle around the mic.

EXT. FOREST ROAD — TOUR BUS

EMBER (O.S.)  
Help!--

TRENTON (O.S.)  
Anyone!--

JAX (O.S.)  
Help us! Can anyone hear us?--

Their panicked cries reverberate woefully around the empty landscape.

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS — LIVING QUARTERS

JAX  
This isn't good...

TRENTON  
Did you crank it?

JAX  
That's gonna make sod all difference.

TRENTON  
Lift me up.

Trenton is on Jax's shoulders now.

Jutting his head outside, twiddling knobs - adjusting settings to achieve more volume.

EXT. FOREST ROAD — TOUR BUS

DEADHEAD'S POV:

On the roof, creeping toward the back of Trenton's head.

He steps over steel pipes connected to an antenna at the front of the bus.

Breath HISSING, getting closer.

JAX (O.S.)  
What are you doing, man?

And closer.

His gloved hand collects a spool of microphone cord. Curls it into a noose.

TRENTON  
Try now--

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - LIVING QUARTERS

Ember SCREAMS as Deadhead starts hoisting Trenton up through the canopy.

JAX

No!

Gurgling, twitching, clutching at his throat. Ember and Jax grapple at his flailing legs - but it's hopeless.

With a CRUNCH, Trenton is gone.

JAX

Trent!!

The mic disconnects. The amp dislodges, THUDS to the cabin floor.

FEEDBACK SQUEALS

Ember flicks the power off.

Silence.

Heavy breathing.

Jax creeps to the sunroof, trembling.

Ember grips his arm.

JAX

I'm closing it!

She nods, lets go.

Jax hurriedly shuts the canopy. Locks it.

Deadhead SMASHES his fist through the glass, his arm reaches in and grabs Jax's throat.

EMBER

No!--

Ember rushes to the dining table. SMASHES the wine bottle in half.

Jax is gagging, blacking out, trying to break free. Ember STABS Deadhead above the wrist. i

SPLAT

He lets go. Jax crawls away from his pendulating forearm, blindly grabbing at them.

They recoil.

Fat, gloved fingers snatch at the air.

JAX  
Get out!!

Unrewarded, his hand slithers away.

Silence.

Heavy breathing.

They gasp as Trenton's mangled body flashes past a window - drops to the ground with a THUD.

EXT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS

Deadhead's boots climb down a rear mounted ladder, one rung at a time.

CLANG

CLANG

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - LIVING QUARTERS

Ember scowls. Jax steps up to her.

JAX  
It was his idea!

Ember reciprocates, in his face.

EMBER  
If you gained the amp before you!--

JAX  
You could've plucked your arse up off the floor and done it! It's my fault?

She jolts him backward with her palms.

EMBER  
Yes it's your fault!!

JAX  
It wouldn't have made any difference!

Jax is losing it, very animated.

Mimics hearing nothing, hand cupped behind an ear.

JAX  
Where's the constabulary?! Huh?!



Ember turns away, sits on the floor.

Jax paces, seething.

EXT. FOREST ROAD – TOUR BUS – TRAILER

Deadhead is emptying it, tossing crates into a pile.

THUD

THUD

INT. FOREST ROAD – TOUR BUS – LIVING QUARTERS

Jax watches him.

JAX  
(to himself)  
What are you looking for?

He whirls, starts rifling through kitchen drawers. Looking for a weapon. Something. Anything.

He sizes up a carving knife.

JAX  
If he gets inside, w-we'll use this.

Ember nods, eyes drenched, make up smeared.

She freezes.

EMBER  
Shhh!

JAX  
What?

EMBER  
Can you hear that?

JAX  
Huh?--

EMBER  
Listen!

Jax reconnects her mic to the amp.

Powers it on.

EXT. FOREST ROAD – TOUR BUS

Deadhead is vocalizing in low, guttural growls.

An ethereal strobe light flickers at machine-gun speed - like a music video.

DEADHEAD

(death-metal ghoulish)

*Amass all your affliction and pain.  
Gather all its power and strength.  
Overcome the slander that they  
perpetrate. Wage the war in your mind  
and cleanse.*

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - LIVING QUARTERS

They huddle, listening intently.

DEADHEAD (O.S.)

*Erase the proof, but your guilt will  
endure. Embrace, face to face, the  
lie.*

JAX

He's yakking to himself.

DEADHEAD (O.S.)

*Giving up on everything you strived  
for. Is consuming you like a fire.  
Flames tear you down and devour.  
Vengeance now the only desire.*

EMBER

No he's not.

(beat)

He's singing.

DEADHEAD (O.S.)

Sound familiar?--

Ember CLICKS the power off.

JAX

What does that mean?

EMBER

I don't know.

JAX

What song is it?

EMBER

I said I don't know!!

Jax rushes into the Sleeping Quarters.

EMBER

We're going to die, aren't we...

Re-emerges carrying Trenton's bass.

Unclips the strap, tosses it aside.

Props it against a wall.

JAX  
Sorry, Trent.

Kicks it, fracturing the neck from the body.

CRUNCH

Another kick, splitting it in two.

CRACK

Collects the pieces, removes the strings.

EMBER  
Why?

He points to a cupboard under the kitchen sink.

JAX  
Get me the bin.

Ember sets aside a rubbish bag.

Hands Jax a steel, kitchenette trashcan.

She asks again with her eyes.

JAX  
We're making a signal flare.

EMBER  
Another movie?

JAX  
My Dad. One of the few useless  
lessons I had to endure...

Dispenses the kindling into the bin.

JAX (CONT'D)  
...usually followed up by a swift  
clip around the ear-hole for not  
paying attention.

Licks open some cigarettes, extracts the tobacco, drizzles  
it in.

Positions the container under the sunroof.

Equips his Zippo. Flicks it on.

JAX  
(mournful)  
This is your way of helping us, mate.

Flames ignite with a SWOOSH.

Smoke rises.

Billowing up and out through the roof.

EXT. FOREST ROAD – TOUR BUS

Deadhead watches the plume drift skyward.

Unperturbed, he unlocks another exterior hatch.

CLANG

Removes a portable gas barbecue, chucks it aside.

THUD

Drags out a thick hosed vacuum cleaner, does the same.

THUD

Then collects a set of fold-up lounge chairs.

Sets them in a neat row of four by the mound of tossed gear.

INT. FOREST ROAD – TOUR BUS – LIVING QUARTERS

Deadhead drags Stone's carcass by one ankle toward the seating arrangement.

Props the cadaver on a chair.

JAX  
He's nuts.

Ember zips up her jacket, warming her hands.

EMBER  
I'm cold.

INT. FOREST ROAD – TOUR BUS – SLEEPING QUARTERS

Jax enters.

Gathers up blankets and sheets from the bunk beds.

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - LIVING QUARTERS

Dumps them in a pile. Ember rations them out.

They nestle, draped in quilts. Ember sulks.

JAX

It's everything we have!

The trashcan fire CRACKLES.

Outside, Deadhead poses Trenton's contorted body in another chair.

EMBER

Oh my god...

JAX

(in despair)

Trent, mate...

EXT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS

He's still alive, lethargically swaying his head, body paralyzed.

Deadhead retrieves a tripod stand from a crate.

Detaches a glistening copper cymbal, throws it away.

Grips the pole with menace.

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - LIVING QUARTERS

Jax places his arm around Ember.

JAX

Don't look.

EXT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS

Deadhead thrusts the shaft into Trenton's neck.

SPLAT

A tiny delay. Then a geyser of blood for about 5 seconds.

Now he's dead.

Deadhead notices a cell phone in Stone's jacket pocket.

Takes it, swipes it on.

Holds it horizontally, ogling Jemma's private selfies.

Strolls to the bus, quoting aloud from a recent text chat.

DEADHEAD

(reading)

It's only a home test, it might not be accurate. Then let's get an accurate one, we'll go to the G P together.

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - LIVING QUARTERS

Ember and Jax look at each other, agape.

EMBER

I didn't know either...

Deadhead hurls the phone.

DEADHEAD (O.S.)

The tragedy of life...

They flinch as it SMASHES into the window.

EXT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS

Deadhead crouches in the darkness, clicks open a case.

Rises to his feet holding a V-shaped electric guitar.

Strap's it on. Grinds on a few power chords.

DEADHEAD

*Erase the proof, but your guilt will endure. Embrace, face to face, the lie.*

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - LIVING QUARTERS

Jax reaches into his carrier bag.

JAX

I need a toke.

EMBER

No, Jax.

They scuffle.

EMBER

I need you clear headed!

He finds a bent spliff. Straightens it with nerve-rattled fingers.

Lights up.

JAX  
It's my safe place, ok?--

EMBER  
Jax...

Ember is distracted by something outside.

EMBER  
look!!

EXT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS

Deadhead halts his mock stage-show.

Interrupted by a shimmer on the horizon.

EXT. FOREST ROAD

A family motor-home is guzzling toward them. A white, luxury Swift Escape.

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - DRIVERS QUARTERS

Ember and Jax bash on the windscreen frenziedly.

THUMP-THUMP

EMBER  
Help!!

JAX  
Help us! In here!

Ember palms the steering wheel horn, frantic.

HONK-HONK

EXT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS

It ROARS past them, ignorant of their plight.

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - DRIVERS QUARTERS

THUMP-THUMP-THUMP-THUMP-THUMP

JAX  
Can't they see us?!

EXT. FOREST ROAD - MOTOR HOME (MOVING)

BOY (8) peeks through curtains at the rear window.

EXT. FOREST ROAD

Deadhead strolls onto the road.

Places a fist under his chin and makes a Satanic horn-hand gesture.

The child's horrified expression evaporates into the night.

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - LIVING QUARTERS

Thunder erupts.

Light pulses underneath dark clouds.

JAX

Ember...

EMBER

What?!

JAX

It's my fault we stopped here.

EMBER

No--

JAX

There weren't any chicks in the car park, it was him.

LIGHTNING CRACKS

Ember grabs his shirt, in his face.

EMBER

What are you telling me?!

JAX

I was throwing a bunch of gear in the trailer, he was there. Staring at me. My paranoia kicked in. I bailed, hopped on the bus--

She lets go, backs away.

EMBER

That's all you are, isn't it? A junkie.

JAX

I didn't know this was gonna go down!



EXT. FOREST ROAD – TOUR BUS

Deadhead is wrapping gaffer tape around Trenton's skull.  
Spooling, winding, crucifix necklace jingling in the wind.

DEADHEAD

*Don't blindly seek truth from  
emotions. Open your eyes to what lies  
ahead. The future awaits with an open  
embrace. The end of chasing dreams  
long dead.*

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS – LIVING QUARTERS

The PITTER-PATTER of rain.

Trashcan flames HISS as water droplets intrude.

Ember and Jax sit on the floor opposite each other.

She picks up her microphone. Presses down on dog-eared duct tape, covering the cartoon motif underneath.

EMBER

(sombre)

I can still hear his voice, singing  
to me when I was in my Mum's belly.

JAX

Your dad was a muso too?

Drags her duffel into her lap. Unzips it.

EMBER

Publishing. Until he got laid off.  
Was all set up for a management gig,  
too--

Something inside catches her eye. Ember takes out a can of luminous hairspray.

Stands up, shakes the can.

She sprays a long, vertical streak onto the window. Slowly, from top to bottom.

EMBER (CONT'D)

(still spraying)

If you're good at something, keep it  
to yourself. Sycophants will steal  
your knowledge and make you obsolete.

Jax holds his head in his hands.

JAX  
That's not gonna work, man. They're tinted.

Ember shuffles sideways, draws some more intersecting lines.

EXT. FOREST ROAD – TOUR BUS

Wide capital letters materialize across a side window.

The message scrawled in glowing hairspray reads 'HELP US'

INT. FOREST ROAD – TOUR BUS – LIVING QUARTERS

The rain swells to a downpour.

Lightning intensifies.

The trashcan smolders – no more signal flare.

Ember gazes outside at her slaughtered band-mates. Two empty chairs await ominously.

EMBER  
Mum was right...

She starts to lose it, panicking.

EMBER (CONT'D)  
...I shouldn't be here.

Swipes her phone on.

JAX  
Ember...

EMBER  
I'm calling her!

Jax reminds her with his eyes that there's no service.

EMBER  
I need to get out of this backward,  
yokel forest and go home!!

JAX  
(thinking)  
Wait a second...

He collects Trenton's cell phone from the floor.

Swipes it on.

JAX  
Em...

EMBER

What?!

JAX

Your cell cam's better than mine,  
come here.

She joins him.

Jax raises a finger toward the road, still looking at the phone.

JAX

Down there.

Ember aims her camera in the direction he's pointing.

ON PHONE SCREEN

Dense forest, shrouded in darkness.

EMBER (O.S.)

Why am I wasting my battery staring  
at trees?!--

JAX (O.S.)

Go right!

BACK TO SCENE

EMBER

What are we looking for?

Jax shoves Trenton's phone in her face.

JAX

This!

ON PHONE SCREEN

A photo of a quaint, two-storey cottage. Smoke drifts out through a chimney.

BACK TO SCENE

It's the farmhouse they drove by on their way here.

They share a hopeful glance.

She zooms again.

ON PHONE SCREEN

The dim, pixelated view finds the house.

Through parted curtains we catch a glimpse of FARM WOMAN (60's) slipping winter coat on over her sleepwear.

BACK TO SCENE

JAX  
Maybe I can leg it.

EMBER  
No! Don't leave me!

Jax moves to the kitchen.

Rifles through cabinets. Obtains a flashlight. Thumbs it on.

No power.

Retrieves a packet of battery's from a cluttered drawer.

Rips it open. They scatter to the floor.

Gathers up four AA's, fumbles them in.

Taking forever.

EMBER  
Hurry up!!

JAX  
(to himself)  
Flat to the spring, dumb-ass.

Toggles the switch.

CLICK-CLICK-CLICK

Light pulses.

JAX  
Can she see us?

ON PHONE SCREEN

Through a window, Farm Woman pottering about.

BACK TO SCENE

They THUMP on the glass.

EMBER  
Helps us!

JAX  
Hello! Over here!

THUMP-THUMP-THUMP

EXT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS

Weak torch-light oscillates inside the cabin. Fists POUND.

THUMP-THUMP-THUMP-THUMP-THUMP

Deadhead observes them, head tilted, breath HISSING.

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - LIVING QUARTERS

THUMP

EMBER

Come on!

ON PHONE SCREEN

Farm Woman closes the drapes, oblivious.

Darkness.

BACK TO SCENE

EMBER

Shit!

EXT. FOREST ROAD

The storm RAGES.

Wind HOWLS.

Car headlights materialize on the rain soaked motorway.

A pick-up truck is doddering toward them.

A red, single cab Bedford that's seen better days.

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - LIVING QUARTERS

They both see it.

EMBER

Jax!

She grabs the flashlight.

Jax is hunched over the boxed stage light.

JAX

How about this?

They unpack it.

Set it on the floor.

Arc it up to full brightness, eyes clenched.

Toggle the fade control.

THUMP-THUMP

EMBER  
In here! Help us!

JAX  
Over here!!

THUMP-THUMP-THUMP-THUMP-THUMP

INT. FOREST ROAD - PICKUP TRUCK (MOVING)

At the wheel is FARM MAN (60's) wearing spectacles, a checkered cap and overalls.

He sees the tour bus, decelerates.

Squints through windshield wipers.

EXT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS

Blinding white light throbs.

But it just blends with flashes of thunder.

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - LIVING QUARTERS

THUMP-THUMP-THUMP

EMBER  
You blind?!

EXT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS

Their fist blows inaudible, drowned out by the storm.

Deadhead emerges.

Locks eyes with the plodding driver.

INT. FOREST ROAD - PICKUP TRUCK (MOVING)

Farm Man is aghast.

Makes the sign of the cross on his forehead and torso.

FARM MAN  
Open his eyes, Lord, so that he may  
turn from darkness...

EXT. FOREST ROAD

Deadhead stomps toward him.

Farm Man floors it, speeds away.

VROOOOOOM

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - LIVING QUARTERS

THUMP-THUMP

JAX

In here you old git!

EXT. FOREST ROAD

The pickup drives for a little while.

Then veers into a side road, meandering toward the farmhouse.

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - LIVING QUARTERS

Ember aims her phone. Jax leers at the screen.

ON PHONE SCREEN

STORM RAGES

The parking vehicle is met by the warm glow of a porch light.

The front door opens.

Farm Woman beckons her husband inside.

He exits the car. Rushes up patio steps, wincing from the deluge.

He points to the motorway, rambling. Probably telling her he passed by some weirdo on the way home.

JAX (O.S.)

Thaaaat's it...now pick up the phone,  
and call 9 9 9.

Beat.

The cottage lights blink off.

Darkness.

BACK TO SCENE

EMBER

No!

EXT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS

Shafts of moonlight streak through thrashing trees.

Rain pelts down.

Sparkling wheel rims peeking behind shredded tyres sink into mud - the bus is rolling onto its side.

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - LIVING QUARTERS

Rainwater seeps through carpet.

The interior rotates about 10 degrees with a METALLIC GROAN.

Ember and Jax regain their footing.

RING-RING.

They freeze.

Look at each other.

RING-RING

It's coming from the Drivers Quarters.

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - DRIVERS QUARTERS

They burst inside.

White light pulses inside a dashboard compartment.

RING-RING

EMBER

The glove box!

Ember thumbs the latch with CLICK.

It won't open.

CLICK-CLICK-CLICK-CLICK-CLICK

She whirls, exits.

Jax clasps at the paneling. Prying. Pulling.

EMBER (O.S.)

Stone's got the key.

RING-RING



Ember re-enters wielding the kitchen knife.

Jax snatches it away.

Exerting, he wedges open the hatch with a CRACK.

The tray unfolds, spitting out a nagging tablet device.

Jax backpedals, he's gashed his palm.

JAX

Fuck!

He stems the bleeding with a shirt cuff.

EMBER

You ok??

Jax nods impatiently.

Ember brings the iPad to her eyes, wipes a few droplets of blood from the screen.

It's a skype call from DAN.

RING-RING

JAX

We have a connection? How?

EMBER

I don't...the satellite! It's a direct link!

Ember answers.

DAN (ON SKYPE)

Howdy folks, Dan here. Look, um, we've got an excess idle alert at--

EMBER

Send help!! Someone is stalking us!

DAN (ON SKYPE)

What's going on?--

EMBER

There's a guy outside! We're locked in the bus, he's trying to--

DAN (ON SKYPE)

See? This is what happens when you use your own driver. For a reasonable additional fee, we were quite happy to offer--

EMBER  
He's trying to kill us you moron!

DAN (ON SKYPE)  
Ok, chill, chill...

A commotion. It sounds like DAN is moving to another room.

Beat.

DAN (ON SKYPE)  
Alright, I've got you on the E L D  
along the...A four eight two, yes?  
Area code S A 4 8 7 S G.

EMBER  
Dan please send help, we're going to  
hang up and dial 9 9 9, yeah?

DAN (ON SKYPE)  
I'll give them a buzz from here--

EMBER  
Let everyone know!

DAN (ON SKYPE)  
Will do. Sounds like we'll be having  
a serious chit-chat about bond  
reimbursement--

JAX  
Fuck the bond!!

END CALL

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - LIVING QUARTERS

They enter.

Ember dials 999.

RING-RING

They gasp. Deadhead's piercing gaze is outside the window  
again.

RING-RING

DISPATCHER 3 (ON SKYPE)  
9 9 9, which service do you--

EMBER  
Police! Please hurry!!

DISPATCHER 3 (ON SKYPE)  
Connecting you...

DISPATCHER 4 (ON SKYPE)  
Go ahead caller, Police emergency--

EMBER  
A psycho is after us! We're stuck on  
our tour bus--

DISPATCHER 4 (ON SKYPE)  
Ma'am, can you tell me your location?

EMBER  
The...the A four eight two. Headed  
north west, we have a show at--

DISPATCHER 4 (ON SKYPE)  
Ok, stay with me, I need you to be  
more specific. Look outside, are  
there any signs, any landmarks?

EMBER  
No! Just trees!

Jax has found something with his phone camera.

JAX  
I got a sign!  
(beat)  
Falling rocks.

EMBER  
(aggravated)  
Give me Trent's phone!

Jax hands it to her. She swipes it on.

ON PHONE SCREEN

The farmhouse photo. There's a road sign, barely legible in  
the dark.

EMBER (O.S.)  
O...a...k...f...

The battery dies.

BACK TO SCENE

EMBER  
Shit!

DISPATCHER 4 (ON SKYPE)  
Ok...Oakford Road.

EMBER  
Yes. I think so!

DISPATCHER 4 (ON SKYPE)  
Ok, calm down, stay inside. I've got  
an officer en route to your location.  
You're at the crossroads on Oakford  
Road, is that right?

EMBER  
No! Like...half a mile up!

THUMP-THUMP-THUMP

EMBER  
He's going crazy, he's punching the  
window!

DISPATCHER 4 (ON SKYPE)  
Is it just one person?

EMBER  
Yes!

DISPATCHER 4 (ON SKYPE)  
Is the person armed?

EMBER  
I don't know! He had, like...a  
screwdriver before.

DISPATCHER 4 (ON SKYPE)  
Ok, can you get somewhere safe?

Deadhead's silhouette dissolves into the dark.

DISPATCHER 4 (ON SKYPE)  
Stay on the line, I'm going to get  
help for you, ok?

EMBER  
Ok.

DISPATCHER 4 (ON SKYPE)  
In the meantime, I want to compile as  
much information as I can, ok?

EMBER  
Ok, please hurry.

A muted CLANG.

Deadhead is climbing the rear mounted ladder - headed for  
the roof.

DISPATCHER 4 (ON SKYPE)  
Can you see what he looks like at all?

EMBER  
Yes! He's wearing a denim jacket, black jeans and he has a mask on.

DISPATCHER 4 (ON SKYPE)  
A mask? Ok, who is it, do you know?

EMBER  
We don't know! He must've hitched a ride in the trailer, after our gig.

DISPATCHER 4 (ON SKYPE)  
I have help coming your way, stay where you are, ok? I have lat and long, but it's at ninety percent.

Ember and Jax hear the FOOTSTEPS above them.

A flash of thunder reveals Deadhead's silhouette atop the bus.

DISPATCHER 4 (ON SKYPE)  
Where is the person now?

EXT. FOREST ROAD — TOUR BUS

Deadhead is pulling on the antenna unit he saw earlier - tearing it off the roof.

Rivets POP and eject.

Sparks SPUTTER.

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS — LIVING QUARTERS

Jax is pressed against a window.

JAX  
I see him!

DISPATCHER 4 (ON SKYPE)  
Ma'am, can you--

BANG

FIZZ

The skype connection goes dead. Satellite disabled.

END CALL

Ember hurls the tablet away. Launches herself against the glass, crazed.

THUMP-THUMP-THUMP

EMBER

Why won't you just leave us alone?!

Jax holds her shoulder.

JAX

Em, they'll come...

The bus GROANS, tilts a little more.

DEADHEAD (O.S.)

*Obsessed with what enthralls you.  
Discard and leave the truth for dead.  
Greed pulls you ever closer. Are you  
not misled?*

Ember regains composure.

Her eyes glaze over, staring at the floor.

EMBER

I know those verses...

JAX

What?

EMBER

I think it's Benton.

JAX

Who's Benton?

EMBER

It's been a few years, but--

JAX

Ember, who the fucks Benton?!

EMBER

The loner kid at my first school.  
Nobody wants to hang out with the fat  
freak in a Slipknot shirt, right?

(beat)

Except me, of course.

JAX

Why are you chumming with someone  
like that?

EMBER

You used to be someone like that! We all did, didn't we?! His playing sucked, but he could write.

(contemplative pause)

There was a poetry behind that dimness, for sure--

JAX

What happened with you two?

EMBER

Everyone used to call him Deadhead. There was nothing upstairs, you know? He lost it one day, choked someone up against the lockers. Nearly killed them.

JAX

So? Is it him?!

EMBER

He got expelled after that, I don't know--

JAX

Why would he be after us?!

EMBER

I don't...because you're on the stage and he isn't? How should I know!!

JAX

He wants me...

Jax is losing it, erratic.

JAX (CONT'D)

...I auditioned for my own death.

EMBER

I'm sorry!

He reaches for his duffel. Ember grabs it before he can.

EMBER

No.

They tussle. She upturns it, empties it.

Jax forages for his weed.

WATER SPLASHING

It's drenched, useless.

JAX

Fuck you!

He THUMPS his fist into a wall. Nauseous, in withdrawal.

EMBER

You're crashing, just breathe.

Ember fetches a water bottle from the kitchen.

Unscrews the lid, hands it to him.

EMBER

I'm with you, I'm right here...

Jax drinks it, shaking.

EXT. FOREST ROAD – TOUR BUS

Deadhead is spooling duct tape around Stone's broken face, chin slumped forward.

Wrapping, winding.

He stops.

Distracted by a shimmer of light – approaching from afar.

EXT. FOREST ROAD

Headlights glare.

Blue LED's behind an engine grille swell.

A Police SUV is throttling toward them.

INT. FOREST ROAD – TOUR BUS – LIVING QUARTERS

Light streams inside. Ember stands, peers into the Drivers Quarters.

EMBER

They're here, we made it!

She turns to Jax, elated.

He nods lethargically.

EMBER

Come here.

EXT. FOREST ROAD – TOUR BUS

The Cop car veers into the rest area in a spray of mud.



Parks at a cautious distance from the front of the coach.

Headlights dim.

EXT. FOREST ROAD — POLICE CAR

STORM RAGES

POLICEMAN (50's, chubby) steps out. Raises the hood on his poncho, wielding a flashlight. A country Cop, the closest available unit.

EXT. FOREST ROAD — TOUR BUS

Equips his radio.

POLICEMAN  
1 4 1 to dispatch.

Beams of torch-light cut through the dark.

DISPATCHER (ON RADIO)  
Go ahead, 1 4 1.

POLICEMAN  
Hiya, Beth. I'm on site at that four fifteen.

Hatch doors lay open on the bus exterior like gaping mouths.

Junk is strewn everywhere.

The discarded gas barbecue reflects a shimmer.

POLICEMAN  
Looks like the coach has pulled over for some kind of...party.

DISPATCHER (ON RADIO)  
Be advised, call was previously flagged as a possible prank.

POLICEMAN  
Bloody kids...

DISPATCHER (ON RADIO)  
What's wrong, Reg? Am I interrupting your evening?

POLICEMAN  
Don't know yet.  
(pause)  
Vehicle rego, romeo alpha eight seven sierra mike tango, R A 8 7 S M T.

A THUNDERCLAP reveals Deadhead's butchered audience.

POLICEMAN  
 (more urgent)  
 Uh, t-two young males appear to be  
 deceased.

DISPATCHER (ON RADIO)  
 Received. Ambulance on its way.  
 Exercise caution, hold for backup.

POLICEMAN  
 Roger dispatch.

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - DRIVERS QUARTERS

EMBER  
 In here!

THUMP-THUMP

JAX  
 They send one tyre-biter? Where's the  
 cavalry?!

The Cop is at the windscreen now. They wince from the light  
 in their faces.

POLICEMAN  
 Police, you alright in there?

The bus GROANS and tilts a few degrees, almost in reply.

He motions for them to come outside.

They look at each other, apprehensive.

POLICEMAN  
 It's ok, we have more officers  
 coming.

Jax loosens the belt around the cabin doors hinge mechanism.

Ember pushes it ajar about half way with a CLANG.

The strap, not fully unwound, stops it from opening any  
 further.

EMBER  
 That'll do, lets go!

EXT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS

Ember wriggles her way outside, petrified, looking left and  
 right.

Descends to the muck below with a SPLASH.

EMBER  
My friend.

Jax is out next.

SPLASH

POLICEMAN  
Where is the person?

EMBER  
We don't--

JAX  
Who cares? Let's get outta here!!

POLICEMAN  
Are you injured?

EMBER  
He's sick, pneumonia I think--

POLICEMAN  
(to Jax)  
You ok there, pal?

JAX  
I'm ace! Bitch dumped my stash.

POLICEMAN  
Come again?

Ember grits her teeth. Jax shuts up.

Policeman leads them to his SUV parked a short distance away.

They hobble through the mud, scanning for Deadhead.

SQUELCH

SQUELCH

He's gone.

METALLIC CLANG

They group freeze.

Turn around.

POLICEMAN  
Both of you, wait in my vehicle.

The Cop walks away from them, flashlight aimed. Toward the trailer which isn't visible from where Ember and Jax are standing.

EMBER  
No! Wait!!

POLICEMAN  
Lock yourself in--

JAX  
Don't bail on us, man!

Policeman gestures to his car.

POLICEMAN  
You'll be safe there.

EXT. FOREST ROAD — POLICE CAR

They dash toward it.

Jax yanks open the drivers door. The warm, air conditioned interior beckons.

Ember is fixated on the Cop, watching his every step.

Walking further away.

JAX  
This plonker isn't helping us. Lets go.

Jax leans in. Fumbles at the ignition slot.

No keys.

JAX  
Sod it!

Policeman's silhouette disappears.

All Ember can see now is the light from his torch - controlled and steady.

EMBER  
We should go back...

JAX  
You barmy?!

EXT. FOREST ROAD — TOUR BUS — TRAILER

STORM RAGES

Policeman examines the pod, flashlight scanning.

LEAVES RUSTLE to his left. He whirls.

Torch-light hovers on 1 eye hiding behind a tree trunk.

Then it's gone.

It's just a critter.

The Cop turns back, cautiously creaks open the trailer's double doors.

METALLIC SQUEAKING

INT. FOREST ROAD — TOUR BUS — TRAILER

POLICEMAN'S POV:

Darkness. Clutter.

A radius of light finds a guitar with one string missing.

Then we see Stone's expelled brain matter dripping from the ceiling.

EXT. FOREST ROAD — TOUR BUS — TRAILER

Policeman stifles a retch, wrist to mouth.

A THUNDERCLAP illuminates what we see but the Cop doesn't — Deadhead standing behind him, uncoiling a length of guitar string with both hands.

POLICEMAN

1 4 1 to dispatch, area search, no  
trace--

EXT. FOREST ROAD — POLICE CAR

Ember and Jax watch the Cop's flashlight beam.

Suddenly, it's shaking all over the place.

JAX

This isn't good--

EMBER

Run!!

Terrified, they sprint back to the bus. A mad dash.

SQUELCH-SQUELCH-SQUELCH

EXT. FOREST ROAD – TOUR BUS – TRAILER

Deadhead is constricting the guitar string around Policeman's throat. Pulling it tight.

The cop spasms. Blood trickles, drenching his uniform red.

EXT. FOREST ROAD – TOUR BUS

Ember squirms inside through the ajar cabin door.

CLANG-CLANG

Jax gesticulates, waiting his turn.

EXT. FOREST ROAD – TOUR BUS – TRAILER

Deadhead lowers Policeman's limp corpse face-down in the trailer with a chilling gentleness.

A torrent of crimson gushes from his half severed neck.

EXT. FOREST ROAD – TOUR BUS

She's in.

EMBER (O.S.)  
Come on!!

Deadhead is approaching fast.

SQUELCH-SQUELCH-SQUELCH

Jax wriggles his way in - ripping clothes, scraping skin.

INT. FOREST ROAD – TOUR BUS – DRIVERS QUARTERS

He dives across the cabin floor. Ember pulls the door shut with a CLANG.

Deadhead wrests it open.

Ember SCREAMS as he thrusts his arm inside - fingers groping, snatching.

CLANG-CLANG-CLANG

Jax reaches up, tugs on the belt - tightening it.

The gash on his palm reopens, blood spills, he loses his grip.

Ember helps, yanking on the strap - the door is closing.

Deadhead's limb is forced to withdraw - getting crushed.

Fingertips slither out.

CLANG

It's shut.

Silence.

Heavy breathing.

FOOTSTEPS saunter away.

SQUELCH

SQUELCH

EMBER

The Cop...

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - LIVING QUARTERS

They scurry through ankle-high water toward the Sleeping Quarters.

SPLASH-SPLASH-SPLASH

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - SLEEPING QUARTERS

Press their faces to the window.

Policeman's legs dangle outside the trailer. His radio warbles.

DISPATCHER (ON RADIO)

...1 4 1? Do you copy?

Silence.

DISPATCHER (ON RADIO)

Reg?

With a THUMP the Cop's decapitated head bounces off the glass. Ember SHRIEKS.

JAX

Fuck!

Through the blood spattered window, Deadhead emerges from the shadows.

SQUELCH

SQUELCH

EXT. FOREST ROAD – TOUR BUS – TRAILER

He hunches over the corpse, equips the radio. Covers his mouth to muffle his voice.

DEADHEAD

That's a, uh, false alarm here.

Rain and THUNDER conveniently aid his deception.

STORM RAGES

DISPATCHER (ON RADIO)

Received 1 4 1, what about the bodies?

INT. FOREST ROAD – TOUR BUS – SLEEPING QUARTERS

Ember bashes the glass.

THUMP-THUMP-THUMP

EMBER

(to Dispatcher)

No you stupid bitch!!

DEADHEAD

Just some crazy teens...goofing around.

DISPATCHER (ON RADIO)

Received. Ten twenty two, disregarding.

END TRANSMISSION

Ember starts to sob, all hope lost.

Jax crawls into his bunk, curls up into a fetal position.

EXT. FOREST ROAD – TOUR BUS – TRAILER

Deadhead frisks the headless carcass.

Collects a taser stun-gun, stuffs it in his pocket.

Unclips a key-ring.

The bus's fuel tank, now exposed on the upturned chassis, catches his attention.

EXT. FOREST ROAD – TOUR BUS

He squats, rips out a bloody screwdriver protruding from a punctured tyre.



INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - SLEEPING QUARTERS

BANG

BANG

Petrol trickles inside.

Ember gags from the intruding odor. Leans into Jax's bunk, shakes him awake.

EMBER

Hey!

JAX

(weak)

You think Trent's right, Em? There's a higher power...waiting for us?

Drags him out of bed.

EMBER

Stay with me!

EXT. FOREST ROAD - POLICE CAR

Deadhead sits behind the wheel.

The ignition kicks in.

VROOM

Headlights illuminate.

He drives in a small arc - positions the car to face the underside of the bus.

Reverses to get a bit of a run-up.

Then accelerates toward it.

VROOOOOOM

INT. FOREST ROAD - POLICE CAR (MOVING)

DEADHEAD'S POV:

Through the windscreen - approaching the bus chassis at lightning speed.

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - LIVING QUARTERS

DEAFENING CRUNCH

Metal CRUMPLES, glass SHATTERS.

The impact throws them against a wall.

The bus is slowly tipping over.

The trailer rotates sluggishly - then disconnects from the tow-bar.

METALLIC GROAN

The battered coach flips 90 degrees onto its side with a DEAFENING CRUNCH - drivers side door facing up.

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - LIVING QUARTERS

Ember and Jax are sprawled on their new floor - the upturned kitchen.

They moan, massaging bruised limbs.

METALLIC SQUEAKING

The wall mounted TV dislodges - plunges from above onto Ember's leg.

CRACK

She SCREAMS in agony.

Jax pushes the TV aside - hovers his fingers, unsure of where to place them. Blood oozes under her jeans.

EMBER  
Don't touch it!!

EXT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS

The SUV idles in the mud, ENGINE GURGLING.

Deadhead reverses in a wide arc - and rear-ends the bus's front windscreen.

DEAFENING SMASH

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - LIVING QUARTERS

They jolt from the impact. Glass SHATTERS.

Ember watches the blood seep from her leg.

EMBER  
We have to stop the bleeding!

Jax scans the mess around them.

Fetches Trenton's guitar strap from the floor.

EMBER  
Just use that!!

She wraps it around her wound.

Ties a knot.

Clenches it tight - SCREAMING in pain.

INT. FOREST ROAD - POLICE CAR

Deadhead shifts into neutral.

Exits the idling vehicle, now rammed up against the front of the bus.

ENGINE GURGLING

EXT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS

He prowls through scattered junk.

Picks up the vacuum cleaner, head tilted, breath HISSING.

Detaches its plastic hose.

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - LIVING QUARTERS

Ember and Jax huddle, peering into the Drivers Quarters.

Deadhead's silhouette materializes at the windscreen. They shudder.

THUMP

Glass ruptures.

One end of the vacuum hose SQUEAKS its way inside.

Shards sprinkle.

They look at each other in dread.

EXT. FOREST ROAD - POLICE CAR

Deadhead takes the other end of the hose and stuffs it in the Cop cars exhaust pipe.

EXHAUST SPUTTERING

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - LIVING QUARTERS

Toxic smoke leaks inside.

They scramble to the smashed open sunroof - on a wall now, not the ceiling.

Coughing, gasping, snapping off remnants of glass from the canopy frame. Desperate for clean air.

Their hands slice up, blood spills.

Ember points to the SUV.

EMBER

That's our ticket out of here!

Jax looks scared.

EMBER

I know getting baked makes reality tolerable, but if you don't take that car, you're not going to have a life to hide from. We're both done.

He nods.

EMBER

I'll distract him, yeah?

JAX

What happened to don't leave me?

EMBER

Just make it! Don't stop until you get help.

Jax covers his mouth with the front of his shirt. Hobbles to the Drivers Quarters, coughing.

EMBER (O.S.)

Jax...

He stops, turns back.

JAX

Uh-huh?

EMBER

You straight?

JAX

Yeah.

(beat)

Sorry about before, I...

EMBER

Bring me down with a sob story later. Go!

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - DRIVERS QUARTERS

Noxious vapor pours inside.

Jax enters, climbs the dashboard, gagging.

Reaches up to unwrap the belt which is loose now.

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - SLEEPING QUARTERS

Ember is pressed against the back window gripping the kitchen knife, hand shaking.

EMBER

Hey freak!! You want us? We're here!!

She turns, squints through the smog - straining to see inside the Drivers Quarters.

It looks like Jax is out.

Turns back, gasps. Deadhead is standing outside.

He gives her a curious stare.

Then snubs her.

Stoops, masked face to the glass, looking for Jax.

She blocks his view.

EMBER

(petrified)

He's dead. I'm yours, come on!!

EXT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS

Deadhead inspects the cracked windowpane, head tilted.

Maybe it's weak enough to punch a hole through.

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - SLEEPING QUARTERS

His fist THUMPS into the glass. Ember backpedals.

THUMP

THUMP

THUMP

The Police car door SLAMS shut. He darts his eyes toward the sound.

Then back to Ember.

She sneers.

INT. FOREST ROAD – POLICE CAR

Jax nestles into the drivers seat. Engages central locking.

CLICK

Thrusts the gear stick. Hits the accelerator.

VROOOOOOM

But the wheels just spin and spray up mud - there's no traction.

In a side mirror, Deadhead is closing in.

SQUELCH-SQUELCH-SQUELCH

Jax hits reverse. Backs into the bus with a CRUNCH.

He's out of the pot-hole.

Deadhead's gloved fist obliterates the drivers side window.

SMASH

Jax recoils, shifts into drive and slams the accelerator.

The killers groping fingers are denied as the SUV speeds away.

VROOOOOOM

EXT. FOREST ROAD – TOUR BUS

The vacuum hose disconnects.

WHOOSH

Petrol seeps from the Cop cars fuel tank, creating a trail behind it.

Deadhead arms the taser gun, eyes the weapon, head tilted.

Then shoots the flammable puddle.

BANG

Electricity arcs. Fire IGNITES.

The surge of flickering flame SCREAMS along its designated path - chasing the absconding vehicle.

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - DRIVERS QUARTERS

Ember sees the flame trail. Hope turns to dread.

EMBER  
Behind you!!

INT. FOREST ROAD - POLICE CAR (MOVING)

Jax grips the steering wheel with manic glee.

Looks up at the rear-view mirror. His pupils burn yellow from the reflection. Tears well up.

EXT. FOREST ROAD - POLICE CAR

KABOOM

The car explodes spectacularly. Glass and debris spray into the air.

The mass of burning, contorted steel swerve, SMASHES into a tree.

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - DRIVERS QUARTERS

THUMP-THUMP

EMBER  
No!!

Ember clambers up the dashboard, crying, cursing.

Tugs on the belt.

CLANG

The cabin door won't close - it's crumpled and skewed.

She tries again, frantic.

CLANG-CLANG-CLANG

EXT. FOREST ROAD

Deadhead is dragging Jax's burning body by one ankle, back toward the bus.

SQUELCH

SQUELCH

SQUELCH

INT. FOREST ROAD — FARMHOUSE — BEDROOM

Darkness.

Gaudy curtains light up from a bedside lamp.

A hand parts them.

Beyond the forest, fire and smoke on the motorway.

A landline telephone cord dangles into view - Farm Woman is calling 999.

EXT. FOREST ROAD — TOUR BUS

Deadhead poses Jax's charred carcass in another chair.

Smoke rises from bone and gristle visible through melted flesh.

DEADHEAD

We're at max capacity, Ember. Only  
one seat left!

He strolls to the bus's underside.

SQUELCH

SQUELCH

Wet boots step onto piping and framework. He's climbing up the chassis.

CLANG

And up.

CLANG

Ascending to the top of the bus.

INT. FOREST ROAD — TOUR BUS — LIVING QUARTERS

MUTED CLANG

Ember limps inside.

Snatches her duffel - lifts it soaking wet into her lap.

Unzips it.

Quivering fingers take a can of hairspray.

She moves to the upturned kitchen, grabs Jax's discarded flip lighter.



Thumbs it on and SPRAYS the can. A jet of fire HISSES out.  
A delirious half-smile appears across her face.

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - DRIVERS QUARTERS

She squats under the cabin door. Hairspray aimed, zippo at the ready.

Silence.

Heavy breathing.

CLANG

The door SQUEAKS ajar. She startles - drops the lighter.

SPLASH

EMBER

Shit!

Plunges her fingers into the water.

CLANG-CLANG

The belt around the hinge is loosening.

She finds it, flicks it on.

No flame.

FLICK-FLICK-FLICK

Still no flame.

EMBER

No!! No no no--

The door CLANGS open a little more.

Ember leans over the dashboard.

Holds the drenched zippo upside down and rolls its flint on the woodgrain surface.

WOOD SCRAPING

Back and forth - unclogging it, desperate for a spark.

WOOD SCRAPING

EXT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS

Deadhead stands atop the bus.

The STORM RAGES around him.

He kneels down, grips the cabin door and RIPS it off its hinges.

METALLIC CLANG

Tosses it aside.

SPLASH

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - DRIVERS QUARTERS

Pokes his head inside the now gaping door-frame.

Ember greets him at point blank range - sprays the hairspray and flicks the lighter on.

SWOOSH

A projectile of fire envelops Deadhead's upper torso. He SCREAMS, high-pitched and shrill.

EXT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS

The killer is ablaze, writhing, twitching.

He plunges off the bus into the mire below.

SPLASH

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - DRIVERS QUARTERS

Ember throws the empty can away.

Looks through the windscreen - watching him burn.

EXT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS

Deadhead stands, extinguishing remnants of flame from his jacket.

Peels away burnt cloth draped around his smoking cranium.

Revealing a chubby face and razor-short hair. There's a blankness in his eyes, one bigger than the other. Grotty teeth behind a permanently raised half upper lip.

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - DRIVERS QUARTERS

Ember gazes in horror at BENTON.

EMBER

Did you have to kill them?!

He squats, looks into her eyes, head tilted.

BENTON

Everyone is disposable. You taught me that.

(beat)

Your skive arse is sitting on a hundred percent royalty...from *my* lyrics.

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - LIVING QUARTERS

Ember retreats inside, panicking.

Thinking. Strategizing.

BENTON (O.S.)

Ding...

She gasps. Benton is watching her through the sunroof canopy.

BENTON

No school bell to save you this time.

Ember gulps, holds her neck.

Theater speakers detach from above and dangle on their cables - swaying like some over-sized wind-chime.

Steel scrapes against steel.

Sparks erupt, dropping into the fuel soaked water.

Spot fires ignite.

FWOOSH

BENTON (O.S.)

I got banged up at Ashcroft.

(beat)

Challenging behavior, they said...

Ember grabs the guitar amp.

Shakes the water off a cable. Hurriedly connects it to the amps line-out socket.

EMBER

(to herself, shaking)

Challenge this...

Plugs the other end of the cable into the line-in socket on a hanging speaker.

EMBER

Watching you through the window was  
painful. You still can't play for  
shit!

EXT. FOREST ROAD — TOUR BUS

Benton strolls to the underside of the bus to climb it  
again.

Then halts, like her words have enlightened him.

He wanders back to the windscreen.

SQUELCH

SQUELCH

Benton examines the glass - it's detached from the chassis  
frame.

Gripping it, he proceeds to tear the entire window pane off  
in one, curling piece.

METALLIC GROANING

Rivets POP and SPIT.

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS — SLEEPING QUARTERS

Ember drags the stage light toward her.

Hunches next to the wired up amp.

Rips open it's grille.

Connects her microphone - presses it against the now exposed  
speaker.

Salvages a shrink-wrapped pair of earplugs from Jax's  
carrier bag.

Fumbles the packet open, stuffs them in her ears.

Slips her headphones on.

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS — DRIVERS QUARTERS

BENTON'S POV:

Stepping through the windowless frame.

SQUELCH

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - LIVING QUARTERS

BENTON'S POV:

Creeping toward Ember hiding at the back of the bus.

SQUELCH

Hunting the brazen thief who profited from his talent.

SQUELCH

Exhaust fumes swirl, hindering visibility.

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - SLEEPING QUARTERS

EMBER'S POV:

Benton is slowly approaching.

Stepping through flames like they're nothing.

His hulking form becoming more defined in the haze - getting closer.

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - LIVING QUARTERS

BENTON'S POV:

Cables hang from above, plugging in to Ember's veiled silhouette like veins.

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - SLEEPING QUARTERS

BENTON'S POV:

Ember is sitting on the floor, her left hand resting on the powered down amp - her right hand on the powered down stage light.

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - SLEEPING QUARTERS

BENTON  
Shows over, Ember.

She thwacks the amp on. Feedback erupts.

DEAFENING SQUEAL

Ember clenches her eyes shut, flicks the stage light on.

Blinding white light.

Deadhead covers his face, SCREAMING in agony.

DEAFENING SQUEAL

He stumbles backward, retreating.

DEAFENING SQUEAL

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - LIVING QUARTERS

Staggering, writhing - blindly negotiating his exit.

DEAFENING SQUEAL

INT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - SLEEPING QUARTERS

Ember shuts off the equipment.

Silence.

Heavy breathing.

She peers into the Drivers Quarters.

He's out.

EXT. FOREST ROAD - TOUR BUS - SUNRISE

Thunder subsides.

The rainstorm eases to a trickle.

Benton is floundering toward the bodies on chairs, clawing at his face - deaf, blind, burned.

Ember emerges from the wreckage, bruised and bloodied.

Removes her headphones. Plucks out the earplugs.

The WAIL of sirens.

She turns to the horizon, bleary.

A procession of vehicles approach - Police, Ambulance, Fire Trucks.

SIRENS WAILING

EXT. FOREST ROAD - FARMHOUSE

Farm Woman and Farm Man scurry into their pick-up truck.

They chug down their driveway toward the commotion.

VROOOOOOM

EXT. FOREST ROAD — TOUR BUS

Ember follows Benton, wincing with each step.

SQUELCH

SQUELCH

She collects the Flying-V guitar from the ground.

Brandishes it like a baseball bat.

Advantaged by his blindness, she poises for a clean shot.

BENTON

Erase the...proof, but your...guilt  
will endure--

EMBER

No encore tonight, fucker.

Swings it into his face.

CRUNCH

Wood SPLINTERS, out of tune strings TWANG.

He drops, lifeless.

SPLASH

Right in front of her band-mates arranged macabrely in the chairs, heads slumped forward, chins against chests.

The SIRENS grow louder.

Her soaking shoes prod Benton's splayed body.

He's motionless.

Ember relinquishes what's left of the guitar.

Collapses to her knees.

Benton sits upright. Grabs her throat with both hands.

He squeezes, pulling her closer. Their noses are almost touching.

Ember is blacking out, choking, gagging.

A flash of silver, somewhere under the muck near Trenton's feet.

It's the discarded cymbal pole.

Ember's outstretched hand slithers through mud - straining to grab it.

BENTON  
(exerting)  
Embrace...face to face, the lie.

Millimeters seem like miles as fingertips yearn the touch of steel.

EMBER  
(struggling)  
Shhh, I wrote that.

She STABS the pole into his neck.

SPLAT

The impact drenches her face in blood.

Benton gurgles.

Then quietly expires.

She stands, massaging her throat.

Grips the shaft with both hands, straddles the corpse and stabs him again.

SPLAT

And again.

SPLAT

Gore sprays up.

Ember lets out an ear-splitting, primordial SCREAM.

EMBER  
AAAAAAAAAAARRRRRRRRRRGH!

The forest shudders.

SPLAT

SPLAT

SPLAT

She's bathed in blood from head to toe. Like a drowned rat.

SPLAT



STONE  
He's dead, Em...

Ember gasps. Drops the pole.

Stone is barely alive, using every ounce of his fading strength to speak.

STONE  
(weak)  
Ya lied to us...why?

Emergency lights oscillate. Klaxons build to a crescendo.

The speeding armada is almost here.

STONE  
I deserve...a fair cut...

She grabs the roll of duct tape from Stone's lap, half wound around his face.

Ember presses down. Wrapping his mouth, then his flaring nostrils, then his frightened eyes.

She hobbles backward, watching Stone convulse in the chair.

MUFFLED GURGLE

And convulse.

MUFFLED GURGLE

Then stop.

TYRES SCREECH

CAR DOORS OPEN

She turns around, arms like Christ. Police and Paramedics swarm.

SQUELCH-SQUELCH-SQUELCH

Pulsing lights dance on the rigor-mortis behind her.

Ember falls into the arms of PARAMEDIC 1.

PARAMEDIC 1  
We got you.

A towel is in her face, dabbing up blood and pieces of intestine.

PARAMEDIC 1  
What's your name, sweetheart?

EMBER  
Ember...

PARAMEDIC 1  
Ok, you're safe now, Ember.  
Everything's going to be alright.

POLICEMAN 1 slips off his jacket, drapes it around her.

Blood pools from Benton's perforated cadaver.

POLICEMAN 1  
It's ok, you had to do it...you had  
to..

Emergency personnel navigate through the carnage.

VOICES and RADIO CHATTER invade her senses from all  
directions.

PARAMEDIC 2 (O.S.)  
...four people down, not breathing...

POLICEWOMAN 1 (O.S.)  
...confirmed, D O A...

Firemen scramble about, barking orders at each other and  
showering the burning vehicles with foam.

FIREMAN 1 (O.S.)  
...another here, officer down!  
(beat)  
Cover him up!!

Someone vomits.

Paramedic 1 attends to the guitar strap tourniquet, now  
caked in dried blood.

PARAMEDIC 1  
Can you walk, Ember?

EMBER  
Yeah, but, hurts like hell.

She's escorted to a waiting Ambulance.

The relentless barrage of VOICES morph into the sound of a  
thundering STADIUM CROWD.

Multi-colored lights continue to pulsate.

CROWD ROARING

Ember basks in the adulation, delirious.

The on-board Wi-Fi inside the Ambulance kicks in.

RING-RING

Ember equips her phone, hand shaking.

RING-RING

ON PHONE SCREEN

Incoming call from: "Mum"

Right on cue - it's their scheduled morning chat.

RING-RING

Ember hangs up.

END CALL

Swipes to her history - 11 missed calls from Yuri.

BACK TO SCENE

Dials his number.

RING-RING

RING-RING

YURI (ON PHONE)

Ember?! We heard what happened--

EMBER

I'm alive...

YURI (ON PHONE)

Good girl.

EMBER

I just...need a shitload of med's for my larynx.

YURI (ON PHONE)

Listen, I'll have a sit-down with the promoter. We're not canceling, just rescheduling.

A zipped-up body bag in a stretcher SQUEAKS past.

YURI (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)  
I'm pulling in some session guys to  
round out your dates. You cool with  
that?

EMBER  
Yeah, I'm cool with that...

YURI (ON PHONE)  
Publicity's about to shoot through  
the roof...

Her managers seedy voice trails off.

EXT. FOREST ROAD - AMBULANCE

The pick-up truck is parked by the roadside. Farm Woman sits  
alone in the passenger seat.

POLICEMAN 1 (O.S.)  
Sir, if you could please stand back.

Farm Man emerges from the shadows, jacket and shoes worn  
over sleepwear.

Ember gulps - he saw what she did.

He makes the sign of the cross on his forehead and torso.

FARM MAN  
Open her eyes, Lord, so that she may  
turn from darkness...

Ember averts his stare as she's laid in a gurney.

STADIUM CROWD (V.O.)  
(chanting)  
EM-BER, EM-BER...

FADE TO BLACK