

FERAL MOUNTAINS

Written by

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**FADE IN:**

**EXT. HIGHWAY - ATLANTA - DAY**

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

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

The Prius' attempt is aborted and backs off.

**INT. PRIUS - HIGHWAY - DAY**

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

WARREN

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

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

ANA

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

WARREN

We even left an hour early and look  
at this mess.  
(tensing hands)  
Just look at it!

ANA

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

WARREN

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

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

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

**INT. CADILLAC - HIGHWAY - DAY**

The MALE CADILLAC DRIVER (20s) stares hard at Warren, who is the first one the Driver sees in the car, and SHOUTS through his open window --

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

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

**INT./EXT. PRIUS - HIGHWAY - DAY**

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

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

WARREN  
Ana... Ana! What are you doing?  
Stop! You're gonna hit them!

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

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

**INT. CADILLAC - DAY**

Cadillac Driver glares at a frantic Warren gawking at him through his window. The driver's FEMALE PASSENGER (20s) is steaming. She leans across the driver, and YELLS to Warren --

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

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

**INT. PRIUS - DAY**

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

WARREN  
I'm feeling dizzy, Ana, I--

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

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

ANA (CONT'D)  
Oh, lighten up, Warren.

**EXT. PRIUS AND CADILLAC - DAY**

The cars come within inches of each other.

**INT. PRIUS - DAY**

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

**INT. CADILLAC - DAY**

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

**INTERCUT PRIUS CADILLAC**

Warren freezes. Eyes wild in fear.

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

Warren just may have shit his pants --

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

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

Ana almost rolls her eyes --

ANA  
Warren, enough --

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

Warren is hyperventilating. He may pass out...

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

FEMALE PASSENGER

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

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

WARREN

(through choppy breath)

He's ai--aiming... at... my... h--h-  
-h--h--head...

He grimaces and clutches his chest.

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

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

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

ANA

Warren! WARREN!

She checks his pulse, reaches to feel his breath from his  
nose to find him breathing, but she's taking no chances --

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

#### **INT. CORRIDOR - OFFICE COMPLEX - DAY**

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

ANA

Hey, you did well, considering...

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

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

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

#### **INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY**

Ana and Warren sit opposite DR. LANGLEY (60s) in a quiet  
office.

Warren soothes himself by watching the hypnotic dance of Langley's desktop screensaver, his own name -- DR. THOMAS LANGLEY, PSYCHIATRIST -- bouncing from edge to edge.

DR. LANGLEY

So? Warren?

Warren tears his eyes from the screen.

WARREN

The drive here was a disaster.

ANA

I've never seen him pass out before.

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

WARREN

It's like it's infecting everything. I can barely meet deadlines at work, and I used to breeze through tax returns.

DR. LANGLEY

Tell me about triggers.

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

WARREN

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

(taps faster)

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

(grows more manic)

And the downtown? Go downtown only if you want to be robbed or killed! And look at the price of gas! I mean it's like someone turned up the volume on the whole world. Sometimes I just want to--

Dr. Langley spins from his computer to Warren.

DR. LANGLEY

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

Warren taps his foot faster.

WARREN

Shouldn't you be telling me that?

(off Langley's look)

Maybe I need another doctor.

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

DR. LANGLEY

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

Warren's tapping stops.

DR. LANGLEY (CONT'D)

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

ANA

Maybe a higher dosage?

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

DR. LANGLEY

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

WARREN

I just want to be normal.

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

DR. LANGLEY

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

WARREN

I can't... I took too many sick days already. I mean I can do remote, maybe, but... We need the money.

DR. LANGLEY

Anxiety over money is another factor, of course.

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

DR. LANGLEY (CONT'D)

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

Ana nods her head.

DR. LANGLEY (CONT'D)

Difficulty breathing?

ANA

Worse.

DR. LANGLEY

Rapid heartbeat?

ANA

Worse.

DR. LANGLEY

Overwhelmed with daily tasks?

ANA

Worse.

DR. LANGLEY

Trouble sleeping?

ANA

Worse.

DR. LANGLEY

Sexual performance?

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

DR. LANGLEY (CONT'D)

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

ANA

How... drastic?

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

DR. LANGLEY

You have to make a severe change in  
environment and routine. Find a  
place entirely different from where  
you're living.

(MORE)



DR. LANGLEY (CONT'D)

A place where Warren's completely removed from current surroundings. Some place remote would be best. And a project. Something he can sink his soul into.

Warren's eyes grow wet and his mind races a million miles a minute. A concerned expression engulfs Ana's face --

ANA

I have a teenager... it'll be hard to turn our lives upside down.

DR. LANGLEY

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

Tears heavily well in Warren's panicked eyes.

HAYDEN (PRE-LAP)

No fucking way!

#### **INT. LIVING ROOM - HOUSE - DAY**

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

HAYDEN

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

ANA

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

HAYDEN

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

ANA

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

HAYDEN

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

ANA

Your dad doesn't know anything about me.

(MORE)

ANA (CONT'D)

And clearly doesn't know that when you marry someone, you stick with them and do anything for them.

A heavy beat of eye contact.

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

HAYDEN

It's my junior year!

ANA

You'll meet new friends.

HAYDEN

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

She sighs and her expression shows she feels bad.

ANA

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

HAYDEN

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

ANA

She's your stepmother. You should respect her.

HAYDEN

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

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

ANA

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

HAYDEN

Dad says fuck all the time.

ANA

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

HAYDEN

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

He bolts and stomps off leaving Ana distressed --

HAYDEN (CONT'D)  
FUCK FUCK FUCK FUCK FUCK!

Warren slinks into the living room, jittery.

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

ANA  
Why didn't you say something?  
Defend yourself.

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

ANA  
You found a place? Already?

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

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

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

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

She's dubious, but she kisses him and pulls him in for a hug.

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

**INT. HAYDEN'S BEDROOM - DAY**

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

HAYDEN  
(into phone)  
Hey man, you think I could stay at your place, just for the school year?

Laughter from the other end --

MALE FRIEND #1 (PHONE)  
My parents don't even want me to  
hangout with you.

ANOTHER CALL AND REACTION --

FEMALE FRIEND #2 (PHONE)  
Ewww, you're joking right?

ANOTHER CALL AND REACTION --

MALE FRIEND #3 (PHONE)  
HaHaHa, good one dude.

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

#### **EXT. HOLMES TOWNSHIP - DAY**

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

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

#### **INT. CAR (MOVING) - DAY**

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

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

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

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

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

PERRY  
Oh, I hear you, Ana. Loud and  
clear. But when you fall in love  
with a place, sometimes you just  
can't help yourself.

ANA  
I believe I can.

The vehicle pulls into the drive of a two-story colonial that appears expensive. Ana glares over at Perry.

ANA (CONT'D)  
Take us to something small, and inexpensive, or drop us off at our hotel.

Warren is impressed with Ana.

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

WARREN  
That's what we're looking for.

Ana and Hayden share a look before Hayden looks away.

**EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY**

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

**INT. CAR (MOVING) - DAY**

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

HAYDEN  
Where is this place, Siberia?

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

**EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY**

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

**EXT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - DAY**

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

The big house appears in terrible disrepair: cockeyed shutters hanging; faded paint peeling, blistering; loose drains coming apart at the seams...

A nearby colossal mountain dwarfs the house, the peak obscured by clouds.

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

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

PERRY

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

ANA

I'm sure the water's great but look  
at this house. You've only brought  
us here because you're about to  
lose your commis--

PERRY

The cornstalks are included.

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

Hayden grabs his mother by the arm.

HAYDEN

Seriously? You're moving us here?  
It's a fucking haunted house!

Ana notices Warren cautiously approaching the house to inspect it. She walks away from Hayden.

WARREN

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

ANA

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

HAYDEN

Thank the Lord.

WARREN

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

ANA

Well, you're not in this by yourself.

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

WARREN

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

ANA

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

HAYDEN

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

ANA

You're not old enough to vote.

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

He turns to Warren --

HAYDEN

You might need this.

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

WARREN

Bonding.

#### **BEGIN MONTAGE: WORKING ON THE HOUSE**

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

-- Warren meticulously patches cracks with putty while Hayden slops paint on the patched areas on the other side.

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

SUPERIMPOSE: "Three Weeks Later"

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

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

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

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

-- Warren rips down the drooping wallpaper while Ana applies a fresh coat of paint to prepped walls.

SUPERIMPOSE: "Two More Weeks Pass"

-- Ana teaches Warren yoga positions. She corrects his Warrior I pose. He's an eager student. Ana watches him adoringly.

-- The front half of the house has been painted. Hayden's technique shows improvement by painting more carefully.

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

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

#### **EXT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - DAY**

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

Warren helps Hayden finish painting the exterior.

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

HAYDEN

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

ANA

Drinking age is twenty-one.

HAYDEN

Dad lets me.

ANA

Not even gonna comment.

HAYDEN

Which is an actual comment.

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



ANA  
(to Warren)  
I'm sorry Hayden's heart isn't in it.

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

ANA  
I didn't ask him.

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

**INT. DINING ROOM - MOUNTAIN HOUSE - DAY**

The family is in the midst of eating dinner.

ANA  
We need to go into town for groceries tomorrow.

HAYDEN  
Great. I'll drive.  
(off her)  
I have my temps.

Ana appears unsure...

ANA  
The roads are a bit--

WARREN  
Sure! I'll ride shotgun, give you some tips.

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

HAYDEN  
That would be coo--

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

**EXT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - DAY**

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

ANA  
Is there a fire?

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

WARREN

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

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

ANA

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

But he's already sunk into the panic --

WARREN

Nothing to worry about? A forest fire can burn through a thousand acres of trees in a day.

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

ANA

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

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

#### **EXT. COMPOUND - MOUNTAIN FOREST - DAY**

Deep in the mountain forest, smoke ascends into the clouds --

SOUNDS OF CHAOS -- MUFFLED SCREAMS -- MUTED GROANS -- SCAMPERING FOOTSTEPS -- CAN BE HEARD, but not seen, through the swirling smoke.

As the wind pushes the smoke, it reveals a concrete fortress enclosing a village of multiple small buildings in ruins...

Barbed wires are embedded atop concrete walls, which are scorched and display chunks of crumbling cement with jagged cracks.

The front gates have been blown apart, displaying a huge gap with loose wires dangling.

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

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

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

SCRATCHES AND BITE MARKS.

FLESH CLAWED AND TORN.

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

#### **EXT. BUILDINGS - COMPOUND**

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

#### **EXT. MEDICAL OFFICE - COMPOUND**

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

#### **INT. MEDICAL OFFICE - COMPOUND**

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

#### **EXT. OUTSIDE THE COMPOUND**

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

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

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

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

#### **EXT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - DAY**

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

WARREN

You're not writing any of this down.

SHERIFF BARNES  
Would that make you feel better?

WARREN  
I think so.

Sheriff Barnes doesn't move to write anything down.

ANA  
What do you suppose happened?

SHERIFF BARNES  
Mountain folk most likely. Maybe a  
still blew up.

HAYDEN  
A still?

Sheriff Barnes looks to Hayden.

SHERIFF  
For making moonshine. Booze.

HAYDEN  
Got it.

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

HAYDEN  
(snickering)  
Still have stills...

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

WARREN  
Aren't you going to do anything  
about them?

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

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

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

The Sheriff opens the door to his cruiser.

SHERIFF BARNES (CONT'D)  
Plus, I don't want to file a  
missing person report. Way too much  
paperwork.

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

WARREN  
He wasn't very comforting.

HAYDEN  
I think he's bad ass.

**INT. OFFICE - HOUSE - DAY**

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

ANA  
You're up early.

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

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

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

Ana smiles broadly as Hayden appears behind her --

HAYDEN  
Did someone say breakfast?

**INT. PRIUS (MOVING) - HOLMES - DAY**

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

**EXT. PRIUS (MOVING) - GROCERY STORE - DAY**

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

Hayden gets out and looks off toward the downtown --

HAYDEN

Dude, it wasn't that bad.

WARREN

Next time, you can drive with your mother.

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

**EXT. FRONT OF HOUSE - MOUNTAIN BASE - DAY**

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

HAYDEN

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

He starts to go inside the house.

WARREN

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

Hayden doesn't want to, but listens.

WARREN (CONT'D)

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

HAYDEN

Sure.

Hayden walks to the garden.

**EXT. GARDEN - FRONT OF HOUSE - DAY**

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

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

WARREN

I said chop the weeds, not the cornstalks!

HAYDEN

Oh, I thought they were weeds.

Warren shakes his head, perplexed.

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

Hayden drops the hoe, walks off, chuckling.

**EXT. FRONT OF HOUSE - MOUNTAIN BASE - NIGHT**

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

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

WARREN  
I think I'll call it a night and grab a shower. Can you do me a favor and clean up and put the supplies away?

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

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

He looks at his phone, opens the contact for DAD and taps it. Hayden's dad, BRENT (40s), picks up.

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

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

INTERCUT with

**INT. BRENT'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

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

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

Hayden picks up a piece of the house siding.

HAYDEN

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

BRENT

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

HAYDEN

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

BRENT

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

HAYDEN

By everything, you mean Haley?

BRENT

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

Hayden sighs, kicks the foundation.

HAYDEN

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

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

BRENT

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

HAYDEN

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

BRENT

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

HAYDEN

Home school's a joke.

BRENT

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



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

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

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

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

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

It's quiet at first, until...

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

The NOISE GROWS LOUDER, coming closer to the edge.

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

The noise in the woods stops.

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

HEAVY BREATHING breaks the silence.

A dark figure SHIFTS in the shadows.

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

**INT. HAYDEN'S BEDROOM - HOUSE - NIGHT**

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

ANA

I heard you talking to your dad.

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

HAYDEN

He doesn't give a shit about me.

ANA

I'm sorry--

HAYDEN  
(motioning to tablet)  
Can't you see I'm in the middle of  
watching this? Just leave me alone.

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

ANA  
What's in there?

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

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

ANA  
Where did you get the beer?

Hayden knows he's busted.

HAYDEN  
Gas station.  
(off her)  
What are you going to do, ground  
me? I'm already in solitary  
confinement.

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

HAYDEN  
You don't have to tell psycho, do  
you?

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

She waits a moment then exits his room.

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

HAYDEN  
Please, please...

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

But he thinks a moment, his expression changes --

His mother's comment sticks with him.

**EXT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - NIGHT**

Storm in full swing. Rain pelts the house like hurled pebbles.

**INT. WARREN AND ANNA'S BEDROOM - MOUNTAIN HOUSE - NIGHT**

The rain and wind muffled. Warren sleeps in an armadillo curl, Ana with a protective arm over him. A serene, protected picture broken by --

A CLATTER FROM OUTSIDE, pulling Warren awake. Anna groans, rolls over. Warren's eyes dart, then--

CLATTER. Again. The sound pierces through the storm. Something moving...

WARREN

Ana?

She squirms a little, but stays asleep. Warren swings himself out of bed --

**INT. HALLWAY - MOUNTAIN HOUSE - NIGHT**

Warren creeps past Hayden's bedroom, its door cracked open.

SCCCCRRAPE -- He freezes. The sound louder now, like something being dragged --

Warren's head turns -- he hears it coming from the front of the house.

**INT. KITCHEN - MOUNTAIN HOUSE - NIGHT**

Warren fumbles in a drawer for a flashlight. SCCCRRAAAAAPE! His hand shakes as he lifts it, approaches --

**INT. FOYER - MOUNTAIN HOUSE - NIGHT**

Ignites the beam as he pulls open the front door to reveal --

**EXT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - NIGHT**

CHAOS. The supplies he left outside are ransacked -- paint cans buckled and spilled -- lumber rope yanked apart, scattering the wood -- bags of screws and nails shredded, like they've been clawed open.

Warren's new gutters have been pulled from the exterior, bent and ruined in the soggy dirt.

He swings the torch beam, picking out the rows of corn, now ravaged, flattened, only a few lone stalks hanging on in the rain.

WARREN

ANA!

**INT. HALLWAY - MOUNTAIN HOUSE - NIGHT**

Warren BARRELS through the house, a shaking ball of fear --

WARREN

Ana! Wake up! Wake up!

She emerges from their upstairs bedroom, adrenaline turning her drowsiness to wariness --

ANA

What's going on?!

**INT. LIVING ROOM - MOUNTAIN HOUSE - NIGHT**

Warren and Ana stand by the window, light from the house spilling out into onto the devastation --

ANA

Could just have been the storm...

WARREN

No way. Something tore those bags open, cut through the rope holding the lumber --

Realizing --

WARREN (CONT'D)

I asked Hayden to pack everything away. I asked him to chop the weeds. He started cutting cornstalks and I got a bit mad... Do you think he--

ANA

Oh come on, Warren. Hayden wouldn't.

WARREN

Well someone did--

HAYDEN (O.S.)

Guys, I'm trying to sleep.

Warren and Amanda turn to see a bleary Hayden in the doorway.

ANA

So, ask him.

Warren's suddenly sheepish --

WARREN

Uh, no, we--

ANA

(shoots Warren a look)

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

HAYDEN

I dunno. Forgot I think.

Hayden steps forward, the chaos outside now in his view.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

Holy shit...

(off them)

I didn't touch them.

ANA

What about the corn? It's  
completely ruined.

HAYDEN

Oh no, we're all gonna starve now.

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

WARREN

I asked you to throw away the  
trash.

HAYDEN

I forgot.

ANA

Trash attracts animals.

HAYDEN

We live in the woods. The animals  
don't need attracting. They're  
already fucking here.

(off Warren)

You really think I did this on  
purpose? Yeah, why not destroy all  
our stuff, give myself more work?

Warren's stumped.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

Basically you think I did it  
because you think I'm a prick.

**BANG!**

A FIGURE APPEARS AT THE WINDOW, HANDS PRESSED TO THE GLASS--

Everyone recoils in terror, Warren losing his balance, scrambling backward.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

What the fuck...

A WOMAN (30s), wearing the tattered remains of a uniform. Her face and arms bear scratches, bruises, burns...

She's barely standing, forehead blotching the window, using it for support.

A deep, confused GROAN bubbles from her throat.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - MOUNTAIN HOUSE - NIGHT - (LATER)**

THE VISITOR sits wrapped in a blanket, staring into space, murmuring inaudibly on the sofa.

A bottle of water sits, untouched, in front of her. So does Ana, gently trying to coax out answers that aren't coming.

A freaked out Hayden watches from the doorway. Warren paces, frantic, speaking into his phone --

WARREN

She's hurt.... I don't have a name.  
She just appeared out of nowhere.  
But it's an emergency. Isn't there  
any way... OK. We'll... Yeah, OK.

Warren hangs up, exasperated.

WARREN (CONT'D)

(off Ana)

The storm brought down a tree on  
Wicklow Road. They can't get an EMT  
here before morning. What do we do?

ANA

Our best.

WARREN

We have no idea who she is, Ana.

ANA

Tara Watts.

She holds up a charred lanyard displaying a smiling woman recognizable as the one lying murmuring and wounded on the sofa.

ANA (CONT'D)

It was in her pocket.

WARREN

She could've stolen it. I mean look  
at our supplies--

ANA

You suggesting we send her back  
into the storm?

WARREN

I-- No, just...

ANA

There's a first aid kit under the  
sink. Hayden --

Hayden snaps out of his daze.

ANA (CONT'D)

Under the sink. Vaseline, too.

HAYDEN

Right.

He vanishes. Warren looks at Tara.

WARREN

How did she get like this? The  
explosion we heard...?

ANA

If so, the poor thing's been  
wandering around for days.

HAYDEN

Here.

He drops the first aid kit beside Ana, beelines for the door.

ANA

Where are you going?

HAYDEN

Locking myself in my room. She  
freaks the fuck out of me.

Hayden leaves. Ana opens the tub of vaseline, turns to Tara.

ANA

I'm just going to put some on the  
burns before we dress them, OK? It  
might sting a little.

Tara remains blank. Ana braves it, gently applying some of  
the gel to a raw burn on her neck.

Tara groans, soft, half-conscious.

ANA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, does that hurt--

Tara suddenly grips Ana's arm --

TARA

*Did you see her?*

Ana's too startled to respond, trying gently to pull her arm free --

TARA (CONT'D)

*Is she coming?*

ANA

Who?

Tara starts looking around, frantic, tearful...

TARA

*Jenny...*

ANA

(shows panic)

Is there someone else outside?

Tara's eyes lock onto hers for one terrifying moment. Then her grip slackens, consciousness leaving her as she slumps back onto the sofa.

WARREN

We should lock the doors and windows--

ANA

She's delirious, Warren.

Ana finishes applying a few amateur dressings to the burns. Warren checks every entry point with trembling fingers.

ANA (CONT'D)

We should get some sleep.

WARREN

No. No way. We don't know what she might do.

ANA

What do you mean?

WARREN

She could be dangerous.

ANA

She's unconscious.



WARREN

Well, I'm not letting her out of my sight.

Ana sighs.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - MOUNTAIN HOUSE - NIGHT - (LATER)**

Warren sits on a chair opposite the couch, wrapped in a blanket, eyes locked on the motionless visitor.

His fatigue starts to outweigh his anxiety, his head drooping down--

--then snapping back up. Tara deathly still. After a little while, his head lolls again. His consciousness loses the battle. The sudden JOLT of his chin hitting his chest JERKS him back awake to see --

TARA'S GONE.

*The couch suddenly empty.*

Warren's definitely awake now, hands fumbling for some kind of protection --

A CLATTER -- From the hallway.

He creeps toward the sound, hefting a coffee table book in one hand --

CLATTER --

He JUMPS, spins toward the source -- the open door of --

**INT. BATHROOM - MOUNTAIN HOUSE - NIGHT**

It's empty. The only sound is his ragged breath as his eyes scan the room.

A WHIMPER --

From behind the shower curtain. His hand shakes as he reaches, pulls it back to reveal --

TARA. Eyes wild and wide, piercing into him, hugging her injured limbs to her chest.

TARA

Close the door...

WARREN

What--What are you doing in--

TARA

Close it...

Warren recoils as she strains to lift her body toward him, her voice a rasped whisper --

TARA (CONT'D)

There are hundreds of them. They didn't leave anyone alive. They're so angry...

The storm outside RATTLES the window, causing her to abruptly SCREAM -- a horrific, inconsolable wail...

**EXT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - DAY**

Morning. The storm abated. Paramedics have strapped Tara to a gurney and wheel her toward an ambulance. The Sheriff stands with the family.

SHERIFF BARNES

We get geologists and eco-whatevers out on the mountains sometimes, which by the uniform I'd say she's one of those. Must've got herself too close to a still.

ANA

She mentioned another name.

The Sheriff sighs.

WARREN

She said something about 'hundreds of them'. Do you think... Was it the mountain people who--

SHERIFF BARNES

Does she seem of sound mind to you? Woman's got grits for brains.

ANA

You should at least investigate. What if someone else was injured?

SHERIFF BARNES

I don't deal in what ifs. I deal in what is. And what is is a young lady spouting nonsense and a department comprised of me and two part-timers.

WARREN

But something must've done this to her. The scratches on her arms--

SHERIFF BARNES

--will be patched up real nice by the boys in white.

(MORE)

SHERIFF BARNES (CONT'D)  
Best course is we let them dope her  
up till she starts makin' sense.  
Till then...

WARREN  
What if we don't feel safe here?

SHERIFF BARNES (CONT'D)  
Then I would suggest you get a dog,  
or put in a security camera.

WARREN  
One camera? Or like a whole  
security system?

The Sheriff shrugs.

SHERIFF BARNES  
Your call. And speaking of calls,  
let's make this the exception not  
the rule, OK? This place ain't  
exactly spittin' distance from town  
and I've been out here twice this  
week.

ANA  
This was very clearly an emergency--  
  
He raises his hands.

SHERIFF BARNES  
No doubt about it. Just saying  
let's not make it a habit. You call  
if something serious happens. And  
not at night. Any perps'll be gone  
before I get here anyway. I can  
deal with it in the A.M.

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

WARREN  
I guess I found my next project.  
  
Hayden perks up.

HAYDEN  
We're getting a dog?

**EXT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - DAY - (LATER)**

A camera, two lights, a few motion sensors, and a panel are  
scattered on the ground. Warren is hooking up the system,  
watched by a dejected-looking Hayden.

Ana carries speakers into the house, gestures for Hayden to  
haul in the monitor.

**EXT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - NIGHT**

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

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

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

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

**INT. KITCHEN - MOUNTAIN HOUSE - NIGHT**

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

The sight on the screen alarms Warren.

As Warren shuts off the siren, Hayden joins them.

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

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

WARREN

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

Warren sees that Ana is afraid.

WARREN (CONT'D)

Sorry. For shouting. I shouldn't have installed it myself. There's probably nothing even out there.

HAYDEN

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

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

WARREN

Maybe we should call the sheriff?

ANA

The sheriff said not to call him at night.

WARREN  
It's the morning.

ANA  
It's three A.M.

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

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

WARREN  
Right. Ana, you stay here, Hayden  
and I will check every room, doors  
and windows.

Warren's actions catches Ana's attention.

WARREN (CONT'D)  
We can check outside in the  
daylight. Let's do this.

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

#### **EXT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - DAY**

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

WARREN  
Look at what they did to my  
security system! There's nothing  
left!

ANA  
Did you check the recording?

They look at each other. Duh.

#### **INT. KITCHEN - MOUNTAIN HOUSE - DAY**

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

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

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

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

The family stares at the monitor screen, flabbergasted.

HAYDEN  
What the hell was that?

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

Heavy silence.

ANA  
I think the sheriff might agree this is something serious.

SHERIFF BARNES (PRE-LAP)  
I'd say this is pretty serious stuff.

**EXT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - DAY**

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

WARREN  
So? What do you think?

SHERIFF BARNES  
Looks like you have some nasty neighbors.

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

SHERIFF BARNES (CONT'D)  
And I think you put in a pretty shitty security system.

WARREN  
(annoyed)  
I meant... what do you think was on the screen?

SHERIFF BARNES  
Feed was so muddy it could be anything. Human. Bear. Sasquatch.

HAYDEN  
There are Sasquatches?

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

WARREN

What are you going to do, then?

SHERIFF BARNES

What do you want me to do, put out  
an APB on a blurry blob?

Off them, he sighs, changes tack.

SHERIFF BARNES (CONT'D)

Look, I'm sorry but there's nothing  
I can do without a clear video of  
who's doing this stuff.

ANA

So we should install a better  
system?

SHERIFF BARNES

You mean Warren?

(scoffs)

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

ANA

We only have so much money to  
spend.

HAYDEN

Hence the shithole town you moved  
us to.

SHERIFF BARNES

Watch it, kid, this is my home.

He goes back to his vehicle. Turns.

SHERIFF BARNES (CONT'D)

You live in the sticks now. That  
means shit happens. Animals.  
Wanderers. Bad fuckin' luck. Got to  
live with it.

# **LATER**

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

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

KARL

Hmmm...

WARREN

What does that mean?

KARL

Whole house's crumblin'. No existin' system. Gonna have to wire the entire place.

WARREN

Alright, Karl, how much?

KARL

I'll cut you a break, call it 20K.

Warren and Ana share a look of silent horror.

**INT. DOG RESCUE - DOWNTOWN HOLMES TOWNSHIP - DAY**

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

CYNDI

What are you looking for?

Warren looks around at all the dog posters and paraphernalia.

WARREN

A cat.

Hayden chuckles. Cyndi stares him down. He stops.

CYNDI

Very funny. What kind of dog?

WARREN

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

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

HAYDEN

(to Ana)

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

ANA

We're all going to take care of the dog.

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

CYNDI

His name's Brutus.



HAYDEN  
Looks more like a Gary.  
(off Cyndi's glare)  
But Brutus is cool.

WARREN  
Will he scare off intruders?

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

CYNDI  
Best deterrent there is.

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

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

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

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

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

WARREN (CONT'D)  
What do you think?

ANA  
He'll do.

Warren rubs the dog's head and face.

WARREN  
Yeah, Brutus. You'll do.

**EXT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - DAY**

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

HAYDEN  
This is our protection?

ANA  
It's his first day. Give him time.

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

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

The family CHASES Brutus.

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

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

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

WARREN

Does that answer your question?

HAYDEN

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

#### **INT. DINING ROOM - HOUSE - NIGHT**

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

HAYDEN

Your pal is staring at our food.

Hayden's a little unsettled by Brutus' stare.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

Is he, like, gonna attack?

WARREN

No. Look at his tail. See, it's neutral. If he was feeling aggressive it'd be raised. He's begging, not threatening.

HAYDEN

(pushes plate away)  
Well, hell, he can have my food and  
he doesn't have to beg.

WARREN

Okay. But only after all of us are  
finished.

Warren gives Brutus a look and Brutus' ears go back and he shuffles backward. Ana watches incredulously --

ANA

Why didn't you ever say anything?  
We could have gotten you a dog to  
help with your anxiety.

Warren returns eating without looking at Ana --

WARREN

Seemed like just another thing to  
worry about.

**INT. ROOM - APPALACHIAN REGIONAL HOSPITAL - DAY**

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

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

DOCTOR

She was severely dehydrated.  
Starving. Thankfully the burns  
aren't too severe. She's lucky. Are  
there any next of kin we should be  
updating?

SHERIFF BARNES

All we have is her name. Can't you  
check her medical records?

DOCTOR

Not without a date of birth.

SHERIFF BARNES

Then I guess she stays a ghost for  
now. She talking?

DOCTOR

Mumbling occasionally. Something  
about Edmund... or Ellis...

NURSE

Askin' about Jenny.

The doctor shoots her a look for eavesdropping. She returns to work, replacing Tara's drip.

DOCTOR

Whatever happened, it sent her into  
severe shock. But she's easing out  
of it. We're hoping she'll be lucid  
soon.

SHERIFF BARNES

You mind if I try asking her a few  
questions?

The doctor's look is a definitive "no". Barnes sighs.

SHERIFF BARNES (CONT'D)

Call me if she wakes up in the  
right mind.

Sudden CHAOS as Tara snaps awake, grabbing at the nurse by her drip, SCREAMING UNCONTROLLABLY. Several other staff rush over to try and placate her --

NURSE

Tara--

NURSE 2

Calm down. You're safe.

\*

DOCTOR

Natalie, quick, we have to  
sedate her.

TARA

You have to warn people! They  
escaped! They all escaped!

\*

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

(to Sheriff, frantic)

I think it's best you leave,  
Sheriff.

Sheriff Barnes obeys, but can't help craning his neck to watch the madness until they sedate her. He's perplexed...

#### **EXT. FRONT DOOR - MOUNTAIN HOUSE - NIGHT**

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

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

#### **INT. WARREN AND ANA'S BEDROOM - MOUNTAIN HOUSE - NIGHT**

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

ANA

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

WARREN

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

ANA

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

WARREN

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

ANA

Yeah, but will I?

Ana puts her pillow over her head.

Later, the moon emerges from a cluster of clouds.

The howling has stopped. Warren and Ana sleep peacefully...

Until BRUTUS BARKS. And he isn't stopping.

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

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

A SQUEAL!

Warren LURCHES back at the spine-tingling sound. Ana is JOLTED awake.

WARREN

What in God's name is--

They hear the sound of SNAPPING pieces of wood and SCRAPING on the deck.

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

#### **INT. FOYER - HOUSE - NIGHT**

Hayden is waiting for Warren at the bottom of the steps. They look at each other and HURRY to the front door.

#### **INT. WARREN AND ANA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

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

ANIMALS TWIST AROUND AND AROUND IN CIRCLES.

WOOD BREAKING.

VICIOUS SHRIEKING AND GROWLING.

#### **EXT. DECK - HOUSE - NIGHT**

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

WARREN

BRUTUS STOP!

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

A BABY MONKEY.

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

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

Hayden follows Warren and is floored.

The Baby Monkey continues to SQUEAL.

Ana arrives in her robe, her jaw drops --

ANA

Is that... a monkey?!

Warren tries to calm Brutus by talking and behaving calmly --

WARREN

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

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

Ana retreats back inside the house.

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

WARREN (CONT'D)

It's OK. Let her go. Come on.  
Brutus... ya idiot, release the thing...

Warren gently strokes the dog's back.

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

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

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

WARREN (CONT'D)

Hayden, quick, take Brutus inside.

Hayden grasps Brutus by the shoulders and directs him inside.

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

WARREN (CONT'D)

How did you know that'd work?

ANA

Had a dog or two myself growing up.

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

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

Warren uses low and soft tones to talk to the baby --

WARREN

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

Ana is stunned by everything happening at once.

WARREN (CONT'D)

We're gonna need some bandages.

Ana runs in to get them.

As he waits, Warren watches the little creature as she finally opens her eyes and looks at him.

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

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

#### **INT. UTILITY ROOM - MOUNTAIN HOUSE - DAY**

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

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

The room is in complete disarray. Walls are scratched and blood stained. Supplies and clothes are scattered.

Bloody bandages have been tossed everywhere.

Ana and Hayden gape at the surreal scene.

WARREN

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

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

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

SHERIFF BARNES

Holy Christ! It's one thing to hear it over the phone but actually seeing the monkey...

WARREN

Rhesus Monkey.

SHERIFF BARNES

I'll take your word for it.

He stares at the tiny creature, riveted.

SHERIFF BARNES (CONT'D)

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

WARREN

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

ANA

And it needs a real doctor.

SHERIFF BARNES

I mean we've got Clyde but he does livestock. Horses. Cows. Big four-footers. I'll have to make some calls.

WARREN

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

ANA

Didn't you bring any?

He shakes his head. Hayden shifts uneasily, eyes on his shoes.

WARREN

(off Ana)

Decided to go cold turkey.

Warren's comment takes Ana by surprise.



HAYDEN

I think I have something...

Everyone turns to Hayden, including the Sheriff. He squirms under their gaze, reluctant to speak, then --

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

I have some Benzos. I stole them from Warren before we moved.

The Sheriff turns his back -- he doesn't want to be hearing this.

Ana's stares at Hayden with sad eyes.

ANA

Hayden... If you're having a problem, you can tell me--

HAYDEN

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

ANA

But why? Why did you steal them?

HAYDEN

I dunno. I just... With the move... felt like I was losing everything.

Ana's anger disappears. She hugs him.

ANA

I'm sorry, hun.

Warren touches his arm.

WARREN

Don't worry about it, Hayden.

Hayden's stunned, doesn't know what to do with himself.

PRE-LAP: The baby monkey lets out a shrill SQUEAL.

**INT. UTILITY ROOM - MOUNTAIN HOUSE - NIGHT**

Warren enters the room after hearing the injured baby. The baby bares her pinprick fangs at Warren as he attempts to corral it, swiping at him whenever he gets close.

WARREN

Come on. Help me out here...

He brandishes a banana.

WARREN (CONT'D)

Shhhh. Look. Look.

Peels it. Takes a bite.

WARREN (CONT'D)  
Mmmm. Good. Tasty.

He pushes a benzo pill into the flesh of the banana. Holds it out.

WARREN (CONT'D)  
Come on. It's for you. You don't need to be scared.

The baby's demeanor softens. She leans forward.

WARREN (CONT'D)  
That's right. You're OK. We're OK.

The monkey takes a cautious, tiny bite, then another, then takes the whole banana from Warren.

Warren uses the distraction to run a finger over its head, stroking, gently, placating --

The baby's eyes close, a moment of comfort in its pain.

WARREN (CONT'D)  
Trust me. In half an hour it'll all feel better.

The baby's tiny fingers close around his index, using him for stability as she chews. Warren's heart melts, then--

LAUGHTER and BARKING from outside.

#### **EXT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - DAY**

Warren steps out of the house to see Hayden playing with Brutus, tossing the striped ball. Surprisingly, Brutus retrieves it.

Warren and Ana watch on in amazement.

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

He throws it again and races Brutus to the ball but Brutus narrowly beats him.

HAYDEN  
Did you see that?

WARREN  
Did you teach him on your own?

HAYDEN  
Yeah, we've been practicing.

Warren and Ana share a smile. Warren realizes--

WARREN

I shouldn't leave Baby.

ANA

You mean, *the* baby?

WARREN

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

Ana smiles at him.

ANA

Well, why don't you take a break,  
'Dad'. I'll check on Baby.

WARREN

OK. I recommend armor.

Ana heads back to the house. Hayden is about to follow when Warren puts his hand on Hayden's shoulder.

The look at each other for a pregnant beat, neither knowing what to say, then--

WARREN (CONT'D)

Hayden... about the pills.

(then)

I don't think you have a drug  
problem.

Hayden raises his eyebrows at the trust.

WARREN (CONT'D)

I think you have a 'Warren'  
problem. I think you stole them to  
spite me. And I get it. I wouldn't  
like me either with the nutcase  
I've been... but can we make the  
best of the situation? For your  
mother?

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

WARREN (CONT'D)

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

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

HAYDEN

Warren.

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

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

Thanks.

Warren nods and smiles and heads in. Hayden and Brutus share a look. Brutus tilts his head in confusion. Hayden laughs and playfully pushes his head down.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

Right?

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

Brutus lies beside the bed as Ana tries to drift into sleep. But Warren is wide awake, repositioning, restless.

Ana voice comes out a groan --

ANA

Warren, I feel like I'm trying to sleep on a fault line. What is it?

WARREN

Where did she come from?

Ana turns, looks up at him in confusion.

ANA

Huh?

WARREN

Baby.

ANA

You heard the Sheriff. Probably just some rich asshole's pet.

Warren shakes his head.

WARREN

That woman the other night. The explosion. That thing on the camera feed. It's all gotta be connected.

ANA

We're the only house for miles. We're practically a lighthouse. We're gonna attract a few wanderers. Let's just thank the Lord none of them was a bear.

Warren's eyes open wide, like he hadn't considered that.

ANA (CONT'D)  
OK, I shouldn't have said that.

She lays her hand on his forearm, trying to comfort him --

ANA (CONT'D)  
Oh Warren, you've been doing so  
well lately.

Warren doesn't seem to hear Ana. He jumps out of bed, pulls a treat out of a drawer. He holds it out to entice a reluctant Brutus to move.

ANA (CONT'D)  
What are you doing?

WARREN  
Putting out our security system.

They leave. She sighs, lies back down.

**EXT. FRONT DOOR - HOUSE - NIGHT**

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

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

Brutus stops chewing on the treat. Eyeballs the woods.

Warren hesitates. His eyes search the woods.

The wind is still but the LEAVES RUSTLE.

SWISHING limbs and bushes alarm Warren.

SNAPPING twigs -- MOVING toward them.

FOOTSTEPS on the undergrowth loom closer.

Warren does not see anything in the dark woods. Keeps quiet. Brutus is ready to pounce, growling.

The sound in the woods subsides.

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

ENCROACHING SOUNDS START AGAIN --

FROM DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS --

Warren's eyes move back and forth -- can't detect where the sound is coming from, then --

A FIGURE. Small but fast, darts between the trees.

Brutus locks on immediately, BUSTS through the fence and DARTS toward the woods.

WARREN

Brutus! Brutus! Come back!

Brutus disappears deep into the woods.

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

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

BRUTUS GROWLING. SNARLING. CONFRONTING SOMETHING...

SHRILL SCREAMS. SCUFFLING. SQUEALING and then --

ANOTHER FIGURE, closer now, DASHES to Warren's right. His head whips round -- Gone.

WARREN (CONT'D)

Brutus!

No sign of the dog. Warren squints eyes at the tree line. His own limbs start to shake with adrenaline and --

THERE. In the open now, a figure silhouetted at the tree line, standing still, STARING RIGHT AT HIM.

WARREN (CONT'D)

Brutus?

But even as he says it, he knows there's no way this thing is a dog -- the figure stretches up on two legs --

IT RUNS -- FULL SPEED -- STRAIGHT TOWARD WARREN. He's frozen to the spot, his legs unable to find their strength --

The INCOMING figure CLOSES IN.

The speed and darkness prevent Warren from discerning what it is, just tiny glimpses as it BEARS DOWN ON HIM: *wild, feral eyes, blood-soaked fangs* --

Warren finds his feet, SPRINTING back to the house, the thing ON HIS HEELS as he practically falls back into the house--

**INT. FOYER - MOUNTAIN HOUSE - NIGHT**

--SLAMMING the door just in time as --

BANG! The feral thing SMACKS into the door, its frenetic hands POUNDING...

HAYDEN (O.S.)

The hell's going on?

Hayden stands, bewildered, in the doorway.

Warren claws at his chest, the tell-tale signs of an anxiety attack making its entrance -- the heavy breathing, the pounding heart --

WARREN

Call... the... sheriff...

A bleary-eyed Ana joins them.

ANA

Warren? What happened?

As if in answer, the 'thing' outside BANGS against the door again, showing a brief glimpse of a gaping mouth visible through the glass --

ANA (CONT'D)

Oh my God--

HAYDEN

It's gonna break the door!

\*

The windows in the next room suddenly RATTLE...

Ana and Hayden RUSH into the --

#### **INT. LIVING ROOM - MOUNTAIN HOUSE - NIGHT**

Just in time to see another figure dart away from the window, leaving a spindly, inhuman handprint fading on the glass.

HAYDEN

There's more than one!

ANA

Are all the doors and windows locked?

They share a look. Hurry back into --

#### **INT. FOYER - MOUNTAIN HOUSE - NIGHT**

Warren can barely get words out through ragged breathing. Ana perceives what's happening. Rushes over to him.

WARREN

Call... the...

ANA

Warren, breathe. The sheriff won't get here in time. Not now, please. Just tell us what you saw.

HAYDEN

Where's Brutus?

ANA  
Did you put him out? Warren?

HAYDEN  
He's out there?  
(realizing)  
You left him?

WARREN  
Oh God, oh God --

HAYDEN  
Fucking coward.

ANA  
*Hayden.*

THUD. THUD. THUD. The door's shaking on its hinges. Warren's breathing's getting out of control. His legs give, body slumping down against the wall.

ANA (CONT'D)  
Stay calm. Breathe.  
(to Hayden)  
Help me.

They each drape one of Warren's arms over their shoulders, guide him into --

**INT. LIVING ROOM - MOUNTAIN HOUSE - NIGHT**

They gently place him on the sofa.

HAYDEN  
What's happening to him?

ANA  
It's an anxiety attack -- His body  
shuts down if things get too  
stressful --

HAYDEN  
Are you serious??

BANG BANG BANG. The window pane RATTLES--

ANA  
Doors and windows, now!

Hayden gets on it, DARTING from room to room securing every entry point as Ana helps Warren with his breathing.

The CLATTERS and THUDS from outside grow louder and louder.

ANA (CONT'D)  
We need your help Warren, please.  
Just do your breathing --



BAANNG! Something LEAPS against the window, sending cracks spidering out from the point of impact.

ANA (CONT'D)  
What was that?!

She leaves Warren, rushes to the window to see what was happening.

Hayden pulls his phone from his pocket with trembling hands.

HAYDEN  
(off her)  
Sheriff said clear video...

BAANNG! A hand beats the glass, humanlike but smaller, spindlier, extending the cracks.

Hayden stifles a scream, leaps back in fear, almost losing his grip on the phone--

BAANNG -- AGAIN. The pane is one hit from shattering, then--

A CACOPHONY OF SOUND --

MUSIC BLARES from the portable CD player at full volume, startling Hayden and Ana.

There's panicked movement outside as the unseen assailants vanish back into the woods.

Warren turns off the CD player, hand shaking as he lowers the remote. He controls his breathing, slowly getting the attack under control.

A beat of stunned silence.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)  
Anyone want to tell me what the fuck just happened?

WARREN  
I think... Baby has... parents.  
(then)  
They're scared of... loud noises.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - MOUNTAIN HOUSE - DAY**

Warren sits on the couch, nursing a steaming mug. Ana finishes taping cardboard over the cracked window pane.

Hayden peers out at the forest, chewing his lip, hunting for any sign of Brutus. Dawn breaks over the landscape, streams of sunlight pick out the family's car outside --

Completely trashed -- Molding twisted off, the windshield smashed, sideview mirrors in pieces on the ground...

HAYDEN  
They left us a present.

ANA  
(looks at car)  
Jesus Christ...

Hayden slumps into a chair. He masks welling tears --

HAYDEN  
I'm starting to really hate this place.

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

ANA  
No. We decided together.

WARREN  
For me. For my health.

HAYDEN  
Seems to be working wonders.

ANA  
Hayden --

WARREN  
He's right.  
(to Hayden)  
You're right. And I'm sorry. We moved here because of my head. Bought the cheapest, piece of crap house because of my chintzy salary. And then when all that puts us in danger, I can't even defend you. It's all me.

He looks up at his family.

WARREN (CONT'D)  
Not any more. As soon as we get Baby off our hands and find Brutus, we'll go back home. Your safety is my number one priority. Both of you. No more messing around.

Hayden snorts, turns away.

The SOUND OF A CAR PULLING UP OUTSIDE.

HAYDEN  
Just in time to be of no use whatsoever.

**INT. KITCHEN - MOUNTAIN HOUSE - DAY**

The Sheriff watches Hayden's footage -- the hand beating on the glass -- a pair of reflective eyes visible in the darkness behind it --

He freeze-frames the figure -- it appears to look very much like *some kind of feral monkey* --

His mouth is agape as Ana hands him a mug of coffee. Fetches another for DEPUTY SUGGS (30s), upper lip braving a mustache it can't fully muster.

SHERIFF BARNES

Well ho-ly crap...

WARREN

Still think it was 'mountain folk'?

SHERIFF BARNES

I made a judgement based on the information I had at the time. Sure looks like an ape.

HAYDEN

Monkey. You're an ape.

Barnes shoots him a dirty look.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

A tailless primate.

SHERIFF BARNES

(to Warren)

Is it just the one you saw?

WARREN

No. Brutus chased after another, I think...

Barnes sighs.

SHERIFF BARNES

Well, listen, me and Suggs are gonna head up the mountain, check out the site of that explosion, maybe see where our furry friends came from and size up the problem.

ANA

And what are we supposed to do?

SHERIFF BARNES

Sit tight here.

HAYDEN

No fucking way.

All eyes on him.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

Those things have come here three times. This place is like a banana plantation to them. You seriously want me to sit around watching TikTok until I get mauled?

SHERIFF BARNES

No, till Wayans swings by in his cruiser and takes you into town. I bet you like ice cream.

HAYDEN

I like my dog.

ANA

How long will that take? The cruiser?

SHERIFF BARNES

Lady, this isn't Uber. We're working with what we have, and that ain't much. Lock the doors. Put on the TV. We'll sort this out.

HAYDEN

I'm coming with you.

WARREN

Hayden...

HAYDEN

Brutus is still out there. Do you seriously not give a shit?

WARREN

Course I do, but... Ana, tell him --

ANA

I'm going too.

WARREN

Ana, no. Did you not--I mean think about what we just went through --

ANA

I am. It happened right here, Warren, in our home.

WARREN

We have no idea how many of these things are out there.

ANA

We know they keep coming here. We  
know our dog, the one you chose, is  
out there.

She pauses, struggling --

ANA (CONT'D)

And I know I don't feel safe here.  
Not alone.  
(then)  
Not with just you.

Her comment hurts Warren. He takes a deep breath, eyes  
searching his family --

They fall on his wife, her weary face pleading with him...

...on Hayden, face determined but pale with exhaustion and  
running on adrenaline...

But it's the striped ball clutched in Hayden's hand like a  
lifeline that hits him hardest...

Warren closes his eyes.

WARREN

You came here for me when you  
didn't have to.

He opens his eyes, finds Ana's --

WARREN (CONT'D)

I owe you the same.

She smiles, pure relief. All eyes turn to the Sheriff, who  
shrugs --

SHERIFF BARNES

It's a public mountain and there's  
no crime as far as I can see. Just  
don't get in our way.

**INT. UTILITY ROOM - MOUNTAIN HOUSE - DAY**

Baby lies asleep, peaceful, sedated. Warren finishes applying  
dressings to her wounds, which he sees have stopped oozing.

He sets out a bowl of water and a few pieces of fruit.

Looks back at her from the doorway.

WARREN

Sit tight.

He takes a deep breath, and steps out.

**INT. ROOM - APPALACHIAN REGIONAL HOSPITAL - DAY**

Tara still lies in her hospital bed while a NURSE reads her chart, checks her IV, not noticing --

*Tara's eyes blinking open.* Then --

TARA

Where am I?

The Nurse stares down at her, surprise giving way to a smile.

**EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - APPALACHIAN MOUNTAINS - DAY**

Sheriff Barnes and Deputy Suggs lead the way up the mountain. The family follows. Warren at the back, eyes constantly darting.

HAYDEN

Brutus!

He WHISTLES.

A RUSTLE in nearby brush FREEZES the group.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

You there, boy?

Barnes' hand instinctively finds the grip of his gun, ready for the worst as --

A COTTONTAIL DASHES from the brush, zigzags across the mountainside.

A collective sigh of relief, cut short by--

KSSSHHHHHHHH. Barnes' radio. He chuckles to himself.

SHERIFF BARNES

Apes have me jittery.

WAYANS (V.O.)

(from radio)

Sheri-- are--

(STATIC)

--ou there?--

SHERIFF BARNES

(into radio)

We're outta range, Wayans. Can you not hold down the fort for one goddamn morning?

WAYANS (V.O.)

Tara Scott --talking-- Doctor called--

SHERIFF BARNES

Sshhhhit.

He pinches his nose.

SHERIFF BARNES (CONT'D)

(into radio)

Alright, Wayans, if you're getting this, go and talk to her, OK? And for the love of God write everything down.

Suggs snorts. Silence.

SHERIFF BARNES (CONT'D)

You got that? Wayans?

Nothing. Barnes kills the radio, frustrated.

**EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - DAY - (LATER)**

Sweat beads on all five brows. Hayden keeps up his chorus of 'Brutuses' and 'here boys'. Warren catches up with Ana.

WARREN

I'm sorry. About last night.

ANA

I know you are.

WARREN

I wanted to help. I did... I want to protect you. Stand up for you. I know that's what you expect and I'm trying to get to a place where I can...

She looks at him, a mixture of love and pity.

ANA

I don't need you to win bar fights in my honor, Warren. I just need someone who isn't gonna turn into jelly any time things get tough.

She sees it weighing on him, softens.

ANA (CONT'D)

How's Baby doing?

WARREN

Stopped trying to kill me at least. Patched her up while she slept. Wounds look like they're healin--

HAYDEN (O.S.)

What is it?! Get the fuck off me --

A commotion up ahead, Suggs trying to restrain Hayden.

ANA  
What are you doing?

SHERIFF BARNES  
Keep him back. He doesn't want to see this.

HAYDEN  
What's over there? LET ME GO!

Warren and Ana run ahead to where Barnes is standing, following his eye-line to --

A MOUND OF BLACK FUR, matted with drying blood.

WARREN  
Brutus... Oh no, Br--

The name catches in his throat.

SHERIFF BARNES  
I'm sorry.

Ana buries her head in Warren's shoulder. Warren sees Hayden struggling. The boy searches Warren's eyes, looking for some sign it isn't true. He finds only tears.

Hayden pulls free, rushes over to the dog's remains, shoulders heaving. He breaks off a few dead tree limbs to cover Brutus' lifeless body.

Warren steps forward to help break off a few more limbs as Ana watches in tears. Hayden places the striped ball next to Brutus' makeshift grave.

Barnes exchanges a concerned look with Suggs, both men starting to realize the seriousness of the threat.

They share a moment of silence before Warren and Hayden join the others and move on.

**INT. ROOM - APPALACHIAN REGIONAL HOSPITAL - DAY**

Tara's weak but conscious, lucid for the first time since she appeared. She gestures to a cup of water at her bedside.

Deputy WAYANS (30S) hands it to her and holds the cup while she sips water through a straw.

WAYANS  
Whenever you're ready.

She nods, clears a creaking throat --



TARA

I was hired as an Associate  
Director at the Edmund Medical  
Institute...

WAYANS

And they sent you here to... what?  
Take a mountain hike?

TARA

There's a research facility.

WAYANS

Here?

TARA

On the mountain.

(off him)

It's there precisely because no one  
goes there.

Wayans mulls this over. He pulls out his phone.

WAYANS

Can you, uh... One second...

He opens the maps app, holds the phone in front of her.

WAYANS (CONT'D)

Where exactly is this place?

She shows him. His expression shifts, unease.

TARA

What is it?

WAYANS

The Sheriff and a deputy are hiking  
up there right now.

TARA

No.

WAYANS

What?

TARA

You have to stop them.

WAYANS

Why? The Sheriff knows the area.

Tara tries to sit up, her body still weak.

TARA

Stop them, NOW!

**EXT. COMPOUND - APPALACHIAN MOUNTAINS - DAY**

The party emerge from the trees and come face-to-face with the charred remnants of the concrete fortress.

Everyone freezes in stunned silence -- They're astounded by the sight of the devastated compound.

WARREN  
What is it?! Was this  
always...

SHERIFF BARNES  
You've got to be kidding me!

ANA  
(to Sheriff)  
You didn't know it was here?

They circle the singed, crumbling perimeter wall, reach the blown out gate and --

FREEZE --

DEPUTY SUGGS  
Jesus Christ...

BODIES litter the ground. Many starting to bloat, missing patches of skin and flesh picked at by vultures and mountain lions...

Warren puts his hand over his mouth, fighting throwing up.

ANA  
Hayden, don't look.

Too late. He stares in a mixture of terror and fascination.

Beside a decimated white-brick office sits a large cage, completely empty.

SHERIFF BARNES  
Alright. Family field trip's over.  
You wait here.

WARREN  
Yeah, maybe that's... Maybe we  
should--

HAYDEN  
You're the only ones with guns.

His tone is flat, his eyes puffy from crying. The Sheriff sighs, realizing he's right, nods.

SHERIFF BARNES  
Don't touch anything. Understood?

He takes a breath, then takes the first step into the compound as we --

MATCH CUT TO:

**EXT. COMPOUND - DAY - FLASHBACK**

Tara, wearing a spotless uniform, takes her first steps into the pristine compound. She's led by DR. ELLIS (50s), wearing a white lab coat.

DR. ELLIS  
What have they told you about our research?

TARA  
Honestly very little.

DR. ELLIS  
Good. That's by design.  
(off her)  
You know as well as I do that certain facets of primatology can invite controversy. We like to keep things under wraps. Come.

He leads her toward a white brick medical office standing apart from the other buildings.

**INT. DR. ELLIS' OFFICE - COMPOUND - DAY**

Tara observes a pregnant Rhesus female, JENNY (3), with gray fur and a white marking in front, sitting on the ground.

Dr. Ellis moves over to his laptop to check his messages.

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

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

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

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

DR. ELLIS  
Most chimpanzees could not solve that puzzle.

Dr. Ellis tears himself away from the laptop.

DR. ELLIS (CONT'D)  
Notice there's no reward, either.  
No mango. No brazil nuts. She's  
motivated purely by the  
satisfaction of solving it.

TARA  
Incredible.

DR. ELLIS  
Tara, I want you to see something.

He gets up, takes the puzzle from Jenny.

DR. ELLIS (CONT'D)  
(points to cabinet)  
Jenny. Keys.

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

Dr. Ellis nods his head to Jenny in approval, smiles at  
Tara's astonishment.

DR. ELLIS (CONT'D)  
Come with me.

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

#### **EXT. COMPOUND - DAY**

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

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

TARA  
Are all the monkeys captive?

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

#### **SERIES OF SHOTS - TARA OBSERVES EXPERIMENTS AND EFFECTS**

-- Researchers injecting vaccines on semi-conscious monkeys.

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

-- Monkeys crammed inside small 4x4 crates.

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

-- Brooding monkeys glaring at humans.

### BACK TO SCENE

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

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

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

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

DR. ELLIS (CONT'D)

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

TARA

It must cost a fortune.

DR. ELLIS

It makes a fortune.

They watch the Assistants remove the slats from the box.

DR. ELLIS (CONT'D)

That must be the new arrivals.

TARA

More Rhesus monkeys?

DR. ELLIS

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

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

TARA

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

DR. ELLIS

They will adapt.

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

TARA

Why here?

(off him)

Doesn't seem an obvious location  
for a research facility.  
Disconnected. Hard to get  
supplies...

DR. ELLIS

The Edmund Medical Institute  
attempted to build the facility in  
multiple locations with access to  
nearby towns. The response was...  
less than warm.

TARA

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

DR. ELLIS

They objected to misconceptions:  
the smell, noise, lower property  
values, upsetting activists...

TARA

But on top of a mountain?

DR. ELLIS

An employee at Edmund grew up near  
the Appalachians. He knew of a  
remote place that had been long  
forgotten. So here we are, out of  
sight, out of mind, unconstrained  
by outside, unsolicited opinions.

The doctor proceeds down the path. Tara and Jenny follow into  
an area marked, "PROCREATION STATION."

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

DR. ELLIS (CONT'D)

She's been doing that for days.

Tara finds it hard to watch.

TARA

Where is her baby?

DR. ELLIS

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

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

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

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

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

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

ASSISTANT

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

DR. ELLIS

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

The Assistants redirect their way to the Research Station.

TARA

Just like that?

DR. ELLIS

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

TARA

I'm sorry doctor, I--

DR. ELLIS

(turns back on Tara)  
Let me show you what Jenny is  
capable of...

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

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

DR. ELLIS (CONT'D)

Jenny. Unlock.

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

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

Tara looks on, stunned. (FLASHBACK ENDS.)

**BACK TO PRESENT**

**EXT. COMPOUND - APPALACHIAN MOUNTAINS - DAY**

That same gate lies open, swinging and squeaking in the mountain winds.

The expedition party creeps past the huge windows of the research station, glass now blown out.

The bodies of a few Lab Technicians are splayed on the ground, lab coats in tatters.

Both Barnes and Suggs now have their guns drawn. The family moves in a tight group. Warren makes a deliberate effort to keep his eyes forward, tunnel vision against the carnage around them.

ANA

This must be where Baby came from...

Barnes takes in the carnage, stops --

SHERIFF BARNES

OK, this is way above us. Thinking we need to call in the feds--

A LOW MOAN interrupts him, spilling from the door of a building marked "SURGERY CENTER". The door lies open, buckled on its hinges.

SHERIFF BARNES (CONT'D)

You hear that?

Sheriff Barnes checks the entrance. The sound repeats, the weak BURBLING of someone in pain.

SHERIFF BARNES (CONT'D)

(calling)

Hello?

(to the others)

Could be survivors. We gotta check.

He shares a look with Suggs, gestures his head toward the door. They venture in.

**INT. SURGERY CENTER - COMPOUND - DAY**

The party stalks past rows of crates and cages line the floor beside surgical tables, every one of them either unlocked or blown open.

MATCH CUT TO:



**INT. SURGERY CENTER - COMPOUND - DAY - FLASHBACK**

Dr. Ellis leads Tara past those same cages, each containing a rhesus monkey, doleful eyes following the human visitors.

DR. ELLIS

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

They walk past a secure doorway marked 'MONITORING ROOM' --

MATCH CUT TO:

BACK TO PRESENT

**INT. SURGERY CENTER - COMPOUND - DAY**

*That same doorway, open, charred, revealing a bank of monitors inside. A few of the screens are shattered, a few tipped over, but several are unscathed.*

The party presses on but Warren remains, entranced by the technology on display, something about it drawing him --

He bites his lip, deliberating, steps into the room.

**INT. MONITORING ROOM - COMPOUND - DAY**

Warren taps on a keyboard. The central screen flares to life, revealing folders upon folders of video files.

ANA (O.S.)

What are you doing in here?

She's in the doorway, Hayden a shadow behind her.

WARREN

It's like ours. Same make as our  
security system. Hell of a lot more  
expensive, but--

ANA

What are you talking about?

HAYDEN

We should stick with the Sheriff.

WARREN

What good are we doing? We're dead  
weight to them -- But here...

Shares a look with Ana. She gets it, nods.

SHERIFF BARNES (O.S.)  
What you doing back there?

WARREN  
(calling)  
Sitting tight.

SHERIFF BARNES (O.S.)  
Good call. You see fur, you holler.

Warren turns to the screen, eyes the rows of folders, cursor coming to rest on one with a familiar name...

WARREN  
Jenny...

He opens the folder, clicks on a file. A video feed begins to play.

ONSCREEN: A cage surrounded by SURGEONS and ASSISTANTS, busy prepping for some kind of test. They disperse as two people enter the room.

HAYDEN  
Shit, that's her.

It's Tara, Dr. Ellis beside her. They stop in front of the cage as the video on the monitor transports us into us into --

**INT. SURGERY CENTER - COMPOUND - DAY - FLASHBACK**

Tara stares at the contents of the cage -- aghast -- she cannot believe what she sees --

JENNY AND HER NEWBORN FEMALE BABY CLINGING TO HER.

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

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

DR. ELLIS  
We'll discuss this later.

TARA  
We'll discuss this right now.

Dr. Ellis pulls her off to the side.

TARA (CONT'D)  
What are you doing? Jenny's your--

DR. ELLIS  
Jenny is a non-human primate.

TARA

I thought you loved her. How can you be so callous?

DR. ELLIS

Jenny's different than the rest. She's much more advanced. I've been documenting Jenny from day one since I started training her. I cannot waste that effort.

TARA

You deliberately trained her for this experiment?

DR. ELLIS

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

TARA

This isn't the work I signed up for.

DR. ELLIS

Then consider this a learning experience.

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

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

The OTHER ASSISTANT reaches out to inject Jenny with a sedative --

She cowers, terrified, but as the needle nears her flesh she seems to find some deep reserve, some primordial parental rage and --

LASHES OUT, fighting tooth and nail for her baby. The Assistant recoils with a bloodied hand.

Other Assistants rush to help as Jenny's SCREAMS grow louder. Dr. Ellis observes, remains stoic.

It takes three people to subdue her and administer the shot, Jenny fighting every second until her eyelids start to droop.

She fights to stay awake, still clinging to the baby. She lets out a doleful MOAN.

Tara forces herself to watch the hideous scene.

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

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

She scoots and hides behind her mother and WAILS.

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

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

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

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

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

DR. ELLIS (CONT'D)

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

TARA

She'll be blind for the next year?

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

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

DR. ELLIS

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

A SURGEON and two Assistants arrive at the station. The Surgeon inspects the curved needles and suture material on the steel tray then hovers over the baby.

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

TARA

NO! NO! STOP IT! STOP IT!

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

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

DR. ELLIS

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

TARA

She's not a subject!

DR. ELLIS

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

TARA

At what price?

DR. ELLIS

At the price of saving human lives. Think about it, Tara. Grief, depression, anxiety, suffering. They paralyze us, stop us functioning as productive members of society. If we can truly understand their minutiae in these animals, in a controlled setting, then we can help people.

TARA

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

The doctor shifts his eyes, he appears uncomfortably persuaded.

DR. ELLIS

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

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

THE SCREEN FREEZES, transporting us --

**BACK TO PRESENT**

**INT. MONITORING ROOM - COMPOUND - DAY**

The family share horrified looks.

ANA

Was that...

WARREN

Baby.

He clicks on the next file under 'Jenny'.

ON MONITOR SCREEN: We see Jenny hunched in the corner of Dr. Ellis' office, ignoring her toys and puzzle. Dr. Ellis sits in a desk chair, observing her.

DR. ELLIS

You don't want to play today,  
Jenny?

The feed transports us into --

**INT. DR. ELLIS' OFFICE - COMPOUND - DAY - FLASHBACK**

Tara enters the doctor's office, surveys the room.

TARA

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

DR. ELLIS

I did. I will no longer suture the  
baby's eyes...

Tara waits for the other shoe to drop...

DR. ELLIS (CONT'D)

The separation, however, will  
proceed.

Tara's stunned by the doctor's deceit.

TARA

That's almost as bad as suturing  
her eyes.

DR. ELLIS

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

(off her repulsive look)

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

**BACK TO PRESENT**

**INT. SURGERY CENTER - COMPOUND - DAY**

Sheriff Barnes and Deputy Suggs press through the building.

Suggs grimaces, steps gingerly over the BODY of a Assistant -- JUMPS as he realizes the *face has been eaten away* --

Trays of blackened surgical tools CLATTER to the ground.

SHERIFF BARNES  
Christ, Suggs. Keep it together.

The silence settles until something SCURRIES in a nearby corridor.

Then that low MOANING, louder now, closer --

SHERIFF BARNES (CONT'D)  
(calling)  
We're coming. You're gonna be alright.

Suggs looks apprehensive, but Barnes gestures his head toward their path ahead -- 'keep going'.

#### **INT. MONITORING ROOM - COMPOUND - DAY**

Warren has queued up another video file --

ON SCREEN: Dr. Ellis tries in vain to get an apathetic Jenny to play with her puzzle in his office. Tara observes...

#### **INT. DR. ELLIS' OFFICE - COMPOUND - DAY - FLASHBACK**

An unattended stuffed doll lies beside Jenny. She simply observes the doctor's movement.

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

TARA  
She doesn't want the doll either.

DR. ELLIS  
She'll adapt.

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

DR. ELLIS (CONT'D)  
We're going to take a little walk.  
I believe Jenny will want to walk with us. Right, Jenny?

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

Dr. Ellis sighs, glances at his designer watch *with the image of Africa on its face* --

DR. ELLIS (CONT'D)  
I'm due in the research lab. Move,  
Jenny.

She doesn't.

DR. ELLIS (CONT'D)  
Come.

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

DR. ELLIS (CONT'D)  
I'm not in the mood for coddling.

The frustrated doctor grabs his laptop and stomps out, forgetting to end the recording. Tara lingers a moment, pitying the emotionless primate. Then slips out.

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

The feed continues, recording a now empty room.

WARREN (PRE-LAP)  
What date was the explosion?

**BACK TO PRESENT**

**INT. MONITOR ROOM - COMPOUND - DAY**

The feed of the empty room continues on the monitor screen.

ANA  
(working it out)  
The seventh...

Warren closes the 'Jenny' folder, notices a series of 'security feeds' archived by date.

He opens the one for 07/07/25. The video files are labelled by location: 'Central Compound', 'Surgery', 'Main Office'...

He opens 'Central Compound', scrolls through a day's worth of footage, lab-coated researchers crossing back and forth across the compound until --

THERE. He stops it. Jenny, key clutched in her hand, heading straight for the monkey cage.

HAYDEN  
You've got to be shitting me...



**EXT. CAGE - COMPOUND - DAY - FLASHBACK**

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

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

THE GATE SPRINGS OPEN --

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

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

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

**EXT. GROUNDS - COMPOUND - DAY**

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

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

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

BACK TO PRESENT:

Warren pauses the tape. We hear a CLICK-CLICK as he opens a new file --

**INT. SURGERY CENTER - COMPOUND - DAY - FLASHBACK**

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

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

DR. ELLIS

The monkeys are loose! Someone alert EHS!

The doctor takes off running to an exit door on the opposite side of the building.

IMAGE FREEZES -- CLICK-CLICK as Warren opens another file, a recording from the camera inside --

**INT. DR. ELLIS' OFFICE - COMPOUND - DAY**

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

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

He keeps typing.

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

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

DR. ELLIS (CONT'D)  
We're friends, Jenny... Right?  
Friends? Family...

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

DR. ELLIS (CONT'D)  
Jenny do you hear me? Friend...  
puzzle... friend... Jenny... Jenny?

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

He realizes he's trapped. He has no other choice than to furiously type for help on the keyboard before --

JENNY AND THE MONKEYS POUNCE ON HIM.

DR. ELLIS (CONT'D)  
AHHHHHHHHH! JENNY! NOOOO!

IMAGE FREEZES -- CLICK-CLICK --

Warren searches through other videos until he finds --

**INT. LABORATORY - DAY**

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

A Scientist opening a container marked 'ACETONE' and 'CLEANING AGENT' sets it on a table.

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

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

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

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

Among the monkeys, one huge BEAST stands out. Its limbs covered in surgical wounds, its movements jerky, menacing.

The Beast lets out a chilling, familiar LOW MOAN as it moves. It turns toward a scrambling Lab ASSISTANT, utters a horrific SCREECH before it leaps on the Assistant, TEARING HIM APART --

Monkeys LEAP to the wiring above -- A wire SNAPS from their weight -- The exposed wire SPARKS as it HITS the floor --

THE ACETONE IGNITES --

THE FLAME GROWS HIGHER AND PICKS UP SPEED --

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

WHABOOOOOM--BA-WABOOOOOM! A brilliant ball of fire renders the lab a blinding white -- (FLASHBACK ENDS.)

BACK TO PRESENT

#### **INT. MONITORING ROOM - COMPOUND - DAY**

TSSSSSHHHHHHHHH -- The recording cuts to static.

The family stares on in horror. Then, as if on cue, that LOW MOAN ECHOES through the building.

The family share a concerned look, realizing --

WARREN  
The Sheriff...

#### **INT. SURGERY CENTER - COMPOUND - DAY**

Sheriff Barnes and Deputy Suggs press on down a hallway, doors to the various operating rooms leading off it.

A sudden RATTLE emanates from one of the operating rooms. Another LOW MOAN. A distant voice distracts the Sheriff --

WARREN (O.S.)  
Sheriff!

SHERIFF BARNES  
What's he saying?

Suggs shrugs. Barnes inches toward the doorway from the side, ready to enter when --

WARREN  
STOP!

The family appears in the hallway, panting and panicked.

WARREN (CONT'D)  
It isn't a person, it's--

A MONKEY LEAPS from the doorway straight at Barnes, knocking him back.

He WRESTLES with it as the monkey tries to sink its teeth into him, the monkey's face inches from its own --

Its eyelids disfigured from tearing at its sutures, its whole body now covered in horrific burns, more living skeleton than monkey.

Teeth SINK into Barnes hand, his gun slipping from his grip. Suggs tries to get a shot, can't find one that won't hit his boss. Barnes FLAILS, spins sideways and --

THROWS THE CREATURE OFF. Its body THUDS into the wall with a YELP. Suggs holds his fire when it SKITTERS away down the hallway, HOWLING.

Suggs helps Barnes to his feet. Suddenly, more HOWLS, echoing through the compound, an awful, cacophonous chorus. The group becomes highly aware -- they're everywhere.

SHERIFF BARNES  
Everybody out. NOW!

#### **EXT. COMPOUND - DAY**

They BURST out of the building and cross the grounds, shadows DARTING all around them, silhouettes atop the charred buildings, in the shattered windows and buckled doorways.

The PATTERN of footsteps behind them, GRUNTS and HOWLS edging closer, prompting the group to FLEE for their lives --

**EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - DAY**

They make it to the tree line outside the compound, half-stumbling down the mountainside, the awful, guttural sounds finally fading behind them.

They take a moment to catch their breath.

**EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - DAY - (LATER)**

The party TRUDGES, pallid and traumatized. Barnes clutches a bleeding hand. He breaks the silence --

SHERIFF BARNES  
I'll call in the feds. We'll check  
the house is safe. Then you pack up  
and we head into town. Not safe to  
stay there.

He gets no pushback.

DEPUTY SUGGS  
(re Barnes' hand)  
Gonna need a shot for that,  
Sheriff.

SHERIFF BARNES  
Last thing on my mind right now.

The party pushes on through the thick forest.

**EXT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - DAY**

The family waits outside as Barnes and Suggs complete their sweep. The two men emerge from the house, nod to the family.

SHERIFF BARNES  
Be quick.

**SERIES OF SHOTS - THE FAMILY PREPARES TO LEAVE**

-- Ana flings belongings into a suitcase.

-- Hayden rifles through the mess in his room, stuffing his backpack to near bursting.

-- Warren fills a turkey baster with milk from the microwave, heads to --

**INT. UTILITY ROOM - MOUNTAIN HOUSE - DAY**

Warren opens the door a crack, slips inside. Baby's awake, instantly bares her fangs. She looks stronger, wilder.

WARREN

Hey, now, I thought we'd made friends.

He holds out his hand. She softens, as if remembering their last interaction. She walks slowly towards him, lets his hand touch her fur.

Climbs up his arm. He smiles, cradling her. Feeds her milk.

WARREN (CONT'D)

No wonder you were trying to tear my face off when we met. Last one of us you saw took your mama away.

**EXT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - DAY**

Barnes and Suggs wait outside the house, Barnes' foot tapping.

Suggs' eye is drawn to a movement in the tree line. He watches it for a beat, then --

DEPUTY SUGGS

Sheriff...

Barnes follows his gaze to --

A RHESUS MONKEY. Standing by the trees, staring right at them.

SHERIFF BARNES

We got a straggler.

He rests a hand on his gun.

SHERIFF BARNES (CONT'D)

Just keep an eye on it.

But just after he says it, another emerges further along the tree line. Then another. And another. Some in the trees. Some on the ground, all staring right at the pair.

The Sheriff and Suggs become increasingly nervous...

SHERIFF BARNES (CONT'D)

(calling)

Hurry up in there!

He draws his gun. Suggs follows suit. A few of the monkeys are inching forward now, fangs bared.

SHERIFF BARNES (CONT'D)

Shit. Keep 'em in your eyeline --

DEPUTY SUGGS

I can't. There's too many!

Suggs' barrel moves from monkey-to-monkey -- too many targets to choose. His eye catches a SUDDEN MOVEMENT to his right --

DEPUTY SUGGS (CONT'D)

GAH!

A monkey LEAPS from nearby brush, TEARS into his leg. He swings his gun round to shoot it but another drops from the eaves of the house and GRABS his arm --

Barnes' tries to get a shot on the attackers but in seconds he's SWARMED too, WRITHING on the ground.

# **INT. UTILITY ROOM - MOUNTAIN HOUSE - DAY**

Warren still cradles Baby while she paws at his face.

WARREN

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

He hears a stifled SCREAM from outside, carries Baby to --

# **INT. FOYER - MOUNTAIN HOUSE - DAY**

Warren HURRIES and SWINGS open the front door -- FREEZES in terror at the sight of Barnes and Suggs, swarmed by monkeys.

Not knowing what to do he SCREAMS at the monkeys --

WARREN

GET AWAY!

The monkeys pause their attack, stare at him, at Baby, their interest now switched...

Warren spies the Sheriff's gun in the dirt, considers going for it but the monkeys CHARGE direct at him --

He DUCKS back inside, SLAMMING the door, his breath a ragged mess.

A THUMP on the door startles him. Then another...

THUMP. THUMP. THUMP. LOUDER AND LOUDER. Not just on the door now, but the windows, the exterior walls...

WARREN (CONT'D)

Ana? Hayden?

Warren takes off his coat and uses it to wrap Baby, muffling her SQUEALS. With Baby in his arms, he SPRINTS to --

**INT. KITCHEN - MOUNTAIN HOUSE - DAY**

He runs right into Ana and Hayden clutching each other in fear -- PPIIISSSHH -- GLASS BREAKS from the incredible force from the thumping outside.

WARREN

They followed us.

ANA

How many?

HAYDEN

Where's the Sheriff?!

Warren's alarmed look answers the question. Silence hangs. They all look at each other. All scared.

INT. UTILITY ROOM - MOUNTAIN HOUSE - DAY

Warren pulls them into the room and closes the door, placing the wrapped Baby into the cat crate.

He paces a small circle as he tries to figure out what to do. But panic hits him -- anxiety spiking through the roof. He tries to fight it --

WARREN

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

His breathing escalates and he has trouble taking deep breaths -- Ana's afraid he's going to blowup --

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

Warren stares at his cowering family. They're doomed if he can't muster the ability to pull himself out of this. He purses his lips, clenches his fist --

The THUMPS outside the room have changed to loud GRUNTS and CRASHES. Pots and pans CLATTER in the kitchen. Warren realizes THEY'RE INSIDE THE HOUSE --

In that fear, Warren seems to find some deep reserve, some primordial parental strength -- He begins to breathe. Count. Breathe. Count. Calm... calm... calm...

He pulls himself out of the anxiety attack and rises an inch taller in stature. He looks at his family and heads to the door.

He partially opens it, peers through the crack --

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



Warren shuts the door, remaining as calm as he can. For them. He meets Ana's eye.

WARREN (CONT'D)

OK. Maybe thirty or more. Full grown. Only a matter of time before they find us.

Ana's in panic-mode. Hayden stares at Warren, that little boy inside him shaking in fear. Warren strides over to him.

WARREN (CONT'D)

Hayden.

Hayden shifts his body position, listens attentively.

WARREN (CONT'D)

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

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

WARREN (CONT'D)

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

HAYDEN

Try me.

WARREN

I need you to distract them.

Hayden's shivering has stopped. He steps up to Warren.

HAYDEN

How?

WARREN

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

Ana's concern for Hayden shows in her face.

ANA

You can't send him out there alone.

WARREN

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

Ana looks to Hayden, tears already in her eyes.

HAYDEN

Don't worry, Mom, I can do it. If  
we're going to get out of this...  
(looks to Warren)  
we have to fight them together.

Hayden hugs his mother then squeezes Warren's shoulder.

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

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

ANA

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

WARREN

You have to trust me.

#### **INT. VARIOUS ROOMS - MOUNTAIN HOUSE - DAY**

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

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

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

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

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

It's JENNY.

The other monkeys wait with her, deferring to her.

#### **INT. FOYER/VARIOUS ROOMS - MOUNTAIN HOUSE - DAY**

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

Reaches for the front door, and at the CLICK of the handle --

JENNY'S HEAD TURNS.

She stands and grunts and gestures with her hands.

The other monkeys SPRING toward the sound, SKITTERING toward the foyer on all fours.

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

**EXT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - DAY**

Warren RACES past the motionless bodies of the Sheriff and Suggs, GRABS the gun. But now he's exposed as monkeys SPILL from the house, blocking his path back in.

He makes a break for it, DASHING around the house to the living room window where the glass was shattered by the Rhesus invasion.

He JUMPS through the broken pane, glass tearing into his clothing, drawing blood beneath as he--

**INT. LIVING ROOM - MOUNTAIN HOUSE - DAY**

SLAMS to the floor, winded, but with no time to waste as monkeys LEAP through the window behind him. He DASHES to --

**INT. FOYER - DAY**

He turns to SLAM the living room door behind him -- but the monkeys BLOCK it from closing --

He PRESSES his shoulder against the door but the monkeys are strong. He's losing the fight...

Worse, the front door is still open --

While holding the door, he looks down at the gun, trying to figure out how it operates, finds the safety --

WARREN

Ana!

Ana follows his voice, emerging from the utility room --

WARREN (CONT'D)

The door!

She HURRIES to close the front door but --

THWAM! Several monkeys SHOOT through the gap, knocking her back --

WARREN (CONT'D)

Ana!

Ana CRAWLS toward him, monkeys HISSING behind her, lips pulled back over their teeth -- But they don't attack since --

JENNY RISES to her feet, MOVING MENACINGLY toward Warren and Ana, baring teeth.

Warren's finds the safety catch, raises the gun, torn over what to do.

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

Spurred on by Jenny, the other monkeys advance toward Warren and Ana, nearly touching them, almost on top of them --

Warren lifts the gun...

Ana SCREAMS.

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

The monkeys let out a LOUD SCREECH, SCURRYING away from Warren and his gun.

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

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

ANA

Hayden! He's outside!

WARREN

I'll get him.

HAYDEN (O.S.)

Fuck if I'm going out there again.

Warren and Ana turn around to see Hayden standing at the doorway.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

They all ran into the woods.

(to Warren)

Good plan by the way.

Ana rushes him and envelops him in her arms.

ANA

Thank God you're safe.

HAYDEN

All I did was throw some rocks into the woods.

(MORE)

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

(then)

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

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

WARREN

We've got to check on the guys  
outside then get out of here. They  
may come back. Grab anything you  
absolutely need while I get Baby.

Warren starts toward the utility room.

**EXT. MOUNTAIN HOUSE - DAY**

Warren, toting Baby, and his family leave the battered front  
door ajar as they hurry outside.

Warren rushes over to the Sheriff, Ana to Suggs. The Sheriff  
and Suggs make slight movements.

WARREN

Thank God the Sheriff's alive.

He looks to Ana, who nods. Warren takes a breath, thinking...

WARREN (CONT'D)

Sorry, Sheriff.

He searches the man's pockets, pulls out the keys to his  
cruiser.

WARREN (CONT'D)

I'll pull up the cruiser and we can  
take them to the hospital.

Ana and Hayden nod.

WARREN (CONT'D)

OK. Let's get out of here.

Warren runs for the car, when --

SCREEEEEECH! Jenny CRIES OUT from edge the woods.

On all fours, the monkeys reemerge from the tree line.

The family REVERSES their direction and SPRINTS to the house.

They almost make it to the deck when --

MONKEYS JUMP IN FRONT OF THEM --

SNARLING --

CRAWLING FORWARD --

Warren is at a loss, his head swivels, looking for a way out. Finding none.

Ana and Hayden are frozen in fear.

But Warren stops, GAZES at their leader, Jenny. Something strikes him, something familiar about Jenny...

The monkeys TIGHTEN the circle as they CLOSE IN.

Ana and Hayden are clinging together, then --

WARREN (CONT'D)  
That's Jenny... from the tape...  
Baby's mother...

Warren bends down and gently places Baby on the ground.

The monkeys halt advancing.

Baby stands on her own. She looks at Warren.

Warren gently nudges her toward Jenny.

Baby outstretches her arms to Warren.

Jenny's stone-faced as she watches.

Warren nudges Baby again.

Baby turns around and looks at her mother. She drops to all fours and scurries toward Jenny, stops, looks back at Warren.

Warren stands still.

Baby finally goes to her mother. They hold each other gingerly. Jenny examines Baby. She touches the healed wounds on her neck.

She pulls Baby to her chest. Baby wraps her arms around her mother. They turn around and disappear into the woods.

The other monkeys follow Jenny into the woods, peacefully.

Warren drops to his knees and bows his head. Ana touches his shoulder. He looks up. She stoops and kisses him.

Hayden watches, tears form in his eyes, but smiles.

Ana hugs them both.

ANA  
You both OK?

HAYDEN  
Yeah. Except Warren shit his pants.

Warren smiles.

WARREN  
You're grounded.

Ana watches with a smile on her face and thankfulness in her eyes as her two guys banter and tease each other.

**INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - HOLMES - DAY**

Sheriff Barnes, bandaged and beleaguered, addresses an office full of government officials, peppering him with questions.

SHERIFF BARNES  
I'm telling you the truth, I really  
don't know anything. Why don't you  
ask the monkeys?

As someone walks into the office, the door opens showing a gaggle of reporters, photographers and bloggers outside, YELLING out for interviews.

The Sheriff buries his head in his hands.

SHERIFF BARNES (CONT'D)  
I've got to find another job.

His phone RINGS. He picks up. Listens. Sighs --

SHERIFF BARNES (CONT'D)  
(into phone)  
... No, you can't have one of the  
'critters' for a pet, they're  
sending them to a sanctuary...

**INT. HOTEL ROOM - HOLMES HOTEL - DAY**

Warren and Ana stand at a window, gazing at the mountains when Hayden enters their room, appearing frustrated.

HAYDEN  
Dad called. He was checking on me  
to see if I was okay.

ANA  
Is he coming?

HAYDEN  
I don't think so.  
(then)  
I don't need him to babysit me  
anyway.

WARREN  
He should at least be a friend.

HAYDEN  
I have a friend.

Hayden extends his fist to fist bump Warren. Warren flinches. Hayden laughs at Warren like he can't believe this guy.

WARREN  
I thought you were going to hit me.

They all laugh, then Warren and Hayden fist bump.

ANA  
How about dinner with us?

HAYDEN  
I'm meeting some of my fans  
downtown.

ANA  
Fans?

WARREN  
(to Ana)  
Don't you know? Your boy's blowing  
us off because he's a local  
celebrity.  
(to Hayden)  
Hey, before you go, can I get your  
autograph?  
(slaps his own butt)  
Right here.

Hayden rolls his eyes as Warren chuckles. Ana can't believe who he's turned into. Hayden heads to his room to get ready.

ANA  
Really? I'm trying to get him to  
behave like a respectful human  
being.

WARREN  
Maybe you should have married one.

ANA  
Nah... I have a funny feeling I  
married the right one.

KNOCK, KNOCK, at the door.

ANA (CONT'D)  
What now?

Warren wearily opens the door to reveal a man wearing dark glasses and a suit, RICK (40s), standing with a pad and pen in hand. Warren looks him up and down.



WARREN

Can't you guys give us a break? We already told you government people everything we know.

RICK

Government? Heavens no, I'm not from the government.

Rick looks down at his own clothes.

RICK (CONT'D)

Oh, I dress like this to get people to talk for free. My name's Rick Franklin and I'm a reporter for the National Sentinel.

ANA

We just had an experience that would make your hair stand on end and you want us to spend hours telling you the story for free?

RICK

Who said you would do it for free?

Warren and Ana share a look.

ANA

Well, in that case, come on in.

**INT. LAMPPOST CAFE - NIGHT**

Warren and Ana eat dinner at the downtown cafe.

ANA

Ready to go back to civilization?

WARREN

I can't leave this place fast enough, but just because I fought off a bunch of monkeys doesn't make me ready to face the city again.

ANA

I don't know if it was the outdoors, the physical work, the project you took on, but your condition... this version of you, I'm falling in love with it.

WARREN

Yeah?

ANA

Yeah.

WARREN

(shrugs)

I'm taking baby steps.

ANA

Your baby steps are moving in fast forward. Look what you did -- dealt with problems, handled adversity, made decisions, you even talked to people...

WARREN

I do like my chances in overcoming this thing. I want to get back to helping us, not just me.

ANA

I would love that.

They share a smile as he reaches across the table to hold her hand.

WARREN

Maybe we can move to a quiet suburb, work full time from home, and ditch the two hour commute to the city. Give you the attention you deserve.

ANA

I don't think that's gonna work out...

Warren doesn't like the sound of this. He instantly floods with worry. Can't hide it.

WARREN

Wh--Why?

ANA

Because... when you're ready... I think you should go back to college.

His face shows this is the last thing he expected.

WARREN

That's out of the blue.

ANA

I think you'd be a fantastic veterinarian. Look how you took care of that helpless baby monkey.

WARREN

I'm too old.

ANA

You're never too old to do what you love.

WARREN

It's far too expensive. We can't take this crazy windfall and blow it on me.

ANA

You'll end up making more money than you do now. I'd say it's a win-win.

Warren ponders the possibility.

WARREN

I'll think about it. But if I give it a try, there's one caveat...

Ana listens attentively.

WARREN (CONT'D)

No monkeys.

Ana smiles.

FADE OUT.

**THE END**