

POD

Written by
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Based on the novel by
Stephen Wallenfels

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FADE IN

On scratchy STOCK FOOTAGE of Ronald Reagan at the height of his powers. The Great Communicator addressing the UN:

RONALD REAGAN

In our obsession with antagonisms of the moment, we often forget how much unites all the members of humanity. Perhaps we need some outside, universal threat to make us recognize this common bond. I occasionally think how quickly our differences worldwide would vanish if we were facing an alien threat from outside this world.

THE IMAGE FRITZES OUT TO BLACK

TITLE OVER BLACK: SANTA MONICA, CALIFORNIA - 5:03 AM

A FEMALE VOICE - adult but not mature - breaks the silence.

FEMALE VOICE

Megs. Wake up. Honey. Come on.

FADE IN

INT. CHEVY NOVA - DAWN

MEGAN "MEGS" OROZCO (12): opens her bleary eyes as she stirs beneath a dirty, threadbare sleeping bag.

MEGS

Where are we?

Megs's wrinkled jeans and T-shirt, and black-soled bare feet tell a similar tale of hardscrabble road-tripping.

FEMALE VOICE

Parking structure. At a hotel.

Shaking off the cobwebs, Megs looks up to see:

HER MOTHER (ALEXIS OROZCO, 29)

Standing outside, leaning into the cracked-open door.

MEGS

We were gonna sleep at the beach.

INT. CHEVY NOVA/PARKING STRUCTURE - CONTINUOUS - INTERCUT

Alexis is unusually sexed-up for this time of day. The liberal application of make-up, very low cut shirt and conspicuous cleavage only amplify her desperation.

The parking structure is dark, car-worn. The dawning sun projects long shafts into the rising levels. An arrow painted on the wall opposite the Chevy Nova leads to a door with a legend that reads "HOTEL ENTRANCE."

The Chevy Nova dates back to the eighties, with so many dirty dings and scuffs that it's impossible to tell its true color.

The plate on the Chevy Nova reads **PENNSYLVANIA - THE KEYSTONE STATE.**

ALEXIS

We ran out of gas.

MEGS

It's really early, mom.

ALEXIS

I need you to listen. I have to go.

MEGS

Why are you dressed like that?

ALEXIS

That's what I'm trying to tell you.
I have a job interview.

MEGS

Job interview?

A white 2012 Mercedes - shiny and washed - pulls up behind them. Megs's Mother looks back and gestures at the driver.

ALEXIS

That's my ride.

MEGS

Ride? Where?

ALEXIS

It's a friend.

MEGS

What friend? Mom. Can't we just go
to San Diego now? Please?

The Mercedes driver gives his engine a REV. An echoing **VROOM!** fills the cavernous space. Followed by another.

Whoever this is, he's getting impatient.

ALEXIS

We. Don't. Have. Gas.

(then, softening)

Now be quiet and listen. You need to do exactly what I say. Wait in the car. Don't go anywhere. Keep the doors locked. Don't open them for anyone. Not anyone. Understand?

Megs stares: even at twelve, she knows how skeevy this looks.
Alexis's eyes water as she looks into Megs's.

The driver REVS again: longer, and LOUDER.

Alexis hustles to crank the Nova's window shut.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)

It's only gonna be about an hour.
When I come back I'll have money.
We can buy gas and a huge breakfast
at Denny's. Pancakes. Blueberry.

(cradling Megs's face)

Okay? Just stay here. Don't eat the
food in the trunk, that's for the
road. You stay in the car.

Megs nods, resigned. Her mother lets go and SHUTS the door:

ALEXIS (CONT'D)

Do not get out of the car for any
reason. Don't eat the food in the
trunk. Promise.

MEGS

Promise.

ALEXIS

I'll be back in an hour.

As Megs BURROWS into her sleeping bag:

TILT UP TO REVEAL ALEXIS - WATCHING FROM OUTSIDE

She traces the outline of a heart on the car's filthy window
before rushing for the waiting Mercedes.

Closing her eyes, Megs hears the THUNK of the closing
Mercedes door, then the rubbing screech of tires on concrete.

CUT TO BLACK

TITLE OVER BLACK: PROSSER, WASHINGTON - 5:45 AM

FADE IN

On a Wheaten Terrier - DUTCH - ambling across the rug at:

INT. JOSH CHILDERS'S BEDROOM - DAY

Dutch walks past a low shelf crowded with karate trophies and belts ranging from white to brown until he finds what he is looking for at the side of the bed:

The dangling foot of JOSH CHILDERS (15). Dutch LICKS Josh's toes with great enthusiasm:

JOSH
Knock it off Dutch.

Josh - shirtless, boyish in spite of his athletic physique - removes his foot and rolls over to face the window.

The morning sun trickles through closed blinds, hitting his face. Josh reaches for the blinds, cracking them open to see:

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - CONTINUOUS

A girl (JAMIE, 11) in a very bright pink hoodie rides her bike down one side of the street, TOSSING newspapers.

JOSH'S P.O.V. drifts from street level to find:

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING ACROSS THE STREET - CONTINUOUS

A generic, flat-fronted crackerbox structure with large front windows...through one of them:

THE BEDROOM OF A SIXTEEN YEAR OLD GIRL

Festooned with indie posters and homespun photo collages. Beneath them, a bed with a purple, floral-patterned duvet.

Something MOVES under the sheets - AMANDA LAUGHTON (15).

Pretty even at this time of the morning, Amanda whips off the bedspread. She's wearing a short T-shirt and underwear.

RESUME ON JOSH - WATCHING INTENTLY

JOSH
Good dog...Dutch.

Josh's bedroom door OPENS to reveal his father ROBERT "BOB" CHILDERS (MID 40's, slim but not muscular, kind of a dork).

BOB
Soup's on, Josh.

Josh lets go of the blinds and curls up. Fooling no one.

JOSH
Go away, dad.

BOB
I made breakfast.

JOSH
OK. Fine.

BOB
Your eggs are getting cold.

JOSH
Get out of here.

Bob strides across the room, grabs the cord to the blinds and YANKS - flooding the room with sunlight.

BOB
On your feet, soldier.

JOSH
Dad -

Josh SPRINGS UP TO THE WINDOW and sees:

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Amanda - standing by the window, her attention somehow gotten by the sudden movement across the street.

Their eyes lock. Oh shit.

Amanda cranes her neck to see Josh - then shakes her head and reaches for her curtains. As she DRAWS them abruptly:

SMASH BACK TO JOSH

In the throes of that most unique of teenage emotions - awkward embarrassment melded with impotent anger.

JOSH
Didn't they have "knocking on doors" back in the baby boom?

BOB
The baby boom? Oh...because I'm old. That's good, son. Very good.

JOSH
A little privacy? PLEASE!

Josh's alarm clock goes off: playing music. Loudly.

BOB
See, time to get up. Just come down
and eat your eggs.

Josh FUMBLES with the clock radio.

JOSH
You make them with olive oil again?

BOB
's wrong with that?

JOSH
Other than they turn green?

Josh's dad is about to put the hammer down, but then the
radio SHUTS DOWN with a LOUD POP.

Dutch then breaks into an uncharacteristic display of
WHIMPERS and SQUEALS.

Josh looks up at his father. Bob's nose bleeds.

Josh reaches for his own nose. Gets blood on his fingers.

AND THEN THE SOUND

Like metal-on-metal tearing and twisting and amplified a
thousand times.

JOSH'S COMPUTER

Sitting on a desk - FLASHES BRIGHTLY.

Dutch RUSHES under the bed.

Josh clutches his ears and takes the fetal position. His
father does the same - and the awful sound carries through a:

SMASH CUT TO

INT. PARKING GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

The sound continues over through this WIDE TRACKING SHOT of
the garage: RE-ESTABLISHING THE LOCATION as the Chevy Nova
enters frame, rattled by the deafening SOUND.

Whatever is happening, it is happening everywhere.

INT. CHEVY NOVA - CONTINUOUS

Nose BLEEDING, Megs digs her head into her sleeping bag,
holding her ears, pushing into the seat as the lights on the
CAR RADIO and the dashboard all FLARE BRIGHTLY.

Then it's over. Like someone flipped a switch. Silence.

Megs peeks up. Wipes blood from her nose. Is it over?

No. A heavy steel door **SLAMS!** open somewhere in:

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - CONTINUOUS - MEGS POV

A YOUNG MAN dragging his GIRLFRIEND along - SHOUTING.

YOUNG MAN

We're getting out of here, go! Go!

The young man gets into the car - STARTS it before his girlfriend gets in - PEELS OUT before she can close the door

AND RUSHES THROUGH THE NEARBY ENTRANCE GATE

SHATTERING the pole!

MEGS POV SHIFTS TO SEE FLASHES OF:

More people coming out of the steel doors into the garage.

THE HOTEL'S GUESTS: trying to escape whatever is happening.

More SHOUTING. Cars STARTING.

Megs LOOKS UP over the back seat and through the window - completely stunned at the MOUNTING CHAOS.

Cars SCREECH out of parking spots - some HITTING ONE ANOTHER.

Half-dressed people - all with bloody noses. Some still in pajamas - others pulling on jackets over sweats - DRAG HALF-ASLEEP CHILDREN, SPOUSES AND PETS INTO CARS AND MINIVANS.

Cars RUSH OUT. Horns. Squealing brakes. Car impacts.

A BUSINESSMAN STEPS INTO MEGS' FIELD OF VISION

Pulling on a jacket over his untucked shirt - blood still trickling under his nose and ears. As their eyes lock:

A CAR SLAMS INTO THE BUSINESSMAN WITH A SICK METALLIC THUNK!

Businessman's body CATAPULTS OUT OF MEGS'S FIELD OF VISION.

MEGS SCREAMS

Her eyes blot with tears. Her frightened CRY carries over a:

SMASH CUT TO

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - STAIRS TO LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The sounds of a NEIGHBORHOOD IN CHAOS rage outside: people SHOUTING, cars and HORNS...and GUNSHOTS.

Bob and Josh - their faces and shirts covered in blood - stagger down the stairs:

JOSH

What the hell's going on?

Bob breaks toward the front window of the house as Josh heads for the front door - but before he can turn the lock:

BOB

PEOPLE ARE FIRING LIVE AMMO - DO NOT STEP OUT - GET DOWN!

As Bob drops and Josh spins to look at Bob and the window.

WIDEN OUT TO INCLUDE THE VIEW FROM THE WINDOW

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - CONTINUOUS - INTERCUT WITH JOSH AND BOB

Something very weird is going on. The bright early morning sun breaks into DARK, FAST-MOVING SHADOWS criss-crossing the street:

But whatever is blotting out the sun remains unseen for now.

A minivan has CRASHED into a fire hydrant, GEYSERING water into the air.

THE PREVIOUSLY-SEEN NEWSPAPER GIRL

Her nose and ears bloody, and knee scraped, drags her broken bicycle away from the conflagration as:

SEVERAL NEIGHBORS

RUSH OUT of their houses and into the SHADOW-STROBING street - all of their faces bloodied:

AND ALL OF THEM LOOKING UP IN THE SAME DIRECTION

One of them, a MAN IN BATHROBE, points a shotgun at the sky.

BATHROBE NEIGHBOR

What the shit? What the shit?

A SECOND CAR BARELY MISSES THE MINIVAN ON THE HYDRANT

Only to SKID to avoid bathrobe neighbor. A painful SCREECH! sends the vehicle out of Josh and Bob's field of vision.

Bathrobe neighbor doesn't notice, he reaches into his bathrobe pocket for more ammo, loads and FIRES overhead!

On the **BANG!** from his weapon:

FOLLOW THE ARC OF HIS FIRE

TO REVEAL THE THINGS INTERMITTENTLY BLOTTING OUT THE SUN

Large black spheres. Hundreds of them. Descending slowly. Soundlessly. Evenly spaced in a grid.

THESE ARE THE PODs

ANGLE ON BOB AND JOSH

On the floor. Looking up. Eyes WIDENING with dread and wonder.

BOB

My. God.

OUTSIDE - MORE AND MORE NEIGHBORS

Come out to eye the developing phenomenon. One of them tries to control a WILDLY BARKING DOG on a leash.

STILL ON THE FLOOR, JOSH TURNS TO LOOK AT THE DOOR

Dying to watch the descending PODs from outside. Bob puts a hand on his shoulder and shakes his head.

BATHROBE NEIGHBOR'S VOICE (O.S.)

HOLY SHIT! HOLY SHIT!

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Josh and Bob look back out the window:

THE PODS SPIN...SLOWLY AT FIRST, THEN GATHERING SPEED

They will continue to spin this way for much of this story.

Bathrobe neighbor - standing among a growing debris field of shotgun shells - looks up as he fishes for more ammo.

A CAR - A WHITE HONDA - STOPS BEFORE HIM

The driver HONKS. But before Bathrobe can respond or reload:

THE PODS EMIT JAGGED BEAMS OF WHITE-BLUE LIGHT

The faces of the neighbors LIGHT UP with refracted glow.

THE BEAMS SPLIT OFF INTO BLACK LIGHT FRACTALS

Forking twigs from a burned branch with a bluish aural glow - some JAG into the air, some STRIKE the ground.

ONE OF THE FORKING BLACK BOLTS STRIKES THE HONDA

And develops into a singularity - a blue/black vortex of opaque light that ENGULFS the Honda, then COLLAPSES.

The Honda vanishes along with the singularity.

MORE TENDRIL-LIKE BEAMS OF BLACK LIGHT

Find their target in other vehicles on the street.

One by one - in an orderly progression - every car is engulfed and VORTEXES out of existence - disappeared - all before the widening eyes of the neighbors outside.

Then, when all the cars are gone:

A BEAM OF LIGHT HITS BATHROBE/SHOTGUN NEIGHBOR

He is engulfed by a maelstrom of blue/black light and VORTEXES out of sight. Everyone who sees PANICS AND RUNS!

JOSH AND BOB

Avert their eyes. The flashes grow into a BLINDING GLARE as:

EVERY NEIGHBOR OUTSIDE

Is systematically VORTEXED out of sight.

The Neighbor holding the dog on the leash is hit. The leash DROPS to the ground. The dog, spared, RUNS FREE.

JOSH

Spots something out of the corner of his eye:

THE NEWSPAPER GIRL IN THE PINK HOODIE

Crouching in front of a large tree, scared out of her wits.

JOSH

Jamie!

INTERCUT BETWEEN JOSH AND JAMIE

As Josh gets on his feet and rushes for the door:

JOSH (CONT'D)
Run over here - I'll open the door!

BOB
No - Josh!

Jamie gets up and runs.

JOSH SCRAMBLES FOR THE DOOR

He FLIPS the deadbolt. FLINGS off the chain. PULLS it open.

Framed by the now-open door, Newspaper Girl TEARS ASS from the street as more people VANISH BEHIND HER.

JOSH
C'mon Jaime, I got you!

She is just about to clear the sidewalk to Josh's front lawn.

Josh reaches out - about to stick his body out the door when:

TWO ARMS WRAP HIM IN A VISE FROM BEHIND

Bob. PULLING Josh away from the door.

JOSH (CONT'D)
I can grab her!

BOB

Stay inside!

Josh looks away from Bob and through the open door to see:

JAMIE

Almost there - reaching out - smiling like she's been saved.

Until a maelstrom of blue/black light opens around her and VORTEXES her out of sight.

JOSH SHAKES FREE OF HIS DAD

JOSH (CONT'D)
Get off me! Get off me!

Josh takes a stumbling step as the light from the PODs DIMS.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - CONTINUOUS - SEEN THROUGH THE DOOR

Empty. No people. No cars.

A dog drags his leash on the blacktop - ambling masterless down the deserted byway.

RESUME ON JOSH

GULPING for air as his eyes water. Bob steps to the door. He locks eyes with his son. No words.

As Bob SLAMS the door shut:

CUT TO BLACK

FADE IN

On a sickly yellow sodium light, glowing with a faint HUM at:

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - DARK TO DAWN

The light - and the rest of the automatic lamps - cast an eerie glow over this dark and silent place, making strange, jagged shadows of the many empty and crashed vehicles.

The body of run-over businessman remains where it landed. His head facing away. Just meters from the Chevy Nova.

The sun rises. The lights shut down with a mechanical POP:

PUSH IN ON THE CHEVY NOVA

INT. CHEVY NOVA - CONTINUOUS

Megs's eyes open as the light from the rising sun hits her.

MEGS

Mom?

She rises - squeezing her eyes. Realizing she is still alone, she peers over the window - past the dirty heart traced there by her mother - and over the back seat.

ANGLE ON THE PARKING STRUCTURE - MEGS POV

Empty. Until she locks eyes with

THE BODY RUN-OVER BUSINESSMAN, LIFELESS BUT EYES WIDE OPEN

SHOCK CUT BACK TO MEGS

GASPING. Turning from the grisly sight and back to her nest.

Megs gathers her breath. Her already red and bleary eyes water...but she snorts back her tears and gathers the sleeping bag - bunching it against the side of her seat before reaching for what food she has in here.

A quarter-full bottle of Mountain Dew and the last few crumbs in a bag of "Super Hot Jalapeño Madness Tortilla Chips."

Megs takes a swig from the bottle, then looks at the Dorito bag with some trepidation. She shuts her eyes and UPENDS the bag into her mouth, ASPIRATING every last bit of the remaining crumbs.

Megs tears the bag open and licks the sides. Her eyes water.

Megs quickly SWIGS the last of the Mountain Dew - lifting the bottle - squeezing it to get every last drop.

Nothing left. Megs tosses the bottle into the front seat and wipes her eyes as her stomach GRUMBLES.

Shaking her head, Megs brings a hand to her lower abdomen. She turns to the car door - *her voice a whisper*.

MEGS

I promised. Don't open the door.

Megs looks around. She unzips her jeans. Looks around. She needs to pee. Megs nods to herself, takes a deep breath and pulls on the door latch, quietly opening the door.

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - CONTINUOUS

Megs SNEAKS out, then creeps along several other cars - never dropping her guard until she reaches a safe distance.

Megs CROUCHES between a station wagon and the parking structure wall. She squats below frame and drops her pants.

Then the soft, trickling sound of a stream...

INTERRUPTED BY THE SLAM OF A STEEL DOOR OPENING

Megs clenches. The stream STOPS. She looks up, past the hood of the wagon and through the windows to see:

TWO MEN (BOTH LATE 20'S) - SEEN FROM HER POV

A short, thick guy and a tall, bony man with a shiny head. Both of them wear hotel security uniforms - navy blue blazers, cheap shirts and ties and khakis.

These are RICHIE and HACKER.

RICHIE

I didn't think that bitch would ever stop crying. Jesus.

HACKER

What else did you expect? Those things zapped everyone.

RICHIE
 Didn't zap anyone I'm gonna miss.

HACKER
 Who's fault is that?

The two men stop at the sight of RUN-OVER BUSINESSMAN.

RICHIE
 Ugh. This one's starting to stink.
 (looks at hacker)
 Hey, you curious?

HACKER
 'bout what?

RICHIE
 You know. Those things out there
 zapped all the people out on the
 street. You wonder what they'd do
 to a corpse?

HACKER
 No way. Mister Hendricks sent us
 out to search the cars for
 valuables.

RICHIE
 Yeah, and I don't want to be out
 here searching cars when this guy
 starts oozing out pus and shit like
 a blister.

HACKER
 I did not sign up for stiff
 disposal detail.

RICHIE
 Grab it.

HACKER
 I'm not -

RICHIE
 Rock paper scissors?

The two men lock eyes for a moment...then rochambeau. Both
 come up rocks. They exchange glances.

After a moment, Richie grabs the shoulders, Hacker the legs.

MEGS

Ducks behind the station wagon then peers around, pulling up
 her pants as she sees:

RICHIE AND HACKER - MEGS POV

Carrying the body to the edge - a part open to the outside - some ten car-lengths from where she crouches, Richie and Hacker HEAVE the body over toward the street.

A BEAM OF LIGHT FROM THE PODS HITS THE BODY

A VORTEX of blue/black orbiting light engulfs the corpse and then collapses on itself. Run-Over Businessman is gone.

RICHIE (CONT'D)

That was out-standing!

(off Hacker)

Ashes to ashes, no muss, no fuss.

Let's search some cars.

RESUME ON MEGS

Pushing herself against the tire as Richie and Hacker step back toward the parked cars.

HACKER (O.S.)

How 'bout that piece of shit Chevy

Nova over there?

RICHIE STEPS OVER TO THE NOVA - OPENS THE DOOR

RICHIE

Stinks in'ere.

HACKER

Any valuables?

RICHIE

In this POS? Empty bag of chips.

HACKER

Move on.

The steel door to the hotel opens to reveal a third man - BLACKBEARD, also wearing a Hotel security uniform.

BLACKBEARD

Richie. Hacker. We need some crowd control in here. Now.

As Richie steps away from the Nova and joins Blackbeard and Hacker in leaving the parking structure:

RESUME ON MEGS

As the door to the hotel SLAMS SHUT behind the men.

She scans the empty structure, then stands and walks toward the ledge.

As Megs's eyes WIDEN - seeing for the first time the alien terror that now lords over the skies...

WIDER TO REVEAL

EXT. THE SKYLINE ABOVE SANTA MONICA - CONTINUOUS

Devoid of cars and people. **Gridded overhead by spinning PODs.**

RESUME ON MEGS

Realizing there's no getting out of this place any time soon.

FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - STAIRS INTO LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN - DAY

Shirtless in pajama pants, Josh ambles down the stairs to the comforting sound of something CRACKLING in a fry pan.

He turns the corner to the open kitchen to see:

HIS MOTHER - CARRIE CHILDERS (EARLY 40'S)

Fresh-faced and pretty, turning from the stove to flip a pancake onto a waiting dish. You wish she was your mom.

CARRIE

Josh. Go back and put on a shirt.

Josh looks up at his mother, confused.

JOSH

I didn't...how'd you get home?

Carrie smiles and points upstairs:

CARRIE

No shirt, no service, Mister.

Josh returns the smile, but before he can go:

THE SOUNDSCAPE FILLS WITH A TINNY, AMPLIFIED VOICE

Which will be known as MEGAPHONE MAN.

MEGAPHONE MAN (O.S.)

"And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake;

(MORE)

MEGAPHONE MAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 and the sun became black as
 sackcloth of hair!" The Book of
 Revelation foretold this present
 darkness - listen to me, neighbors!

SHOCK CUT TO JOSH IN BED

INT. JOSH'S BEDROOM - DAY

His eyes open to the sound of MEGAPHONE MAN. Josh turns to the window and looks outside:

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - CONTINUOUS - JOSH'S POV

The PODs keep spinning overhead soundlessly.

The spray from the overturned fire hydrant has gone down to a trickle in the middle of a very large pond in the street.

Several FIRES send plumes of black smoke up into the sky - over the days, the sky will become permanently grey.

Amanda's window is STILL DRAPED.

Next door to Amanda, a NEIGHBOR stands just behind his open window: far back enough to FIRE a handgun up at the PODs.

And then there's Megaphone Man - one apartment down from Amanda - SPREADING HIS EVANGEL.

MEGAPHONE MAN	NEIGHBOR (O.S.)
This is the rapture! We who	
are left behind must -	SHUT UP!

RESUME ON JOSH

Wrapping a pillow over his head to drown him out as he turns away to see Dutch...licking himself in a corner of the room.

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Josh enters - dutifully followed by Dutch - to see his father standing at the living room window just beyond the dining room, holding a dry-erase marker: clearly engaged in thought.

Megaphone Man remains a constant presence in this scene.

BOB
 Josh. Good. I put your eggs on a
 plate in the oven. Eat up.

JOSH
 Fry them up with olive oil?

BOB

Nice and green. Get your plate and come over here. We need to talk.

JOSH

There's an alien invasion, half the suburbs are on fire, and dad's making eggs.

Josh gets his breakfast as Bob keeps to his work:

BOB

Survival's the first order of business.

JOSH

I thought tracking down mom was the "first order of business."

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Josh enters. The TV is on - the screen full of digital noise.

BOB

We have power, but no TV, radio, or internet. I spent all night trying to get a signal to call your mom, but all communications are down.

REVEAL what his father has been doing with the marker:

THE LIVING ROOM SLIDING DOOR IS COVERED WITH NOTATIONS

The PODs visible from this vantage point are all outlined - their positions marked and arrowed, their estimated spinning velocity calculated with mathematical formulas.

RESUME INSIDE

A large binder - full of loose-leaf pages, many already filled with handwritten text - sits on a coffee table.

JOSH

Maybe you needed to keep trying, see if you get some bars.

BOB

That work with your phone? I assume you tried reaching your mother too - or texting Alex?

Josh looks away, forlorn.

JOSH
Yeah. All night.

BOB
Then we both did the same thing to
no avail. Land lines are down too.
(indicates the TV screen)
Those ships don't want us talking.

JOSH BOB
PODs. PODs?

JOSH
That's what I call them. Stands for
"Pearls of Death."

Bob regards his son for a moment, then verbalizes something
he has been considering for a while.

BOB
Pearls of Death. Hmm. We don't know
that the people - the ones who got
hit by the PODs - were killed.

JOSH
They looked pretty dead to me.

BOB
Where are the bodies?

JOSH
Were you asleep yesterday? When our
neighbors got disintegrated?

Bob takes his son's snark in stride, continues to analyze:

BOB
Maybe teleported. They thinned the
herd, restricted access to
communications and transportation,
but we still have water and power.
There's a strategy at work here.

JOSH
And you know that. For sure.

BOB
No. Only thing I know is that they
don't take animals. Only people.

JOSH
And cars.

BOB

So long as they're outside and completely exposed. Your mother's Camry is still in the garage.

(indicates outside)

The Collinses have their windows open. They're OK. No one next door on either side though. No one in Alex's house across the street?

JOSH

No.

BOB

I'm sorry.

JOSH

You know what I'm sorry about? That they didn't take that megaphone guy. Wish he'd been taken - or that I had a fucking megaphone, give him a piece of my mind -

BOB

Language!

JOSH

Jesus, dad.

BOB

There's no profanity in this house.

Josh FLINGS his plate at the wall. It SHATTERS.

JOSH

There's alien starships outside.

BOB

Find another way to express your concerns.

JOSH

There's alien. Starships. Outside.

Bob lets his son's outburst echo, then replies calmly:

BOB

And they haven't moved and they haven't done anything since yesterday morning. As long as their behavior remains consistent - as long as we stay inside - we are going to be OK.

JOSH

Tell mom. Tell Alex. Oh wait. You can't!

Bob closes the notebook, walks over to the mess and quietly, methodically scoops up the debris of Josh's outburst.

BOB

Your mother was at a library conference. I can't imagine she -

JOSH

I can imagine.

BOB

But you don't know it. And we will only deal with things in our sphere of influence. That means not worrying about your mother. That means not worrying about Alex. That means survival. That means keeping only to what we know. That means tracking these - PODs - to see if anything changes.

JOSH

Oh. OK. I'll just stop worrying about my mother...and about Alex - my best friend and neighbor since the first grade. You want me to stop worrying about you too? Or is that in my "sphere of influence?"

Bob stands, handing Josh the broken shards of his plate.

BOB

Wasting resources is not going to get us anywhere.

JOSH

Like it's gonna make a difference. We have a half-empty pantry, 1997 Toyota Camry in the garage, dry erase markers. Know what we need? The freakin' Army, the freakin' Air Force, freakin' Jeff Goldblum to write the freakin' virus!

BOB

They took out every car on the street and every person not under a roof in seconds. I'm sure the armed forces never had a chance.

JOSH

So what now? We sit under this roof
until we run out of food?

(off Bob's silence)

What now, dad? Are you tracking
them because you're figuring out
some way to beat them?

BOB

I'm an engineer at a Department of
Energy subcontractor that makes
valves. I'm not beating this thing.

Josh EXITS, grabbing a picture of his mom from an end table.

JOSH

So you're just filling time until
one of us fu - freaks - up and
steps outside. Great.

(re: the picture)

You won't be needing this.

Bob watches his son go, then turns to his diagram as the
muffled sound of Megaphone Man continues in the background.

INT. JOSH'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Josh enters, followed by Dutch. He puts the picture of his
mother on the shelf, next to his trophies, his cell phone -
and another, unframed picture:

ONE OF JOSH AND HIS FRIEND, ALEX AT A KARATE MEET

He hits a button on his cell phone:

DIALING MOM...DIALING MOM...NO SIGNAL

Josh shakes his head and hits another speed-dial.

DIALING ALEX...DIALING ALEX...NO SIGNAL

Josh keeps hitting the buttons as he PLOPS down on the bed
and looks out the open blinds to see:

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Fires continue to burn in the distance.

AMANDA'S APARTMENT WINDOW REMAINS DRAPED

Beneath, Megaphone Man continues from his open window:

MEGAPHONE MAN

"We have transgressed: thou hast not pardoned. Thou hast covered with anger, and persecuted us: thou hast slain, thou hast not pitied."

NEIGHBOR (O.S.)

I'm gonna go there and shoot you!

MEGAPHONE MAN

(undeterred)
Thou hast covered thyself with a cloud, that our prayer should not pass through."

Josh reaches for an MP3 player, puts in his earbuds AND TURNS UP THE BLACK KEYS. As Josh shuts his eyes:

MATCH DISSOLVE FROM JOSH TO MEGS**INT. CHEVY NOVA - NIGHT**

Megs lies on the driver's seat - reclined below the closed window. Her stomach GRUMBLES. She puts her hand on her belly.

Megs reaches forward for the trunk release. She pulls it a few times - looks back - nothing.

MEGS

Come on - come on. I'm hungry.

Megs YANKS - IT COMES OFF IN HER HAND - and at the same time:

THE SOUND OF GLASS SHATTERING - FOLLOWED BY A CAR ALARM

Megs stares at the trunk-release in horror: did she do that?

BEEEP! BEEEP! BORP! BORP! WHOO-OOP-WHOO-OOP! BORP! BORP!

The alarm screams from behind - the FLASHING LIGHTS come into view over the rear deck of the Chevy Nova.

Startled and terrified, Megs makes herself as small as possible in the seat...then PEERS BACK to see:

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - MEGS'S POV - CONTINUOUS

A HOTEL GUEST - in shirtsleeves and slacks, holding a tire iron and ignoring the racket from the alarm - skulks over a puddle of broken safety glass from a sedan on the row of cars opposite the Chevy Nova.

Hotel Guest uses the tire iron to clear the window, then reaches in and pulls out a half-open bag of Ding Dongs.

Shoving a Ding Dong in his mouth, Hotel Guest cups his ears to drown out the alarm, then turns toward the Chevy Nova.

MEGS

Turns away, shrinking into her chair - did he see her?

FROM THE BACK WINDOW OF THE CHEVY

Hotel Guest approaches. He gets closer...closer...Megs shuts her eyes...the BLARING ALARM gives an escalating rhythm to the mounting tension...

THUNK! Hotel guest goes to work on the trunk of the Chevy Nova with his tire iron. **THUNK! THUNK!** The trunk flies open. The sound of RUMMAGING.

Megs opens her eyes - peers - can't see anything through the trunk-obscured back window. She turns to the rearview:

TO SEE THE DOOR OPENING TO REVEAL RICHIE, HACKER AND BLACKBEARD

RICHIE

What the hell do you think you're doing - Mr. Stevens in room #815?

Hotel Guest drops the trunk lid - not quite shutting it. Megs can now JUST see a little more of the developing scene.

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - CONTINUOUS - MEGS'S P.O.V.

The exchange barely heard over the still-braying alarm.

HOTEL GUEST

Hey. Guys. Just - you know - looking in the trunk of my car -

RICHIE

Bullshit.

Hacker disappears to the sedan. Within seconds the Alarm is off, replaced by pleading from Hotel Guest.

HOTEL GUEST

I have a right to go into my car.

RICHIE

Like you went into that one over there? You own that one too?

HOTEL GUEST

I don't want any trouble.

RICHIE

Too late.

BLACKBEARD

We can't have you breaking into cars. That's a breach.

RICHIE

That makes Mister Hendricks very angry, and when he gets angry, then we gotta do our job.

Hacker comes up from behind Hotel Guest and grabs the tire iron from his hand, then the Ding Dongs.

HOTEL GUEST

You people are not the boss of me. I'm a guest at this hotel. You can't just take over, ration food, tell us where we can and can't -

Richie punches him in the stomach with a disgusting, sludgy **THUNK!** Hotel Guest folds in excruciating pain.

Hacker **SLAMS!** the back of his neck with the tire iron.

MEGS

Doubles over in her seat, hiding as hard as she can.

BEHIND THE CHEVY NOVA

Hotel Guest crumples to the floor with a pathetic GURGLE.

RICHIE

Hear that? Bruised my knuckles on his spine. Guy has no abs.

HACKER

(to Hotel Guest)
 Martial law, asshole!

BLACKBEARD

Let's get him inside.

RICHIE

We could just throw him off the ledge. Won't even hit pavement.

BLACKBEARD

Don't be morbid.

The three men heave Hotel Guest up to Blackbeard's shoulder.

RICHIE

Man. Put a bullet in me if I ever get as soft as this tub of lard.

MEGS SEES THEM DISAPPEAR BEHIND THE CLOSING HOTEL DOOR

She then counts to thirty, then quietly pulls open the door.

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - CONTINUOUS

Megs creeps around the Chevy Nova to the now-open trunk. She silently pries it and sees something that lights up her face -

A COOLER

Megs grabs it, shuts the trunk quietly and gets back inside:

INT. CHEVY NOVA - CONTINUOUS

Megs opens the cooler. Smiles. There's a bottle of water.

She cracks and CHUGS it - drinking (and dribbling) almost half before realizing she may need to conserve. She then lets out A HUGE BREATH of relief and screws the cap on the bottle, then surveys the rest of the haul:

One beer. One Mountain Dew. A half-gone package of salami. Soggy hot-dog buns. A handful of mustard packages. Some stinky yellow cheese sealed in a Ziplock bag.

Lolling in a layer of lumpy cooler water that was once ice.

With a hungry SMILE, Megs takes out a piece of salami, some cheese, pours ON a dollop of mustard... as she CHOWS DOWN:

FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN**EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY**

Megaphone Man steps to his open window...getting as close to the outside as he can...and picks up his megaphone.

MEGAPHONE MAN

"The voice from heaven spake unto me again, and said, go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth...and I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter."

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - KITCHEN/DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dutch licks himself. Josh pokes at his eggs forlornly as Bob folds laundry on the kitchen counter - neatly and precisely. Megaphone Man's voice continues to DRONE in the background.

MEGAPHONE MAN (O.S.)

"And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings."

JOSH

Who owns a Megaphone? And who does laundry during an alien invasion?

BOB

We still have water and power. My guess is either the PODs will turn them off at some point as part of their strategy, or the utilities will collapse on their own from being undermanned.

JOSH

That's comforting.

BOB

What I'm trying to impress on you is that we must keep our lives as normal as possible. Stay clean, shaved, launder our clothes, vacuum the floors. You may even crack your homework every once in a while.

(off Josh's epic eye-roll)

And eat all the bacon. It'll spoil otherwise. It's already past the expiration date.

Josh listens like it's verbal ipecac. The laundry stacked into neat little piles, Bob steps around, gathering his notebook and placing it on the table. Josh peeks over:

JOSH

"Day four: visibility down, clouds may account for reduced inventory." Nice. Really putting a dent in the invading forces there.

BOB

I'm only worried about -

JOSH

Yeah-yeah, our "sphere of influence." As opposed to useful things like when they're gonna finish us off.

BOB

They haven't done it yet. Which means we may be here for the long haul. Which means, we need to talk about our situation.

JOSH
Our situation? Oh, you mean the
goddamn planet-wide invasion?

Bob's tone is even and measured: a man of logic and reason trying to bring control to a situation well beyond it.

BOB
I do not want profanity in this
house. If you feel the need to
interject, choose other words.

JOSH
Other words. Like "banana?"

BOB
"Freakin'" and "darned" are both
viable alternatives.

Josh takes a deep breath, gathering himself, then:

JOSH
May I be excused?

Bob shrugs. Josh nods, stands and quietly makes his way to:

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

His father craning his neck to watch from the living room, Josh opens the door and faces Megaphone Man's building:

JOSH
SHUT UP YOU GODDAMN WINGNUT! NOBODY
WANTS TO GODDAMN HEAR IT!

Megaphone Man STOPS.

Josh takes a deep breath. A moment of silence. Then:

MEGAPHONE MAN (O.S.)
"And I heard a voice in the midst
of the four beasts - and I looked
and behold, a pale horse - and its
name it said on him was Death - and
Hell followed with him."

Defeated, Josh SLAMS the door shut, then returns to:

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - KITCHEN/DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Josh sits and looks down at his food, downtrodden.

JOSH

That was technically outside this house.

Bob shakes his head and pulls out a piece of paper which he puts in front of his son.

BOB

Study this and share any thoughts you might have.

THE PAPER

Reads "Survival Priorities" and features bulleted items numbered from 1 to 25, including:

**- fill every container with water, including the bathtub -
make a list of all food items and medicines - figure out what
we can burn if the power goes out - break down furniture -
recharge batteries - floss our teeth -**

JOSH

OK. This is all pretty sensible. In an OCD post-apocalypse kind of way. Food stuff seems a little extreme.

BOB

We've been living high on the hog for too long. We need to finish everything that requires cooking - the electricity's going to fail eventually. After that we can use the camping stove. Then we move on to the non perishables - canned goods, cake batters.

JOSH

And after that, what?
(indicates Dutch)
His food?

BOB

He doesn't get any more of our water after today. He eats his dry food until it runs out. After that, he goes out and forages.

JOSH

Forage? You mean like hunt?

BOB

He can go out. We can't.

JOSH
He's twelve. With a messed-up hip.

BOB
He has instincts.

JOSH
Yeah, licking himself.

BOB
There's a creek two yards away. He drinks from it and scouts for his own food. He's lucky I haven't confiscated his Alpo as a last resort for you and me.

Josh looks at his food, not wanting the following thoughts:

JOSH
What is our last resort? We eat the dog? Each other? The guy with the Megaphone?

Bob speaks analytically: an engineer weighing the factors.

BOB
I'm not entertaining the idea of cannibalism yet.
(after a moment)
The PODs aren't solid. There's some kind of energy inside. Could be a life form. Maybe waiting to come out. That's speculative, but my hope is our condition will change before last resorts are called for.

Before Josh can come up with a reply for that:

BANG! A GUNSHOT!

Then amplified SCREAM OF PAIN from Megaphone Man and then the FEEDBACKY **THUNK!** of his megaphone hitting the floor.

Josh and Bob SCRAMBLE to their feet and race to:

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - FRONT WINDOW - CONTINUOUS

Where they see:

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Megaphone Man's window frames an awful melee as several MEN, one of them a SKEEVY GUY HOLDING A GUN, struggle against Megaphone Man: a spreading bloodstain on his shoulder.

MEGAPHONE MAN
 (shouting, no megaphone)
 The power of Christ shall save me
 from the depredations of -

Skeevy Guy PUSHES HIM OUT THE WINDOW. Megaphone Man flails for a handhold - then falls - but before he hits the ground:

MEGAPHONE MAN IS ENGULFED IN BLUE/BLACK AND VORTEXES OUT!

The megaphone follows out the window...but this piece of equipment doesn't vortex out of existence.

It hits the pavement and SHATTERS noisily.

RESUME ON JOSH AND BOB

Shocked. No gallows humor. Just horror. A long beat, then:

BOB
 We should inventory the food and
 medicines.

Bob turns to go.

Josh stands there, stunned...he just saw someone get killed, not by the PODs, but by his neighbors.

JOSH
 OK. Yeah.

As Josh turns to follow his father:

DISSOLVE TO

INT. CHEVY NOVA - NIGHT

Lit only by the spill from sodium lights, Megs's empty bottles, cans and food wrappers sit on the passenger seat.

Megs's hand comes into frame and picks up the can of Mountain Dew...it's clearly empty, but she upends it over her mouth, trying to get the very last drop out.

Nothing.

Unlike Josh and Bob, who have managed to stay clean over the first days of the POD incursion, Megs's hair is greasy - pinned to her scalp. Her cheeks are streaked with dirt and her clothes look significantly worse for the wear.

Thirsty and desperate, Megs looks to the back seat and sees the cooler. She wrinkles her nose, then reaches for the thing and wrestles it onto her lap before flipping open the lid.

INSIDE THE COOLER

Sludgy molten ice. Slightly sludgier than previously.

Megs takes a deep breath. Then another. Then another.

MEGS

It's soup. Soup. Think of soup.

She closes her eyes and TIPS the cooler toward her mouth, letting the warm, cheesy water slide right in...then lowers it back down after a few healthy GULPS.

Megs WIPES her face with her sleeve and makes her best attempt at a satisfied grimace when her gag reflex kicks in.

It's all she can do to throw open the door to the Chevy Nova - as she RUSHES OUT:

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - MOMENTS LATER

Her hand clutching her rapidly-filling mouth, Megs runs as far from the Chevy Nova as she can - toward the opposite end of the structure - the ramp leading to the next floor up.

Unable to run any further, Megs ducks behind a car and:

HMMBLEAGH! PLOP!

The unmistakable sound of a digestive tract hitting REVERSE.

Megs steps back into frame: spitting out the dregs from her mouth, eyes shut and watering, throat dry-heaving as she stumbles from the mess and deeper toward the incline ramp and a pair of crashed cars.

Megs finally reaches the crashed cars and doubles over the hood of one of them, wiping her bleary eyes to see:

HANDWRITING ON THE DIRTY HOOD

i love you mary

Megs looks at the handwriting with some confusion...then tilts her head further up to see its source:

THE BODY PINNED BETWEEN THE TWO CARS!

A FAT MAN in blood-stained pajama bottoms. Eyes open. Greying skin. Blackened tongue sticking out. Bloat settling in.

Megs GAGS again. She pushes herself back - falling to the floor on her rear.

She then gets to her feet and breaks into a desperate run up the ramp, trying to get as far away as possible.

MEGS RUNS AS FAST AS SHE CAN

Until her breath - choked, gagging - can take her no further.

Megs bends over, holds her knees...that's when her eyes spot:

A BOTTLE OF WATER ON THE FLOOR

Half full. Capped. By an open driver's side car door.

Megs creeps up to the bottle, her sight rising to see:

A DEAD WOMAN'S HAND, DANGLING FROM THE OPEN CAR!

A second shock. Megs sees the woman in the driver seat - elderly, gingham dress, silver-hair, wearing reading glasses.

Her eyes are open.

Megs catches her breath and stares at the woman for a beat. There's something very kind about her face, even in death.

Megs reaches up, takes off the woman's reading glasses and closes her eyes. She then picks up the water bottle.

MEGS

Thank you.

FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN ON JOSH

His room lit by an overhead lamp. The mp3 player clipped to the waistband of his sweat pants and budded to his ears is turned up to ELEVEN as Josh runs through his Katas in:

INT. JOSH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Josh throws a couple of kicks into the air, including one that sends him into an ornate spin that concludes with him facing the open window in a Bruce Lee pose.

THAT'S WHEN HE SPOTS AMANDA

Watching him from:

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS - INTERCUT

She's dressed in jeans and a T-shirt - no makeup. Disheveled but still pretty.

Josh pulls off his earbuds and steps to the window.

Amanda HOLDS UP HER HAND IN GREETING. Josh does the same.

Josh looks down, realizes that he is not entirely dressed, and scrambles to pick up a T-shirt.

She SMILES again as he pulls the shirt on - and he realizes that he's being shy and a bit of a dork - but before the encounter can develop further.

THE DOOR TO AMANDA'S BEDROOM OPENS

She SPINS to see Skeezy Guy...ENTERING. Yes. The same Skeezy Guy who pushed Megaphone Man out to the PODs is in Amanda's room, and it isn't a friendly encounter.

Skeezy Guy GRABS Amanda's arm and pulls her toward him, then drags her along as he walks out, but not before turning to the window - looking out for a moment - and then:

MAKING EYE CONTACT WITH JOSH

Skeezy Guy stands there for a moment, then flips Josh the bird, and closes the drapes. In the nature documentary that is life, Skeezy Guy just labeled himself the Alpha Dog.

Josh turns around - unsure about what to do. That's when his overhead light FLICKERS OFF.

JOSH

Oh. Great.

Josh stands there for a moment, but the moment is quickly overtaken by the sound of Bob's shouting from downstairs.

BOB (O.S.)

Josh! JOSH!

JOSH

I'm upstairs dad.

BOB (O.S.)

Are you OK?

JOSH

Yeah...fine dad...

The **THUNKTHUNKTHUNK!** of Bob running up the stairs shakes the house. He bursts through the door. Agitated.

BOB

We lost the power grid. We lost it.

JOSH
You said it could -

BOB
Not yet. We're not ready. We still have perishables - we didn't gather all the water we could -

JOSH
Dad we filled the tubs -

Bob GRABS Josh by his T-shirt and drags him out to:

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Bob is manic, his mind jammed with last-resort scenarios:

BOB
Get all the baggies from the kitchen - and the trash cans - lawn bags from the garage - fill them!

Bob steps into:

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Where he OPENS THE TAPS on the sinks while jamming hand towels into the drains.

JOSH
Dad, what is your deal?

BOB
I didn't think they would come after our resources like this. Not after their first move - and I calculated it'd be at least a few more days before the power grid failed - but now it's off, so maybe they turned it off - maybe that's the situational change I was expecting - maybe they can turn the water off too - and if they do and we aren't prepared - we're going to be caught like this again.

(before Josh can speak)
Why aren't you getting bags to put water in? What's wrong with you?

Bob grabs a trash basket from the floor, dumps the contents and puts it under the sink faucet to collect more water:

JOSH
You're freaking out.

BOB
Don't you want to live? Don't you?

JOSH
Please. Stop shouting -

Bob GRABS and DRIVES him out into the wall at:

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Josh has no idea what to do. His dad SHOUTS:

BOB
I can't do this alone - I need your
help - I can't keep us alive alone -
someone has to help me or your
mother is never going to see you
again - I have to keep you alive -
I have to keep you alive!

Josh PUTS HIS ARMS AROUND HIS FATHER - trying to calm him
down - putting his head over his father's shoulder.

Bob's eyes are still open. He doesn't quite know what to do
even as he gathers his composure.

THE LIGHTS FLICKER BACK ON

Josh looks up. Bob does the same.

JOSH
Maybe the power grid...sort
of...fixed itself...

Josh awkwardly pulls his arms away. His father steps back.

BOB
Yes. Power. Outage. Probably not a
lot of people at the plants. I
guess this is to be expected.

JOSH
Why don't I fill up the tubs and...

Bob nods - he's already getting out of there - his voice
FADING as he steps to the stairs:

BOB
I can go get some bags and fill
those up. It's a good idea. Good
thinking, son. Good thinking.

As Josh watches his father make his way down the stairs:

SLOW DISSOLVE TO

EXT. CHILDERS HOUSE - DAY - TO ESTABLISH

Under smoke-grey skies and spinning PODs.

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - BATHROOM

Bob stands over the FULL TUB with a grease pen and makes a mark at the water level. He stands and goes to the mirror over the basin and writes on it with the grease pencil:

PLEASE MARK ALL LEVEL CHANGES TO WATER SUPPLY

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Showing nothing but DIGITAL NOISE. Josh sits on an easy chair in front of the TV, munching slowly on a graham cracker.

Dutch stands at his feet - begging for food. Josh ignores him, pretending to flip channels: impersonating the personalities he would normally see on screen:

JOSH

When asked if he was going to counter attack, the President said "uh...I'm in my bunker eating canned meats"...Today in sports nothing happened because for all the money these showboating mesomorphic mental deficientes earned, they couldn't fight an alien invasion...we interrupt this static to tell you you're never going to find out what happens on *Game of Thrones* because the entire cast was killed by aliens...
Armando! Te quiero! Te amo!

Dutch climbs up on Josh, whimpering.

JOSH (CONT'D)

All right, all right, here.

Josh holds out a piece of graham cracker. Dutch noshes down.

BOB (O.S.)

What the hell was that?

Josh STARTS and prairie-dogs over the chair.

JOSH
 What the shit, dad? There's aliens
 and you're sneaking up on people?

BOB
 Did you give him a graham cracker?

JOSH
 No - no!

Bob looks down at the dog, licking his chops.

BOB JOSH
 You have got to be kidding. Dad, it's just a -
 Do you not want to live? Is that it? that it?

Bob responds in a quiet, measured tone: a man trying to use science and logic to keep from losing his composure again.

BOB
 It's thirty calories that could
 mean the difference between living
 one more day or dying before our
 situation reaches a resolution. Is
 that what you want?

JOSH
 You were supposed to go shopping
before mom left town.

BOB
 Don't invert this. We have what we
 have and that's that. I'm sorry,
 but Dutch needs to stay outside.

Bob grabs Dutch by the collar. Josh sees where this is going and grabs the other side of the dog's collar.

JOSH
 No, he doesn't.

BOB
 Look at this rationally. He can't
 stay here to drag on our resources.

JOSH BOB
 You know what? You're losing it. Excuse me?

JOSH
 I don't have a mom. I don't have a
 best friend. Dutch is my resource.
 I'm not going to turn him out.

Bob looks at Josh: his son's words sting.

BOB
Let him go.

Before the argument escalates, the TV FRITZES off.

Josh and Bob look at one another. Bob looks to a clock. It's off. He moves to and flips the light switch. Nothing.

JOSH
I'm sure it's just another outage.

BOB
(a deep, resigned breath)
Maybe...maybe not. We knew the power would fail eventually. This might be it. I have the flashlights recharged. I'll give you one if the lights aren't back on by nightfall. Conserve energy.

As Bob lets go of Dutch and steps out of the living room...

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - KITCHEN - DUSK

The fridge door hangs open as Bob kneels, cleaning out the inside, a bottle of Windex in one hand, a cloth on the other.

Bob gets on his feet and folds the cloth meticulously, switching it for his notebook as he turns to the pantry.

IN THE NOTEBOOK

Is a graph: **REQUIRED CALORIC LOAD TO MAINTAIN HOMEOSTASIS** on top, **AVAILABLE CALORIES** on the bottom.

IN THE PANTRY

Is all the food Josh and Bob have left. It's not a lot. Twelve cans of assorted soups and beans. Some spices and condiments. Not a comforting sight.

As Bob turns the cans around to their nutritional information and precisely writes down the calories per can...

DISSOLVE TO

A CLEAR PLASTIC PACK OF TIC-TACS

Pulled from the center console of a crashed station wagon at:

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - UPPER FLOOR - NIGHT

Still lit in the sick glow of the sodium lights. Strewn with fender-bendered cars, trash and abandoned luggage.

Megs - her clothes filthy and her hair rapidly matting into dreads - crouches behind the beat-up station wagon, adding the Tic-Tacs to the rest of her haul:

A half-eaten candy bar, a Slim-Jim stick, a bottle of ginger ale, a can of beer, a dime bag of marijuana with some rolling papers, a broken butter knife, a cigarette lighter, and a prescription bottle labeled "ERYTHROMYCIN."

She opens the dime bag of marijuana and sniffs the inside, then makes a face. Yuck. But decides to keep it anyway.

Megs looks around, takes a swig of the ginger ale and re-closes it as she jams everything into her pack and zips up.

Megs then squeezes into the divide between floors, getting to the next floor down in a hop.

FOLLOW MEGS AS SHE CREEPS ALONG THE LINE OF CARS

Until she reaches the next divide between floors and tucks through to the next level.

That's Megs. Nimble. Resourceful. A hero.

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - CLOSER TO CHEVY NOVA - MOMENTS LATER

Megs emerges from a divide between floors - and as she lands in front of a parked car -

SCRASH!

She ducks. Then peers around the parked car to see:

RICHIE AND HACKER - BREAKING CAR WINDOWS

Richie with a baseball bat, Hacker with a two-by-four. Hooting and hollering as they break one window after another.

RESUME ON MEGS

Watching, clutching her backpack.

INTERCUT WITH RICHIE AND HACKER

Hacker loots as Richie launches himself over the trunk of the Chevy Nova and **SLAMS** his bat down on the glass - and on the sound of the glass SHATTERING:

THE SODIUM LIGHTS GO OFF

Richie and Hacker exchange glances.

HACKER
Power's out.

RICHIE
No-really-you-think? SHIT! SHIT!

Richie goes to town, POUNDING every last one of his frustrations out on the Chevy Nova.

The sound carries over to:

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - NEXT FLOOR UP - CONTINUOUS

Megs runs as stealthily as she can across the debris - scanning the parked cars - trying to find a new home.

Megs makes a sharp turn and ducks into a divide, climbing to:

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - HIGHER LEVEL - CONTINUOUS

She runs across, scanning, and that's when she sees:

A LARGE, BLUE SUV - A LINCOLN NAVIGATOR

Out of its spot, front passenger quarter-panel wrinkled from a collision, the glass from that window a pool on the ground.

Megs smiles...home sweet home.

INT. LINCOLN NAVIGATOR - MOMENTS LATER

Megs puts her backpack over the broken passenger window, reaches in, and unlocks the passenger side door of the SUV.

IN A MONTAGE, SHE SEARCHES THE SUV

In the GLOVE BOX, she finds a penlight - which she flicks on and off with delight - and a writing pad and pencil. Megs turns the penlight to the back seat and hits -

A BABY SEAT, STAINED WITH NOSE-BLOOD

Megs reacts to the grisly sight

EXT. LINCOLN NAVIGATOR - CONTINUOUS

The side passenger side door opens. The baby seat flies out.

RESUME

Megs looks in the side pocket. A package of Crayolas. Coloring books featuring unicorns. A few comic books.

Megs sticks her hand between the seats. Her face lights up.

CLOSE ON THE PEPPERIDGE FARM GOLDFISH SHE JUST FISHED OUT

Megs counts them - four - all of them a little dusty, maybe hairy, and pops one in her mouth.

Megs then PEELS OFF THE FLOOR MATS and finds something under the seat.

A SMALL BRIEFCASE WITH A COMBINATION LOCK

She regards the case for a moment, tries to open it - locked - but before she can do anything else, she hears something.

From the back of the SUV. A squeak.

Megs CRAWLS OVER THE SEATS to the cavernous rear bay.

INT. LINCOLN NAVIGATOR - REAR BAY - CONTINUOUS

The third row of seats in the SUV are folded down. Megs hears the sound from underneath. Squeak. Squeak.

Megs folds up the rear seats - and wrinkles her nose as if something seriously stinky just hit her.

As she gets over the stench, she peers in closer, pointing the penlight on the floor to see:

A SMALL CAGE - WITH A CAT INSIDE

The size of a fuzzy softball, big grey eyes ringed with dried goop, yellow hair.

There are two empty dishes in her cage. Megs hits them with the light: one has "Cassie" written on it with red crayon.

MEGS

Hi Cassie.

The cat looks up with massive, adorable eyes.

INT. LINCOLN NAVIGATOR - MIDDLE SEATS - NIGHT

Megs cuddles Cassie in her sleeping bag: the cat PURRS as she feeds her a bit of salami and a capful of ginger ale. BFF's.

MEGS
You're a lucky kitty.

Cassie looks up and SQUEAKS. Megs nuzzles herself into the plush seats of the Navigator. As she closes her eyes.

MATCH CUT TO

MEGS - EYES CLOSED - IN A DARK PLACE - IN A FLASHBACK

Shaking, pushing herself into a corner. The sound of a serious SHOUTING match rages outside of wherever she is:

ALEXIS'S VOICE
Just chill. I'll clean it up. OK?

A MALE VOICE, slurred enough to evoke "raging drunk" answers:

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
How about you don't make a damn
mess in the first place, bitch?

The THUDDING **CLUNK** of a fist connecting with soft tissue - Alexis GRUNTS in breathless pain - then a **CRASH!** Dishes FLUNG from a table and hitting the floor.

Megs's eyes well with tears. She shuts them hard. Another **CRASH!** echoes through the space.

MALE VOICE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Want to answer me, you pig? How
about you clean that shit up?

The sound of DRUNKEN FOOTSTEPS...which then Dopplers away. Darkness floods with light. Megs is hiding in an armoire at:

INT. CRAPPY APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Having just OPENED the armoire door, Alexis stands over Megs, finger over her split and bloody lip.

MEGS
(a whisper)
Are you OK?

ALEXIS
*He's passed out on the couch. Get
whatever you can put in a backpack.
And the sleeping bag. OK?*

MEGS
Are we running away?

ALEXIS

*To San Diego. I have a friend
there. I got my car fixed. You have
any money? Socked away?*

(off Megs's head-shake)

OK. Don't make noise. He'll hear.

Alexis steps toward the apartment door - looks out - then as she turns back to Megs, making a "coast is clear" gesture:

RESUME ON MEGS IN THE NAVIGATOR

Eyes opening. Holding Cassie even tighter.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Josh - sweatpants down to his ankles - sits on the toilet. He reaches for some toilet paper.

ON THE ROLL - JUST THE LAST BIT STUCK TO THE CARDBOARD.

Josh rolls his eyes and opens the sink cabinet. Nothing.

JOSH

Dad! Do we have any TP left? DAD?

SMASH CUT TO

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - MASTER BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Bob sits at his own commode, regarding his own empty tube.

BOB

I was just about to ask you that!

RESUME ON JOSH

Shaking his head. Annoyed.

He looks over at the towel rack - nothing there but a large bath towel. He then lets out an exasperated breath. What now?

Josh takes off his T-shirt - and as he looks at it as potential wiping material, two things are clear, that the comforts of home are rapidly vanishing in this place...and that Josh is significantly skinnier now than he was at the beginning of this story.

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Bob - also looking gaunt - SMASHES a wooden chair with a small mallet. Josh ENTERS, pulling on a fresh T-shirt.

JOSH
Thanks for keeping up with the
laundry, Dad. Came in handy today.

BOB
You're very welcome.

JOSH
(re: the chair)
Letting off steam?

BOB
No electricity. No heat pump.

Bob gathers the pieces of the chair in his arms and moves to the fireplace, already crowded with clumps of paper, and tosses in the kindling.

JOSH
Let me guess, you already made a
list of the furniture in order of
burning priority?

Bob reaches over for a page from his notebook on the coffee table, his tone slightly sheepish and self-aware:

BOB
Grouped in order of flammability.

Josh looks at the page in disbelief as Bob lights the fire:

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Josh and Bob play backgammon by the fireplace - a few candles fill the darkness between them.

BOB
You're playing it too safe. You
should have hit me there - forced
me into a defensive position.
That's what I'm about to do to you.

Bob rolls the dice and moves his pieces. Josh shakes his head, not happy to get schooled.

JOSH
Fire up some *Mass Effect 3* and I'll
show you risk-taking.

BOB
Guess I'm lucky the power's out.

JOSH

Oh. You are lucky. I'm a man of action on the X-box. Grab life by the *cojones* type.

Really?

BOB

JOSH

Just wait 'til I get the hang of this backgammon thing.

BOB

So why haven't you asked out that girl in the apartment building?
(off Josh's surprise)
I'm old, but I got eyes.

JOSH

I dunno. We - there's this thing. House kids don't really talk to apartment kids.

BOB

That's a "thing?"
(off Josh's nod)
That's freakin' idiotic. You go along with that?

JOSH

Are you going to make your move?

BOB

Are you going to answer me?

Feeling defensive, Josh aims for the rhetorical ankles with a metaphorical lead pipe and instantly regrets it.

JOSH

Little late for you to start giving me life lessons dad.

Bob looks up, failing to disguise just how much that hurt.

JOSH (CONT'D)

I mean...you know...I can't exactly go out and ask her on a date...now that there's PODs...or something.

Bob takes a deep breath and looks away. As he rolls the dice:

DISSOLVE TO

INT. LINCOLN NAVIGATOR - MIDDLE SEATS - NIGHT

Megs lies asleep, Cassie in her lap.

AND THEN A SLAM!

A steel door opening. Megs's eyes SNAP open. She looks out through the window to see.

RICHIE AND HACKER

Carrying flashlights - their beams casting thick shafts in the dusty air.

By now, Richie and Hacker look at lot less like security guards and a lot more like malnourished hooligans.

Hacker's jacket is tied to his waist like a hoodie and Richie wears a Hooters tee, his pants cinched by a belt tightly held over his narrowing waist.

Richie's flashlight-beam hits the Navigator.

RICHIE

That blue Navigator over there.

MEGS

Clutches Cassie as she sinks under the window line.

RESUME ON RICHIE AND HACKER

HACKER

I searched that already. It's just a bunch of comic books and crap.

RICHIE

Comic books? Cool ones? Like *Deadpool*? Merc-with-a-mouth?

HACKER

Kiddie stuff. *My Little Pony*.
(growing annoyance)
Hendricks didn't send us out here at oh-dark-thirty to find comic books, right? What is it? Drugs?

The two men reach the Navigator, stand on opposite sides of the driver's cabin, shine their flashlights inside.

INTERCUT WITH THE INTERIOR OF THE NAVIGATOR

The beams criss-cross, hitting the sleeping bag in the back - draped over the foot well, concealing something...or someone.

RICHIE (O.S.)

That'd be sweet, but no.

HACKER (O.S.)

Money?

The two men open the front doors of the car, as they search:

ANGLE ON THE SLEEPING BAG ON THE MIDDLE/PASSENGER SEATS

A bundle - large enough to hide a person.

RICHIE

Think. With our guests being so restless, what would you want?

HACKER

Smokes?

RICHIE

A gun, you cueball-dumb-ass.

HACKER

(flips open the glove box)
You'd think finding guns in
people's cars would be like going
to Wal-Mart.

Richie opens the middle door, shines the flashlight in.

RICHIE

Yeah, well, welcome to the People's
Republic of California.
(scanning)
You searched this car?

HACKER

Yup. No guns. Cross my heart.

RICHIE

(looking at the floor)
Window broken?
(off Hacker's nod)
You wipe it off the seats?

Richie reaches for the sleeping bag...SLOWLY...THEN PULLS IT
OFF...but Megs isn't there.

RICHIE (CONT'D)

Sure you didn't find anything?

Hacker moves around to the rear of and OPENS THE GATE.

HACKER

Just the cat.

RICHIE

Cat?

HACKER

Pee stinkin' fuzzball in a cage.

RICHIE
You left it in there?

HACKER
I hate cats.

RICHIE
That's sick.
(looking up)
So? You lookin' at a starved up
dead cat now?

HACKER
Looking at nothing.

Richie joins Hacker at the open rear gate.

RICHIE
Someone took it. And the gun.

HACKER
There is no gun.

As Richie speaks:

TILT DOWN TO REVEAL MEGS

Underneath the car. Her backpack and Cassie in her arms.

RICHIE
I got information to the contrary -
some woman's husband is having an
asthma attack and she told Mister
Hendricks about the gun safe in
exchange for medicine.

HACKER
What if there's no gun?

RICHIE
Then there's gonna be an acute
shortage of asthma medicine.

As Megs hears this and reacts:

THE DOOR TO THE STRUCTURE OPENS TO REVEAL BLACKBEARD

BLACKBEARD
Find the gun?

HACKER
I told you there's no -

RICHIE
Not yet.

BLACKBEARD (CONT'D)
Mr. Hendricks says he wants the men
and women separated. Come on.

RESUME ON MEGS - TREMBLING

Watching Richie and Hacker's feet as they move away.

RICHIE (O.S.)
Separated. That a fact?

BLACKBEARD (O.S.)
Men go to the ninth floor, women to
the eighth...contagious sick people
with no medicine of their own go to
the tenth. Divide and conquer.

HACKER (O.S.)
Do I get to super-vise the ladies?

RICHIE (O.S.)
Shut up you asshole.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - LINCOLN NAVIGATOR - MOMENTS LATER

Megs - the sleeping bag tucked into her backpack with the gun
case and the cat in hand - tucks a Crayola-scrawled note
under the windshield wiper of the Navigator.

WANT THE GUN? LEAVE FOOD AND WATER BY THE DOOR - BANG! BANG!

HOLD ON THE NOTE

As Megs walks away, searching for a new home...

SLOW DISSOLVE TO

A POD - HOVERING OVER A SUBURBAN HOUSE

A pearlescent anomaly in a sky turned grey by fires and
debris...inscrutable but for a strange, glowing hint of
something active inside.

TILT DOWN TO REVEAL DUTCH

Walking from the deserted street to the front lawn of the
house - across the street and several houses in the opposite
direction of the apartment building.

The door to the house OPENS to reveal a NEIGHBOR.

NEIGHBOR
Hey doggie-doggie! Want a treat?

JOSH'S VOICE
DUTCH! COME BACK HERE DUTCH!

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Where Josh watches the developing scene - the neighbors house diagonally across the street from his.

JOSH
Get back Dutch! You people stop
messing with my dog! C'mon Dutch!

Dutch finally listens and CROSSES THE STREET.

Josh SLAMS the door shut the moment Dutch enters.

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - MASTER BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Bob stands in front of the sink - the tap open as he shaves...until the tap dribbles to nothing.

BOB
Aw. Heck.

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A camp stove sits on the counter. Josh ENTERS, looks out over the dinette table - whose chairs have all been broken up - to the living room, and sees Bob.

Bob sits on the couch next to the "woodpile," using scissors to cut neat squares out of several business suits.

JOSH
We need to keep Dutch on a rope.

BOB
Why's that?

JOSH
I think the people three houses
over and across the street want to
eat him. Why are you cutting up
your suits?

BOB
Brush your teeth this morning?
(Josh shakes his head)
Water's gone.

Josh motions behind his ear: letting his dad know that he missed a smidge of shaving cream, then, as Bob wipes it off:

JOSH

Think the PODs turned it off?

BOB

I don't think it matters whether they did it or the system finally failed. From now on we use only what we absolutely have to, and save every last drop we can for drinking.

JOSH

When I was three I used to dream of not washing.

BOB

Dreams do come true. Also. There's two buckets in the garage. Urinate in one and defecate in the other.

JOSH

"Defecate"?

BOB

You finish your business, throw the contents of the bucket out the garage window, far from the house as you can without sticking your arms out, just like we've been doing with the garbage.
(indicates the suit)
Wipe with these rags.

JOSH

That was your best suit.

BOB

Can't imagine I'll be needing it again. You got anything you want to donate to the rags pile, be my guest. Just don't touch any of your mom's clothes. She might need them.

JOSH

You worrying about mom? What about your "sphere of influence?"

Bob death-stares Josh:

BOB

I may not know where your mother
is, but at this moment, her clothes
are in my sphere of influence.

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - JOSH'S BEDROOM - DAY

Josh - shirtless, his ribs now every bit as visible as the stubble darkening his boyish face and the black spots developing under his eyes - lies in bed, looking at the pictures of his mother and of Alex, and listening to his MP3 player: The Black Keys's *Lonely Boy*.

Josh looks down at the battery indicator - 50%.

The sound of the music is torn by the sound of DUTCH BARKING. Josh turns off the MP3 and opens the blinds to see:

EXT. CHILDERS HOUSE - CONTINUOUS - INTERCUT

The PODs continue their dominion over the empty skies. Beyond them, black smoke from further unfought fires

Beneath the skyline, Dutch - pulling a rope stretching to the garage door of the Childers house - BARKS HIS HEAD OFF.

Josh follows Dutch's eyeline across the street to -

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS - INTERCUT

A DEER canters before the building - followed by several fawns. That's what Dutch is barking at.

Josh SCANS the windows. Megaphone Man's is broken.

A lone OLD WOMAN - desiccated and dressed in rags - steps to the window of the apartment next to Amanda's.

She then takes out a gun and SHOOTS AT THE DEER!

THE DEER RUNS OFF

JOSH

Stop shooting lady! What are you
gonna do, lasso it? You're gonna
kill somebody!

The Old Lady FLIPS JOSH THE BIRD, and then, as she leaves the window:

JOSH SPOTS AMANDA

Their eyes match. Josh lifts the blinds as Amanda reaches for something...a piece of paper, which she LIFTS TO THE WINDOW.

AMANDA (TEXT)
HT IM AMANDA

JOSH
 (a smile, to himself)
 He-llo there. Her name's "Amanda."

Josh stands, looks around, not a scrap of paper to be found, so he holds up his hands, indicating he wants her to WAIT!

MONTAGE - VARIOUS PLACES AROUND THE CHILDERS HOUSE

Josh barrels down the STAIRS. He throws open drawers in the KITCHEN. He lands in the LIVING ROOM, tears a few pages from Bob's POD notebook and GRABS a dry erase marker.

SMASH CUT BACK TO JOSH'S BEDROOM

Where he SCRIBBLES FRANTICALLY - then holds up a sheet.

JOSH (TEXT) (CONT'D)
IM JOSH HIG?

AMANDA

Gets another piece of paper and writes.

As the conversation continues, this sequence - writing and showing each sign - becomes more and more abbreviated in editing until the pages and text flow like dialogue.

AMANDA (TEXT)
STARVING.

JOSH

Takes this in - writes - then holds up a piece of paper.

JOSH (TEXT)
ME 2. LETS ORDER SOME PIZZA.

Amanda returns his message with a smile, then:

AMANDA (TEXT)
ROFL RU SCARED?

JOSH (TEXT)
SCARED? OF WHAT?
 (then a second page)
JK.

AMANDA (TEXT)
U ALONE?

JOSH (TEXT)
STUCK W/DAD N DOG. RU?

AMANDA (TEXT)
No IWIWU

Josh wrinkles his brow, takes a moment to decypher, then:

JOSH
 IWIWU. IWIWU. I wish I was with
 you? Wishes she was with me. Nice.
 (writing)
 Hasn't met my dad.

JOSH (TEXT) (CONT'D)
Y?

AMANDA (TEXT)
BM STOLE OUR FOOD N WATR N BEER

JOSH
 BM...BM...bowel movement?
 (writing)
 No. Right. "Bad man."

JOSH (TEXT) (CONT'D)
WHERE R UR RENTS?

AMANDA (TEXT)
KIA.

JOSH
 Killed in action.

That one lands hard. Josh looks at her from across the way,
 bowing his head.

AMANDA (TEXT)
LIL SISTER IS SIK

JOSH
 Jesus it sucks to be you.
 (writing)
 Stay friendly...be sympathetic...

JOSH (TEXT) (CONT'D)
S2BU - CALL 911

Amanda LAUGHS, then bends down to write.

JOSH (CONT'D)
 Made her laugh. OK. That works.

AMANDA (TEXT)

URYY4M

JOSH

What's THAT mean?

AMANDA (TEXT)

G2GB

AMANDA BLOWS HIM A KISS

It hits Josh like a sledgehammer to the head. As she steps away from the window:

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

By candlelight. Josh - his hair a greasy mess - scratches his stubble and puzzles over a paper on which he has written "URYY4M" as he pokes listlessly at the chili on his plate.

Bob wipes down the kitchen with Windex and a rag - his attention to detail compulsive.

BOB

Something wrong with your chili?

JOSH

It's cold? Every time I stick in my spoon sounds like someone's "defecating"?

Bob ignores the jab and turns to the pantry - where the dwindling cans have been arranged in order of caloric load - and pulls out a bottle:

BOB

Put more popcorn topping on it.
(off Josh's eye roll)
You sure you're tasting the chili and not just smelling yourself?

JOSH

I ran out of deodorant. What?

BOB

You can borrow some of mine. You stink on ice.

JOSH

Your deodorant stinks harder than my BO. Can I have a baggie of water?

Bob looks over to the counter - the baggies stand there like toy soldiers. He then indicates a garbage can, half-filled.

BOB

We're not drinking the baggies while we still have water in the garbage can and the tubs.

JOSH

The trash can water tastes like garbage.

BOB

It's all in your head. I washed the garbage cans thoroughly.

Josh SIGHS LOUDLY. Bob relents and hands over a baggie.

BOB (CONT'D)

You refill that from the garbage can when you're done.

(looks at Josh's paper)

That some kind of a puzzle?

JOSH

A message.

Bob smiles at his son - he has an idea what this is about.

BOB

"You are too wise for me." See? Two Y's - "too wise."

(off Josh's look)

You're shocked a scientist can break a simple cryptogram?

CUT TO

A PAIR OF FEET - A WOMAN'S

Dragged across the concrete at:

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - UPPER LEVEL - DAY

The woman (DANA, 30's: pretty but malnourished and disheveled, dress rumped, hair mussed, fingernails chipped) struggles as Richie and Hacker hold each of her arms, forcibly PULLING HER.

DANA

I told you he keeps the gun in a little briefcase under the seat - the kind with a combination lock - it's not my fault it isn't there.

HACKER

Tell that to Mr. Hendricks.

Hacker takes the woman's arms. Richie pulls out a switchblade and springs with a resounding **SNKT!** Richie then twirls it in his fingers - expertly - as Dana watches in mounting fear:

RICHIE

Don't mind me. I learned this in my court-mandated anger management class. My grandfather gave me the blade when I turned sixteen. Must've gutted five hundred elk. Genuine bleached bone handle from the hip of a twelve-point buck. Carved it himself.

HACKER

Ever cut your finger?

RICHIE

Oh. I cut some fingers. Not my own.

As the conversation - and the tension - develops:

PAN OVER TO A BLUE VOLVO TO REVEAL

MEGS - CURLED UP IN THE BACK SEAT - INTERCUT

By now, the human clutching the cat looks more like the Feral Child from *The Road Warrior* than a 12 year old girl.

But she isn't dirty enough to obscure her excruciating fear.

DANA

Did you find a kitten in a cage?
There was a kitten in the car. Are
you sure you looked at the right
car?

HACKER

Oh, it was the right car, but no
kitten, no gun safe. This is
becoming a trend with you.

Dana breaks into tears: tired, hungry and terrified.

DANA

I don't know...I just...can I
please go back to my husband? My
kids?

Richie walks to the edge of the structure. Hacker follows, pushing Dana along.

RICHIE

You oughta have a look at the view
from here.

DANA

I'm...scared of heights.

MEGS PRAIRIE DOGS OVER THE WINDOW-LINE OF THE VOLVO

Watching as the action moves to the edge of the structure.

RICHIE

See over there? There's a little
coffee shop - sold the best
huckleberry scones. Up there on
Wilshire. Fresh out the oven. Real
huckleberries picked in the
Willamette Valley in Oregon. Line
down the block every morning.

(pulling Dana over)

Let's look out over the city, you'n
me. Watch the beautiful alien
spaceships, do some brainstorming,
figure out a so-lution to this
mutual problem.

Dana doesn't speak - she tears up and mewls under her breath.

HACKER

We're asking nice. Where's the gun?

RICHIE

See my coffee shop? Over there? You
gotta lean out a little to see it.
You wanna do that?

DANA

(sobbing out the words)

I promise I don't know where it
went. We keep it in the car, just
like I said.

RICHIE

See that's not the right play here.

DANA

I don't know!

Richie shrugs, then turns away - then SPINS, grabs Dana and -
even as she STRUGGLES - THROWS her over the edge.

EXT. PARKING STRUCTURE - CONTINUOUS

Dana SCREAMS as she falls...but she never finds the ground, because the PODs quickly VORTEX her out of existence.

MEGS

Ducks under the window - her eyes blotting with tears as she processes Richie and Hacker's awful crime.

RICHIE AND HACKER

Make their way back from the edge of the structure.

HACKER

Son of a bitch. That was intense.

RICHIE

(unfazed)

Now we gotta look into option B.

HACKER

The hell is option B?

RICHIE

I found this on the windshield.

Richie goes into his pocket and pulls out the Crayola-scrawled note Megs left on the Navigator.

HACKER

You had this and you still interrogated that woman?

Richie STOPS Hacker, they stand off in front of the Volvo as:

MEGS

Chokes her tears - struggling to not make a sound.

RICHIE

She lied...and I got a rule: "you lie, you die."

Hacker looks at Richie, realizing that he may be dealing with a world-class psycho here.

HACKER

You tell Hendricks about this?

RICHIE

Yeah, I told him, and he said "get the gun." So I'm getting the gun.

(MORE)

RICHIE (CONT'D)
 (establishing dominance)
 You got a problem with that?

Hacker rapidly concludes that he does not have a problem.

HACKER
 I'm cool. Beans.

RICHIE
 'cause the way I see it, we got a
 problem.
 (snatching the note)
 We got ourselves a pirate in this
 parking structure - someone trying
 to shake us down - and we're going
 to have to shut that shit down.

Richie moves away as Hacker follows.

ANGLE ON MEGS

Crying into her sleeping bag and nuzzling Cassie.

SMASH CUT TO JOSH

SLEEPING IN BED

Peaceful in the pitch blackness - until:

THE POD SOUND BEGINS AGAIN

You remember it. Like metal-on-metal tearing and twisting and amplified a thousand times.

Josh's eyes SNAP OPEN as the blood rushes from his nose.

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Josh stumbles out, clutching his ears. The sound stops.

JOSH
 Dad?

Josh stumbles down to his father's room, opens the door:

AND IS BLINDED BY FLASH OF BLUE BLACK LIGHT

Holy fuck!

A bolt of black lightning - dark yet bright - and standing still before him - a pulsating tendril of lambent blackness extending into the house through the bedroom window.

Behind the blue light - Josh can make out the shape of:

HIS FATHER - LYING FACE DOWN ON THE BLOOD-STAINED CARPET

Scared completely and absolutely shitless - Josh backs away.
 The bolt of black light MOVES TO FOLLOW. Like a living thing.
 Josh TURNS AND RUNS:

ONLY TO FACE A SECOND TENDRIL OF LIGHT

Coming at him from his bedroom. The two shafts of light PICK UP SPEED and converge on Josh - then **SLAM!** into him!

THE LIGHT ENTERS JOSH, ILLUMINATING HIM FROM WITHIN

For a moment, every part of Josh: skeleton, circulatory system, nervous system, muscles - lights up in a haze of blue black illumination.

Then it's gone. The black light tendrils recede out of the house at impossible speed.

Josh falls to the floor.

CUT TO BLACK

FADE IN - MOMENTS LATER

As Josh SPRINGS UP, wiping the blood dripping from his face.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Dad - DAD!

A shadow forms in the doorway across the hallway from Josh - Bob, standing at his bedroom door.

BOB

I'm OK. I'm OK. Are you -

JOSH

What was that?

Bob puts his hands on his son's head, making sure he's OK.

BOB

It came in the window...turned me transparent...then I passed out.
 Can you stand?

Josh nods. Bob offers a hand. Josh stands to face his father.

JOSH

Why are they doing this to us?

The question lingers in the air for a sad moment, and then.

BOB
Scanning us. Trying to figure us
out.

JOSH
Why? Why us?

Bob looks at his son. The darkness hiding the desperate truth that he has no answers.

BOB
My flashlight went out. Is your's -

JOSH
Yeah. In my room. I'll -

Josh nods - back to "sphere of influence" mode, and steps to:

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - JOSH'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Josh grabs his flashlight. Switches it. Nothing. Bob enters.

BOB
Yours is out too? What about your
watch? Phone? MP3?

Josh scrambles in the darkness for each of the items:

JOSH
Dead. Dead. Dead.

Bob grabs Josh's desk chair and stands on it - reaching up for the smoke alarm and pushing the test button. Nothing.

BOB
They took away our batteries.

Josh plops down on his bed, utterly defeated.

JOSH
Great. No more iTunes. What a loss.

Bob looks away for a moment, his face bathed in moonlight as a dread revelation dawns on him.

BOB
Know what else runs on batteries?

JOSH
TV remote?

BOB
My pacemaker.

Off the dread revelation:

SMASH CUT TO BLACK

SMASH IN ON MEGS'S EYES

SNAPPING open at:

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - CADILLAC - NIGHT

Her eyes are red. Blood trickles from her nose.

Still reeling, Megs turns over to see Cassie - unfazed - looking at her quizzically.

MEGS
Are you OK?
(off Cassie's MEOW)
How about some water?

Megs reaches for a can. Empty. She finds a water bottle. Only a few last drops.

Megs opens the bottle, pours the dregs into the cap, and holds it before Cassie's lips.

As Cassie SLURPS away the last of their water...

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - ANOTHER FLOOR - NIGHT

Megs walks the floor - trashed - broken glass everywhere. Garbage. Crashed cars. Everything worse for the wear.

Megs passes by a van: **RUGSUCKERS CARPET CLEANING...**the rear bay door hangs open...she doesn't give it a second thought.

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - FIRST FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

The green door to the hotel OPENS as Richie and Hacker - carrying glow-sticks to light the way - squire several WOMEN out into the floor.

RICHIE
Don't waste our freakin' time. Do
your business and get back in.

One of the WOMEN turns to face Richie:

WOMAN

Hey, these people have been through an emotional trauma, you think you can ease up a little?

SNKT! Richie breaks out his switchblade.

Holding the knife in the same hand as his glow-stick, he reaches out for the woman, grabs her shirt and pulls her in:

RICHIE

You wanna talk about trauma?
(creeping closer)

I just got turned transparent by the black-light disco tentacle of death. Maybe I don't have the desire to be yelled at by some busybody know-it-all bitch.

As Richie brings his knife up to the woman's neck:

REVEAL MEGS - WATCHING FROM THE DIVIDE BETWEEN FLOORS

HACKER

Ease up, Rich -

RICHIE

Don't tell me to ease up, jackass, Flava Flav has problems of his own.

As Richie bores into the woman with his eyes, her face finally comes into view under the glow from the lightstick - which REVEALS:

THAT SHE IS JOSH'S MOTHER, CARRIE

Beautiful and accessible even in her disheveled state, her intense, intelligent eyes trying to engage Richie's empathy in order to diffuse this difficult situation.

RICHIE (CONT'D)

We give you water and food - we escort you out to this freakin' sewer so you can pee and shit in the middle of the night without being sucked up by the monsters. You wanna take your chances out there with those aliens? I'll pitch you out into the street myself.

CARRIE

Listen. Rich - Richie - that's your name, right? My name is Carrie Childers.

(MORE)

CARRIE (CONT'D)

I'm a reference librarian. I have a husband and a teenage son in Washington. I just want to survive long enough to see them.

RICHIE

Maybe you'll see them sooner if I push you out there.

Richie puts an arm on Carrie's shoulder and holds the knife to her face with the other as:

MEGS

Racks her brain for a plan - unable to watch this awful man destroy another human being.

RICHIE

Drives Carrie closer to an exposed edge of the parking structure, until the tension is cut by an echoing **KLANG!**

A HUBCAP

SPINS OFF in the distance behind Richie and the group - having fallen from the divide to the second floor.

RICHIE SPINS AROUND TO SCAN THE SOURCE OF THE FALL

And THROWS his glow-stick.

It LANDS - illuminating Megs's eyes in the darkness.

Richie LOCKS with her. He can't see who or what she is - just a pair of eyes, piercing the darkness.

Carrie slips away - but that doesn't matter to Richie. He's got a new target - and BREAKS INTO A RUN.

RICHIE (CONT'D)

(to Hacker)

It's the pirate! Get 'em inside!

Richie RACES to the divide, CLIMBS UP and SQUEEZES through.

MEGS

RUNS like hell across the second floor, climbing on top of a car and running over the trunk, cabin and hood to get to the divide to the next floor.

RICHIE

SQUEEZES through the divide - scans the darkness - hears:

MEGS

A blur, going up the ramp to the next floor!

RICHIE

Chases after her - his baleful expression intermittently lit by the moonlight.

MEGS

HAULS ASS - until her foot hits a pool of glass.

She SLIPS and **SLAMS!** her forehead into the hood of a car.

Megs struggles to get her bearings as:

RICHIE COMES INTO VIEW

At the bottom of the incline behind her.

Even in the dim light, the blood from the ugly cut on Megs's forehead makes a foreboding black stain on her face.

As Megs blinks the pain away and heads for the next level.

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - HIGHEST LEVEL - NIGHT

Megs runs in and out of frame...and a beat later, Richie enters, sucking for air. He stops and clutches his knees, then recovers enough to stalk across the floor...

ANGLE ON MEGS

Somewhere dark...listening...holding her breath...

RICHIE

Looks wherever he can for Megs before coming to a stop before the RUGSUCKERS van as Megs holds her breath.

Richie enters the van - thinking he's got her.

INSIDE THE VAN

Nothing but dead rug cleaning machines and broken glass.

RICHIE

Where the hell are you? Where the
hell is my gun?

Richie goes berserk, PUNCHING the rug cleaning machines.

OUTSIDE THE VAN

One of the rug-cleaning machines FLIES OUT THE BACK OF THE TRUCK - the reservoir SHATTERS and SPLASHES water everywhere.

Richie follows...cradling his hurting fists.

Spent, Richie pulls off his hoodie with a not inconsiderable amount of frustration...

As he uses the hoodie to wipe his blood-and-sweat-stained face before turning to walk away...

REVEAL MEGS

On TOP of the Rugsuckers van, lying flat on her back, DOING EVERYTHING SHE CAN TO HOLD HER BREATH - and hold on.

CUT TO

THE WORDS - U GET BLU-FLASHD LAST NITE?

On a piece of paper at:

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - JOSH'S BEDROOM - DAY

Dutch lies on the bed, unaware of the world around him as Josh picks up the paper and holds it up to the window...

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Amanda - still cute in spite of the worn look of her clothes, the dirt on her face and the incipient sinking of her cheeks from malnutrition - sees the paper and writes - a very unhappy look on her face as she replies:

AMANDA (TEXT)

SCARED.

Josh shoots her a sympathetic glance, then:

JOSH (TEXT)

ME 2

They exchange glances for a moment - the presence of each giving the other comfort, then:

AMANDA (TEXT)

I'M 16 2DAY.

Josh smiles and writes:

JOSH (TEXT)

HAPY B-DAY! I'M 16 NXT WK!

AMANDA (TEXT)
BRING ME CAKE? LOL.

Josh laughs, and as he bends down to write a new message.

SKEEVY GUY ENTERS AMANDA'S ROOM

Josh drops his dry-erase and looks out - putting his hand on the glass as a look of dread fills his face.

AMANDA TURNS TO SEE SKEEVY GUY

She lifts her hand instinctively, but he is bigger, stronger, and not mincing any gestures.

He SLAPS her hard across the face, then grabs her by the shirt as her knees give out.

JOSH HAS NO IDEA WHAT TO DO

No recourse. Nothing but his own anger and impotence.

SKEEVY GUY SCOOPS UP AMANDA

And RIPS her shirt open as he pushes her onto the bed - not even bothering to draw the shades as he unbuckles his belt and drops his pants.

JOSH BANGS ON HIS WINDOW

JOSH
 (under his breath)
 Come on, Amanda, fight.

AMANDA

Reaches for her night table as Skeevy Guy gets on top of her - and then, in a flash, he ROLLS OFF from over her, clutching his now-bleeding neck:

AND REVEALING THE SCISSORS IN AMANDA'S HAND!

Amanda HEAVES with all her strength - and what happens next is quick and nasty - a SOUNDLESS BLUR seen from a street-width away.

Skeevy ROLLS OFF the bed to the floor, arms occupied trying to control the bleeding.

Amanda POUNCES - one, two, three four stabs to his face, limbs, torso - a THRASHING OF ARMS just below the window line, a GOUT of blood from his jugular.

Skeevy guy DIES.

JOSH REELS BACK

Struggling to catch his breath, trying to process the unspeakable violence he has just witnessed.

AMANDA STANDS TO LOCK EYES WITH JOSH

Blood splattered all over her. Hands crimson. Eyes hollow.

Josh's young mind has absolutely no idea what the best possible response is to her.

Amanda lets go of the scissors like a poison chalice. Her eyes fill with tears. Her hand touches the window - leaving a bloody print.

She looks down at herself, up at Josh - and **DRAWS THE DRAPES.**

STAY ON JOSH

Backing up onto his bed. Fuckstruck.

After a moment, the door to his room **OPENS** to reveal Bob - stubble faced, his hair matted to his head after days of not showering, the skin of his neck hanging loose like a rooster's wattle - oblivious, wrapped up in his own thoughts.

BOB

Josh we need to...uh...Mr. and Mrs. Collins across the backyard put a sign on their window - they need some kind of medicine, Motrin or Alleve or something because Mrs. Collins broke her ankle. So my feeling is that if we put Dutch out the back yard on his rope and give him enough slack, maybe we can tie a baggy to his collar with the medicine...are you OK?

Josh slowly turns to look at Bob. His face pure black ice. Bob looks down at his son, absolutely shocked by a darkness he has never seen from him before.

BOB (CONT'D)

OK. Let's revisit this later.

Bob nods, backs out of the room and shuts the door.

CUT TO

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - RUGSUCKERS VAN - DAY

The sound of banging coming from inside:

INT. RUGSUCKERS VAN - CONTINUOUS

Megs struggles with something, trying to smash, bash or pry it open - she heaves, and it comes loose with a **SNAP!**

A WATER RESERVOIR ON A CARPET CLEANING MACHINE

About a gallon. Megs SMILES like Christmas Eve. She tips the heavy plastic reservoir over head and gulps down the water, then spreads the overflow on her face, dabbing at the wound on her forehead...and wincing.

It's a large, bloody, ugly wound - the light of day only makes it clearer that this is going to be an issue.

Megs refills her bottles and shucks them into her backpack...right next to the gun case.

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - FORD BRONCO - MOMENTS LATER

Her bottles all refilled, Megs makes her way to her hideout *du jour*. She opens the rear bay door and reaches for the sleeping bag:

MEGS

I found some water, Cassie...and it doesn't even taste like rug!

Megs lifts the sleeping bag. Her eyes widen.

CASSIE ISN'T THERE

Only a note:

AHOY, PIRATE-

YOU HAVE SOMETHING THAT BELONGS TO ME. I HAVE SOMETHING THAT BELONGS TO YOU. BRING THE GUN TO THE DOOR ON LEVEL 1. WE'LL MAKE A TRADE. XOXO, R.

PS: MEOW! MEOW!

Off Megs, staring at the note in horror...

CUT TO

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Bob stands a foot away from the now-open sliding door, holding a length of rope as Josh enters and realizes what is going on.

JOSH

Dad? What are you doing?

Bob looks up - caught.

BOB
It's the Collinses, you used to mow
their lawn - they -

JOSH
Stop it - bring him back!

Josh lunges for the sliding door. Bob puts his hand on Josh's chest - gently but firmly.

BOB
Josh. They're our neighbors -
they're good people - all Dutch has
to do is deliver some medicine to
their back door - please.

Josh takes a deep breath - then turns to the sliding door:

EXT. CHILDERS HOUSE - BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS - JOSH'S POV

Dutch ambles across, the rope tied to his collar and a bag of pills cleverly strapped to his mid-section...making his way across the joined back yards toward...

EXT. COLLINS HOUSE - BACK ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS - JOSH'S P.O.V.

Where MR. AND MRS. COLLINS - in their sixties, both dirty and emaciated - wait in the shadows behind their open back door, egging Dutch over.

Dutch enters the house. Mr. Collins CLOSES the door.

RESUME ON BOB AND JOSH

JOSH
Why'd he close the door?

BOB
Wouldn't you? Don't want to slip
out trying to corral the dog.
Everything's fine.

The two of them wait a moment. Then another. Then another.

JOSH
It's been too long - what are they
doing in there?

BOB
They're weak and hungry - it might
take them some time to pry -

Josh grabs the rope and pulls on it as he steps up to the edge of the sliding door.

JOSH
 Let go of him, Mr. Collins! Take
 your pills and let go! DAMNIT Mr.
 Collins! Let my dog out!

Bob looks out the sliding door to see:

EXT. COLLINS HOUSE - BACK ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS - JOSH'S P.O.V.

The door OPENS. The rope is cast out. The door SHUTS. No Dutch!

RESUME ON BOB AND JOSH

JOSH
 Oh shit.
 (reeling in the rope)
 No. No. No!

Bob takes up the slack. The rope comes back.

THE END HAS BEEN CUT.

BOB
 Oh no.

JOSH
 They took my dog.
 (screaming out)
 SONS OF BITCHES! GIVE ME BACK MY
 DOG! I USED TO MOW YOUR GODDAMNED
 LAWN!

Josh turns back to face his father, who tries to put a hand on his shoulder, but Josh shakes him off, pissed.

Off Bob, as Josh strides away...

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - GARAGE - DAY

Carrie Childers's mommobile - a two-models-back Toyota Camry - sits quietly on the cement, dead to the world.

Josh BURSTS through the door, pissed off - steps past the house's water heater, then KICKS the car, hurting himself.

JOSH
 OW! Son of a bitch!

Josh clutches his foot, finally turning around to bend over the hood of the car - then, as the pain subsides and the tears stream from his face, he straightens up and takes a few steps away from the car.

Sniffing back his sorrow, Josh reaches up.

TO GRAB THE MANUAL RELEASE ON THE GARAGE DOOR

PULLING the release, then LIFTING the door open.

THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Sprawls in wide-angle view before Josh.

Alex's house...the apartment building: shattered windows, overgrown lawns, leaves and trash blowing in the wind...deer...stray dogs.

The sky is dark grey - choked by all the unfought fires that have raged since the first dawn of the PODs - and dotted with inscrutable, still-spinning PODs.

JOSH STEPS UP TO THE EDGE OF THE OPEN GARAGE DOOR

JOSH (CONT'D)
Good-bye Alex. Amanda. Mom.

Josh closes his eyes. His foot moves closer to the outside.

CARRIE'S VOICE
Not today, OK?

Josh turns around to see his mother, in sweats, carrying a tote bag - yoga mat peeking out - standing by the Camry.

Josh looks at her for a moment:

HIS HAIR IS NOW CLEAN, HIS FACE UNSTUBBLED, HIS CLOTHES PRESSED

The thin, smelly, greasy-haired teen Josh has become under the POD invasion replaced by his clean-cut past self.

JOSH
What do you mean not today?

CARRIE
You can't have the car. I told you.

JOSH
Mom. I gotta meet Alex tonight,
it's opening weekend of -

CARRIE
Josh, I have yoga.

JOSH
It's a stretching class, you can do that at home.

CARRIE
Not today. Especially not today.

JOSH
You know what, mom? Whatever. OK?

As Josh turns back around, petulant:

RESUME ON JOSH - AS HE WAS AT THE TOP OF THE SCENE

The FLASHBACK over, Josh looks back at the empty space where his mother once stood.

He then STEPS BACK and CLOSES the garage door.

Off Josh, shrouded in darkness...

INT. HOTEL - SERVICE CORRIDOR - DAY

An AIR VENT budes, then dislodges from its frame as Megs's feet break it free. Her legs come back into the duct and she emerges from within, knife in hand...

But not without BANGING her head. Megs tumbles to the floor - covered in dust and cobwebs - clutching the wound on her forehead. It's purple, angry, and making her life hell.

Looking around to make sure the coast is clear, Megs reaches into her backpack - there, with the gun case, is a rag, with which she dabs - lightly - at her wound.

She winces each dab. The rag now wet with blood and pus.

Megs reaches into her bag and pulls out a roll of duct tape, with which she affixes the rag just over her eye - a makeshift bandage, and eyepatch for a pirate.

As Megs returns the vent back to its frame:

INT. HOTEL - LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER - MEGS'S P.O.V.

Seen from a narrow opening - THE CRACK OF A BARELY-OPEN DOOR.

The lobby is large, but not fancy. A stop for business people and budget tourists. Radisson or Ramada, not Ritz Carlton.

A group of GUESTS stands in a semi-circle around a wide-shouldered, square-faced man. While everyone else looks ratty and tired, he seems like he's fresh out of the shower with his black hair slicked back, tan slacks, white shirt, and blue sport jacket. The jacket sports a hotel logo.

This is MISTER HENDRICKS (late 50's) - flanked by Richie. Hacker and Blackbeard man the doors to the HOTEL RESTAURANT.

MISTER HENDRICKS

I apologize, but certain unfortunate events require that I intrude on your day. I've been informed that two bottles of alcohol and some aspirin were stolen from my staff. This is truly disappointing. Those items were to improve the comfort of guests in need. When someone steals from one of us, they steal from all of us.

Hendricks makes an arc around the guests: a field marshal inspecting his troops. No one makes eye-contact. As Hendricks speaks, his jacket flashes open every once in a while - revealing a handgun in a holster.

MISTER HENDRICKS (CONT'D)

As director of security in this hotel, it's my job to maintain safety and order. I'm in charge of who gets what and when, and there are zero exceptions to this rule. I'm offering one bottle of water and five cigarettes to the person who turns the thief in. Also, I'm halving the water ration tonight. If I don't have a name tomorrow morning, I am cutting the water ration indefinitely. I assure you that would be very bad for the sick folks up on floor ten.

(letting it land)

That's all.

Hendricks turns and strides to the restaurant - followed by Richie - as Blackbeard and Hacker open the doors.

MEGS'S POV SHIFTS TO SEE CARRIE

Looking across the now-dispersing crowd to lock eyes with another woman - MARY (early 30's, dishevelled, distraught).

Mary nods for Carrie to follow - and makes a beeline straight for wherever it is that Megs is hiding!

REVERSE ANGLE ON MEGS

To REVEAL she has been behind a door labeled BUSINESS CENTER. She quickly vanishes, letting the door SHUT behind her.

Mary and Carrie STEP THROUGH THE DOOR.

INT. BUSINESS CENTER - CONTINUOUS

A small room with a counter on one end and several deserted workstations. Mary looks around, then closes the door.

CARRIE
Stinks in here.

Mary Looks at Carrie - distraught:

MARY
It's me they're after.
(off Carrie's shock)
You know that girl from the front desk? With the nose ring? I think she gives one of the guards - he gives her stuff in exchange for -

CARRIE
Which guard?

REVEAL MEGS - COWERING BEHIND THE COUNTER

MARY
The one who won't shut up about the kitten he keeps in the kitchen? How he's gonna slice it up and put it in the soup?

CARRIE
Richie.

Megs eyes light up at the names of her cat - and her nemesis.

MARY
I saw them going at it in the stairwell. His pants were on the landing and these two little minibar bottles of vodka were in the pocket - and the aspirin.
(choking back tears)
Lewis - he's been burning up with fever - ear infection - and when I asked Mr. Hendricks to help, he told me that sick babies were not a priority...so I just grabbed it...I'm gonna get lynched.

CARRIE
 Tell anybody? Your husband?
 (off Mary's head-shake)
 Is the baby OK?

Mary breaks into tears as she speaks:

MARY
 The aspirin takes the edge off for
 a little while but...Lewis almost
 died of an ear infection six months
 ago. I don't want Hendricks locking
 him up in the tenth floor with all
 the sick people.

Carrie ponders this for a split second, then takes control -
 an able, reassuring presence:

CARRIE
 OK. Walk out like nothing happened.
 Then wait an hour and go to the
 guard with the black beard - he
 seems the nicest. Tell him you
 smelled alcohol on my breath.

MARY
 You can't -

CARRIE
 Just give me some of the
 aspirin and the bottle,
 enough to make it convincing.

MARY
 They threw that woman off the
 ledge.

Carrie throws her arms around Mary.

CARRIE
 I'll figure something out. You have
 baby Lewis to take care of, and I
 can handle these guys.

As Mary composes herself:

MEGS

Nods, realizing what she has to do.

CUT TO

Cassie - in an airplane pet carrier on a high up shelf at:

INT. HOTEL - RESTAURANT - NIGHT - MEG'S POV

Seen from a vent above. The place is well-appointed, and occupied only by Hendricks - who sits at a table, lit by candles, pouring himself a generous tumbler of rum followed by a fresh can of Coca-Cola.

Blackbeard stands by a swinging door to the kitchen - the kind with a large, round window.

HENDRICKS

Been three days since we kidnapped our feline guest, Mister Low.

RICHIE

He'll show up.

HENDRICKS

Maybe you're overestimating our pirate's affection for the animal.

RICHIE

I'm not.

Hendricks stands, walks to the kitchen door.

HENDRICKS

We cannot risk any of our guests getting a gun. Ever see *Die Hard*?

RICHIE

Best Christmas flick ever.

HENDRICKS

Remember what happened when John McLaine got a gun?

RICHIE

Elevator opens and there's this dead guy with a Santa hat on and -

HENDRICKS

He starts picking people off one at a time you imbecile.

Hendricks pushes past Blackbeard into:

INT. HOTEL - AIR DUCT - CONTINUOUS

Megs shakes her head, and as she SLOWLY crawls further into the filth of the air duct...

INT. HOTEL - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER - MEGS'S POV

A pale, skinned carcass - barely recognizable as a poodle - hangs on wires from a shelf over a stainless steel counter like a piece of game - the innards removed. A garbage can by the counter teems with food waste - and fur.

Mister Hendricks SLICES strips of meat from the dog carcass as he speaks to Richie, tosses it into a large stock pot simmering on a large, industrial stove.

HENDRICKS

I have one gun. If someone other than us gets a gun, then we are even. Then they have leverage.

(off Richie)

Leverage they can use when we have to cut the water rations again, or when they find out where the meat they're chowing down on comes from.

RICHIE

I like Poodle.

(off Hendricks stare)

Better than chihuahua.

The sound of SOMEONE KICKING A STEEL DOOR turns Hendricks's attention to the walk-in fridge.

HENDRICKS

Sounds like our newest kitchen guest. Check in on her.

(then)

And hand me the oregano.

Richie ambles to another shelf, where large, institutional condiment bottles sit along with a few tomatoes.

As Richie tosses the oregano to Hendricks, then makes his way to the closed door of the walk-in fridge:

REVEAL MEGS

Behind a vent on a large, exposed duct - one of many criss-crossing the ceiling.

Richie OPENS the door to the walk-in fridge to REVEAL Carrie, mouth and feet bound with duct tape, kicking at the door.

RICHIE

Aw, what's the matter bitch, can't breathe? Want me to take off the tape?

Carrie's muffled SHOUTS reply from behind her gag. Richie replies by KICKING her in the ribs. Hard.

RICHIE (CONT'D)
Not in this lifetime, bitch.

As Carrie folds over in pain, Richie closes the walk-in fridge door and turns to Hendricks.

RICHIE (CONT'D)
What about her?

HENDRICKS
She steals, she suffers the consequences.

RICHIE
Consequences of an alien variety, am I right?

HENDRICKS
After dinner's done.
(smelling the stew)
We got some time before the poodle soup's ready. Let's check on the natives, make sure they aren't getting restless.

Hendricks puts a lid on the pot, and as he beckons Richie out of the kitchen:

THE SCREWS IN MEGS'S VENT

POP out. The vent follows. Megs maneuvers the large, unwieldy vent back into the ducts and crawls out, landing on top of a steam dishwasher cabinet.

As quietly as possible, Megs makes her way across the kitchen...and Cassie MEOWS loudly.

She spots Cassie on the shelf and CLIMBS up on the counter - REACHING UP - but she is too short.

Megs climbs down - looks around - then spots the tomatoes on the other shelf.

And STUFFS them in her face - barely, but eventually hearing the sound of KNOCKING on the freezer door.

Megs rushes over - SMUSHING the last of the tomatoes into her mouth - and THROWS open the freezer door.

CARRIE LOOKS UP AT MEGS

Eyes reacting to the filthy little girl in front of her.

Megs rushes to the counter, grabs a knife, and - after tearing off her gag - goes to work on the bonds.

CARRIE
Who are you?

MEGS
I'm the pirate.

CARRIE
(re: her bandage)
You even have an eyepatch.

MEGS
Shh. One of them's at the other side of the door.

Carrie nods, Megs points to the shelf where Cassie sits.

MEGS (CONT'D)
If you stand on the counter, can you get my cat?

CARRIE
You gotta be kidding.
(off Megs's head-shake)
How do the three of us get out of here?
(Megs points to the duct)
You gotta be kidding.

Megs helps Cassie stand, but as the two move -

HENDRICKS (O.S.)
All right, all right, tell them to cool their jets, we'll give them their damned food.

CARRIE
Come on.

MEGS
The cat - I need -

CARRIE
No time, they'll kill us both.

As Carrie rushes to the dish-steaming cabinet and climbs:

MEGS MAKES EYE CONTACT WITH CASSIE

And as she makes the hardest decision of her young life:

MEGS
I'm sorry, Cassie.

CUT TO

THE KITCHEN DOOR, SLAMMING OPEN TO REVEAL HENDRICKS

Followed by Richie. It doesn't take long to figure out that something's astray: soon as they spot the open freezer door.

HENDRICKS
What the hell?

RICHIE
She ate the tomatoes. She ate the
goddamn tomatoes!

Hendricks turns around and spots the open air duct - he reaches into his pocket, draws his gun -

AND FIRES INTO THE DUCT!

As Richie rushes over, climbs up and looks inside:

THE DUCT IS EMPTY

RICHIE (CONT'D)
The longer you hide, bitch, the
more it's gonna hurt!

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - NIGHT

Megs and Carrie fly through a door into the structure - Megs leads the way - to the space behind the rear gate of a minivan in a very dark, very hidden corner of the floor.

Carrie and Megs crouch behind the minivan - watching to see if they were followed.

CARRIE
You need to tell me your name.

But Megs is on a mission - taking the gun case out of her backpack and showing it to Carrie:

MEGS
You need to help me open this - you
need to help me get the gun out and
go back and get Cassie -

CARRIE
Calm down. Tell me your name.

MEGS

It's Megs - OK? Now can you help me
open this? I've been trying for
days and I can't -

Megs BANGS the gun safe against the floor of the parking
structure.

CARRIE

Megs. There's too many - they have
everyone in there hostage -

The tears burst through Megs's façade:

MEGS

They're gonna eat her!

And with that she throws her arms around Carrie and cries
into her shoulder. Carrie's maternal instincts are strong,
and she holds Megs, until she stops crying.

CARRIE

Megs? Oh my god, you're burning up.

Megs is passed out. Carrie lies her down on the structure
floor - feels her forehead - then peels off the duct
tape/eyepatch.

Megs's wound is infected. Festering. Off Carrie, weighing her
options:

CUT TO

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - JOSH'S BEDROOM - DAY

Josh writes on a piece of paper: **AMANDA - WHERE R U?**

He stands and walks to the window - but before he can prop up
the sign, something catches his eye:

A BLACK PLUME OF SMOKE

Arching into the sky from:

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Amanda's window is still draped - the bloody handprint still
there...until the drape opens to REVEAL Amanda. Far worse for
the wear. Eyes filled with tears.

As Josh and Amanda look at one another:

ANGRY BLACK AND ORANGE FLAMES

ERUPT from the other side of the building. Whatever is happening in there, it's bad, and it's only getting worse.

AMANDA LOOKS BACK INTO HER BUILDING

Then returns her tearful gaze to Josh, holds up a sign:

AMANDA (TEXT)
PRAY 4 ME JOSH XO

THE WINDOW IN THE APARTMENT NEXT TO AMANDA'S

SHATTERS as a chair flies through the glass - letting out a frightening BILLOW OF BLACK SMOKE!

The Old Woman last seen shooting at the deer ekes her way out through the smoke...and with the last of her coughing, sputtering strength, THROWS HERSELF OUT THE WINDOW!

THE PODS VORTEX THE OLD WOMAN INTO OBLIVION

Amanda sees this - then looks at Josh and shakes her head.

RESUME ON JOSH

Not about to let this danger go by without helping her.

JOSH
 Wait for me, Amanda, wait for me.

CUT TO

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - KITCHEN

A cloth and cleaning solution in hand, Bob cleans around the last three cans in the pantry...his strokes methodical - until he hears a BOOMING sound.

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - FRONT DOOR/WINDOW - CONTINUOUS

Bob beelines for the window and sees -

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Where the fire escalates with each passing second - as does the sound of Josh, BOUNDING down the stairs.

BOB TURNS TO SEE JOSH

Heading for the front door - fiddling with the locks.

Quickly putting the pieces together, Bob propels himself to the door and shoves Josh aside, surprising his son with his response.

Josh recovers and stands off against his father, who crouches in front of the door - arms out, knees bent, an aging wrestler.

JOSH
Get out of my way.

BOB
No.

JOSH
I'm going.

BOB
Not like this.

JOSH
Then how?

BOB
That building's gone already -
there's nothing to -

Josh LAUNCHES himself at the door.

The two men TUSSELE - and it's an ugly, ungainly fight: two people weak from malnutrition and dehydration, both of them completely committed to stopping the other.

Josh BACKHANDS his father across the face - breaking his nose with an audible **POP!**

Bob takes the hit like a man - holding back his pain response to throw a HOOK at his son's kidneys - the punch lands with a squishy **THUNG!**

Josh GASPS FOR AIR. He felt that. Bob gives him another one for his trouble. Both men stand apart for a moment, choking for air, grabbing their wounds - depleted by the exchange.

But Josh gets it back quickly enough to SWEEP his dad's leg and put him on the floor - trying to PIN HIM DOWN WITH A KNEE as he reaches for the deadbolt.

Bob reaches up and GRABS - first by the neck, then the arm, pulling him down, hooking fingers SCRAPING at his son.

BOB (CONT'D)
No - you can't - no -

JOSH
I'm gonna die anyway, I'm
gonna make it count -

Josh STUMBLES as his father tightens his grip, so he puts his hands on Bob's shirt and PULLS HIM up from the ground - then THROWS him across the landing onto a wall.

Hard. Bob lands with a soft GRUNT.

Josh stumbles to his feet, flips the chain and THROWS the front door open.

THE APARTMENT BUILDING ACROSS THE STREET

Is now a BLAZING INFERNO.

JOSH

WINCES as heat and smoke hit his face: is he really about to commit suicide?

Yes. He is. But just as his foot rises to meet the outside, he hears his father - weak, PLEADING:

BOB (CONT'D)

Son...

Josh LOOKS BACK at Bob, crumpled on the floor - left hand over his heart, right hand clutching the left wrist.

Josh quickly realizes what he is seeing - his father is having a heart attack.

JOSH

Dad? Dad. Where are your pills?

Josh reaches out for his dad - stepping away from the still-open door, helping him down to the floor.

Josh looks down at his father's face - veins BULGING, skin pale, eyes red, barely GURGLING out the words.

BOB

Cabinet - bathroom.

As Josh overcomes his buckling legs to run:

FOLLOW JOSH'S JOURNEY THROUGH THE HOUSE

In EXCRUCIATING REAL TIME - as he stumbles up:

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

Clutching his side where Bob punched him as he reaches:

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Josh runs for the door to:

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

TRIPPING and almost falling as he enters:

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - MASTER BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Where the THROWS open the medicine cabinet - and as he FUMBLES with the bottles inside...

CUT TO BOB - ON THE FLOOR BY THE OPEN DOOR

Struggling for breath as Josh DESCENDS the stairs behind him, slipping beside his father as he pops the bottle open and pries to old man's mouth open.

JOSH

Under your tongue - come on -

Bob's mouth yields and Josh slips the pill in...then:

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

EXPLODES in a violent fireball, the SHOCKWAVE reaches:

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

KNOCKING THE FRONT DOOR FROM ITS HINGES and BLASTING the front window of the house in a smoking maelstrom of flying glass and tearing drapes.

As Josh throws himself over his father, shielding him from the flying debris...and then looks up to look through the open door to see:

THE FLAMING HUSK WHERE THE APARTMENT BUILDING ONCE STOOD

Off Josh, knowing beyond a doubt that Amanda is gone.

CUT TO

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM

Josh helps his father into the room. Both look like they have been in a POW camp - beaten, emaciated and soot-streaked.

BOB

I'm sorry.

(off Josh's silence)

I didn't want you to die. I didn't want Dutch to get taken either.

(MORE)

BOB (CONT'D)
I just wanted to help. To be
useful. To someone.

Josh puts Bob down on the bed, takes off his shoes.

JOSH
I know.

BOB
You really would have done it.

Josh lets out a deep, spent breath, and then - as he speaks -
puts a sheet over his father.

JOSH
We're three cans of beans away from
feasting on our one box of cake
mix...that's if we have enough
water left to...

BOB
Someone could defeat the PODs...or
they could just go away.

Josh walks to the door - ready to go - but stops himself and
plops down at the foot of the bed, looking out into space.

JOSH
What if...the people who got
zapped...what if they got taken, or
they went somewhere else?

Bob slowly, painfully, props himself up on his elbows.

BOB
Like a feed lot? Slave labor pool?
What if you'd gone out that door...
(sucking air)
Found yourself somewhere like that?

JOSH
Dad. What are we gonna eat after
the cans are gone? Each other?

Bob takes a second to process that, then bores into his son,
his eyes darkening from his all-too-recent brush with death.

BOB
When I go...are you going to be
willing to do what it takes to
survive?

JOSH
Where you going with that?

BOB

You know.

Josh shakes his head - not wanting to entertain this.

JOSH

Would you?

BOB

(tapping his chest)

I won't have to make that decision.

JOSH

I'm not either.

BOB

Your mother is out there.

JOSH

Get some rest.

But before Josh can go, he notices:

HIS FATHER'S NOSE

BLEEDING. Josh looks up, too tired to rage, and feels the blood coming from his own nose.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Aw...shit.

THE POD SOUND FILLS THE ROOM

Bob and Josh both take the fetal, clutching their ears:

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - CONTINUOUS

The PODs now emit a dense, impenetrable WHITE FOG, swirling around them in time with their spinning then peeling off into the skies in stark contrast to the smoke and fire-choked skies above - slowly cutting everything off from view.

BOB

Uncurls himself and looks at his son. Shock on his face.

DISSOLVE TO**THE SKYLINE ABOVE SANTA MONICA**

Slowly filling with the white POD FOG.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - CONTINUOUS

Carrie watches the developing situation from inside a MINIVAN. Beside her lies Megs, stirring on top of the sleeping bag, sweating, in a FEVER.

As Carrie looks down, rummaging through Megs's backpack, and produces the prescription bottle labeled ERYTHROMYCIN.

FADE TO WHITE

FADE IN ON A MONTAGE**INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY**

Bob writes on his book. The windows are whited-out with fog.

DAY 23 - With the fog continuing for a second day, it is impossible to track the movement of the PODs - if any.

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - DAY

Josh SWEEPS up the glass and debris from the explosion.

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - JOSH'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

His windows destroyed by the shockwave, Josh gathers the broken glass into a garbage can. He finds his pictures - of his mother and Alex - on the floor and carefully dusts them off before replacing them on the shelf.

Josh then reaches for a sheet, unfurls it, and duct tapes it to the window-frame. As Josh rehabilitates his bedroom...

DISSOLVE TO

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - DAY

Richie tapes a note to one of the large steel doors leading from the structure into the Hotel.

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - NEXT LEVEL UP - MOMENTS LATER

Richie tapes another note to another door.

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - NEXT LEVEL UP - MOMENTS LATER

Richie tapes another note to another door...and as he steps back into the hotel...

PULL BACK SEVERAL CAR-LENGTHS TO REVEAL

CARRIE - CROUCHING BEHIND A CAR

The hood open. She watches over the hood line - holding her breath as Richie goes back in. The door **THUNKS!** closed.

Carrie waits for the coast to clear, then sneaks down the row of cars, staying out of view until she reaches the door - she takes the note, reads it, then crumples it up.

Carrie returns to the car and finishes what she was doing before she was interrupted: she **PRIES OFF** the windshield washer reservoir using Megs's broken knife.

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - MINIVAN - DAY

Megs lies on the middle seat, passed out, feverish. Beside her, Carrie pours water from the reservoir into a fast food cup and grinds one of the erythromycin tablets inside.

As she **LIFTS** Megs up to feed her the solution.

CUT TO**INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT**

By the light of a candle burned to a formless blob, Josh spoons beans from a can onto a bowl, then takes two cups from a cabinet and turns to the garbage can. It's empty.

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Josh steps up to the tub, cups in one hand, candle in the other. The tub is ticked marked with many grease pencil strokes...leading all the way to "empty."

Josh shakes his head. The candle **FIZZLES OUT** with a trickle of grey smoke...

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Josh grabs two baggies full of water. Only two left.

CUT TO**INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - DAY**

Carrying a plastic windshield water reservoir, Carrie pulls a note taped to a door. The contents can now be read.

GIVE US THE GUN, OR BABY LEWIS DIES IN THE TENTH FLOOR.

Off Carrie:

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - MINIVAN - MOMENTS LATER

Megs continues to suffer from an intense fever, she lies on top of the sleeping bag, shirt off, sweating, as Carrie uses a rag to WIPE her forehead.

CUT TO

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - GARAGE - DAY

Josh and a weak Bob - both looking a lot worse for the wear - work on the water heater by the door. After a moment, a valve gives way and a TRICKLE of water emerges from a spout.

Bob and Josh waste no time, collecting what little dregs are left in the tank with a meager few cups.

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - NIGHT

Bob and Josh CRUNCH down on uncooked spaghetti - slowly doing out their ration from an open bag on the couch cushion between them. The coffee table? In the fireplace.

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - JOSH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Josh sleeps, curled up, clutching his bedspread...

ANGLE ON JOSH'S WINDOW

The fog enters through the space between one of the sheets duct taped through the window-frame...it doesn't spread, but keeps a vaguely tendril-like aspect as it moves with will and purpose above Josh, coalescing into a whirlpool...

BEFORE SWIRLING AROUND HIM WITH INCREASING SPEED

Then shrouding his body and:

ENTERING THROUGH HIS NOSTRILS

Josh remains asleep. As the last of the fog enters his body:

SMASH CUT TO JOSH'S EYES

SNAPPING OPEN INTO BRIGHT DAYLIGHT

Morning is here. No fog in the bedroom.

Josh SNAPS up from bed to stare at the daylight. He then reaches forward, peeks through the bedsheets on the wall.

Then TEARS off the sheet to REVEAL:

EXT. CHILDERS HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The PODs are still spinning overhead - but the fog has lifted completely...and the sky is azure - no smoke, no clouds.

MATCH DISSOLVE FROM JOSH TO MEGS

Walking into the sunlight at:

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - DAY

Wrapped in her sleeping bag, Megs closes her eyes as Carrie's hand reaches into frame and closes over her shoulder.

CARRIE
Look who's awake.

MEGS
What happened?

CARRIE
Your cut got infected.

MEGS
How did you -

CARRIE
All moms are part time doctors.
(holds out the pills)
And you had these.

MEGS
The sky's blue.

CARRIE
No fires. No clouds. It's like that
fog cleaned everything out. Smell
that?
(takes a deep breath)
Ozone. Like they charged up the air
with electricity - zapped away all
the pollution.

Megs looks up and nods, but she has other things in mind:

MEGS
You look like my aunt Janet.

CARRIE
Did you like your Aunt Janet?

MEGS
I liked her just fine. When she
didn't drink.

CARRIE
I never drink.

MEGS
I like you better.

CARRIE
Thank you.
(a deep breath)
We're going to have to go back into
the hotel.

MEGS
For food?

Carrie squats down to look at Megs in the eye, and hands her the crumpled-up note from Richie.

CARRIE
Yes. But mostly because of this.

MEGS
(reading)
Those bastards.

CARRIE
My friend - Mary - her baby, his
name's Lewis, has an ear infection.
These pills - the same ones that
cured you - could save Lewis's
life.
(looking around)
They're locked up in the tenth
floor. I tried to sneak in through
the vents we used to come in -

MEGS
The vents are too small after the
ground floor. You can only crawl to
the lobby.

CARRIE
And I couldn't go past that because
the guards all know what I look
like. The guard with the black
beard does a shift on the tenth
floor stairwell landing at night.
He's the nicest one of all the
guards - and he doesn't know your
face.

Megs considers this, then:

MEGS

So what you're saying is, I have to go back inside.

CARRIE

Still like me better than Aunt Janet?

MEGS

(nods, smiles, then)
I could use the vents to get to the stairs...but then what?

CARRIE

You'll bribe him.

MEGS

With what? The gun?

CARRIE

No. They can't have the gun. Not ever. Not that I could open the case.

MEGS

It's a really tough case.

CARRIE

Do you trust me? Will you say exactly what I tell you?

Megs looks up at Carrie and nods, but before she can speak:

A DROP OF BLOOD FALLS FROM HER NOSE TO THE FLOOR

Megs and Carrie look at one another. Carrie picks her up and carries her to hiding behind a nearby car as:

THE POD NOISE OVERWHELMS EVERYTHING

As Carrie holds on to Megs - a mother protecting a child:

MATCH DISSOLVE TO BOB'S FACE

On the floor. Eyes shut and clutching his ears at:

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

As Josh - unaffected by the POD sound - rushes over:

JOSH

Dad - DAD!

The sound ends. Bob opens his eyes and looks up at his son.

BOB
 Oh...that hurts...
 (then, looking up)
 Why isn't your nose bleeding?

JOSH
 (touching his face)
 I - I'm sure I'm just dehydrated.

BOB
 Did you hear the sound?

JOSH
 I heard it but -

Bob rises, his curiosity peaked - about to ask another question when something else - something even more shattering - takes his attention.

Something he can see through the living room window.

BOB
 Oh...no...

As Josh turns to follow his father's line of sight:

REVERSE ANGLE ON THE VIEW FROM THE WINDOW

EXT. CHILDERS HOUSE - BACKYARD/NEIGHBORHOOD - CONTINUOUS

The PODs have, indeed, stopped spinning - and a red circle slowly appears over the bottom third of each sphere.

THE PODS THEN OPEN SIMULTANEOUSLY

TO DISGORGE THOUSANDS OF SMALLER PODs

Methodically deploying into a spiral pattern over the skies, then breaking off in clusters to take position.

These PODs are livelier than the mother PODs: they appear to dance over the landscape in a ballet of Brownian motion that continues even as they reach their terminal points.

By the time the larger PODs are done releasing their offspring, the day is dark with many, many times more PODs than before.

The larger PODs close up. As they begin to ROTATE AGAIN:

RESUME ON JOSH AND BOB

Their gaunt, bearded faces registering everything beyond the window, but not quite knowing what to say or believe.

BOB
Think your mother is seeing this?

JOSH
I dream about her every night.

BOB
Me too.

Josh turns to look at his father, puts a hand on his shoulder. Bob is *shaking*. Fighting the welling tears.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Josh dispiritedly splits what was once an end table and tosses the wood in the fire. The only piece of furniture left intact in the living room is the couch.

The light from the fireplace illuminates the dramatic change in Josh. In less than a month of little food, no bathing, no shaving and no creature comforts, he has become wraith-like - his hair matted, his skin papery over what were once young muscles, his skin mottled.

Bob enters - in contrast to his son, he wears a clean button-down shirt and slacks...and while he is just as wasted away physically, his wounds are clean, his hair combed and his beard reasonably trimmed.

JOSH
Hot date tonight?

Bob produces a wrapped gift.

BOB
Not exactly. Happy birthday, Josh.
(off Josh's surprise)
Your mother picked out the card before she left. Also, I found this inside my messenger bag...it's only been expired a few months so...

Bob holds up a granola bar. And off Josh, smiling:

CUT TO

BOB AND JOSH - SITTING ON THE COUCH - MOMENTS LATER

Josh opens his wrapped gift as Bob peels the last of the wrapper off the bar and splits it in two. Under the wrapping?

JOSH
Car stereo?

BOB
To go with the Camry.

It doesn't matter that there's an alien apocalypse, Josh responds like any sixteen year old who just got his own car:

JOSH
No way!

BOB
Way.
(off Josh's eye-roll)
Even has a hookup for your MP3 player. Your mother thought it was time. She was tired of negotiating with you for car time.

JOSH
(ear-to-ear)
That's kinda awesome.

Bob hands over half of the power bar, Josh almost puts the whole thing in his mouth.

BOB
We have our moments.
(stopping him)
Eat slowly. Make it last.
(as Josh nibbles)
I think we should go out into the garage and install your new stereo.

JOSH
Really?

BOB
Got something better to do?

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - GARAGE - NIGHT

The garage door is open to let in the moonlight. The dregs of a candle light up the dashboard as Bob and Josh work in the darkness underneath.

BOB
No - Josh - this one goes here,
that one goes there.

JOSH
Fine, you do it.

BOB

I will.

Josh back on the driver's seat, puts his hands on the wheel.

JOSH

And since we can't actually power
it up...I'm just gonna sit here and
think of what I'd be hearing on my
first drive.

Bob pulls himself onto the passenger seat.

BOB

Where I'm from, you play
Springsteen or you don't play
anything.

JOSH

(eye roll, then)

Man. You and that geezer.

BOB

Easy there, chief -

JOSH

All right, all right - I guess if
Vampire Weekend covered him he
can't be that bad.

BOB

Who covered him?

JOSH

Yeah, the one song -
(thinks, then sings)
We sit in the car outside your
house/I can feel the heat a'coming
'round/I go to put my arm around
you and you give me a look like I'm
way out of bounds -

Bob recognizes it as "I'm Going Down" from *Born in the USA*
and JUMPS in, giving it his raspy-voiced all:

BOB

Well you let out one of your bored
sighs/Well lately when I look into
your eyes -

JOSH

*I'm goin down, down, down
I'm goin' down, down down!*

BOB

*I'm goin down, down, down
I'm goin' down, down down!*

After a massive - and really dissonant crescendo - the two
stop singing, look at one another, then BREAK INTO LAUGHTER.

JOSH

Man. That's awkward.

BOB

Not the most appropriate dad and
son sing-along, no.

(as the laughter settles)

I have no idea what we're going to
do tomorrow.

JOSH

You mean for entertainment?

Bob bows his head. His tone darkens.

BOB

I mean for food and water. I mean
you could die within three days
with no water.

JOSH

We'll figure something out.

BOB

What happens when there's no
figuring left to do? The PODs
aren't going anywhere. No one's
beaten them. They've multiplied.

Josh shrugs. He has no answer. Bob takes a moment, then:

BOB (CONT'D)

If I died. If you had no other
recourse. Would you eat me?

JOSH

Eat you. Like hack off your finger
or something? No freaking way -

BOB

I've been thinking a lot about it -

JOSH

You can officially stop, I'm not
sticking a fork in you.

BOB

We have a few envelopes of
cake batter left - maybe we
can milk some more water from
the heater -

JOSH

Stop it!

BOB

My pacemaker is shot. I could die
from a heart attack tomorrow.

(MORE)

BOB (CONT'D)

One of us needs to carry on for Mom, and the only person that could be is you. And if you're willing to eat me, which I truly hope you are, then you could live -

JOSH

No! OK? Not. Going. To. Happen.
(opening his door)
Over and done.

BOB

Don't move, son.

JOSH

I can't believe I am having this conversation with you!

Bob puts his hand on Josh's shoulder - stopping him from leaving the car. Josh kicks his legs back in.

BOB

There's another option.

JOSH

What?

Bob takes a deep breath, then reaches into his pocket and retrieves a large vial, full of pills.

BOB

You were ready to walk out into the PODs the other day...

JOSH

Seemed like the least painful way to go...and maybe Amanda would have seen me...trying.

BOB

Well, maybe we don't have to do that, or watch each other starve to death.

(re: the pills)

These are mom's painkillers. From when she hurt her back last year.

JOSH

Those still good?

BOB

I took one last night. They are very good. And there's forty five of them left.

JOSH
Is that enough?

BOB
For the two of us to float off on a
cloud and never wake up? Yes.

Josh looks up to the car's ceiling. The expression on his face making his though process clear..."I am sitting in a car pondering suicide with my old man."

JOSH
You've thought a lot about this,
haven't you?

BOB
The PODs just cleaned the air and
deployed a thousand baby PODs. I
can't help but think that they're
getting the planet ready for
something. Some final solution that
doesn't include us.

JOSH
So we take the pills...and we don't
watch each other turn into walking
skeletons.
(off his dad's nod)
No cannibalism.

BOB
Not one ropey bite.

JOSH
What about after?
(off Bob's look)
Technically, you are talking about
a suicide.

Bob smiles and shakes his head.

BOB
I'd rather explain my response to
these circumstances to St. Peter at
the Pearly Gates than step outside
and wake up in an Alien Slave camp.

JOSH
You make a good point.

Bob places the bottle on the dashboard in front of them, his tone grim if accepting.

BOB
I have my moments.

As the two men lean back on their seats...

CUT TO

INT. HOTEL - AIR DUCT - NIGHT

Megs crawls through the duct, holding a cheap lighter in one hand, like John McClaine in *Die Hard*.

INT. HOTEL SERVICE CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Dark. Creepy. Lit only by a long shaft of light from the slightly ajar door to the lobby.

THE VENT MEGS USED EARLIER

BUCKLES once again - she peers out - coast is clear.

Megs - again covered in cobwebs and rat feces - crawls out of the vent and replaces it quickly, then bounds down the corridor...a WALKING DUST CLOUD, shaking all the crap from her clothes.

INT. HOTEL - STAIRWELL - NIGHT

The lone cigarette lighter proves a meager light in this seemingly endless and angular spiral...as Megs musters her strength and makes her way up to an uncertain outcome...

CUT TO

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - GARAGE - CONTINUOUS - INTERCUT

Josh tips the hot water heater to get the last little bit of rusty water into a small cup.

Bob separates the pills into equal doses as:

MEGS

Continues up the stairs...past the eighth level...she's small, and weak from hunger and disease, but she just sucks it up, gasping for air as she moves.

BOB AND JOSH

Sit next to one another in the Camry. Each holding a small cup of rusty water and a handful of pills.

Bob methodically swallows one pill at a time - waiting for his drink until he has taken the lot.

Josh follows suit, taking as many as he can, then taking a small gulp of water before throwing the next bunch into his mouth.

Bob turns to Josh as he finishes...then throws his arms around him, and holds him, tight:

BOB
Proud of you. Always have been.

As Josh returns the embrace:

MEGS

Climbs up the final steps to see

A DOOR LABELED FLOOR 10

As

BOB AND JOSH

Both close their watering eyes for the last time. As the life slowly leaves their bodies...

FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN ON MEGS

Alone on the landing. Facing the door labeled FLOOR 10. Girding herself.

She takes a deep breath. Reaches for the door. Opens it.

And gets a faceful of Blackbeard!

INT. HOTEL - TENTH FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Blackbeard holds a kitchen knife at Megs face - a his knee-jerk, startled response to an intruder.

BLACKBEARD
Who are you?

Megs looks up at him - and breaks into tears, summoning her most duplicitous little-girl-lost posture.

MEGS
I just want to see my daddy! The other guy lets me see him! Please!

Blackbeard's pose softens as he stares at this strange girl.

BLACKBEARD
Never seen you before.

MEGS
I usually come up during the day.

BLACKBEARD
And you're still alive? This floor
is full of sick, contagious people.
(holstering his gun)
Which one of these sad, sorry
schmucks is your dad?

MEGS
He's bald. Used to be fat. Richie
punched him in the stomach in the
parking garage like, the second
day. I think he broke his ribs.

BLACKBEARD
I remember that punch.

MEGS
Can I go see him? Please?

BLACKBEARD
Mister Hendricks will kill me - and
you - if he finds out anyone's come
up here.

MEGS
I can make it worth your while.

Blackbeard bends down to get eye level with Megs.

BLACKBEARD
Now what could a filthy, shit-
stinking little rugrat like you
possibly give me that would make
anything worth my while?

Megs reaches into a pocket and pulls out the baggie of
marijuana she found while scavenging cars in the structure.

MEGS
Medical grade Hindu Kush.
(off Blackbeard's look)
I traded it for my Nintendo DS and
a pack of gum.

Blackbeard snatches the baggie from Megs's hand, sniffs it.

BLACKBEARD

You got ten minutes. Say hi to your old man and then get the hell back to your room.

CUT TO

MEGS

Walking down the dark and frightening hallway. Some of the doors are open or ajar. She catches GLIMPSES: the sick and dying victims of Mister Hendricks's reign over this hotel.

A MAN WITH A BROKEN LEG

His bandages and sheets covered in blood - a slight hint of gangrene in an unhealing gash above his knee.

AN OLD WOMAN - HER SKIN PALE

Leaning against the door frame, the front of her dress covered in vomit.

A YOUNG COUPLE

The MAN holding his violently-coughing WIFE.

RESUME ON MEGS

Walking - and hearing the sound of a baby SCREAMING. She moves with purpose - reaches a door...and KNOCKS.

Mary opens the door, holding the screaming, clearly pained BABY LEWIS, the look on her face one of absolute helplessness.

Megs reaches into her pocket and digs up the medicines, then.

MEGS

For baby Lewis. From Carrie.

MARY

She's alive.

MEGS

(nods, then)
I have to go.

Mary NODS and offers a weak, but grateful smile which Megs returns. Megs then looks around...AND RUNS.

INT. HOTEL - STAIRWELL - MOMENTS LATER

Megs makes her way down the stairs as fast as her feet will take her: ninth floor, eighth floor - and as she runs down to the seventh -

RICHIE'S VOICE (O.S.)
Are you a retard? Did you not hear
me and Mister Hendricks tell you to
look out for -

THE DOOR TO THE SEVENTH FLOOR BURSTS OPEN IN FRONT OF MEGS

To REVEAL Richie, holding Blackbeard by his long hair with one hand, the baggie and an unlit spliff on the other.

Richie locks eyes with Megs.

She turns and RUNS UP the stair. But Richie is bigger, faster, and better fed.

Megs doesn't stand a chance.

In seconds, Richie has a handful of Megs's hair. Megs SCREAMS and STUMBLES, falling on her face on the stairs with an echoing **CRACK!**.

Her nose now bleeding, Megs BELLOWS as Richie solidifies his grip on her, then, putting a hand over her mouth, SCOOPS HER UP LIKE A KITTEN.

RICHIE
Ahoy there.

SMASH CUT TO**INT. HOTEL - LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER**

Lit by a few candles and the bright light of the moon in the clear, clean skies outside.

A door SMASHES open - Richie, carrying a STRUGGLING Megs, barges in to see HACKER, startled from his slumber on one of the easy chairs by the front desk.

HACKER
What's going on?

RICHIE
Get Mister Hendricks. Tell
him I have our pirate.

Hacker stands, already on his way out:

HACKER
Well dip me in shit.

Richie moves toward the front entrance of the hotel.

RICHIE
 You stole from us, you kept
 important gear from us...now you're
 gonna die. You understand this?

Megs BITES DOWN ON HIS HAND - Richie SHOUTS, removes his now bloody hand and SMACKS her on the head even as he keeps an unyielding grip on her with the other.

RICHIE (CONT'D)
 Do that again and I'll cut you open
 before I throw you out there.
 (to Blackbeard)
 Hold the door for the lady.

MEGS
 (spitting Richie's blood)
 I hope the aliens suck you up.

RICHIE
 Not before you.

Richie Heads for the door. Blackbeard holds the entrance open...and outside:

A CITY SURROUNDED BY PODS - BACKLIT BY A BRIGHT MOON

Blackbeard looks out to the empty street beyond the front door of the hotel.

Megs SCREAMS as loud as she can. Richie's grip loosens. Megs's legs hit the ground. She tries to fight for her freedom - but to no avail: he has her.

Richie finally DRAGS Megs to the threshold - but before he can toss her outside:

THUNK!

A small and very hard gun case SMASHES against the back of Richie's head!

Richie's hands RELEASE.

Megs BREAKS FREE. As she RUNS away from the door:

REVEAL CARRIE - HOLDING THE GUN CASE

Richie turns just in time to see her rear back and **SMACK!** the case into his chest, propelling him out into:

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF THE HOTEL - NIGHT

Richie - now clutching the gun case - finds himself under a sky full of dancing PODs!

RICHIE

Oh shit!

He VANISHES - SCREAMING BLOODY MURDER as the PODs VORTEX him out of existence in a flash of blue and black light!

The gun case falls to the ground as Richie dematerializes, landing with a resounding **PONK!**

The street then goes quiet.

RESUME ON BLACKBEARD

Now alone in the standoff with Carrie - Megs behind her - and behind them, just out of focus:

A NUMBER OF HOTEL GUESTS

Led by Mary and baby Lewis.

CARRIE

(to Blackbeard)

You take another step toward her
and I'll beat you to death.

HENDRICKS (O.S.)

No one's beating anyone.

Carrie and Megs turn to see Hendricks - flanked by Hacker.

Hendricks takes his gun from its holster as Blackbeard steps over to his side while taking out a large kitchen knife.

HENDRICKS (CONT'D)

Why don't we just tone down the
rhetoric and do some business.

(to Carrie)

Get me the gun case.

CARRIE

It's outside.

HENDRICKS

I bet you can toss it over before
they zap you...and before I shoot
the pirate.

Carrie casts a long, disdainful look at Hendricks as Megs stands her ground.

CARRIE

No.

HENDRICKS

There's no "no" here. I have the gun.

Mary steps up from behind Carrie, and as she does:

RACK FOCUS TO REVEAL THE GROWING GROUP BEHIND HER

At least a dozen fed-up, bleary-eyed guests.

MARY

How many bullets do you have?

Hendricks pulls back the hammer on his revolver in response.

CARRIE

You're going to shoot me? Then her?
The baby? How many bullets do you have?

Hendricks looks at the assembled crowd, then at his men.

HENDRICKS

I got six bullets, six more in my speed loader and two men armed with knives.

(at the uneasy crowd)

Who else wants to know if I mean business?

But Carrie steps toward Hendricks, putting herself in front of the barrel of his gun.

CARRIE

Put the gun down. You're done here.

A bead of sweat forms on Hendricks's forehead.

Carrie comes closer, eyes locking as his finger twitches over the trigger - he's about to shoot - until:

BLACKBEARD

Do what the lady says.

A kitchen knife appears around his throat.

Held by Blackbeard.

HENDRICKS

What are you doing?

BLACKBEARD

I work for food, man. I don't kill babies.

Hendricks hesitates, Carrie lunges forward and GRABS the gun, wrestling it from Hendricks's hands.

Carrie backs up, pointing the gun at Hendricks and Hacker.

Blackbeard takes the knife from Hendricks' throat, joining the crowd. Hacker drops his knife.

CARRIE

I think you two need to spend some time locked up in the tenth floor.

Megs looks up at Hendricks and Hacker, then at Carrie. As their eyes meet - and Carrie's face softens, her expression one of complete reassurance:

DISSOLVE TO

INT. HOTEL - UNUSED ROOM - NIGHT

Megs lies by candlelight on a clean bed as a fresh, white sheet is drawn over her by Carrie.

CARRIE

You're going to be safe tonight.
(a smile)
I promise.

As Megs smiles - and then falls asleep almost instantly...

DISSOLVE TO

JOSH'S EYE - SNAPPING OPEN

Moving from side to side to see that he is alone at:

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - GARAGE - TOYOTA CAMRY - DAY

Josh shakes off the cobwebs - the expression on his face both bleary and making it clear that he has no. fucking. clue. what just happened.

Why did he wake up? Where is his father?

JOSH

Dad? Dad!

Josh pushes open the car door - and as he STUMBLES out, his coordination thrown by the drugs still in his system:

FOLLOW JOSH IN REAL TIME INTO AND ACROSS THE HOUSE

Through the KITCHEN - past the LIVING ROOM -

JOSH (CONT'D)

What the hell dad? Where are you?

- up the STAIRS - down the CORRIDOR - into the MASTER BEDROOM and finally into:

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - MASTER BATHROOM - DAY

Josh THROWS himself through the door and sees:

BOB'S INERT BODY

Lying in the tub in shorts, his head, face and body shaved. A rectangle of sun from the skylight frames his lifeless face.

Josh rushes in and SCOOPS UP his father in his arms.

JOSH

Dad - dad, please - no.

But Bob is cold. His body unmoving. He's dead.

JOSH (CONT'D)

You son of a bitch. I'm not ready.

Josh shuts his eyes hard. Tears stream through nonetheless - and as he opens his eyes to blink out his mounting sorrow:

JOSH SPOTS A PAIR OF ENVELOPES ON THE VANITY

One of them under a kitchen knife. The first envelope reads JOSH. The one under the knife reads "INSTRUCTIONS."

Josh shakes his head - quickly realizing the extent of Bob's plans for his own dead body.

Josh carefully lays his father back down and opens the envelope with his name on it, sitting on the side of the tub, letting his tears flow.

BOB (V.O.)

(as Josh reads)

Son. Only two of your pills were pain meds. The rest I filled with cake batter. I did this because I am your father. I know I'm being selfish, but I want you to live. The invasion can't last forever. Mom may still be alive.

(MORE)

BOB (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*If there is even a chance that you
 can survive to the "after," you owe
 it to her, and to me, to do
 whatever is necessary to survive.*

Josh lets the note fall. As he buries his face in his hands:

DISSOLVE TO

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Josh sits by the fire, wrapped in a sheet. Numb and grief-stricken.

The envelope labeled "INSTRUCTIONS" sits on the cushion next to him, unopened, and beside it, the knife.

As Josh's eyes CLOSE...

PUSH IN ON THE FIRE

DYING OUT to smoking embers and then cold ashes as NIGHT
 TURNS TO DAY.

RESUME ON JOSH

Eyes opening as the sun comes into the room. Josh doubles over, clutching his stomach.

He then looks at the knife, and the note.

He stands, a sad, stricken look on his face, and walks out of the room.

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Josh looks into the refrigerator. The door hangs open. Useless. The shelves are empty.

The pantry tells the same sad story.

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - GARAGE - DAY

Josh wrestles with the water heater, but there is nothing left inside. Not one drop. Josh PUNCHES the large, white tank...and then, as his hands go to his face in despair.

CUT TO

THE KITCHEN KNIFE IN JOSH'S HAND

Entering frame at:

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - CORRIDOR - DAY

Josh emerges from the stairs, fingers tightening around the handle as he makes his way to the door to the master bedroom.

Josh reaches for the door, then stops.

His hand TREMBLES.

Josh's grip tightens around the knife as he prepares to do whatever is necessary to survive.

Josh's hand closes around the doorknob, about to open it - and then:

THE POD SOUND FILLS THE SOUNDSCAPE

Josh turns and lifts his hand to his nose.

It's not bleeding.

His body is not shutting down.

The sound continues.

Josh RACES DOWNSTAIRS to:

INT. CHILDERS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - WINDOW - DAY

Josh looks outside - through the dry-erase markings made by his father on the glass - to see:

EXT. CHILDERS HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The Mini PODs

SPIRALING

Into the sky:

THEN RE-ENTERING THE LARGER PODS

Through bright, glowing red rings in their upper hemispheres.

In seconds, all of the Mini PODs have rejoined the motherships.

The larger PODs reseal themselves...

...and slowly, soundlessly recede into the cloudless sky...

through the upper atmosphere...

...and COMPLETELY OUT OF SIGHT.

RESUME ON JOSH

Watching. Breathing. Thinking.

Then OPENING the sliding door and STEPPING out into:

EXT. CHILDERS HOUSE - BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Where it's just like any other clear and beautiful day in Prosser, Washington.

Josh looks up into the empty sky...then hears something.

BARKING

He looks down to see DUTCH - cantering out of the door to the Collins house!

Josh's face brightens, his lips spreading into a broad smile as his best friend, tail wagging, picks up speed and SLIDES into his waiting arms.

JOSH

Where the hell have you been?

Josh spots A NOTE tucked into Dutch's collar. He unfolds it. It reads:

WE COULDN'T.

FORGIVE US.

JOSH (CONT'D)

I'm glad you're here, boy. We're going on a trip. We're going to find mom.

Josh holds Dutch close, and as he pets him, and looks out into the beautiful blue skies above:

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. HOTEL - DAY

As Carrie and Megs step out onto the street:

PULL OUT TO REVEAL

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF THE HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Survivors stream out of the buildings surrounding the hotel...all dirty, gaunt and unshaven - but also grateful to be alive - and all of them looking up at the skies.

Megs looks at the gathering crowd, then at Carrie.

MEGS

They came to our home, took away
our cars and our families...

CARRIE

And cleaned our air.

As Megs speaks, Carrie turns, looking into the distance.

MEGS

Then they just leave?

Carrie's eyes widen - whatever she is seeing is impressive,
even after all she has already seen.

CARRIE

They didn't just leave, Megs.

Carrie points toward:

EXT. SANTA MONICA BAY - CONTINUOUS

Carrie and Megs turn to the sea - a beautiful blue disk
dominating the horizon...and at the center of the bay?

A MONOLITH

Ten times taller than the largest building in Los Angeles,
originating only god knows how deep inside the Earth's crust
and surrounded in an electrically-charged mist!

Carrie and Megs stand there speechless...as do the hundreds
of people POURING INTO THE STREETS.

The initial shock and awe wear off after a long beat, then:

MEGS

What do we do now?

CARRIE

My husband always says we should
focus on things in our sphere of
influence.

MEGS

What's that even mean?

CARRIE

It means that I have a son, in
Prosser, Washington, and I'm sure
he'd love to meet you.

MEGS
What's his name?

Carrie turns away from the Monolith, taking Megs's hand:

CARRIE
Josh.

CUT TO BLACK

THE END