

Later, Alligator

By

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When his wife suspects he's hiding a deadly secret, a desperate husband retreats to his cabin seeking solace, only to be devoured by a rampaging alligator that threatens to expose him.

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FADE IN:

EXT. PORT SULPHUR, LA. - LAKE JUDGE PEREZ - NIGHT

The distant croaking of frogs echoes through the swamp.

A 68-YEAR-OLD MAN sits in his white fishing boat, casting his line into the dark waters.

He gazes toward the foggy shoreline, the mist clinging to the surface like a shroud.

He's relaxed, perhaps too relaxed, until something stirs in the trees.

He lightly grunts.

An enormous figure shifts, its eerie eyes glinting in the twilight.

Startled, the MAN's eyes widen.

He lunges for his gun, the empty beer can clattering to the floor.

His fingers tighten around the grip.

CLICK!

He cocks the weapon, ready for whatever comes next as he stands, horror etched on his face, gasping.

EXT. NEW ORLEANS, LA. - CAESARS SUPERDOME - ESTABLISHING SHOT - EVENING

Caption: THREE WEEKS LATER

A crowd streams into the venue, many sporting impressive physiques.

INT. ARENA - CONTINUOUS

A bodybuilding competition unfolds and the arena buzzes as MEN and WOMEN flex and pose on stage, showcasing their hard-earned muscles to an enthusiastic audience.

CAMERA FLASHES!

LUKE SHERWIN (35M), a renowned bodybuilder, strides to the front, flexing for the cameras.

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FLASH! FLASH!

In the audience, FAYE SHERWIN (35F) sits beside her sister-in-law, SAM (34F).

Faye's brother, ROLLY (34M), is behind them, flanked by Luke's entourage.

Luke winks at Faye, his muscles bulging as he poses, making her feel like the only one in the room.

The crowd erupts in cheers!

Faye is visibly turned on, while Sam notices Rolly's admiration for Luke. Initially pleased, she soon feels ignored and annoyed.

Faye smirks as Luke struts away, confidence radiating from him.

FAYE
Still doing 'BIG' things. Always.

She glances at Sam, who rolls her eyes.

SAM
Very impressive.

Faye clicks her tongue, feigning annoyance.

FAYE
What's that about?

Sam crosses her arms, shaking her head.

SAM
I'm just stating the obvious.

FAYE
Don't be mad because you just sat
there while I went for what I wanted.

SAM
You were just tired of being a slut.

They both chuckle, the tension easing.

FAYE
Shut up! I couldn't keep angering The
Most High with all that fornicating. I
had to put him on lock. (gestures

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playfully)

Sam's expression shifts as she stares off, lost in thought.

SAM

It's like I'm screaming inside, and no one sees it.

FAYE

What do you mean?

Sam hesitates, her frustration bubbling.

SAM

It's like the other day. He gets mad at me for being outside all day. I'm your wife, not your maid!

Faye giggles, a knowing smile on her face.

FAYE

I'd be mad at you too.

The host's voice cuts through the chatter.

HOST (O.C.)

We have a special shoutout!

Faye suddenly perks up.

Luke approaches the microphone, beaming with pride.

A beautiful woman in the crowd catches his eye, he's troubled as he quickly turns back to Faye, who's glowing with excitement.

LUKE

I've been happily married for two years tomorrow. Stand up baby!

Faye rises, beaming as the crowd erupts in applause.

ROLLY

(shouting)

That's my sister, and my brother-in-law!

Luke's entourage cheers, playfully gesturing at Rolly. Rolly flexes his muscles at Sam, who smiles but with a hint of sarcasm.

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LUKE
(yelling)
Happy anniversary, baby. I love you so
much!

Faye forms a heart with her hands, mouthing, "LOVE YOU TOO!" Her smile is radiant, but it falters as she catches Sam's scowl while taking a seat.

FAYE
Sam, what's wrong?

Sam's frustration deepens.

SAM
Things change when you say "I DO." It
doesn't matter when you say it.

FAYE
It's always gonna be something. Just
hang in there.

SAM
That new movie, "12 more years a
slave."

A moment passes.

SAM (CONT'D)
He really wants to see it. But it's
only going to remind him of work.

Faye leans in, gently taking Sam's hand.

FAYE
You know what? The media keeps saying
there aren't many happy Black
marriages. But they're lying.

SAM
(scoffing)
Really? Where?

FAYE
Out there, in the world!

Sam remains unconvinced. Faye leans in, her expression intense, almost like a persuasive detective, as the crowd gasps and cheers in the background.

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FAYE (CONT'D)
How long does it take to see that your
man is a monster?

Sam's expression shifts, showing she's starting to consider it.

FAYE (CONT'D)
Remember Ephesians 6:12?

SAM
Oh, LAWD.

FAYE
"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."
God's truth and righteousness aren't the problem. (looking away, voice low)
it's the shadows beneath the surface—darker forces far worse than our husbands.

Sam nods in reluctant agreement, her eyes meeting Faye's as Faye flashes a confident smirk.

FAYE (CONT'D)
And that movie's just a trap to stoke our anger and keep us distracted.

Luke and the other bodybuilders approach the stage, ready for the host's announcement.

HOST
(excited)
And the Championship award goes to...
(yelling) Luke... Sherwin!

The crowd erupts in cheers as Luke strides up to accept his trophy.

CAMERA FLASHES!

HOST (CONT'D)
This is Luke's fourth win. He'll be heading to his sixth consecutive World Championship Title competition!

Luke stands proudly before the crowd, his smile radiant, bare

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chest gleaming, white teeth shining, and muscles glistening under the bright lights.

INT. LULING, LA. - LUKE AND FAYE'S MANSION - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Faye carefully places Luke's trophy on the mantel, right next to their wedding photo, his competition awards, and other trophies.

Luke approaches her slowly, playfully mimicking Tarzan, as if she's Jane.

Faye can't help but smile at Luke's goofy charm, especially when he's riding high after a competition. He wraps his arms around her waist, pulling her close in a passionate embrace, embodying the perfect gentleman.

LUKE

Two weeks before that competition...
(pauses for effect) I need five
burgers... like, right now!

Faye grins, her excitement bubbling over.

FAYE

Five burgers, huh? I think I've got
something even better.

With a playful glint in her eye, she leans in, and they tumble onto the couch, lost in each other's arms, kissing passionately, teetering on the edge of intimacy.

CLOSE UP: LUKE'S LEFT CALF REVEALS A TATTOO THAT READS "LUKE AND FAYE," ENCIRCLED BY A DIAMOND RING.

INT. LUKE AND FAYE'S MANSION - BEDROOM - MIDNIGHT

Faye awakens, sensing something is off. She sits up, her expression filled with concern as she listens intently to the sounds of Luke's distress from the living room.

INT. LULING, LA. - LUKE AND FAYE'S MANSION - KITCHEN - MORNING

Faye sits at the kitchen table, focused on her laptop while the chef prepares breakfast. Luke enters the kitchen, his eyes landing on Faye's laptop, wide open. He approaches slowly, a look of confusion on his face.

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LUKE
What's that, babe?

FAYE
I'm scheduling an appointment for you.

LUKE
Appointment? For what?

Luke grabs two pancakes, shoving a piece into his mouth, and after a moment, leans back, and tosses another balled up piece in.

FAYE
(typing)
You were up... all... night.

Luke's annoyance grows as he finishes the pancakes.

LUKE
(chewing)
It's nothing. Why do I have to hear about this every time?

Faye slams the laptop shut.

FAYE
It's not like I'm overreacting.

Luke takes a deep, annoyed breath. Faye mimics him, crossing her arms.

LUKE
Babe, this is just part of being a bodybuilder sometimes.

Faye opens the laptop again, frustration evident on her face. She types: "**random stomach pains at night.**"

FAYE
Yeah, same old excuse. Let me see. You eat pretty good, minus the GMO burgerss you love, but you're still having these pains. Are you taking too many vitamins?

LUKE
Nope, always the recommended doses.

Faye's eyes widen as she spots a search result: "Cause: HIGH STEROID USAGE."

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FAYE

OH HELL NO! I hope you're not...

LUKE

(interrupting)

You think I'd jeopardize my career
with that poison?

FAYE

Well, I already scheduled the
appointment. (sarcastically) We'll
kill two birds. Again!

Luke's expression shifts to guilt as the screen displays:
"Online appointment confirmed with Dr. Joseph R. Helm."

INT. LULING, LA. - ROLLY AND SAM'S HOME - BASEMENT "MANCAVE"
- DAY

Rolly is lifting weights, sweat glistening on his neck. His tank top is soaked as the sound of metal clanking fills the air, punctuated by his grunts of effort.

On the cement floor beside him, an old magazine from 1993 lies open near the bench press, poorly illuminated.

The page features a cartoon ad for, "**THE INCREDIBLE HULK.**" The illustration depicts a massive, green man, but with a reptilian face, complete with a lizard tongue and bulging muscles tearing through his shirt.

The ad reads: "*Increase your muscle mass, reveal your inner Hulk! Join the lizard people of the Ubaid culture, 5900 BC, bathing in the deep Egyptian waters... Unleash your inner BEAST, LOSE CONTROL!*"

At the bottom, it concludes with: "*Muscles Energy Shake.*" Rolly finishes his set, glancing at his reflection in the mirror, doubt creeping in. After a beat, he kisses his muscular arm, trying to boost his confidence.

ROLLY

(yelling)

I'm almost there, Sam!

INT. LIVING ROOM - SOFA - CONTINUOUS

Sam lies sprawled on the couch, a look of disgust etched on her face, bitterness simmering beneath the surface.

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ROLLY (O.C.)
(yelling)
You hear me?

SAM
(rolling her eyes)
Yes! (*mutters to herself*) I'm sure
your boyfriend will approve.

Her phone vibrates with a new text from Bank of America:

TEXT: "ZELLE: \$1,700.00 RECEIVED FROM FAYE SHERWIN." A look
of unexpected relief washes over Sam.

She opens the "CONQUEST MORTGAGE APP," and is immediately
prompted, "15 DAYS PAST DUE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$2,000.00
including \$300 late fee and interest."

She sighs with disappointment as she reads Faye's message:

TEXT: "I HOPE THAT HELPS."

Sam types: "YEAH, THANKS. Y'ALL STILL COMING OVER, RIGHT?"

Faye replies: "YEP! WAY MORE FUN THAN A BORING DINNER."

Sam types: "COOL, CALL ME LATER."

Setting her phone down on the table, she buries her head in
her hands, as if weighed down by an invisible burden, before
finally pushing herself up and heading into the kitchen.

INT. NEW ORLEANS, LA. - OCHSNER MEDICAL CENTER VIP WING -
EXAMINING ROOM - NOON

Luke and Faye sit anxiously, waiting for Dr. Helm to deliver
his diagnosis.

DR. HELM
No signs of physical trauma. Nothing
indicating exactly where the pains are
coming from. (*sighs*) We'll prescribe
some more pain meds for you.
(*hesitant*) Maybe it's time to take a
break from the competitions.

Luke subtly shakes his head "NO." Faye catches him.

FAYE
That could be good for you.

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LUKE
It's a world championship, babe.

Dr. Helm stands awkwardly, unsure of what to say. Faye, now visibly annoyed, turns to him.

FAYE
(voice trembling)
What about us trying to have a baby?

DR. HELM
(fidgeting, avoiding eye contact)
Having a child can happen
unexpectedly. I'm really sorry.

FAYE
(frustrated)
Sorry isn't enough. We've been trying
for months, and every empty test feels
like a failure. I need to know what's
wrong.

DR. HELM
(sighing, meeting her gaze)
I understand. Sometimes, the body just
doesn't cooperate. There are many
factors—stress, health, timing...

FAYE
(interrupting)
But what factors are affecting me? I
can't keep waiting while my life slips
away.

DR. HELM
(softly)
I wish I had a clear answer.

Faye, frustrated, storms out of the office.

LUKE
What the hell, man? Take a break?

DR. HELM
What are you doing? She'll find out
what's wrong with you eventually.

LUKE
Nothing's "WRONG" with me.

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DR. HELM
Two years is a long time.

Luke dismisses him, avoiding eye contact-checking his phone.

LUKE
How about that game this week?

Dr. Helm shakes his head in frustration. Luke spots Faye at the elevator, her patience wearing thin.

LUKE (CONT'D)
Just get me on those meds! Aight?

He rushes after Faye as Dr. Helm watches with concern. His phone rings.

DR. HELM
Dr. Helm.

He sighs in annoyance.

DR. HELM (CONT'D)
Put her through.

In the background, a woman is crying.

DR. HELM (CONT'D)
Jo, calm down! We'll just try again.

INT. LULING, LA. - ROLLY AND SAM'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Luke and Faye sit on opposite sides of the room as Rolly hands out drinks, festive music playing in the background.

He hands a drink to Luke before taking a seat. Sam glances between Luke and Faye, noting their sour expressions.

SAM
This party shole is crackin'!

ROLLY
So, what's wrong?

Rolly adopts a therapist pose. Luke smiles, contemplating.

LUKE
She mad about my clean bill of health.

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FAYE

Mm-hm. That's why he has gravity-stricken pains that make him fall to his knees at night.

Faye downs her drink.

LUKE

Babe, what do you want from me?

FAYE

Quit playin'. You know exactly what I want.

LUKE

I'm not skipping that competition!

Rolly jumps in.

ROLLY

Yeah, he needs his coins; y'all stay in a mansion!

SAM

Rolly, stay out grown folks' business.

Rolly looks appalled and starts bickering with Sam.

FAYE

We have enough money. I could go back to LPD. You could do personal training. You refuse to consider that your job is killing you? (pause) But, you don't care.

Luke's anger flares.

LUKE

I DO CARE!

FAYE

How? When you leave me at home for days or weeks at a time? I hope whatever's out there is worth losing your wife over.

Faye walks off, the bickering fading into the background. Luke stands there, sorrowful, then takes a deep, frustrated sigh.

INT. LULING, LA. - LUKE AND FAYE'S MANSION - BEDROOM - DAWN

Luke quietly slips out of bed, careful not to wake Faye. He grabs a duffle bag, already partially packed with his clothes. He leaves a note on the pillow that reads: "**I'll be back in a couple of days. I need time to think. Love you!**"

With one last glance at Faye, who remains sound asleep, Luke quietly exits the room.

EXT. PORT SULPHUR, LA. - LAKE JUDGE PEREZ - LUKE'S CABIN - MORNING

Luke pulls up to the carport.

CUT TO:

INT. LUKE'S CAR

He grabs his duffle bag and steps out of the car.

CUT TO:

EXT. FRONT DOOR OF THE CABIN

Luke approaches the front door, pushes it open, and the screen door slams shut behind him.

The soothing sounds of the morning swamp fill the air—birds chirping and the gentle trickle of the lake's waters.

EXT. PORT SULPHUR, LA. - LAKE JUDGE PEREZ - CONTINUED

Two men, COLUMBUS (51M) and ALAN (43M), cruise down the road. Alan is busy taking inventory of the bait bags in their pails. Both men are buzzing with excitement.

Columbus, a rugged Latino with salt-and-pepper hair—each gray strand hinting at a story—drives with purpose.

Alan, carefree and smirking, seals up the bags, jotting down the item count with a sharpie.

ALAN

Kings of the swamp, here we come!

COLUMBUS

(with a gleam in his eyes)

King of the swamp.

Alan pauses, then bursts into laughter.

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ALAN
Come on. That thing's a myth.

COLUMBUS
Ross saw it a few weeks back.

Alan raises an eyebrow, skeptical.

ALAN
Whatever that drunk saw wasn't a
monster gator.

COLUMBUS
He said it was on all fours, then
stood up like a man. That'll be a cool
mil for us.

ALAN
(laughing)
Sounds like something that only comes
out at night.

COLUMBUS
It was night.

ALAN
One million dollars, huh?
(sarcastically) Hell, do we even have
enough bait?

Columbus grips the steering wheel, lost in serious thought.

ALAN (CONT'D)
Sounding like conspiracy
theorists—aliens, hidden creatures,
and now monsters.

COLUMBUS
It's real. Just because you don't
believe doesn't change that. Remember,
I'm the one with insight. I'm the
brains here.

Alan scoffs, shaking his head.

ALAN
So with all your genius, you trust a
guy who still owes you five grand?

COLUMBUS
I still haven't figured out what you

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are yet.

Alan stifles a laugh, amused by Columbus's frustration as he speeds down the road.

EXT. PORT SULPHUR, LA. - LAKE JUDGE PEREZ - LAKE - DAY

Luke's boat drifts aimlessly on the lake, a look of stress etched on his face. His phone buzzes with a new text. He glances at it:

TEXT: "You were so amazing the other night. Your wife is so beautiful, and it was very sweet of you to give her a shoutout in front of your groupies. I'm trying not to take it personally that you've been avoiding me—like I'm some kind of stalker or something. But hey, I still love you. Kudos on your win! (arrow punctured heart emoji)"

Luke hesitates, his finger hovering over the screen before he finally deletes the message.

With a deep troubled breath, he casts his fishing line into the water.

Across the lake, a 13-foot alligator and two crocodiles crawl along the shore, their eyes glinting with hunger and ferocity, ready to pounce.

INT. LULING, LA. - LUKE AND FAYE'S MANSION - BEDROOM -
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Faye stirs awake and notices a note on Luke's pillow. Her expression shifts to anger.

FAYE

Really?

She turns over, frustration boiling over.

FAYE (CONT'D)

Probably at that damn cabin.

With a huff, Faye yanks the covers over herself, leaving the note lying there, untouched.

EXT. PORT SULPHUR, LA. - LAKE JUDGE PEREZ - LAKE - CONTINUED

Luke spots two men pulling up to the outskirts of his property in a pickup truck. He watches as they begin unloading items from the truck's bed.

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Turning his back to them, he casts his line into the water on the opposite side of the boat.

EXT. LAKE SHORE - CONTINUOUS

The atmosphere is thick with mystery, the sounds of the swamp heightened. The sun beats down, scorching the ground, while relentless mosquitoes swarm around.

COLUMBUS
Just grab all of it.

ALAN
That's a lot of chicken and gizzards.
No limit for your million-dollar
alligator, huh?

Alan chuckles to himself as he reaches for smallmouth buffalo, mullet, and beef melts, loading them into trash bags. He pauses, curiosity piqued.

ALAN (CONT'D)
Did Ross at least tell you how big it
was?

COLUMBUS
He wasn't close enough, but it was
pretty big.

Alan's skepticism returns.

ALAN
He was probably seeing double. I'm
telling you; he's just foolin' you.

Alan finishes loading the bait into a pail and wipes his brow with his shirt.

COLUMBUS
That Marshall fella... I'm counting on
him to pay us the big bucks.

ALAN
I hope so. I'm tired of this shit!
It's been a damn year already.

Columbus snaps back.

COLUMBUS
The rainy season just started. Quit
complaining. Hand me that.

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Alan hands Columbus a tranquilizer gun, complete with a Master-Pack of huge darts filled with tranquilizer fluid. He checks his jeans for his pistol as he grabs both bags.

ALAN

I just wonder why he wants the biggest one anyway.

Columbus grins, clearly amused.

COLUMBUS

This is why I'm the brains.

Alan rolls his eyes.

COLUMBUS (CONT'D)

More people come to see the big ones, especially one worth seeing.

Alan glances over at a man fishing in the lake. His gaze shifts to the cabin, where he spots a car parked in the carport with the license plate reading "**LUKE 88.**"

ALAN

(staring at the car)

Damn! Usually nobody's ever at that cabin.

COLUMBUS

That's alright. They just better stay out of our way.

They strap their tranquilizer rifles over their shoulders and make their way toward the water, Columbus carrying the pail while Alan drags the bags.

In the distance, ferocious-looking crocodiles, and an alligator bellow, exposing their wide snouts and hungry appetites.

One by one, they enter the water, ready for the hunt.

EXT. LULING, LA. - ROLLY AND SAM'S HOME - FRONT PORCH - LATER
Faye and Rolly sit on the porch, both deep in thought. Inside, Sam is out of sight. Rolly glances at Faye but hesitates to speak.

FAYE

Same thing. Over and over.

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Rolly stares off into space, anger simmering beneath the surface.

FAYE (CONT'D)
Remember in college when we couldn't wait to graduate and start our lives?

A beat.

FAYE (CONT'D)
Then I met Luke, and he's been a mystery ever since—a puzzle.

Rolly stays silent, and Faye's annoyance grows.

FAYE (CONT'D)
What Rolly?

ROLLY
So my thoughts matter now?

FAYE
Grow up! We not kids anymore!

ROLLY
It's simple—he's not a puzzle; he's just a regular guy not one of your investigations. The doctor said everything is fine. Why you still feelin' some type of way about it?

FAYE
That stupid doctor can't even figure out why I haven't gotten pregnant yet.

Rolly processes her words, guilt creeping in.

FAYE (CONT'D)
There's something about those two when they're together.

ROLLY
You're suspicious about everything he does.

Faye seems to tune Rolly out.

FAYE
He better not be cheating; I saw his little admirer.

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ROLLY
He loves you. Groupies come with the territory. Just chill.

FAYE
I'm going out there. To talk to him.

Rolly's frustration boils over.

ROLLY
Naw, just wait for him to come back.
Give him some space! Damn!

Faye raises an eyebrow, a mix of humor and frustration.

FAYE
Is this your male intuition talking?

Rolly stares off again, lost in thought. Faye's curiosity piques.

FAYE (CONT'D)
Must be what you have to do with Sam.

Rolly snaps out of his daze, mildly alarmed. Faye's expression shifts to determination.

FAYE (CONT'D)
We're getting a second opinion.

ROLLY
Naw, just have the doctor run more tests on him or something.

FAYE
We're going to a different doctor.
Whose side are you on?

ROLLY
Yours. I'm just saying that's not what you do to your friends.

Rolly stops himself, trying to backtrack as if he spilled a drink. Faye's fury ignites.

FAYE
I knew it! They're friends! How long?

ROLLY
Would you calm down?

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FAYE
Don't play with me! How long?

Rolly hesitates, the weight of the truth is heavy.

ROLLY
He told me since High School.

Faye stands up, and Rolly grabs her arms.

Faye yanks away and storms off toward her car.

ROLLY (CONT'D)
(yelling)
What you gonna do?

The sound of Faye's screeching tires echoes as he watches her turn the corner.

A confrontational demeanor takes over as he storms into the house.

INT. - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Rolly storms up to Sam, who has a nervous, confrontational demeanor.

Rolly hesitates, his jaw tightening as anger fills his expression.

ROLLY
What did you tell her?

Sam looks afraid but finds a boost of bravery.

SAM
The hell are you talkin' about?!

Rolly shakes his head, scoffs, and starts to walk away.

SAM (CONT'D)
We need to talk about all these
vacation days. And why is your job
calling to see if you've reconsidered?
What are you reconsidering Rolly?

ROLLY
I'm quitting.

SAM
Rolly we have bills! You know I can't

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work! Thanks to you!

Rolly turns to Sam, pulsating with anger.

ROLLY
I'm pursuing bodybuilding—full time.

Sam looks at Rolly, confused and defensive.

SAM
Your priorities are mixed up. And if you think I'd tell your sister anything that could get back to you, you're just proving how paranoid you are. Those weights are messing with your head boo boo. (leaning in) Haven't you had enough of living vicariously through him? This twisted dream of yours is making you lose your damn mind!

Rolly freezes.

SAM (CONT'D)
You're still that five-year-old kid idolizing a magazine cover. You really want to be that big green guy with muscles bursting out of his shirt real bad, huh? Is that what you want? A psycho woman hovering over you like you're a child? Freaking out every time you leave because she has no clue what you're up to? All you want is a little space and a smidgen of relief from her smothering ass! Don't you ever get tired of this pointless dream?

ROLLY
(staring angrily at Sam)
Amongst other worthless things.

Sam looks as if Rolly's words have just 'gut-punched' her.

SAM
Worthless? Why don't you just crawl back into your mancave and continue your Luke ass-kissing session!

Rolly's anger boils over. He storms up to her, teeth gritted, and grabs her tightly with one hand. Sam whimpers as Rolly's

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other hand tightens into a fist.

EXT. PORT SULPHUR, LA. - LAKE JUDGE PEREZ - LAKE SHORE - NOON

Columbus sits poised, scanning the water, while Alan fidgets, sweat dripping down his forehead, frustration etched on his face.

ALAN

(exasperated)

It's been two hours! Where the hell
are these damn alligators?

COLUMBUS

They don't come when you call; they
come when they're ready.

A beat.

COLUMBUS (CONT'D)

But there's another option.

Columbus glances at the water.

Alan shakes his head vigorously, eyes wide.

COLUMBUS (CONT'D)

Come on, man! We need that cash! All
we have to do is rent a boat from the
marina in town.

ALAN

(shocked)

No way! I'm not trying to die today!

Columbus raises an eyebrow, unfazed. He suddenly notices the man from earlier, LUKE, drifting back to shore on his boat.

COLUMBUS

He looks familiar.

ALAN

(eyes wide)

Wow, that's been his cabin all along!

Columbus smirks, unimpressed.

COLUMBUS

That boat looks a bit small for him.

Columbus's gaze sharpens as he spots a massive 13-foot,

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1,300-pound alligator silently trailing Luke's boat.

ALAN
(panicking)
What are we gonna do?

They zoom in on the alligator lurking behind Luke's boat. Columbus pulls out his pistol, checking the cylinder.

ALAN (CONT'D)
Don't shoot it!

COLUMBUS
(smirking)
Yep, I'm definitely the brains.

Alan bristles, offended.

COLUMBUS (CONT'D)
(eyes fixed on Luke)
Let's move.

Alan's confusion deepens, concern creeping in.

ALAN
Just make it quick.

Alan wipes sweat from his brow, letting out a desperate sigh.

They abandon the remaining bait and load their tranquilizer guns.

COLUMBUS
Follow my lead, I'm sure you can do
that.

Alan scoffs with annoyance.

COLUMBUS (CONT'D)
We need to act fast.

INT. LUKE'S BOAT - LAKE - CONTINUOUS

Luke closes the cooler of fish he caught.

As he looks up, he sees the two men approaching.

Confusion and annoyance cross his face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUKE
(muttering, as he approaches)
Man, what y'all still doing here?

As his boat drifts closer, he notices the guns in their hands, anxiety creeping in. He shifts nervously as they veer into the bushes.

Suddenly, a sharp, unbearable pain shoots through him, making it impossible to row. He whimpers, struggling.

INT. BUSHES - CONTINUOUS

Columbus and Alan hide in the bushes, watching Luke's distress unfold.

Luke's boat finally reaches the shore, the alligator slipping beneath the surface.

Luke stands up, and Columbus takes aim, firing a shot!

BANG!

The bullet grazes Luke's left arm. Shocked, he stumbles out of the boat.

As his foot touches the water's edge, the enormous alligator lunges, biting him and dragging him backward.

Luke crashes to the ground, panic in his eyes.

COLUMBUS
(thrilled)
We got him! Let's move! Start filming!

EXT. LAKE SHORE - CONTINUOUS

Columbus and Alan burst from the bushes, rushing toward Luke, who is now grappling with the alligator.

Alan begins filming the chaos with his smartphone.

Suddenly, they're blocked by two large crocodiles drawn in by the scent of bait.

Luke fights back with incredible strength, using his arms to fend off the alligator's jaws.

EXT. NEW ORLEANS, LA. - HIGHWAY - CONTINUED

CUT TO:

INT. FAYE'S CAR

Faye grips the steering wheel, closing a folder resting on the passenger seat.

She glances at her phone and dials Luke's number.

Silence.

No answer.

VOICEMAIL:

FAYE
(frustrated)
Better be a life-or-death situation!
Why aren't you answering your phone?

Faye disconnects the call through her car's Bluetooth, her irritation palpable.

She accelerates down the road, anger fueling her speed.

EXT. PORT SULPHUR, LA. - LAKE JUDGE PEREZ - LAKE SHORE -
CONTINUED

The alligator finally retreats back into the water. Luke, still on the ground, cradles his injured arm.

The scene zooms in on Luke's arm as a small drop of blood falls in slow motion toward the ground.

Suddenly, the alligator reemerges, losing control as it lunges at Luke, grabbing his foot and attempting to drag him into the water once more.

Luke desperately grabs at anything within reach, but nothing stops the relentless pull.

In the distance, Columbus and Alan manage to drive the two crocodiles back into the lake. Suddenly, a piercing scream from Luke cuts through the air.

Alan whips out his phone, pointing it toward the chaos of Luke's alligator attack.

Columbus readies his tranquilizer gun, but his heart sinks as he sees Luke being yanked halfway into the alligator's maw, now disappearing beneath the surface.

The water turns a deep, blood-red.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Columbus lowers his tranquilizer gun in defeat.

Alan, still filming, notices something alarming.

From the depths, a massive 20-foot, 2,000-pound alligator surfaces, the 13-foot alligator clamped sideways in its jaws.

Columbus and Alan stare in shock as the giant alligator chomps down on the smaller one.

Blood drips from both snouts, painting a gruesome picture.

Columbus's eyes widen with excitement—this monster-gator is real.

The scene turns horrific as the smaller alligator writhes in agony, its cries echoing as it's torn apart by the beast.

The monster-gator spits out the split—three remains of the 13-foot alligator into the blood-stained water.

It then turns its attention to Luke's boat, trampling it with ease.

COLUMBUS
(pointing urgently)
Alan! Get to that side!

Columbus scrambles to close in on the monster-gator, grabbing the largest dart filled with the most tranquilizer fluid and loading it into his gun.

The monster-gator demolishes Luke's boat, blood dripping from its snout onto the sand.

Columbus steadies his aim at the creature. Alan continues filming, his hands shaking with nerves.

Suddenly, the monster-gator pivots and charges at Columbus, its massive jaws opening to reveal rows of sharp, metallic teeth.

Columbus aims the gun. He pulls the trigger.

BANG!

SNIP!

INT. NEW ORLEANS, LA. - OCHSNER MEDICAL CENTER - LOBBY -
AFTERNOON

An enraged FAYE approaches the receptionist desk, gripping a folder tightly.

FAYE
I need to speak with Dr. Helm.

RECEPTIONIST NURSE
I can set up an appointment.

Faye's eyes dart to DR. HELM passing by. She bypasses the nurse, her voice rising.

FAYE
Doctor Helm!

Dr. Helm jumps, startled, as Faye corners him in the hallway. He shifts nervously.

DR. HELM
Mrs. Sherwin, you don't have an appointment today.

FAYE
Yeah, I know. But neither does your 'BFF' Luke from high school.

Dr. Helm forces a nervous laugh, but Faye's expression hardens.

FAYE (CONT'D)
Oh? This is funny to you?

DR. HELM
With all due respect, we can discuss this in my office.

FAYE
(interrupting)
I've trusted you with my husband's care for over a year, only to find out you've both been lying to me!

DR. HELM
You can't blame me for your husband withholding information.

Faye thrusts the folder into Dr. Helm's hands, leaving him confused.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DR. HELM (CONT'D)
His medical record?

Faye digs into her purse and pulls out another folder.

FAYE
(with a mocking tone)
My beloved Luke has never seen a
doctor—there's no medical record for
him anywhere in the U.S.

She slaps the folder onto his chest. Dr. Helm opens it, his expression shifting to worry.

DR. HELM
This research of yours isn't protected
by doctor-patient privilege. How did
you get this?

FAYE
A contact from my old job. He owed me
a favor. And then there's the obvious.

Faye holds up her wedding ring defiantly.

Dr. Helm rolls the folder tightly in his hands, anger simmering beneath the surface.

DR. HELM
There still needs to be written
authorization.

He hands the rolled-up folder back to Faye, who snatches it away.

FAYE
(leaning in)
Let me tell you something, Doctor. If
you've fabricated any medical records
for your "friend," you're in serious
trouble.

Their exchange draws the attention of passersby. Dr. Helm gulps, trying to mask his fear with a forced smile, but it only fuels Faye's fire.

DR. HELM
He's entitled to his secrets.

A smirk creeps onto his face, catching Faye off guard.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FAYE
I 'WILL' be back.

Faye storms off, leaving Dr. Helm to face the small crowd still watching him.

He stares at her retreating figure, the weight of her words hanging in the air.

EXT. BELLE CHASSE, LA. - MILLER BLACK FARM ZOO - REAR - LATER

Columbus and Alan pull up in a massive dump truck with a crane attached, accompanied by two men.

A zoo curator, MARSHALL DOUGLASS (56M), waits for their arrival.

Marshall guides the dump truck to an open area where the top of the largest metal cage in the zoo is ajar.

EXT. MONSTER-GATOR'S CAGE - CONTINUOUS

The crane lifts the motionless monster-gator, covered with a tarp, up and out of the truck and into the cage.

Columbus carefully opens the cage door and pulls off the tarp.

Marshall stares in awe at the 20-foot, 2,000-pound creature.

As the crane lifts upward, the top of the cage closes. The alligator opens its eyes and snout, rising to its feet.

The binding ropes around its snout SNAP!

MARSHALL
(yelling)
It's awake! Close the cage!

COLUMBUS
(quickly slamming the cage door
shut)
Got it!

The door locking automatically.

MARSHALL
(to the alligator)
You were about to have a full-course
meal, weren't you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The monster-gator glares at them, its dark brown eyes laced with green and hints of orange. Marshall scans the creature, wide-eyed.

The creature's massive eyelids closing periodically.

Its sharp, metallic teeth glint in the light, and its thick, scaly body showcases a myriad of green shades.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)

What kind of species is this?

Columbus moves to the right side of the cage, the monster-gator mimics him. He shifts to the left, and the creature follows suit.

ALAN

What the hell are you doing?!

COLUMBUS

Just watch.

Columbus extends his hand, lowering it to the ground. The monster-gator kneels.

MARSHALL

How is that possible?

COLUMBUS

It's been lurking outside Luke Sherwin's cabin. We caught it—one of the alligators that attacked and killed him. This is a famous gator now. A gator that will become a true legend. You can showcase it here at your zoo and make some serious dough. (pause) You know this dump's been struggling lately. We need a big draw. I can't afford another failure; I've lost too much already.

Marshall approaches the monster-gator slowly, fear and disbelief in his eyes, chuckling lightly.

MARSHALL

Two gators? Did you actually see this one kill Luke Sherwin?

Columbus signals for Alan to show Marshall the footage.

Marshall watches the video of Luke's attack and the emergence

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

of the monster-gator.

COLUMBUS
That pool of blood is Luke Sherwin's.

MARSHALL
I need that footage.

COLUMBUS
We can't do that; we're leaving town
as soon as I get my money.

Alan frowns, confused.

MARSHALL
You really think I'm gonna showcase a
killer alligator that killed a famous
bodybuilder to the public?

COLUMBUS
(leaning in, earnest)
Look, I get it. But this gator is a
once-in-a-lifetime find. It could turn
your zoo around. We can't afford to
let this opportunity slip away.

Marshall paces back and forth, staring at the monster-gator.
Columbus discreetly reaches for his pistol.

Alan tenses up.

Columbus grips the handle of the pistol, squeezing tighter.

MARSHALL
I can do four hundred thousand.

Columbus and Alan exchange glances, weighing the offer.
Columbus releases the pistol.

COLUMBUS
Deal.

ALAN
(eagerly)
Yeah, deal.

MARSHALL
My only concern is how I'll do this
without any footage.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COLUMBUS
You'll get the footage, when I get my
money!

Alan looks at Columbus, confused and frustrated.

COLUMBUS (CONT'D)
If I were you, I'd keep my mouth shut!
If there's an investigation, just
steer clear until it concludes. Just
think--this alligator's fame will
spread all over the city once everyone
knows what happened to Luke.

Marshall's expression shifts as he processes this.

MARSHALL
Okay... (pauses, hesitates) ...this
better work! I'll transfer the funds;
it should take a couple of hours.

An employee of the zoo, RAYE (26F), approaches the group,
surprised.

RAYE
Wow, look at this!

MARSHALL
This is Raye, one of my zookeepers.

Raye waves to Columbus and Alan as Marshall turns to her.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)
I need you to maintain this cage until
we find a better home for our... big
friend here.

Raye gazes at the monster-gator.

RAYE
This exhibit's gonna definitely draw a
crowd. Look at it--it's so unique.

MARSHALL
That's exactly what I'm counting on.

Raye studies the monster-gator closely and notices its
eyelids have now turned completely black.

She looks startled and nervous as her eyes widen. She steps
back nervously.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARSHALL (CONT'D)
I still don't understand how this
animal...

MARSHALL walks over to the monster-gator, which stares back at him ferociously. He tries to be playful.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)
...can understand commands? An
intelligent alligator, huh? How do you
do it, buddy?

Marshall kneels down, and Columbus and Alan chuckle lightly.

Raye's eyes widen with fear as the monster-gator lunges forward, its massive snout spreading to an almost 180-degree angle against the metal bars of the cage.

Marshall is startled and falls backward onto the floor. His heart races.

Columbus, Alan, and Raye stare in shock.

They catch a glimpse of the monster-gator's insides as the dart from Columbus's tranquilizer gun falls out of its snout and clinks onto the floor.

The metallic teeth of the monster-gator nearly cut through the metal bars of the cage.

MARSHALL (CONT'D)
(scrambling to his feet,
breathless, screaming)
What the hell?!

The monster-gator's snout begins to close slowly, producing a high-pitched screech as its teeth scrape against the metal.

Columbus, Alan, Marshall, and Raye all cover their ears.

The four of them stand frozen, completely horrified.

With a deafening SNAP, the monster-gator's snout shuts tight.

INT. BELLE CHASSE, LA. - MILLER BLACK FARM ZOO - CAGE AREA - EVENING

Raye walks through the zoo, tugging on cage doors. She hesitates at her locker next to the storage room, drawn toward the monster-gator's cage.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Her heart races with memories of the creature's earlier antics. She tugs on the metal lock, feeling a thrill at working with such exotic animals, but today feels different.

The monster-gator stares at her, its gaze captivating. Raye isn't scared. Instead, she feels a strange connection, as if it understands her.

She smiles and leans playfully, surprised when the monster-gator mimics her movements.

RAYE
How special are we?

Suddenly, Raye overhears Marshall's heated phone conversation down the hall. She leans in to eavesdrop, her heart pounding.

MARSHALL (O.C.)
No, they'll get their money, trust me!

Raye inches closer to his office.

MARSHALL (O.C.) (CONT'D)
No, I've thought this through. It's going to work. This creature puts any slasher movie to shame—guaranteed to bring in big bucks!

Raye smirks, a mix of amusement and disbelief.

MARSHALL (O.C.) (CONT'D)
This is my zoo, dammit! (pause) We're gonna make this the biggest exhibit ever. Forget the cops and their empty threats. (pause) This is my alligator! They eat people all the time!

Raye's eyes widen, her breath hitching as a chill runs down her spine. She instinctively takes a step back, her heart racing.

MARSHALL (O.C.) (CONT'D)
I'll leak the damn thing myself! Just do your end. Luke Sherwin's dead; that's not my problem. Just make sure I have legal rights to it soon. I don't need his wife trying to get the Humane Society to destroy it. They're low-life poachers—criminals. Who will believe them?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Suddenly, Raye hears a loud creak from the monster-gator's cage. The door slowly opens.

Overcome with curiosity and fear, Raye inches closer. Terror washes over her as she sees the monster-gator is gone. The lock is missing, and the gate looks like something took a huge bite out of it.

Panic rises within her.

RAYE
(screaming, voice trembling)
MARSHALL!!! Get out here!

INT. MARSHALL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

MARSHALL
Hold on!

Marshall puts his phone down and rushes to Raye's aid.

EXT. MONSTER-GATOR'S CAGE - CONTINUOUS

He finds her wide-eyed and trembling, her gaze fixed on the empty cage.

Confusion quickly escalates into panic as he realizes the cage is empty.

MARSHALL
What are you doing just staring at an empty cage? Go grab the dart gun!

Raye's heart races as she bolts toward the back storage room.

INT. MONSTER-GATOR'S CAGE - CONTINUOUS

Marshall cautiously steps inside the cage, his heart racing as he scans the dimly lit area.

TILT UP to the vaulted ceiling, revealing a gaping hole, just out of Marshall's view.

Suddenly, the monster-gator wraps its massive tail around a steel beam above, slowly lowering itself through the jagged opening, its scales glistening ominously.

Marshall kneels to investigate the saliva-drenched metal locks and severed bars strewn across the floor, remnants of a violent escape. Confusion clouds his mind as he remains blissfully unaware of the lurking danger.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The monster-gator opens its snout, stretching to an almost 180-degree angle, revealing rows of jagged teeth.

Saliva drips onto the floor beside him, each drop echoing like a warning bell.

INT. MONSTER-GATOR'S CAGE - RAYE'S POV

Raye bursts into the cage with the tranquilizer gun, gasping.

RAYE
(yelling)
WHAT THE-

INT. MONSTER-GATOR'S CAGE - CONTINUOUS

Marshall looks up, panic flooding his eyes. Just as he realizes the danger, the monster-gator's snout snaps shut, devouring him whole, leaving only his legs dangling.

Raye screams, the sound echoing in the confined space, as the monster-gator releases its grip from the beam and crashes onto the cage floor.

Heart racing, she quickly aims the tranquilizer at the beast and pulls the trigger. The dart flies but fails to penetrate the monster-gator's thick hide.

In a horrifying moment, it swallows Marshall whole, his legs falling lifelessly to the ground.

The monster-gator lunges at Raye. She fumbles to load another dart, panic surging through her veins.

Its massive tail swings, knocking the dart gun from her hands, clattering to the floor.

With no time to waste, Raye turns and **RUNS FOR HER LIFE**, adrenaline propelling her forward as she dodges the snapping jaws behind her.

INT. MARSHALL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Marshall's phone sits on his desk, a faint voice crackling through the receiver.

The phone BUZZES, signaling an incoming call.

In the background, RAYE sprints past Marshall's office, panic in her eyes. Suddenly, a monstrous GATOR lunges into view, chasing after her.

EXT. BATON ROUGE, LA. - HIGHWAY - CONTINUED

Columbus and Alan drive down the highway.

INT. COLUMBUS'S TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Alan dials Marshall's number again and again.

No answer.

COLUMBUS
(fuming)
What the fuck?

ALAN
(smirking)
I think we're being ghosted, my
friend.

Columbus, rage boiling over, slams the wheel and makes an illegal U-turn on the median, dirt flying and tires screeching as he veers into oncoming traffic.

INT. BELLE CHASSE, LA. - MILLER BLACK FARM ZOO - CAGE AREA - CONTINUED

Raye navigates past several animal cages, each filled with loud cries and frantic movements.

She attempts to sneak out the back but finds the door padlocked. Panic rises—she doesn't have her keys.

CUT TO:

EXT. RAYE'S LOCKER - CONTINUOUS

Raye's locker stands by the storage area, a beacon of hope.

INT. CAGE AREA - CONTINUOUS

Raye turns back, dread pooling in her stomach.

The camera's perception shifts dramatically, focusing on Raye, who is on the verge of passing out.

She takes a deep breath, steadies herself, and inches forward.

Reaching the corner of the hallway, she peeks around and heads toward her locker.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

As she approaches, the monster-gator slithers into view, blocking her path, daring her to move. The animals grow louder, their cries echoing in the chaos.

Suddenly, the monster-gator lunges, chasing Raye. She bolts toward the monkey cage.

With fear in her eyes, Raye swipes her keycard to enter the jungle-themed monkey cage, slamming the steel door shut behind her.

It locks with a **CLICK**.

INT. MONKEY CAGE - CONTINUOUS

Raye waits silently, heart racing, ensuring she's safe. When the coast is clear, she hides under a massive piece of tree bark.

Relief washes over her—until she hears a keycard being used, followed by the steel door creaking open.

Raye stares in disbelief, scanning for the monster-gator.

Moments later, the tree bark shifts and shakes, sinking lower, almost crushing her.

Petrified, Raye watches as the monster-gator walks on top of the tree bark, then suddenly stops.

A tense moment passes. The monster-gator's enormous snout turns, lowering directly in front of Raye as it spots her.

Raye covers her mouth, but a muffled scream escapes as the monster-gator opens its snout, biting into her and the tree bark **ALL AT ONCE!**

EXT. BALLE CHASSE, LA. - ROAD - NIGHT

Faye is fiercely driving down the dark road, the tension palpable.

INT. FAYE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Faye grips the steering wheel, her eyes misty with anger. She reaches into her purse, pulls out her anxiety medication, and pops a few pills into her mouth.

On the car's flat screen, we see she has called LUKE **20 TIMES**. The navigation displays: "ETA TO LAKE JUDGE PEREZ, PORT SULPHUR, LA. 25 MINUTES"

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FAYE
(frustrated)
Siri! Call my stupid brother again!

INT. LULING, LA. - LOCAL LOUNGE - CONTINUED

Rolly sits at a table, staring blankly into space, nursing a glass of Hennessy.

Around him, a couple of guys from Luke's entourage flirt with women admiring their muscles.

They nudge Rolly, who glances at a woman throwing flirtatious glances his way. The guys encourage him to respond.

ROLLY
(shaking his head)
Naw, I'm married, sweetheart.

The women look surprised. The two guys shrug off Rolly's response and continue their advances.

Rolly's expression shifts to one of deep guilt and sadness.

He fidgets with his wedding ring, oblivious to his phone lighting up beneath the table, displaying: "**BIG SIS.**"

INT. FAYE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Frustrated, Faye disconnects the Bluetooth, her anger simmering.

EXT. FAYE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Faye's car zooms down the road, the night air rushing past.

The camera brings us from the back end of Faye's car to the nearby zoo, just blocks away.

INT. MILLER BLACK FARM ZOO - MONKEY CAGE - CONTINUOUS

The monster-gator slithers through the monkey's jungle cage, dripping blood and bits of tree bark.

A gorilla stands guard, eyeing the monster-gator with confusion.

The monster-gator suddenly snaps its jaws shut with a loud **CLAP**. The gorilla backs down, fear evident in its eyes.

The monster-gator continues its path, climbing up a heavy

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

branch. At the top, it bites through the metal bars of the cage, spitting them aside. With a powerful leap, it escapes to the ground, making its grand exit.

EXT. BALLE CHASSE, LA. - ROAD - CONTINUED

A WHITE MARRIED COUPLE drives down the road in their SUV, flanked by their two BIOLOGICAL SONS in the back seat.

INT. INSIDE OF CAR - CONTINUOUS

DAD

Boys! New Orleans! Are you ready for our crazy weekend?

TEENAGE BOY

Yeah, especially when I win this bet.

The mother, visibly tired and frustrated, turns to her son.

MOM

I'm not raising a gambling addict.

The teenager smirks, brimming with confidence.

TEENAGE BOY

It's not a gamble if I always win.

The younger brother chimes in.

YOUNGER BROTHER

You're gonna lose. He's a rookie player and he sucks.

TEENAGE BOY

You're just mad because you can't hit the ball!

YOUNGER BROTHER

(angered)

I DO NOT SUCK!

MOM

Edgar Junior, stop that!

TEENAGE BOY

It's true! He gets walked every time.

Suddenly, the mom and dad notice something strange up ahead.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MOM
Honey? What's that?

The dad squints, slowing down the car as he gently presses the brakes.

The teenager's eyes widen in nervous amazement.

TEENAGE BOY
Whoa! That's an alligator!

A massive monster-gator crosses the road, causing another car to stop abruptly, tires screeching.

The family realizes the alligator is even bigger than a pick-up truck.

MOM
(petrified)
Let's turn around!

The monster-gator's long tail finally passes as it continues toward the thick trees and brush.

DAD
It's gone now.

The younger brother stares in awe.

YOUNGER BROTHER
(exclaims)
It's going towards the lake!

He grabs the door handle as cars behind them begin honking. The tail of the monster-gator disappears into the brush.

YOUNGER BROTHER (CONT'D)
I wanna see!

He jumps out of the car and runs into the brush.

MOM
(yelling)
SHANE! Edgar, go get him!

The teenager jumps out of the car, pursuing his younger brother.

MOM (CONT'D)
(yelling)
NOT YOU!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The teenager disappears into the brush.

The dad jumps out of the car, chasing after his sons as cars behind them pass by, shouting obscenities.

MOM (CONT'D)
(shouting)
OH SHUT UP AND GO AROUND!

HONK!

EXT. BALLE CHASSE, LA. - LAKE JUDGE PEREZ - LAKE SHORE -
CONTINUED

The younger brother creeps toward the lake, watching the monster-gator slither into the water.

He inches closer to the edge.

His older brother emerges from behind.

TEENAGE BOY
(yelling)
Shane, what are you doing? Are you stupid? Get your ass back here!

YOUNGER BROTHER
I just wanna see where it's going! Did you see its eyes? They sparkled!

INT. UNDER THE WATER - CONTINUOUS

The monster-gator makes an about-face and heads back to shore.

EXT. SHORE OF THE LAKE - CONTINUOUS

Their dad emerges, panic in his voice.

DAD
(yelling)
BOYS! GET BACK FROM THERE NOW!

Just as he finishes, the monster-gator lunges out of the water, biting off the boy's arm.

He screams, stumbling to the ground as blood gushes onto the sand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAD (CONT'D)
(screaming)
SHANE!

The dad and his teenage son rush toward the boy as the monster-gator makes a final lunge, grabbing him by the head and pulling him into the lake, the boy screaming.

The dad stares in shock, holding his teenage son tightly, eyes fixed on the now silent, blood-stained water.

INT. NEW ORLEANS, LA. - OCHSNER MEDICAL CENTER - DR. HELM'S OFFICE - LATER

Dr. Helm sits at his desk, focused on his laptop, erasing files with LUKE SHERWIN's name at the top.

A knock sounds at the door.

NURSE GUILMORE (O.C.)
Doctor?

DR. HELM
Come in.

Nurse Guilmore enters, looking frustrated.

NURSE GUILMORE
Your wife called. Again!

Dr. Helm's expression shifts to annoyance.

DR. HELM
Tell her I'm busy.

Nurse Guilmore raises an eyebrow, her irritation evident.

NURSE GUILMORE
She's going to keep calling. You might as well talk to her.

Dr. Helm looks like he's on the edge.

DR. HELM
(raising his voice)
I said I'm busy!

Nurse Guilmore is taken aback by his sudden aggression but remains composed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DR. HELM (CONT'D)
Look, we both know she won't stop.
Just think of something clever—you're
good at that.

Nurse Guilmore smirks, a hint of judgment in her eyes.

NURSE GUILMORE
I'll do my best, but you can't keep
avoiding her. She said you were
supposed to be home hours ago.

Dr. Helm ignores her, staring intently at his computer screen, panic creeping into his expression.

NURSE GUILMORE (CONT'D)
Oh, and I scheduled Luke for tomorrow.
Were you able to reach him?

Dr. Helm continues deleting files, his focus unwavering.

DR. HELM
No, keep trying to reach him.

Nurse Guilmore smirks slightly, amused by his mysterious turmoil, as she closes the door behind her.

After a moment, Dr. Helm picks up his private line and dials Luke.

DR. HELM (CONT'D)
(scolding)
Luke! I've been calling you all day.
(calming down) I need you in here so
we can figure out our next move. I
can't say too much, but you know
what's at stake. Just get in here!

He hangs up the phone, pausing with a look of deep worry.

EXT. BALLE CHASSE, LA - ROAD - LATER

Columbus and Alan are speeding down the road.

INT. INSIDE COLUMBUS'S TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Fury is etched on their faces as they approach the road leading to the zoo.

COLUMBUS
You think you can mess with my money?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Huh? Nobody messes with my money.

Alan, skeptical, interjects.

ALAN
(raising his voice)
OUR MONEY!

Columbus ignores Alan, his gaze fixed on the road ahead. He's shocked to see loose animals running amok.

ALAN (CONT'D)
Something must have happened.

COLUMBUS
There goes that genius when I actually need him.

Columbus pulls over, and they quickly approach the scene.

EXT. ROAD - CONTINUOUS

They see an EMT and several police officers searching through the woods.

They approach an officer who is counseling a family, particularly a 17-year-old boy who stares blankly, clearly traumatized.

COLUMBUS
Officer, I need to get through to Canton Street.

OFFICER
We can't let anyone through. Please, just go back to your car.

The teenage boy snaps out of his daze.

TEENAGE BOY
When are you gonna find and kill that alligator?

The officer tries to keep him calm.

COLUMBUS
Alligator? Where did it go?

The teenager, frustrated, points toward the bushes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TEENAGE BOY
In that lake over there.

Columbus and Alan immediately head back to the truck.

The truck takes off down the road bypassing the road block.

EXT. PORT SULPHUR, LA. - LAKE JUDGE PEREZ - LAKE - CONTINUED

Two fishermen, LYLE (66M) and ROSS (68M), drift in a white boat. A lantern sits in the middle of the boat.

Ross, visibly drunk, stumbles as he searches the water with his flashlight. Lyle, agitated, reaches for another beer.

LYLE
It's been a while, Ross.

Ross continues scanning the water with his flashlight.

ROSS
(slurring, interrupting)
It's out here!

LYLE
(sighs)
Let's head back to shore. I'm hungry;
I need my supper.

Lyle takes a swig of his beer. Ross stumbles slightly. Lyle belches.

LYLE (CONT'D)
You're drunk! You're gonna fall in
looking for this thing.

Suddenly, Ross notices something up ahead.

ROSS
I knew it! See! look!

Lyle squints, noticing movement in the water.

LYLE
FISH. That's all...

ROSS
NO! LOOK!

Suddenly, scales from an alligator appear.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LYLE
(fearful but dismissive)
It's just a croc. It's harmless.

Ross pulls out his weapon and fires.

BANG!

Lyle jumps, startled and angry.

LYLE (CONT'D)
ROSS! WHAT THE HELL?!

The scales disappear beneath the surface.

ROSS
Shit!

Ross stares into the water, tension building. A moment passes.

Suddenly, a giant alligator tail lifts out of the water and smashes into the center of the boat. Ross falls into the water.

Lyle panics, standing up. Ross resurfaces, gasping for air.

The giant alligator tail strikes again, smashing into the boat. Lyle falls into the water.

The boat splits in half—one side afloat, the other sinking.

Ross and Lyle are stunned as the monster-gator fully reveals itself, turning back to face them.

LYLE
OH! MY!

They stare in terror as the massive creature glides toward them. Panicked, they begin swimming as fast as they can.

The monster-gator dips beneath the surface.

LYLE (CONT'D)
(despairingly)
Oh hell!

Ross gets yanked under the water. Lyle swims for his life.

One of Ross's severed arms surfaces, floating on top of the water. Lyle dives underwater, trying to swim faster.

EXT. LAKE - POV UNDERWATER

The monster-gator charges through the water at Lyle. Lyle screams, bubbles escaping his mouth.

The monster-gator turns sideways, opens its jaws, and grabs Lyle as it swims by.

EXT. LAKE - POV ABOVE THE WATER

The water begins to darken, indicating blood. The surface calms.

A moment passes, then the enormous monster-gator surfaces quickly, holding Lyle's lifeless body.

The monster-gator's eyelids shift from black to their original green color.

It turns away, revealing the back end of its long tail as it swims off.

EXT. PORT SULPHUR, LA. - LAKE JUDGE PEREZ - LUKE'S CABIN - MOMENTS LATER

Faye arrives, her eyes locked on Luke's car parked in the carport.

She rushes to the front door, twists the knob, and finds it unlocked.

FAYE
(exclaims)
Luke.

INT. LUKE'S CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Faye scans the room, her heart racing as she notices Luke's belongings scattered on the sofa.

FAYE
(voice steady, intense)
I'm not mad anymore. We need to talk.
I know you're here.

She spots Luke's bag of clothes but finds no sign of him.

Faye searches the rest of the cabin, everything neat and untouched, a stark contrast to her growing anxiety.

Her gaze shifts outside to a boat near the shore, trampled

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

and in pieces.

Faye gasps, then bolts outside, the front screen door slamming shut behind her.

EXT. PORT SULPHUR, LA. - LAKE JUDGE PEREZ - TRAIL - CONTINUED
Columbus and Alan drive down the unpaved road leading to Luke's cabin.

INT. COLUMBUS'S TRUCK

Alan is on the verge of bursting, his frustration boiling over.

ALAN
(blurted out)
This is suicide!

COLUMBUS
What?

ALAN
You really think it's just gonna come back here?

Columbus's patience wears thin.

COLUMBUS
Where the hell else would it go?

ALAN
This isn't just any gator, man!

Columbus smirks, a hint of sarcasm in his voice.

COLUMBUS
Oh, really? It isn't?

ALAN
I'm serious! You saw those teeth! It had to have torn through a steel and metal cage to escape. We're in real danger.

Columbus waves off Alan's concerns, excitement bubbling beneath the surface.

COLUMBUS
We're shooting for that mil this time.
(pause) It's our time, man! Get

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

excited!

Alan stares at him, fear etched on his face, the weight of the situation sinking in.

INT. LULING, LA - ROLLY AND SAM'S HOME - KITCHEN - CONTINUED

SAM, tears in her eyes, holds a GLOCK in her right hand. A mildly bruised and blackened eye marks her face.

She sits at the kitchen table, staring off into space, clutching an ultrasound image of a baby in her other hand.

On the table, a medical report is partially visible. It reads: "Cause of miscarriage: possible abuse."

Further down, it states: "Results: Permanent infertility."

"Doctor notes: Patient has suffered extreme physical, psychological, and emotional trauma rendering her unfit for work until further notice."

Sam's gaze drifts to a wedding picture of her and ROLLY. Rage ignites in her eyes, burning a hole through Rolly's face in the photo.

With a trembling hand, she lets the ultrasound slip onto the table, raises the gun, and aims it at Rolly's image.

Suddenly, her phone RINGS. The screen reads: **FAYE CALLING.**

Sam hesitates, lowers the gun, and after a few more rings, answers the call, silent.

FAYE (O.S.)
(hysterical)
Somebody finally answered!

Sam wipes her tears away.

SAM
Why? What happened? You okay?

EXT. LUKE'S CABIN - CONTINUOUS

FAYE
(crying)
I came here to talk to Luke and I
don't know where he is! I found his
clothes, bag, and fishing gear! It's
weird, you know?

INT. ROLLY AND SAM'S HOME - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Sam stares blankly at the wall, wiping her eyes again.

FAYE (O.S.)
Sam! You there?

SAM
Maybe he just took a walk. He'll be back.

FAYE (O.S.)
In the woods, girl? At night?! A black man taking a nice brisk stroll.

Sam's anger flares.

SAM
I don't need this right now! I have enough to deal with. You're such a drama queen! Didn't you say he does this all the time?

EXT. LUKE'S CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Faye's frustration boils over.

FAYE
So that makes it okay? You and Rolly constantly give him a pass, and I'm so tired of it!

A beat.

FAYE (CONT'D)
Why is his boat trampled to pieces, Sam? Huh?! He even left the front door unlocked!

INT. ROLLY AND SAM'S HOME - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Concern washes over Sam as she pushes her own drama aside.

SAM
I'm sorry, have you called the police?

FAYE (O.S.)
I can't keep involving them in my problems. And that damn Sharon might leak somethin' to the press.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM

Well, just wait. I'm on my way.

FAYE (O.S.)

I don't think it's safe. I'll just...

Sam interrupts, urgency in her voice.

SAM

You shouldn't be there alone. I was just waiting up for Rolly.

Sam disengages her Glock, stands, and tucks it into the back of her jeans.

FAYE (O.S.)

I'm so scared! Sam I don't know what's going on!

SAM

It's okay, we'll figure it out together.

Sam hangs up the call, her hands shaking as she grabs her keys. She takes a deep breath, preparing for what's next.

EXT. PORT SULPHUR, LA. - LAKE JUDGE PEREZ - LUKE'S CABIN -
CONTINUED

Faye spots blood smeared on the jagged edges of the boat's torn wood.

With a mix of despair and longing, she reaches for one of Luke's fishing poles.

In the distance, something stirs in the water.

Faye suddenly hears the faint rumble of a truck approaching, growing louder.

Panic rising, she drops the fishing pole and rushes inside the cabin.

INT. LUKE'S CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Faye crouches behind the window sill, her breath steady as she peeks through the glass.

INT. COLUMBUS'S TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

The truck rolls up to the cabin. Columbus squints, skepticism

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

etched on his face.

COLUMBUS
(half-joking)
Well, the welcoming committee is here.

He glances at Alan, who fidgets nervously, his hands tapping on his knees.

COLUMBUS (CONT'D)
Come on, man. Get it together.

INT. LUKE'S CABIN - FAYE'S POV

Faye's eyes widen as she spots Columbus and Alan approaching the front door, tranquilizer guns slung over their shoulders, pistols drawn.

She darts into the kitchen, searching for a hiding spot.

The sound of heavy footsteps grows louder.

The screen door slams shut behind Columbus and Alan as they step inside.

Columbus takes charge, his demeanor commanding.

COLUMBUS
Alan, search the place.

Faye holds her breath, her phone vibrating in her pocket. She quickly silences it.

Alan moves toward her hiding spot. Faye scrambles to the back, her heart racing.

Faye hears Columbus's boots thudding closer and panics. She slips into a closet, quietly locking the door behind her.

Columbus rounds the corner, twisting the doorknob slowly, a predatory glint in his eyes.

COLUMBUS (CONT'D)
Someone was here looking for him.

INT. INSIDE CABIN CLOSET - CONTINUOUS

Faye presses her hand over her mouth, stifling a gasp.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COLUMBUS (O.C.)
(leaning in)
Whoever it is, ain't leaving here
alive.

Faye's eyes widen in terror as Columbus walks away, the sound of heavy footsteps diminishing.

INT. LIVING ROOM OF CABIN - CONTINUOUS

COLUMBUS
Let's gear up. It's tougher to catch
them once they're loose.

ALAN
We should just let it go.

Columbus shoots him a glare, frustration boiling over.

COLUMBUS
What, you have better things to do?

ALAN
(urgently)
Listen, your "monster-gator" has been
out here for weeks. It's angry,
scared, and dangerous.

Columbus interrupts, his voice rising.

COLUMBUS
(shouting)
It's just a stupid alligator!

A beat.

Alan remains skeptical, his brow furrowed.

COLUMBUS (CONT'D)
We caught it once; we can do it again.

ALAN
It's smarter than you think.

COLUMBUS
We'll just sit tight and let it come
slithering out of the water.

ALAN
(sarcastically)
Great plan for when the cops start

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

asking about Luke's mangled body!

INT. INSIDE CABIN CLOSET - CONTINUOUS

Faye's heart races as she processes the conversation.

FAYE
(mouthing)
Alligator? Killed Luke?!

INT. LIVING ROOM OF CABIN - CONTINUOUS

COLUMBUS
(smirking)
I've got it all figured out. I'm the
brains here, and you? (serious) You're
just the coward.

Alan stands tall, defiance in his posture.

ALAN
You're the fuckin' genius, huh? The
one who thinks it's smart to return to
a crime scene and catch a fuckin'
psycho-killer alligator?

Columbus hesitates, then chuckles, amusement flickering in
his eyes.

COLUMBUS
Yeah, yeah. Just remember, it's gonna
take everything we've got. So, man up!

INT. INSIDE CABIN CLOSET - CONTINUOUS

Faye glances at her phone, noticing a text from Sam sent five
minutes ago, the muffled sounds of Columbus and Alan echoing
in the background.

COLUMBUS (O.C.)
At least we don't need bait this time.

Faye reads Sam's message:

TEXT: "WHY AREN'T YOU ANSWERING? I'LL BE THERE SOON. GPS SAYS
15 MINUTES. I'LL PUT THE METAL TO THE PEDAL!"

In the distance, Alan's voice cuts through.

ALAN (O.C.)
Fuckin' genius? Yeah right. This is a

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

disaster.

Faye's heart races as she replies, typing quickly.

TEXT: "TURN AROUND. CALL THE POLICE. TWO MEN ARE HERE. THEY MIGHT HAVE DONE SOMETHING TO LUKE!"

Columbus's confident voice rings out.

COLUMBUS (O.C.)
It'll come right to us.

Just as Faye is about to hit send, she hears someone calling her name from outside.

INT. LIVING ROOM OF CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Columbus and Alan freeze, their attention drawn to the voice.

INT. INSIDE CABIN CLOSET - CONTINUOUS

Faye's heart races as she quickly presses send.

EXT. PORT SULPHUR, LA. - LAKE JUDGE PEREZ - LUKE'S CABIN - CONTINUED

Sam approaches the cabin, her voice echoing in the stillness.

SAM
Faye! Why aren't you answering me?

As she walks, her phone buzzes with a text.

She glances at it, her eyes widening at the video titled,

TEXT: "BREAKING NEWS! LUKE SHERWIN'S CONTROVERSIAL PREGNANT BABY-MOMMA DRAMA SURFACES."

SAM (CONT'D)
Oh my GOD! FAYE!

Just then, Faye's text comes through. Sam's expression shifts, realization dawning.

She turns to head back to her car, urgency in her steps.

Columbus and Alan spot her. Columbus cocks his pistol and fires a shot into the air.

BANG!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sam jumps, halting in her tracks.

COLUMBUS
Where are you going?

She raises her hands, trying to defuse the situation.

SAM
Let's just calm all the way down. I'm looking for someone, not trying to start World War Three.

Columbus and Alan exchange wary glances.

COLUMBUS
Drop the phone.

Sam reluctantly lets her phone fall, but keeps her composure.

SAM
Hold on! I'm just looking for my husband. I'm worried, that's all.

INT. LUKE'S CABIN - FAYE'S POV

Faye inches toward the front door, feeling helpless.

EXT. LUKE'S CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Columbus narrows his eyes at Sam.

COLUMBUS
Your husband? Faye?

SAM
Where is he? You know something.

COLUMBUS
How do you figure that?

SAM
You're in his cabin with guns like you own the place.

Columbus gestures to Alan.

COLUMBUS
Alan, check her.

Alan steps forward, pulling Sam's gun from the back of her jeans.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He picks up her phone and brings her closer to Columbus.

SAM
This is trespassing, you know?

He hands the phone to Columbus and tosses her gun into the bushes.

COLUMBUS
You've seen our faces. Trespassing is the least of your worries.

Columbus glances at the phone screen, his expression shifting.

A slight grunt escapes him, followed by a chuckle.

COLUMBUS (CONT'D)
Faye. Must be the one hiding in the closet.

He turns the phone toward Sam, revealing a string of frantic texts from Faye.

Sam's worry deepens, but her gaze shifts to something out of the corner of her eye, panic washing over her.

SAM
No...

Columbus and Alan follow her gaze, eyes widening as the massive monster-gator emerges from the lake, its grotesque form charging at Columbus.

Columbus quickly stows Sam's phone and readies his tranquilizer, while Alan fires his pistol.

BANG!

BANG!

Sam ducks behind Columbus's truck, heart racing.

ALAN
I TOLD YOU THIS WAS STUPID!

The monster-gator, with its enormous snout, knocks Columbus fifty feet into the air, bellowing as he flies into the brush.

Alan drops his pistol but grabs his tranquilizer gun, aiming

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

as he runs for the cabin.

The tranquilizer dart misses as the monster-gator pursues him, leaping up the stairs and crashing through the screen door.

INT. LIVING ROOM OF CABIN - CONTINUOUS

The monster-gator lunges, catching Alan by the torso mid-air and landing with a thud.

It tosses him vertically into the air, then opens its jaws wide, almost 180 degrees, welcoming his body inside, feet first.

Its jaws clench around Alan, his head poking out.

ALAN
(screaming)
NO! GOD, PLEASE NO!

Faye watches in horror, frozen in disbelief.

The monster-gator bursts through the side cabin door, Alan's head still in its jaws, his screams echoing as it disappears into the bushes out back.

EXT. LUKE'S CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Faye's scream pierces the air, snapping Sam out of her shock. Columbus lies unconscious in the bushes. Faye bolts from the wreckage of the cabin, rushing to Sam.

SAM
We have to get outta here! NOW!

They hear a low bellow and turn to see the monster-gator, blood smeared across its snout, staring them down.

Sam spots Alan's pistol on the ground and lunges for it.

SAM (CONT'D)
Faye, get in the truck!

Faye jumps into Columbus's pickup.

The monster-gator bellows at Sam.

BANG!

BANG!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The shots have no effect.

FAYE

SAM! Forget it! Come on!

The monster-gator charges, fury in its eyes.

SAM

We're not doin' this!

She jumps into the truck, slamming the door behind her.

INT. INSIDE COLUMBUS'S TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

SAM

DAMMIT! NO KEYS!

The monster-gator lumbers toward the front of the truck, climbing onto the hood, causing it to sag under its immense weight.

Sam and Faye scream as the monster-gator bellows, the back of the truck lifting slightly under the pressure of its bulk.

It's so massive that three-fourths of it is still on the ground.

Suddenly, the monster-gator retreats, and the truck slams back down.

FAYE

(yelling)

It's push to start, Sam! The fob is right there!

Sam spots the key fob and quickly starts the truck. Just as she's about to hit the gas—

EXT. COLUMBUS'S TRUCK - POV UNDER TRUCK

The monster-gator ducks underneath, using its entire body to lift the truck onto its back.

INT. COLUMBUS'S TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Faye and Sam exchange wide-eyed glances, disbelief washing over them.

They scream.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM
This is insane!

EXT. COLUMBUS'S TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

The monster-gator begins to spin the truck in a wild circle, their screams filling the air.

EXT. COLUMBUS'S TRUCK - COLUMBUS'S POV

Columbus stirs, finally regaining consciousness.

He sits up, eyes widening at the sight of his truck spinning on the back of the monster-gator.

COLUMBUS
(under his breath)
What the hell...?

Realizing he can't waste any more time, Columbus discreetly grabs his guns and bolts into the bushes.

INT. INSIDE COLUMBUS'S TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

FAYE
(shouting)
Drive! Hit the gas!

SAM
(frantic)
I'm trying!

EXT. COLUMBUS'S TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

One rear wheel spins wildly in the air while the other remains motionless on the monster-gator's back.

The truck bounces violently with the creature's movements.

INT. COLUMBUS'S TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

FAYE
(yelling)
Sam, put it in four-wheel drive!
HURRY!

EXT. COLUMBUS'S TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

The monster-gator stops spinning and starts to walk forward, causing Sam and Faye to bounce even more.

INT. COLUMBUS'S TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Sam presses the button for "four-wheel drive," and the truck jolts as all four wheels kick into gear. She slams down on the gas pedal.

EXT. COLUMBUS'S TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

ENGINE REV'S!

BOOM!

The front wheels crash down onto solid ground.

BOOM!

The back wheels hit the ground with a thud.

INT. COLUMBUS'S TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Faye's phone slips from her pocket, landing under the rear seats as the truck speeds away, leaving the monster-gator behind.

The creature bellows at them, but Faye catches its gaze through the rear window.

FAYE
(relieved, softly)
See you later, alligator.

As they drive off, Faye watches the monster-gator retreat into the bushes, its focus shifting back to its meal—Alan.

Faye sits frozen, fear and shock etched on her face, grappling with the reality of what just happened.

SAM
(yelling)
What in the world was that?!

Faye looks lost, struggling to process her thoughts.

FAYE
(voice trembling)
Luke's dead.

Sam's eyes widen in disbelief.

SAM
What?! Are you sure?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FAYE
(staring blankly)
They said they're gonna recapture the alligator that killed him.

SAM
(realizing)
You know those dudes knew you were in there the whole time, right?

FAYE
That thing killed him. I can feel it.

Faye's mind races, overwhelmed by emotions.

SAM
(trying to regain focus)
You can't trust them. They've been stealing alligators!

Sam wrestles with the steering wheel, navigating the rough terrain, but Faye remains dazed.

SAM (CONT'D)
Faye, did you hear me?

FAYE
(softly)
I know. But it all makes sense now.

SAM
Those guys would've capped us if it weren't for that alligator.

Faye struggles with her grief.

FAYE
Yeah, like it came for who it really wanted. Did Rolly ever mention prehistoric alligators?

SAM
(exclaims)
When doesn't he? He's all into that wicked Egyptian mythology and idolatry mess. Why?

Faye's expression shifts, a spark of realization igniting.

FAYE
Didn't he say the Egyptians would pray

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

to giant alligators? I wonder.

SAM
(interrupting)
Does it matter, Faye? What are we
gonna do?

Faye looks stunned, her thoughts still swirling.

FAYE
Go to the police?

SAM
(cutting her off)
And tell them what? That we just
waltzed with a deranged alligator? You
really think they'll arrest it?

FAYE
(smiling slightly)
Yeah, and if they do, I'm sure
alligator man will be desperate enough
to post its bail.

SAM
Let's focus on getting the hell out of
here. We can plan its welcome home
party later!

Faye notices Sam's black eye, concern creeping in.

Sam quickly looks away, and Faye's expression shifts to one
of revelation.

Sam drives recklessly through the woods.

FAYE
(frustrated)
Where are you going? You're just
driving and driving!

SAM
I don't know! Haven't you ever been
out here with him?

FAYE
A long time ago. (sarcastic) He needs
his space, as Rolly puts it.

Sam glances at Faye, a serious tone creeping in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM

Faye, I hate to say this, especially
now...

FAYE

(yelling)

STOP!

Sam slams on the brakes, narrowly avoiding an elderly woman with her hands raised, looking distressed.

ELDERLY WOMAN

Oh, thank you. I need help.

Sam and Faye rush to her side.

EXT. PORT SULPHUR, LA. - LAKE JUDGE PEREZ - WOODS - MIDNIGHT

FAYE

Are you alright?

ELDERLY WOMAN

Not really. I can't find my husband's boat anywhere.

Faye's nurturing instincts kick in.

FAYE

Ma'am, there's a dangerous alligator out here. You should head home where it's safe.

The woman, undeterred, shakes her head.

ELDERLY WOMAN

He always goes fishing with Lyle, and it's past midnight. He wouldn't still be out here.

She starts to walk away, and Faye quickly follows.

FAYE

We can take you home.

The woman, her face filled with hopelessness, interrupts.

ELDERLY WOMAN

The police can't even help; those zoo killings have them tied up.

Sam approaches, intrigued.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM
Zoo killings?

ELDERLY WOMAN
An alligator escaped.

Faye's expression shifts to understanding.

FAYE
We'll take you to the lake.

Sam's frustration bubbles over.

SAM
(to the woman)
Give us a moment.

Sam pulls Faye aside.

SAM (CONT'D)
I really hate when people volunteer
me!

FAYE
She lives out here! We can help her
find her husband, and maybe he can
protect us from that monster.

Sam hesitates, weighing the risks.

SAM
Alright, but if we end up as alligator
chow, I'll never forgive you.

Faye can't help but chuckle, a hint of amusement breaking
through her tension.

FAYE
Come on crazy, let's go.

The two of them head over to the woman, determination in
their steps.

EXT. PORT SULPHUR, LA. - LAKE JUDGE PEREZ - WOODS - CONTINUED

Columbus trudges deeper into the brush, his tranquilizer
rifle gripped tightly in his hands.

The eerie silence of the night is suddenly pierced by the
distant bellow of an alligator.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Columbus pauses, his expression shifting from determination to caution.

He turns toward the sound, listening intently before resuming his trek further into the shadows of the forest.

EXT. PORT SULPHUR, LA. - LAKE JUDGE PEREZ - LAKE - CONTINUED

CUT TO:

INT. COLUMBUS'S TRUCK

Sam, Faye, and the elderly woman approach the lake. The distant bellowing of an alligator sends a shiver through Sam.

FAYE
Did you hear that?

Sam swallows hard, parking the truck with a shaky breath.

SAM
Alligators and crocodiles are
everywhere up there!

The elderly woman, her eyes sparkling with a mix of nostalgia and reassurance, chimes in.

ELDERLY WOMAN
I've lived here my whole life. They're
harmless.

Sam and Faye exchange wary glances, but curiosity pulls them toward the lake.

EXT. PORT SULPHUR, LA. - LAKE JUDGE PEREZ - LAKE - MOMENTS
AFTER

The swamp is alive with sounds—crickets, croaking frogs, and the ominous rustle of unseen creatures. Sam's breath quickens, almost drowned out by the eerie chorus.

As they near the water, a thick fog clings to the surface, revealing the lake's vastness.

A few alligators and crocodiles watch them, their eyes glinting in the dim light. Sam's unease grows.

SAM
Can we hurry up? I don't see anything
out here.

(CONTINUED)

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FAYE
Wait, I see something.

Faye points to a half-submerged boat drifting lazily on the water.

ELDERLY WOMAN
Good eyes, dear.

Faye's expression shifts to one of regret.

FAYE
Was it a white boat?

The woman falls silent, her gaze locked on the lake.

FAYE (CONT'D)
I don't see your husband.

The woman continues to stare, lost in thought.

Faye squints at the boat, recognition of its destruction dawning in her eyes.

With a deep breath, Faye steps closer, gently placing a hand on the woman's arm.

ELDERLY WOMAN
Forty-two years. Damn you, ROSS!

Tears spill down the woman's cheeks. Faye instinctively pulls her into a comforting embrace.

FAYE
I know how hard it is to lose someone who truly understands you—even when you don't always understand them. I believe the alligator did this. I really need your help.

A heavy pause hangs in the air. The woman wipes her tears, determination flickering in her eyes.

FAYE (CONT'D)
Do you know how to kill an alligator?

ELDERLY WOMAN
We've got some firepower in the shed.
Used it a few times.

Sam's gaze darts to the water as she spots alligators and

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

crocodiles slipping into the lake, heading their way.
Panic surges through her, and she pulls out Alan's gun.

SAM
We need to get outta here-now!

The women walk toward the truck. Sam leading the way with the gun by her side.

Suddenly, a rustling sound breaks the tension, drawing their attention to the brush ahead.

Sam aims the pistol at the noise.

SAM (CONT'D)
(shouting)
Who's there?!

Silence hangs heavy in the air.

The rustling grows LOUDER, the atmosphere thick with dread as something emerges from the bushes.

Shock and fear wash over their faces.

INT. LULING, LA. - ROLLY AND SAM'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - LATER

The scene opens with a title card: "**45 MINUTES EARLIER.**"

Rolly bursts into the house, flanked by two members of Luke's entourage.

His face is a mask of worry.

ROLLY
(shouting)
Sam! You home?

FRIEND 1
(chuckling)
Man, you lost your phone, and now your girl?

He laughs, but Rolly's expression remains tense.

ROLLY
(defensive)
She ain't gone far.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRIEND 1
(grinning)
Better check the closets, just in
case!

Rolly starts searching the house, his movements frantic.

FRIEND 2
(teasing)
Yeah, man, she might've packed her
shit and left your ass.

The friends laugh, but Rolly returns to the living room,
irritation simmering.

ROLLY
(annoyed)
Y'all play too damn much.

He heads to the garage, the camera following him closely.

He glances around, but Sam's car is nowhere to be seen.

Panic sets in as he rushes back to the living room.

ROLLY (CONT'D)
(alarmed)
Her car is gone!

FRIEND 1
(trying to calm him)
Don't trip, man! She'll be back.

Ignoring him, Rolly strides over to the house phone in their
dining room.

FRIEND 2
(mocking)
Damn, y'all still have a landline?

Their laughter grates on Rolly's nerves as he dials angrily.

He checks his voicemail, and his expression shifts from worry
to fear.

He hangs up and dials Sam's number.

EXT. LAKE JUDGE PEREZ - WOODS - CONTINUOUS

Columbus trudges through the underbrush, the distant sound of
an alligator bellowing echoing around him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He glances at Sam's buzzing phone, which displays "**Rolly, Wife Beater!**" on the screen. He smirks, pocketing the phone without answering.

INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Rolly's anxiety morphs into sadness and regret.

ROLLY
(frustrated)
She ain't answerin'!

He hangs up and dials Faye, the laughter of his friends faintly audible in the background.

INT. COLUMBUS'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Sam and Faye are driving through the woods, bickering in the front seat. Faye's phone continues to buzz on the floor in the back.

INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Rolly's fear escalates as he lowers the phone, realization dawning.

ROLLY
(voice trembling)
Sam went to that damn cabin too. I
know it.

FRIEND 2
(jokingly)
Uh... oh!

The friends burst into laughter, but Rolly's frustration boils over.

ROLLY
(confrontational)
What's your problem, man?

FRIEND 1
(interjecting)
Rolly, we've all been drinking.

ROLLY
(serious)
This is serious! Y'all haven't seen or
heard from Luke. (pause) I told her
not to go to that cabin. Women never

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

listen.

The friends exchange glances, unfazed by Rolly's distress. He scoffs, shaking his head with a mix of disbelief and anger.

ROLLY (CONT'D)
(muttering)
Y'all probably ain't even really cool
with Luke like that anyway. Fake-ass
punks.

FRIEND 2
Let me give you some advice: you care
too much dawg. You'll never fit in
with us; you just don't have the
confidence. Seriously, stick to your
day job. Luke's probably avoiding yo
ass 'cause he senses it too. Us
bodybuilders, we can spot 'kats' like
you from a mile away.

ROLLY
(irritated)
Y'all gotta bounce.

FRIEND 1
(smiling)
Aight, we out.

The friends exit, leaving Rolly alone in the dimly lit room.

The laughter fades, replaced by an oppressive silence.

Rolly sinks into a chair, disappointment, anger, and
confusion etched on his face as he reflects on their words.

He looks down at his wedding ring and fidgets with it
slightly.

After a moment, a surge of determination washes over him.

He stands abruptly, his jaw set, and strides toward their
bedroom.

INT. ROLLY AND SAM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Rolly opens his gun case, entering the combination with shaky
hands.

He finds a Glock labeled "**HIS**," but the spot for "**HERS**" is
empty. Confusion and worry wash over him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He pauses, the weight of the moment pressing down on him.

He fills the Glock's chamber with bullets, determination hardening his features.

Rolly stands there, the gun heavy in his grip.

He glances at the door, the tension palpable.

The laughter of his friends echoes in his mind, but he shakes it off, focusing on the task ahead.

He charges out of the room, gun in hand.

EXT. LAKE JUDGE PEREZ - LAKE SHORE - CONTINUED

The scene snaps back to the present as Sam, Faye, and the elderly woman stand tense, confronted by Columbus.

Sam and Columbus face off, guns drawn.

COLUMBUS
DROP IT!

SAM
(unflinching, eyes locked on him)
YOU DROP YOURS!

Sam steadies her aim, Faye and the elderly woman huddled behind her, their breaths shallow.

Columbus's gaze shifts to the elderly woman.

COLUMBUS
Ain't that something? You met my old friend.

He chuckles, amusement dancing in his eyes, then glances at his truck.

COLUMBUS (CONT'D)
Enjoy the ride?

FAYE
What exactly happened to Luke?

Columbus raises an eyebrow, intrigued.

COLUMBUS
Ah, the famous Mrs. Luke Sherwin, the closet hider.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A beat.

COLUMBUS (CONT'D)
Almost didn't recognize you without
the fake glitz.

Faye's anger flares, her fists clenching.

His smirk fades into a patronizing grin.

COLUMBUS (CONT'D)
I know more than you think.

He glances at the lake, spotting a half-demolished boat.

COLUMBUS (CONT'D)
Bad day for husbands.

Faye's rage ignites.

She snatches the gun from Sam's hand, pointing it at
Columbus, her hands trembling.

FAYE
I'll blow your brains out unless you
help us kill that alligator!

Columbus raises an eyebrow, impressed.

COLUMBUS
You've got guts.

He reaches for his phone, making the trio tense.

COLUMBUS (CONT'D)
Looking for answers?

He plays a video of Luke's attack.

Faye, Sam, and the elderly woman watch in shock, their faces
pale.

The video ends, and Faye trembles, tears streaming down her
face.

SAM
(softly)
Give me the gun, sis.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FAYE
(trembling)
Are we really gonna point these guns
at each other all night?

Columbus smirks.

COLUMBUS
Alan's gun only had four bullets.

Faye pulls the trigger in desperation, but it clicks empty.

She drops the gun, defeated, her shoulders slumping.

Columbus turns to the elderly woman.

COLUMBUS (CONT'D)
You wouldn't happen to have that five
grand on you, would you?

The woman panics and bolts.

Columbus shoots her in the back.

BANG!

Sam and Faye scream as the woman collapses, blood pooling
around her.

Sam walks up to her and kneels beside the body, shock on her
face.

SAM
No.

Faye steps forward, fists clenched, her voice rising.

FAYE
Is this all you know, Devil? Stealing
and killing?

COLUMBUS
Calm down. I still want my alligator,
and you're gonna help me.

Faye glares at Columbus, tears streaming down her face, her
voice trembling with fury.

FAYE
We're not helping you with anything!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Columbus steps closer, and Faye flinches.

COLUMBUS

I could get a million for it. \$250,000
each for you.

He grins, a predator sizing up his prey.

Sam, desperate, approaches Faye, her voice urgent.

SAM

We won't survive out here alone! We
need him!

Faye's expression morphs into a mix of confusion and anger,
her heart racing.

FAYE

Sam, are you serious? He just killed
someone right in front of us!

SAM

He's a scumbag, but we need to do
this.

FAYE

(her voice trembling with anger)
You think money can fix everything?
Luke is gone, Sam!

Sam erupts, her voice rising, the weight of their situation
crashing down on her.

SAM

He's got a baby on the way!

Faye looks as if she's been punched in the gut, her
expression shifting from disbelief to anger.

FAYE

You've known this whole time?

SAM

I just found out. It's all-over social
media.

A beat.

SAM (CONT'D)

I didn't know how to tell you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Columbus watches, bemused, as the tension between them thickens.

COLUMBUS
Change of heart?

Faye's resolve crumbles, her voice barely a whisper.

FAYE
What do you need us to do?

Sam exhales in relief, a flicker of hope igniting.

SAM
This man knows what to do, he's done it before.

Faye glances at Columbus's phone, uncertainty clouding her eyes.

FAYE
What if he takes the money and runs?

Columbus tosses his phone at their feet, the device landing with a thud.

COLUMBUS
Insurance. Code is eleven-forty-five.

Faye picks up the phone, slipping it into her pocket.

COLUMBUS (CONT'D)
Let's go.

Faye follows, with Sam trailing behind, the weight of their decision heavy in the air.

COLUMBUS (CONT'D)
I know these woods. Follow my lead.

He eagerly holsters his pistol and grabs the tranquilizer gun from his shoulder, loading a massive dart into it.

EXT. PORT SULPHUR, LA. - LAKE JUDGE PEREZ - WOODS - MOMENTS AFTER

Faye walks in silence, disbelief clouding her thoughts, the night air thick with tension.

SAM
It's gonna be fine, Faye.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Faye doesn't respond, her mind racing.

SAM (CONT'D)
So you're not talking to me? I'm not
the one who cheated.

Faye continues to ignore her, the silence stretching
uncomfortably.

SAM (CONT'D)
Maybe it's not true.

FAYE
You believed it.

Sam's guilt is palpable.

FAYE (CONT'D)
Good riddance.

Sam's expression hardens.

SAM
So all that talk about faith,
controlling the narrative, and now you
believe a social media post? Some
loyalty you have.

FAYE
You have your nerve! I've seen the
jealousy in your eyes.

Sam grabs Faye's arm, turning her to face her, desperation in
her gaze.

SAM
You haven't seen me at all! All you've
seen is Luke!

Faye's gaze softens as she is reminded of Sam's black eye,
her heart aching.

FAYE
(voice trembling)
I'm so sorry, Sam.

Sam's expression is a mix of blankness and simmering anger.

SAM
Well, don't be. He needed a punching
bag, and I was the cheapest option.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Faye's nurturing spirit resurfaces, concern etched on her face.

FAYE
How long?

Sam continues walking, her sadness evident as they see Columbus up ahead.

SAM
Do you know what it feels like when someone brings all your insecurities to the surface? It's like a knife to the gut. You finally realize how you've wasted your life. And that void? It's something even your wife can't fill.

Faye listens intently.

FAYE
(softly)
I had no idea.

SAM
You're right, money won't bring my baby back.

Faye gasps, shocked.

FAYE
You never told me.

Sam's anger flares, her voice rising.

SAM
I wish he were here. Guest of honor to our little alligator party.

FAYE
You did not just say that!

SAM
(bitterly)
Blood is thicker than water, no matter how tainted.

FAYE
(voice rising)
Let me tell you something, Sam: just because he hits you doesn't give you

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

the right to wish harm on him in front
of me! You may not love him anymore,
but I do!

A heavy silence hangs between them, the weight of Faye's words sinking in.

SAM
I do love him. (pauses, slight
chuckle) I'm just a hot mess.

Columbus, irritated, refocuses, his voice a harsh whisper.

COLUMBUS
SHHH! I think I hear something.

Columbus scans the darkness with his flashlight, and Faye and Sam quickly move in behind him, their hearts pounding.

He turns, placing a finger to his lips, signaling for silence.

Columbus's flashlight reveals a glint of eyes in the tree ahead of them.

Suddenly, a low growl reverberates through the night, and the monstrous gator reveals itself, descending from the trees with surprising ease.

SAM
(fearfully)
This thing never ceases to amaze me.

Columbus gestures for Sam and Faye to flank the monster-gator, but they both shake their heads in terror, frozen in place.

Columbus's frustration mounts as the gator inches closer, its massive body looming over them.

COLUMBUS
(urgently, whispering)
Stay low!

The gator inches closer, its claws glinting in the dim light, stretching-forward ominously just inches from its front webbed feet.

SAM
(voice rising)
AREN'T YOU GONNA SHOOT IT?!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COLUMBUS
(calmly)
Not yet. It won't penetrate its hide.
This animal is smart.

Faye and Sam stand frozen until a distant voice breaks the tension.

ROLLY (O.S.)
(yelling)
SAMARA! FAYE!

Sam and Faye exchange a look of confirmation, fear palpable.

FAYE
(whispering)
It's Rolly!

They stare toward the sound, hearts racing.

EXT. PORT SULPHUR, LA. - LAKE JUDGE PEREZ - LUKE'S CABIN -
CONTINUED

The cabin stands isolated among the towering pines, the lake shimmering ominously in the distance.

Rolly, consumed by despair, grips his Glock tightly, his knuckles white as he rushes down the creaking stairs of Luke's cabin, desperation etched on his face.

ROLLY
(voice cracking, filled with panic)
WHERE ARE YOU?

EXT. PORT SULPHUR, LA. - LAKE JUDGE PEREZ - WOODS - CONTINUED

The monster-gator's eyelids darken ominously, a predator's gaze. It turns its head backward toward the sound.

Sam and Faye exchange terrified glances, their breaths quickening as the beast lunges, crashing through the underbrush.

The gator's long, multi-hued tail whips through the foliage, leaving chaos in its wake.

SAM
(shouting, urgency in her voice)
ROLLY, RUN!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FAYE
(voice rising in fear)
ROLLY, GET OUTTA HERE! NOW! PLEASE!

Columbus, eyes wide with a mix of fear and determination, races after them, hope flickering in his heart.

EXT. PORT SULPHUR, LA. - LAKE JUDGE PEREZ - LUKE'S CABIN -
CONTINUED

Rolly, frozen in place, strains to hear the distant cries.

ROLLY
(shouting, desperation spilling over)
SAMARA? FAYE? IS THAT YOU?

Suddenly, the monster-gator bursts into view, its jaws snapping open with a deafening roar, a living nightmare charging toward him.

Rolly's breath quickens, his body trembling as the gun in his hand shakes violently, mirroring his fear.

He fires wildly, the bullets pinging off the monster-gator's thick hide, each shot a futile plea for survival.

Doubt gnaws at him—**"What good is a gun against such a beast?"**

Rolly's scream pierces the air, raw and primal, as he realizes the horror before him.

Rolly turns and bolts, adrenaline surging through him.

The monster-gator leaps onto the roof of Rolly's car, its weight causing the vehicle to shudder.

Rolly stumbles back, eyes wide in horror, crashing to the ground.

He can't think, can't scream, can't escape the grip of fear that holds him down.

With trembling hands, he points his gun at the monstrous creature, his voice a raw, desperate cry.

ROLLY (CONT'D)
(screaming, heart-wrenching)
SAMARA!!!

EXT. LAKE JUDGE PEREZ - WOODS - FAYE AND SAM'S POV

Faye and Sam sprint through the dense woods, branches clawing at them, their hearts pounding with urgency.

They are driven by a primal instinct to save Rolly, fear propelling them forward.

EXT. PORT SULPHUR, LA. - LAKE JUDGE PEREZ - LUKE'S CABIN -
CONTINUED

The monster-gator grotesquely slithers off Rolly's car, its massive form looming as it advances toward him.

Rolly's back hits Faye's car, trapping him, the gator dares him to make a move.

His heart races as he raises his gun, fingers trembling.

He fires again, but the gator deftly shifts its snout, evading each bullet with a chilling ease.

ROLLY
(voice breaking, desperation
creeping in)
Why won't you just-go away?

He lowers the gun, defeated.

The monster-gator crawls closer, each movement a grotesque display of horror, its eyes glinting with a predatory playfulness.

Rolly whimpers, the gun steady by his side, but his resolve crumbles.

We see a grotesque top view of the monster-gator's twenty-foot, two-thousand-pound body, a titan of terror.

The camera spirals down to a close view of Rolly's face, frozen in fear.

He glances down, realizing one of the gator's massive webbed feet is inches from his legs, the creature's breath hot against his skin.

Faye and Sam finally emerge from the woods.

SAM
(voice low, steady)
Rolly, honey, don't provoke it. Just

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

look away.

Rolly, trembling, diverts his gaze, but the gator inches closer, undeterred.

ROLLY
(shouting, panic spilling over)
I'M SURE IT'S ALREADY PISSED OFF!

Sam and Faye approach the monster-gator cautiously, their movements deliberate, as if trying to negotiate with a force of nature.

Rolly fights the urge to glance at the beast, his heart pounding in his ears.

Columbus bursts onto the scene, tranquilizer gun in-hand, determination etched on his face.

COLUMBUS
(commanding)
DON'T MOVE!

Rolly, on the brink of unconsciousness, can feel the gator's breath, a putrid mix of decay and power, washing over him.

The monster bellows, a low rumble that vibrates through the ground.

Columbus aims for the gator's rear, searching for a vulnerable spot.

ROLLY
(shouting, desperation rising)
WHAT'S TAKING YOU SO LONG?

Faye scans the gator's backside, her eyes darting over the vibrant greens and browns.

Rolly can't hold back any longer.

ROLLY (CONT'D)
(voice raw)
SHOOT THIS THING!

Faye searches, desperation in her eyes. Her gaze catches on a sharp object on the ground.

She picks it up, hesitating, her eyes drawn to something strange on the gator's lower left leg.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Her mouth drops open in shock.

CUT TO:

THE MONSTER-GATOR'S LOWER LEFT LEG. The camera zooms in on a tattoo that reads, "**LUKE AND FAYE**," encircled by a diamond ring. A beat.

FAYE
(voice trembling, realization dawning)
LUKE?

SAM
(confused, glancing at Faye)
What did you just say?

Faye points, her hand shaking.

FAYE
(breathless)
Look.

Sam's eyes widen in shock as she sees the tattoo, her world spinning. Just as she starts to sway, Faye quickly grabs her arm to steady her.

ROLLY
(frantic)
Luke?! What are you talking about?!

The monster-gator slowly backs away from Rolly, its demeanor shifting. Faye's expression darkens, betrayal flickering in her eyes.

FAYE
(voice high, filled with hurt)
The alligator is LUKE!

Columbus processes this revelation, a mix of shock and determination igniting within him.

COLUMBUS
(resolute)
HE'S MINE!

He quickly aims his tranquilizer gun.

CLICK, BANG!

The dart flies, missing the gator as it shapeshifts into

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

human form. Rolly stands, gun still at his side, grappling with the surreal reality unfolding before him.

The group stares in disbelief as Luke stands there, fully naked, his eyes normal yet marred by a green, lizard-like sheen that flickers through the whites.

Faye and Sam approach Luke slowly, a mix of fear and fascination. Luke licks out his split tongue, a reptilian gesture that sends shivers down their spines.

COLUMBUS (CONT'D)
(lowering his tranquilizer gun,
disbelief etched on his face)
What just happened?

Faye's expression is a mix of shock and betrayal.

FAYE
(staring at Luke)
I can't believe this!

Luke's gaze remains locked on Faye, a blend of longing and fear in his eyes.

He takes a hesitant step closer, revealing vulnerability beneath his monstrous façade.

LUKE
(voice shaky)
Faye. I didn't choose this. You
weren't supposed to know.

Faye's heart races, torn between the memories of the man she loved and the creature he has become.

FAYE
(softly)
But... how?

Luke's eyes flicker with pain, the burden of his transformation clear.

LUKE
(struggling)
It's just who I am.

A beat.

LUKE (CONT'D)
I can't control it anymore.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sam glances between them, sensing the emotional distance growing, her amazement shifting to concern.

Luke takes another step forward, desperation etched on his face as he reaches out.

LUKE (CONT'D)
(earnestly)
I'm still the same person inside.

The moment hangs in the air, suspended between hope and despair. Faye's expression softens, but the betrayal lingers.

SAM
(wide-eyed, voice trembling)
Luke, what are you?

Rolly can't bear to look at Luke anymore, his gaze drops to the ground, disbelief written across his face.

ROLLY
(voice trembling with anger)
He's reptilian. Guess it's not just a conspiracy theory after all.

COLUMBUS
(muttering, a hint of admiration)
Ross, you old drunken genius!

FAYE
(voice rising, hurt)
Reptilian? You've been lying to me about everything!

LUKE
(defensive, almost pleading)
What's so wrong with me? I gave you something... normal.

Rolly steps in, his voice sharp.

ROLLY
(with conviction)
Dude, you're not normal! You're a monster!

Sam's fury ignites.

SAM
(shouting)
ROLLY, SHUT UP!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROLLY
(voice low and intense, fixated on
Luke)
He is! Reptilians are monsters...
blood-drinking, cannibalistic
beings... performing ancient satanic
rituals on people.

A beat. His voice grows heavier with accusation.

ROLLY (CONT'D)
Especially on children. Stealing them
from their families.

A beat. Columbus's expression darkens, excitement replaced by
dread, as if he understands the truth in Rolly's words.

ROLLY (CONT'D)
(bitter edge creeping in)
Thanks to the 'ELITES,' the government
made a deal with them ages ago. Long
before any of us were born. The
 slightest whiff of blood drives them
wild. When these blood-suckers go too
long without feeding, they start to
feel that inner torment.

Faye's expression shifts, a look of revelation washing over
her.

She glances at Luke, then quickly looks away, shame flooding
her features.

ROLLY (CONT'D)
(laughing with relief, almost
frantic)
It's not me. IT'S NOT ME! I'M NOT THE
PROBLEM!

SAM
(convincing with empathy)
Rolly. You were never the problem.

Rolly's laughter diminishes.

COLUMBUS
Yeah, you learn early, a kid
immigrant, without a home or family.
It really teaches you how to dodge
these monsters lurking in the shadows.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Faye and Sam struggle to process Columbus's words, their eyes flickering with a mix of sympathy and horror.

He readies his gun, the tranquilizer glinting ominously.

COLUMBUS (CONT'D)
(with a bitter edge)
You're a Hollywood celeb. You should
know better.

He raises the gun, aiming it at Luke.

COLUMBUS (CONT'D)
(coldly)
But who cares? Time to get paid.

Luke's anger boils over as he steps toward Columbus, his presence imposing.

Columbus's nerves fray as he catches a glimpse of the now rapid lizard-like flicker in Luke's eyes, a horrifying transformation brewing beneath the surface.

LUKE
(voice low, seething)
At least you don't need bait this
time. Isn't that what you said?

He jabs a finger at the bullet graze on his left arm.

Faye, Sam, and Rolly's eyes widen at the mark, the reality of the situation sinking in.

LUKE (CONT'D)
(voice rising, filled with rage)
All to catch an alligator.

Sam erupts.

SAM
(yelling, incredulous)
YOU THOUGHT HE WAS AN ALLIGATOR-BABY?
FROM BACK IN THE SLAVERY DAYS?!

COLUMBUS
(trying to regain control)
You better just calm down now!

Rolly, fueled by protectiveness, draws his gun, pointing it at Columbus's head.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROLLY
(firmly)
Naw, partna! 'YOU' better calm down!

Luke strides toward Faye, desperation in his eyes, but she avoids his gaze, shame and fear battling within her.

He gently forces her to meet his eyes.

FAYE
(voice trembling, conflicted)
So stubborn. That tattoo. You
knew—marking your flesh was a sin,
honey. Leviticus 19:28, remember?

Luke's expression softens, longing evident.

LUKE
(softly)
Babe, I just wanna go home.

Rolly's gun shifts to Luke, protective instincts flaring.

ROLLY
(warning)
Get the hell away from my sister.

Luke turns to Rolly, betrayal flooding his features.

ROLLY (CONT'D)
(voice breaking)
You're what I call a freak.

CLICK!

COLUMBUS
(with a manic grin)
He's what I call, "A MILLION BUCKS!"

Luke's gaze hardens as he confronts Columbus.

Columbus pulls the trigger.

BANG!

In a flash, Luke's lizard-split tongue darts out, intercepting the dart, rolling it up, and flinging it into the lake.

Columbus's panic sets in as he fumbles to reload.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Luke begins to transform, grotesque and towering, an eight-foot-tall monstrous green reptilian lizard-man creature. His true form.

Columbus aims again, but Luke snatches the tranquilizer gun with a swift, clawed hand.

Columbus bolts, fear propelling him as Luke gives chase, a primal growl escaping his throat.

Faye, desperate to follow, finds herself restrained by Rolly.

FAYE
(struggling, frantic)
Let me go!

Sam's voice cuts through the chaos.

SAM
(exclaiming)
Rolly! Just let her go!

Faye breaks free from Rolly's grasp.

ROLLY
(voice raised, urgency spilling
over)
Faye! Come back here!

Rolly and Sam sprint after her, determination etched on their faces.

EXT. PORT SULPHUR, LA. - LAKE JUDGE PEREZ - LAKE - CONTINUED

Luke leaps from tree to tree, his massive feet thudding against the ground, sending ripples through the lake.

Columbus, breathless, struggles to keep ahead of him, the distance between them shrinking with each desperate stride.

Luke's lizard tongue flicks out, missing Columbus by mere inches, a grotesque game of cat and mouse.

The lake trembles, disturbed by the chaos, while birds scatter from the trees, their cries echoing the horror unfolding below.

Luke's relentless pursuit continues, each bound bringing him closer to Columbus.

With a final, powerful leap, Luke lands on Columbus's back,

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

sending him crashing to the ground.

Luke begins to tear into him, the gruesome scene unfolding in a frenzy of blood and desperation.

Columbus's cries pierce the air, raw and filled with agony.

Faye appears, her eyes widening in horror at the sight before her.

FAYE
(screaming)
Luke! STOP!

Rolly and Sam arrive, their faces pale as they take in the gruesome spectacle.

Luke pauses, blood dripping from his lizard-like beak, his expression shifting from primal hunger to something resembling regret.

He wipes at the blood, a tragic sadness washing over him.

LUKE
I was just hungry.

Faye's composure crumbles, tears streaming down her face as she watches the scene unfold.

Luke, feeling the weight of her gaze, looks down, his tail curling around him in a gesture of shame. After a moment, he bolts, leaping into the lake and vanishing beneath the surface.

Rolly and Sam stand in stunned silence, gazing at the lake, the reality of the moment settling in.

Columbus lies on the ground, blood pooling around him, his breaths shallow and fading.

Rolly steps closer, kneeling beside Columbus, waiting in silence until the last breath escapes him.

Sam joins Rolly, both of them standing over the lifeless body.

Sam pulls out her phone out of Columbus's pocket, the screen lighting up in the dim light.

SAM
What now?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROLLY
Let's get out of here.

Rolly's gaze lingers on Sam, a mix of regret and helplessness in his eyes.

Faye, consumed by despair, rocks back and forth, wailing softly, lost in her grief and isolation.

The lake glistens and sparkles from the moonlight.

EXT. PORT SULPHUR, LA. - LAKE JUDGE PEREZ - ROAD - LATER

Rolly's car speeds down the road.

INT. ROLLY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Faye sits in the back seat, glued to the footage of Luke's attack.

SAM
We can't just leave him out there.

Rolly's jaw tightens, anger simmering beneath the surface.

ROLLY
Why? That's where he belongs.

SAM
I can't fucking believe you!

Sam's words cut through Rolly, a flicker of guilt crossing his face. Faye remains absorbed in the video, her expression a mix of horror and disbelief as she replays the harrowing scenes.

She watches Luke being dragged into the water by an alligator, Alan and Columbus battling two crocodiles, and finally, the monstrous gator emerging.

Faye rewinds the footage, her focus sharpening. She pauses, zooming in, and plays it in slow motion.

Now, she sees Luke, underwater, transforming into the monster-gator, still trapped in the alligator's jaws.

Faye stares out the window, shame washing over her, her eyes glistening with unshed tears. A moment later, calmness settles on her face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FAYE
He made a good point.

SAM
What do you mean?

FAYE
(voice trembling)
I just wanna go home.

SAM
Faye, we can show the police that video and that'll be it.

FAYE
And then what? I'll be a joke. It'll blow up on the news, all over the blogs. Every shady YouTube channel will be all over it.

Faye drifts into a daze, her thoughts spiraling.

FAYE (CONT'D)
Control the narrative. At least we know that lying, stalking witch isn't pregnant. (pauses, despair creeping in) I don't know what to do. Where do I go from here?

SAM
I don't know, sis. I'm used to you having all the answers.

FAYE
I ignored all the red flags, I'm so stupid!

ROLLY
How could you have known he was some kind of 'satanic being'?

Sam looks away, frustration bubbling beneath her calm exterior.

SAM
Yeah, I ask myself that same damn question.

ROLLY
(sarcastic)
You wanna just say what's really on

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

your mind?

SAM

I don't get how you can just toss him aside like that! Hell, I thought you wanted to leave me for him!

Rolly smirks, a hint of relief in his eyes as the tension begins to lift.

ROLLY

I did think about it.

Sam hesitates, then bursts into laughter. Rolly smiles, the heaviness between them dissipating as he takes her hand.

Faye is suddenly hit with bitterness.

FAYE

It must be nice to laugh about my tragedy. You just had to drag me to that bodybuilding competition, didn't you?

ROLLY

Really, Faye?! You're blaming me for this?

SAM

It's nobody's fault, okay?

Faye's expression shifts to one of shock and hurt.

FAYE

He was gonna turn back into himself... grab his things... get in that car... and come home like nothing ever happened. Lying to me... keeping secrets. I'd rather he had cheated and had a baby on the way. That would be easier to handle than this.

Faye hangs her head, despair enveloping her, her shoulders slumping as the weight of it all settles in. A moment of clarity washes over her.

FAYE (CONT'D)

(taking a deep breath)

I'm finally gonna get some good sleep tonight.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Faye's sudden silence sends a wave of concern through Sam and Rolly.

EXT. LULING, LA. LUKE AND FAYE'S MANSION - LATER

Rolly pulls up in front of the mansion.

INT. ROLLY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Faye hesitates, sadness etched on her face.

ROLLY

Do you want us to come in?

FAYE

I'll be fine. We'll sort things out in the morning.

Faye steps out of the car, her gaze drifting up to the stars twinkling in the night sky as she walks toward the grand mansion.

Rolly and Sam watch her, concern lingering in the air.

ROLLY

She's not thinking clearly.

SAM

She does have a lot on her mind. Let's just come back in the morning.

ROLLY

So, you 'do' wanna come home with me?

Sam smirks, a glint of mischief in her eyes.

SAM

As long as you promise to stop idolizing that magazine. You might not be bowing down to it, but you need to toss that damn thing out!

Rolly nods, a smile breaking through his earlier tension.

ROLLY

(earnestly)

I'll never hit you again.

SAM

You damn right, 'cause if you do, I'll make sure you never wake up again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Rolly chuckles, but the humor fades as he realizes Sam is dead serious.

INT. LULING, LA. LUKE AND FAYE'S MANSION - LIVING ROOM -
CONTINUED

Faye watches Rolly and Sam drive away, a mix of relief and sorrow washing over her. She picks up her wedding photo from the mantel, her eyes lingering on Luke's smiling face.

Suddenly, a noise from the kitchen breaks her reverie. She hesitates, then moves to investigate. The atmosphere is thick with suspense.

FAYE

Hello?

Hope flickers in her voice, but fear lingers just beneath the surface.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

She enters the kitchen and out of the shadows, a damp and naked Luke steps into view.

FAYE

(softly, a hint of nostalgia)
The man I fell in love with.

LUKE

Babe, you're the woman I'll always
love.

FAYE

(playfully, but with an edge)
You always knew how to make one hell
of an entrance.

Luke smirks.

LUKE

(anxiously)
You won't tell anyone about this,
right?

Faye's gaze hardens, uncertainty clouding her expression.

Luke's need for reassurance grows. He looks at her, almost like a child awaiting a reprimand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUKE (CONT'D)
Please, just... let it go. It was just
an alligator!

Faye's eyes flash with a silent demand for answers.

LUKE (CONT'D)
Ok, I've never eaten people before
this. Only wild animals. (pauses,
trying to convince her) I had to look
like something acceptable, alright?

Faye is torn, both amazed and betrayed.

FAYE
A prehistoric alligator out there, and
a human in here.

LUKE
Any reptile, I'm not like the others.

A look of fear and confusion is etched on her face as she
discreetly reaches for Columbus's phone, activating the video
camera.

FAYE
We won't say a word. And I'm sure Dr.
Helm won't either.

Luke lowers his head, shame washing over him.

He turns his back, and Faye seizes the moment to grab the
sharpest object within reach—a knife from the counter.

LUKE (O.C.)
I had a feeling you knew. I'm sorry,
babe.

Faye hides the knife behind her back just as Luke turns
around.

FAYE
(coldly)
You should be.

LUKE
I feel better knowing you understand.
Now, I can change whenever I need to.
No more pain... no more hiding... no
more secrets.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Faye processes his words, her anxiety palpable. Luke's gaze sharpens, sensing her unease.

LUKE (CONT'D)
Babe, what's wrong?

In a flash, Faye reveals the knife and the phone from behind her back. With determination, she stabs her finger, letting the blood flow as she drops the knife.

FAYE
(voice trembling, but resolute)
I'm sorry, Luke! I need proof! Show me
who you really are!

She hits record on the phone. Luke's fury ignites, his eyes flashing green and orange.

He begins to shapeshift, his monstrous form expanding, filling the kitchen with his terrifying presence as the monster-gator.

The kitchen erupts in chaos, the air thick with tension and the smell of fear as the reality of her situation crashes down around her. Faye's scream echoes.

EXT. LULING, LA. - ROLLY AND SAM'S HOME - MOMENTS AFTER

CUT TO:

INT. ROLLY'S CAR

ROLLY
(staring blankly out the window)
I don't know what to do.

SAM
(frustrated, tired)
There's nothing you can do. Luke's out there, somewhere, probably eating somebody. Faye has completely given up on this whole reptilian-i-zation of the entirely crazy shapeshifting situation.

Rolly glances at Sam, a hint of concern in his eyes.

ROLLY
(annoyed)
Samara, come on. Be serious.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM

I am serious. He's in the wilderness.
He's home now.

INT. LULING, LA. - LUKE AND FAYE'S MANSION - KITCHEN -
CONTINUED

Faye is horrified. She stands face-to-face with the monster-gator, which inches closer, bellowing harshly and snapping its snout at her repeatedly.

CHOMP! CHOMP!

Faye screams.

EXT. LULING, LA. - ROLLY AND SAM'S HOME - CONTINUED

CUT TO:

INT. ROLLY'S CAR

Rolly ponders, concern etched on his face as his jaw tightens. Suddenly, a look of revelation dawns on him.

ROLLY

(shocked)

He 'is' home! (pause) Sam, go in the house!

Sam looks at Rolly defiantly, refusing to be told what to do.

ROLLY (CONT'D)

(annoyed)

Sam, please, just listen to me for once! I want to keep you safe!

He grips the steering wheel, anxiety coursing through him.

SAM

Rolly, I'm your wife. And wherever you go, I go. We-in this together!

Rolly acknowledges her with a smirk, a mix of admiration and frustration.

ROLLY

Aight!

He quickly speeds down the road.

INT. LULING, LA. - LUKE AND FAYE'S MANSION - KITCHEN -
CONTINUED

Faye stands her ground, her heart racing as the monstrous gator lunges at her, snapping its jaws with a terrifying-
CHOMP! CHOMP! CHOMP!

The metallic clang of its teeth echoes through the kitchen, reverberating in her bones. The sound becomes unbearable.

FAYE
(voice trembling)
Luke, please! I know you're still in
there!

The gator halts, its eyes narrowing, then bellows-a guttural roar that shakes the very walls. Faye flinches, her resolve wavering.

FAYE (CONT'D)
(whispering)
You're not gonna hurt me.

The creature's massive tail swings violently, crashing into the kitchen island, sending pots and pans flying. The cabinets shatter under the force, creating a cacophony of destruction.

FAYE (CONT'D)
(pleading)
Stop! You're scaring me!

The gator bellows again, lifting its snout defiantly, as if challenging her to understand. Faye's eyes dart around the wreckage, her breath quickening, caught between fear and a desperate hope.

Suddenly, the gator morphs, transforming into an enormous, 8-foot-tall gecko-lizard. It stomps onto the marble floor, each step a thunderous declaration of rage.

FAYE (CONT'D)
(exclaims)
LUKE! PLEASE!

The creature roars, a primal scream that echoes her own inner turmoil, as if throwing a tantrum against the world.

EXT. LULING. LA. - LUKE AND FAYE'S MANSION - CONTINUED

Rolly and Sam sprint toward the mansion, the chaos inside

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

growing louder with each step. Rolly's face is set with determination as he pulls out his Glock, adrenaline surging.

They reach the front door, the sounds of destruction echoing behind them—a haunting reminder of the battle within.

INT. LULING, LA. - LUKE AND FAYE'S MANSION - KITCHEN -
CONTINUED

Rolly and Sam burst through the front door, their eyes widening at the horrifying chaos in the kitchen. Faye's showdown with Luke intensifies.

LUKE
(roaring)
RRRAAAHHH!

Rolly and Sam gasp, instinctively stepping back. They cautiously approach Faye, who is filming Luke, her hands trembling.

Suddenly, the creature flicks out its sticky lizard tongue, snatching the phone from Faye's grip and swallowing it whole. Faye gasps.

Rolly yanks Faye aside, raising his gun, his voice steady despite the chaos.

ROLLY
Get back!

BANG!

The bullet pierces the soft flesh of the giant gecko-lizard, a green substance oozing from the wound as it bolts toward the back of the house.

FAYE
(yelling)
WE NEED THAT PHONE!

SAM
(panicking)
WE NEED TO GET THE HELL OUTTA HERE!

But before they can move, the monster-gator re-emerges, its eyes burning with vengeance.

FAYE
(screaming, crying)
LUKE!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The creature's eyelids turn black, and Faye's scream pierces the air. Sam instinctively raises her phone to film the monster.

The monster-gator lunges at Sam, its snout slamming into her, sending her crashing against the wall.

Sam lies unconscious, the phone clattering to the ground, its screen cracking.

ROLLY
(shouting)
SAM!

The monster-gator bellows, and Rolly aims his gun, but the creature swings its snout, knocking Rolly across the room. The gun slips from his grasp, hitting the floor and discharging.

BANG!

The bullet ricochets off the ceiling.

FAYE
(pleading)
LUKE, PLEASE! CALM DOWN!

The monster-gator advances toward Faye, its presence overwhelming. Sam remains unconscious as Rolly crawls toward her, desperate to pull her to safety.

The monster-gator inches closer, its gaze fixed on Faye, anger radiating from its form. The creature halts, its massive frame looming over her.

FAYE (CONT'D)
(voice breaking)
DO YOU REALLY THINK I CAN LIVE LIKE
THIS? LOOK AT YOU!

The monster-gator's fury seems to waver, its eyes softening as it stares at Faye.

FAYE (CONT'D)
(trembling)
I WANT CHILDREN. I DON'T WANNA LIVE A
LIE! YOU HAVE TO DO THIS FOR ME!

The monster-gator begins to back away slowly, uncertainty flickering in its eyes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FAYE (CONT'D)
(calm whispering)
Luke, I'm scared.

The creature retreats further, its gaze dropping to the ground, as if grappling with its own sorrow.

INT. KITCHEN - SAM'S POV

Sam stirs, regaining consciousness. She sees Rolly sneaking around towards the alternate rear kitchen entrance, gun drawn, and gasps in concern.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The monster-gator's form shifts, and Luke's voice emerges, strained yet familiar.

LUKE
I know. I can't help it, sometimes. I
need you.

Faye's heart races, horror etched on her face as she hears Luke's voice from the monstrous form.

LUKE (CONT'D)
(softly)
I can't see my life without you.

In a moment of transformation, Luke shifts back to his human form, but Faye notices a bulge in his stomach—the phone.

INT. KITCHEN - ROLLY'S POV

Rolly inches closer, his gun aimed at the back of Luke's head, tension thick in the air.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Luke steps toward Faye, his eyes locked onto hers, filled with desperation.

LUKE
(intensely)
But, I'll do anything for you. I'd die
for you.

He takes her hands, a moment of connection amidst the chaos. The gun is cocked beside Luke's head.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROLLY
(voice steady)
Done.

Luke's eyes widen in shock. ROLLY (*pulling the trigger*),

BANG!

INT. LULING, LA. - LUKE AND FAYE'S MANSION - KITCHEN -
MOMENTS AFTER

Rolly, Sam, and Faye stand over Luke's lifeless body, the
weight of the moment heavy in the air.

Faye is devastated, yet a flicker of relief crosses her face.
Rolly's expression is a mix of fear and disbelief.

SAM
(softly, grabbing Rolly's arm)
It's gonna be okay.

ROLLY
(somber, shaking his head)
I'm goin' to jail for murder.

Faye interrupts, her voice firm.

FAYE
Hand me the gun.

Rolly hesitates, uncertainty clouding his eyes. Faye snatches
a towel from the sink, wiping the gun meticulously, her hands
steady despite the chaos.

She grips the handle tightly, determination etched on her
face. She places the gun down next to Luke's dead body.

FAYE (CONT'D)
(looking down at Luke)
They'll find all the proof they need
right here.

The trio stares at the bulge in Luke's belly.

INT. NEW ORLEANS, LA. - DR. HELM'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Dr. Helm sits at the kitchen table, his eyes glued to his
phone, anxiety radiating from him. In the background, his
wife, Joanna, prepares breakfast.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOANNA
Honey, I'm ovulating.

Dr. Helm swipes through his phone, lost in thought.

JOANNA (CONT'D)
You know what that means, right?

DR. HELM
(mumbling)
Mm-hmm.

JOANNA
(teasingly)
Mm-hmm... is that all?

No response. Joanna's annoyance grows.

JOANNA (CONT'D)
Joe, it's time!

Dr. Helm looks up, startled.

DR. HELM
Right now?

Joanna scoffs, continuing to set the table. She loosens her robe, revealing a sexy lace bra and panty set.

JOANNA
(after placing the plates)
Well, after we eat, I guess. Unless you can't wait.

Dr. Helm barely glances up, dismissive.

DR. HELM
Maybe after we eat.

JOANNA
(raising her voice)
Joe, put the damn phone down!

Startled, Dr. Helm looks up.

DR. HELM
What, honey?

JOANNA
This is serious! We need to have a baby!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Dr. Helm's concern deepens, but he dismisses her again, focusing on his phone.

JOANNA (CONT'D)
So, your morning gossip is more important than me?

DR. HELM
Luke Sherwin was found dead in his home, butt naked with a bullet in his brain.

Joanna freezes, guilt washing over her.

JOANNA
Luke Sherwin?! I'm so sorry, honey!
What happened?

DR. HELM
They're questioning his wife. I think she killed him.

Joanna sits down slowly, her expression shifting.

JOANNA
Not surprising. Especially her.
Remember how she came at you all crazy-like at the hospital?

DR. HELM
How did you know about that?

JOANNA
Nurse Guilmore.

Dr. Helm hides his annoyance, continuing to read the article. Joanna watches him closely.

JOANNA (CONT'D)
What is it?

DR. HELM
(suddenly serious)
She said he transformed into a huge reptilian creature and attacked her.

JOANNA
(incredulous)
She didn't?!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DR. HELM
Yeah. She's always been a bit off.

Dr. Helm's eyes widen as he reads further.

ARTICLE: "Police are investigating a tragic incident involving 35-year-old Faye Sherwin, who is in custody along with her brother Rolly Gains and his wife Samara Gains. The investigation is pending autopsy results, which Faye claims will reveal evidence of her husband Luke's bizarre secret."

A look of panic crosses Dr. Helm's face.

JOANNA
What else does it say?

DR. HELM
(jittery)
Oh... just that they're still looking
into it.

Dr. Helm places his phone face down, trying to mask his anxiety.

Dr. Helm is overcome with annoyance.

DR. HELM (CONT'D)
Where's my steak, honey?

JOANNA
Oh, I almost forgot.

She retrieves a steak from the fridge and tosses it onto the skillet.

The sound of the meat hitting the hot surface fills the kitchen.

JOANNA (CONT'D)
(trying to connect)
He's been your best friend since you
were babies. How are you holding up?

DR. HELM
(flatly)
Kinda numb.

Joanna studies him, sensing something deeper.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOANNA
(confused)
That's funny. You actually looked a little nervous for a sec.

Dr. Helm shifts uncomfortably, the sizzling steak, and the incessant buzzing of his phone echoing the tension in the room.

JOANNA (CONT'D)
You know it's funny how I was just telling Nurse Guilmore that we should've spent some time with them. He's your only famous friend. Though now I'm kinda glad we didn't. I don't want us in the middle of their mess.

Dr. Helm rubs his head, regret etched on his face.

JOANNA (CONT'D)
(cheerfully)
My husband loves steak and eggs for breakfast. Just like our future son. He'll look like me but have your charm. I was thinking, once we conceive, maybe you could take some time off so we can enjoy the pregnancy together.

She glances at Dr. Helm, noticing his distant expression.

JOANNA (CONT'D)
(sighing)
Okay, we'll talk about something else.

DR. HELM
(irritated)
It's just... you bring it up every five minutes. Baby, baby, baby... if it's meant to happen, it will.

Joanna's disappointment is palpable.

JOANNA
(supportively)
I'm sorry. You're dealing with a loss. You're grieving.

DR. HELM
(softening)
Jo, I want to talk about it. Just not

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

right now.

As blood oozes from the steak, Dr. Helm inhales the aroma, a mix of desire and discomfort crossing his face.

He suddenly winces, a sharp pain gripping his stomach. Joanna turns the steak over, noticing his distress.

JOANNA
(concerned)
Oh honey! When are you gonna get the results back about those pains?

The steak continues to sizzle, the tension thickening.

DR. HELM
(squirming)
The tests came back normal. I'm sure it's nothing major. (exclaims) THE STEAK!

Joanna quickly turns off the heat, placing the steak onto a plate and setting it in front of him. He cuts into it, devouring the medium rare steak hungrily.

JOANNA
(worried)
Slow down, honey! That's probably why you're having these pains. You eat like your life depends on it.

Dr. Helm's eyes glaze over with an unsettling hunger as he slams his utensils down, suddenly lifting Joanna with a look of raw desire.

JOANNA (CONT'D)
(teasingly)
I knew that steak would do it. I know my husband very well. Inside and out. Let's make a baby.

Dr. Helm carries Joanna out of the kitchen, her laughter echoing joyfully behind them.

He turns back, smiling into the camera, but a lizard-like flicker passes through the whites of his eyes before he looks away.

FADE OUT.

THE END