

The Other Half

Hoping to salvage their fractured relationship, a family retreats to an isolated vacation home to reconnect until a mysterious visitor exposes a secret that threatens to tear the family apart for good.

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FADE IN

EXT. SHOOTING RANGE - DAY

THROUGH THE SCOPE (POV):

A set of crosshairs jitter across the terrain. It focuses on tall grass that sways in a gentle summer breeze on a dirt-and-rock-covered rise.

EXHALE.

The scope glides to a patch of earth where an ant colony bustles with movement, pebbles and grains scattered like debris.

EXHALE.

The crosshairs lurch toward a faux deer target in the distance. They steady, dancing slightly left... then right... centering on the shoulder.

VOICE (V.O.)

(soft)

Once you have your shot lined up,
exhale slowly. Hold your position.
Release the safety and hug the trigger
when you're ready.

END SCOPE POV.

A boy steadies his rifle. Left eye closed. Right eye staring down the scope.

ANDREW MILLS - 12y/o. A respectful, thoughtful, observant boy on the edge of adolescence. Andrew admires his father and cherishes his mother. Caught emotionally between their impending divorce. He's hopeful, but not naïve. Curious and introspective, he's driven by a desire to grow up right, even as the world around him starts to shift.

Andrew steadies his rifle.

He exhales slowly, releasing all tension and settles into his target.

His thumb rises to the shoulder of the rifle. A flick of the safety -

CLICK.

His thumb lowers. His closed eye tightens. His finger twitches -

BOOM.

THROUGH THE SCOPE (POV):

A puff of dust rises behind the target, dragged off by the breeze.

END SCOPE POV.

Andrew lowers the rifle, looks up.

Beside him, a pair of binoculars peer into the distance. Held steady.

TREVOR MILLS - 30'S. A natural leader with quiet strength. Former military man who is calm, disciplined, and precise. The kind of man people trust instinctively. Well-educated and emotionally grounded, Trevor's patience is unwavering, even under pressure. He approaches fatherhood the way he did the battlefield: with purpose, composure, and a deep sense of duty.

TREVOR
High and to the right.

Andrew's head lowers in shame.

TREVOR (V.O.)
(supportive)
You're anticipating the bang. That anticipation causes you to squeeze the trigger *rather* than hug it. You have to *accept* the bang, absorb it.

Andrew listens closely. Nods in understanding.

He readies his position, settles into his seat.

Leans into his rifle. Closes his left eye. Takes aim.

The gun sways gently, then steadies.

EXHALE.

BOOM.

The target jerks with a sharp -

TUHD.

TREVOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)

HIT!

Andrew's head shoots up. He's elated.

He stands, bursts over to his father.

They hug, laughing and smiling. A moment of pure celebration.

CUT TO:

EXT. OPEN FIELD - LATER

Tall field grass parts beneath FOOTSTEPS.

Trevor and Andrew, walk side by side, rifle cases swinging at their sides in rhythm.

Up ahead, a pickup truck waits, parked alone amongst the tall grass.

The tailgate drops with a heavy -

CLUNK.

Gun cases SLIDE into the truck bed. A cooler is TUGGED forward.

Trevor and Andrew climb onto the tailgate, sitting shoulder to shoulder.

EXT. TRUCK BED - CONTINUOUS

They CRACK open Cokes. RIP into beef sticks.

ANDREW

Thanks for bringing me out here Dad.
This sure is fun.

TREVOR

Absolutely. I love getting time like
this with you. Your mother never
really understood it.

Trevor takes a bite. Pauses, a flicker of something on his mind.

ANDREW

Dad, now that I'm older... can I ask
(MORE)

ANDREW (CONT'D)
you a question?

TREVOR
Shoot.

ANDREW
How many men did you kill when you
were in the Middle East?

A beat. Trevor glances over.

TREVOR
What did I tell you about asking that?

ANDREW
I know... I know. "It's all about the
mission."

TREVOR
I didn't want to kill, but it was them
or my unit. If it came down to them or
one of my guys, I took the shot.

ANDREW
I'd be scared.

TREVOR
You think I wasn't?

Andrew shrugs, chewing slowly.

TREVOR (CONT'D)
I was terrified. We all were. But in a
unit, every man's got to watch the guy
beside him.

Andrew listens, locked in. He absorbs every word.

TREVOR (CONT'D)
You don't run from fear. You own it...
set it aside.... do your job. That's
what makes a team work. Not courage...
responsibility. That's everything.

Andrew takes a contemplative beat, absorbing his father's
words.

A quiet moment... then something sparks in his mind.

ANDREW
(anxious)
Oh crap! What time is it?

TREVOR
(checks watch)
4:35, why?

ANDREW
I forgot I got baseball practice at five.

TREVOR
And here I was giving a speech about responsibility...

ANDREW
(sheepish)
I got it, I got it.

They hop off the tailgate.

It slams shut with a solid CLUNK.

The truck doors CREAK open. They climb in.

The engine ROARS to life, kicking up a cloud of dust as the truck peels off across the open field.

CUT TO:

INT. MILLS HOME KITCHEN- EVENING

The door from the garage opens. Andrew steps in, energized from the day. Trevor follows, arms full of gun cases and a cooler.

In the kitchen, Katie stirs a simmering pot.

KATIE MILLS - 30s. A loving, devoted mother to Andrew, though the strain of a crumbling marriage has created distance. Withdrawn and introspective, Katie struggles to express herself, especially with Trevor. She still believes in their marriage, or wants to, but her patience is thinning, and the silence between them is growing louder.

ANDREW
Hey, Mom!

KATIE
How was practice?

ANDREW

Oh, you know... same stuff different day.

KATIE

(disapproving)

I really don't like it when you say that.

ANDREW

Sorry.

Andrew dashes off to wash up. Trevor lingers in the mudroom, setting the gear down before he enters the kitchen.

TREVOR

Hey... how was your day?

KATIE

(flat)

You were late getting him to practice. Coach called.

TREVOR

That's on me. We lost track of time.

He moves in, aiming for a kiss on her cheek. She pulls away subtly but pointed.

Trevor takes a beat.

TREVOR (CONT'D)

Need any help?

KATIE

I've got it.

She stirs the sauce. Without looking, she gestures toward a small stack of mail on the counter.

KATIE (CONT'D)

Another late notice came today.

Trevor crosses behind her to the counter. He thumbs through the stack; overdue, past due, final notice. His face tightens at the sight of each one.

TREVOR

Don't they have any compassion for our situation? I send them what we can.

KATIE

They don't care Trevor. Sending partial payments isn't going to keep the lights on.

TREVOR

It's better than sending them nothing.
(beat)
I'm trying here.

KATIE

(frustration)

You need to try harder. It's been eight months since you were laid off and we can't keep living the way we do off *my* salary.

TREVOR

I know that. It's not my fault unemployment ran out after six months.

KATIE

No, but I expect more effort from you. More urgency.

TREVOR

I've been trying. Workshops. JobCore. Applications. I've applied to so many listings I can't think straight. No one's hiring.

KATIE

Going shooting in the middle of a weekday doesn't exactly help.

Andrew rounds the corner. He stops short at the edge of the kitchen, senses the tension.

Trevor and Katie, both clock him. The argument stalls. Guilt hangs in the silence.

ANDREW

(cautious)

When's dinner?

KATIE

Almost ready.

Andrew reads the room.

ANDREW
You guys, okay?

TREVOR
Yeah, we're good.

He flashes the stack of bills.

TREVOR (CONT'D)
Just... life.

CUT TO:

INT. MILLS HOME OFFICE - NIGHT

A computer screen illuminates the dark office.

Trevor's eyes reflect the screens ambiance.

MOUSE CLICK

TYPING

His fingers jitter across the keys.

Job categories scroll by - security guard, IT management,
data security. Trevor clicks fast, scanning each one.

Each ends the same: 'NO OPENINGS AVAILABLE' flashes in bold
red.

Frustrated, he throws his hands up, collapses his head into
them.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

From the hall, Katie watches. Silent.

CLICK - (O.S.) DISTANT

She starts to leave, pauses.

KATIE
(softly)
Hey, I'm headed to bed.

CUT TO:

INT. MILLS HOME OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Trevor's head pops up over the screen.

TREVOR

Allright Hun. See you in the morning.

His attention darts back to the screen.

CLICK, CLICK

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Katie starts to say something again. She stops.

Whatever it was, she swallows it.

A beat, then she walks away.

CUT TO:

INT. MILLS HOME OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Trevor's eyes shoot up, peering over the monitor.

He watches her go. Exhales. Turns back to the dead-end listings.

CLICK

CUT TO:

INT. OUTSIDE THE BEDROOM - LATER

Alone in a pitch-black room, Katie lays in bed.

The bedroom door creaks open, casting soft light across the bed.

Her eyes still open. A single tear slips down Katie's cheek.

She stays perfectly still.

Trevor stands in the doorway. After a beat, his head bows in shame, or surrender.

He softly closes the door.

CUT TO:

INT. MILLS HOME OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Trevor enters into the office again. The room still aglow from the computer screen.

He collects a blanket from the couch, fluffs it.

He lies down on the couch, pulls the blanket over him.

He releases a deep exhale. His mind races past worrying thoughts.

The computer screen fades to black. The room sinks into shadow.

CUT TO:

INT. DR. SHAW'S OFFICE - THE NEXT DAY

Trevor and Katie sit on a couch with a noticeable gap between them.

Katie leans back, arms folded, eyes distant.

Trevor sits upright, alert. Posture sharp from years of training.

DR. SHAW
How's the job hunt going Trevor?

TREVOR
It continues. Barely a nibble yet.

Katie shifts, rolls her eyes. Says nothing.

DR. SHAW
(noticing)
This seems to be a recurring point of tension for you two.

TREVOR
All the time. And I get it. She's carrying the load. I just hope she sees that I'm trying.

DR. SHAW
Katie, do you...

KATIE
(defensive)
Do I what?

DR. SHAW
Do you feel that Trevor is trying?

KATIE
(small beat)
Yes... I do. But, this is about more
than a job.

DR. SHAW
Absolutely it is. No one is disputing
that. But let's try and focus on one
thing at a time.

KATIE
(shifts again)
Yes, I do know he is trying.
(beat)
I know... it's not his fault the
company laid him off.

Katie turns to Trevor, places her hand gently on his arm.
Looks him square in the eyes.

KATIE (CONT'D)
I want you to know, I appreciate all
you do around the house, with Andrew,
while I'm working. I also know... I
don't say thank you enough.
(self-aware)
Or at all, really.
(soft but direct)
I just wish you'd talk to me. Tell me
what's really going on in your head.
All I get is; "I've got this." Or "You
don't need to know all the details."

Trevor lowers his eyes to the floor. He knows she's right.

DR. SHAW
Trevor... I take it you agree?

TREVOR
She's not wrong. I do tend to bottle
things up... I guess. I just don't
want to weigh her down with all the
trivial things, that I think I should
handle on my own.

KATIE
(quietly)
When we got married... what was it
(MORE)

KATIE (CONT'D)
your old Army buddy said during his
toast?

Trevor lifts his gaze to meet hers. He's vulnerable now.

KATIE (CONT'D)
He said; "Here's to the partners in
crime."
(pause, voice soft)
I can't be your partner in *life*... if
you don't let me in.

DR. SHAW
Very well put Katie.
(closes his notebook, stands)
I think we've made some progress
today.

They both rise. Katie collects her purse. Trevor fumbles for
his keys. Dr. Shaw, halfway to the door, pauses.

DR. SHAW (CONT'D)
Before you go, I'd like to offer a
suggestion.

They stop. Both turn to him, attentive.

DR. SHAW (CONT'D)
This... might not be feasible at the
moment, given your financial
situation... But, I'd like you to
consider taking a family vacation.
Somewhere quiet. Secluded. Give
yourselves a chance to... reconnect.
Just the three of you.

Katie starts to respond, but Dr. Shaw gently holds up a hand.

DR. SHAW (CONT'D)
No pressure. You don't have to decide
now. Just... give it some thought.
Okay?

TREVOR
Yes sir.

KATIE
I will.

DR. SHAW
Great! I'll see you both next week.

They exit the room together.

CUT TO:

EXT. DR. SHAW'S PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Trevor and Katie walk toward their separate cars. Trevor unlocks his truck with a BEEP-BEEP. Katie rounds her sedan, unlocks hers.

Trevor pauses, turns to her.

TREVOR

What do you think about my brother's cabin?

KATIE

In Colorado? We haven't been there in years. Not since Andrew was seven.

TREVOR

It's quiet. Secluded. But still close enough to town not to feel isolated.

(beat)

And hey... it's free. Won't cost us a damn thing.

KATIE

(pauses)

I like the idea... I'm just not ready to commit right now.

(softer)

I promise... we will talk about it.

(beat)

I need to get back to work.

Katie gets in and shuts the door. Starts the engine.

The car backs out and starts to pull away.

TREVOR

(shouting after her)

It could be good for all of us. A reset. Get away from the noise... and breathe.

CUT TO:

INT. KATIE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Katie hears him.

Her eyes glance to him in the rearview mirror.

She doesn't stop.

CUT TO:

INT. KATIE'S OFFICE BREAKROOM - LATER

Coffee GURGLES in a brewer. A vending machine drops a snack with a lite POOF. A man reads the business section of a newspaper. It CRINKLING as he turns the page.

Lauren sits at a table snacking on a granola bar scrolling on her phone.

Katie enters with her Yeti mug, heads to the coffee pot.

Lauren spots her as she enters, her attention directed.

LAUREN
(perking up)
Hey you! How'd therapy go this morning?

KATIE
(smiles softly)
Good.

Katie pulls out the coffee pot, POURS into her mug.

KATIE (CONT'D)
We made some progress in communication... I think.

LAUREN
Hey, that's something. A step in the right direction, right?

Katie replaces the pot into the brewer.

KATIE
Possibly.
(blows on her coffee)
Our therapist suggested we take a vacation to reconnect. Now Trevor is all excited about it.

Katie SLIDES out a chair and sit across from Lauren.

LAUREN
You don't want to?

KATIE

The vacation part... desperately.

(beat)

But right now, it just... doesn't feel like the right time. With Trevor out of work, the bills. It feels... irresponsible.

LAUREN

Do you think it'd help? Your relationship I mean.

KATIE

(beat)

Maybe. I don't know.

(sighs)

Sometimes I wonder if it's already too far gone.

LAUREN

(sympathetic)

Awwwww girl. I'm sorry. I really hope you find some direction.

Before Katie can respond...

CO-WORKER (O.S.)

Lauren! There you are. Mr. Olsen needs you right away.

LAUREN

(grabbing her wrapper)

That's my cue.

She heads to the door, tossing her trash on the way out. She pauses at the door.

LAUREN (CONT'D)

(over her shoulder)

Take the vacation honey. What harm could it really do?

Lauren exits. Katie sits alone for a beat, staring into her coffee. Thinking.

CUT TO:

INT. MILLS HOME OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Trevor sits behind the computer; eyes locked on the glowing screen.

Rapid TYPING and repeated mouse CLICKS fill the room. He's focused.

His phone RINGS. He answers, curt.

TREVOR

Yeah!

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Andrew walks past the office, slowing when he hears Trevor's voice.

TREVOR (O.S.)

I'm working on them now. I'll be ready
in time.

Andrew stops, curious. He leans in just enough to listen without being seen.

TREVOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Yeah, I got it. Meet you there
tomorrow.

THUD

The phone hits the desk.

CUT TO:

INT. MILLS HOME OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Andrew steps inside. Trevor glances over the screen, startled. He CLICKS the mouse a few times; closing windows, covering tracks.

TREVOR

Hey Bud! What are you up to?

ANDREW

I was going to ask you the same thing.
Who were you talking to?

TREVOR

Huh? Oh, the call?

(quick beat)

I have a job interview tomorrow.

ANDREW

Really? That's awesome.

TREVOR

Well thank you, but don't celebrate yet.

ANDREW

What's the job?

TREVOR

Low-level management at a warehouse nearby.

ANDREW

That's... something.

TREVOR

Yeah. So... what's up?

Andrew sits across from him, serious. His face says it all.

ANDREW

Are you and mom really, okay?

Trevor pauses, honestly answers.

TREVOR

Not really. But... we're working on it. Remember what I told you about commitment? About not giving up?

ANDREW

"A true commitment never has an end date."

(smiles)

I got it.

TREVOR

That's marriage in a nutshell.

(beat)

Seriously though, you shouldn't worry. Your twelve. Enjoy being twelve. All this grown-up stuff I'm dealing with... completely overrated.

ANDREW

(chuckles)

Ok, Dad.

Andrew rises and starts to exit the room.

TREVOR

Hey, son...

Andrew stops, peers over his shoulder.

TREVOR (CONT'D)

No matter what happens with your mom
and me, you need to understand... it's
got nothing to do with you. Okay?

Andrew nods in agreement. Exits the room.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Andrew walks down the hall; his smile fades slightly. This is
a lot for a twelve-year-old to carry.

CUT TO:

INT. MILLS HOME KITCHEN - EVENING - LATER

The family sits at the table, eating dinner in near silence.
Trevor shifts in his seat, anxious.

Katie senses it but doesn't speak. Andrew's eyes ping-pong
between them, reading the room.

KATIE

(fed up)

Spit it out. I know you've got
something to say.

TREVOR

You've been busy at work. We don't
have to talk about anything right now.

KATIE

Obviously, you have something on your
mind.

TREVOR

I've just been thinking about what Dr.
Shaw suggested this morning.

KATIE

(eyes snap to him)

Go ahead.

TREVOR

I love the idea. I think it's exactly what we need.

KATIE

I do agree... but this is the worst possible time. We can't just drop what we're doing and go on a vacation.

Andrew, half listening to the conversation, almost drops his fork.

ANDREW

We're going on vacation? Awesome. Where?

KATIE

No where-

TREVOR

(interrupts)
The cabin.

KATIE

Nothing has been-

ANDREW

(interrupts)
Uncle Mike's cabin?

KATIE

(voice raised)
Hey-

TREVOR

(interrupts again)
Yes. For a week, just the three of us.

ANDREW

I love hanging ou-

SLAM

Katie's hand hits the table.

The room stops. Forks freeze mid-air, mouths agape, eyes wide open.

KATIE

(frustrated)
Will you two shut up for a second?
(MORE)

KATIE (CONT'D)

God... sometimes I can't even get a word in edgewise when you two get going.

They both remain still and quiet. Katie takes a moment, reclaiming her space.

A silent beat.

ANDREW

Sorry, Mom. I just thought... I don't know, the cabin sounded cool. It's been forever, and things feel kinda... weird around here. It might be nice to just be somewhere else.

They both glance at him.

Andrew sinks back in his seat, the tension finally hitting him. He fidgets with his fork, uneasy, unsure if he should speak again.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

It's okay if we don't. I get it. Money stuff.

Katie realizes this is hard on him too. She reaches over, places a few calming pats on Andrew's arm.

KATIE

(calmer)

First of all, I'm not sure I can even get PTO for the week. And... even if I can, I'm not sure I can mentally unplug right now. I'm running on fumes here.

(beat)

Secondly, Andrew has baseball commitments. Third, yes, your brother's place is free, but we're still talking gas, food and probably a few costs once we're up there.

(beat)

So... as I said, I'm not sure this is the best time.

TREVOR

Honey, I hear you. You're right about all of that.

(beat)

(MORE)

TREVOR (CONT'D)

You do agree we need a reset, right?

KATIE

(throws hands)

I guess.

TREVOR

Okay... I tell you what. Tomorrow, you check on the PTO. The rest of this week, I'll find a way to earn some extra dough. If I can come up with

(thinking)

five hundred bucks, will you agree?

KATIE

How in the hell are you going to find five hundred dollars?

TREVOR

I'll mow yards. Wash cars. Whatever it takes.

KATIE

(louder)

Where has *that* motivation been the last eight months?

It stings more than he'd like to admit but he knows she's right.

TREVOR

(grunting, honest)

Great point.

(beat)

I want to do this for our marriage. For the family. You two are everything to me.

He lowers his head, the weight of his guilt and resolve settling in.

TREVOR (CONT'D)

I'm willing to admit, I haven't kept up my end of the bargain. I owe you both an apology for that.

He looks up, his eyes burn with a quiet fire.

TREVOR (CONT'D)

Things are about to change around

(MORE)

TREVOR (CONT'D)
here. I promise, you're about to see a
whole different side of me.

Trevor dives back into his plate, avoiding eye contact. Katie watches him. Hopeful, but skeptical.

Andrew looks up. Attempts to time his words.

ANDREW
I know its "adult" stuff and whatever,
but I miss when things were... easier
for you.
(beat)
It's just... we haven't all traveled
anywhere in forever. I kinda don't
care where we go. I just want it to
feel... normal again.

Andrew's words land with Katie, hard.

The room thickens with quiet.

Katie watches her son.

His head is down, pushing food around his plate.

She sees the weight on his shoulders too. A quiet sadness.

For the first time, she realizes he's not just noticing the tension. He's also carrying it.

KATIE
(softly, to Trevor)
Five hundred, by Monday.

Andrew and Trevor exchange a triumphant smile. Katie lets the edge of a smile crack through... then reins it in.

Dinner continues with something that feels awfully close to hope.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY - ONE WEEK LATER

The summer sun shines down on the plains of Colorado as the family drives west.

Andrew sits in the back seat with ear buds plugged into an I-pad.

Trevor looks over to Katie with a satisfied grin.

KATIE
(glancing)
What?

TREVOR
Told you I could do it.

KATIE
Sometimes... you still amaze me.

Trevor's smile widens. Been a while since Katie has paid him a compliment.

KATIE (CONT'D)
When we get back...
(beat)
just try to put that same motivation
into finding a job, okay?

And... it's gone.

TREVOR
(deflated)
C'mon... don't ruin the moment.

Andrew taps his foot along to music, half-listening to the music, the rest toward the brewing argument.

KATIE
What? I didn't -

TREVOR
(interrupts)
I don't wanna fight. That comment
hurt.

KATIE
I don't mean to be hurtful, but I...

TREVOR
(interrupts again)
Na uh. Stop right there.
(beat)
Please... let's both try to enjoy this
week without fighting. Just one week
together, no arguing.

Katie pulls herself back, realizes Trevor is right.

She takes a beat and thinks about her next words.

KATIE

You're right. This week is supposed to
be about decompressing and
reconnecting. I'm sorry.

Katie grabs his hand from the wheel and holds it
supportively.

KATIE (CONT'D)

No work talk. No money talk. Just us.
All of us.

They ride in silence for a beat. Nothing's perfect. But for
now, it's enough.

BUZZ BUZZ

Trevor's phone vibrates in his pocket.

He pulls his hand away from Katie and checks the screen.

His smile fades slightly as he reads the message.

Quickly he locks the screen and tucks the phone away.

KATIE (CONT'D)

Who was that?

TREVOR

I thought you said no work talk.

Katie shoots him a look.

TREVOR (CONT'D)

Job listing notification. I'll apply
later.

Trevor glances at the rearview mirror.

A distantly familiar car lingers a ways back on the highway.

His smile falters for just a second. Quickly comes back.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY GAS STATION - AFTERNOON

The car pulls into the station and nestles up near a pump.

Trevor's door opens in a flash.

He jumps out of the car.

TREVOR

Will you pump the gas, Honey? I gotta go.

He bolts across the lot, not even glancing back. Almost too fast.

Katie opens her door, casually exits and rounds the car to start the pump.

Andrew lags behind, slipping inside the station, letting the CHIME of the door trail behind him.

SWIPE

Katie slides her credit card.

CLUNK

She lifts the pump.

CLANK

Inserts the nozzle into the car and CLICKS the handle.

She leans against the car, thumb swiping idly through headlines. Nothing urgent. Just filling time.

SWAT

A paper map slaps onto the pump. Katie startles, nearly drops her phone. She catches it just in time.

A stranger steps out from behind the pump.

CARL

Apologies. Didn't mean to startle you.
I'm a bit turned around. Would you
mind helping me figure out where in
the world I am?

Carl Shipley - 30s. Built like a wrestler, arms sleeved in tattoos. A crooked little goatee rides under a five o'clock shadow. Wears combat boots and camo pants. There's a flicker of something haunted in his eyes. And an unsettling tremor in his voice.

Katie recollects her breath.

KATIE

No worries. I spend too much time on
this thing as it is.

She gestures with her phone.

KATIE (CONT'D)

Nobody uses these anymore. Maps I
mean.

(beat)

Where are you headed?

CARL

I'm still trying to figure that out.
I'm on one of those... *insta-getaways*.

KATIE

Sounds fun. If you pull out your
phone, I can help you set a location
ping on your GPS.

CARL

I don't bother with that technology
mumbo-jumbo. I prefer to do things the
classic way.

KATIE

Old-school man, I like that.

Katie steps closer, peers down at the map.

The pump CLICKS off.

CUT TO:

INT. GAS STATION BATHROOM STALL - CONTINUOUS

Trevor sits on the toilet, elbows on knees.

His mind clearly elsewhere.

He reaches into his pocket, pulls out his phone.

DIALING

He lifts the phone to his ear.

RING - PHONE (O.S.)

He grimaces.

RING - PHONE (O.S.)

He pulls the phone away. Glances at the screen.

RING - PHONE (O.S.)

Back to his ear. Still waiting.

RING - PHONE (O.S.)

He ends the call. Lets the phone rest in his lap.

Takes a deep breath.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY GAS STATION - CONTINUOUS

Katie points at ease.

KATIE

Right here. Just outside of Alamosa.

CARL

Alamosa... I'm not anywhere near
Denver.

(beat)

Ain't that like a man without a plan?

KATIE

(chuckles)

You're living in the moment.

Over Katie's shoulder, Carl spots Trevor coming out of the bathroom. His eyes clock him, follow him.

Trevor meets Andrew exiting the store. The door CHIME trailing him again.

Trevor sneaks up behind Andrew and wraps his arm around his neck into a headlock. Andrew pushes him away smiling.

Carl's eyes snap back to Katie.

He collects and folds his map with practiced ease, backing away with a tight nod.

CARL
(rushed)
I appreciate your help ma'am. I'll see
you again sometime soon.

He turns fast, almost too fast, hustling to his car.

KATIE
(waiving)
Have a safe getaway.

Carl's engine RUMBLES to life.

The car pulls out of the lot and speeds off down the road
just as Trevor and Andrew round the corner.

TREVOR
Who were you talking to?

KATIE
Some guy, asking for directions.
(beat)
Seemed nice.

Katie spins around, pulls the pump from the car. She slides
it into the pump housing with a SNAP.

The family loads into the car, each door closing with a solid
THUD.

The engine REVS up, headlights shine and the wheels spin.

The car pulls out of the station and back onto the main
highway.

CUT TO:

EXT. CABIN PROPERTY - LATER

The car CRUNCHES over dirt and stone, winding toward the
cabin.

The car pulls to a halt in an area surrounded by trees, the
engine stops.

Downslope a bit sits the cabin. A modern mountain hideaway
nestled between the splitting trees overlooking the valley
below.

The family exits the vehicles, the doors shutting with the
familiar THUD.

FADE TO:

INT. UNKNOWN LOCATION - CONTINUOUS

A dark, dingy room. Walls lined with computers, monitors and technical surveillance equipment.

A pair of feet rest on a table.

Behind them, a monitor plays live footage of the cabin and family circling the car.

CUT TO:

EXT. CABIN PROPERTY - CONTINUOUS

Katie walks over to Trevor, who's taking in the view.

KATIE

I had forgotten how nice it is up here.

Trevor takes a deep and long SNIF of the mountain air.

TREVOR

Oh, how I have missed that smell.

Andrew joins them. Trevor claps him on the back before sliding his hand up and tugging on his shoulder.

TREVOR (CONT'D)

What do you think Bud?

ANDREW

Looks like Uncle Mike has been busy. I remember this place being a bit more... rustic.

TREVOR

Well, a home is an investment. Even a vacation home. The more you put into it, the more it gives back.

KATIE

How in the world does your brother afford a place like this?

TREVOR

Come on. Mike's one of the top minds in his field. People practically throw money at him.

KATIE
People *throw* money at him?

TREVOR
(shrugs)
That's what he says.
(beat)
Let's get our stuff inside, huh?

CUT TO:

EXT. CABIN FRONT DOOR - LATER

Keys JINGLE; the dead bolt SNAPS back.

The front door opens.

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Andrew steps in, hands full with a suitcase, I-pad and a backpack draped over his shoulder.

ANDREW
(glances around)
Uncle Mike *has* been busy. This is
nicer than last time.

Katie follows with her pillow and blanket in one arm and a duffel bag draped over the other.

Trevor brings up the rear, juggling the most weight. Cooler in one hand, duffel in the other, and a small carry-on dangling from his teeth.

Andrew darts off around the corner.

As the family clears the room, in the doorframe, a vehicle CREEPS by the cabin on the dirt road. Too slow to be casual.

It doesn't stop. Just keeps rolling past.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Trevor eases into the room.

He turns, making sure no one is behind him.

He gently closes the door.

He spins around, searching.

He starts opening the medicine cabinet.

Finding nothing, he moves to the cabinet under the sink.

Still empty, he moves to a double door closet filled with towels and sheets.

He thumbs through the contents.

CUT TO:

INT. ANDREWS BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The suitcase PLOPS down on the bed.

Andrew slings the backpack around him, dropping it on the bed. It crumbles next to the suitcase.

He sits on the bed, fiddling with the I-pad. Battery low.

ZIP

He opens the backpack and pulls out a charging cord.

He rises and looks around the room. He spots an electrical outlet by the end of the bed.

CLICK

He plugs in the charger.

Andrew takes the other end and connects it to the I-pad with a SNAP.

From the doorway, a shadowy figure lingers.

Andrew senses something, glances up.

He flinches.

ANDREW
(startled)
Oh my God!

TREVOR
(casual)
Hey Bud, help me with the rest of the
(MORE)

TREVOR (CONT'D)
stuff?

ANDREW
(deep breath)
Yea, sure.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAR - LATER

CLICK.

Trunk pops open and rises.

Trevor and Andrew approach. Their arms dig into the remaining contents.

Andrew grabs a bag. He spots an unfamiliar duffel beneath it.

Trevor's too busy juggling his own load to notice.

Andrew grips the handles and lifts. He GRUNTS under the unexpected weight.

Trevor sees and instantly drops everything.

TREVOR
(panic)
NO, NO, NO! Don't touch that!

Andrew flinches at his father yelling. He quickly drops the bags handles.

TREVOR (CONT'D)
That one stays... for now. I'll take
care of it later. Sorry, should have
told you.

Andrew stares confused, maybe a little spooked. That was not like his Dad.

Trevor never reacts that fast. Or that loud.

Trevor quickly tosses a car-washing towel over the duffel, hiding it.

Sensing Andrew's unease;

TREVOR (CONT'D)
Sorry to snap at you there. Just
(MORE)

TREVOR (CONT'D)
didn't want you to hurt yourself
trying to lift that.

ANDREW
(after a beat)
It's heavy. What did you put in that
one?

TREVOR
Just some stuff for a project I'm
finishing up. It's a surprise for your
mom. Don't ruin it, okay?

ANDREW
O-kay.

They collect the rest of the bags.

SLAM.

The trunk shuts.

They head downhill toward the cabin.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - CONTINUOUS

Tree tops sway in a gentle summer breeze, casting flickering
shadows across the forest floor. The sound is rhythmic...
almost hypnotic.

A shadowed figure moves through the trees. Slow, deliberate.
Watching.

It stops at the edge of a clearing. Lingers.

Downhill, 200 yards away, the cabin is in view. The boys
vanish through the front door.

The door shuts.

A long beat.

The figure steps backward into the trees.

Gone.

END ACT I

CUT TO:

EXT. CABIN BACK PORCH - DUSK

The western Colorado sky glows in streaks of orange, purple, and pale gold.

Katie lounges in a chair, feet propped on the railing, a book open in her lap.

She flips a page, fully absorbed in the story.

Suddenly, a figure immerges behind her.

A shadowed figure approaches silently behind her.

A wine chalet lowers over her shoulder and rests lightly on her chest.

She flinches. Feet drop from the railing.

KATIE
(startled)

OH!

She spins in her seat.

Trevor stands behind her, holding two glasses and a bottle of wine.

Katie exhales. A soft laugh.

She takes the glass.

Trevor moves beside her, settling into the next chair.

He sets his glass down, starts working the cork.

A beat.

POP.

The wine is open.

Katie lifts her glass toward him.

He pours. Then his.

In the distance, a faint CRUNCH of twigs from the tree line.

Katie doesn't hear it. Trevor doesn't either.

Trevor places the bottle on the deck with a soft CLUNK.

He raises his glass. She raises hers.

TREVOR

Here's to vacation. Been a long time coming, and here we are.

KATIE

(smiles softly)
Here here.

CLINK

They sip. The toast is complete.

Trevor settles into his chair, sips his wine.

Katie dives back into her book.

TREVOR

What're you reading?

KATIE

A love story... sort of.

TREVOR

Sort of?

KATIE

The guy's charming, mysterious... and secretly a killer.

Trevor raises an eyebrow, amused.

TREVOR

Sounds like my kind of bedtime story.

KATIE

(laughs)
Don't get any ideas.

Trevor's smile lingers a beat too long. It doesn't quite reach his eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. ANDREWS BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Andrew lies on his bed, gaming on his iPad.

His avatar dies.

ANDREW
(softly)
Crap.

He flips through game options.

A pop-up flashes:

"UNLIMITED LIVES - 5 DAYS - ONLY \$29.95"

A lightbulb moment.

He sets the I-Pad aside.

Moves to the window. Peers out.

His parents are on the porch, laughing softly, wine in hand.

Relaxed. Distracted.

He hesitates. Should I?

CUT TO:

INT. TREVOR'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Andrew slips inside.

He spots Trevor's wallet on the dresser.

Opens it.

His eyes widen.

ANDREW
(whispers)
Whoa!

It's stuffed with hundred-dollar bills. Easily thousands.

More than he's ever seen in one place.

More than his dad promised mom. Way more.

He glances out the window again.

Still safe.

He quietly removes one of Trevor's credit cards.

Closes the wallet, puts it back exactly where it was.
And slips out.

CUT TO:

INT. UNKNOWN LOCATION - CONTINUOUS

The glow of a monitor fills the frame.

The camera zooms in on the screen.

The image sharpens. A close-up of Trevor and Katie on the cabin's back porch.

The monitor image **DISSOLVES** seamlessly into:

DISSOLVE

EXT. CABIN BACK PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Trevor and Katie sit quietly as the vibrant sunset fades.

Trevor gazes thoughtfully at the horizon as dusk transitions to night.

TREVOR
(contemplating)
The last 8 months aside... We've been
pretty happy together, haven't we?

Katie closes her book. Takes a deep breath, exhales.

KATIE
No... but also, a little yes.

Trevor stares. Not the answer he was expecting.

He stays silent. She turns to face him.

KATIE (CONT'D)
(sincere)
I love you. I always have. But
sometimes, I don't feel love from you.

Trevor starts to speak.

Katie holds up a hand.

He nods, sinks into his chair. His gaze doesn't leave her.

KATIE (CONT'D)

Let me get this out.

(beat)

You're an amazing father. An incredible role model. A strong provider. But... I don't feel like you see me anymore.

You're right there for Andrew. You jump on every problem around the house. You're the first to help a neighbor, a friend, anyone. And those are all great things, Trevor. They are.

(emotional)

But where's my husband? Where's my rock? Where's my shoulder to cry on?

I'm not trying to sound selfish here Trevor, I'm really not. You... have your list of priorities, and I don't feel like I am anywhere on it.

We're supposed to be partners in this life. That's what marriage is. A partnership. But you keep doing your own thing... like you always have. And you just expect me to... roll with it.

(slower now)

I need you to be with me. Spiritually. Emotionally. Physically. All of it... or none of it.

(beat)

You need to decide which one.

She breathes.

A weight finally lifted.

Trevor sits in silence, absorbing every word.

A long, reflective beat.

TREVOR

(humble)

Thank you.

(a long beat)

Thank you for telling me your honest thoughts.

(vulnerable now)

I'm at a loss for words right now.

(MORE)

TREVOR (CONT'D)

So... if it's alright with you, I'm
going to take some time, absorb
everything you just said and respond
when I have the right words. Words you
deserve.

Katie leans over, gently places her hand on his arm.

She doesn't speak.

She rises, collects the wine glasses and heads inside.

Just as she reaches for the door -

CLICK

A distant shutter.

She freezes, looks off into the dark woods.

Darkness. Stillness. Nothing.

She glances back to Trevor.

He hasn't moved.

She steps inside, gently closing the door.

CUT TO:

INT. KATIE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Katie enters. Eases the door closed, locks it.

CLICK

She slumps against the wall. Breathing heavy.

Tears slip down her cheeks.

The wine glasses fall from her hands.

She cups a hand over her mouth, muffling the sobs.

Her body shakes.

She slides down the wall, pulls her knees to her chest.

She lets it all out.

PAN THROUGH WINDOW:

EXT. CABIN BACK PORCH - CONTINUOUS

The black sky above is lit with stars.

Trevor stares up into them, searching for the perfect answer in the heavens.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WOODS - DAWN

THROUGH THE SCOPE (POV):

The rifle scope glides across a misty clearing to a pond in the distance down slope.

A buck drinks from the water's edge.

EXHALE

The scope sways slightly left, then right.

It steadies.

CLICK

BOOM

The scope steadies.

A burst of water explodes just over the buck's back.

It bolts into the trees.

END SCOPE POV.

Andrew lifts his head from the scope.

Watches the buck disappear.

TREVOR

You're still anticipating the bang.

ANDREW

(frustrated)

I know... I know. I'm never going to get this, Dad.

TREVOR

(calm)

Hey... relax Bud. That's why we practice.

Andrew set down his rifle, sits up. Trevor rises with him.

ANDREW

How did you get so good at this stuff?

TREVOR

The United States Army son. The best of the best taught me.

ANDREW

They wouldn't take me if I keep shooting like that.

TREVOR

Believe it or not... I was worse than you at your age. Your grandfather gave up trying to teach me.

ANDREW

Maybe you should do the same.

TREVOR

Never.

(beat)

I will never give up on you.

They share a glance and a warm embrace.

ANDREW

This is a really nice spot. I like the vantage point.

TREVOR

Mike and I use to hunt here. I nailed my first buck right over there.

Trevor points into the distant rocks downslope.

TREVOR (CONT'D)

In fact... if I remember correctly, there is an old Indian cave buried in those rocks. We checked it out once. My brother said they used it to store food in the winter when they roamed this land.

ANDREW
Can we go check it out?

TREVOR
Maybe another time. We need to start
heading back.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - LATER

Trevor and Andrew hike back toward the cabin, mostly quiet.

Andrew's mind stirs.

ANDREW
Dad... is mom okay? I heard her crying
last night in her room.

TREVOR
She's better now.

ANDREW
Did you say something to upset her?

TREVOR
No... quite the opposite, actually.
It's all the things I haven't said
that upset her.

ANDREW
What do you mean?

TREVOR
Your mom and I had a talk last night
and... she said a lot of things she's
been needing to say for a long time.
That can be hard for anyone.
Especially on someone who carries a
lot inside.

ANDREW
Was she mad at you?

TREVOR
In a way. She shared with me how she
really felt. Now I can make some
changes, so she does not feel that way
anymore.

ANDREW

Like what?

TREVOR

Your mother is the best thing in my life... besides you. I had forgotten that. She reminded me of it. Now... we are trying to work through it... together.

Trevor stops. Andrew stops with him.

Trevor places his hands on Andrew's shoulders, looks him in the eyes.

TREVOR (CONT'D)

You need to understand something son, marriage is not easy. It's a lot of give and take. Compromise. Mostly patience.

Patience with each other is key. If you abuse that patience, it runs out. Your mom's patience ran out on me. Now I'm trying to rebuild it.

Someday, you will be married. We are trying to set an example that we would be proud to see you follow.

ANDREW

(eyes swelling)

I don't want yall to split up.

Trevor pulls him in.

They embrace. Strong, loving, quiet.

TREVOR

I don't want that either, Bud. Not for a second.

CUT TO:

INT. UNKNOWN LOCATION - CONTINUOUS

The monitor displays live footage of Andrew and Trevor's moment.

Soft CLANKING and KNOCKING is heard in the background.

A small red light blinks on a box under the monitor.

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The morning sun shines through the curtains warming the room.

COFFEE GURGLING

Steam rises from the coffee maker.

Katie pulls a mug from the cabinet.

KNOCK

POURING

Coffee fills her mug.

CUT TO:

EXT. CABIN FRONT STOOP - CONTINUOUS

Katie walks outside into the crisp morning air.

Steam rises from her mug.

She SIPS slowly.

She scans the horizon, taking in the quiet majesty.

Then... motion. Something on the ridge.

From the tree line, a man emerges.

Steady and purposefully he strolls.

She can't make out details.

Soon, he vanishes into the shadows of the woods.

Katie keeps watching while she takes another sip.

She turns, quietly steps inside, without a second glance.

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN KITCHEN - LATER

Katie sits at the table, coffee in hand. Scrolling headlines

on her phone.

Suddenly, WOOSH, the door opens.

Andrew STOMPS into the cabin. Arms full with rifle cases.

ANDREW
Morning mom.

KATIE
Morning. How'd it go? Yall get anything?

ANDREW
Nothing.

He sets the rifles in the corner, opens the fridge, grabs a drink.

ANDREW (CONT'D)
Saw a beautiful buck. Dad said 6-point. I missed and he ran off.

KATIE
Oh baby, you'll get yours soon.

Katie glances around, notices Trevor hadn't come in.

KATIE (CONT'D)
Speaking of your father... where is he?

ANDREW
He's taking a walk. Said something about finding the right words for you... or something.

Andrew heads down the hall toward his room.

Katie sits alone now.

A small glimmer in her eye.

A quiet smile.

She sips her coffee and keeps reading.

CUT TO:

EXT. RIVERBANK - CONTINUOUS

Water RUSHES downstream. A tranquil hum drowns out most sound.

Trevor strolls the river's edge.

Casual on the outside but his mind churns.

CUT TO:

INT. UNKNOWN LOCATION

A monitor displays a live feed of Trevor casually strolling the woods.

In front, feet are resting on the table.

Suddenly, the feet drop to the floor.

FOOTSTEPS ON STAIRS - muted.

CREAK - A door opens.

CLICK - A door closes softly.

The monitor glows, alone, in an empty room.

CUT TO:

EXT. RIVERBANK - CONTINUOUS

Trevor stops. Squats. Collects a few stones from the moist ground.

PLOP

He tosses one into the water.

START POV CARL:

(Camera is Carl. Carl not shown)

From a distance, hidden, Carl watches Trevor.

Silent. Still.

END POV CARL:

Trevor straightens.

He senses something.

His head jerks around.

START POV CARL:

(Camera is Carl. Carl not shown)

Carl slides behind a tree. Silent and deliberate.

END POV CARL:

Trevor's gaze lingers a moment, then turns back toward the river.

Begins walking farther upstream.

START POV CARL:

(Camera is Carl. Carl not shown)

Carl peers from behind the tree again. Watching.

Trevor vanishes behind a rock formation.

END POV CARL:

(Show Carl)

Carl waits. Watches. But Trevor doesn't reappear.

Carl scans the shoreline, eyes searching.

He steps forward, around the tree, shifting for a better view.

Suddenly, face to face with Trevor.

A beat.

Trevor moves fast.

THWACK

He grabs Carl by the throat.

In one swift motion, SLAMS him to the ground with a muted THUD.

Like lightening, Trevor is on top of him.

A large Bowie knife pressed at Carl's throat.

Trevor's open palm hovers over the knife's hilt, ready to drive it down in a heartbeat.

Their eyes lock.

TREVOR
(forceful, quiet)
What the fuck are you doing here?

Carl freezes.

His brow twitches. Something's... off.

CARL
(casual)
Hey there partner. Hadn't heard from
you since our last rendezvous.

The blade trembles tightly in Trevor's grip.

A raging fire burns in Trevor's eyes. Something we haven't
seen before.

It's not just controlled anger. It's *intent*.

TREVOR
(low, dangerous)
That was the plan. We lay low. We stay
apart.

CARL
Partner, you're not playing fair. I
didn't get my cut.

TREVOR
You'll get your half when I'm sure
it's safe.

CARL
That's not how this works amigo.

TREVOR
(low growl)
You stay the hell away from here.
(beat)
You stay the *fuck* away from my family.

CARL
The other half of the money... and I'm
gone.

TREVOR
(leans in)
Soon.

Trevor rises. Blade still in hand.
 He backs away and vanishes into the trees.
 Carl stays grounded. Breathing heavy.
 Rises onto his elbows.
 Looks around. Left. Right.
 He's alone.

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN - AFTERNOON

KNOCK KNOCK

Andrew's bedroom door swings open with a soft CREAK.
 He's on the bed, I-pad in hand.
 He notices the door opening. Pulls out his ear buds.

TREVOR

Hey Bud. We're gonna go into town for
 a bit. There's a nice little fishing
 spot there. You wanna see if we can
 catch some trout?

ANDREW

Sure.

Andrew hops up. Drops the I-pad on the bed with a soft THUD
 as he exits.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - LATER

The car shakes and RATTLES from the bumpy dirt road leading
 away from the cabin.

The Mills family rides in silence.

Katie stares out the window.

Andrew watches them both closely. Concern still lingers.

No words are spoken. Enough were, last night.

Trevor sensing Katie's distance, reaches for her hand.

Gently collects it, leans down and kisses the top.

Squeezes it softly.

Katie flashes a glance in his direction.

A hint of a smile.

It's enough for Trevor.

He releases her hand, placing it back on her leg.

They continue down the road.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWN FISHING POND - LATER

PLOP

A bobber drops into the glassy, calm pond.

Families and fishermen dot its banks.

Trevor sits on a bench at the end of a wooden pier. Alone, still. Just watching the water.

Andrew just down the shore. Casually casting and reeling.

Trevor's eyes drift. Searching the horizon, searching himself.

START KATIE POV:

(Camera is Katie. Katie not shown)

Katie slowly approaches from behind.

He doesn't notice.

She reaches out her hand, placing it on his shoulder.

END KATIE POV:

Trevor doesn't startle.

Just turns, smiles softly.

KATIE

Any luck?

TREVOR

(calm)

Haven't even baited the hook.

(beat)

I'm not really fishing for trout.

Katie sits beside him. Facing away from the water but her eyes are on him.

TREVOR (CONT'D)

I think... I know what I want to say.

She shifts, just slightly. Listening.

TREVOR (CONT'D)

Are you ready to hear it?

Katie hesitates, then nods.

Trevor turns to face the pond. Unsure he wants to see her reaction.

TREVOR (CONT'D)

(calm, sincere)

All my life's been... routine. You know my father was strict. School, chores... even our damn meals were timed. Add the military into that mix.

Katie listens.

TREVOR (CONT'D)

So, when we got married... I just slotted it in like... the next phase. Okay, wife. Check. Home. Check. Kid. Check.

(beat)

That's not marriage. That's a checklist.

Katie's eyes swell. She breathes deep.

Trevor turns his attention directly to her.

TREVOR (CONT'D)

You're right. You've always been right. I wasn't treating you like a partner... I was treating you like a teammate.

(softly)

But this... this isn't a game.

TREVOR (CONT'D)

(beat)

You've held up more than your share.
Covered for me. Waited for me. And I
left you alone in it.

Katie wipes tears from her eyes.

TREVOR (CONT'D)

I just didn't see it. But I see it
now. I see you.

(beat)

You're tired. And you should be. I
should've been there. And I will be
from now on.

(with resolve)

I choose us. I choose you.

(beat)

Thank you... for not giving up on me.

(beat)

I love you. Always have.

Katie trembles. Her shoulders rise, then fall.

She wipes her eyes again. This time slower.

Trevor stays still. Turns his gaze back to the pond.

Lets her feel it. Lets her breathe.

After a beat, Katie rises.

Now, she can't find the words.

She pulls a tissue from her purse. Dots her eyes.

She walks away.

Trevor doesn't look back. He gives her space.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK BENCH - CONTINUOUS

A magazine lowers. Enough to reveal a pair of watchful eyes.

They track Katie as she walks off the pier.

Then shift to Andrew, heading toward his father.

The magazine closes with a RUSTLE.

Carl rises.

Walks away without a word.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWN FISHING POND - CONTINUOUS

Trevor sits at the edge of the pier, recovering from his vulnerability.

Andrew approaches from behind, fishing gear in hand.

ANDREW

Dad...

Trevor turns toward him.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

When we parked, I saw this store I
wanna check out. Is it cool if I go
look around?

TREVOR

Sure.

Andrew drops his gear. Turns to go.

Trevor calls after him.

TREVOR (CONT'D)

Hey Bud... you need some dough?

Andrew stops in his tracks. He turns and nods.

ANDREW

Yea.

Trevor pulls out his wallet.

Opens it. A flash of green.

He peels off one of the hundred-dollar bills.

Andrew clocks the stash.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

Geez Dad... where did you get all
those bills?

Trevor finches. Closes the wallet a little too fast.

Shoves it out of sight.

TREVOR

From before we left, remember?

(quickly handing it over)

Here. I hope they can break that.

Andrew takes the bill. Brand new, crisp, clean. A little too clean.

ANDREW

Thanks.

He walks off, but not without one last look over his shoulder.

Trevor watches the pond.

Andrew watches him.

Then turns and keeps walking.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAFE - LATER

The town square bustles with activity.

Katie sits under a shade umbrella, quietly drinking a tea, absorbing Trevor's words.

She TAPS the side of the glass with her fingertips, lost in thought.

She glances up.

In the distance, see's Trevor and Andrew approaching.

She gulps the last of her tea, rises.

She drops a few dollars on the table and exits the cafe area.

CUT TO:

EXT. SIDEWALK - CONTINUOUS

Katie rounds the small wooden gate and joins the boys.

Together, as a family, they head back toward their car.

Suddenly the crowd parts.

A familiar face emerges.

KATIE
(surprised)
Hey... Old-school.

The family stops.

Carl raises his head, eyes locking on the family.

CARL
(thinking, tilts head slightly)
Gas station lady... yeah, how you
doing today?

Trevor glances warily at Carl.

KATIE
What are you doing here?

CARL
(shrugging)
Past through the other day. I liked
the vibe... figured I'd stay a bit.

KATIE
(smiling faintly)
You really do live by the moment,
don't you.

Carl's gaze slowly shifts to Trevor.

CARL
(grinning, voice low)
Yea... you never know who you will
meet.

KATIE
(apologetic)
Oh, sorry. This is my husband Trevor
and our son Andrew.

Carl's eyes flicker. Just a micro expression of surprise or
recognition. His grin tightens.

Carl reaches out, shakes Trevor's hand.

CARL
(smooth, masking interest)
Trevor... that's your name?
Interesting.

His tone carries a hint of intrigue, as if this is unexpected.

He repeats the name quietly to himself, like tasting something new.

Trevor offers a polite, neutral nod. Eyes locked on Carl.

TREVOR
(calm, cautious)
Hi.

An unnervingly long pause.

Andrew's eyes dart between Carl and Trevor.

CARL
(grinning)
Well... I don't want to keep you from
your family time. Need to see a guy
about some money he owes me.

Carl starts walking away, eyes briefly flicking back at Trevor.

CARL (CONT'D)
(casual, menacing)
Have a good one... Trevor.

KATIE
(nodding)
Bye.

Trevor watches Carl leave, then turns to Katie, frowning slightly.

TREVOR
(curious, concerned)
How the hell do you know him?

KATIE
(shrugs)
Met him at the gas station asking for
directions. Never did catch his name.

Trevor's gaze tightens for a moment.

TREVOR
(skeptical)
Something about him feels... off.

KATIE
(reassuring)
He's harmless. Just a drifter passing
through.

Trevor scans the crowd, quietly alert.

TREVOR
(quiet, firm)
Maybe. But stay clear of him.

ANDREW
(curious, uncertain)
He sure seemed to know you, Dad.

Trevor forces a half-smile, shaking his head.

TREVOR
Nope. Just a stranger.

KATIE
Come on. I want to get back to the
house. My dogs are barking.

The family continues down the sidewalk toward the car.

Trevor glances back over his shoulder.

In the distance, Carl has stopped.

He just stares at Trevor.

CUT TO:

EXT. CABIN PROPERTY - NIGHT

The night is deep, dark, and quiet.

Everything and everyone is sound asleep.

Suddenly —

HONK! HONK! HONK!

Piercing horns and flashing car lights slice through the
stillness.

The Mill's vehicle alarm blares, echoing through the forest.

Lights snap on inside the cabin down the slope.

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Trevor's bedroom door swings open.

He appears wearing only boxers, a gun in hand.

He bolts toward the front door.

Fumbling nervously with the lock, he hurries to open it.

The car alarm's muted screams bleed in from the windows.

He swings the door open, grabs a flashlight from the nearby shelf.

CUT TO:

EXT. CABIN PROPERTY - CONTINUOUS

Trevor rushes out the door into the cool night air.

He CLICKS on the flashlight, its beam piercing the darkness, chasing away shadows.

He sweeps the light left, then right. Nothing.

Katie steps up into the doorframe behind him.

BEEP BEEP

She clicks the key fob, disabling the alarm.

TREVOR

Thanks, Honey.

Quiet now, Trevor inches toward the vehicle.

The light beam sweeps left to right with each careful step.

He approaches cautiously. Flashlight in his left hand, gun at low ready in his right.

Through the vehicle's windows, the light glows.

Trevor arrives to find the vehicle unbothered.

He sweeps the light over the car. Nothing out of place. Nothing broken.

One last scan of the surroundings. All clear.
Trevor lowers his shoulders, turns and heads down.
Still in the doorway, Katie yells from the distance.

KATIE
Anything?

TREVOR
(quiet yell)
Nothing. All good.

Trevor retreats into the cabin. The door shutting with a distant THUD.

The cabin lights begin to flick off one by one.

Twigs SNAP - (O.S.) - DISTANT

CUT TO:

EXT. CABIN PROPERTY - MORNING

The morning sun bathes the area in a warm orange glow.

Trevor scans the ground around the vehicle.

Inch by inch, he steps softly, skillfully.

He rounds the trunk, moving down the passenger side.

TREVOR
Bingo!

Shoe prints lightly line the soil near the vehicle's front door.

Trevor bends down, studying them. An unfamiliar pattern.

He pulls out his phone and CLICKS a photo.

He slowly turns his head to the right, following the trail.

As the brush thickens away from the parking spot, the trail disappears.

TREVOR (CONT'D)
Damn.

He rises. Looks out into the wilderness, squinting. All is

still clear.

Trevor glances around. He's all alone.

His foot SCRAPES against the ground, brushing soil over the evidence.

He retreats into the cabin.

CUT TO:

INT. UNKNOWN LOCATION - CONTINUOUS

A monitor displays Trevor stepping back into the cabin.

A coffee mug slowly rises, blocking the screen.

Hands shift, gripping the mug.

A spoon drops into the cup and begins stirring. Slow, deliberate.

CLINK CLINK.

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

SCRAPE SCRAPE

TAP TAP TAP

Katie stirs eggs, tapping the edge of the pan with the spoon.

Trevor settles at the kitchen table, looking deflated.

KATIE

Did you find anything?

TREVOR

Not a thing. Completely clean around the car.

(beat)

Maybe a deer or something brushed it enough to set off the alarm. Got scared and ran off.

KATIE

We are in the wilderness after all.

After a beat, Trevor shifts uneasily in his seat.

Katie notices.

KATIE (CONT'D)
What's on your mind?

TREVOR
(nervously)
Are we... on the right path?

Katie freezes, looks directly at him.

TREVOR (CONT'D)
What I mean to ask is... was coming up
here the right thing? Is this...
working at all?

Katie takes a deep breath.

KATIE
We've made some progress.
(beat)
I think... we still have a long way to
go. But overall... yes. I'm happy
here, relaxed. This is just what I
needed. What we needed.

TREVOR
(relieved)
I'm glad to hear you say that.

KATIE
Why? Don't you feel the same?

TREVOR
No, no... I do. I've just been
thinking. Things are changing in me. I
just want to make sure they are the
right changes.

Trevor looks off into the distance, searching his mind.

TREVOR (CONT'D)
I've just never really failed at
anything before. I wasn't allowed to.
I'm ashamed with myself for failing
you. I just wa-

Katie sets down the spoon, quickly moves to his side.

KATIE

(interrupts)

You haven't failed me. I've been disappointed in your efforts thus far... yes. But you've taken my concerns seriously. I can already sense a new Trevor. I love that.

(beat)

As long as you are *trying*, you haven't failed me. It's the *effort* you put in that shows me what I need to see.

Trevor, on the verge of tears, leans in and embraces Katie.

She melts into his arms. They share a long, tender embrace.

Andrew walks into the room.

ANDREW

Ewww. Get a room you two.

They pull apart, a slight chuckle escaping both of them.

They both wipe their eyes.

TREVOR

Mornin' Bud. How you sleep?

ANDREW

Good, until the car decided to play a symphony at 2am. What the heck was all that?

Katie rises and continues making breakfast.

TREVOR

(shrugs)

Undetermined.

ANDREW

Do we have any plans today?

TREVOR

Not officially, you got anything in mind?

ANDREW

I'm kinda bored with my I-pad. Can I just go walk around... explore the wilderness?

TREVOR

I love that! Absolutely. You want some company?

ANDREW

Kinda just want to be alone. No offense.

TREVOR

None taken. You do you, son.
(beat)
That ok with you, hon?

KATIE

(hesitant)
Just be careful. Since there's not much for cell service around here, take the hiking whistle with you.

ANDREW

Alright.

KATIE

Breakfast is ready. Grab a plate and dig in.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - AFTERNOON

CAW

Crows caw over head as the wind rustles the treetops with a soothing sway.

The mountains hold a quiet, calming silence today.

A hand appears, gripping a grouping of rocks tightly.

Andrew pulls himself up over the ledge, resting on top.

He catches his breath, then rises.

He glances down at how far he's come, then looks up at the rest of the climb.

It's not a difficult slope, but Andrew huffs as he pushes onward.

After a few more exhaustive steps, he reaches the top.

He stands tall. Gazes over the valley below.

He spots a rock near the edge. A perfect spot to take a break.

He sits, pulls a water bottle from his cargo pocket and drinks.

Suddenly, from behind him -

CRACK!

Andrew spins around.

CARL

Hey young man. Beautiful view up here,
isn't it.

Andrew's caution eases. It's that nice man from town.

ANDREW

(thinking)
Old school... I think my mom called
you.

CARL

(smiling)
Steven's the name actually.

Carl approaches, hand extended.

Andrew takes it. They shake.

CARL (CONT'D)

Mind if I sit with you a moment?

ANDREW

It's a free country.

CARL

That it is my boy.
(sitting)
Men paid for that freedom with blood,
some with their lives.

ANDREW

My Dad served.

CARL

(thinks)
Trevor is his name... right?

ANDREW

Yes sir.

CARL

Marines?

ANDREW

Army actually.

CARL

I always thought he was a Marine.

Andrew picks up on the familiarity in Carl's tone.

ANDREW

Do you know my dad or something?

CARL

(smiling slightly)

Let's just say... we worked together.

ANDREW

Then why did he act like he didn't
know you yesterday?

CARL

Your dad likes to play things close to
the chest. He doesn't share much with
you about what he does, does he?

Andrew tilts his head, pondering.

ANDREW

Not lately I guess, no.

CARL

Men with secrets tend to hide their
true intentions. Even from the ones
closest to them.

Andrew gazes at Carl, a flicker of understanding mixed with
doubt.

CARL (CONT'D)

Speaking as a man with secrets myself,
showing people we love who we really
are can be scary.

ANDREW

I always thought a man should accept
his fears, embrace them, and face

(MORE)

ANDREW (CONT'D)

them.

CARL

Your dad taught you that, huh?

ANDREW

Yea.

CARL

Well... he's not wrong. But every man
has fears he's too afraid to face.
Your dad's are about to come for him.

ANDREW

What do you mean?

CARL

You'll see what I'm talking about soon
enough.

Carl rises. Brushes the dust off his rear.

CARL (CONT'D)

You take care of yourself son. Tell
your Dad I said hi.

Andrew sits, confused.

Nothing Carl said sounds like Trevor.

And yet... everything did.

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Katie sits in a chair, engrossed in her book.

Across the room Trevor is half-asleep on the couch.

Katie closes her book. Places fingers onto the bridge of her
nose.

She sets her book down.

Trevor notices her discomfort. Looks toward her.

TREVOR

You okay, hun?

KATIE
I got a headache.

Katie rises and exits the room.

Trevor lays back down, closes his eyes.

A few moments later, from the other room, Katie calls out -

KATIE (O.S.)
Do you have any Tylenol?

TREVOR
(yells)
Yea. Let me get it for you.

KATIE (O.S.)
Don't get up, I'll get it.

TREVOR
(yells)
Look in my travel bag in the bathroom.

KATIE (O.S.)
Okay.

Andrew closes his eyes again.

A long beat.

Trevor senses someone hovering nearby.

He slowly opens his eyes.

Katie stands over him, holding a thick stack of cash.

KATIE
(inquisitive)
What the hell is this?

TREVOR
(defensive, hesitant)
Uh. That's the money I earned before
we left.

KATIE
(louder)
You told me you made just over five
hundred. There's like five thousand
here.

Trevor sits up sharply from the couch.

TREVOR

What are you doing going through my wallet?

KATIE

I didn't go through it; it was just sitting out in the open.

TREVOR

You clearly did, it's right there... in your hand.

KATIE

(snaps fingers, frustrated)
Don't change the subject! Where did you get all this money?

TREVOR

(defiant)
I don't have to explain myself.

KATIE

(angry, hurt)
God damn it, Trevor! This is exactly what we've been talking about. It's stuff like this that pushes me away from you. Just be honest with me!

Trevor straightens. He knows she's right.

He hangs his head. Breathes in deep.

TREVOR

(calm)
You're right. I'm sorry.
(beat)
The truth is-

Suddenly, Andrew bursts through the front door.

Katie and Trevor both jerk their heads toward him.

Andrew rounds the corner.

ANDREW

Dad! Steven says hi.

TREVOR
(confused)
Steven? Who is Steven?

ANDREW
Oh, you know... Old School.

	TREVOR		KATIE
What?		What?	

ANDREW
That guy we talked to in town
yesterday. His name is Steven.
Apparently, you two use to work
together.

What? KATIE TREVOR
(defensive)
What? No, we haven't. I
don't even know that guy.
Your mom knew him.

KATIE
(suspicious)
You worked with him?

Trevor snaps his head to Katie.

TREVOR
(panicked, defensive)
No.

ANDREW
He says you owe him money.

Trevor snaps his head back to Andrew.

Katie raises the stack of bills.

Trevor snaps his head to Katie.

KATIE
(angry)
This money? Is this to pay him off?

ANDREW
(to Katie)
Oh, you found it too?

Trevor snaps his head back to Andrew.

TREVOR
(panicked)
No. What?

KATIE
(to Andrew)
How did you know about this?

Overloaded, Trevor takes a giant step back.

TREVOR
(yelling, rapid breathing)
What the hell is going on here? I
don't know what either of you are
talking about!

KATIE
(yells)
Trust!

ANDREW
(yells)
You're lying!

TREVOR
(screams)
TIME OUT!

Everything... everyone freezes.

Trevor's breathing is heavy. Pulse rate high.

He feels dizzy.

He stumbles backward and sits down on the coffee table.

Katie and Andrew both close in around him.

Trevor's eyes dart between them both.

He breathes, his mind races.

KATIE
Well?

TREVOR
(gasping)
Give me a minute here.

Trevor takes another deep breath. Sinks his shoulders.

TREVOR (CONT'D)
(honest)
Ok. The money came from my brother.

KATIE
(doubtful)
Mike?

TREVOR
(defensive)
Who else? Yes... Mike. He left that
for me here. As a surprise... for us.

KATIE
(doubtful)
Why would Mike leave you almost five
thousand dollars?

TREVOR
(defensive)
I can't even begin to know why Mike
does what he does.

KATIE
Ok... What about Steven?

TREVOR
(adamant)
What about him? I... do... not...
know... him.

ANDREW
(serious)
He sure knows you. He knows about your
military service, your secrets.
Sounded like you two were best
friends.

TREVOR
(frustrated)
Oh my god! How many times do I need to
say it?

Something clicks for Trevor.

TREVOR (CONT'D)
Wait a minute? When did you talk to...
Steven or whatever the hell is name
is?

ANDREW
I ran into him on my hike. He's really
a nice guy. We had a nice talk.

TREVOR

(upset)

I told you to stay away from him.

KATIE

(questioning)

So, you do know him?

TREVOR

No!

KATIE

Then why do we need to stay away from him?

TREVOR

(defensive again)

I just... have a feeling about him. Something's off with him. Trust me.

ANDREW

(serious)

I can't, Dad. That's the point. I don't know who to trust.

Trevor's heart shatters.

He sinks low, deflated.

Katie leans in closer. She means business.

KATIE

I don't know what is going on with you... or what you're into, but you need to come clean... I mean right now!

Trevor rises slowly, shoulders heavy.

He looks at Katie and Andrew. The weight of their distrust is very clear. He knows nothing he says now, will fix this.

Without another word, Trevor turns and exits the room.

On his way out, Andrew throws a final dagger.

ANDREW

So much for facing your fears and accepting responsibility, huh, Dad?

CUT TO:

EXT. CABIN PROPERTY - CONTINUOUS

Trevor exits the cabin.

He moves swiftly towards the car.

He gets in SLAMMING the door shut.

Swiftly starts the engine and backs out.

CUT TO:

INT. UNKNOWN LOCATION - CONTINUOUS

A monitor shows the vehicle speeding away.

Sounds from the background echo softly:

CLANK

THUNK

ZIP

FOOTSTEPS ON STAIRS

CREAK

THUNK - DOOR CLOSES

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN KITCHEN - EVENING

Katie and Andrew sit at the table.

Not a word is spoken.

A fresh meal steams in front of them.

Neither touches it.

Katie glances out the kitchen window.

The sun lowers behind the trees and peaks.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Trevor drives down the highway.

Right hand on the wheel. Left resting against the window.
Hurt, betrayal, and distrust cloud his face.

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Katie scrapes the meal into the trash.
She turns to collect the remaining dishes.
Andrew enters.

They share a look. A silent, comforting "I got you."
Andrew moves to the sink and begins scrubbing dishes.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK BENCH - CONTINUOUS

Trevor sits alone on a bench, watching the western sky shift from orange to dark purple.
Worry and defeat etched in his eyes.
A tear rolls down his cheek.
He collapses his head into his hand, shuddering with sadness.
He cries, releasing his burden.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CABIN KITCHEN - NIGHT

Katie sits alone at the kitchen table, one leg pulled up into her chest.
She bites her nails, nervously watching out the window.
Her worry grows. After every fight, Trevor always sends her something to let her know he's okay.
She pulls out her cell phone.

NO SIGNAL.

She rises, holding her phone high in the air. Nothing.

She sits back down, lost in thought.

She opens her photo gallery and begins scrolling through family pictures.

One by one, memories of good times flood her mind.

Tears begin to well up.

She keeps scrolling. Feelings rush back.

Suddenly. Faint FOOTSTEPS.

She freezes, listening.

The FOOTSTEPS grow louder, closer.

KATIE
(relieved)
Trevor?

She bolts to the door.

Swings it open in a flash.

It's CARL.

Her face drains instantly.

CARL
I'm aware this is a -

KATIE
(interrupting)
Steven, this isn't the best time for a visit.

CARL
Trevor... asked me to stop by.

Katie's attention is captured.

Andrew enters the room. Drawn by the noise of the conversation.

Carl sees him.

CARL (CONT'D)
(casual)
Hey Andrew.

ANDREW

Hey.

KATIE

I'm sorry, you... talked to Trevor?

CARL

(sincere)

Yes. He's very disheartened by all that's happening. He won't admit this, but... he's ashamed and afraid to face you. I offered to stop by... maybe explain a few things to you both. See if we can't clear up some of the confusion.

Katie and Andrew share a look. Andrew shrugs.

KATIE

O... ok. Please come in.

Katie steps aside, letting Carl enter.

As he walks in, he unslings a backpack and lays it on the table.

CUT TO:

EXT. CABIN FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Carl's arm pushes the cabin door closed from the inside.

A shadow passes by the window.

END ACT II

CUT TO:

EXT. CABIN PROPERTY - NIGHT

A full moon bathes the land in a cold, numbing silver.

In the distance, headlights appear.

They grow brighter as they approach.

The car rolls to a stop.

The engine shuts off.

The door opens.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Trevor pauses.

The dome light illuminates his tired face.

He sits quietly, gathering his thoughts.

Slowly, he sinks his head onto the steering wheel.

Takes a deep breath. Then another. And another.

He rises, exits the car.

SLAM.

The door shuts. The dome light fades.

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The doorknob CREAKS as it turns.

The door slowly swings open.

Trevor steps inside.

He pauses, listening. Glances around the room.

He reaches back and shuts the door.

THUNK

TREVOR

(softly)

Katie?

(beat)

Andrew?

KATIE(O.S.)

(muted, nervous)

Living room.

Trevor walks through the kitchen, the living room comes into view through the door frame.

Katie and Andrew are huddled together on the couch.

They look frightened. Trevor doesn't notice.

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The **CAMERA** starts tight on the doorway frame leading to the kitchen.

Trevor stands **FRAMED** in the doorway, his voice breaking the silence.

TREVOR
I owe you both an apology.

As Trevor slowly steps forward, the **CAMERA** slowly **PULLS BACK**, matching his pace.

TREVOR (CONT'D)
It's past time I'm honest with you.

The **FRAME** widens revealing Carl lurking just behind the doorway, motionless, watching, waiting.

TREVOR (CONT'D)
You both deserve more than that.

Trevor moves toward the living room, unaware.

He enters into the living room.

TREVOR (CONT'D)
I need to come clean ab-
(cut off)

Suddenly -

BAM! - Carl pistol whips Trevor.

KATIE	ANDREW
(scream, overlap)	(scream, overlap)
AAAH!	AAAH!

Trevor collapses to the floor. Unconscious.

SMASH CUT TO BLACK.

Katie's and Andrews scream echo. Slowly fading out.

A long beat.

INT. CABIN LIVING ROOM - DAWN

START TREVOR POV:

View slowly **FADES** in. Everything is fuzzy.

View **FADES** out.

INHALE

EXHALE

View **FADES** in. Getting clearer now. Carl rises from a chair across the room.

View **FADES** out.

MOAN

GROAN

View **FADES** in. Crystal clear.

Early morning sun light bleeds in from the windows.

Carl stands over Trevor, leaning down, hovering over him.

END TREVOR POV:

CARL
(casual)
Hey there partner. Good morning.

Trevor lies on his side, bending his neck to scan the room.

In the center, Katie and Andrew sit back-to-back-tied up, mouths gagged.

Tears stream down their faces, eyes wide with fear.

Trevor turns his head back to Carl.

He tries to move his arms to rise.

He can't. Carl has tied his hands behind his back.

He tries to speak.

He can't. He's gagged.

CARL (CONT'D)
Here ya go amigo. Let me help you up.
We got lots to discuss.

Carl grabs Trevor by the shoulders, pulling him into a sitting position.

Once settled, Carl lowers his face close to Trevor's.

Noses nearly touching. Eyes locked.

CARL (CONT'D)
Now, I'm gonna talk for a minute...
and your gonna sit here and listen.
Okay?

Trevor nods. Eyes darting between Carl and his family.

Carl rises, knees cracking with the movement.

He rounds Katie and Andrew.

Trevor's eyes track him.

Carl rounds Katie and Andrew.

The family's eyes all meet. Katie and Andrew's eyes are filled with raw fear.

Behind them, Carl settles onto the coffee table.

He casually lifts his handgun, resting it on his knees.

The barrel points dangerously close to Katie and Andrew.

They flinch.

Their terror is palpable.

CARL (CONT'D)
Comfy?

Trevor's eyes lift off Katie and Andrew, locking on Carl.

CARL (CONT'D)
Years ago, when I took this job... the
agreement was a fifty/fifty split.
Everything... right down the middle.
After expenses, of course.

Trevor stares, worry etched across his face.

CARL (CONT'D)
Each job went smooth.
(shakes gun in approval)
You... you're a smart guy. You planed
each one very well.

Trevor's eyes dart to Katie.

Her gaze reflects disappointment. She was right all along.

Trevor widens his eyes in denial.

CARL (CONT'D)
This last job... no different.
Executed flawlessly.

Carl leans forward onto his knees, the gun resting menacingly
between Katie and Andrew.

They continue to flinch. Avoiding the aim of the barrel.

CARL (CONT'D)
Then, you go and change the hand
off... the split. Why?

Trevor shakes his head, eyes wide.

Carl rises, starts slowly circling the room.

CARL (CONT'D)
You see, Trevor... changing the deal?
That's not just a slap in the face.
It's a declaration. A challenge.

Carl stops.

He lowers the gun, pointing directly at Katie.

Trevor and Katie both share a muted SCREAM.

Her eyes cinch shut.

CARL (CONT'D)
You're playing with fire... and you're
gonna get burned.

Carl pulls the gun back, continues slowly circling.

CARL (CONT'D)
I'm a patient man... but my patience
only goes so far. You crossed a line.

Carl rounds behind Trevor.

Trevor swallows hard. Breathing intensifies.

His heads whips around to keep tracking Carl as he passes behind him.

CARL (CONT'D)

And now... you've changed the rules.
You're not just protecting your family
anymore... you're fighting for *their*
life.

Carl stops and points the gun at Andrew's head.

Andrew cinches his eyes shut.

Trevor and Katie share a louder, muted SCREAM.

Carl squats beside Andrew, pressing the barrel closer.

Trevor and Katie's muted SCREAMS continue.

CARL (CONT'D)

(louder)

You want to fix this?

Trevor aggressively nods.

CARL (CONT'D)

(same volume)

You'll do as I say?

Trevor aggressively nods.

CARL (CONT'D)

(yells)

Because if you don't... I'll make damn
sure you regret it.

Carl shoots up, arm stiff, finger on the trigger, gun shaking.

Trevor starts thrashing and bouncing, SCREAMING through the gag, pleading.

Katie lowers her head, tears dripping.

She can't bear to watch.

CARL (CONT'D)
(yells)
No more secrets!

He reaches over, aggressively yanks down Trevor's gag.

TREVOR
(through tears)
Alright! You win! The money is yours.

Trevor lowers his head in submission. Weeps with fear.

CARL
Well, see how easy that was?

Carl rubs his hand down Andrew's face, cups his chin.

CARL (CONT'D)
(to Andrew)
All this mess could have been avoided.

TREVOR
You're right. I'm sorry.

Head down, Trevor raises his eyes, glancing at the knot binding Andrew's hands together. Sloppy work.

He swallows hard, then lifts his gaze to meet Andrew's.

TREVOR (CONT'D)
I'm sorry.

He shifts his gaze to Katie.

TREVOR (CONT'D)
I'm so sorry.

Carl catches the disappointment and shock in Katie's and Andrew's faces at his admission.

CARL
They really had no idea did they? Did I say you were good? I might have undersold it. Keeping this whole other side of you from your wife... and son. Now *that's* impressive.

TREVOR
Enough. You want the money? It's all yours... on the condition you leave them alone. Do what you want with me,
(MORE)

TREVOR (CONT'D)
but they stay here.

Carl rises, eyes narrowed, distrustful.

TREVOR (CONT'D)
I've got the money in a secure place.
I was waiting till the coast was
clear. That last job... it was close.
I needed to be sure we were clean.

CARL
Where is it?

TREVOR
I have a spot just down the hill. It's
where I store all the equipment and
supplies. Hidden, secure. The moneys
in there.

Carl studies Trevor, sensing a setup.

CARL
You understand, if it ain't there,
I'll kill you. March right back up
here and kill these two.

TREVOR
These are the two most precious things
I have on this earth. Why would I risk
their lives with something as trivial
as this?

Carl stares at Katie. Shifts his gaze to Andrew.

After a beat, his eyes lock on Trevor.

Eyes don't lie.

CARL
Alright, let's see how this plays out.

Carl steps behind Trevor and grabs under his arms.

Trevor and Andrew lock eyes.

Trevor winks.

Andrew's eyes squint in confusions and distrust.

Just as Carl starts to pull him upward -

TREVOR
(silently mouths)
The knot.

Andrew's eyes widen.

His fingers twirl around the knot exploring. His fingers find a weakness.

Andrew winks in understanding.

CARL
Let's go.

Trevor now standing, Carl leads him to the door.

As it opens, Carl turns.

CARL (CONT'D)
Sit tight you two. If Trevor here really is that smart, he'll give me what I want, and he will be back to release you.

Carl pulls him out the door. It SLAMS shut behind them.

Andrew and Katie listen closely as the muted THUNKS across the back porch fade away.

Andrew begins frantically working at the knot.

CUT TO:

EXT. CABIN PROPERTY - CONTINUOUS

Carl follows Trevor down the slope toward the hideout.

Gun pointed at Trevor's back the whole time.

They walk silently.

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Katie notices Andrew fumbling around with the knot.

Katie turns her head, MUMBLES softly behind the gag.

KATIE
(muted)
What are you doing?

Andrew turns. Nods his head downward. A muted GRUNT escapes from under the gag.

ANDREW
(muted)
The knot.

CUT TO:

EXT. CABIN PROPERTY - CONTINUOUS

Trevor and Carl continue their trek.

CARL
I really hope this isn't some
desperate attempt to get out of this.
I'm not a killer but I sure will enjoy
putting a bullet in your head if you
try anything.

Trevor stays silent. With Carl's attention drifting over the uneven terrain, Trevor slowly and tactfully works his knot.

They keep a steady pace.

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The knot behind Andrew loosens.

He wrestles his hands free.

He rises to his knees, reaches up and pulls down his gag.

Swiftly turns around, pulls down Katie's gag.

KATIE
Wow. Good job.

Andrew swiftly works Katie's knot.

ANDREW
We gotta save Dad. I know where
they're going.

KATIE

What? No... we're staying here and
calling the cops.

Katie's knot is undone.

She pulls her hands forward, rubbing her wrists.

ANDREW

(urgent)

There's no time... and no signal.

Andrew shoots up, bolts out of the room to the other end of
the cabin.

Katie rises slowly. Yells after him.

KATIE

Andrew, no! It's too dangerous.
Besides, your father made his bed. Now
he gets to lie in it.

Andrew enters back into the room with haste. His rifle
tightly bound to his chest.

Katie's eyes widen when she notices the gun.

KATIE (CONT'D)

No! Absolutely not!

ANDREW

(urgent)

We have to save Dad!

KATIE

Your Dad is in his own trouble.

ANDREW

(urgently pleading)

Don't you see... he's sacrificing
himself... for us!

KATIE

We'll take the car, get to where we
have signal and call for help. Let's
go.

ANDREW

There's no time!

Like lightening, Andrew shoots out the room and heads

outside.

KATIE
(yells)
Andrew!

CUT TO:

EXT. CABIN PROPERTY - CONTINUOUS

Andrew runs full speed into the woods.

Rifle secured in his hands as he sprints downhill.

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Katie stands alone, unsure and tense.

Suddenly, the front door CREAKS open.

Urgent FOOTSTEPS approach. They're deliberate, measured,
unlike Carl's heavy steps.

Katie snaps her head toward the sound.

The FOOTSTEPS stop.

Her eyes widen.

KATIE
(surprised)
What the hell are you doing here?

(Beat. Hold the tension before cutting away or shifting
scenes)

CUT TO:

EXT. VANTAGE POINT - CONTINUOUS

A light fog rises off the small pond in the valley, synced
with the rising morning sun.

On the rock formation downhill, Trevor and Carl emerge into
view.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROCK FORMATION - CONTINUOUS

Both men carefully step onto the rocks.

Trevor's hands still bound behind his back.

Trevor still working the knot every chance he gets.

Carl follows, gun still aimed at Trevor.

As they reach a flat surface, Trevor stops.

CARL

This it?

TREVOR

Right in there.

Trevor nods toward the cave.

Carl turns his gaze to the cave.

In a flash, Trevor frees his hands from the rope.

He punches Carl as he turns back.

The force knocks the gun from Carl's hand.

It skids across the rocks near a soft drop.

Carl rears back and lunges for Trevor.

He grabs Trevor's shoulders.

Trevor lands a punch to Carl's ribs.

Carl WINCES.

As he rises, Carl elbows Trevor in the gut.

Trevor doubles over, winded.

Carl SLAMS an elbow into Trevor's back.

Trevor crashes to the ground.

Carl's eyes scan quickly.

He spots the gun and lunges for it.

Trevor pushes himself to his knees and lunges at Carl.

He grabs Carl around the waist and throws him backward.

Carl doesn't fall... catches himself.

Trevor rises fully.

The two men exchange a fierce glance.

They charge at each other.

Their bodies SLAM together with brutal force.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - CONTINUOUS

Andrew sprints toward the vantage point where he and Trevor hunted earlier.

BREATHING heavy, winded, he pushes forward.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROCK FORMATION - CONTINUOUS

Trevor pushes Carl back and clocks him with a right hook.

Carl rebounds with a left to Trevor's side.

Trevor bends in pain.

Carl seizes the moment, dropping a right fist straight to Trevor's face.

Trevor collapses to his knees.

He counters with an uppercut to Carl's abdomen.

Carl is blown backward by the force.

Trevor dives for the gun.

CUT TO:

EXT. VANTAGE POINT - CONTINUOUS

Andrew arrives at the vantage point. Winded but determined.

He sees his dad and Carl fighting on the rock formation below.

He swiftly takes action, setting up his rifle.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROCK FORMATION - CONTINUOUS

Trevor grabs the gun.

He rolls over and raises it.

Carl kicks his hand. The gun flies out.

Trevor grabs and yanks Carl's foot hard to the left.

Carl's knee buckles, and he collapses.

Trevor rises, ready to continue.

Carl slowly gets up, breathing heavily.

He discretely grabs a fist-sized rock from the ground, hiding it behind his back.

CARL
(breathing heavy)
Having fun partner?

TREVOR
(windied)
I'm just getting started.

CARL
(menacing)
Oh... me too.

CUT TO:

EXT. VANTAGE POINT - CONTINUOUS

START SCOPE POV:

The scope scans the rocky terrain, quickly locking onto the two men.

It narrows in on Carl.

Focus sharpens.

It finds the rock hidden behind Carl's back.

Lifts to Carl's back, right behind his heart.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROCK FORMATION - CONTINUOUS

TREVOR
You still haven't figured it out
yet... have you?

CUT TO:

EXT. VANTAGE POINT - CONTINUOUS

SCOPE POV:

The scope focuses on Carl's heart.

EXHALE

CUT TO:

EXT. ROCK FORMATION - CONTINUOUS

CARL
What's that?

CUT TO:

EXT. VANTAGE POINT - CONTINUOUS

SCOPE POV:

The scope sharply focused tight on Carl's heart.

CLICK

CUT TO:

EXT. ROCK FORMATION - CONTINUOUS

VOICE (O.S.)
You've got the wrong guy.

CUT TO:

EXT. VANTAGE POINT - CONTINUOUS

SCOPE POV:

Tight on the cross hairs.

BOOM

A beat.

The scope settles from the shot.

Pink mist sprays from Carl's back.

He collapses.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROCK FORMATION - CONTINUOUS

Trevor jerks his head in the direction of the shot.

Smiles with pride.

CUT TO:

EXT. VANTAGE POINT - CONTINUOUS

START SCOPE POV:

The scope reflects Trevor's prideful smile.

It sways right.

Finds another man standing on the rocks behind Carl.

Zooms in, focusing sharply.

END SCOPE POV:

The rifle lowers.

Andrew's head raises.

ANDREW
Uncle Mike?

CUT TO:

EXT. ROCK FORMATION - CONTINUOUS

Carl, on his back, lays on the rocks. Blood pooling underneath him.

He slowly turns his head to the right.

Mike slowly steps down off the rocks.

He stops, stands beside Trevor.

He steps forward, the morning light filling his face...
identical to Trevor's.

Carl's eyes widen.

CARL
(weak)
There you are, Falcon.

His eyes dart between Trevor and Mike.

CARL (CONT'D)
There's two of you?

MIKE
There's always been two of us,
Stingray.
(pointing)
That one was just never involved.

CUT TO:

EXT. VANTAGE POINT - CONTINUOUS

Andrew stands triumphant at the vantage point.

Katie arrives, winded, by his side.

ANDREW
Mom... what's Uncle Mike doing here?

CUT TO:

EXT. ROCK FORMATION - CONTINUOUS

Carl lays his head back onto the rocks.

His eyes drift the sky as he fades.

His chest lowers, stills.

Trevor and Mike watch as he slips.

A solemn beat.

MIKE
(casual)
Hey Bro.

TREVOR
Don't "Hey Bro" me, you asshole. Do
(MORE)

TREVOR (CONT'D)
you realize all the trouble you've
caused me this week?

MIKE
I'm sorry brother. I didn't think
Stingray was going to come after me so
soon.

TREVOR
What is all this? What are you into?

MIKE
Best you don't know. Plausible
Deniability.

The conversation quickly shifts as Andrew and Katie approach,
breathless and wide-eyed.

Trevor joyously darts to Andrew and hugs him tight.

TREVOR
Hey Bud! Great shot! I'm so proud of
you.

ANDREW
I just did like you taught me.

Katie steps up as Trevor and Andrew separate.

They stand face to face.

TREVOR
(humble)
Honey... I -

Katie dives into his arms. Wrapping around him tightly. Tears
stream down her face.

He exhales, pulls her in tighter.

Andrew turns to Mike.

ANDREW
Uncle Mike... I don't believe it.

Andrew and Mike hug.

Katie lifts her head from Trevor's chest. Wipes tears from
her cheek.

She looks to Mike.

KATIE
(confused, cautious)
All this time?

MIKE
(sheepishly)
Yea. Watching, waiting, protecting.

KATIE
(still processing)
Why didn't you say anything... warn
us?

MIKE
(shrugs)
The less people know, the safer they
are.

ANDREW
So... you're the reason Dad has been
so sketchy lately?

TREVOR
(sighs)
Mike's been the other half the whole
time.
(beat)
Come on, let's get to the cabin. I'll
explain everything.

The group starts to walk away.

Andrew pauses.

ANDREW
What are we going to do about him?

Katie and Trevor look to Mike.

Mike glances down at Carl.

MIKE
Well... if the wildlife doesn't get
him first, I'll deal with him later.

Looks back up to the family.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Stingray lived completely off the
(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)
grid. Trust me... no one's going to miss him.

KATIE
Wow. He really was... Old School.

DISSOLVE

INT. CABIN BACK PORCH - LATER

The family is gathered on the back porch.

Katie sits on Trevor's lap.

She lovingly applies an icepack to his head.

Andrew sits on the railing watching his parents. Smiles.

KATIE
Ok mister... talk. Start with the money?

TREVOR
There really is an innocent explanation for that.

DISSOLVE

INT. CAR - FLASHBACK (NEW PERSPECTIVE)

Katie grabs his hand from the wheel and holds it supportively.

KATIE
No work talk. No money talk. Just us. All of us.

They ride in silence for a beat. Nothing's perfect. But for now, it's enough.

BUZZ BUZZ

Trevor's phone vibrates in his pocket.

He pulls his hand away from Katie and checks the screen.

START NEW CONEXT:

TEXT SCROLL - "Left you a surprise in the bathroom. Don't tell Katie. Mike"

END NEW CONTEXT.

His smile fades slightly as he reads the message.

Quickly he locks the screen and tucks the phone away.

KATIE (CONT'D)

Who was that?

TREVOR

I thought you said no work talk.

DISSOLVE

INT. BATHROOM - FLASHBACK (NEW PERSPECTIVE)

He starts opening the medicine cabinet.

Finding nothing, he moves to the cabinet under the sink.

Still empty, he moves to a double door closet filled with towels and sheets.

He thumbs through the contents.

START NEW CONTEXT:

He finds a manilla envelope hidden under the towels.

His name written on the front.

He opens it, revealing a note.

The note reads - "Give your family a vacation they will NEVER forget. Love you. Mike"

Trevor turns over the envelope and a large, banded stack of hundred-dollar bills falls into his hand.

Trevor's eyes grow wide. He smiles.

END NEW CONTEXT:

DISSOLVE

EXT. CABIN BACK PORCH - CURRENT

The back door CREAKS open.

Mike steps onto the porch.

TREVOR
(sarcastic)
So really guys... you have Uncle Mike
to thank for this *unforgettable*
vacation.

MIKE
(casual)
Hindsight and... all that. Whatever.

TREVOR
Your still an Asshole.

MIKE
Guilty.

Mike approaches Trevor and hands him an iPad-like device.

Katie carefully rises and sits next to Trevor.

Trevor takes the device.

TREVOR
What's this?

He studies the device.

Multiple monitor screens display surveillance angles all over
the property.

MIKE
It's everything we've been working on
this last year.

Katie rises again, moving behind Trevor to see the screen.

Andrew hops down and joins them.

TREVOR
Oh my God, Mike. You said we weren't
ready for field testing.

MIKE
Maybe... I shaded the truth a little.

TREVOR
This is great! Does the remote control
work?

MIKE
Yea. Try it out.

Trevor CLICKS an icon.

The screen changes to a camera angle with a remote-control interface.

He manipulates the camera angle.

TREVOR

This is awesome!

(beat)

Wait... this is your front gate camera? That's like two miles away. How did you get the remote range to reach that far.

MIKE

That's the breakthrough. That's what's going to sell these systems.

TREVOR

Holy shit!

KATIE

What is this?

TREVOR

Mike and I developed a security monitoring system that's completely off grid. Wireless and un-hackable.

MIKE

I put up 30 camouflaged cameras all over my property.

(pointing)

I dug out an underground surveillance bunker about three hundred yards over there. That's how I kept track of Stingray's activities.

DISSOLVE

INT. SURVEILLANCE BUNKER - FLASHBACK (NEW PROSPECTIVE)

A monitor displays a live feed of Trevor casually strolling the woods.

In front, feet are resting on the table.

Suddenly, the feet drop to the floor.

START NEW CONTEXT:

Mike rises.

He turns and ascends the stairs.

Opens the door and exits the bunker.

END NEW CONTEXT:

CUT TO:

EXT. RIVERBANK - FLASHBACK (NEW PROSPECTIVE)

Trevor vanishes behind a rock formation.

Carl waits. Watches. But Trevor doesn't reappear.

Carl scans the shoreline, eyes searching.

He steps forward, around the tree, shifting for a better view.

START NEW CONTEXT:

Trevor strolls the riverbank, moving in front of a rock formation.

At an angled distance behind him, a figure watches.

Suddenly, a new figure rushes up and attacks.

THWACK!

Mike grabs Carl by the throat.

In one swift motion, SLAMS him to the ground with a muted THUD.

Like lightning, Mike is on top of him.

A large Bowie knife presses against Carl's throat.

From across the river, Trevor sits on a stone.

The river drowns out all noise.

The rock formation blinds Trevor from the struggle; angles are deceptive.

Mike's open palm hovers over the knife's hilt, ready to drive it down in a heartbeat.

Their eyes lock.

MIKE
(forceful, quiet)
What the fuck are you doing here?

Carl freezes.

His brow twitches. Something's... off.

CARL
(casual)
Hey there partner. Hadn't heard from
you since our last rendezvous.

The blade trembles tightly in Mike's grip.

A raging fire burns in Mike's eyes.

It's not just controlled anger. It's *intent*.

MIKE
(low, dangerous)
That was the plan. We lay low. We stay
apart.

CARL
Partner, you're not playing fair. I
didn't get my cut.

MIKE
You'll get your half when I'm sure
it's safe.

CARL
That's not how this works amigo.

MIKE
(low growl)
You stay the hell away from here.
(beat)
You stay the *fuck* away from my family.

CARL
The other half of the money... and I'm
gone.

MIKE
(leans in)
Soon.

END NEW CONTEXT:

DISSOLVE

EXT. CABIN BACK PORCH - CURRENT

KATIE

When did this start?

TREVOR

Right before I got laid off from Hyden Security Systems.

MIKE

This is all Trevor's baby. I just provided resources and raw materials.

(beat)

This is the Mills family's future.

ANDREW

So... that "job interview" for the warehouse you had before we left was... this?

TREVOR

Yup. Mike met me in town that week so we could file our patents.

KATIE

Why didn't you say anything?

TREVOR

I wanted it to be a surprise.

ANDREW

Speaking of surprises, what's with that awfully heavy bag in the trunk? Mom's surprise.

TREVOR

Oh yea...

(to Mike)

The next batch of 20 cameras are in the trunk.

Katie turns her head toward Trevor interested.

TREVOR (CONT'D)

(holds up the control device)

Surprise!

The family sits together, relaxed but reflective. The sun sets gently, casting warm hues behind them.

Mike casually walks off the porch and into the woods.

Trevor, Katie and Andrew share a quiet moment. No words, just presence.

Trevor looks to Katie and Andrew, a small, hopeful smile.

Katie squeezes his hand, leans into his chest. Smiling.

Andrew rests his head on Trevor's shoulder.

The family sits lovingly nestled together on the back porch.

IMAGE DISSOLVE SEAMLESSLY INTO:

INT. SURVEILLANCE BUNKER - CONTINUOUS

A monitor displays live footage of the family lovingly nestled together on the back porch.

A beat.

Mike's hand reaches into view, turns the monitor off.

CLICK

BLACKOUT

END ACT III

THE END