

SIXTEEN STATES

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SUBMISSION DRAFT  
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EXT. FORESTED ROAD - EARLY MORNING

The grey gloaming of morning. A PICKUP truck pulls to the side of the road at the edge of the WOODS. In the bed, an adorable SPOTTED JUVENILE DOG YIPS with excitement.

A man who looks to be a HUNTER emerges from the truck with a RIFLE and heads for the treeline. The excited young dog jumps out and follows him.

EXT. WOODS / GULLY - A SHORT TIME LATER

A perfect morning for hunting, good visibility and flat light. The Hunter loads his gun, looking serious as cancer.

The spotted dog sniffs the breeze when-- A SNAPPING TWIG gets their attention, the Hunter's eyes dart to see--

A BUCK, oblivious to his presence, rooting around nearby. It's beautiful.

PAN back to the Hunter- taking in the sight, while the dog stiffens at attention.

The Hunter studies the gorgeous animal closely, its musculature highlighted by the early rays of then rising sun when... A TEAR wells in his eye.

The Hunter returns his attention to the gun. He flips off the safety.

BACK ON THE BUCK, still unaware, when a loud GUNSHOT RINGS OUT. The startled animal DASHES AWAY UNHARMED as we PAN BACK to the hunter to REVEAL--

--A HUGE SECTION OF THE HUNTER'S HEAD IS GONE- the rifle barrel still in his mouth as his body CRUMPLES TO THE GROUND before a tree painted with his blood and brain matter.

The dog is completely unaware and DARTS AFTER the buck, leaving us with the Hunter's remains.

A ghastly and unforgettable image- the man's lifeless EYE looking to the skies. CAMERA TILTS UP, following his gaze, as the bright white sky soon BLEACHES THE FRAME.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SUBURBAN MAIN STREET - DAY

Tall, gauzy, OUT OF FOCUS SHAPES undulate like stalks of corn in a SLOW MOTION breeze.

Moving closer reveals them to be SMALL AMERICAN FLAGS, dozens of them, gripped by HANDS both young and old -- held aloft above a CROWD.

It doesn't seem unusual the flags only have SIXTEEN STARS.

We move through this lyrical forest of red, white and blue, over the heads of the SPECTATORS until we come upon a PARADE.

IN SLOW MOTION MONTAGE, we take in familiar images of HIGH SCHOOL MARCHING BANDS and FLOATS...

...MAJORETTES and REVOLUTIONARY WAR RE-ENACTORS...

...VFWs and UNCLE SAM ON STILTS walk side by side as happy MIDWESTERN TOWNFOLK cheer them on, lining the streets of an average Midwestern town. And from the banners held by the marching members of the ROTARY CLUB, it seems we are in a place called WYNTON, ILLINOIS.

The pastoral imagery continues along suburban FRONT YARDS populated by running kids passing houses draped in bunting and other regalia. Golden hour paints it all in orange.

EXT. CONSTANCE HOUSE - DUSK

Outside one of these houses, on a quaint cul-de-sac, we catch up with a FAMILY OF FOUR leaving their front door with armfuls of dishes destined for their neighbor's home.

APRIL CONSTANCE follows her youngest daughter, POSEY (8), out the door. April has a bowl of POTATO SALAD and a covered POT while little Posie lugs a tupperware CONTAINER, best she can.

APRIL  
Keep it flat Posey honey...

POSEY  
I am.

APRIL  
No that's sideways... Do you have the cupcakes Josh?

Her husband JOSH clears the threshold with a plate balanced on one hand and a GROWLER of beer in the other.

JOSH  
No- Bella does- Bella? You comin' or what?

Josh looks over his shoulder to his older stepdaughter, ISABELLA (14)-- bringing up the rear with a CUPCAKE PLATTER.

ISABELLA  
Coming... Why so much stuff?

JOSH  
Your mother wants to impress the  
new neighbors.

APRIL  
I'm just being nice!

POP-POP-POP-POP! A few TWEENS set off a HALF-MAT OF FIREWORKS  
across the cul-de-sac, startling everyone.

EXT. JEN AND MATT'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - NIGHT

SPARKLERS and SNAPPERS occupy raucous little ones while a few  
DADS toss some small FIRECRACKERS.

A classic SONG on the outdoor speakers as NEIGHBORS pick at  
the potluck outlay. Neighbor dad MATT wears a baseball hat  
that reads US BORDER FORCES. He unloads burgers and dogs off  
the grill and onto platters held by April and Isabella.

APRIL  
So how you liking Wynton, Matt...?

MATT  
We love it so far. Work's good,  
taxes are super low, people seem  
nice...

JEN (O.S.)  
April will you give me that and sit  
down already?

Matt's wife JEN appears and takes the platter from her, her  
16 year old son, COLE, trailing behind her. Isabella  
instantly notices him.

JEN (CONT'D)  
Isabella, this is Cole. He's shy,  
but he sure is handsome isn't he?

COLE  
Mom...

Cole rolls his eyes as the women laugh at him, but can't help  
but notice Isabella's smile. The moment is soon broken by the  
distant BOOM of FIREWORKS.

Jen claps her hands and SHOUTS to be heard by all-

JEN  
 TIME FOR FIREWORKS! TIME FOR  
 FIREWORKS!

The grown-ups begin to migrate to a corner of the yard,  
 leaving Cole and Isabella together.

An awkward moment between the teens, then--

COLE  
 So... uh.. You going to the  
 football game Sunday?

ISABELLA  
 Um, probably, yeah...

COLE  
 Maybe we should go together?

Isabella tries to play it cool as she blushes at this  
 unexpected moment.

COLE (CONT'D)  
 I'm not shy.

Cole's smile melts her a little. MUSIC SWELLS AS they  
 continue to flirt--

SMASH CUT TO:

POP! BOOM! OOOH! AHH! PYROTECHNICS fill the skies as the  
 neighbors enjoy the COMMUNITY FIREWORKS filling the sky.

SCORE builds as we CRANE UP SLOWLY, revealing the GLOW OF THE  
 FIREWORKS ON THE TREETOPS...

CRANE UP continues as we go higher, FLASHES of colored light  
 illuminating the surrounding neighborhood and eventually--

--A LONG, LOOMING WALL OF SHIPPING CONTAINERS at the edge of  
 town, CUTTING THROUGH THE LANDSCAPE AND SNAKING INFINITELY  
 INTO THE DISTANCE IN EITHER DIRECTION.

PULL OUT CONTINUES as fireworks from adjoining towns can also  
 be seen in the distance- FURTHER ILLUMINATING THE SEEMINGLY  
 ENDLESS WALL--

MUSIC BUILDS as....

TITLE CARD: **"SIXTEEN STATES"**

And as the music crescendoes, we--

FADE TO BLACK:

OVER BLACK-

The sound of LEAVES on a light SUMMER WIND.

TITLE CARD: **"Monday"**

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET / PARK - AFTERNOON

A beautiful day. Leaves rustle on the trees of the quaint street. Nothing could be more normal as we catch up with April walking Posey through the neighborhood.

APRIL

But Suzanne was your Grandmama's  
name...

POSEY

I still don't like it...  
(then)  
And why do you call Bella "Bella"?

APRIL

Because it's short for Isabella...

POSEY

You know why I like when you call  
me Posey?

APRIL

Um... maybe because you're pretty  
like a flower?

Posey laughs as they walk on.

EXT. SUBURBAN PARK - DAY

Minuscule in the frame, they make their way across marshy lowlands, passing a PARK. Jutting up from the nearby woods is a municipal WATERTOWER- a familiar suburban sight.

Something draws Posey's attention. She points.

POSEY

Mommy look.

On the other side of the playground something moves in the grass. Before any alarm can be raised, the YOUNG SPOTTED DOG scampers into view. Posey laughs at his awkward gait.

April kneels down to accept the dog and it flops into her lap. She SMOOSHES ITS FACE and it LICKS HER PLAYFULLY as she notices his collar.

APRIL

Did you break out of your yard?  
Let's find out who you belong to.  
(to Posey)  
You want to pet him?

Posey moves closer as April reaches for his collar, but before Posey can pet him, the dog SCAMPERS OFF.

POSEY

Hey! Come back!

APRIL

Here boy-- come here--

He's already too far to catch, running for the treeline.

POSEY

Is he going home?

APRIL

I hope so. I'm sure they're missing him right now.

As Posey grabs her hand, April watches the dog head for a GULLY by a THICK STAND OF TREES - which eventually consume it in their shadows.

INT. CONSTANCE HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

The family sits around a small table in the kitchen holding hands as Josh prays.

JOSH

Lord God and giver of all good gifts, we are grateful as we pause before this meal, for all the blessings of life that you give to us. Mindful of your continuous care, we are grateful for the blessings of this table.

EVERYONE

Amen.

APRIL

An extra prayer for the Conner family. That you may comfort them and love them during their hardship.

*This is clearly a break in form* and Josh squirms with discomfort. He shoots a glare at April.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Amen.

EVERYONE

Amen.

ISABELLA

Something going on with the Conners  
mom?

April looks to Josh- she clearly wants to say something and  
he's not happy about it-- so he jumps in before she can.

JOSH

They were neglectful, always were-  
now they're dealing with the  
repercussions. End of story, now go  
on and eat.

April shoots a glance back at Josh as SILENCE falls over the  
table and everyone eats. Eventually Josh changes the subject--

JOSH (CONT'D)

I scheduled an extra practice  
Saturday by the way. Sunday's gonna  
be a tough one...

April nods as the hush returns like a blanket of snow.

INT. CONSTANCE HOUSE - KITCHEN - SINK - LATER

The kids have left and Josh and April finish cleaning up.

JOSH

What's the point of bringing it up  
is all? I mean thank goodness  
someone called it in, you know?  
Besides- who wants to talk about  
that stuff?

APRIL

They know Mary and Dave's kids. Do  
you think if we don't talk about it  
they won't notice?

JOSH

There's plenty of good things for  
them to notice. Do you know how  
lucky we are? To have all the  
things we have?

APRIL

I know, but--



JOSH

What we have is special. We are safe, we have security, a roof over our head, friends... Those are things that a lot of good people fought and died for in this country. Hell- their dad was one of them.

APRIL

Don't you think I know th--

JOSH

I'm just saying they shouldn't ever forget that.

APRIL

Of course not... but there's nothing wrong with caring, Josh.

JOSH

What? Like the Anderson Seven?

APRIL

You know that's not what I'm saying-

JOSH

(quoting something)  
"Let 'em through, let 'em through-  
God told me to let 'em through"

APRIL

This is different.

JOSH

Everything has consequences.

April looks at him with a slight unease. There's something she wants to ask.

APRIL

It wasn't you who called them in  
was it?

Josh deflates- just stares back at her. But he doesn't rush to deny it.

APRIL (CONT'D)

I mean, you wouldn't do that but...

He declines to elaborate. He just sighs and exits, leaving April equal parts guilty and unsure.

FADE OUT.

OVER BLACK-

**"Thursday"**

PRELAP the sound of a SHOPPING CART on pavement.

EXT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

April pushes her cart toward the sliding doors. She smiles at a familiar worker and is soon passing some STUDENTS hawking PETITIONS.

STUDENT

Will you sign a petition to stop  
family separations at the border  
today?

APRIL

Already have- thank you...

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

A normal American grocery store. Normal enough. April moves through the aisles with Posey in the cart.

She picks up a dozen EGGS. Some CANNED GOODS. Some CELERY. Inspects some APPLES when she's joined by a FRIENDLY SHOPPER.

FRIENDLY SHOPPER

They're really good. My kids ate  
'em all an hour after I brought  
them home.

APRIL

My kids aren't big into apples but  
my they do look good...

INT. SUPERMARKET CHECKOUT LINE - LATER

April waits in the express lane, behind an OLD MAN being rung up by a kindly cashier, named BOONE.

BOONE

That's twenty-four fifty.

The Old Man hands him some money, then matter of factly places his WRIST on a SCANNING DEVICE which quickly BEEPS.

BOONE hands back his CHANGE AND RECEIPT.

BOONE (CONT'D)

There you go sir, have a good one.

April's next. Greets him with a smile as he rings her up -

APRIL  
Hey Boone, how's things?

BOONE  
Oh you know. Same stuff different day.

APRIL  
Of course. You going to the game Sunday?

BOONE  
Got Amy to switch my shift.  
(then)  
That's twenty even.

April hands him a twenty and routinely puts her wrist on the machine. BEEP. She grabs her bag and gets on her way.

APRIL  
Thanks.

FADE OUT:

OVER BLACK

PRELAP the sound of a CHEERING CROWD and a referee WHISTLE-

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD - STANDS - NIGHT

Josh stands on the sidelines BARKING ORDERS to his high school PLAYERS. It's the last play of the game, the crowd eating it up.

IN THE STANDS, April has Posey on her lap, cheering on their local team.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD - PARKING LOT - LATER

Out of sight of the crowds, Isabella and Cole have found a perfect spot. Giggling and closeness precedes the moment she's been waiting for.

He kisses her cheek and gently places his hand on her waist. She smiles and he kisses her on the mouth, the tempo quickens-

ISABELLA  
Wait.

Pause button pushed, he pulls back. Is he moving too fast?  
She holds him from retreating further.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)  
When was the last time you were  
checked?

He hangs his head. Moment ruined.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)  
Sorry. It's just that my stepdad is  
always -- I'm sorry. He's such a  
fucking dick...

He steps back and nods, defeated.

COLE  
Yeah I know. I get it... My dad's  
the same way.

ISABELLA  
I mean it's just... I'm sorr-

COLE  
You don't have to be... My dad's a  
freak about it too.

Isabella decides to push it aside, desperately wanting to  
reclaim the kiss.

ISABELLA  
We don't have to listen to them...

She reaches up and moves closer.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)  
Forget them, let's just--

She kisses him, but she can tell from his lips- the moment  
has passed.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)  
Moment's passed, huh?

He smiles awkwardly, agreeing with the sentiment.

COLE  
Game's almost over anyway...

She reluctantly nods in understanding but she's clearly  
crushed as any lust struck teen would be. She chokes back  
her disappointment as they leave the private area.

CUT TO:

BACK AT THE GAME the final WHISTLE BLOWS-- signaling victory for the home team.

CUT TO:

Moments later, April gives Posey to Josh.

APRIL  
Congratulations coach...

Josh winks at her, taking Posey.

APRIL (CONT'D)  
Can you take her in your car? Me  
and Bella will pick up some dinner.

He agrees just as April notices an ELDERLY WOMAN with TWO YOUNG CHILDREN headed for the exits. Something occurs to her.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD - EXITS - NIGHT

The ELDERLY WOMAN shepherds the young kids through the crowd.

APRIL (O.S.)  
Ann?

ANN turns around to see April.

ANN  
Oh April so nice to see you.

APRIL  
Nice to see you. I noticed that  
you're with the kids- is everything  
okay with Mary and Dave?

Ann is not comfortable with this question- not here.

ANN  
They're um..... It's fine.  
Everything's fine.

But April notices tears begin to well up in the woman's eyes. She's obviously not telling the truth.

APRIL  
Ann?

Ann turns and melts into the crowd. April is concerned but--

ISABELLA (O.S.)  
Mom?

Isabella is behind her, looking pretty upset herself.

APRIL  
You okay?

ISABELLA  
Can we just go?

And as Isabella blows past and heads for the parking lot...

INT. CAR - LATER

April and Isabella drive along in SILENCE. April tries to engage her, like moms do.

APRIL  
I saw Cole- did you see him? He's pretty cute, huh?

ISABELLA  
I don't want to talk about it...

APRIL  
Everything okay?

ISABELLA  
Why's everything gotta be so hard?

Isabella tries to hide a tear from April.

APRIL  
Oh Honey. I know sometimes even the simple things seem hard in this world. I mean the way the world is.

ISABELLA  
Can't we just forget all this? Go somewhere better?

APRIL  
Like where? There is nowhere else.

ISABELLA  
What about Appalachia? People talk about that.

APRIL  
Oh honey, that's not real. I think you know that.

ISABELLA  
It could be. Anywhere would be better than here.

APRIL

No. That's just a story people tell  
to give themselves hope. People  
need hope sweetheart.

ISABELLA

So it's a lie-

APRIL

No. It's more like faith...  
Something to believe in. Something  
that keeps them going.

April searches for direction. It's a moment that every parent  
faces and April looks for a spark.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Do you remember Grandma and  
Grandpapa's place at the lake?

Nothing. She continues.

APRIL (CONT'D)

That lake was pretty murky.  
Basically a big mud puddle really--  
and so many sunken trees at the  
bottom. Like- a giant trap for  
catching kids limbs. It's a wonder  
they ever let us swim in it. As  
you'll recall Grandma had a pretty  
wide definition on what was safe  
for children.

This memory has pulled Isabella out of her shell a bit.

ISABELLA

She gave me a BB gun when I was  
five.

APRIL

And firecrackers!

Isabella smiles a little.

APRIL (CONT'D)

So you remember...

(beat)

Well one time, I must have been 6  
or 7, I was jumping off the deck  
into the lake with my cousins. Even  
Grandma said that that was too  
dangerous to do -so you can  
imagine...

(then)

(MORE)

APRIL (CONT'D)

Well sure enough, my legs got caught in those limbs at the bottom and I was trapped. I couldn't tell up from down and I was starting to panic. You know with my eyes clamped shut to keep out that muddy water. You know the way little kids do. The way Posey does.

April comically imitates a small child squeezing their eyes shut. Isabella smiles.

APRIL (CONT'D)

It's a miracle I didn't drown.

ISABELLA

Did someone jump in and save you?

APRIL

No. Those kids didn't even notice I was gone.

ISABELLA

So what happened?

APRIL

I remembered something Grandpapa said to me. He said if you ever get in trouble underwater, open your eyes and swim toward the light. That's what I did and I found my way out.

(a smile, then)

I made quite a show of it. Crying and screaming- snot running down my face. I was angling for a grilled cheese and tomato soup. Grandma's cure for near-death trauma.

This jars a happy memory loose in Isabella's mind.

ISABELLA

Grilled cheese and tomato... I remember that.

April reaches over and rubs her neck.

APRIL

You just got to swim toward the light Sweetheart... Sometimes it's the only choice we got.

Isabella would never admit it, but she gets it.



I/E. CAR - LATER

April and Isabella cruise through the suburban streets, mid conversation. The mood is lighter than before.

As April rounds the corner she notices-- FLASHING LIGHTS AND POLICE VEHICLES. NEIGHBORS are gathering and moving toward one of the houses on her block.

ISABELLA

What's going on?

APRIL

Oh no...

As they grow closer, a terrible realization creeps over them.  
*IT'S THEIR HOUSE.*

April pulls the car over and marches toward the house. The front door is open and a terrifying collection of AUTHORITIES has gathered around. This is not a random police action.

UNITED STATES VECTOR CONTROL or USVC is printed prominently on the side of one of the vans. Figures dressed in PPE SUITS from head to toe look like aliens emerging from the vehicle.

April's mind races. Who's this for? Is it Josh? That's when--

JOSH EMERGES FROM THE CROWD to greet her- his EXPRESSION IS GRAVE. She does the math and with sudden horror-

APRIL (CONT'D)

Posey!

April charges toward the house but JOSH STEPS IN FRONT OF HER, ARMS RAISED-- STOPPING HER.

JOSH

April... wait-

APRIL

Who is it? Is it Posey?

JOSH

April just calm down and listen-  
This is...

APRIL

Josh, I asked you a question. Is it  
my little girl? Tell me right now.

Josh gestures to a uniformed man named COLONEL JIM BEDFORD- who arrives with his HANDS RAISED much like Josh.

COLONEL BEDFORD  
Ma'am please calm down- everything  
is going to be fine.

APRIL  
Where's my daughter? You're not  
taking her away!

Isabella, scared, tries to interject.

ISABELLA  
Josh..?

JOSH  
She's fine.

The Colonel's right hand man, MAJOR STENZ joins in the  
chaotic conversation.

MAJOR STENZ  
There's nothing to be alarmed  
about, ma'am, this is just-

APRIL  
Where is she?

JOSH  
She's sleeping. She's fine.

COLONEL BEDFORD  
Ma'am were you at the--

APRIL  
I want to see-

April tries to get through the narrow space between her  
husband and the Colonel- but they THROW THEIR HANDS UP AND  
STEP BACK AS IF SHE WERE A LEPER.

EVERYONE  
WHOA! HOLD IT!

MAJOR STENZ  
STAY WHERE YOU ARE MA'AM.

JOSH  
Honey- just hang on. Hear them out.

April FREEZES, taken aback by the tone. Isabella can't help  
but notice the dynamic- tries again for answers.

ISABELLA  
Josh...?

But April already knows.

APRIL

Oh God- is it me...?

COLONEL BEDFORD

Ma'am please. This is just a precaution.

APRIL

Is it me? But... no...

COLONEL BEDFORD

You were at the FreshMart on Route 6 Friday, yes?

APRIL

Yes...

COLONEL BEDFORD

An employee on register 3 was flagged during an employer health check.

APRIL

Boone?

MAJOR STENZ

To confirm or deny would violate the subject's right to privacy.

COLONEL BEDFORD

What we can say is we need to do our due diligence with people that had direct contact with the subject.

APRIL

Meaning what?

COLONEL BEDFORD

We'd just like to have you in, ask a few questions and do a quick test. The subject is not yet within the transmission window, so there's nothing to worry about- but we are required to double check.

It's a lot to take in. She shoots a look to Josh.

JOSH

They said it'd only be a couple hours...

ISABELLA  
Can she refuse?

JOSH  
*Bella-* Let these men do their job-

APRIL  
Can I?

MAJOR STENZ  
You could, but you'd need a lawyer to petition the court. And you would have to be kept under observation by a professional at your home at your own expense.

COLONEL BEDFORD  
It would take about ten days.

JOSH/APRIL  
Ten days?

COLONEL BEDFORD  
That what you'd like to do ma'am?

ISABELLA  
Yes.

JOSH  
Bella-

Isabella clams up as April thinks. Ten days doesn't sound appealing. Unsure, she looks to her husband for guidance.

They share a long stare at one another, until Josh gives a subtle shrug as if to say, "The easy way is better."

April takes that in and finally says-

APRIL  
Wouldn't want to waste the money...

ISABELLA  
Mom no. Josh, don't let her-

JOSH  
It's ok. She won't be long.

APRIL  
It's ok honey. I'll see you soon.

COLONEL BEDFORD  
Thank you ma'am. We will have you back as soon as possible.

They watch as April is led to a nearby VAN and takes a seat.

ISABELLA  
Can we go with her?

MAJOR STENZ  
You won't be allowed in, best to  
wait until she's released...

Seated alone, April shares a fake smile for her family...

APRIL  
It's gonna be okay honey.

The door SLIDES CLOSED. Josh heads back home, leaving  
Isabella fighting back tears... looking around... embarrassed  
because people might see.

She soon sees Cole- looking upon her with sympathy. A moment  
of hope as she works his way toward him-

ISABELLA  
What do I do? I don't know what to  
do...

But before Cole can answer, MATT interrupts.

MATT  
Stay back...

She stops, confused.

MATT (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry about your mom, but you  
need to stay away now...

COLE  
Dad--

Matt stares daggers at Cole, who immediately backs down.

Isabella can't believe her eyes. She looks to Cole who wants  
to speak, but is clearly afraid of his dad.

ISABELLA  
Cole...?

He looks down, ashamed. Isabella is broken hearted, tears  
flowing freely as Matt, Cole, Jen and the rest of the  
neighbors back away from her...

...leaving her increasingly alone on her own front lawn.

CUT TO:

I/E. VAN - SUBURBS - NIGHT

Equally alone, April watches from inside the van as the houses and businesses of her community pass by.

The van is amidst a convoy of USVC vehicles consisting of local and state police, light military transports and three additional USVC vans identical to the one April rides in.

EXT. U.S. VECTOR CONTROL CENTER 38 - NIGHT

The police vehicles peel off from the USVC convoy as they enter a CAMPUS OF INSTITUTIONAL BRICK BUILDINGS, ringed in by layers of FENCING AND CONCERTINA WIRE.

A closer look indicates the complex is a large midwestern HIGH SCHOOL long-ago repurposed for USVC operations.

A sign reads UNITED STATES VECTOR CONTROL STATION 38 - CHATHAM COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH CENTER.

April takes it all in as the vans pull up before an entrance, greeted by four SMALL TEAMS of USVC PERSONNEL in PPE suits.

The doors of April's van slide open and April looks to the handsome USVC NURSE before her, greeting her with a smile.

MALE NURSE

Hi. May I see your right wrist please?

April extends her arm. The nurse quickly affixes an ORANGE ID BAND to her wrist.

MALE NURSE (CONT'D)

Orange three. Don't forget that.

She is led by one of the teams toward a large building.

She looks around to see others escorted from the remaining vans. ONE IS THE FRIENDLY WOMAN who she talked to while buying apples at the store.

ANOTHER IS THE OLD MAN from the register line. They look as freaked out as she does.

NEARBY, the USVC TEAM including the Colonel and Major, go through a SECURITY LINE outside a DOOR.

Their items go through a MACHINE akin to an airport scanner while they put their fingers in a TESTING DEVICE. GREEN LIGHTS ALLOW THEM ACCESS through the door.

This seems like something they do several times a day.

INT. PUBLIC HEALTH STATION - MOMENTS LATER

April is escorted into a cavernous space which has been retrofitted into a field hospital of sorts. A ROW of aluminum-framed plexiglass COMPARTMENTS containing exam equipment and institutional furniture fill the space.

The sterile and functional aesthetic is broken up by PATRIOTIC WALL ART designed to calm and inspire both workers and visitors.

INT. PUBLIC HEALTH STATION - PLEXI COMPARTMENT - LATER

CLOSE ON A BLOOD DRAW from April's arm. April looks through the plexiglass to see the Old Man and Apple Woman from the store going through the same routine in other compartments.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

There we go...

April snaps out of the moment, refocusing on the FEMALE DOCTOR bandaging up her arm and placing the blood sample in a small centrifuge-like device connected to a computer.

DOCTOR

It'll be just a minute...

She picks up a TABLET and looks it over while April eyes a familiar sight hung outside the plexiglass chamber--

A LARGE EDUCATIONAL MAP FEATURING NORTH AMERICA-- but MOST OF THE STATES ARE BLACK except for the 16 STATES east of the Mississippi River and North of the Ohio River which are red, white and blue.

*Now we know why the American Flags only have 16 stars.*

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Been feeling okay?

APRIL

Fine... Normal.

DOCTOR

Good. Headaches? Trouble sleeping?

APRIL

Ummm... well...

The Doctor smiles.

DOCTOR

I mean more often than a mom of two  
would normally have.

April smiles back. The woman's warmth is appreciated.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

I just have to ask the questions.  
Check the boxes. Part of the  
routine. Okay? I do this all day  
long. Did you touch any blood?  
(off April's head shake)  
Do you remember if he coughed?

APRIL

Coughed? I don't think so...

DOCTOR

Good. As you know, the condition is  
transmitted through blood contact.  
He is stage one and he had no open  
wounds, so unless he was aspirating  
blood particles and you breathed  
them in, there's almost zero chance  
of transmission. Don't worry,  
you'll be mommin' again in no time.

APRIL

Good.

DOCTOR

When was your last test?

APRIL

Two weeks ago. Just a home one...

DOCTOR

Good.

She checks off a box on the tablet.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

My kids are both married off.  
Believe it or not, you'll miss all  
the chaos once they're gone...

April appreciates the comment with a grin, then-

APRIL

Are we almost done?

DOCTOR

Two more questions. Are you  
allergic to anything?



APRIL  
How many people from the market  
have you seen?

DOCTOR  
Twenty. None positive.

April notices a NURSE leading the APPLE WOMAN out of the compartment next to hers. She gives April a smile and a thumbs up as she passes.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)  
See?

Relieved, April heaves a sigh.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)  
So-- Allergies?

APRIL  
No. None.

DOCTOR  
Good.

April looks to the OTHER COMPARTMENT where the Old Man is having his wristband SNIPPED OFF. April smiles as he exits.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)  
The field guys are a bit  
overzealous, sure-- But no one  
wants another Anderson Seven, you  
know? "Let 'em through..."

A tiny BEEP and the centrifuge stops spinning. April looks to the Doctor as she turns her attention to the computer.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)  
Ok... just have to-

She hits a few keys, CLICKS her trackpad matter of factly. April picks up her jacket.

APRIL  
Ok let's go. Last question?

No answer. The Doctor is distracted by the computer.

APRIL (CONT'D)  
What's the last question? You said  
one more question so...

NO ANSWER from the Doctor. April can't help but notice *she's no longer smiling.*

Not a peep, SILENCE besides the CLICKS ON THE COMPUTER TRACKPAD. It's maddening to April.

APRIL (CONT'D)  
Can you just ask the question  
please? Doctor?

The Doctor PUSHES A BUTTON on the desk- it blinks silently.

APRIL (CONT'D)  
What's that?

The Doctor plucks some NITRILE GLOVES from a box on the table and puts them on.

APRIL (CONT'D)  
Doctor?

Gravely serious, the Doctor lifts her face mask from her neck and puts it on.

APRIL (CONT'D)  
What? What's going on...? Tell me  
what's going on...

April draws closer. The Doctor backs up to the door.

APRIL (CONT'D)  
Hey! What's going on? Talk to me...

The Doctor continues to back off, but doesn't respond. She exits the room and --

APRIL (CONT'D)  
HEY!

--SLAMS the DOOR SHUT ON APRIL.

APRIL (CONT'D)  
HEY!!

APRIL RAPS on the plexiglass as the Doctor confers with a uniformed USVC OFFICER- ignoring her pleas.

He signals to nearby ORDERLIES who descend on the compartment with professional haste.

APRIL (CONT'D)  
I think there's been a mistake...  
There's been a mistake.

Instantly the orderlies POP LATCHES on the corners of the compartment to release CASTERS that make it easily movable.

Within seconds she's being pushed down the aisle- powerless and terrified.

APRIL (CONT'D)  
WAIT! STOP! WAIT!!

No one answers. They continue to push her toward the gaping maw of a FREIGHT ELEVATOR. April implores them for help.

APRIL (CONT'D)  
Stop! I need to talk to somebody!  
Just wait! Please!

It's useless. CLANG! The compartment fits snugly in the freight elevator with a loud clatter.

APRIL (CONT'D)  
SOMEBODY HELP ME!!!

CLANG! The doors SLAM TOGETHER like the mouth of a giant beast- sealing her from view and muting her cry for help.

CUT TO BLACK:

A BEAT OVER BLACK as the sound fades. Then-

APRIL (PRE-LAP) (CONT'D)  
You can't just keep people for days  
on end. I want to talk to my  
family. There's been a mistake...

MAJOR STENZ (PRE-LAP)  
It's a simple question ma'am...

INT. ISOLATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Not unlike a prison visiting situation, April is seated across from a PLEXIGLASS WINDOW. *She's agitated and sweaty.* Behind her are two armed and hazmat suited GUARDS.

On the other side of it is Major Stenz from Vector Control, seated at a table before a microphone.

APRIL  
It's a mistake. What about the  
others? They were let go...

MAJOR STENZ  
Again--  
(reading)  
You are in quarantine.  
(MORE)

MAJOR STENZ (CONT'D)

USVC and therefore the Department of Public Health has found through testing of your blood that you display the positive markers associated with the C5 virus, level two. Do you understand this information as it has been presented to you? Yes or no.

APRIL

No. How can I be level two if Boone was level one?

MAJOR STENZ

That's not relevant. I'm asking if you understand what I'm telling you  
(reading)

You are in quarantine. USVC and therefore, the Department of Public Health, has found through testing of your blood that you display the positive markers associated with the C5 virus level two. Do you understand this information as it has been presented to you? Yes or no?

She doesn't answer, angrily wipes away the SWEAT from her face with her sleeve.

MAJOR STENZ (CONT'D)

We cannot move on until you answer the question. Yes or No--  
(then)

You are in quarantine. USVC and therefore the Department of Pub--

APRIL

I want a lawyer. You can't just keep me here. I have rights.

MAJOR STENZ

Your rights have been revised under Article Two of the American Health Safety Act, subsection C. As such, you are--

APRIL

Revised? What about my family?

MAJOR STENZ

They've been tested. All negative.

COLONEL BEDFORD ENTERS THE MAJOR'S ROOM, looking impatient.

COLONEL BEDFORD

What's the delay Major? Orange is up. Finish the protocol and get her to holding.

MAJOR STENZ

I'm sorry sir. I'm having trouble with Section--

COLONEL BEDFORD

Let me guess- Section L, question 3.

MAJOR STENZ

Yes sir.

Bedford turns his gaze to April, smiles. Leans over the mic.

COLONEL BEDFORD

I apologize ma'am, the Major is still training. Allow me-

(then, rote)

You are in quarantine. USVC and therefore the Department of Public Health has found through testing of your blood that you display the positive markers associated with the C5 virus level two. Do you understand this information as it has been presented to you?

APRIL

There's been a mistake.

COLONEL BEDFORD

A mistake with the question?

APRIL

No.

COLONEL BEDFORD

A mistake with the findings?

APRIL

Yes.

COLONEL BEDFORD

Oh... I see. So you understand what I'm telling you, but you disagree with the findings? Is that what you're saying?

APRIL

Yes.

COLONEL BEDFORD  
(to Major)  
She understands. That's a yes on  
question three.

APRIL  
NO!

COLONEL BEDFORD  
Your dissent has been noted. In  
accordance with your revised rights  
these findings will be presented to  
the court for legal validation.  
Once validated, you will be  
relocated per the American Health  
and Safety Act to an area deemed  
safe and beneficial to public well  
being and security.

He pushes a button on the table before the major. The heavy  
door next to April BUZZES and POPS OPEN.

COLONEL BEDFORD (CONT'D)  
Proceed to holding.

April looks to the two ORDERLIES who motion for her to get up  
and go. Meanwhile, the Major hangs his head.

MAJOR STENZ  
Sorry sir- I get bothered  
sometimes, lose my focus.

COLONEL BEDFORD  
It's normal. Don't beat yourself  
up. You're doing better than I did  
at your age...

Stenz appreciates the Colonel's wisdom as he exits.

INT. USVC PROCESSING - CORRIDOR - LATER

April is escorted down a LONG CORRIDOR toward a set of  
GUARDED DOORS.

A CROWD is heard beyond, along with MUFFLED PUBLIC ADDRESS  
MESSAGES, all growing louder as they approach, until-

Guards OPEN THE DOORS and April enters a VAST SPACE beyond.

INT. USVC PROCESSING - HOLDING - CONTINUOUS

A holding center. FOUR AISLES of HURRICANE FENCE HOLDING CAGES, each one containing a dozen DETAINEES. Some scream, some pace about, others sleep under foil emergency blankets.

A voice continually talks over the PA SYSTEM.

PA SYSTEM (O.S.)  
*Orange one through ten- Your legal  
 status is in validation. Please  
 stand ready...*

April is led down the ORANGE CODED AISLE. She can't believe the sights she's witnessing. Eventually a MAN'S VOICE pokes through the din.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)  
 Hey! Over here!

April turns to see BOONE THE CASHIER trying to get her attention from a passing cage.

BOONE  
 It's not my fault...

April just keeps moving, unsure what to think when-

PA SYSTEM (O.S.)  
*Orange one through ten- Your legal  
 status has been validated. Please  
 proceed...*

BUZZ-CLANK. The doors in the aisle are UNLOCKED and OPENED BY WAITING GUARDS. The aisle begins to flood with detainees headed in the same direction as April.

Boone is one of those people- he tries to make his way through the throng, but can't.

April is too busy trying to see where they are headed to notice. She looks to a TALL WOMAN detainee.

APRIL  
 Where are they taking us?

The tall woman squints ahead to see a big ROLLING GATE is being opened--

TALL WOMAN  
 Outside I think....

They both ponder this as the group moves toward the gate.

TALL WOMAN (CONT'D)  
Where you from?

APRIL  
Wynton. You?

TALL WOMAN  
Meecham. I'm Lynn.

APRIL  
April.

As they draw closer and file through the gate, they can finally see they are emerging onto--

EXT. USVC PROCESSING - SHIPPING DOCK - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

A well guarded SHIPPING DOCK plays host to FOUR SEMI-TRUCKS backed into it- their SHIPPING CONTAINERS open and ready to receive the detainees.

LYNN  
Guy in my cell said they have quarantine camps in the North. A guard told him there's phones and you can have visitors...

A crying CHILD (GINNY, 6) gets their attention. She's looking for someone, gripping her STUFFED HEDGEHOG tight.

GINNY  
Daddy...? Daddy?

Lynn and April react with concern, but before they can get to the little girl--

FATHER  
Ginny! I'm here!

Her FATHER breaks through the crowd and SCOOPS HER UP. They breathe a sigh of relief as he comforts her and everyone continues to move along...

Soon enough they are ENTERING ONE OF THE DARK CONTAINERS.

INT. SHIPPING CONTAINER - CONTINUOUS

April looks to other detainees for some clue as to what to feel, but they seem to be looking to her for the same thing.

CLANG- one by one the container doors are SHUT-- sealing the detainees off from the dock lights, leaving them in the dark.



MURMURS of concern take over the group, but are soon drowned out by the diesel rigs STARTING UP.

A couple of TINY HOLES IN THE STEEL let in just enough light to illuminate the fear they are experiencing.

The sound of every bump on every inch of pavement is all they have to try and divine where they're headed.

APRIL

(sotto)

Keep me safe, my God, for in you I  
take refuge. I say to the Lord,  
"You are my Lord; apart from you I  
have no good thing..."

OTHER PRAYERS can be heard as April repeats her psalm.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Keep me safe, my God, for in you I  
take refuge. I say to the Lord..."

Calm and focus begin to overtake the container as still others JOIN IN.

LYNN

..."You are my Lord; apart from you  
I have no good thing..."

The tiny PINPRICKS OF LIGHT barely illuminate HANDS finding one another in the dark, GRIPPING TIGHT WITH HOPE. It's as beautiful as it is heartbreaking, until suddenly--

SQUEAK-HISS. Air brakes bring the container to a stop.

CREAK. The SOUND of a door on the cab of the truck OPENING-- followed by the FOOTSTEPS of the driver exiting it. Then--

CLINKING... *metal on metal...*

HISS-CLANK-HISS... *like an air line being unhooked.*

SCRAPING... *like the grinding of a lever.*

CLANG! The entire container SHUDDERS.

GASPS of surprise inside, while outside--

MORE FOOTSTEPS, *first on GRAVEL, then on STEEL.*

SLAM! *The door of the cab closing...*

ROARING OF THE ENGINE- *throttling up until--*

CLANG! The container SHUDDERS AGAIN as we hear the cab DETACH and DRIVE AWAY.

VOICES (IN DARK)  
They're leaving! Where are they  
going? Where are we!?

People try to see out the tiny pinholes in the metal walls for any clue to what's happening. It's no use.

LYNN  
What the fuck is going on? They're  
just gonna fucking strand us...?

And as the last decibels of the cab DRIVING OFF are heard...

APRIL  
No... listen.

A DISTANT RHYTHMIC THUMP. The detainees strain to identify it. Within seconds it's clear what it is...

ROTORS screwing through the air- growing LOUDER as they draw near. Multiple HELICOPTERS approaching- no question of it.

Moments later the sound of SAND AND GRAVEL pelting the steel walls of the container precede the arrival of the aircraft OVERHEAD.

Detainees YELL to be heard, but the engine noise is too loud to discern anything.

CLANG!! *Like an anchor was dropped on the ceiling.*

SCRAAAPE!! *Something heavy grinds atop the container UNTIL--*

CLINK! *More metal on metal- the sound of CHAINS unfurling.*

BOOM!! The container LURCHES and METAL CREAKS VIOLENTLY.

PEOPLE SCREAM as it all builds to a definitive conclusion--

-- *THEY HAVE BEEN LIFTED FROM THE GROUND.*

April makes her way to one of the PINHOLES- Presses her eye against it to see--

APRIL'S POV

THREE OTHER HELICOPTERS carrying CONTAINERS westward through the night-- a HALF-MOON in the sky ahead. Beneath that, on the horizon, is the WALL.

It's no more than a mile away, and they are fast crossing over it. And for the first time we can clearly see their world for what it is:

THE WALL SNAKES ALONG THE BANKS OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER.

Soon enough we begin to NOTICE that there are LIT UP TOWNS ON ONE SIDE OF THE RIVER WHILST THE OTHER SIDE IS A DARK AND LIFELESS URBAN SKYLINE.

A long dreadful moment as that excruciating fact sinks in and--

INT. CONTAINER - NIGHT

Inside the container, people resume fighting to try and see through the pinprick holes in the steel.

The rotors are too loud to make out their voices, but the sound of the HELICOPTER PA is enough to cut through the din--

HELICOPTER PA (O.S.)  
*Attention. Be advised by order of  
 the court you have been deemed a  
 clear and present danger to the  
 United States and as such, in  
 accordance with Federal Law  
 governing those with revised  
 rights, you will be deported,  
 effective immediately.*

A wave of shock ripples through the container.

HELICOPTER PA (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
*This decision is final and appeals  
 will not be heard.*

CLANG! The sound of BOLTS POPPING and suddenly the CONTAINER DROPS. People leave the floor for a brief moment and --

CRASH! They HIT THE GROUND. The STEEL WALLS BEND OUTWARD from the impact-- POPPING OPEN THE DOORS and OPENING THE CONTAINER TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD.

HOT SPOTLIGHT FLARE floods the compartment as April and the rest scramble outside to find--

EXT. INDUSTRIAL RIVERBANK - NIGHT

The helicopter shines its SPOTLIGHT down on the deportees as they scamper out into the mud and head for dry ground.

April tries to get her bearings. Behind her, the MISSISSIPPI RIVER flows... and 500 yards beyond that - CONCERTINA WIRE LINING THE OPPOSITE RIVERBANK and THE WALL BEYOND, bisecting the horizon.

*They're over the wall, over the river, in another world.*

April sees Lynn fighting her way out of the crushed container. She makes her way past fleeing people just as--

WHAM!!! Another Helicopter drops a CONTAINER into the mud a few yards away- popping off the doors in much the same manner.

April grabs Lynn and pulls her in the opposite direction when--

WHAM!! Helicopter three drops its container as well. BUT THIS ONE FALLS DOORS FIRST IN THE MUD-- Preventing any chance of escape.

April and Lynn see this in horror.

APRIL

Oh my God.

They run to help- All they can do is search the container in vain while the FRENZIED BANGING of those trapped inside fills their ears.

Still under the glare of the spotlights from above, the LAST OF THE CONTAINERS DROPS ONTO one of the many OLDER RUSTED OUT CONTAINERS that line the bank.

It SHEARS at its midpoint, releasing the horrified occupants who scamper out.

Then from above--

HELICOPTER PA (O.S.)

*Do not attempt to cross the river.  
Any attempt to re-enter the United  
States will be deemed an act of  
aggression and met with lethal  
force.*

And with that, the helos turn and head back over the river. The roar of the rotorwash soon gives way to the sounds of those left behind-- CRYING, BEWILDERMENT, SCREAMS OF ANGER.

LYNN

(at helicopters)

You can't do this!! Are you just gonna leave us with nothing you fucking pieces of shit!?!?

APRIL (O.S.)

Lynn!

April's focus remains on the capsized container. She screams out to anyone who will listen.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Help me!  
(to crowd)  
Anyone! Help!

Lynn and a few OTHERS join her by the SUBMERGED END OF THE CONTAINER.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Dig out around the doors!

The dozen or so people help PULL MUD AWAY from the container while those inside continue to SCREAM for help.

Lynn SLAMS the steel with a large ROCK, QUIETING the voices.

LYNN

We hear you! We're getting you out!

A symphony of GRUNTING AND STRAINED BREATHS as April and the others continue to DIG... *But the mud just rushes back as soon as it's cleared.*

LYNN (CONT'D)

This isn't gonna work...

April just continues to dig, hoping against hope.

LYNN (CONT'D)

April...

April doesn't listen to her until--

A SCREAM from INLAND. The trees and looming skyline beyond gives us little more than the *sounds of agony and terror.*

EVERYTHING STOPS as the dread sets in on the deported. Then--

DOZENS OF INFECTED POUR OUT INTO THE OPEN. They are a crazed horde of men, women and children- ghastly in appearance but not undead. They are engines of rabid hostility unleashed upon the deported. And someone just rang the dinner bell.

CHAOS. The living panic. It's hard to see in the night as they are quickly outnumbered. ATTACKED... BITTEN... SAVAGED.

Lynn and April clock this, but April won't give up on freeing the trapped.

LYNN (CONT'D)  
Jesus. Let's go.

APRIL  
Help me!

LYNN  
Let's go!

Lynn sees SEVERAL PEOPLE running toward them with a group of INFECTED in pursuit.

She grabs April and drags her away from the container.

APRIL  
NO!

Fleeing people RUN PAST THEM and SLOSH INTO THE RIVER to escape the oncoming infected.

EMACIATED MAN  
COME BACK!

A scarred EMACIATED MAN in tattered old clothes who looks like one of the infected, unexpectedly SPEAKS, yelling toward the exiting helicopters.

EMACIATED MAN (CONT'D)  
They need to come back! I'm not  
one of them! Take me back! I'm not  
sick any--

POP! The back of his head BLOWS OPEN and he goes down right in front of April.

Lynn drags April toward the water to follow the others when--

SPLASHES RIP ACROSS THE WATER- PEOPLE GO DOWN as if SHOT.

A second later, the SOUND OF GUNSHOTS from across the river. Distant MUZZLE FLASH is visible from atop the wall.

MORE PANIC as April and Lynn run from the river-- others being CUT DOWN ALL AROUND BY BULLETS, THE INFECTED OR BOTH.

Amidst of the chaos, they stumble on GINNY, the little girl, SCREAMING as an Infected ravages her DEAD FATHER. A moment of shock before April scoops the girl up instinctively.

Clutching her hedgehog, Ginny screams for dad as GUNFIRE AND MAULING continue all around. April follows Lynn best she can.

The mud is insanely slippery but they press on through a VIRTUAL FOREST OF OLD RUSTY DECAYED CONTAINERS.

Lynn sees a way through, edges ahead of April.

LYNN

This way!

April follows but SLIPS and FALLS into the mud. Behind her, several INFECTED are bearing down on her.

APRIL

WAIT!

But it's too loud for Lynn to hear and she disappears from view. There's no way for April to get away and--

An INFECTED WOMAN GRABS GINNY and April tries to pull her back. At the same time, an INFECTED MAN reaches for Ginny - The infected woman reacts by attacking the MAN VICIOUSLY like a dog defending a bone.

April has a chance to get away, but finds herself FACE TO FACE with TWO INFECTED. And just when it looks like she's done for--

CLANG CLANG! The infected are distracted by BOONE- beating a rod of REBAR against the rusty steel of an old container.

The distraction is just enough to get their attention and he CHARGES them-- whacking away with the rebar as April uses the moment to get away.

She looks back to see Boone RUN IN ANOTHER DIRECTION and lead the infected away. She absorbs this sacrifice for a moment before continuing with Ginny in Lynn's direction.

CUT TO:

MOMENTS LATER, April scans for Lynn- looking around at the carnage like a deer in the headlights. She's quickly spotted by some infected and before she can decide what to do-

LYNN (O.S.)

APRIL!

April turns to see Lynn about twenty yards away on the FAR SIDE OF A DEEP DRAINAGE RAVINE. She waves April over. Still carrying Ginny, April immediately runs right at her as the infected GIVE CHASE.

LYNN (CONT'D)

C'MON!

April runs full out, but the infected are gaining.

As she draws closer to Lynn she can see the Ravine is functioning as ersatz MOAT- bogging down other infected in the mire of mud and urban runoff.

LYNN (CONT'D)

Jump!

April has no choice- *it's jump or nothing.* And at the last possible moment she LEAPS and--

OOOF! Ginny FLIES FROM HER ARMS to waiting Lynn as April lands chest-first on the edge of the far side of the ravine. Behind her, infected fall into the muck like rabid lemmings.

April's feet dangle before the mired infected. Lynn is quick to SNATCH HER WRISTS AND DRAG HER OUT TO SAFETY. They barely get a moment before they hear a CRY FOR HELP FROM NEARBY.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

HEY!!

A MUD COVERED MAN struggles to get out of the ravine nearby, repeatedly sliding down to several infected stuck in the mud around him-- tirelessly thrashing in an effort to get to him.

MUDDY MAN

HELP ME!! PLEASE!

The women rush to his aid when April notices *IT'S BOONE.*

This gives her brief pause- but of course her heart quickly gets the best of her and she helps PULL HIM UP.

BOONE

Jesus thank you! Thank you!

For the first time, they're able to scan the horrific scene resembling a bloodbath not seen since the Civil War.

Then April notices the ravine is filled with enough infected to make a ramp of sorts for the coming horde.

APRIL

C'mon!

Lynn scoops up April and they all TAKE OFF RUNNING as the first of many infected get OVER THE RAVINE AND CHASE THEM.

EXT. OVERGROWN INDUSTRIAL AREA - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

April, Boone and Lynn (carrying Ginny) run full tilt through the woods, half blinded by the darkness and further handicapped by the thickening brush.



Their HEAVING BREATHS dominate all as they finally emerge in a small CLEARING. In the lead, Lynn pauses to look around. April and Boone follow suit.

Only then can they hear the SOUND of INFECTED scampering through OVER BLACKTOP and GRAVEL.

*It sounds like a lot of them and not seeing them makes it more terrifying.*

Lynn squints in the darkness and manages to spot something-

LYNN

There!

What's left of a COLLAPSED WIRE FENCE straddling the overgrown shoulders of a driveway is their best chance at finding a hiding place. They run for the pathway as the SOUNDS of the infected draw CLOSER.

April presses on her ribs- a stitch she can't stop to service-

BOONE

See that!?

And as Boone HUFFS on his way past her toward--

EXT. INDUSTRIAL SILOS - PRE-DAWN

The first photons of morning have brightened the sky to a dull blue, providing enough light to show us--

An old INDUSTRIAL AGRI-STORAGE FACILITY, surrounded by FENCING and a LOCKED GATE. A ramshackle three story concrete husk of a building with SILOS, it seems to have been abandoned mid-renovation- judging from the missing windows and overgrown construction equipment surrounding it.

Boone is first to the fence and LOCKS HIS HANDS TOGETHER to offer Lynn a lift over.

BOONE

Go over! GO.

Lynn needs no prompting to step into his hands and get HOISTED to the top of the fence with Ginny in her arms. She latches on, the RUSTY top crossmember BEGINS TO BEND.

With no choice, Lynn lowers Ginny on the other side and rolls off the rickety fence to safety.

APRIL IS THE NEXT TO BE HELPED OVER. As soon as her weight hits the crossmember it SNAPS and the fence quickly SAGS.

INFECTED come into view- leaving Boone no choice but to climb the wobbling unstructured fencing as the they close in.

He gets to the top as the infected arrive, but the fencing sags BACKWARD- landing him right into the arms and mouths of the ravenous infected.

HE SCREAMS as he's eaten alive, letting go of the fence which springs back up a few feet.

Lynn pulls Ginny's face into her bosom and watches with April as Boone dies as the accumulating infected PUSH ON THE FENCE.

They quickly RETREAT TO THE BUILDING, ENTERING THE OPEN DOORWAY.

INT. SILO STORAGE BUILDING - MAIN ROOM - PRE-DAWN

Once inside, the winded women put down Ginny and look around for stuff to block the entrance.

Lynn finds a STACK OF PLYWOOD.

LYNN

Here!

She quickly muscles a sheet of plywood to the door. April joins her to STAND IT UP AND BLOCK the entrance.

April spots a big heavy JOBSITE ROLLING TOOLCHEST and pushes it up against the plywood.

APRIL

Lock the wheels...

Lynn and April quickly LOCK OFF THE WHEELS and COLLAPSE to the ground as the SCREAMS of Boone and the AGITATED HORDE CONTINUE OUTSIDE.

For the first time, April can begin to absorb her new reality. She's in shock. Hyperventilating and COUGHING.

Gaining some wind, Lynn stands up and looks outside. The Infected remain on the other side of the fence.

The ones that can't get to Boone are attacking each other like rabid beasts.

LYNN

Jesus they're killing each other...

BLAAHK!! April, panting and still trembling with fear, suddenly VOMITS- getting everyones attention.

LYNN (CONT'D)

You okay?

April nods, finally getting her breath.

APRIL

Yeah. Adrenaline...

April quickly concentrates on Ginny.

APRIL (CONT'D)

It's okay... we're okay...

April truly wants to believe that. She scoops up Ginny and her Hedgehog.

APRIL (CONT'D)

It's okay, it's okay...

Lynn assesses their surroundings, studying the pile of PLYWOOD nearby. Then, through her heaving breaths-

LYNN

I think we have enough wood to  
board this whole place up...

April realizes she may be somewhat in shock. She gets her mind around the concept and agrees with a nod.

And as she joins Lynn rifling through the toolchest...

SLOW FADE OUT:

A long beat of BLACK, then a title card-

### **"Saturday"**

PRELAP the sound of light COUGHING, then-

INT. AGRICULTURAL STORAGE BUILDING - MAIN ROOM - MORNING

All windows and doors are sealed with plywood. Daylight seeps through the seams.

On the ground, a few scavenged items: A BOTTLE OF WATER, AN OLD TWINKIE, A CAN OF DOG FOOD, an old PAPER ROAD MAP...

A small campfire smolders beneath A MAKESHIFT CHIMNEY the women have made from salvaged pieces of ducting.

Another COUGH wakes Ginny as she sleeps on some cardboard. Across from her the remains of the campfire to see Lynn lying opposite her, SHIVERING.

She looks pasty and pale, definitely feverish- like April a few days ago. She quickly notices Ginny looking.

GINNY  
Are you okay?

Lynn tries to play it off, acting strong.

LYNN  
Fine honey- just a little cold...

She sits up, pulls her knees to her chest, still COUGHING.

LYNN (CONT'D)  
I get cold sometimes is a--

BLAHHH! She VOMITS, surprising them both. Lynn looks to the EMPTY BEDDING where April likely sleeps- then back at the vomit. IT'S ALMOST ENTIRELY BLOOD.

She's overcome with terror for Ginny.

LYNN (CONT'D)  
You need to get away from me.

Ginny, clutching her hedgehog, doesn't understand. Lynn squirms in pain.

LYNN (CONT'D)  
Go find April! GO AWAY!

Ginny does as she's told and runs to an adjoining room.

GINNY  
Aprillllll!

INT. AGRICULTURAL STORAGE - CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Ginny heads for a door and enters-

GINNY  
April...?

The room is EMPTY.

Ginny backs out of the room, unsure what to do.

-ANOTHER PAINED SCREAM FROM LYNN...

...then the CLATTER AND CRASHES of things being knocked over.

Ginny turns to see what the matter is only to discover-

APRIL AND LYNN ARE ENTANGLED and SCREAMING with intense SAVAGERY-- For a moment it looks as if Lynn has turned.

Amid the insanity we see a SPLINTERED SCRAP of 2x4 has been STABBED INTO APRIL'S CLAVICLE. It's hard to comprehend what's happening until--

GINNY (CONT'D)

LYNN STOP!

That's when April rears back- a MOUTH FULL OF BLOOD AND GORE as Lynn DROPS TO THE GROUND DEAD- chunks of flesh GNAWED OFF.

APRIL IS NO LONGER APRIL. She has the CRAZED EYES OF THE INFECTED and she is BURNING A HOLE INTO INNOCENT GINNY.

Ginny DROPS HER HEDGEHOG TO THE GROUND AS APRIL POUNCES ON HER. We stay focused on the plush toy as we are left to wonder what could possibly save the defenseless little girl.

Horrific sounds ring out as we--

CUT TO BLACK:

A long beat of SILENCE over BLACK, then --

A dull throbbing RHYTHM is barely heard. It slowly BUILDS.

TITLE CARD over BLACK: **"December"**

SLOW FADE IN:

A DIFFUSE GLOW, mysterious and undulating in time to the music, slowly comes into focus.

Distorted by heavy red smoke, STRANGE FIGURES gesticulate and contort to a MUFFLED DIN...

...It's unsettling and entirely alien, but then the sound begins to RESOLVE ITSELF AND REVEAL THE TRUTH--

EXT. BURNT OUT FACTORY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

-- It's a party. HEAVY METAL music and a collection of TEENAGERS DRINKING AND DANCING AROUND A BONFIRE outside an old abandoned factory on a winter night.

Alcohol flows freely as bedraggled teens deal with their worlds' dark reality in the most unhealthy way possible.

Dipping into conversations, an older TEEN girl gabs with friends as her embarrassing LITTLE BROTHER desperately tries to fit in with a beer.

LITTLE BROTHER

...well I heard that even if you  
get sick you can get better...

BIG SISTER

Shut up- grandma says that so you  
don't get scared, loser! Grow up.

The KIDS LAUGH, while in a distant corner, out of view from  
the crowd, a COUPLE drunkenly make out.

The YOUNG WOMAN and a YOUNG MAN try to devour each other's  
faces without a hint of irony. We see now that this woman is  
ISABELLA, but this young man is NOT COLE. It's someone new -  
older and more dangerous.

He lowers her down to the ground and slips a hand into her  
jeans. Her head falls back for a moment.

She's swimming - too drunk. In fact she is blacking out, but  
this doesn't stop the young man... perhaps the opposite.

EXT. BURNT OUT FACTORY - BONFIRE - CONTINUOUS

Back at the bonfire, the party is boiling. We see a familiar  
figure making his way through the crowd. It's Cole and he's  
looking for her.

COLE

Hey Beau- have you seen Bella?

BEAU

What?

COLE

Have you seen Bella?

BEAU

Nope.

A group of girls walks by- he knows one of them.

COLE

Tiff! Tiff!

TIFF

Oh hey Cole.

COLE

Have you seen Bella?

TIFF

I thought you two broke up again?

COLE  
(frustrated)  
Tiff please.

Tiff thinks about it then directs him toward the building.

TIFF  
Fine but don't end up being a  
stalker okay?

Cole ignores this and heads toward the building. Tiff watches as he charges off.

Tiff observes what unfolds- Cole discovers Isabella. The Young Man and Cole exchange HOSTILE WORDS unheard by her.

The Young Man SWINGS but is so drunk that Cole easily steps around it. He pushes the drunk kid to the ground and quickly collects a staggering Isabella.

Cole drags her away from the party, like a protesting rag doll. They pass Tiff on their exit.

ISABELLA  
Where are we going?

COLE  
I'm taking you home.

ISABELLA  
I told you I don't want to see you  
anymore--

COLE  
Fine- after I take you home you  
won't have to see me anymore.

CUT TO:

EXT. COLE'S TRUCK - NIGHT - LATER

Cole has pulled his truck over on a rural road as Isabella kneels outside, vomiting.

COLE  
It's actually good you're getting  
it out.  
(then)  
Here.

He throws her a bottle of water that FLIES BY HER UNNOTICED and ROLLS INTO THE DITCH. Pained, Isabella climbs to her feet-wiping her mouth on an oily rag from the floor.

She flops onto the seat.

ISABELLA  
Do you have any water?

Cole smiles and POPS OUT OF THE TRUCK to retrieve the bottle from the ditch. He carefully steps around the puke puddle and hands her the bottle, after wiping it clean on his shirt.

As Isabella drinks greedily, Cole checks her condition.

COLE  
You feeling better?

ISABELLA  
A little bit. I just need to sober  
up before I go home.  
(then)  
Why are you even here? Your Daddy  
wouldn't like it...

COLE  
How many times do I have to  
apologize for him? Why can't you  
just ignore him?

ISABELLA  
Sorry if I don't like being chased  
away every time I wanted to see  
you... I'm over it.

Cole sighs, unable to relitigate the past yet again when-- a carload of NOISY TEENS rolls by, SCREAMING at the top of their lungs before leaving them in silence yet again.

Isabella tries to focus her thoughts.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)  
What if they came...?

COLE  
Huh?

ISABELLA  
What if they came for you? What  
would you do?

Cole looks to her.

COLE  
I don't know... fight maybe? Run?

ISABELLA  
Where? Appalachia?



COLE

That's not real. I just mean I'd rather go out my own way.

A long mournful moment from Isabella and then-

ISABELLA

What do you become?

COLE

You know what people say...

ISABELLA

Just say it.

(then)

A monster.

Emotion begins to well up in Isabella. She fears this is what happened to her mother and it's crushing her. Her eyes dart away and we see how the loss of her mother has set her totally adrift.

COLE

Let's get you back...

Isabella nods, appreciating that he cares.

CUT TO:

INT. CONSTANCE HOUSE - POSEY'S ROOM - LATER

From the way the room is decorated, it's clear that Posey is a little girl with vision. Elaborate hand drawn DECORATIONS line the wall and a large collection of treasured junk is strewn artistically on the shelves. It's mom-less chaos.

ANGRY SHOUTING from ANOTHER ROOM wakes her. Half asleep, she climbs out of bed and walks toward the noise.

INT. CONSTANCE HOUSE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

As Posey comes into the hall, the ARGUMENT can be made out OFF CAMERA.

ISABELLA (O.C.)

I was with friends! And since when did you give a fuck?

JOSH (O.C.)

Watch your mouth! Comin' home glazed in puke and smelling like cheap beer is no concern of mine?

Posey makes her way toward the living room.

ISABELLA (O.C.)

Oh you care so much? Like you  
cared about mom? You don't give a  
shit about us!

JOSH

Isabella! I'm here because I want  
to be. Maybe you should remember  
that, you little shit.

ISABELLA

What the fuck are you playing at?  
Mom's not here because of you! You  
were so scared to break the rules.  
Pussy!

JOSH

Your mom may not have liked the  
rules but she knew we have to live  
by them! Why can't you get it  
through your goddamned skull!?  
It's not my fault.

ISABELLA

I fucking hate you!

JOSH

YEAH? WELL I'M ALL YOU FUCKING GOT!

Josh grabs her violently and pulls her close to his face.

JOSH (CONT'D)

You know where you'd be without me?  
I should throw you out on your ass!  
Just remember that. She's fuckin'  
dead! Remember that!

POSEY steps into the living room just as Isabella is wincing  
from her stepdad's rage.

Josh sees Posey almost instantly.

Shit! Isabella sees her too. Confused, she has tears in her  
eyes. Shit! Shit!

A terrible SILENCE.

Overwhelmed, Isabella leaves the room in tears. Josh looks  
to Posey, emotionally ill-equipped and exhausted.

It's clear that in April's absence, the family has become unmoored. They're really not a family at all.

SLOW FADE OUT:

INT. CONSTANCE HOUSE - ISABELLA'S ROOM - MORNING

MORNING. Isabella, cocooned in bedding, sleeps soundly. Josh knocks and enters. Isabella stirs and tries to focus.

ISABELLA

What?

JOSH

Get up. Make your sister breakfast and get her to school today.

ISABELLA

Why...?

JOSH

'Cause I said so- Maybe if you make yourself useful instead of fucking up, you'd learn something.

He rips the blankets off her.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Come on!

CUT TO:

EXT. CONSTANCE HOUSE - MORNING

Isabella and Posey leave the house and head off to school.

EXT. CUL-DE-SAC - A SHORT TIME LATER

As they pass the neighbors' house, Isabella notices Cole peeking out the window at her.

He waves, happy to see her. She waves back, never breaking stride. And as he watches her head down the block--

EXT. PARK - LATER

Isabella and Posey continue their walk. A smattering of SNOW on the ground. Posey babbles as Isabella uses her phone.

POSEY

And so I said, "I want gummy anteaters," and Cammy said she wanted gummy whales and it was so funny, isn't it so funny?

ISABELLA

Uh huh...

POSEY

Why aren't you listening!?

ISABELLA

Uh huh...

It isn't long before they come upon the park. But Bella is too engrossed in her phone to notice Posey RUNNING OFF TO THE PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT until it's too late.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

Hey! No park!

POSEY

You sound like daddy!

ISABELLA

His name is Josh not--

POSEY

Let me swing!!

Isabella SIGHS and slumps on a bench and climbs back into her phone as Posey tries to get a swing going by herself.

Ever more engrossed by her phone, time loses its meaning. It takes quite some time before Isabella snaps back to reality.

ISABELLA

Okay- Come on Posey... I've got shit to do!

The playground is EMPTY. Where is Posey?

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

Posey!

A SCREAM from a nearby gully. It's Posey.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

Shit-

Adrenaline surging, Isabella jumps to her feet and runs toward the scream.

ANOTHER SCREAM! But this one is followed by a GIGGLE.

Isabella crests the lip of the gully to see Posey SITTING ON THE GROUND, PLAYING with a YOUNG DOG. *Its markings are an EXACT MATCH to the puppy from months ago.*

Hugely relieved, Isabella marches toward giggling Posey. She's about to give her a piece of her mind when something shocks her.

DARK BLOODY GOO is smeared on Posey's jacket and face.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)  
Posey- what is that?

POSEY  
What is what?

Isabella wrenches her up from the ground and inspects her.

ISABELLA  
Are you cut?

POSEY  
I'm fine.

Isabella looks at the dog. IT'S MOUTH IS DRENCHED IN DARK BLOOD.

ISABELLA  
Did it bite you!?

POSEY  
No!

ISABELLA  
It looks like blood- is it blood?!

Isabella rips off the disgusting coat and tosses it aside.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)  
SHIT SHIT SHIT! What is it!?

She turns to the dog. It's GONE.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)  
Where'd it go!!!!?

POSEY  
In the trees...

Isabella looks to the treeline. Sees the dog disappear into the woods.

Unsettled, Isabella runs after it.

POSEY (CONT'D)  
What's wrong? Where are you going?!

EXT. WOODS / GULLY - NIGHT

Isabella negotiates her way through the brush in the muddy gully until she spots something up ahead. Posey follows her.

Soon enough she comes upon the dog wagging it's tail in the LAP of SOMEONE sitting against a tree.

She creeps closer until she sees a familiar sight--

THE DEAD HUNTER FROM THE OPENING.

Horrendously decomposed, the corpse's stomach has been gnawed open and what's left of its entrails are on display. And there stands the DOG- FEEDING on the corpse.

Bella fills with dread. Then she notices OTHER DOGS- muddy, feral, with no collars-- perched in the undergrowth, feasting on scavenged parts.

Bella is aghast. And like a low flying fighter jet, the PRELAP of an EAR SPLITTING SCREAM COMES FULL until--

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. CONSTANCE HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

The SCREAM continues. Isabella has Posey in the bathtub-scrubbing her mercilessly and manically with gloves on.

POSEY  
(screaming and crying)  
Stop, stop. You're hurting me!

Isabella takes no heed, terrified and consumed by it.

ISABELLA  
Stop moving! THIS IS IMPORTANT!

POSEY  
STOP STOP STOP!!!

With a SHOVE, Posey breaks free from her grasp, then HOPS OUT OF THE TUB and COLLAPSES in the corner SOBBING.

This pathetic sight snaps Isabella's panic. She grabs a towel.

ISABELLA  
I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

She walks over to her and wraps her up.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry, I'm sorry.

Posey embraces her and they sit on the floor entwined, quietly crying. It's both beautiful and sad.

A loud KNOCK at the bathroom door startles them.

JOSH (O.C.)  
What's going on in there?

The girls share a look.

ISABELLA  
(sotto)  
You don't say anything about this to him- okay?

Posey is confused by this. Another KNOCK.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)  
(sotto)  
Okay?

Posey agrees with a nod. Another KNOCK.

JOSH (O.S.)  
Bella!

INT. CONSTANCE HOUSE - HALLWAY - A MOMENT LATER

Isabella talks to her stepfather outside the bathroom, acting as casually as she can.

ISABELLA  
She was playing near the creek and I was on my phone and she fell in. By the time I got her out she was covered in mud so we came home. I wasn't paying attention. So I guess it's...  
(beat)  
I wasn't paying attention.

Stoney as ever, Josh lets silence hang in the air for a beat.

JOSH  
And what happened to her jacket?

ISABELLA

Uh... It...

She's losing faith in her lie.

POSEY (O.S.)

(through door)

She threw it in the trash.

JOSH

What? Why?

ISABELLA

It was trashed from the water and the mud... It was getting too small anyways...

JOSH

You think that's for you to decide?

ISABELLA

Apparently, I guess...

Josh stares through her. Then-

JOSH

She okay?

ISABELLA

Yeah she's fine. I'm sorry.

JOSH

Yeah well, now you gotta go buy her a new one... Pay more attention.

Josh OPENS the bathroom door to reveal Posey, FULLY CLOTHED, STARING AT THE FLOOR.

Josh offers no affection or even a comforting word. They all just stand there, horribly awkward.

Isabella breaks the moment when she puts an arm around Posey and walks her to her room and Josh goes the other way.

Once at Posey's bedroom, Isabella crouches down to follow up with her sister. She looks scared and confused.

ISABELLA

Everything's gonna be ok, alright?

Posey wants to believe her. And after a moment, she does. They hug.

SLOW FADE OUT:



A beat of BLACK, then--

PRELAP: THUNDER rolls... the sound of RAINDROPS.

CUT TO:

EXT. GULLY - DAY - DAYS LATER

A RAINY DAY. All snow is gone.

The DEAD HUNTER'S remains are fully in view amidst the stand of trees-- grotesque, menacing, haunting.

Suddenly, a blinding FLASH OF LIGHT lifts the inherent gloom of the forest for a split second.

A CAMERAMAN in a hazmat suit flashes again. He stands behind a cordon of police tape with a milling collection of similarly clad officials.

OFFICER BLAKE (PRE-LAP)  
A jogger found it...

Colonel Bedford and Major Stenz are being escorted toward the body by a local cop- OFFICER DAN BLAKE.

OFFICER BLAKE (CONT'D)  
...the body had been there for  
four...six months? Probably well  
hidden until the snow melt. Would  
you agree Colonel?

COLONEL BEDFORD  
Not my op. You can direct your  
question to Major Stenz. I'm just  
advisory...

MAJOR STENZ  
Anything from the lab?

OFFICER BLAKE  
Nothing yet but I think it's a safe  
assumption he was infected. Took  
matters into his own hands.

Bedford looks at some footprints imprinting the mud. He sidles up to Stenz and in a low voice, helps him out--

COLONEL BEDFORD  
Footprints...

Stenz, grateful for the help, looks to the ground and runs with it.

MAJOR STENZ  
What about the footprints?

OFFICER BLAKE  
They don't match him. Don't match  
the jogger....

MAJOR STENZ  
So someone else found it and didn't  
report it...?

Bedford looks around, suspicious. Stenz studies the prints.

MAJOR STENZ (CONT'D)  
One of them's a child...

He looks to the Colonel for guidance. The Colonel nods.

MAJOR STENZ (CONT'D)  
(to Blake)  
See if any of the houses near the  
park have cameras.

The Colonel's eyes drift to follow the frozen footprints.  
They are headed away from the scene.

He begins to head off in that direction until--

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK - A MOMENT LATER

The Colonel, Major and Officer Blake emerge from the woods  
and into the open park.

Bedford scans the area until his eyes fall upon THE TRASH CAN  
by the playground.

He gives it a good stare before--

TIME CUT TO:

MOMENTS LATER, Bedford is fishing a CHILD'S JACKET from the  
trash can. It's Posey's.

Looking closely, something inside the jacket catches his eye--

It's written in INDELIBLE INK on the INNER COLLAR. Just one  
handwritten word:

"POSEY"

The Colonel and other men take notice. Stenz looks to him.

MAJOR STENZ  
You think it's connected?

The Colonel shrugs, not noticing he's touching the DARK STAINS on the sleeves of the jacket before stuffing it into an evidence bag held by local cop, Officer Blake.

OFFICER BLAKE  
I'll pull up the names and ages of the surrounding neighborhood and look to see if we can find a name match.

MAJOR STENZ  
Don't raise too many alarms at this point. Plainclothes, unmarked. Until we get something actionable.

OFFICER BLAKE  
Okay. Might take a few days...

The view from the hilltop park reveals a Spielbergian SPRAWL OF SUBURBIA STRETCHING OUT INTO THE DISTANCE.

The Colonel takes in the sight like a game warden before the culling of the deer.

In the distance, a house not much different than the rest...

CUT TO:

INT. CONSTANCE HOUSE - KITCHEN - EVENING

Josh finishes laying out dinner on the kitchen table.

JOSH  
Girls-- supper's ready.

He takes his seat and waits for them to arrive.

CUT TO:

Moments later, the girls are seated around the table as they all hold hands in prayer.

JOSH (CONT'D)  
...for all the blessings of life that you give to us. Mindful of your continuous care we're grateful for the blessings of this table.

ISABELLA/POSEY  
Amen.

They eat in SILENCE. Isabella shovels food down, hoping to end the uncomfortable ritual as soon as possible. Then something DRAWS HER ATTENTION.

Posey is barely touching her food. Isabella stares at her intently. There's definitely something wrong.

Isabella looks to Josh to see if he has noticed, but he's focused on his plate. She looks back to Posey to see-

A SINGLE BEAD OF SWEAT forms on Posey's forehead and begins to run down her temple.

Isabella knows this is not good. She watches the drip continue its way down her face, paranoid that her stepfather may notice--

JOSH

Posey, you're not touching your food. You not feeling well?

Posey looks up, but before she can answer, Isabella interrupts to cover.

ISABELLA

She found my chocolate stash and ate it all. We'll be lucky if she doesn't puke.

POSEY

No I didn't.

Josh gives a half smile. Isabella shoots a look to Posey while her stepdad's head is turned.

ISABELLA

Sure deny it.

JOSH

Well that teaches you, doesn't it?

Sensing something is amiss, Posey opts not to protest further.

POSEY

Yes.

Isabella returns to her food, her mind reeling.

INT. CONSTANCE HOUSE - POSEY'S ROOM - LATER

Isabella, clearly worried, helps Posey into her pajamas. Feels her head.

ISABELLA  
How are you feeling, Squeaker?

POSEY  
Yucky.

ISABELLA  
Probably just a cold...  
(then)  
But don't tell Josh, okay? If  
anything's wrong, only tell me  
okay? I'm the only one you can  
trust. Okay?

Posey nods. Isabella gets her into the bed and hugs her. Out of view, Isabella's dread fully blossoms on her face.

INT. BATHROOM - LATER

Isabella digs through the vanity under the sink, intently looking for something. Eventually she finds it.

A box of HOME TEST KITS. Her relief quickly passes when she discovers IT'S EMPTY.

ISABELLA  
Fuck...

And as the dread returns...

EXT. CONSTANCE HOUSE - KITCHEN - THE NEXT MORNING

Josh makes Posey's lunch in the kitchen as the morning light streams in. Isabella arrives at the threshold and takes a moment to prepare a lie.

ISABELLA  
She's taking her own sweet time.  
I'll get her going.

JOSH  
Okay, 'cause I got to go...

This is the answer she was looking for.

ISABELLA  
Okay.

Isabella leaves the kitchen and heads down the hall.

INT. CONSTANCE HOUSE - POSEY'S ROOM - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Isabella enters to find Posey is still in bed. She looks peekid, pasty. Isabella feels her head.

Still feverish, Isabella tries not to worry her.

ISABELLA  
Time to get up...

POSEY  
But I'm tired.

ISABELLA  
Good news. No school today.

POSEY  
Good...

Posey tries to roll over.

ISABELLA  
Nope- we've gotta run an errand  
okay?

Isabella attempts to motivate her.

INT. CVS DRUG STORE - DAY

*People are staring...* or at least it feels that way to Isabella.

She walks down the aisle of the large drug store with her sickly sister bundled up next to her-- ISABELLA'S FIST IN POSEY'S BACK in order to move the logy girl along without anyone noticing.

Posey looks desperate to be back in her bed.

POSEY  
Bella?

Isabella soothes her.

ISABELLA  
Home soon, promise.

POSEY  
I'm thirsty.

Someone walks by the girls, eyeing them - Isabella tries to clock if they're looking at Posey. She's totally paranoid someone will notice the sick little girl.

Isabella takes a deep breath and marches onward. Her eyes dart around, scanning for something on the shelves.

At the end of the aisle- BOXES OF HOME TESTS. Several different styles, similar to diabetic test kits. Colorful packaging and reassuring messaging belie the horrible truth of what they are.

One final look around to be sure no one is looking.

Coast clear, Isabella raises her arm to reach for one when--

VOICE (O.S.)

Isabella?

SHIT! Isabella deftly *shifts her hand to a LOWER SHELF and GRABS SOMETHING ELSE*. She turns to find MATT, her neighbor (and Cole's dad) IN THE INTERSECTING AISLE.

He's in his full Border Forces uniform, although he's off duty.

MATT

Your dad know you're not in school?

ISABELLA

Um.. yes, just doing... Josh gets busy and well I...

(she sucks at this)

...I do some shopping.

A long pause. Too long. His eyes gaze to the shelf, then back to her.

MATT

He keeps you out of school to shop?  
Is someone sick?

ISABELLA

No... no. It's my service day.

Slightly suspicious, he tries to get a look at Posey.

MATT

Are you feeling okay, S--

Isabella pulls Posey close, burying her face in her torso. He tries to get a good look at her but--

ISABELLA

She's shy...

She turns and begins her exit, hoping to get away. But--

MATT  
Isabella?

She STOPS, *busted*. Then turns around to face him.

MATT (CONT'D)  
You seen Cole lately?

Isabella wonders if it's a trick question. Then--

ISABELLA  
No...

MATT  
Good.

He stares, it's intimidating. She walks away and scoots Posey down the aisle with her.

Rounding the aisle and safely out of sight, Isabella takes a DEEP BREATH and resets just as--

BLAHHHK! Posey VOMITS in the aisle. PANIC. Isabella whips back around to find--

NO ONE SAW.

POSEY  
Sorry...

ISABELLA  
You okay? Is there more?

Posey shakes her head. Isabella grabs her hand.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)  
Let's go.

CUT TO:

INT. CVS - CHECKOUT - MOMENTS LATER

Isabella unloads her basket. Like a boy buying condoms, she has extra items to distract from the test box on the counter.

The cashier doesn't make eye contact as she robotically picks up item after item and bags them. Things are going right.

Isabella's eyes drift to the next cashier over to see MATT WATCHING. Fake smile on his face, he's too far to see the items, but close enough to read her face.

Isabella does her best to smile back and look casual until--



POSEY

Bella...?

Isabella looks to see Posey looking like she's gonna hurl again. Before she can react--

CASHIER

Thirty two fifty.

Isabella jumps a bit but quickly hands over some cash and TAPS HER WRIST ON THE SCANNER.

ISABELLA

Keep it--

Leaving her change, she makes a SWIFT EXIT WITH POSEY IN TOW.

Matt is left looking suspicious.

CUT TO:

INT. CONSTANCE HOUSE - POSEY'S ROOM - LATER

Isabella UNBOXES THE HOME TEST KIT while Posey sits nearby.

POSEY

No... I hate those things.

ISABELLA

I know... but we just need to see what kind of sick you are... Gimme your finger.

She takes Posey's finger and rubs it with an ALCOHOL SWAB.

POSEY

Cold...

Isabella unwraps a LANCET from the kit. Posey watches as her sister closes in on her finger with it. And just as Isabella is about to prick her finger--

ISABELLA

Now give me your finger.

Posey obliges and Isabella SQUEEZES POSEY'S FINGER until it turns dark purple.

POSEY

Ahhh... it hurts Bella.

Isabella presses on and JABS POSEY'S FINGER with the LANCET. She milks the blood out.

EXT. CONSTANCE HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - CONTINUOUS

JOSH'S TRUCK PULLS INTO THE DRIVEWAY. He emerges, looking annoyed.

INT. CONSTANCE HOUSE - POSEY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Isabella dabs the drop of blood on Posey's finger onto a SMALL TRAY. She slides it into a small disposable plastic device with a DIGITAL READOUT.

The screen BLINKS TO LIFE and an ANIMATED CLOCK ICON begins to spin.

Posey climbs under the covers.

ISABELLA HEARS THE FRONT DOOR OPEN.

ISABELLA

Oh shhhh---

JOSH (O.C.)

Isabella? Are you here?

Isabella freaks out.

SHE LOOKS AT THE DEVICE- the clock icon is still spinning.

She looks for a place to stash it, finally deciding on Posey's NIGHTSTAND DRAWER.

She hears him approaching the bedroom.

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

Hey! You need to get out here right now.

INT. CONSTANCE HOUSE - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Isabella steps into the hallway to find Josh moving toward her with a full head of steam.

JOSH

Why weren't you two at school?

ISABELLA

I went to take Posey this morning but she wasn't feeling well, so I just thought she should maybe rest.

JOSH

Sick? Why didn't you call?

ISABELLA

Not 'sick' sick-- it's just a cold.  
She sleeps with the window open-

JOSH

Why wouldn't you call?

He moves past her and into Posey's room-- quickly sits next to her and feels her forehead.

JOSH (CONT'D)

She's warm.

ISABELLA

Really? I don't think s--

JOSH

A cold, a fever-- You know the protocol. You're supposed to call me.

ISABELLA

Well I didn't know there was one so...

JOSH

Are you kidding? I mean just feel her -- it's slight but it's--

A BEEP. Isabella looks to the DRAWER she hid the test and quickly back to her stepfather.

JOSH (CONT'D)

What was that?

Isabella shrugs, unconvincingly.

He clocks this. The tension mounts on Isabella maintaining her poker face until--

DING DONG. The doorbell interrupts, drawing Josh over to the window to see: POLICE CARS and USVC PERSONNEL outside.

JOSH (CONT'D)

What the hell--?

ISABELLA

Who is it?

He turns to look at Isabella- CATCHES HER CLOSING THE DRAWER.

Josh looks at the night stand drawer. Then back at Isabella. An electric shock shoots through her, behind her facade.

Before she can speak, HE WALKS OVER AND OPENS IT.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

Wait--

JOSH REACHES INTO THE DRAWER AND REMOVES THE DEVICE. Once he realizes what it is, he looks to her-- confused.

She can't speak. He looks back down to the device... TO THE UNSEEN READOUT SCREEN.

She desperately TRIES TO READ HIS FACE as he looks at the result- searching for some sort of reaction when--

ISABELLA (CONT'D)

What...?

KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK!

Without betraying what he sees, Josh DROPS THE DEVICE IN THE TRASH without making eye contact with Isabella- AND EXITS.

Isabella stumbles forward as if in a dream. Looks out the window to see the POLICE are outside.

Flooded with foreboding, she approaches the TRASH CAN next to Posey's bed and FISHES OUT THE DEVICE. She turns it over to read the result....

*"POSITIVE. Call your local Vector Control hotline"*

Isabella REELS. Posey is positive... *The police are here for her... and Josh is going to stand by and let the only person that she has left be taken away.*

She hears Josh ANSWER THE DOOR. Listens with dread--

JOSH (O.C.)

Yes?

OFFICER BLAKE (O.C.)

Yes sir- we've been in the neighborhood you may have noticed. We're looking for the owner of a girls jacket. A small child...

Isabella moves slowly toward the hall-- her mind ablaze as the conversation continues at the door.

EXT. CONSTANCE HOUSE - HALL - CONTINUOUS

Isabella's walk to the living room seems to take an eternity as we hear the OFFSCREEN conversation continue.

*She should take action. She has to do something. But what?*

As she finally nears the end of the hallway, all she can manage is to eke out a childlike plea--

ISABELLA

Hey--

It comes out slightly above a whisper, unheard, as he rounds the corner where she's--

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

--blinded by the sunlight blasting through the front door. Her stepfather stands slumped against the doorjamb, his spine like a question mark.

OFFICER BLAKE

...It was found in O'Shea park.  
Material on it tested positively so  
it's vital we find who it belongs  
to. There was a...

Beyond the officer is a COLLECTION OF AUTHORITIES. Enough men to storm the place if needed- some half-clad in hazmat suits.

OFFICER BLAKE (CONT'D)

...a name printed in the collar.  
'Posey'. Our database says you have  
a young girl in this residence  
about that age- Is that correct?

Josh pauses before answering. Finally speaking with a quaver. He sounds utterly defeated.

JOSH

That's right, I do.

Isabella grabs onto the wall for support as her legs nearly crumble out from under her.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Except for one thing...

A long pause, and...

JOSH (CONT'D)

...Her name's not Posey.

Isabella pauses with some surprise. Blake is suspicious.

OFFICER BLAKE

You sure about that?

JOSH

Yeah...

Blake spots Isabella in the background.

OFFICER BLAKE

That your daughter?

Josh turns to see what he's looking at.

JOSH

Stepdaughter. Name's Isabella.

OFFICER BLAKE

Hi Isabella- you got a little sister do you?

Isabella is freaked out. Nods nervously.

OFFICER BLAKE (CONT'D)

And what's her name?

Isabella is FROZEN. A long beat before Josh JUMPS IN and speaks for her--

JOSH

Suzanne.

OFFICER BLAKE

Yeah?

He looks to Isabella. She nods in agreement. But Blake smells a rat.

OFFICER BLAKE (CONT'D)

Can I see your family documents sir?

JOSH

Um- yeah. Of course.

Isabella watches with dread as Josh reaches to a SIDE TABLE near the door and FISHES SEVERAL IDENTIFICATION PAPERS out of a decorative bowl.

Josh hands over the paper-- all we can think is, "What the fuck's he gonna do?"

The officer looks at the paper closely, READING ALOUD.

OFFICER BLAKE

Josh...

(he flips page)

(MORE)

OFFICER BLAKE (CONT'D)  
...Isabella- 15. And...  
(he flips page)

The officer examines the document. There is a picture of Posey-- her name clearly identified as...

OFFICER BLAKE (CONT'D)  
...Suzanne- 7.

JOSH  
That's right.

The officer double checks. Printed right there next to the photo- SUZANNE EVE CONSTANCE.

JOSH (CONT'D)  
Yeah. Suzanne.

The officer hands the papers back to Josh, but he looks suspicious. It's an uncomfortably long time.

OFFICER BLAKE  
Sorry to bother you. Have a nice day.

JOSH  
Thank you.

Josh CLOSES THE DOOR and TURNS AROUND. Without making eye contact, he walks by Isabella and heads toward Posey's room.

Isabella, still recovering from the tumult, watches him pass, processing what just happened, then stumbles after him.

Heading down the hall and rounding the corner to Posey's door, Isabella sees the last thing she ever thought she would:

*Josh cradling Posey in his arms.* He's crying. Defeated by concern and horror.

He lifts his head and looks at Isabella, overwhelmed.

JOSH (CONT'D)  
What are we going to do, Bella?

This unexpected redemption washes over Isabella like a warm wave. Without words, she joins him at the bed.

Posey stirs and looks at them through her delirium.

POSEY  
Did that man call me Suzanne? Did you tell him I hate that name?

Josh shakes his head gently, feeling her forehead again.

POSEY (CONT'D)  
I only wanna be called Posey...

Isabella and Josh are amused by this. She's still Posey...  
For now.

EXT. COLE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

FROM COLE'S POV- through his WINDOW across the cul-de-sac- He  
peers at the police car outside Isabella's house.

MATT (O.S.)  
What's going on there?

Cole snaps around to find his father over his shoulder.

COLE  
I don't know...

They watch Officer Blake step off the front porch and--

EXT. CONSTANCE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Blake joins his team at the curb, sidles up to his DEPUTY.

DEPUTY  
What do you think Dan?

OFFICER BLAKE  
I don't know...

He seems to have residual suspicions. Then one of the USVC  
TEAM MEMBERS approaches with a TABLET-- Hands it to Blake.

USVC TEAM MEMBER  
Look at this. Just came through.

Blake looks at the tablet. Something concerns him deeply.

OFFICER BLAKE  
You're shitting me...

The team member shakes his head.

USVC TEAM MEMBER  
Major Stenz says we should wait for  
him. He wants to lead the  
extraction.

And as Blake agrees with a nod, staring at the tablet...



OFFICER BLAKE  
Fine. We'll wait 'til tonight.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - NIGHT

A USVC CONVOY moves through the dark streets of the suburbs.

MAJOR STENZ (PRE-LAP)  
(over radio)  
Team 3, I want you standing by...

INT. POLICE VAN - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

TWO ROWS OF USVC AGENTS sit inside a moving assault vehicle. Clad in armor, they are ready for action. Major Stenz, in the passenger seat, TALKS ON HIS HEADSET.

MAJOR STENZ  
(continuing)  
...Vector protocol has issued a writ and warrant. Given the extenuation we feel like it will be a simple grab. Force is not expected to be necessary...

CUT TO:

INT. CONSTANCE HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Josh stands at the sink doing dishes. A large bottle of bleach sits next to the sink.

Isabella enters and notices a bleeding rash on his hands.

ISABELLA  
You need to wear gloves. Bleach burns right through your skin.

Josh nods and keeps washing holding back his fear and rage.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)  
Hey, we need to talk about it.

JOSH  
What's there to talk about?

ISABELLA  
What are we going to do?

JOSH  
What do you want me to say?

ISABELLA  
We have to do something.

JOSH  
I fucking know.

ISABELLA  
Well what?

He scrubs harder unwilling to join the conversation.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)  
WHAT!?

No answer. He just stares out the window. Lost.

She looks at him with disdain before giving up and leaving.

BACK TO:

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

With a CHIRP OF THE BRAKES, the convoy pulls over in the neighborhood, joining a pair of waiting POLICE CRUISERS.

Officer Blake greets the Major as he gets out of the vehicle.

MAJOR STENZ  
Let's keep this as quiet as possible.

Blake nods. Stenz speaks into his headset again.

MAJOR STENZ (CONT'D)  
Team 3- take standby positions...

The team exits the vehicle QUIETLY and they stealthily start taking positions.

BACK TO:

INT. CONSTANCE HOUSE - ISABELLA'S ROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Isabella retreats to her bed, upset and dejected, lit only from the light coming in from the hallway.

A shadow crosses over her. She looks to see Josh standing at the door- contrite and deep in thought.

JOSH  
(quietly)  
They're gonna figure it out  
eventually... But they're not  
taking her. No way...

Isabella is surprised to hear this.

ISABELLA  
What do we do? Where do we go?

JOSH  
Nothing to do but wait for it to  
happen.

ISABELLA  
And then...?

JOSH  
I'll take care of it.

She knows what he means and she knows he's right and it's  
killing her.

ISABELLA  
There has to be something else...

JOSH  
There isn't. The best we can do is  
keep this family together until it  
happens. It's what I should've done  
for your mother...

Josh disappears into self recrimination.

ISABELLA  
She'd tell us not to give up hope.

JOSH  
Swim to the light...

The mood lightens as they recognize her words and smile  
slightly.

JOSH (CONT'D)  
She tell you that one too?  
(off Bella's nod)  
She'd know best. She always did...  
(then)  
I miss her, Bella. I miss her so  
much...

Isabella realizes now that what had always appeared to be a  
vast chasm between them had always been bridged.

JOSH (CONT'D)  
 But I know she'd want this family  
 to stay together and be strong for  
 one another... to do what's best  
 for Posey. And we will...

For the first time she sees her stepfather for who he is.  
 Someone who's as lost as she is, coming to grips with the  
 only decent choice they have.

ISABELLA  
 They're not going to take her.

Josh nods through tears. He wipes his eyes and looks at her.  
 She looks at him, resolved.

CUT TO:

EXT. FRONT PORCH - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Major Stenz and Blake head to the front door and once there-

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK. They wait for a response. Then-

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK. Another try from the Major.

One of the team notices a SHADOW MOVING IN THE WINDOWS.

RADIO (O.S.)  
 Someone's on the move.

The Major listens at the door, hears FOOTFALLS on the STAIRS  
 INSIDE, growing closer. He looks to the peephole to see a  
 shadow on the other side lean in and peek out. Then-

THE DOOR OPENS to REVEAL COLONEL BEDFORD, in sweats and a T-  
 shirt.

Suddenly we realize this is NOT OUR PROTAGONISTS' HOUSE- It's  
COLONEL BEDFORD'S HOUSE. And he's a bit confused.

COLONEL BEDFORD  
 What's this about Stenz?

MAJOR STENZ  
 Colonel...

Stenz looks nervous... almost upset. Bedford presses him  
 with a look.

MAJOR STENZ (CONT'D)  
 I'm sorry sir. I um-  
 (steels himself)  
 (MORE)

MAJOR STENZ (CONT'D)

Your H.Q. Egress Test flagged you last night. We have the writ and the order to bring you in.

The Colonel tries to comprehend this. He stares at the Major for a long moment as he processes.

Stenz stands his ground with both guilt and surety. Tense.

But the Colonel finally relents with a tiny snort to indicate he knew this would probably happen one day.

COLONEL BEDFORD

Sure thing...

(then)

Stage one?

MAJOR STENZ

Looks that way. I'm sorry sir. I hate to be the one to be here doing this...

COLONEL BEDFORD

Hey what'd I tell you? What we do saves lives. You can always rest assured with that...

MAJOR STENZ

Yes sir. Thank you sir.

COLONEL BEDFORD

I'll come in in the morning...

Bedford starts to close the door, but is surprised when Stenz blocks it with his foot.

COLONEL BEDFORD (CONT'D)

What the hell are you doing?

MAJOR STENZ

You know the rules sir.

COLONEL BEDFORD

Are you fucking kidding me? Remove your boot from the door.

MAJOR STENZ

I'm sorry sir--

COLONEL BEDFORD

GOD DAMNIT! REMOVE YOUR--

Stenz's backup arrives in time to help him PUSH THROUGH THE DOOR and GRAB BEDFORD- who thrashes and SCREAMS DEFIANTLY.

COLONEL BEDFORD (CONT'D)  
LET ME GO!!! LET ME GO!!!

As the men drag Colonel Bedford to a WAITING VAN, his screams change from alpha dog to the blubberings of a scared child.

COLONEL BEDFORD (CONT'D)  
NOOOOOOOOOO!! GOD JESUS NOOOOOOOO!!!

CUT TO:

INT. CONSTANCE HOUSE - POSEY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Josh enters Posey's room. She's awake. He stares at her, allowing himself to feel.

She's pure innocence. No guile whatsoever. Just a little girl looking to the only dad she's ever known.

Josh sits on the chair next to her bed, scans the pile of books on the end-table.

He doesn't know what to say. Unable to find the words, he tries something else.

JOSH  
What's your favorite...?

POSEY  
Mouse on a Motorcycle.

JOSH  
Yeah?

She nods happily. He fishes a book from the pile and opens it up as Posey smiles.

JOSH (CONT'D)  
(reading)  
*"Keith, the boy in the rumped shorts..."*

And as the bedtime story unfolds...

SLOW FADE OUT:

A beat of BLACK, then--

PRELAP the sound of ROTOR BLADES.... Of SCREAMING.... Of a horrible CRASH and--

SMASH CUT TO:

I/E. SHIPPING CONTAINER/RIVER BANK - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

LIGHT FLOODS the inside of a shipping container filled with deported CIVILIANS. They scramble out into the DROP ZONE that's already POPULATED BY INFECTED--

BEDFORD is one of them. He leaps to freedom and begins to fight for his life. It's quick, chaotic and disorienting until--

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. AGRI-STORAGE BUILDING - EARLY MORNING

The rising sun lights up the familiar building, still boarded up with plywood. The sound of RUNNING is heard--

CLOSE ON BEDFORD, covered in blood and mud, running for his motherfucking life.

Behind him a horde of infected. In his hand, a well-used OAK LIMB CUDGEL.

From his labored breaths, we surmise he's been at this awhile and he's desperate.

Luckily the building is dead ahead. He heads for the fence--

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. AGRI-STORAGE BUILDING - MAIN ROOM- LATER

A corner of PLYWOOD covering a window is knocked open by Bedford's cudgel. It's a big enough gap for him to squeeze through and pull himself in and--

-he lands on the floor next to the IMPROVISED CHIMNEY built by Lynn and April. He looks around--

CUT TO:

INT. SILO WING - DAY

Bedford descends a staircase into an unfamiliar part of the structure, fairly well lit by the industrial SKYLIGHTS above.

He moves on until he comes to the CHAMBER below the silos to find DOZENS OF RATS moving in and out of rusty holes at its base, leaking CORN.

They have enough to live on for a thousand generations.

Bedford continues to look. CRUNCHING below his feet forces him to notice RAT SKELETONS AND BONES littering the floor.

The rodent remains seem to grow more populous as he approaches a corrugated metal STORAGE CORRIDOR-- moving along until he finds himself at the ENTRY of an EMPTY STORAGE ROOM--meagerly lit by the tiny windows ringed around it.

Peeking in, he SEES SOMETHING...

A CRUMPLED FEMALE BODY in a fetal position in the center of the space. It's ringed by dozens of RAT BONES and SKELETONS as well as scavenging LIVE RATS.

The body is a mess of tattered clothes and hair. A splintered 2X4 sticks out of its shoulder. It doesn't move.

Wary, Bedford kicks a fist-sized PIECE of crumbled BRICK across the room. It HITS the body without effect.

He creeps closer. He can't see the face so he uses his foot to flip the body over. Finally we can see what he sees:

It's APRIL. Gaunt grey skin, scratched up and shoulder run through with a scrap of 2x4. It's a ghastly sight, but much like we do- *he recognizes her.*

He studies her dead, slackjawed face, reflecting on what became of her. Perhaps seeing his future as well...

BWAHHHHH! She LURCHES to LIFE- contorting on the ground as every muscle in her body SPASMS at once.

Bedford backs away in shock.

BWAHHHHH! Again she CONVULSES VIOLENTLY- letting out a HORRIFIC SOUND in the process. It's GUTTERAL AND RATTLING. Her eyes OPEN and she STARES at Bedford and HEAVES HER CHEST.

Bedford stands ready with his cudgel, ***but this behavior seems more like suffering than it does threatening.***

BWAHHHHH! Again she CONTORTS AND HEAVES- aiming the pained sound his way and staring.

It's hard to watch. His pity is obvious as he moves closer.

He RAISES HIS WEAPON. And as he's about to come down on her--

APRIL  
NOOOOOO!

Bedford freezes. Still rattling and guttural, it sounded like-



APRIL (CONT'D)

NOOOOO!

*More human this time, but no less disturbing.* Bedford studies her as she SPASMS and tries to control her mouth muscles.

APRIL (CONT'D)

P--- P--- P--- Pleasssssssenooooo--

Suddenly he's absolutely sure she just talked. He drops his weapon and she explodes into a FLURRY OF SPASMS AND SCREAMS that seem to have no end... until-

She COLLAPSES, LIMP AND WEAK AGAIN. Breathing shallow breaths, she suddenly seems harmless.

He focuses on her mouth- slowly moving much like an infant's would, involuntarily trying to find a teat.

How the hell is she alive?!?!

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. EMPTY STORAGE ROOM - DAY

BRIGHT LIGHT scorches the frame. SILENCE in a concrete room flooded with sun from the industrial skylights above.

Beneath the high ceilings, alone in the space, is a BED made of furniture blankets. And upon it is a familiar form.

CLOSE ON APRIL. Cleaned up and slowly coming awake. Her pallor and complexion have come a long way. She looks human again... Literally.

Next to her is an IMPROVISED I.V. -- an upside down plastic soda bottle filled with water and a tube that descends downward into her MOUTH.

She grabs the tube and pulls at it, gradually removing about a foot of it from her throat. And once it's out of her gullet- SHE COUGHS LOUDLY.

But coughing brings out the pain from the BANDAGED WOUND on her. And as she tries to make sense of this.

COLONEL BEDFORD (O.S.)

Good morning.

Startled, April turns to see Bedford in the doorway. She stares at him a moment, making sense of the haze.

APRIL

How...

COLONEL BEDFORD

You've been out for four days...  
Your shoulder was gangrenous. I  
had to remove a lot of tissue...

APRIL

No... how...

COLONEL BEDFORD

It's just a disease. And given  
enough time, it will run its  
course... It's one of the first  
things they tell you when you make  
Colonel.

(beat)

Surprise...

This news is insane. April is horrified but too messed up to  
respond, filled with questions. But all she can manage is-

APRIL

They know...?

COLONEL BEDFORD

They tried recovery camps early  
on... Too many accidents, too many  
variables trying to keep virulent  
psychopaths under control for weeks  
on end... It always ended with them  
killing everybody.... And the  
numbers just kept growing. It  
wasn't sustainable, not at scale  
anyway. Those separatist wingnuts  
in Appalachia do it but they're  
just playing with fire...

April isn't quite sure she heard that right.

APRIL

Appalachia's real...?

COLONEL BEDFORD

Yeah. We say it's not because we  
can't afford the risk of people  
getting ideas in their head... I  
mean, sure there's some rich fucks  
and politicians allowed to get  
better somewhere safe, but not for  
people like you... or even me.

(MORE)

COLONEL BEDFORD (CONT'D)  
It's hard enough protecting the  
uninfected and keeping the beasts  
on the other side...

April can't believe her ears.

APRIL  
But--

COLONEL BEDFORD  
Do you know what the odds of you  
coming out the other end of this  
were? Winning the powerball twice  
in a row is probably easier. The  
odds of surviving the infected?  
Plus the odds of surviving as an  
infected? Astronomical. You see  
them turn on each other? Eat each  
other? Meat is meat to them. And if  
you somehow survive being one and  
turn back? Your body's been  
through the wringer and you're  
right back to being prey... no one  
survives it.

(then)  
You were safe because you were  
trapped in here. Away from them,  
with steady food... but you  
probably would've died from that  
infection anyway.

(beat)  
Like I said-- Powerball. You're  
lucky.

April can only shake her head in disbelief, tearing up.

APRIL  
If you know. How can you do it? Let  
people die?

COLONEL BEDFORD  
I don't like it. But I understand  
it... I had a duty to protect what  
we had left.

April is disgusted.

COLONEL BEDFORD (CONT'D)  
You can hate me. I hate me too.  
But it's nothing for you to worry  
about now. What you need to do now  
is get strong...  
(then)  
Because I'll be one of them soon.

He allows that to set in, then EXITS, leaving April ALONE.

CUT TO:

INT. AGRI-STORAGE - STORAGE ROOM - NIGHT

The middle of the night. All is quiet. Enough moonlight enters the room to discern that April is awake.

Still disabled, she is searching for supplies, putting things in a BAG. *Is she getting ready to leave?* She overturns a few boxes but finds nothing of use.

She peers to the doorway where a dim ORANGE GLOW is visible.

INT. AGRI-STORAGE - SILO BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

April enters the room to see the last flickers of a small fire Bedford has made, smoke venting out of one of the shattered skylights above.

He's asleep nearby, near some SCAVENGED ITEMS he's put together. She recognizes some of them from the stash that was gathered in the main room.

She remembers something and grabs a FLASHLIGHT from the pile.

INT. AGRICULTURAL STORAGE - VARIOUS - NIGHT

The flashlight beam lights up a STAIRCASE leading to a door. She ascends quietly.

INT. AGRI-STORAGE - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Scanning for anything useful, April makes her way through the door and into a corridor which we recognize from earlier.

She is overtaken by a memory, abandons her search and is propelled forward by something unseen.

INT. AGRI-STORAGE BUILDING - MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The beam of the flashlight pokes around the large room where she finds what she's looking for--

The improvised chimney, the remains of the campfire and near a pile of random items- a PAPER ROAD MAP. She picks it up and pokes around a bit more-

The beam of light traces old dusty footprints, dark stains in the concrete. Slowly, something seems to be seeping into April's brain.

Suddenly she STOPS, frozen, looking at the ground, staring at-  
THE STUFFED HEDGEHOG.

April is rapt, *begins to quake involuntarily*. Then, in a violent instant she is OVERCOME by a sense memory in every cell- overrun by tears and COLLAPSING TO THE GROUND.

She shudders in front of the evidence of her past, macerating in the memories associated with the old toy. It's painful and heartbreaking.

COLONEL BEDFORD (O.S.)  
How much do you remember?

She turns to see Bedford is at the other end of the room- Her face is awash in horror and sorrow. And then finally--

APRIL  
Everything...

Bedford absorbs the horrible implications of this. His heart bleeds for her, for what it means to have done the horrible things she remembers doing.

BEDFORD  
I'm sorry. But it wasn't you...

She scans her surroundings, reliving what she did and relating it to the shreds of clothing left on the ground. She fights for control of her tears and her breathing.

Her eyes say it was her. It's painful to see.

MUSIC as she closes her eyes, transforming herself, neatly stowing her trauma. When she opens them again-- *resolve*.

APRIL  
I'm going back.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CONSTANCE HOUSE - POSEY'S ROOM - NIGHT

MUSIC CONTINUES as Josh reads another chapter from *Mouse on a Motorcycle* to Posey.

*She's looking worse*. She wears a surgical mask to protect her family from coughing up any blood particles.

But her eyes say it all- She has not turned, but she's not Posey anymore...

CUT TO:

INT. AGRI-STORAGE - SILO ROOM - NIGHT

A fresh fire burns in Bedford's interior camp. Bedford takes a pot off a HOT BRICK and pours hot water in a scavenged MUG.

COLONEL BEDFORD

I was stationed not too far from here back in the day. They pulled us out when Springfield went to hell. Back when we were 23 states. I was just a corporal then...

(then)

They always knew the river would be the backstop, but I don't think they ever thought it would be so soon after the Rio Grande Breach...

He passes the cup to April, who is studying the map nearby.

APRIL

How you feeling?

COLONEL BEDFORD

Clammy... achy... grumpy.

APRIL

That means you still have time.

COLONEL BEDFORD

Lucky me...

They both sit beside the fire.

APRIL

I think I found a good place to cross.

COLONEL BEDFORD

You're being ridiculous. You can't do that.

APRIL

I'm going back.

COLONEL BEDFORD

There is no going back. No one has ever gone back.

APRIL

My family is on the other side of that river. I'm going back or I'm going to die trying.

COLONEL BEDFORD

That's ridiculous.

She returns her attention to the map.

APRIL

If we're here, I figure I can walk to this narrow point here in about a day...

COLONEL BEDFORD

Did you hear me? It's not that easy.

APRIL

I figure this is like 300 yards-

COLONEL BEDFORD

Yeah. And what about the sniper tower we built on the other side precisely *because* that's the narrowest part of the river? And what about the eight rows of razor wire laid there? And what about the patrol boats every hour? And Jesus-- I mean-- You think you can just backstroke across the Mississippi? The currents are too strong. There is no going back.

APRIL

I'll figure it out.

COLONEL BEDFORD

And what then? You can't go over that wall. It's eighty feet high and ten containers thick.

APRIL

I SAID I'LL FIGURE IT OUT!!!

COLONEL BEDFORD

THERE IS NO GOING BACK!!

The Colonel restrains himself, tries to put his temper back in the box while April just stares at him in frustration.

COLONEL BEDFORD (CONT'D)  
 Listen I need to be leaving soon.  
 I'm sick and you stand no chance if-

APRIL  
 What are you talking about? I can  
 lock you in my room with food. You  
 can survive it.

He smiles slightly, his eyes brighten with a hint of whist.

COLONEL BEDFORD  
 No. I'm not interested in that.

APRIL  
 In becoming one of --

COLONEL BEDFORD  
 In surviving.

This takes her back for a beat but before she can press him,  
 the Colonel attempts to explain.

COLONEL BEDFORD (CONT'D)  
 Look, I love my country. It's how I  
 was raised. It's part of who I am.  
 And I've spent the better part of  
 my life protecting that... But it's  
 going away. Everything that we  
 know and love about our way of  
 life-- it's going away. I mean you  
 above all people must see that.

A long SILENCE on April. She pities him but does not agree.

APRIL  
 I don't see that at all. I see the  
 opposite of that. I don't know  
 why, but I've always put my faith  
 in the future. My husband hates it  
 about me, my oldest hates it too.  
 They think I'm naive... pie in the  
 sky... But that's not what it is.  
 It's not like I know that things  
 will be better, I don't. And maybe  
 they won't...

(then)

*But they could be.* There's just as  
 much a chance things will get  
 better as there is that they'll get  
 worse. The odds are even. Like a  
 coin flip. You win half the time.  
 That's not naive, that's a *fact*.

(MORE)



## APRIL (CONT'D)

If you hang in there long enough both outcomes are equal. So as long as the odds are even I won't change my mind that things will be better... Because I know that eventually, given enough time, they will be... they have to be. It's just God's way... I mean, what are the chances that I survived? And what are the chances that *you* survived? And then made it here and found me? You. *The one person who can get me back over that wall...*

April looks at him with undeniable surety.

## APRIL (CONT'D)

I don't know... I think maybe the coin's flipping my way...

Bedford is cornered by her logic and certitude. How is it possible that this woman, after all she's seen and been through, still has hope? It stirs something in him. And before he can think better of it, he's all in--

## COLONEL BEDFORD

There is one part of building the wall on the river they didn't account for.

She smiles at his change of heart-- and as she listens to what's next...

SLOW FADE OUT:

A beat of BLACK, then--

The sound of FOOTSTEPS on linoleum--

## INT. SPORTING GOODS STORE - DAY

Josh drifts past aisles filled with sporting goods. He spots one of his neighbors, Ricky, along the way to his final destination.

## RICKY

Hey Josh.

## JOSH

Hey--

## RICKY

Josh uh--

Josh just continues on distracted, leaving Ricky in his wake. He's focused on a task and we're not sure what it is until he arrives at the GUN COUNTER and addresses the cashier.

SPORTING GOODS CASHIER  
What can I do for you?

He taps on the glass case, pointing at a PISTOL.

JOSH  
Let me get that MP and a box of  
nine mil.

SPORTING GOODS CASHIER  
For the range, home protection or  
something else?

This ripples through Josh. The full weight of what he's doing and why he's here lands on him like a thousand pounds of stones. He looks down afraid that his eyes might reveal the horrible truth.

JOSH  
Range.

SPORTING GOODS CASHIER  
Got a sale on Remington FMJ,  
hundred count?

JOSH  
Okay.

The cashier puts a BOX OF AMMO on the counter before him.

SPORTING GOODS CASHIER  
\$324.99- which comes to....  
(hits a key)  
54.50 after the government subsidy.

Josh throws down his card and puts his wrist on the ubiquitous point of sale tracking SCANNER as the cashier walks over to the CARD READER.

JOSH LOOKS AT THE BOX as if this small thing might overwhelm him and cause him to dissolve into tears right there.

He places a hand on it- hoping it might break the spell.

The cashier returns with the paper slip. Josh signs it, struggling to keep his hand from shaking as the Cashier places the ammo in a bag with the gun.

SPORTING GOODS CASHIER (CONT'D)  
Thanks so much. Have a good day.

Josh nods and exits, chased by ghosts.

EXT. CUL-DE-SAC - LATER

Josh drives home, through a bucolic suburban backdrop.

In the cul-de-sac, a group of NEIGHBORS (including MATT) have collected on the driveway - deep in conversation. They look up as he approaches.

Josh is certain he and his family are the topic of conversation.

CUT TO:

Josh climbs out of his truck and notices out of the corner of his eye Matt crossing the cul-de-sac and coming his way.

He quickens his pace, hoping to get inside before he can--

MATT

Hey...

Caught, he stops and turns.

MATT (CONT'D)

Everything okay?

JOSH

Fine. Why?

MATT

Been hearing noises. Sounds,  
like... screams coming from the  
house. Anything up?

Josh silently chastises himself for being sloppy as he searches for an acceptable response.

MATT (CONT'D)

Not trying to make it weird but uh,  
I got to think of mine, you know.

JOSH

Yeah, I'll be honest with you--  
things have been tough and the kids  
have been going at it and I haven't  
been keeping on top of them like I  
should. House full of women... You  
know.

Matt pauses ominously before he answers. Slightly shaken, Josh tries to keep his demeanor neutral.

MATT  
Teenagers...

Gulp.

JOSH  
Yeah... I'll take care of it...

Matt nods and Josh exits.

INT. CONSTANCE HOUSE - POSEY'S ROOM - DAY

Posey lays in bed completely drained of color- almost drained of humanity. Isabella adjusts Posey's surgical mask, dabs her head with a cold towel in an empty attempt at childcare.

Josh enters and observes the heartbreaking sight for a moment before Isabella notices him.

JOSH  
We need to baffle those windows,  
neighbors can hear.

Isabella nods and looks to the SHOPPING BAG in his hand.

MUSIC as Josh just notices and stares back at her for a moment. Isabella has a dreadful thought about the contents and the sadness in her eyes prompts him to EXIT.

PRELAP the sounds of HARRIED BREATHS... THUDS...

CUT TO:

EXT. URBAN OUTSKIRTS - CATHEDRAL - DAY

MUSIC AND SOUND CONTINUE as we find Bedford and April charging forward through an ABANDONED BURNED OUT CATHEDRAL.

They're terrified. Gulping air. Stumbling but moving fast.

Suddenly, we see why. A mass of infected BREAK THROUGH THE DOORS of the cathedral and spill forward at monstrous speed.

A few yards AHEAD, April stops short and scans her surroundings. No way out. They're trapped.

No time to think because the infected are coming quick. Wide eyed and cornered, April's mind swims-- panic creeping up her spine.

"Is she slipping into shock?" Bedford thinks as he looks at her-- then desperately scans his surroundings.

THERE! He points up to a rusting SCAFFOLD clinging to the inside wall of the old building. Clearly a restoration was in process when the world went to shit.

BEDFORD

We go up.

He grabs her by the arm and drags her forward.

CUT TO:

They clamber up just as the infected reach them. Climbing the rickety old scaffolding as fast as they can-- but they are shaken as the vast tide of infected cause the whole structure to BUCKLE as they IMPACT the foundation.

The structure starts to falter- but still the two climb upward, hoping to reach a ROW OF WINDOWS at the top.

Soon they're half way up.

SCREECH! Metal WAILS as the SCAFFOLDING GIVES WAY and falls slowly to the ground like an ancient tree being felled.

April and Bedford ride it down and somehow manage to escape the wreckage by JUMPING AT THE LAST MOMENT.

But now they're BACK ON THE GROUND- SURROUNDED BY INFECTED.

WHUMP! A last piece of scaffolding falls onto the infected and cuts a hole through the throng. Bedford and April seize the opportunity and charge through the opening.

Once clear- they spot a SIDE DOOR and slip through.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - MOMENTS LATER

City of the dead. April and Bedford move through an avenue cut through a collection of SMALL MAUSOLEUMS. They've managed to pick up *ANOTHER* PACK OF INFECTED who pursue them like a human avalanche.

They take a sharp corner- jump a short fence and find refuge in one of the smaller funerary structures-- slipping inside and crouched between TWO DUSTY COFFINS as a tide of infected PASS BY OUTSIDE.

Nearly hyperventilating, April coughs out a few words.

APRIL

I think... they're... leaving.

She turns to Bedford. He's not there.

In the corner of the crypt, a single infected stands against the wall in a shuddering stupor. Bedford sneaks behind it and slips a knife into the base of its neck- Killing it instantly.

He returns to April and crouches next to her.

BEDFORD

We'll wait here for now. Maybe things will lighten up after dark.

April nods and sits. Bedford joins her. They both dig out their waters and drink greedily.

April takes in her surroundings for a beat and manages to smile.

APRIL

Wait until Posey hears about this.

Posey? Did she just say Posey? Bedford swallows and wipes his mouth trying to not show too much.

BEDFORD

Posey?

APRIL

My youngest. She hates graveyards. Used to make me go three miles out of my way just so we didn't have to drive by a place like this.

BEDFORD

She's little?

APRIL

Eight.

Bedford knows it has to be her. The name on the blood covered jacket in the park. Too much to relegate to coincidence, but... Does he tell her?

APRIL (CONT'D)

It wasn't even a gothic place like this. One of those places with the grave stones flush to the ground. More like a park really, but boy how she hated it...

He has to. He steels himself.

BEDFORD

Listen...

CLANG! The group of infected have found them. They're at the door and pushing through fast. *Too fast.*

April and Bedford scamper to the back of structure instinctively. TRAPPED AGAIN.

Too fast to think, no time for solutions. They're flooding in through the only exit.

The cause is lost. It's obvious. It shows on both of their faces.

TIME SLOWS DOWN, THINGS GROW SILENT and SOFT MUSIC PLAYS.

Bedford is about to give up when he looks at April- Her face losing that unfaltering faith he saw as the tide of infected begin to envelop them. But--

*-another coincidence that brought them together? It has to mean something...* and he'll be damned if he lets it end this way-

Suddenly SOUND and SPEED return as he THROWS HIMSELF AGAINST THE COFFIN AND PUSHES IT FORWARD-- Instantly creating a platform that they can slide across to reach the door.

April knows immediately what he's doing and soon the two are OUT THE DOOR INTO THE OPEN-- fast on foot and running for their lives--

EXT. URBAN OUTSKIRTS - TRAIN YARDS - DAY - DUSK

Multiple trains populate the many tracks- FENCES run parallel to the tracks on either side. April is marching forward, dripping with sweat. Bedford, keen eyed, a bit behind.

BEDFORD

Slow down- you're gonna burn yourself out.

Bedford looks really bad. Pale and pasty. Winded.

APRIL

How far are we?

BEDFORD

We're close. Docks should be just beyond. Get up- see what you can see

April climbs up one of the train cars and gets a pretty good view. She scans the horizon where the river runs parallel to the tracks and spots a familiar sight across the way--

The WYNTON WATER TOWER, poking over the wall in the southeastern distance.

APRIL

We're just up the river from Wynton.

BEDFORD

Good...

He pulls out a MAP as April climbs down.

BEDFORD (CONT'D)

So we're here- just south of the drop zone. We want to be just north of that, here- the waste docks.

APRIL

It'll be night soon...

Bedford nods as he puts the map away and they continue northbound.

EXT. DEPOT GATES - NIGHT

A concrete wall along an industrial area near the river. A flashlight ILLUMINATES SOME SIGNAGE that dictates it once operated as a depot for WASTE MANAGEMENT.

INT. WASTE DOCK WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

April and Bedford rummage through cabinets and find AN OXY-ACETYLENE TANK/TORCH SETUP.

BEDFORD

Perfect. Now here's the rub...

He leads her to an opened door and points to their next stop.

Down by the river is a DEPOT DOCK AREA consisting of a myriad of large GARBAGE BARGES, one next to another, like a washboard formation- piled high with old trash like a series of HILLS swarmed by ever scavenging SEAGULLS.

BEDFORD (CONT'D)

I was on the detail that sunk the tugs. We didn't have time to deal with the barges so we just chained 'em up. But if we can cut one loose, couple miles down, the river doglegs east.

(MORE)



BEDFORD (CONT'D)

These things are so heavy, inertia  
will beach the barge on the other  
side.

This makes sense to April.

APRIL

But?

Bedford points to the huge heavy dual tank torch setup.

BEDFORD

We gotta get that down there...  
(points back to docks)  
...with *them*.

April squints and sees MANY BARGES are TEEMING WITH INFECTED  
that feast upon the RATS, SEAGULLS and WEAKER INFECTED.  
She's ready.

APRIL

Let's go.

CUT TO:

EXT. GARBAGE DOCKS - PRE-DAWN

Bedford and April struggle to carry the TORCH RIG along the  
dock as quietly as possible. Ahead of them is a barge that  
seems free of infected and is as far from the "busy" ones as  
possible.

They both keep heads on a swivel as they move slowly toward  
their destination.

They both strain, trying to avoid coming noisemakers like  
wobbly sheet metal panels and other unwanted surprises.

Fortunately the incessant BIRD CRIES AND CAWS are loud enough  
to mask what little noise they do make.

Finally they come to the BARGE and behold the HEAVY CHAIN  
that anchors it to the dock.

Exhausted, Bedford opens up the valves on the tanks, finds a  
SPARK IGNITOR on the rig-

BEDFORD

(whisper)

Shit... no goggles...

(then to April)

Once I light this thing, we blow  
our cover.

Bedford resumes prepping the torch and whispers--

BEDFORD (CONT'D)  
When we get to the other side, I  
can use this to cut a way through  
the wall.

She's nods, prepping herself.

BEDFORD (CONT'D)  
(re: the torch)  
Now turn away.

April turns away and Bedford lights up the torch- painfully squinting as he dials in the flame. He puts it to the chain and turns his own head away.

Instantly the dockside is ALIGHT with a flickering blinding white. *For the first time we see just how many infected are populating the trash piles on the far barges.*

APRIL  
Oh god...

THE INFECTED ARE IMMEDIATELY DRAWN TO THE LIGHT and begin to CLAMOR OVER THE TRASH HEAPS toward it IN DROVES.

APRIL (CONT'D)  
How long?

BEDFORD  
I don't know.

April looks instinctively to the chain and winces at the searing pain it induces in her eyes.

BEDFORD (CONT'D)  
DON'T LOOK!

She returns her gaze to the ensuing ARMY OF INFECTED, going from barge to barge like an invading cavalry over hilly terrain.

They draw ever closer. April raises her CUDGEL, waiting for the inevitable.

CLOSER.

SHE LEANS IN, ready to strike--

Things are getting seriously hairy, when finally--

CLANG! The sound of the CHAIN HITTING THE GROUND tells them that it's BEEN CUT. Instantly, the barge starts to move.

BEDFORD (CONT'D)

GOT IT!

Together they get on the barge and drag up the WELDING RIG.

BEDFORD (CONT'D)

YES!

April and Bedford watch as they leave the infected on the dock and turning on one another.

APRIL

Holy shit that was crazy!

Bedford can finally breathe, collapses onto the trash to rest his sickened body as they continue drifting past the docked barges still teeming with Infected.

They watch from their safe vantage until--

CLANG! The barge SHUDDERS and April turns to see the front has hit A STEEL PILING. As the current pushes the barge onward, it can do nothing but PITCH AROUND the piling -- SENDING THE AFT TOWARD the infected infested docked BARGE next to them.

APRIL (CONT'D)

No....

CLANG-SCRAPE-GROAN! April goes down as they hit the passing BARGE and scrape along it on their way away from the docks.

INSTANTLY THIRTY INFECTED GET ONBOARD the aft during this moment as April and Bedford scramble to their feet.

And just as the barge hits the MAIN CURRENT and is pushed downriver, the WAVE OF INFECTED HEAD ACROSS THE BARGE FOR THEM.

There's no way to win. Nowhere to go. April looks for a weapon.

Bedford thinks and a beat later, LIGHTS THE TORCH BACK UP. As if to use it as a weapon.

BEDFORD

Get in the water.

APRIL

What?

He POINTS THE TORCH AT THE OXYGEN TANK. April doesn't understand.

APRIL (CONT'D)  
What are you doing!!?

BEDFORD  
Get in the water!

Bedford finds a SCRAP OF WEBBING in the trash- starts to  
WRAP IT AROUND THE TORCH TO KEEP IT AIMED AT THE TANK.

BEDFORD (CONT'D)  
I'll be right behind you! Get in  
the water!

The infected are extremely close, but the churning dark water  
is equally terrifying.

APRIL  
I can't--

BEDFORD  
GO!

APRIL  
No!

BEDFORD  
You have to.

APRIL  
What?

April is amazed by what she hears. He looks to her.

BEDFORD  
Your daughter! She's sick! There  
may still be time...

April is awash as that hits her like a thunderbolt.  
Confused and horrified she can barely begin to ask how he  
knows that when--

BEDFORD (CONT'D)  
Save her!

HE KICKS HER and she GOES OVER THE EDGE and INTO THE WATER.  
Bedford TIES OFF THE WEBBING. The tank glows red hot.  
Bedford gets up to jump, BUT--

HE'S GRABBED AND QUICKLY ENGULFED BY THE HORDE.

April bobs violently as SHE'S SWEEPED AWAY- only occasionally  
getting a glimpse back at the now burning barge-- just enough  
to see BEDFORD FIGHTING THE INFECTED and trying to muscle his  
way to the water when--

BOOOOOOOOOM! The tank EXPLODES and sets half the barge and the entire night sky ALIGHT.

Shocked and horrified, April forgets to swim a moment as she watches. However, she is fully clothed and resumes struggling to swim as she moves downriver.

She GASPS while trying to remove her shoes and stay afloat.

With each attempt, she disappears under the water and resurfaces. But the longer it continues, the longer she remains under- until finally the water CONSUMES HER...

UNDERWATER- She is pulled ever downward, looking up at the dull glow of light above. She fights the current and exhaustion, swimming for the light, but gets no closer...

BACK AT THE SURFACE, we wait for her to emerge. But she never arrives...

We hear nothing but the river.

SLOW FADE OUT:

OVER BLACK

PRELAP-- the sound of horrible animal noises.

INT. CONSTANCE HOUSE - HALLWAY - MORNING

Isabella, exhausted, stands in the hall listening to the TERRIBLE NOISES coming from Posey's room.

The sound is GUTTURAL with strange HIGH PITCHED WHEEZING intermixed. There are elements that one would describe as human but for the most part they are horrifyingly alien.

JOSH

Isabella, bring a bowl of cold water.

INT. CONSTANCE HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Isabella lays the bowl in the sink with shaking hands. She hangs onto the edge of the porcelain for reassurance... or is she trying to hold fast for the storm she is about to enter?

Steeling herself as best she can, she takes the bowl and the small stack of rags she has prepared and EXITS THE ROOM.

CUT TO:

INT. CONSTANCE HOUSE - POSEY'S ROOM - LATER

Sweet little Posey is almost gone.

The room has been turned into a cell. Windows BAFFLED to stifle the noise- all unnecessary furniture moved to a different room. SHEET PLASTIC hung in an attempt to make a biological barrier.

SHE IS MOTTLED AND ASHEN. SWEATING PROFUSELY. DELIRIOUS.

She utters an unearthly RATTLE - a quaver that sends a jolt of electricity to Josh's spine.

Isabella, masked, enters the room and sets the bowl and rags down next to the bed.

A masked Josh takes a towel, moistens it and tries to cool her fever when-- BLAAACHH! She vomits into her mask.

Isabella and Josh freeze, staring at the mess. Something fills them with dread-- SPLOTCHES OF BLOOD throughout the dripping liquid. They both look up to see the same thing pooled around Posey's nostrils.

They look to one another, knowing they've reached a terrible milestone in the course of her disease.

CUT TO:

INT. CONSTANCE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

They sit on the couch completely exhausted. Josh has his eyes closed but isn't sleeping. Who could sleep?

Isabella stares at him. This experience has brought them together as a family in a way she would have previously thought impossible. They've become reliant on each other emotionally and the resulting bond is elemental and profound.

ISABELLA

Dad?

Josh opens his eyes, wondering if he just heard her call him 'dad'. She struggles to somehow find the strength to ask what needs to be asked, but Josh understands what she's trying to say. He reaches out to grab her hand.

He looks at her and nods... as if to say, "I know."

It's time.

CUT TO:

EXT. RIVERBANK - MORNING

All is peaceful at the RIVERSIDE in the shadow of the wall.

RUSTY old CONCERTINA WIRE snakes along the shoreline. A few long DEAD BODIES AND SKELETONS of infected victims that managed to get across are tangled within it.

Eventually we reveal April- on her side, head on the shore, the rest of her in the water.

She blearily comes to, BAG still slung around her, as she struggles to her feet and assesses. No sign of the BARGE, no sign of anything. All she knows is she's on the side of the river she wants to be on.

She limps toward the wall-- An interlocking construction of cargo containers stretching up toward the sky like a giant stack of legos-- hastily constructed, but no less ominous, imposing and seemingly impassible.

And to make things worse--

A CRACK from the brush. Then ANOTHER.

Fuck. They're here.

And as she turns to face her fate, she is surprised to see--

DOGS. A small pack of muddy, half starved, FERAL DOGS.

They stare at her, sizing her up until-- they conclude she's not worth their time and turn back the way they came. As they move, they REVEAL A DOG STANDING BEHIND THEM.

And although it's muddy from its chest to its paws, the *MARKINGS on his face and coat make it clear...*

IT'S THE DOG THAT INFECTED HER, no question about it. Still alive, probably living off the corpses along the shoreline. *But how can he be on this side of the wall?*

APRIL IS AGOG. There must be a way through.

And as April sets to following him--

CUT TO:

EXT. RIVERBANK - FOOT OF THE WALL - MORNING

April arrives at the base of the wall, which is half-submerged in mud- Up close, the wall is not in good shape- Rusty and compromised from the weight.

She finds a dog trying to squeeze through A RUSTED HOLE of an opening peeking above the mire. It's not much of an opening, based on the fact that even these emaciated dogs have trouble getting through.

Watching the last dog disappear inside, April drops down on all fours and puts her head through.

Inside the container it's a world of blackness.

She pulls her head out again and considers the wall. Maybe there's a better option somewhere el-

SNAP!

She turns her head and SCANS THE TREES. In the distance- a lone infected moves past.

It moves away from her, but its presence is enough to shake her. She senses something is wrong. Quickly she moves toward where it came from- toward the river.

The trees grow less dense and the dark nature of her situation begins to resolve itself when she sees--

THE SMOLDERING BARGE HAS RUN AGROUND nearby and it's full compliment of infected are SPILLING OFF ONTO THE BANK. They fall over themselves, some of them burned, attacking each other and writhing like a tub of nightcrawlers dropped on the deck of a fishing boat.

Gut punched, she watches them... until she realizes that in fact, she is the one who is being watched.

THEY CHARGE TOWARD HER IN A SUDDEN TERRIFYING SURGE.

April runs back toward the wall. The hole will have to work.

But how can it?

CUT TO:

Diving into the mud before the hole, she can't move the earth away fast enough. She scans the area for some sort of tool - but this turn of the head reveals a desperate situation.

They are CLOSE. Too close. Moving fast. She has no time. It's too late.

Desperate, she lies on her belly and tries to wriggle her way though. No longer able to stifle her panic, she SCREAMS as she tries to force herself even an inch forward.

Suddenly something GIVES- and she SLIDES FORWARD.



The mud proves to be the advantage she was looking for. Offering enough lubrication for her to make some headway.

INT. CARGO CONTAINER - CONTINUOUS

Covered in mud, she slides her waist through. Soon she is able to use her arms to push down on the wall and soon enough she pulls the rest of herself inside.

INFECTED storm the hole, quickly cutting off what little light leaks into the container. They are having as much trouble bridging the hole as April had. She takes this slim advantage to let her eyes adjust and reconnoiter.

She blinks to try to crack the blackness. She can discern the crude volume of the space but little else. She whips her head BACK to see-

TWO GLOWING RED POINTS from the far side of the container draw her attention.

They are a DOG'S EYES, refracting the meager light.

They vanish quickly but she moves toward them- glancing back just as the first infected MAKES ITS WAY THROUGH THE HOLE behind her.

More by touch than sight, April finds a rusty passage. Quickly she enters the ADJOINING CHAMBER.

INT. FLOODED CARGO CONTAINER - CONTINUOUS

A strange place - this container has slipped below the previous one and is now nearly completely FLOODED WITH BOGGISH GREEN WATER. Out of options, she slides into the disgusting water without hesitation.

She wades forward, chest deep, into BLACKNESS-- stopping only for a moment to gain a clue as to what direction to proceed.

A LOW SCRATCHING SOUND from the corner draws her. The scratching is moving across the roof above her. Is it dog feet? The sound their claws make walking on a hard surface?

She jumps as she BUMPS INTO SOMETHING--

A half-rotted DOG CARCASS bobs to the surface. She notices there are SEVERAL MORE around her- Eyes rotted out, festering with unspeakable corruption- they chide her silently.

How many of these poor creatures died in here swimming around hopelessly until they drowned?

A new hell draws her eyes back to the hole she just passed through - SEVERAL INFECTED HAVE MADE THEIR WAY THROUGH-- SLIDING INTO THE WATER and making their way toward her.

She moves away and toward corner she heard the scratching sound-- There has to be way through.

INT. SPACE BETWEEN CONTAINERS - MOMENTS LATER

When the containers settled into the mud, it opened a gap between them, creating a narrow PASSAGE that April now finds herself.

She pulls herself up into the narrow space. Desperately she crawls forward on her belly.

But the infected are right behind her, coming into the passage. Coming her way. Gaining on her!

April has to move faster but has no idea where she is headed.

At the far end of the passage, the space opens up and she finds that she can actually stand up into a NARROWER VERTICAL SPACE. She immediately understands where she is.

The corroded, failing structure of the containers has made a gap-- leading her to a set of CONTAINER DOORS. She feels around searching for what must be there.

She finds it! THE DOOR HANDLE. Following her fingers she finds the door slightly ajar-- offering a space for her to slither through.

INT. DARK CONTAINER - CONTINUOUS

She gets into the barely lit container but suddenly stops and looks back toward the light coming in the door where the infected are already crawling through on all fours. Three of them, scampering over each other like hamsters.

April tries to find another way out in the dim light, but a scampering infected inadvertently KICKS THE DOOR SHUT -

ALL IS BLACK NOW.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. CONSTANCE HOUSE - POSEY'S ROOM - LATER

Isabella sits on the bed, alone with Posey. Posey has entered a quiet sleep and looks almost peaceful.

ISABELLA

When I was little I always used to wake mom up early and ask her if she could make me a little sister. Every morning. It drove her crazy. She used to snap at me but it didn't stop me. I just kept asking. But when they finally got around to it things were different then I thought. Instead of having someone I could play with or even a baby doll I could dress up-- I got a squirmy squeaker who was either puking or crapping on me. Mom was so busy she basically ignored me. I wasn't old enough to understand-- but I guess I was wondering how I fit in. One day when you were sitting in your high chair. Queen of the table spitting out anything Mom gave you. Eatin' nothin. I made a funny face and you laughed. Boy did you laugh. I fed you something and down it went. Then I knew who I was. I was the only one who could get you to eat. It filled me up because you needed me.

(then)

And I kinda don't know if you knew how much I needed you too.

And as our hearts break-

INT. CONSTANCE HOUSE - HALLWAY - LATER

Josh waits in the hallway. Isabella exits her room and closes the door behind her. Josh's eyes convey something intense is coming down. It's time.

ISABELLA

Are you sure?

He looks at her with certainty and strength unseen until this point and nods. Isabella, unafraid to show weakness, embraces him and SOBS.

After a beat he lifts her head up.

JOSH

Leave the house Bella.

ISABELLA

No- I want to stay--

JOSH

No. I'll do it alone. Let me do this. This can't be the last way you see her. I haven't been much to you. I've let you down in a lot of ways. So I'm asking, to let me do this alone.

She looks at him. He needs to feel like he's taking care of the only person he has left in the world. Isabella concedes with a nod.

Josh kisses her on the cheek and it's not until now that we see the GUN IN HIS WAISTBAND.

He watches her go, then fixes his attention on Posey's door. And as he heads toward it--

CUT TO BLACK:

OVER BLACK

PRELAP the SOUND of PANTING BREATH, rattling and aggressive.

CUT TO:

INT. CLUTTERED CONTAINER - CONTINUOUS

ON APRIL. HIDING in a CLUTTERED CONTAINER-- listening to the unseen. THE PANTING. THEM, *drawing nearer to her.*

The strange RATTLE of their labored breathing is so close one could feel the heat of their bodies as they move past her, groping into the darkness.

They are still hunting her. April tries to move stealthily in the shadows, moving slowly along the wall- hoping against hope to find the passageway that the dogs used.

She tries to stay silent. Not a whimper or a wasted breath.

The sound of bodies COLLIDING-

An infected WAILS HUNGRILY and noisily LUNGES.

CHAOS as the sound of WAILING and BODIES flailing in the darkness denote a deadly encounter- but a HIGHER PITCHED wail tells us it's two infected FIGHTING ONE ANOTHER.

April MOVES AWAY from the scuffle, trying to stay hidden, STOPPING as we hear the other two infected RIPPING THE HIGH PITCHED WAILER APART.

Barely able to see, April has only her ears to illustrate them digging into flesh and unzipping its belly. The unmistakable sound of viscera SPILLING ONTO SHEET METAL and cartilage popping under ravenous teeth.

It shatters April's mind. But it's also one less infected to worry about.

As the carnage settles down, SCRATCHING ABOVE draws April farther from the infected and toward what we can only surmise are DOG PAWS and gradually-- A SOURCE OF SUNLIGHT.

INT. ANGLED CONTAINER - CONTINUOUS

Rapturous light bathes April as she climbs through the hole and rises to her feet in a container severely angled up toward the opened sky.

UP THE SLOPE at the other end she can make out the open door and through them she can see the source of the light. Without taking time to judge the space she climbs up- slipping on the steel floor but finding footholds where she can.

Nearing the top, a SCREAM from the other end draws her eyes. She looks back to see-

ONE OF THE INFECTED HAS FOUND ITS WAY IN. Making a miscalculation, she decides to speed up her ascent, undermining her footing.

She grabs at a RUSTY PIECE OF BRACING, but it BENDS. She LOSES HER GRIP- leaving the sharp piece of metal DANGLING PRECIPITOUSLY.

To her horror she finds herself SLIDING DOWN THE INCLINE AND INTO THE ARMS of her waiting pursuer.

At the last moment she KICKS OUT-- knocking the hunter off its feet. She lands ON HER BACK with a THUD -- but seizes a tiny moment in time to resume her climb.

But just then- the other infected ENTERS AND LUNGES.

IT HAS HER.

She struggles with it as BLOODY TEETH SNAP AT HER EARS while the other one gets up and GETS A HAND ON HER. Adrenaline, already coursing through her blood in pints, surges. She KICKS AND PUNCHES CONVULSIVELY. It does nothing.

If only she had a weapon. She looks up to the dangling piece of bracing and gives one more desperate effort to LASH OUT and PUSH THEM BACK.

Then, putting her back against the slope - she PUSHES OFF WITH HER LEGS and slides her body up the slope.

She REACHES UPWARD, STRETCHING FOR THE DANGLING PIECE OF METAL BRACING.

She PULLS HERSELF AWAY from the grinding jaws and UPWARD toward salvation.

The infected pursue her- but the slope and their diseased minds inhibit their progress.

She's so close to grabbing the potential weapon, she stretches, SHE GRABS IT, but--

The last infected makes another spastic LUNGE-- landing a hand on April's pant leg and PULLING HER DOWN with the BRACING IN HAND.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. CUL DE SAC / CLEARING - SHORT TIME LATER

Isabella walks the neighborhood, trying to do what Josh asked, but her helplessness and burden dominate all.

As she comes to a small clearing at the edge of the neighborhood, she turns her eyes to the sky in a show of hope and internal prayer.

MUSIC as she fights back her thoughts of what's to come...

INT. POSEY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

MUSIC CONTINUES as Josh sits beside Posey, quaking from fever, taking labored breaths. His eyes water as he tries to find the strength to do what needs to be done. Then-

He reaches for something OFFSCREEN. For a moment we think it's the gun, but we soon reveal-- it's her copy of Mouse on a Motorcycle. He opens it to a dogeared page in the last chapter.

JOSH

We're almost done...

MUSIC CONTINUES as he starts to READ.

JOSH (CONT'D)

*Ralph was a hero in the mouse hole that night. His admiring relatives gathered around...*

EXT. CLEARING - CONTINUOUS

MUSIC and JOSH'S READING CONTINUE as Isabella makes her way up the small rise at the edge of her development. The cul-de-sac lays splayed out behind her like an immense wagon wheel.

JOSH (V.O.)  
*...Ralph dragged his heels to brake  
 the motorcycle. Quietly he parked  
 it beside the bed and...*

She moves toward the path that would lead little Posey and her to school every day.

The path that goes to the park. The park that had the dog. The dog that ate the body. She trudges on instinctually-unable to look back or even to imagine the horrible goings-on behind her.

JOSH (V.O.)  
*...quietly he removed his crash  
 helmet and hid it behind the  
 curtain....*

INT. CONSTANCE HOUSE - POSEY'S BEDROOM - LATER

MUSIC CONTINUES as Josh sits beside Posey, finishing the last words of the book.

JOSH  
*He did not want to disturb the  
 sleeping boy. Ralph could wait to  
 ride the motorcycle. It was his to  
 keep.*

Emotionally wrecked but resolute, he closes the book and lays it next to her bedside lamp... and the PISTOL.

He reaches for it and--

CUT TO:

EXT. CLEARING - CONTINUOUS

MUSIC CONTINUES as Isabella takes a deep breath, as if bracing herself for the coming gunshot until--

--something draws her attention:

A LONE FIGURE in the far distance- COMING TOWARD HER. Straggled and filthy, despite a state of near exhaustion, the figure moves toward her. Is it one of the infected?

Isabella STOPS - paralyzed. She must be losing her mind. It's an eerie sight, but soon she realizes...

It's her MOTHER.

It can't be, but it is... and she starts to run toward her.

Isabella launches herself forward-- running toward April until they meet on the crest of the hill-- rolling to a stop feet apart.

Confused and overcome with emotion, Isabella falls to her knees, dissolving into tears.

April goes to her and WRAPS HER UP IN HER ARMS.

APRIL

It's me, sweetheart. It's me.

Isabella returns the hug with ferocity, nearly knocking April down.

ISABELLA

I knew it...I knew it...

April looks into her eyes, deep set with worry.

APRIL

Is Posey still... ?

April can't say it. But Isabella's dread has the implications quickly dawning on her.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. CUL-DE-SAC - SHORT TIME LATER

Propelled by terror, April and Isabella dash through the now familiar neighborhood.

Isabella has a considerable lead on her mother and as she runs, she gets the ATTENTION of the neighbors.

Passing COLE'S HOUSE, Isabella sees Jen and Cole take notice from the opened garage. A moment later, they SPOT APRIL passing by.

Jen is rapt at the sight of her old friend who is somehow alive. Absolutely awestruck as if witnessing a miracle, she can only watch April run for the house behind Isabella--

SMASH CUT TO:



INT. CONSTANCE HOUSE - VARIOUS - CONTINUOUS

Isabella is first in, still well ahead of her mother. She heads straight to Posey's room when-

BANG!!!

The gunshot stops her dead in her tracks for a moment, unable to scream or comprehend what awaits her a few feet away.

She staggers forward, entering into the room to find Josh choking back an ocean of self recrimination. He throws the gun to the ground.

Isabella turns to the bed to find--

POSEY IS UNWOUNDED. A smoldering BULLET HOLE in the HEADBOARD.

JOSH

I tried.... I tried... I can't...

Isabella is frozen still when April arrives at the door-trying to assess what happened before going to Posey's bedside.

As if in a dream, Josh watches her- trying to make sense of the fact that his wife is standing right in front of him.

He's in absolute shock, dumbstruck. As a wave moves through him he falls to pieces. How can this be true?

JOSH (CONT'D)

How...?

April turns her attention to him. Moving closer, she tries to comfort him-- but he pulls away.

APRIL

Josh...

JOSH

I gave up. I thought it was impossible. I gave up. I should have fought for you but I didn't. I didn't.

April wraps him up and waits for him to slowly turn to her.

APRIL

How can you say that? How? Somehow you kept these two little girls alive. You kept them alive and safe and I can't imagine how.

(MORE)

APRIL (CONT'D)

Honey you didn't give up on me  
because these girls- they are me.  
You understand me? They are me.

(then)

Now you get to your feet and you  
help me now. Because we need to get  
this little one someplace safe. She  
isn't going to die. Do you hear me?  
You don't die. They've been lying  
to us. You don't die.

ISABELLA

How...? Where...?

April's eyes fill with tears as she recalls her conversation  
with her from earlier.

APRIL

Appalachia sweetheart. It's real.

Hope has survived in her somehow from hell and back and  
Isabella can scarcely believe it. She basks in its glow and  
smiles.

APRIL (CONT'D)

We need to take her and go. We need  
to get out of here - now. People  
are coming and they're gonna take  
her.

Josh nods, coming out of it.

JOSH

But...

He wants to say she's already gone, but--

APRIL

She's gonna live.

Josh doesn't understand fully but moves toward Posey to undo  
her bonds.

INT. CONSTANCE HOUSE - GARAGE - SHORT TIME LATER

Josh and April finish tying Posey up in the back seat of the  
truck's crew cab. She thrashes instinctively, COUGHING  
REPEATEDLY, but isn't strong enough to pose a threat.

They tape a sheer plastic sheet to the roof to isolate her  
from the others.

Isabella tosses some essentials in the bed as her parents emerge from the back seat and close the doors.

Josh heads for the driver's seat and as April and Isabella pour into the car, HE STARTS the engine and pushes the DOOR OPENER BUTTON.

The door opens, Josh PULLS OUT INTO THE DRIVEWAY TO FIND--

EXT. CONSTANCE HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

THE NEIGHBORS, INCLUDING JEN AND COLE, standing at the end of the driveway, blocking their path and DRAWING CLOSER.

Josh stops the truck and puts it in park.

APRIL

Don't let them see her...

She opens her door, Josh follows her lead--

And as he meets up with April in front of the truck, the neighbors pepper them with questions--

JEN

How?

Jen is tearing up at the sight of her.

VARIOUS NEIGHBORS

How are you here? Where have you been? What's going on? Etc...

Isabella gets out too, she sees COLE standing behind his mother.

BACK ON JEN, trying to get answers.

JEN

How?

A wave of discomfort sweeps through the group.

APRIL

I was over there. I survived. All of us can survive-- You're being lied to. People are just being thrown away...

They can't believe their ears, but that's when POLICE SIRENS IN THE DISTANCE get their attention.

Other neighbor, RICKY arrives- rifle slung from his shoulder-

RICKY

We heard a shot... we called  
them...

April grows worried. VIOLENT COUGHING from inside their truck  
gets everyone's attention. Fear builds ever more.

APRIL

We have to go. Now. Please just let  
us pass...

The crowd aren't sure what to do as April and Josh go back  
the truck--

MATT

NO!

MATT APPEARS-- his HK SERVICE PISTOL aimed at them both.  
Cole and his mother are aghast.

MATT (CONT'D)

What the fuck is going on here?!

JEN/COLE

Matt! Dad no-

MATT

She's sick!

APRIL

No I-m--

MATT

STAY BACK!

He trains the gun on April.

MATT (CONT'D)

How do we know that? Huh? Let's  
just wait for the cops-

Josh starts to reach for the pistol in his waistband, but  
Matt is onto him instantly.

MATT (CONT'D)

Don't!

Matt turns the gun on Josh, then reaches out, gesturing to  
him to hand it over. Josh complies when--

COUGH COUGH COUGH! Posey can be heard in the car.

All eyes turn.

MATT (CONT'D)  
What the fuck is that...?

Matt manuevers around toward the truck and quickly sees sick Posey tied up in the back.

APRIL  
Matt no.

MATT  
Jesus. She's one of them! She's sick!

APRIL  
I got through it! So can she! So can everyone! I'm proof.

They struggle to believe her but everyone is on tenterhooks-fearful and potentially aggressive.

Chaos is burbling. The coughing grows more awful.

VARIOUS NEIGHBORS  
How long has she been this way?  
You're playing with our lives!

APRIL  
Wait- don't be afraid-- We're going to take her away from here. We're going to be careful. We're going to get her well-

JOSH  
Just let us g--

MATT  
Fuck off! And what about her!?  
(re: April)  
She was on the other side! She could still be carrying it!! They can kill us all!

Ricky tries to calm the situation.

RICKY  
Look at her Matt- she looks fine--

MATT  
Fuck that! I don't care what happened-- it don't make her one of us! Not anymore!

Matt points the gun at the truck. Isabella SCREAMS. The whole situation explodes as people panic.

MATT (CONT'D)  
I'm putting an end to this!

He keeps the crowd at bay as he makes his way back to the truck and OPENS THE DOOR TO get a good shot on Posey--

Pale, heaving for breath after a coughing jag, her nightmarish appearance further disturbs the crowd. Matt puts the gun barrel to her head and--

MATT (CONT'D)  
It's the only way!

Cole reacts to intervene- RUNS TOWARD HIS FATHER while Josh DIVES FOR MATT and-

COUGH!!!! Posey hacks into Matt's face- SPATTERING HIS FACE AND SHIRT WITH BLOOD DROPLETS.

Dumbstruck with shock, he freezes-- calculating the implications until-

COUGH!! She does it again-- this time SPATTERING HIS EYES.

He backs off- semi blinded and full of horror.

MATT (CONT'D)  
NO! No no no-- get it off!

He staggers to the crowd. They freak out accordingly.

MATT (CONT'D)  
Get something! Get it off!

Seizing the moment, April grabs Isabella's hand and pulls her back to the truck.

The neighbors can only stare as Matt grows ever more hopeless and panicked- none more so than his own family.

MATT (CONT'D)  
Somebody help me! Why won't anyone help me?!!

Matt moves toward the crowd. They instinctively back away as if from a leper, but he keeps coming.

MATT (CONT'D)  
Help me!

Even Cole and Jen back away from him. Betrayed and desperate, he rushes closer. Everyone lurches backward until RICKY RAISES HIS RIFLE AND HOLDS HIM OFF.

RICKY  
Stay the fuck where you are!

MATT  
Rick--

RICKY  
Stay the fuck where you are!

Matt is awash in consequences, quickly coming to grips with his future, speechless and panicked.

As Matt suffers, Josh motions for Isabella and April to back away toward the truck.

Isabella turns her attention to Cole. He looks at her, lost-aware that she's leaving but unable to go.

ISABELLA  
He can survive it...

He looks back at her, helpless.

ISABELLA (CONT'D)  
Tell everyone.

Isabella heads for the truck. SIRENS DRAWING CLOSER.

CUT TO:

The shell shocked neighbors fan out away from the horror and the family DRIVES AWAY from the surreal scene, their exit barely noticed.

Shocked and shaken, the family drives to the end of the cul de sac and TURNS THE CORNER onto the MAIN ROAD, vanishing from our sight and-

I/E. ROAD / TRUCK - DAY

MUSIC CONTINUES as April, Josh, Isabella and Posey make their way EASTBOUND- out of town to safety, their community growing farther away from them.

They're a family again, driving away to find somewhere safe, somewhere they can get their daughter well and start again.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CUL-DE-SAC - CONTINUOUS

MUSIC CONTINUES as POLICE CARS and USVC vehicles ARRIVE on the cul-de-sac and head for the house.

Pulling to the curb, OFFICER BLAKE emerges from his cruiser, to take in the scene. Matt crying on the ground, held at gunpoint while the others watch.

As the USVC team makes their way through the neighbors to quarantine Matt, the neighbors' HEADS BEGIN to turn, everyone STARING AT Blake.

Blake can't help but notice that he is becoming the focus of this group of people he is supposed to protect--

*--people now filled with questions they want answers to.*

And as the Blake locks eyes with his soon to be inquisitors-

DISSOLVE TO:

I/E. ROAD / TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

MUSIC CONTINUES as the family drives on.

April looks back at Posey as she sleeps. She reaches into her bag and pulls out the plush HEDGEHOG, placing it next to her.

Isabella looks out to the side of the road. To the passing mailboxes and trees... the shadows growing long... to the future....

April reaches out and grabs Josh's hand and squeezes it affectionately. She looks up to his face for a moment of reciprocation, but his eyes are glued to the road ahead.

He's alarmed.

Quickly she follows his gaze to see what he's looking at. As the road rises ahead, invisible until it was too late, sits a HEAVILY MANNED CHECK POINT.

JOSH

Isabella- cover her up.

Isabella pulls down the plastic sheeting and pulls off Posey's surgical mask-- then covers her restraints and mouth with the blanket.

It's effective but Isabella is terrified.



APRIL  
Let's just keep it calm.

April gives Isabella an reassuring glance.

EXT. CHECKPOINT - MOMENTS LATER

The truck pulls up to a stop and a YOUNG SOLDIER approaches them. Josh rolls down his window.

JOSH  
Problem?

Inexperienced, but trying to project an air of authority the soldier leans forward.

YOUNG SOLDIER  
We have a vector protocol incident  
on the river, 'fraid we're closed  
here.

JOSH  
We're just trying to get home.

YOUNG SOLDIER  
Where?

JOSH  
We're heading to Cooper and they  
let us through the last road block  
a few miles back so we could get  
through before they shut down the  
highway. This is the only way to  
Cooper so...

YOUNG SOLDIER  
They didn't send any information  
ahead about you so I really don't  
know what's...

He looks around to see if anyone outranking him is nearby to give advice. From his expression, all the soldiers milling around are just as inexperienced as him.

JOSH  
C'mon- it'll be ok... I just want  
to get these sleepy girls home.

He considers it a moment.

JOSH (CONT'D)  
You got kids?

YOUNG SOLDIER

Just one.

JOSH

Then you know what I mean...

The soldier nods knowingly. It looks like it may go Josh's way until--

YOUNG SOLDIER

I'm gonna have to ask my Colonel.

Josh and April's faces fall as the soldier backs away and walks to a parked HUMVEE nearby.

The window opens and the body language of the soldier clearly indicates he's chatting with an unseen ranking officer until--

The humvee door opens and the young soldier steps away from the car as an OFFICER climbs out of the passenger seat.

It's STENZ. Former aide to Bedford.

Newly minted Colonel insignias are visible on his collar as he heads toward them.

April notices him with shock. Josh and Isabella notice her change in demeanor instantly. Tension begins to fog the air.

ISABELLA

What? What is it?

April quiets her with a shake of the head, then turns away and ducks down as Stenz is upon them.

STENZ

What's going on here?

YOUNG SOLDIER

Just a family- They're not locals  
so I'm not sure if they're subject  
to...

Stenz examines the truck. April tries to bury her face further. This action itself raises Stenz's suspicion. He silences the soldier.

Slowly, he walks around to April's side of the vehicle eyes locked on her.

Josh plays out the scenarios in his mind. His body language seems to indicate that he may jump into foolhardy action which April stifles with a touch of his hand.

Isabella sinks back into her seat, overcome with doom.

Stenz arrives at April's window and now he has a clear view of her face. He can't quite place her but she definitely looks familiar. He quickly becomes suspicious.

He changes his focus, studying everyone- Josh, Isabella, and finally, Posey.

COLONEL STENZ  
Lower the window please.

Josh swallows hard as he can do nothing but comply. The motorized window lowers and Stenz stares closely. He notices the faintest trace of her wrist restraint peeking from under the blanket.

He's about to let it go when he HEARS SOMETHING.

An UNEARTHLY GUTTURAL RATTLE comes from beneath the blanket that covers her face. He pulls back the blanket to see blood spatter on Posey's mouth.

Sudden alarm climbs up his throat as he looks to April, FINALLY PLACING HER. But before he can act--

APRIL  
Wait-

April remains very calm and speaks to him in a serene voice.

APRIL (CONT'D)  
Just wait. Look at me.

Her incongruous tone holds his attention.

APRIL (CONT'D)  
You know me. You know who I was and where I was headed.

He does.

STENZ  
But...

APRIL  
You're a colonel now. So you know what's possible.

He's surprised to hear that.

APRIL (CONT'D)  
We're taking her east. To the  
mountains. I think you know  
where...

How does she know that? He looks to her as if to ask.

APRIL (CONT'D)  
Bedford...

He can't believe his ears. But before Stenz inquire about him further, April just shakes her head.

He understands, but a moment later, his face tightens up- his thoughts returning to duty.

April notices and looks to her sleeping daughter.

APRIL (CONT'D)  
Now look at her.  
(firmer)  
Look at her.

Stenz looks back at Posey. Her bloodied mouth and shallow breaths. Revulsion quivering in his eyes.

APRIL (CONT'D)  
She's not a monster. Look at her.  
(then)  
She's just a little girl.

Her voice takes on a tone moral certainty.

APRIL (CONT'D)  
She's just a little girl.

Stenz tramples down a sudden compulsion to act and wipes his mouth. He looks around, confused and bewildered.

What's he going to do? It's anyone's guess. He looks April in the eye and speaks and--

--starts BARKING at his surrounding underlings.

STENZ  
Open up! Let them through.

A cold bucket of relief douses the family. Josh throws the truck into gear and pilots it forward.

MUSIC TAKES OVER as the truck goes through the checkpoint and onto the quiet highway.

As they pass, April shares a glance with Stenz. Something intangible in his eyes lightens her.

And as the car clears frame, WE SEE-

THE DOG-- emerging from woods. And as he trots back toward the town, we can't help but think about the implications of what he did and may continue to do.

And as he heads away...

EXT. HIGHWAY - DUSK

The truck drives toward the setting sun, they take in what they're leaving behind and what may be ahead.

They're headed East.

Toward a new home.

Toward the mountains...

Toward hope.

SLOW FADE OUT:

THE END