

The Brink of Love

By

Frank Liu

frank.liu.96@gmail.com

7/5/2011

FADE IN:

INT. TOM'S OFFICE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK DREAM)

A standard lawyer's office.

TOM, early forties, handsome and in good shape, engages in sex with his SECRETARY, a pretty twenty-something brunette, right on top of Tom's desk, as papers flutter around.

EXT. LAW BUILDING - NIGHT (FLASHBACK DREAM)

Alice, early forties enters.

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT (FLASHBACK DREAM)

Alice takes the elevator up to Tom's floor.

INT. TOM'S OFFICE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK DREAM)

SECRETARY

Oh, Tom!

Tom moans in pleasure.

Suddenly, Tom spots Alice standing in the doorway in utter shock.

Tom gets off of the Secretary.

SECRETARY (CONT'D)

No, Tom, don't stop!

The Secretary notices Alice, and quickly re-buttons her blouse.

Alice runs out of the office.

Tom follows.

TOM

Alice, wait! Alice!

CUT TO . . .

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT (PRESENT DAY)

TOM
(in sleep)
Alice!

Tom awakens in cold sweat.

Tom takes a few moments to catch his breath. Then he takes an engagement ring out of his pocket, and fiddles with it in his hand.

Alice sleeps peacefully beside him.

Tom looks at her, and smiles.

TOM (CONT'D)
(softly)
Thanks for taking me back.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Alice walks down to the smell of fresh cooked breakfast.

Tom puts down two plates and sits down.

TOM
Morning, Alice.

ALICE
Hey.

Alice and Tom sit down and eat.

TOM
How's the food?

ALICE
Good.

TOM
Listen, Alice, you know how much I love you.

ALICE
Ok.

TOM
I think we should take our relationship to another level.

ALICE
I don't know about that.

TOM
Why not?

ALICE
Remember how you cheated on me with
that bimbo.

TOM
I thought we got past that.

ALICE
It was only six months ago.

TOM
I'm sorry. I was drunk, stupid and
didn't realize what was in front of
my all along. I know those are
just excuses, but-

ALICE
Do you realize how much you hurt
me?

TOM
I can't change the past, but the
future... I see us very happy
together.

Tom takes out a ring box and slides it over.

Alice opens it.

TOM (CONT'D)
Marry me.

ALICE
I don't know... That's a big step.

Tom walks around and gets on one knee.

TOM
We were meant for each other.

ALICE
I want to, Tom, I really do.

TOM
But what?

ALICE
I don't know...

TOM
I love you, Alice. I'd do anything
for you.

TOM (CONT'D)
Will you marry me?

Alice glances at the ring as Tom slips it on.

ALICE
You know how much family is
important to me. You haven't met
my brothers and Uncle Bob, yet.

TOM
Then, we'll meet them. Will you
marry me?

ALICE
Okay, Tom.

Tom embraces Alice's hands.

TOM
I'm sorry that your parents died.

ALICE
It was a long time ago.

TOM
We can have that old fashioned
wedding you always talked about,
too.

ALICE
That would be nice.

TOM
So, lets drive on down!

ALICE
Right now?

TOM
Yeah, why not?

ALICE
But what about your job?

TOM
You're far more important than my
job.

A beat.

ALICE
I think maybe we're moving too
fast.

Alice busies herself with washing dishes.

Tom peruses her from behind and kisses her neck.

TOM
I think maybe we're moving too
slow.

Alice turns to Tom.

ALICE
We would need to pack...

TOM
I'll pack for the both of us. So
are we doing this or what?

ALICE
Yeah, ok!

Tom and Alice kiss.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Tom quickly packs two suitcases filled with stuff.

EXT. PORCH - DAY

Alice talks on her cell phone.

UNCLE BOB (V.O.)
Isn't he the guy who cheated on
you?

ALICE
He's changed. Really, he's
changed.

UNCLE BOB (V.O.)
I don't know, honey. You know how
men are.

ALICE
But he's different.

UNCLE BOB (V.O.)
You sure?

ALICE
Yes.

UNCLE BOB (V.O.)
You love him?

ALICE
With all my heart.

A beat.

UNCLE BOB (V.O.)
How far are you from South
Carolina?

ALICE
Maybe five hours.

UNCLE BOB (V.O.)
Okay, honey, we'll get ready to
meet him.

ALICE
I don't think any preparations are
necessary. He's a decent guy.

UNCLE BOB (V.O.)
It's always better to be prepared.

ALICE
But Uncle Bob...

UNCLE BOB (V.O.)
Alice, you know the rules.

Tom lugs two suitcases through the front door.

ALICE
Fine. I got to go, bye.

Alice hangs up her phone.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Tom lugs the two suitcases and puts them in their sedan.

TOM
South Carolina, here we come!

Tom gets in the car. Alice gets in slowly.

Alice pulls out a portable GPS, and fondles with it nervously.

ALICE
Listen, Tom. You remember how we always wanted to go geocacheing?

TOM
Yeah.

ALICE
Well there's this really big one on our way to my parent's house. I was wondering if it would be cool if we could maybe take a detour...

TOM
I don't think we have time for games.

Alex takes a piece of paper with coordinates.

ALICE
It's really on our way. Please?

Tom stares into Alice's beautiful eyes.

TOM
Ok, Alice. Anything for you.

Alice smiles.

The car drives off.

EXT. MAIN ROAD - NIGHT

Tom drives while Alice sleeps. Tom looks over for a loving beat. He stares at his GPS next to Alice, and takes a dirt road.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

The car cruises down the road. Tom looks over at the GPS, while he makes a turn.

He looks up.

TOM

Jesus!

A HITCH HIKER, late forties, gruff, an outdoors man, stands in the middle of the road.

Tom swerves to miss him. He gets their car stuck on the side of the road.

Tom hits his head on the windshield.

ALICE

Tom! Tom! Are you alright?

TOM

Some stupid hitch hiker stood in the middle of the road.

The Hitch Hiker walks over, and taps at Tom's window.

Tom rolls down the window.

HITCH HIKER

Y'all ok in there?

TOM

Why were you standing in the middle of the fucking road?

HITCH HIKER

Prospecting.

TOM

Prospecting what?

HITCH HIKER

Prey.

The Hitch Hiker opens Tom's door and throws him on the road.

ALICE

Tom!

TOM

(to Alice)
Call 911.

HITCH HIKER

Oh, there will be no reception out here.

The Hitch Hiker takes out a HUNTING KNIFE and presses it close to Tom's throat.

TOM

You fucking bastard!

HITCH HIKER

You're in the company of a psychopath. Choose your words wisely, friend.

TOM

Please...

IN THE CAR

Alice searches for a weapon. She opens the dashboard compartment and finds a screw driver.

Quickly she gets out, sneaking up behind the Hitch Hiker.

Tom sees Alice, and tries to avoid him from focusing on Alice.

TOM (CONT'D)

What do you want?

The Hitch Hiker does not answer.

He leans close to Tom staring into Tom's eyes.

Alice stands right behind the Hitch Hiker, screw driver held up in a stabbing position.

The Hitch Hiker hears breathing from behind. He doesn't flinch.

TOM (CONT'D)

What do you want?

Alice shakes glancing at how close the knife is to Tom.

HITCH HIKER

I want you.

The Hitch Hiker bashes Tom with the hilt of the knife. He falls to the ground, barely conscious.

Alice jabs at the Hitch Hiker, but misses.

ALICE
Please you don't have to do this.

HITCH HIKER
But this is what I do.

ALICE
We've got money! And you can have
our car!

The Hitch Hiker slowly approaches Alice, as she steps back, eyes glued in terror.

The Hitch Hiker notices the Connecticut plates.

HITCH HIKER
You Yankees think you can come on
down south like nothing happened.

ALICE
I was born in South Carolina.

HITCH HIKER
Then why are you with that
Northerner.

ALICE
I love him.

HITCH HIKER
But does he love you?

A quick beat.

ALICE
Please just don't kill us! Tell us
what you want, please!

HITCH HIKER
Just last week I gutted this
investigative reporter, and what a
queer he was. Thinking he can come
to my territory and solve crimes he
ain't welcome to solve.

The Hitch Hiker gets into a battle stance and passes the knife from one hand to the next.

ALICE
Oh, God please help me!

Tom struggles to get up, but falls down.

The Hitch Hiker, walks over and kicks Tom in the head, knocking him out.

HITCH HIKER

There ain't no God here. And if there were a God, this would be his blind spot. My territory, understand?

ALICE

I'm sorry. We thought this was a public road.

HITCH HIKER

It is a public road, but I'm the watcher. I watch over it, and that makes it mine.

Alice quickly steps back faster, looking for other cars.

HITCH HIKER

You won't get any help, ma'am. People rarely travel down this way.

ALICE

We didn't know that. We're sorry.

HITCH HIKER

No need to apologize, ma'am. You two have brought me much joy.

The Hitch Hiker takes a step forward licking his knife.

ALICE

Please! Don't kill us!

HITCH HIKER

It's Yankees like you guys who did a number on my folks some years back. Speeding. The authorities called it a "hit and run"/.

ALICE

I'm sorry for your loss, sir-

HITCH HIKER

This is a scary road to travel down especially at night.

ALICE

We didn't know-

HITCH HIKER

Well, you know know. Some say this road is cursed, some say ghosts, but you want to know the truth? It's just little old me, keeping a watch.

ALICE

Let us go, and we can give you money!

HITCH HIKER

I ain't here for business. I'm here for pleasure.

ALICE

Please, just let us go! We won't talk.

HITCH HIKER

You tried that tact already. I ain't a retarded bumpkin. You think I'm some ignorant country boy?

ALICE

No, sir. We're good people.

HITCH HIKER

There ain't such thing as good people. We're all sinners.

ALICE

Are you religious, sir?

HITCH HIKER

Been one in the past, but saw through that bullshit. Now, I'm just a man with a knife, watching and stalking and murdering. It ain't glamorous, but it's a living.

Down the road a convertible speeds by at full speed.

ALICE

Help! Help me!

The Hitch Hiker grabs her, and takes cover behind shadows.

INT. CONVERTIBLE - NIGHT

JOEY, 18, a high school jock drinks from a flash of vodka. Next to him, sits JENNIFER, 18, cheerleader, gorgeous, running her hand down Joey's pants.

In the back seat, PAUL, 17, a bit nerdy, rubs his eyes.

PAUL

Go back!

JOEY

What do you mean go back?

PAUL

I thought I saw something.

JENNIFER

I didn't see anything.

Jennifer removes her hand from Joey's body.

PAUL

We need to go back! I think there's an accident back there.

JOEY

It's two against one. There's nothing to see.

Paul unbuckles his seat belt and leans his head over to the front.

PAUL

I definitely saw something.

Without warning Joey screeches the car to a halt.

Paul forward backwards, tumbling to the front, hitting his head on the car radio. It's cracked.

JOEY

The hell did you do to my radio? If you weren't my brother, I'd kill you...

Joey examines the crack.

JOEY (CONT'D)

I just got that installed a few months ago!

Joey grabs Paul by the shirt.

JOEY (CONT'D)
Get out of the car.

PAUL
What?

JOEY
You fucking retarded? I said get
out of my fucking car!

Joey shoves Paul backwards.

JENNIFER
Paul, cool it. We can't leave him
in the middle of nowhere.

JOEY
You're taking his side now?

JENNIFER
I'm not taking sides. Maybe we
didn't notice anything because we
were "preoccupied."

PAUL
I saw something. I swear I did.

Joey reaches for his cellphone, and passes it to Jennifer.

JOEY
Ok, Jennifer contact the police,
but that's it. We don't go
back. we let the pros handle this
shit.

Jennifer looks at the cell phone.

JENNIFER
No reception.

JOEY
Fuck! What about you Paul?

Paul pulls out his phone.

PAUL
Nothing.

Joey ruffles into his right pocket. A few packaged condoms
fall out, a few dollars, and finally he finds his cell
phone. He checks it

JOEY

Nationwide coverage my ass.

JENNIFER

I think I might have heard something. Maybe Paul's right. We can't just leave them stranded without reception.

JOEY

I can't go back. One more DUI and the coach tells me I'm off the team for good.

Joey finishes off the last of the alcohol, and tosses it into the woods.

JENNIFER

Do it for me. Please!

Joey sighs.

JOEY

Ok, this is the plan. I sit in the back seat, Paul, you drive, and if the police comes, you say you've been driving all night long.

PAUL

(soft)

Ok.

JOEY

What's that, I didn't hear you.

PAUL

I said ok!

Joey and Paul open their doors and swap seats.

JENNIFER

What about me?

JOEY

You can either come to the backseat and join me, or you can sit shotgun with my dumbass brother.

A long beat.

JOEY (CONT'D)

Get in the back seat, Jennifer.

JENNIFER

Sorry, but I'm not in the mood. Let's just get this thing over with.

Paul starts adjusting his side and review mirrors.

JOEY

Oh my God, you don't need to adjust the mirrors.

PAUL

Safety first.

JOEY

Fuck, you're ruining my perfect day.

JENNIFER

This drama is really irritating me!

JOEY

I'm sorry. Jennifer, please join me in the back seat?

(beat)

Nothing sexual, I promise.

JENNIFER

Fine.

Jennifer squeezes through the two front seats into the backseat.

Joey helps her.

Finally, Paul has his mirrors adjusted, and makes a U-TURN, heading back the way they came at a slow 35 miles an hour.

JOEY

Go faster.

PAUL

We need to go slow just in case we pass it.

JOEY

I'm giving you ten minutes, and that's it.

Paul drives a little faster.

PAUL
What's with the hurry?

JOEY
Our parents won't be home until
tomorrow afternoon.

PAUL
I know that.

Joey turns to Jennifer

JOEY
That means we have the house all to
ourselves.

Jennifer reaches for Joey's right hand and fondles it. Joey
brushes Jennifer's hair aside. They kiss.

JOEY (CONT'D)
I think I love you, Jen.

JENNIFER
Me too. But just tone it down with
your brother, ok?

JOEY
I'll try.

EXT. ROAD - LATER

The convertible slows down as Paul sees the stalled car and
the man knocked out.

JOEY
Shit, you were right!

Paul slowly drives near the scene, and parks by the road.

They get out, and check on Tom.

Jennifer checks her cell phone. No signal.

JENNIFER
Any reception?

Paul checks his cell phone.

JOEY
None. What about you Paul?

Paul paces back and forth, unsure what to do.

JOEY (CONT'D)
Paul? Any reception?

PAUL
No reception.

Jennifer crouches down and checks Tom's pulse.

JENNIFER
He's alive.

JOEY
Wake him up. Paul and I will check
his car.

Joey walks around the car.

JOEY
Good news, no other bodies.

Silence.

JOEY
Paul, you hear me?

PAUL (O.S.)
Guys, I think I found something.

Paul and Jennifer walk over to Paul, who stares down at a woman's purse and a bloody trail leading straight into the woods.

JENNIFER
Is that real blood?

PAUL
I think so.

JENNIFER
I'm scared, Joey.

JOEY
Stay with me, and you'll be fine.

Jennifer grabs Joey's arm as they look around.

SILENCE.

JOEY
Ok, I'm gonna get my BB gun just in
case...

Paul hands Joey the keys.

Joey jogs to the convertible, and pulls out a realistic looking BB gun.

He looks at two different clips. One loaded with small plastic plastic balls, and the other loaded with metal balls.

He puts the metal holding clip in, and cocks it.

Joey turns back to Jennifer and Paul who are now looking at an unconscious Tom.

Jennifer crouches down and wipes blood from Tom's forehead.

JENNIFER

Please wake up.

Joey gets down, and starts to shake Tom.

JOEY

Wake up, asshole. Wake up.

PAUL

Does anyone have some water?

Jennifer rummages through Alice's purse and finds a small water bottle. She hands it over to Paul.

JENNIFER

Here.

PAUL

Thanks.

Paul gets down and slowly empties the water bottle on Tom's face.

Tom starts to come back to life, sputtering and disoriented.

TOM

Alice! Alice!

Tom scrambles up, fists clenched, ready to fight.

Joey, Paul and Jennifer steps back, startled.

JENNIFER

We're here to help you.

TOM

Where's Alice? Where's Alice?

JOEY
There was no Alice!

TOM
Oh, God! Oh God, no!

Tom gets on his knees and sobs.

Paul notices the massive bump on Tom's forehead.

PAUL
You alright, man?

TOM
I need to find Alice!

JOEY
You probably just had a concussion
from the accident. We'll take you
to the hospital on our way home.

TOM
But Alice-

JOEY
We searched for other
people. There is nobody else here.

Tom takes Alice's purse from Jennifer and rummages through
it.

He finds an ID card of Alice.

Tom crouches down, and shows Joey the ID card belonging to
Alice. Tom glances over Joey's shoulder to get a good look.

Paul takes the ID card.

PAUL
This is your wife?

TOM
Not yet, but we're engaged.

Paul hands the ID card to Jennifer.

JENNIFER
Organ donor...

Jennifer hands the ID back to Tom.

TOM
Yeah, Alice believes in helping others. She has a great heart. We need to find her.

JOEY
Wait... There is no we. There is you and there is us. We did our part... We have no obligation to help you.

TOM
Please!

JOEY
We're tired, and we have a long night ahead of us.

Joey puts his hands around Jennifer's waist, ready to head back to the car.

Paul turns to Tom.

PAUL
This Alice person. She may be in danger. We got to do something.

Joey stops and he and Alice turns around.

JOEY
This isn't our problem.

Jennifer turns to Joey.

JENNIFER
Let's help him.

JOEY
For all we know this guy could be some serial killer.

Tom gets up, and reaches into his pocket.

Joey aims his realistic looking BB gun at Tom.

JOEY (CONT'D)
What are you reaching for?

TOM
My wallet.

JOEY
Ok, do it slowly.

Joey aims the BB gun it at Tom's forehead,

TOM
That's unnecessary. I can tell
it's a fake.

JOEY
It's loaded with metal BB's. It
will still hurt.

Tom withdraws his wallet and hands it over.

Joey motions for Paul to retrieve the wallet.

Paul checks it out.

PAUL
His name is Tom Hannagan. He's a
lawyer.

JOEY
Fan-fucking-tastic! Just what we
need, another fucking lawyer.

Paul hands the wallet back to Tom.

TOM
I'm a public defender. I help
those that can not help themselves.

JOEY
Call a spade a spade, buddy.

Joey cocks the BB gun.

JOEY (CONT'D)
I hate lawyers.

JENNIFER
(to Joey)
Put that thing down Tom, you're
scaring me.

Joey slides the small BB gun in his pants.

Paul notices a trail heading into the woods.

PAUL
Look, over there!

Joey and Tom looks at the dirt trail resembling a body being dragged into the woods.

TOM

That must be where he took Alice!

JOEY

Ok, what the fuck happened? Start from the beginning.

TOM

There was a man standing in the road while I was taking a turn, I tried to avoid him and got my car stuck.

JOEY

What did he look like?

TOM

He was big, probably at least six feet, heavysset. I couldn't get a good look on his face or I can't seem to remember. He knocked me out.

PAUL

What was he wearing?

TOM

Some sort of raincoat.

JENNIFER

Did he have a weapon?

TOM

Yeah, a very large hunting knife.

JENNIFER

There's no stab wounds on you.

TOM

He hit me with the hilt of the blade, and kicked me, knocking me out.

PAUL

You saw her being dragged away?

TOM

No, I was completely out of it.

JOEY
Why did he kidnap your wife-

TOM
(reflecting)
Fiancee.

JOEY
Why did he kidnap your fiancee, but
left you to live.

TOM
I don't know. He probably lives
somewhere in the woods. Probably
decided to first get Alice first
and then come back for me.

PAUL
Can you get your car out of the
ditch?

TOM
Not without a tow truck. It's
stuck.

Joey runs his hands through his head, thinking.

JOEY
Ok, get in our car, and we'll drive
you to the nearest police station.

TOM
How far is the nearest police
station?

JOEY
The closest town is Redfield. It's
about an hour's drive.

TOM
There and back?

JOEY
One way.

TOM
That's two hours for help! And I
don't even know how long I've been
out... I got to get to her!

JOEY
You can do what you want, but we're
going home.

TOM

Please I need your help! Her life
is in extreme danger!

Joey hands over his BB gun to Tom.

JOEY

That's the best I can do for you.
You may not be able to kill him
with this, but you can certainly
slow him down. Good luck.

Joey turns to leave.

JENNIFER

No, Joey! We need to help him.

JOEY

We don't need to do anything. It
ain't our problem.

Jennifer points to Tom.

JENNIFER

Look at him! He is in no shape to
take on a madman by himself.

JOEY

Have you considered that if we stay
and go into the woods, we may be
next?

JENNIFER

What if it was me? What would you
do?

JOEY

Of course I'd go and save you, you
know that!

JENNIFER

We can't leave him.

PAUL

She's right. It's the right thing
to do.

JOEY

(to Paul)

Shut the fuck up!

PAUL

If we can save her, you know, we'd be heroes.

Joey breathes heavily, considering his options.

PAUL

That could really help you get a scholarship...

TOM

If you help me, I can give you all ten grand each.

JOEY

You expect that we're just going to trust your word on that?

TOM

I swear, ok?

Tom looks into Joey's eyes.

Tom reaches into his pocket and takes out a spare business card.

TOM (CONT'D)

You can trust me. I almost always keep my word. And in this situation, I guarantee I will compensate you all regardless of the outcome of-

(soft)

Alice. If she's dead or alive...

Joey considers his options.

JOEY

Fuck!

Joey paces to his car, lifting up the covering and reaches inside.

JENNIFER

What are you doing?

JOEY

Getting us armed.

Joey hands Jennifer a tire iron.

Joey then pulls out a shotgun, and starts to load it.

TOM
That things real, right?

JOEY
As real as leaves on a tree.

A beat.

PAUL
You took dad's shotgun?

JOEY
Well, it's good for situations like this.

PAUL
Yeah. Good call.

Joey cocks the shotgun.

Joey hands Jennifer the keys.

JOEY
I need you to get in the car, don't stop till you get into town, and get the police.

Jennifer gives Joey a long kiss.

JENNIFER
I love you. Be careful, ok?

JOEY
I will. Now go.

Jennifer gets into the convertible and speeds off.

Joey racks his head, thinking hard.

JOEY (CONT'D)
This is a big fucking mistake.

PAUL
We're doing the right thing.
(beat)
Is your head still hurting?

TOM
I can handle the pain.

JOEY
But can you keep up with us?

TOM
The love of my life is in
danger. I can keep up with
anything.

JOEY
Ok, let's go.

Tom passes the BB gun to Paul.

TOM
Wait.

Tom rushes over and picks up a large stick. He practices a
few thrusts.

TOM (CONT'D)
I'll take point.

The three men head follow the drag marks, into the dark
woods.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

The convertible speeds onward. Jennifer, alert as ever,
clenches onto the steering wheel.

Jennifer's cell phone rings.

JENNIFER
Finally reception!

It's MOM.

Jennifer answers.

MOM (V.O.)
Honey, how was the game.

JENNIFER
We won.

MOM (V.O.)
Great. You coming home?

JENNIFER
Not yet.

MOM (V.O.)
Is there something wrong? Your
voice-

Ahead, a spike strip lies around a turn.

JENNIFER

No mom, I'm scared. There was this man, and he-

The convertible hits the spike strip, spinning out of control.

Jennifer loses the phone.

Jennifer checks the passenger seat, and behind.

She sees it on the road. She hops out.

MOM (V.O.)

Jennifer? Jennifer?

Jennifer rushes over, and before she can grab it, a giant boot crushes the phone.

Jennifer looks up.

The Hitch Hiker stands tall and scary.

Jennifer crawls backwards.

The Hitch Hiker pounces on Jennifer, stabbing her repeatedly with his large hunting knife.

The cell phone, barely operational, lights up.

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

Jennifer?

The Hitch Hiker gets up, blood everywhere.

He walks to the phone and picks it up.

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

Jennifer, are you alright?

HITCH HIKER

She can't come to the phone right now. Can I take a message?

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Tom, Joey and Paul follow the dirt trail.

PAUL

It looks like he stopped dragging here here.

Tom bends down.

TOM
(tearing up)
Alice.

JOEY
Maybe she got free.

TOM
Doubt it. Maybe he decided to
carry her.

JOEY
The trail ends here. We have no
idea where they went.

TOM
Just give me a second to think.

JOEY
We're standing prey, gentlemen...

Joey gets on one knee, pointing his shotgun around his neck.
Paul sniffs around.

PAUL
You smell that?

JOEY
Smell what?

TOM
Yeah. It smells like rotting
flesh.

Paul, like a hound dog follows the trail to a bunch of
bushes to the left. Tom follows.

Paul parts the bushes, leading up to a dirt trail.

TOM (CONT'D)
This must be the path.

SILENCE

PAUL
Tom! Tom!

Some rustling, and Tom approaches

PAUL
I found this fabric. It's still
smells of fresh perfume

Joey hands it to Tom.

TOM
It came from Alice.

PAUL
Are you sure?

TOM
I could recognize her perfume
anyday.

JOEY
Quiet down!
(beat)
Found this half buried.

Joey picks up a sledgehammer and hands it to Tom.

Tom drops the stick.

TOM
Thanks.

Paul looks at his BB gun.

PAUL
You two have real weapons. All I
got is a fake gun.

JOEY
Don't underestimate a BB
gun. Shoot him in the face, and it
will hurt like hell.

TOM
Ok, ready?

Tom holds the bushes open while Joey and Paul slip through,
then he goes in.

PAUL
See that?

Tom, Joey and Paul cautiously walk up to a "NO TRESPASSING"
sign. On the wooden pike lies a bloody DEER'S HEAD swarming
with MAGGOTS.

JOEY
God it stinks.

TOM

We're on the right track, boys.

Tom leads leads the way, hatchet in hand.

Joey and Paul follow.

INT. HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

MOM, mid forties sits with DAD, also mid forties. Two SHERIFF DEPUTIES sit opposite them, jotting down notes.

MOM

I think I heard muffled screaming,
and a few moments later this man
came on.

SHERIFF DEPUTY #1

What did he say?

MOM

Something about Jennifer is busy
and if he could take a message.

SHERIFF DEPUTY #1

Did you recognize the voice?

MOM

No. It wasn't Joey's.

SHERIFF DEPUTY #2

Joey?

DAD

Jennifer's boyfriend.

Sheriff Deputy #1 looks at Sheriff Deputy #2.

SHERIFF DEPUTY #1

Can you describe the voice.

MOM

Gruff. Almost gritty. Maybe a
hint of, I don't know how to
describe it.

DAD

It was evil.

SHERIFF DEPUTY #1

Are you sure it was from nobody you
knew.

MOM

It wasn't Joey's voice. I know you guys always suspect the spouse or husband for these disappearances, but I'm telling you the voice was almost mocking, like some line from a western.

SHERIFF DEPUTY #2

Like a Dirty Harry?

MOM

Yeah, but with a slight tone of pleasure.

SHERIFF DEPUTY #1

Anything else?

MOM

Then the phone went dead.

SHERIFF DEPUTY #1

Ok, Mr. and Mrs. Ellis, is there anything else we should know.

MOM

Not that I can think of.

DAD

You'll find her, right?

SHERIFF DEPUTY #1

Usually a person should be reported missing after the first forty-eight hours. But under your circumstances, we know something may be amiss.

MOM

Please search for her?

SHERIFF DEPUTY #1

It's late, tomorrow morning we'll get a warrant and see if we can triangulate the cell signal and pinpoint the exact location.

SHERIFF DEPUTY #2

What provider does your daughter use?

DAD
Excuse me?

SHERIFF DEPUTY #2
Cell phone provider.

MOM
Apex Mobile.

Sheriff Deputy #1 jots down the cell phone company's name.

SHERIFF DEPUTY #1
Ok, thank you for your time. We
got what we need.

DAD
So there's nothing you can do?

SHERIFF DEPUTY #2
Not for tonight. You know it could
all be some practical joke. You
never know.

SHERIFF DEPUTY #1
Goodnight, Mr. and Mrs. Ellis.

MOM
Please...

Sheriff Deputy #2 turns around.

SHERIFF DEPUTY #2
You have my sympathy, ma'am, but
this is how the system works.

The two Sheriffs turn and walk out the door.

Mom closes it behind them.

DAD
Bastards! Well, I'm going to
search for her!

MOM
Where the hell are you going to
start?

Dad sits down, frustrated.

Mom embraces him.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

A POLICE CAR's engine runs, but remains in park.

INT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT

Sheriff Deputy #1 sits at the wheel and Sheriff Deputy #2 sits beside him.

SHERIFF DEPUTY #1
Let's pay this Joey a visit.

SHERIFF DEPUTY #2
Woman said it wasn't Joey's voice.

SHERIFF DEPUTY #1
Well, if it ain't him, we need to inform his parents anyway.

SHERIFF DEPUTY #2
Think we'll find her?

SHERIFF DEPUTY #1
Between you and me, these cases never end well.

The Police Car pulls away.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

The Hitch Hiker finishes digging a shallow grave, and rolls Jennifer's body to the bottom. He tosses the broken phone below, and starts to cover her.

Behind him, the convertible glistens in the moonlight.

EXT. DIRT PATH - NIGHT

Tom, Joey and Paul spot a small cabin ahead.

Paul slowly turns the knob. He opens it.

SWISH! A hatchet slashes down from the ceiling into Paul's face. His lifeless body, bleeds as his body and the hatchet falls to the ground.

JOEY
Oh, my God! Paul.

Joey gets down, embracing his brother.

JOEY (CONT'D)
(crying)
Paul! Paul!

Tom checks his pulse.

TOM
He's dead.

JOEY
I was such a dick to him.
(beat)
I don't even know why.

TOM
I'm sorry.

Joey stares at Tom, shaking back and forth.

It's a long awkward moment.

JOEY
He wanted to help you, and he died
for it.

TOM
Words can not express how sorry I
am.

JOEY
Today was the best day of my
life. The football game, beating
our rivals, and the time I planned
to spend with Jennifer...

TOM
You can head back.

JOEY
What?

TOM
This isn't your fight.

JOEY
My brother just died, and you're
telling me to head back?

TOM
I don't want any more blood on my
hands. I didn't expect this.

Joey slowly removes the hatchet from Paul's head.

He bends down and kisses Paul on the forehead.

JOEY

I'm going to shove this fucking hatchet so far up this psychopath's ass that he's going to vomit his intestines!

Joey hands his shotgun to Tom.

JOEY (CONT'D)

You know how to use this, right?

TOM

Yeah.

Joey cautiously enters the cabin.

Tom follows.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

Joey finds a flashlight on a table, and turns it on. It flickers.

He shines it around.

JOEY

Candles.

Tom takes out a lighter and lights the candles up.

Tom and Joey stare in bewilderment as jars filled with body parts line the shelves.

JOEY (CONT'D)

Sick fucking bastard!

Tom heads to the back, cautiously, on the lookout for traps.

TOM

Watch out for traps.

JOEY

Yeah.

Joey browses the jars, it's sickening, yet catches Joey's curiosity.

Joey stumbles on a plastic red tank of gasoline.

JOEY (CONT'D)

Oops.

Gasoline spills all over the floor.

Joey bends down, and sets it back upright.

Suddenly Joey gags.

JOEY (CONT'D)

The hell?

He walks over to a tall cabinet.

Joey opens it, revealing a dead body of the INVESTIGATOR REPORTER hanging on a hook, blood still dripping down, yet he's dead.

JOEY (CONT'D)

Poor bastard.

Tom walks over.

They both stare at the body.

TOM

I wonder how many he's killed.

JOEY

I remember years back, when I was a kid, there was this serial killer all over the news. They called him the... The...

TOM

Crimson Butcher.

JOEY

Yeah, The Crimson Butcher. They never caught that son of a bitch. He would butcher up people and leave them all over the highway, and sometimes on people's front porches. But then he stopped, but people kept on disappearing. Bastard was never caught.

TOM

This one knows what he's doing. We may very well be facing the butcher.

JOEY

What was the body count before they stopped bothering?

TOM

Twenty or so?

JOEY

Yeah, he targeted everyone. My mom wanted to move out of state because of it.

TOM

Do you see that?

JOEY

See what?

Tom reaches into the dead hanging man's pocket and retrieves a revolver.

He checks it.

TOM

One bullet...

(beat)

Want it just in case?

JOEY

Yeah

Joey takes it and wipes some blood on his pants. He slides it behind his back into his jeans.

JOEY (CONT'D)

Close the locker before I puke.

Tom slams it shut.

Joey walks to the back of the cabin, revealing an ANTIQUE BOX.

He opens it, revealing a MEAT CLEAVER.

JOEY (CONT'D)

Meat cleaver...

Tom finds sees an antique drawer to the left.

He slowly opens it a smidge.

He gets down and peers inside, making sure there are no traps.

Tom opens it.

He finds a map.

TOM
Over here!

Joey walks over, closing the antique box.

Tom spreads the map on a cabinet.

TOM (CONT'D)
The road ends at this X... I don't
know what it stands for.

JOEY
Only one way to find out.

Tom snatches up the map. The two storm out of the cabin,
eager for vengeance.

EXT. DIRT PATH - NIGHT

Tom strides fast.

JOEY
From this point on, I'm a hundred
percent committed to kill this
mother fucker!

Joey turns around and grabs Tom.

JOEY
How committed are you?

TOM
I'm a hundred percent with you.

Joey releases Tom, and pats him on the back.

JOEY
You ok with torture?

TOM
Like what?

JOEY
Like cutting his limbs off one by
one while he watches. Feeding him
his testicles like slop. Shit like
that.

TOM

I get a little queezy when it comes to blood, but yeah, you can torture him all you want. I have no sympathy. Any assistance you need, you just ask.

JOEY

Good.

TOM

First, I want Alice back in one piece and for the rest of the night that son of a bitch's going to suffer and wish he never fucked with us.

(beat)

We can do this. Two against one.

JOEY

Fuck yeah.

EXT. DIRT PATH ENTRANCE - NIGHT

A construction SIGN read: "ROAD CLOSED."

Cars speed by on the main road.

The Hitch Hiker looks on in the shadows, with a cigarette in his mouth.

HITCH HIKER

Nothing to see, folks. Nothing at all.

He drops the cigarette, extinguishing it.

He picks up a two-way radio.

HITCH HIKER (CONT'D)

(into radio)

Entrance closed.

EXT. END OF ROAD - NIGHT

Construction signs read: "ROAD CLOSED" just like at the entrance.

A MANIAC, who dresses and looks exactly like the Hitch Hiker grabs his radio. The only difference is he has a slight stutter.

MANIAC
 (into radio)
 I closed this one, too.

INTERCUT AS NEEDED

HITCH HIKER
 What's your count?

MANIAC
 Dead or alive?

HITCH HIKER
 Alive.

MANIAC
 Minus the immune, I count three.

HITCH HIKER
 Think they found the cabin by now?

MANIAC
 I recon so.

HITCH HIKER
 Then that makes two.

MANIAC
 Brother, can we go crazy now?

HITCH HIKER
 Haven't we already?

MANIAC
 I've been holding back.

HITCH HIKER
 Go wild.

EXT. CABIN - NIGHT

Tom and Joey walks far away from the cabin.

Joey holds the map, while Tom keeps his shotgun ready.

JOEY
 What if we missed something?

TOM
 Like what?

JOEY
We only spent some couple of
minutes in that cabin.

TOM
You want to go back?

JOEY
No, but what if we can cause a
distraction?

TOM
Like what?

JOEY
I spilled some gasoline. There's
more than enough to turn that to
ash. Bastard investigates, and we
get him.

TOM
You think he'd fall for it?

JOEY
It's a gamble.

TOM
Odds in favor?

JOEY
I don't know.

TOM
Flip a coin.

JOEY
What?

TOM
Sometimes we must let fate decide.

Tom takes out a quarter.

TOM (CONT'D)
Heads in favor, tails, we carry on,
alright?

JOEY
Ok.

Tom flips a coin, catches it and slams it down on his left
forehand.

He takes a deep breath and looks.

TOM

Heads.

The two walk back to the cabin.

Joey bends down and grabs Paul's arms.

JOEY

Help me.

Tom and Joey drag Paul to the side, and hides his body by some bushes.

JOEY (CONT'D)

(softly, to Paul's lifeless
body)

I'll bring your body home, I
promise.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

Tom and Joey enter the cabin. Joey grabs the plastic red gas container and starts to sprinkle it everywhere.

They walk backwards outside, leaving a trail of gasoline.

Tom takes out his lighter, lights it.

TOM

Goodbye cabin.

Suddenly before he can toss it, the Maniac grabs him from behind, in a choke hold.

Joey wields his hatchet, unable to get a good swing. He tries to run around, but the Maniac turns, always facing Joey.

Tom's about to pass out.

MANIAC

Don't you outsiders know who y'all
dealing with?

TOM

Yeah, The Cowardly Lion.

Tom passes out. The Maniac drops him, and picks up his shotgun.

The Maniac takes aim at Joey, fires and misses. He cocks the shotgun, aims again, and makes a partial hit.

Joey is struck with a few pellets, and falls to the ground, his hatchet out of reach.

MANIAC

Looks like your a deer without
horns.

The Maniac cocks the shotgun, but before he can aim, Joey whips out the revolver and shoots the Maniac in the head.

The Maniac falls to his knees, dazed. It's a fatal shot.

Joey gets to his feet, grabs the hatchet, and gets ready to swing.

JOEY

Come die like my brother, bitch!

Joey swings his hatchet into the Maniac's neck, almost beheading him.

The Maniac falls to the ground face first, with a loud thump.

Slowly Tom gasps for air. He gets to his knees and stumbles over.

TOM

Nice.

Joey drops the hatchet and helps Tom.

JOEY

Wished I could have tortured him
more.

TOM

We got him. We won.

Tom and Joey, take deep breaths, and stares at the dead Maniac.

Joey smiles.

JOEY

So The Crimson Butcher finally goes
down.

Joey spits at the Maniac. He then grabs the hatchet and swings from the other side beheading the Maniac.

JOEY (CONT'D)
Whooh! That feels good!

TOM
A little overkill, don't you think?

JOEY
Bastard butcher deserves all he's
going to get.
(beat)
Come on, take a swing!

Tom hesitates.

JOEY (CONT'D)
This is the guy who kidnapped your
girl. Come on, just one swing.

He passes the hatchet to Tom.

Tom feels the weight of the hatchet.

JOEY (CONT'D)
Come on, knock yourself out.

Tom takes a few deep breaths and slowly holds the hatchet up
above his head.

He brings it down with dead center between the Maniac's
legs.

JOEY (CONT'D)
Great shot.

Tom tries to hand the hatchet to Joey.

TOM
Actually, I was aiming for his left
kneecap.

JOEY
Bullshit. You knew what you
wanted. Now, watch this.

Tom rips off the Maniac's head and sets it on the
ground. It's a bloody mess.

JOEY (CONT'D)
Hold his head down for me.

TOM
What?

JOEY

I'm a great kicker. Come on, just put some put a little pressure on it.

TOM

I'm already grossed out by the sight.

JOEY

Close your eyes, hold your nose, and let me kick a field goal.

Tom walks over, and gets down.

TOM

I'm only doing this because you saved my life, kid.

Joey takes a few steps back, readjusts his positioning and charges at the head. He kicks the head like a football, soaring over the woods, far away.

TOM (CONT'D)

I can see why you're a star player.

JOEY

(playing it off)

Oh, I'm not that good. Just an All-American quarterback, two years in a row.

TOM

You're a senior?

JOEY

Guilty as charged.

TOM

I remember when I was a freshman in high school, I once tried out for the team, but-

Inside the Maniac's coat, the radio flashes.

HITCH HIKER (V.O.)

Agent Orange to Stalking Eagle.

(beat)

Stalking Eagle, you copy?

Tom and Joey turn to the dead Maniac's body.

JOEY
What do we do?

Tom slides his hands, unwraps the Maniac's raincoat, and squeamishly takes out the radio.

HITCH HIKER (V.O.)
Stalking Eagle, report back.
(beat)
Stalking Eagle, you know how impatient I can get...

Tom picks up the radio, thinking about broadcasting back.

Tom coughs and clears his voice.

JOEY
(whispering)
No, don't do it.

TOM
If we don't respond, he'll know something's up.

JOEY
Damn it!

HITCH HIKER (V.O.)
Stalking Eagle, you fucking respond, you hear?

TOM
(in radio, deep voice)
Sorry, Stalking Eagle, taking a piss.

HITCH HIKER (V.O.)
What's your six?

TOM
What the hell is a six?

JOEY
He's asking what's your position.

TOM
(in radio, deep voice)
Cabin. You?

SILENCE

TOM (CONT'D)
 (in radio, deep voice)
 What's your six, Agent Orange?

HITCH HIKER (V.O.)
 (chuckling)
 I'm in good position. There's
 going to be a slaughter tonight, I
 tell you what.

TOM
 (in radio, deep voice)
 Acknowledged. I'm as excited as a
 kitten in a cage with 52 rats.

HITCH HIKER (V.O.)
 (chuckles)
 Kitten in a cage with 52
 rats. Now, that's a good one.

TOM
 (in radio, deep voice)
 So what's your six, Agent Orange?

HITCH HIKER (V.O.)
 Now why would I reveal something
 like that?

TOM
 (in radio, deep voice)
 I don't copy, please clarify.

HITCH HIKER (V.O.)
 First off, my brother's got an IQ
 of a fifth grader. He doesn't
 understand similes, metaphors or
 talk like a sharp witted military
 private.

Tom and Joey are petrified.

HITCH HIKER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 (in radio, deep voice)
 I'm guessing your Tom... Ain't
 that the truth?

Tom looks to Joey, unsure what to do.

Joey grabs the radio.

JOEY
 (in radio)

(MORE)

JOEY (CONT'D)

Listen, you son of a bitch, the cops are on their way, so you better give up.

HITCH HIKER (V.O.)

No, sir. The law is not on their way.

JOEY

(in radio)

And how do you know that?

HITCH HIKER (V.O.)

Police scanner.

JOEY

(in radio)

Fuck you, you son of a bitch!

HITCH HIKER (V.O.)

(chuckles)

You sure did a number on my brother. If we weren't related, I'd congratulate you myself.

JOEY

(in radio)

Yeah, we killed him.

HITCH HIKER (V.O.)

That was a nice kick, too. Not good enough for a pro, but not a total dud.

Joey and Tom, intimidated look around.

HITCH HIKER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Your probably wondering how I know. I got eyes. See the tree by the cabin? Take a good look up.

Tom and Joey glance up.

There is a small security camera.

JOEY

(in radio)

Fuck your camera. We're going to light your cabin on fire!

Joey grabs Tom's lighter.

HITCH HIKER (V.O.)
I wouldn't do that.

JOEY
(in radio)
Why not?

HITCH HIKER (V.O.)
Rule number one. No fires.

Joey paces over to the cabin, lighter lit.

HITCH HIKER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Light it up and Alice dies right
now.

Tom runs over.

TOM
Don't do it.

JOEY
He's bluffing.

TOM
I can't take that chance.

JOEY
That camera is watching down on
us! We burn the cabin, that tree
becomes an inferno and that
camera's gone.

HITCH HIKER (V.O.)
If you believe I'm
bluffing... Hear this...

We hear some pacing through the radio.

ALICE (V.O.)
Tom... Tom... I'm scared!

Joey hands Tom the radio.

TOM
(in radio)
Are you alright, darling?

ALICE (V.O.)
I'm hurting. Hurting real bad. He
has a knife at my throat. He's
tied me up, and I can't move.

TOM
 (in radio)
 Ok, darling. Listen, I'm going to
 make everything alright.

The phone sounds off some rustling as the Hitch Hiker
 snatches from Alice.

ALICE (V.O.)
 (barely audible and sobbing)
 No!

TOM
 Ok, we won't burn down your cabin.

HITCH HIKER (V.O.)
 Thata boy. Listen to your
 master. That cabin's got
 sentimental value. My first kill
 was in there.

TOM
 (in radio)
 What do you want?

HITCH HIKER (V.O.)
 I want you to kill your partner
 yonder. Kill him, and I'll release
 your sweat little darling.

Joey backs away from Tom.

HITCH HIKER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Kill that dumb jock, and Alice is
 all yours.

TOM
 (in radio)
 How do I know you're telling me the
 truth?

HITCH HIKER (V.O.)
 What choice do you have? I can
 slit her throat right here, right
 now, and there's nothing you can do
 about it.

Tom turns to Joey.

JOEY
 No, Tom. We stick together, and
 we'll get her back.

TOM
I don't know, man.

JOEY
Are you kidding? I risked my life
for you. My brother's dead.

Tom turns his back to the camera.

TOM
The camera. I don't think it's
wired with sound.

Tom drops the radio, and takes out his shotgun.

Tom approaches Joey, shotgun in hand.

Joey backs away, hatchet ready, on guard.

TOM (CONT'D)
Run! Run into the woods. Now!

Joey, turns around and runs into the woods.

Tom aims slightly left and shoots. He takes another shot.

Tom runs into the woods after Joey.

EXT. THICK WOODS - NIGHT

Joey, out of breath pants. He sees Tom approaching, shotgun
lowered.

Joey grabs the hatchet tight, ready for battle.

TOM
Relax, I ain't going to kill you.

JOEY
Really?

TOM
I'm not a psychopath. I'm a
lawyer.

JOEY
(grim)
Not much of a difference, there.

TOM
Cut the jokes.

JOEY

Sorry.

TOM

Here's the plan.

Tom fires two shots into the air.

TOM (CONT'D)

Now, you're dead.

Joey scans the treeline.

JOEY

How do we know there's no cameras here?

Tom follows his move.

TOM

I can't see any.

JOEY

We didn't notice that camera by the cabin either.

TOM

Let's pretend we're in the clear.

JOEY

Okay.

TOM

You stay here, and I'll tell him I blew you to pieces.

JOEY

What if he wants proof?

TOM

Then, I'll drag you over, and you play dead.

EXT. CABIN - NIGHT

Tom stumbles over, pretending he's out of breath and grabs the radio.

TOM

(in radio)

Done deal.

HITCH HIKER (V.O.)
How do I know you're telling the
truth.

TOM
(in radio)
I've done everything you asked of
me to this point! I love Alice. I
don't care about anyone but
her! Trust me. He is dead!

HITCH HIKER (V.O.)
(chuckles)
Now, your a murderer.

TOM
(in radio)
Murder is when you take away a
life. I see it as more of a
trade. A life for a life. Now
please release Alice!

HITCH HIKER (V.O.)
Drag Tommy's body into camera view.

TOM
(in radio)
You got it.

Tom drops his shotgun, and runs into the woods.

EXT. THICK WOODS - NIGHT

Joey leans against a tree, looking up into the stars.

Tom approaches.

JOEY
Well?

TOM
He wants to see your body.

Joey grips his hatchet.

JOEY
Not going to happen, buddy.

TOM
Just let me drag you to the cabin,
and you just play dead.

JOEY
For how long?

TOM
As long as it takes for him to
release Alice!

JOEY
I can't pretend to be dead all
night! It's a chilly night. What
if I shiver and he sees that I'm
alive and well?

Tom reaches into his pocket and takes out a PILL BOTTLE.

TOM
How much did you have to drink,
tonight?

JOEY
I don't know.

Tom hands Joey the pill bottle. Joey leans the hatchet
against his leg, as he examines the pill bottle. The ink is
smeared and pretty unreadable.

JOEY (CONT'D)
What are these?

TOM
Some sleeping pills.

JOEY
What's the dosage?

TOM
Twenty-five milligram each.

JOEY
Of what?

TOM
I don't know. It was my wife's and
the label is torn off.

JOEY
Ok, I'll take two, I guess.

TOM
Just don't overdose.

JOEY
Easy for you to say. I'm a little
drunk and never had these before.

TOM
Yeah?

JOEY
I don't do drugs, really. My mind
has always been on football. Sure
I drink, but who doesn't?

Joey takes two pills, and tries to swallow them down. After
a moment, he succeeds.

Joey hands the pill bottle back to Tom.

TOM
Now, hand me that hatchet.

Joey picks up the hatchet.

JOEY
I can't do that.

TOM
Please!

JOEY
Look at me! I don't appear shot at
all. And if you drag me over, and
I carry this hatchet in hand, he's
going to know I'm not dead.

TOM
That's why I want the
hatchet. Trust me. Hand it over.

JOEY
You're going to kill me. I see it
in your eyes. First you drug me,
then you kill me!

TOM
No, I'm not going to hurt you!

JOEY
Yes, you are!

Tom shows how he's unarmed.

JOEY (CONT'D)
You need this hatchet to kill
me. I ain't a dumb jock.

TOM
No, I need that hatchet to- Just
hold on, I'll show you.

Tom starts to take off his shirt.

TOM (CONT'D)
Cut me.

JOEY
What?

TOM
Cut me. Not too deep, though.

JOEY
What's that going to solve?

TOM
I'm going to smear my blood all
over you, and you'll look dead.

Joey takes the hatchet and stands up.

JOEY
How do you want me to do
this. horizontal or vertical.

TOM
I don't care. Do it diagonal!

Joey gently puts the blade to Tom's chest.

JOEY
How deep?

TOM
A few centimeters.

Joey carves the hatchet diagonally into Tom's chest, just
about a few centimeters deep..

Tom groans, but contains his pain.

TOM (CONT'D)
Now slice it down six inches. Do
it quick.

Joey quickly slashes Tom's chest.

Tom clenches his teeth.

TOM (CONT'D)
 (moaning)
 Ahhhh!

Joey lowers the hatchet, watching the blood drip down.

TOM (CONT'D)
 Ok, lie down, and let my blood drip
 all over you.

Joey slowly gets on the ground, face up.

JOEY
 Listen, you don't have AIDS or
 nothing, right?

Tom watches as his blood drips all over Joey.

JOEY (CONT'D)
 Do you have AIDS or something?

TOM
 No!

TOM (CONT'D)
 Smear some on your face.

Joey, with reservation, smears some of Tom's blood on his neck, cheeks and forehead.

JOEY
 So you don't have any diseases I
 should know about, right?

TOM
 (sarcastic)
 I had the chicken pox once.
 (beat)
 Now I drag you to the cabin, ok?

JOEY
 Whatever.

TOM
 Play dead, ok? Don't show the
 slightest movement, or Alice dies.

JOEY
 I got it.

Tom shoves the hatchet, handle first, down his pants.

He takes a deep breath. He drags Joey by the armpits with both of his arms, keeping Joey's head up away from the ground.

JOEY (CONT'D)

Should I close my eyes or keep them open?

TOM

I don't know, close them.

(beat)

I doubt that camera's got that much resolution anyway to tell the difference, anyway. And soon the pills will kick in and you'll fall asleep.

JOEY

You owe me, man.

TOM

Tell you what, we get out of this alive in one piece, I'll give you a full ride. Any university you want.

JOEY

You know, I'd shake on that if I weren't being dragged like a dead man.

(beat)

You'll come back for me, right?

TOM

Of course!

JOEY

Just making sure.

TOM

We're close. Now, no more talking.

JOEY

Okay.

EXT. CABIN - NIGHT

Tom drags Joey near the cabin.

He removes the hatchet from his pants and tosses it to the ground by the cabin.

HITCH HIKER (V.O.)
 Good job, you're a predator after
 all.

Tom snatches up the radio.

TOM
 (in radio)
 Now where's Alice?

HITCH HIKER (V.O.)
 Follow the yellow brick road.

Tom grabs his shotgun from the ground.

HITCH HIKER (V.O.)
 You don't need that. Come unarmed.

TOM
 (in radio)
 How do I know I can trust you?

HITCH HIKER (V.O.)
 You trusted me enough to kill your
 friend there. Now come, unarmed
 and fast.
 (beat)
 Run, boy, run!

Tom drops the shotgun and dashes down the dirt road.

EXT. DIRT PATH - NIGHT

Tom's grasps the radio tight and keeps walking, fastening
 his pace.

TOM
 (in radio)
 How much more?

HITCH HIKER (V.O.)
 You'll know it when you see it.

TOM
 (in radio)
 I'm coming unarmed. What's to say
 you don't kill me?

HITCH HIKER (V.O.)
 I like you.

TOM
 (in radio)
 And Alice?

HITCH HIKER (V.O.)
 Oh, I just adore her

TOM
 (in radio)
 Don't you hurt her.

Tom approaches a left turn.

HITCH HIKER (V.O.)
 Bear trap on the left.

As Tom strides and cuts the corner, he barely misses it. He loses his balance and falls to the dirt.

HITCH HIKER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 A promise is a promise, and I keep my word.
 (beat)
 You and Alice will be treated as guests. But break a rule-
 (chuckles)
 Let's not even think about the consequences of that. You're close, get up, Tom.

Tom, turns on his back and notices another camera on a tree.

TOM
 Uhhh.

Tom gets up and stuffs the radio in his pocket.

TOM (CONT'D)
 (to self)
 I'm going to die, aren't I?

Tom stops, and looks around.

Up ahead, the road takes a right.

TOM (CONT'D)
 Ok, I can do this.

Tom half-jogs over, and is careful, watching his steps.

The dirt path seems to turn to gravel, and after turning, he sees a large old-style house. Well maintained and with flowers leading up to the front porch.

EXT. GRAVEL ROAD - NIGHT

Tom stops in awe.

He jogs over.

Tom sees a balcony, and can't believe his eyes.

It's Alice, radiant as ever.

TOM
Alice, Alice!

ALICE
Tom!

The Hitch Hiker walks on the balcony, and ushers Alice back inside.

TOM
No, Alice! No!

Tom runs as fast as he can, closing the gap between him and the house.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Tom reaches the porch, out of breath, and unsure what to do.

He looks around. There is a pickax to the side and a rocking chair.

HITCH HIKER (V.O.)
Drop the radio, ring the bell and
don't you think about grabbing that
pickax, boy.

TOM
(to self)
Like cattle to the slaughterhouse.

HITCH HIKER (V.O.)
Hurry up Tom, we're waiting.

Tom slowly places the radio beside the door, and rings the doorbell.

Tom covers his face with both hands.

He hears the door creak open, slowly he slides his hands away to the side revealing UNCLE BOB, an old man, weak and skinny.

UNCLE BOB
 Come on in, son.
 (beat)
 Oh, and wipe your feet.

In disbelief, Tom does as ordered.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Well decorated and clean, just like a normal southern home.

Tom looks around in disbelief. His guard is down, less tense.

UNCLE BOB
 Follow me to the dining room.
 (beat)
 You hungry, boy?

TOM
 Yes, sir.

UNCLE BOB
 Good. We got turkey, gravy, corn
 and biscuits.

TOM
 You live here, sir?

UNCLE BOB
 All my adult life.

TOM
 And um-

Uncle Bob turns around, smiling with yellow teeth. He pats Tom's back.

UNCLE BOB
 All your questions will be answered
 in due time.

TOM
 Yes Mr.-

UNCLE BOB
 Call me Bob.

TOM
 Thank you, Bob.

Uncle Bob leads Tom to . . .

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

A rather nice dining table. At the far end sits the Hitch Hiker, raincoat and all.

The Hitch Hiker holds a knife, not bloody, and uses it to cut a piece of bread, and places it in his mouth, chewing, while calculating Tom.

To his left, sits Alice, unharmed and looking as fresh as ever.

Uncle Bob takes a seat closest to the entrance.

Tom immediately walks over to Alice.

TOM
Are you hurt?

ALICE
I'm ok.

TOM
I love you.

ALICE
I love you, too.

Tom and Alice kiss for a passionate few moments.

The Hitch Hiker COUGHS to interrupt the two lovers.

Slowly, the Hitch Hiker takes off his raincoat, and stuffs it to the side, revealing slacks and a crisp dress shirt.

HITCH HIKER
Changed my clothes for you, Tom.

Tom glances the Hitch Hiker over.

The Hitch Hiker is clean shaven, well groomed, but still intimidating.

TOM
I can see that.

The Hitch Hiker walks over, tall and proud.

Tom, uncomfortable, stands up and backs up, protecting Alice.

The Hitch Hiker extends his right arm for a handshake.

Tom, hesitant shakes his hand.

HITCH HIKER
I'm glad you got here in one
piece. My name is Leon, I'm
Alice's brother.

Tom and the Hitch Hiker release their handshake.

TOM
What?

Alice rubs Tom's shoulders, with happiness and good intent.

ALICE
He's my brother, Tom.

Tom turns around.

TOM
What do you mean?

ALICE
We're related. He's my big
brother.

Tom turns to Uncle Bob.

ALICE (CONT'D)
That's Uncle Bob.

Uncle Bob gives tom a nod as he wipes his hands clean on a
napkin.

TOM
Can we talk in private?

Alice looks to the Hitch Hiker who gives her a nod of
approval.

ALICE
Sure, follow me.

Alice takes Tom aside near the pantry.

ALICE (CONT'D)
I'm so glad you came.

TOM
This is your family?

ALICE
Yeah. Like we planned. We made
it.

TOM
(whispering)
I thought you were kidnapped. And
uh, your brother... He's a
psychotic murderer!

ALICE
He's family.

TOM
He's a killer!

HITCH HIKER (O.S.)
My ears are burning...

Alice grabs Tom by both hands.

ALICE
Come, let's have a civil
supper. Loosen up. Everything is
going to be ok.

Alice and Tom sits back down.

Tom gives the Hitch Hiker forced smile.

Alice takes Tom's plate and piles on turkey, mashed
potatoes, corn, bread and some peas, and puts it in front of
him.

The silverware is already set.

Tom stares at the plate.

Around him, the family begins to fill their plates and eat.

ALICE (CONT'D)
You want some sweat tea, darling?

Tom snaps out of a daze.

TOM
Yes, sweat tea would be fine.

Alice hands Tom a teacup, and pours him some tea.

Everyone starts to eat except for Tom.

Tom takes a sip of tea, confused.

Finally, he snaps out of it, and notices how hungry he is.

He grabs a fork and knife and starts to eat.

HITCH HIKER
How's the southern hospitality?

TOM
(unemotional)
The food is terrific.

HITCH HIKER
Organic. None of those pesky
chemicals and genetically altered
stuff involved.

TOM
(forced)
Mmmm.

UNCLE BOB
You know, Leon and his twin brother
James were the ones who were
persistent we keep our food
organic. I favored, cheap and
quick, but they made the right
decision.

An odd beat.

TOM
I'm sorry about your
brother... James. He died a
brutal death.

HITCH HIKER
We saw.

UNCLE BOB
Bless his soul, he's in a better
place.

A beat.

ALICE
I was disturbed you held his head
down like a measly soccer ball and
let that kid kick it over the
forest like some toy.

TOM
I'm sorry.

ALICE
Leon and Uncle Bob, they were very
hurt.

TOM
 I'm sorry.
 (beat)
 I didn't know.

UNCLE BOB
 It was a test after all. Gone with
 the old, usher in the new.

HITCH HIKER
 I loved James, but he was dull
 witted. He almost spilled the
 beans some years ago. A great guy,
 but a liability.

ALICE
 Let bygones be bygones.

UNCLE BOB
 Amen to that.

Tom remains silent.

HITCH HIKER
 What do you say brother?

TOM
 Brother?

HITCH HIKER
 Once you marry Miss Alice, we're
 brother-in-laws.
 (beat)
 I like brother for short.

TOM
 (acting excited)
 I'd like that. I was an only child
 growing up.

ALICE
 Family is the most important thing
 in the world.

INT. DINING ROOM - LATER

The table is cleared, and Alice and Tom sit alone.

TOM
 The GPS geocaching thing...

ALICE
It was a just a fib to make you
take the dirt road.

TOM
You planned this all out?

ALICE
It was Uncle Bob's idea.

TOM
But why?

ALICE
How else was I going to know how
committed you are?

TOM
But all this?

ALICE
You cheated on me, remember?

TOM
I apologized my heart out.

ALICE
We still had to make sure. We
don't let in the wrong people into
this family.

Alice grabs Tom's hands.

ALICE (CONT'D)
I know, it breaks tradition, but
let me show you something...

INT. ALICE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A well sized room, decorated with old furniture.

In the middle of the room is a lavish white wedding dress,
full of fluff, fitted neatly over a headless manikin.

Alice and Tom walk in.

Tom stands in the door way and takes a step inside.

Alice prances around the wedding dress.

ALICE
Isn't it marvelous?

Tom is silent.

ALICE (CONT'D)
I started designing it and working
on it since I was fourteen years
old.

TOM
Oh.

ALICE
My uncle taught me to sew to keep
my mind off of things. Things that
would make me all
terrified. Things that was in my
nature.

TOM
How long did it take you to finish
it?

ALICE
I worked on it for four straight
years, and then stopped when I
moved up north for college. It was
never finished until tonight. I
put the final stitch and now, it's
my masterpiece!

TOM
It's magnificent.

ALICE
Yeah, that's why I wanted to show
it to you. Couldn't wait to show
it.

Tom walks closer, examining the fabric.

TOM
It's very nice.

Alice looks Tom up and down.

ALICE
Well, you better get dressed for
the big event.

TOM
The big event?

ALICE
Our wedding, silly! We're getting
married tonight!

TOM
Where?

ALICE
Here in this house, of course!

TOM
Don't we need a minister?

ALICE
Uncle Bob is certified to marry us,
and brother Leon will bare witness!

A long silence.

ALICE (CONT'D)
What's wrong, Tom?

TOM
Nothing. It's just so sudden.

ALICE
You proposed, and now we're getting
married! I've been dreaming about
this moment for over a decade! How
it would be like to marry someone,
and have my dress all completed.
(beat)
You should get dressed.

TOM
I didn't bring any formal wear.

ALICE
I know your size. Follow me.

Alice leads Tom into a small room, furnished with only a
chair, table and bookshelf.

INT. SMALL ROOM - NIGHT

On the table lies all the requirements of a groom's tuxedo,
folded neatly and tied with ribbons.

ALICE
Well, I'd better let you get
dressed.

Alice leaves.

Tom, dumbfounded, unties the ribbons.

He walks behind him and slowly closes the door.

He spots a small window, and tries to open it, but it's
jammed.

Tom sees a small floorboard on the floor, which seems out of
place.

Tom gets down on his knees and slowly pries it off,
revealing a compartment with a small metal tin box.

Tom opens the box, filled with old newspaper clippings of
"The Crimson Butcher."

A rather large HOLE in the wall, is unnoticed by
Tom. There's an eye on the other side, bloodshot.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

The Hitch Hiker, in a tuxedo gazes at Tom through the hole
in the wall.

INT. SMALL ROOM - NIGHT

Tom turns in the direction of the sound, and sees the hole.

He looks through it, but sees nothing but a hallway.

After a few intense beats, Tom returns to the floor.

Tom scans article after article.

An old PHOTO falls out. It is Alice at fourteen with a
bloody meat cleaver swinging down on a dead man's chest.

On the back side, in stylish writing reads: "My First Kill."

TOM
(to self)
She's the butcher?

Tom hears footsteps.

He quickly shoves the newspaper clippings and photo back in the tin can, and places it back in the compartment, snapping the wooden board back in place.

KNOCK, KNOCK.

Tom walks over and opens the door slightly.

Uncle Bob stands outside, dressed in a minister's garbs, with bible in hand.

UNCLE BOB
You better get dressed. The
ceremony starts soon.

Tom nods, and shuts the door.

Tom starts to undress, and put on the new clothes. They fit perfectly.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

The porch lights turn on, and wedding music is heard.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A wedding ceremony is set up. An antique record player plays the wedding tune.

Uncle Bob stands in the center, and before him stands Tom, alone and nervous.

Then Alice and the Hitch Hiker walk down the aisle, into the room, and the Hitch Hiker lets Alice walks over beside Tom.

The Hitch Hiker takes a seat in the center of the room, joyful.

Uncle Bob smiles.

He hands Tom Alice's wedding band.

Alice turns to Tom. Her eyes are hard to see because of the white shawl.

ALICE
Ready?

Tom nods bleakly.

UNCLE BOB
Let's begin.

The record player finishes the song, and spins with static.

UNCLE BOB (CONT'D)
It is with great happiness that we
are here to witness the holy
matrimony of these two lovers,
Alice Peters and Tom Hamilton.

Alice turns to Tom and smiles.

Tom smiles back, almost forced. Sweat drips down his forehead.

UNCLE BOB (CONT'D)
Now, do you Tom take Alice to be
your bride, for better or for
worse, so death shall you part?

TOM
I do.

UNCLE BOB
Do you Alice take thee Tom as your
husband, for better or for worse,
so death shall you part?

ALICE
I do.

UNCLE BOB
You may exchange rings and kiss the
bride.

Alice and Tom exchange rings.

Tom lifts up Alice's white shawl and they kiss. Alice is into the moment eyes closed, the happiest day of her life, but Tom is rigid, he opens his eyes and glances at Alice in fear.

POP!

Alice and Tom turn to the Hitch Hiker who has opened up a bottle of champagne.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Tom, Alice, the Hitch Hiker and Uncle Bob sit, sipping wine and eating cake.

Alice stands up and takes Tom's hand.

ALICE
Time for our honeymoon
retreat! Goodnight, Uncle
Bob. Goodnight Leon.

UNCLE BOB
(winks at Tom)
Go easy on her, Tom.

Tom eyes a small knife by Uncle Bob. He walks over, discreetly grabs it and shoves it up his sleeve.

TOM
Thank you, Uncle Bob.

The Hitch Hiker stands up, and gives Tom and Alice a gracious nod of approval.

HITCH HIKER
Enjoy yourself, sis.

INT. ALICE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Alice pushes Tom on the bed, and begins to unbutton his shirt.

Tom stalls.

ALICE
What's the matter?

Tom snaps out of it, and starts to take off Alice's dress.

Tom and Alice begin kissing, and fondles around, pretty rough.

Tom looks around, while Alice kisses his bare chest.

Tom turns and gets on top of Alice.

ALICE (CONT'D)
I didn't know you liked it this
ruff.

SILENCE.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Tom... Are you alright?

A long beat.

TOM
Are you the Crimson Butcher?

Alice nods.

ALICE
When my folks died, I turned to
violence to cope.

TOM
How did you get way with it?

ALICE
My brothers started killing after I
was being spied upon. That way,
the authorities would have to rule
me out, and they did.

Tom and Alice kiss passionately.

Tom breaks away.

TOM
Really, how many have you killed?

ALICE
Does it matter? I've found myself
now. I don't need violence
anymore, I have you. Does that
make sense?

TOM
I guess.

Tom covers Alice's mouth with his left hand, and with his
right, he whips out the knife and begins stabbing her, but
her dress is too thick to do much damage.

Alice bites Tom's left hand.

ALICE
Help!

With both hands Tom begins to strangle Alice.

ALICE (CONT'D)
I love you, Tom...

Alice struggles to survive.

Loud FOOTSTEPS emerge from outside.

The Hitch Hiker kicks in the door and grabs Tom away from Alice. He throws him to a far wall, and hands her a small revolver.

Alice takes a step closer to Tom.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Goodbye, Tom.

Alice shoots Tom in the heart three times. He falls, face first. Tom's blood expands on the floorboards, almost reaching Alice's feet.

The Hitch Hiker puts his hands around Alice.

HITCH HIKER
There's plenty of fish in the sea.

Alice tears up.

ALICE
But I wanted this one.

HITCH HIKER
There will be others.

Alice notices her blood splattered dress.

She crumbles to her knees and cries.

ALICE
These stains will never come off!

The Hitch Hiker gets down and consoles her.

DISSOLVE TO . . .

EXT. CABIN - DAY

Alice, dressed in black and the Hitch Hiker, dressed in his rain coat carry Tom's body down the dirt path.

When they approach, they toss Tom's body next to the cabin, right beside Joey.

ALICE
Gosh he stinks.

HITCH HIKER
The effects of decomposition at
work, Alice.

Alice and the Hitch Hiker enter the cabin.

Joey slowly wakes up. After a few moments, he remembers
what's happening.

Joey shakes Tom, but to no avail.

HITCH HIKER (O.S.)
You remember where the shovel is?

ALICE (O.S.)
Check the locker.

Tom gets up and grabs the shotgun.

INT. CABIN - DAY

The Hitch Hiker grabs a shovel, right next to the
locker. Alice reaches into an antique box, and takes out
the meat cleaver.

ALICE
(to meat cleaver)
It's been a while hasn't it,
friend?

EXT. CABIN - DAY

The Hitch Hiker and Alice walk outside.

Something seems amiss. Before anything can be done, Joey
ambushes them from the side, and cocks the shotgun.

JOEY
Die, you psychopaths!

Joey pumps a round into the Hitch Hiker's chest, and
another, blowing his head off.

ALICE
No!

Alice charges at Joey with her meat cleaver.

Joey uses the shotgun to fend off the initial attack.

He pushes Alice back, and cocks the shotgun, ready to shoot.

Joey aims and pulls the trigger, but he's out of shells.

Alice charges at Joey.

Joey drops the shotgun and rushes for the hatchet.

Joey, snatches the hatchet and swings it into Alice's stomach as she slashes him in the right shoulder with the meat cleaver, getting stuck.

Alice falls face first, in agony.

JOEY

That's my fucking throwing arm,
bitch!

Joey, with his left hand, pulls out the meat cleaver, and tosses it to his right. Before Alice can get up, Joey swings it down straight into the back of Alice's neck.

Alice twitches, and with a last breath, dies.

INT. UNCLE BOB'S ROOM - DAY

Uncle Bob sits staring at a small monitor in black and white. He stands up in disbelief, and suddenly his left arm stiffens.

UNCLE BOB

Ah...

Uncle Bob falls to his knees, and slowly dies from a stroke.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Joey walks through the woods, not following any road, approaching civilization.

CUT TO BLACK

ROLL CREDITS

FADE IN:

EXT. MAIN ROAD - DAY

A truck approaches. It slows down and paces as Joey movies.

Joey turns and sees COACH BARKER, late thirties.

The truck stops, and COACH BARKER, unlocks the passenger side door.

COACH BARKER
Jesus, Joey, get in!

Joey climbs in, and fastens his seat belt.

COACH BARKER
What happened?

JOEY
Some psychopaths tried to kill me.

SILENCE.

INT. TRUCK - DAY

Coach Carter notices Joey is bleeding from his right shoulder.

COACH BARKER
What happened there?

JOEY
Got stabbed by a psycho bitch.

COACH BARKER
Ok, I'll drive you to a hospital.
(beat)
Can you still throw for next week's game?

JOEY
I don't think so.

Coach Barker, hands clenched into fists, hits the dashboard.

COACH BARKER
God damn it! We need you!

A beat.

JOEY
You know how our kicker kind of sucks?

COACH BARKER

Yeah?

JOEY

I kicked a human head over two hundred yards last night.

COACH BARKER

Uh, so?

JOEY

I can kick, coach.

COACH BARKER

Well, kicking a football and a human head are two separate things.

TOM

Coach, give me a chance!

COACH BARKER

Ok, Joey, we'll give you a try out.

Joey slumps back in his seat, and looks through the passenger side window as the truck roars back to life, makes a U-turn and cruises on back towards town.

FADE TO BLACK