

Skeletons

BLACK SCREEN

DAVID (V.O.)
So... what have you got so far?

MISSY (V.O.)
Well, nothing really. I just got started.

DAVID (V.O.)
Let me hear.

MISSY (V.O.)
David, there's nothing --

DAVID (V.O.)
Come on... just read me what you've got.

MISSY (V.O.)
OK... "Once upon a time, there was a brave hunter, who lived with his wife in a little house in a big, dark forest."

Pause.

DAVID (V.O.)
(continuing)
That's... good!

MISSY (V.O.)
I told you I didn't have --

DAVID (V.O.)
I like the hunter part... is there more?

MISSY (V.O.)
That's all. I just got started!

DAVID (V.O.)
Well, that's... that's a good start!

MISSY (V.O.)
Shut up!

DAVID (V.O.)
No, really! You have to start somewhere....

FADE IN:

EXT. NEW YORK SUBWAY EXIT - MORNING

A beautiful Spring day. The world seems quiet for a moment.

Then comes the morning rush.

NO SOUND, except a quiet song -- Liz Phair's "SHANE," perhaps? The crowd of grim-faced worker bees barrel up the stairs in SLO-MO. The entirety of this scene will be in

SLO-MO. BEGIN TITLES.

DAVID HUNTER, 45, stands out in this crowd. He walks purposefully, undisturbed. Serenely devoid of emotion.

Dignified but not stuffy. He is well-dressed, tall, handsome -- attractive not because of a pretty face, but because he wears his confidence like a crown.

David walks to a SIDEWALK VENDOR, waits in line. He glances at the paper. Looks up for a moment, as if he has caught a scent. A brief look of distrust clouds his face. Then the moment is over. He takes a cellular phone out of his pocket and auto-dials a number. No answer, apparently.

It is his turn. He orders. Puts his phone down on the counter while he gets money out of his wallet. Change, coffee, napkin. The "DON'T WALK" sign is blinking. He hurries to get across before the light changes.

Halfway across, he stops. The VENDOR is calling him: he has forgotten his cell phone. A split-second of indecision. The "DON'T WALK" sign is not blinking anymore. He heads back, jogging slightly. In the corner of the screen a 20-year-old Oldsmobile is racing to make the light. His turn signal is not on.

(Liz Phair is singing, "You gotta have fear in your heart... You gotta have fear in your heart....")

INSIDE THE OLDSMOBILE, the DRIVER approaches fast. The light is changing from yellow to red. He spins the wheel. Suddenly, there is David in front of the car.

David sees the car only when it is on top of him. He has a second to look at the driver with a look of shock. David is thrown onto the hood, his legs broken, tumbling into the windshield, which is now shattered and opaque.

The car veers diagonally across the road. An anxious truck driver is already gunning across the intersection, hoping to get across so he can cut off the cab driver who cut him off two blocks ago. Neither see the Oldsmobile until they're just about across. They both slam on their brakes, but not soon enough.

David is just rolling off the driver's side of the hood when the Oldsmobile is hit. The cab hits the left back fender and the truck the left front fender. David has disappeared, but wherever he is can't be good.

The Oldsmobile spins from the impact of the truck, and is hit again in the rear by the back wheels of the truck. Glass is everywhere. The truck, miraculously, has managed not to flip.

It skids to a stop. Passers-by watch astounded as they watch a little bit of the world come crashing down.

And underneath the wheels of the truck, a twisted, well-dressed arm. Being dragged. Coming slowly to a stop. He had a nice watch. It doesn't look like it's working anymore, though.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE SOUND OF A LAWN BEING MOWED.

FADE IN:

EXT. CEMETERY - MORNING

Another beautiful Spring day. The mourners are gathered to lay David into the ground. The small crowd includes family members, neighbors and business associates, many of whom we will meet again later (JOHN, KATE, HANK, JUDY, BOB). The minister gives the last rites, his monotone drone blending into the hum of the lawn mower in the distance.

MINISTER

... ashes to ashes, dust to dust...

A row of crying women and stone-faced men. MISSY, 42, seems to be the only woman not crying. She is an attractive woman, though not the type who knows it. A lifetime of keeping in her emotions has made it difficult for her to cry. She seems to be searching for the tears inside her head, like a set of lost keys.

A soldier is playing "Taps." She looks at the coffin, the mourners all around her, the cemetery workers waiting in the background, leaning on their shovels and smoking.

BANG! She is shocked out of her reverie by the 21-gun salute.

Seven shooters, three rounds. The crowd is jolted by every shot. A woman next to Missy starts to sob. Missy just looks like she wants to run.

FEW MINUTES LATER

People are shuffling away, putting their hands on Missy's shoulder, hugging her, holding her hand. She still looks like she wants to run. The minister approaches.

MISSY

Thank you, Father. What you said, it was -- I appreciate it.

MINISTER

He was a good person. Like his wife.

MISSY

I don't know how I'm supposed to feel. Or what I should be doing. I, um...

She trails off, at a loss.

MINISTER

Everything will come in time. Just remember -- he'll always be with you. He's a part of you. You carry him around inside.

MISSY

Yes. Thank you.

MINISTER

Come talk to me, whenever you want.

And if you need to keep yourself busy, we can always use help at the church.

MISSY

Yes. Of course.

MINISTER

Take care, Missy. Call me.

MISSY

Yes.

They clasp hands. He walks away. Waiting behind him is KATE, also in her 40's, attractive but tough as nails. Missy looks enormously relieved that Kate is here, and the only one left for her to talk to.

KATE

Cigarette?

MISSY

Yes.

They light their cigarettes. Smoke for a moment in silence.

KATE

Sucks about David. Getting killed and all.

Missy looks at her, shocked. Then laughs, shaking her head in disbelief.

MISSY

Yes. It sure does... suck.

(MORE)

MISSY (CONT'D)

(exhaling)

"If you need to keep yourself busy."

KATE

Huh?

MISSY

Father Gary said if I needed to "keep myself busy," I could help out at the church.

KATE

Oh... yeah.

Kate doesn't have any idea what she's on about.

MISSY

In other words, "You don't have any kids, no job... what could you possibly have to do now that your husband's gone?"

KATE

Always on the lookout for cheap labor, the bastard.

MISSY

I mean, what about my writing?

KATE

(getting it)

Right! Your writing! That's, uh... how's that going anyway?

They look at each other for a moment. Missy lets out an exhausted little laugh.

MISSY

Well, let me tell you, Kate --

KATE

Hey -- I have a bottle of wine in the car. You wanna drink it on the way back to the house?

MISSY

Oh God, yes.

EXT. THE HUNTERS' DRIVEWAY - AN HOUR LATER

Kate's car comes to a stop among all the other cars in the driveway and on the street. The Hunters -- now just Missy -- live in the suburbs in an upper middle class house of good size.

Kate and Missy walk towards the side entrance. Missy stops, sighs. If only she didn't have to go inside.

Kate looks back.

KATE

You okay?

MISSY

Yeah. Great.

They enter the house.

INT. KITCHEN - THAT NIGHT

Missy's younger sister, JUDY, and Kate clean up the dishes and leftovers while Missy talks to her father, HANK. Hank's stern expression makes Missy seem like a drama queen by comparison.

HANK

Your sister thinks we oughta stay over.

MISSY

No, Dad. That's all right --

JUDY

Dad, Bob and I can't stay over. Tommy's got a game tomorrow.

HANK

Now wait, you said --

MISSY

It's all right. No one needs to --

JUDY

I just thought Dad might like to keep you company, then drive back in the morning. With his vision, I just don't think he should be driving all the way back to Ohio --

HANK

Damn it, my eyes are fine!

MISSY

Judy --

JUDY

We don't need to get into that again. But, Dad -- would it kill you to spend some time with your daughter?

HANK
 (under his breath)
 Depends on which daughter....

Judy has the refrigerator open and is holding up a few jars.

JUDY
 For God's sake, Miss, you think I
 can throw some of this stuff away? I
 mean, how long are you planning on
 keeping this... whatever it is?

Missy looks as if she's about to yell, but rolls her eyes
 and holds it in.

MISSY
 Judy, hon? Why don't you let me and
 Kate finish that? You have a long
 drive ahead of you.
 (to Hank)
 You too, Dad. Why don't you go with
 Judy? I'm just going to fall asleep
 as soon as you leave.

JUDY
 I'm not just going to leave you when
 the kitchen looks like --

MISSY
 Judy, please!

Everybody shuts up for a second. Judy looks affronted, then
 realizes that this is her chance to be graciously
 condescending.

KATE
 (to Judy)
 It's okay, Judy. I have things under
 control.

Judy grabs Missy's hands and looks at her as if she were
 Mother Theresa.

JUDY
 Missy? Whatever. You. Need.
 (yelling at her husband)
 Bob? Come on! Turn off the TV! We
 have to go!

Her face transforms from shrew back to Mother Theresa. Her
 husband Bob moseys in.

JUDY (CONT'D)
 (continuing)
 Missy, when I think of that...
 horrible man who took David from
 (MORE)

JUDY (CONT'D)

you, that he ran away -- it just makes me crazy. Have they found him yet? Have you called to make sure they're putting all their men on it?

BOB

Jesus Christ, Judy...

JUDY

Well, I'm sorry! But you can't just assume that the police are going to stay focused on this. You have to stay on top of them. And if someone's not helping you, ask to speak to their superior.

MISSY

I'll call the mayor tomorrow.

JUDY

Missy, I'm serious.

BOB

(changing the subject)

David was a good man. We're all going to miss him.

MISSY

He was a good man, wasn't he. Yeah.

She knows everyone is watching her to see her reaction, but she has no idea how to react.

INT. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE - DAY

JOHN

I ask you, how could God allow a thing like this to happen?

Missy is sitting in the office of JOHN, their attorney, looking ever more weary and uncomfortable. She nods her head absently, hoping he's not actually waiting for an answer.

JOHN (CONT'D)

(continuing)

I mean, a good husband and fath-- oops. That's weird. I was about to say "husband and father." I don't know why. A cliché, I guess. Sorry.

(collect his thoughts)

But a good guy. Served his country. Always gave to charity. Great golfer. God -- I've known the guy, what? Twenty years? Did he ever tell you he was my superior officer at one point?

MISSY

Yeah. I mean, he never talks about the war, but he did tell me that.

JOHN

Why couldn't it have been the driver who died? Or that moron in the Bronx who beat his kids to death? This world... I just don't know....

MISSY

Yeah. Yeah.

(pause)

So, John, am I in good shape?

The attorney looks at her blankly.

MISSY (CONT'D)

(continuing)

Financially?

JOHN

Yes! Yes. In fact, you're in very good shape. For a while, anyway. David had a decent amount of life insurance, and a very well thought-out retirement plan, investments in mutual funds... plus, as I, you know, mentioned before, no kids.

(beat)

You might not want to stay in that big house forever, when you can live more comfortably in a smaller place, but that's up to you. You won't have to go out and get a job at McDonald's anytime soon.

MISSY

Oh. Good.

JOHN

Hey -- before the uh, you know, David mentioned that you've been writing?

MISSY

Yes. Trying. Children's books, actually. It's something I've always wanted to do.

JOHN

Well, great. Hopefully that'll be a comfort. Having something to keep you busy.

MISSY

Yes, well... we'll see, I guess.

She gets up to leave.

JOHN

Oh -- and Missy? Do me a favor. Take a look through his papers, you know, on his computer -- I just want to make sure that there's nothing I need to take care of that he hasn't told me about.

MISSY

Anything in particular you're looking for?

JOHN

Not really. David was pretty well organized. But, you know, there might be bills, or receipts, or whatever. I just don't want you to have to worry about anything. You take care of yourself, and let me handle the rest.

MISSY

Right. OK. I'll do that. Thanks, John.

He stares at her for a moment, shaking his head.

JOHN

It's just not fair....

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATE NIGHT

Missy lies on her couch, unable to sleep. She has quite a nest built up for herself, with books and dishes all around her, and looks as if she has been sleeping here (or trying to) for at least a week.

She tosses and turns to no avail. She sits up, throws off the covers and trudges off to the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUING

She has the refrigerator open and is looking through her aging casserole collection.

MISSY

Yuck.

She gets a trash bin and puts it next to the refrigerator. She starts dumping the contents out of the casserole dishes. She finds one that looks all right and settles down on the floor to eat a helping of it.

A FEW MINUTES LATER

She is washing all the casserole dishes, singing a Frank Sinatra song.

MISSY (CONT'D)

(continuing)

"In the wee small hours of the morning... that's the time I miss you most...."

A FEW MORE MINUTES LATER

Missy carries a typewriter to the table. Then she lays a pile of books and papers next to it. The books are mostly how-to writing books (How to write children's books, how to sell your story, etc.) with some classics of children's literature mixed in: Where The Wild Things Are, The Cat In The Hat, The Polar Express, fairy tales by the Brothers Grimm and Charles Perrault.

She has a stack of typed pages crisscrossed in red marker.

She takes one page and rolls it into the typewriter. It already has one line typed across the top:

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

"Once upon a time, there was a brave hunter, who lived with his wife in a little house in a big, dark forest."

She looks at it for a couple of moments. Then she types:

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

(continuing)

"Every day but Sunday, he would leave their house very early to go hunting, carrying the lunch his wife had packed him. His only weapons were a bow and arrows, and a big, sharp knife. And every day but Sunday, he would come home with an animal slung over his shoulder. Sometimes it was a deer, sometimes a hare or two, or three. Once, he even brought home a bear, which was so big he had to drag it behind him. They took what meat they needed for food, and sold the rest at market in the village."

She stops for a moment and reads what she has just read, then continues.

Pictures around the house show Missy's and David's history.

David as he was when he returned home from the war, in a wheelchair, thin as a bone. Early pictures of their courtship in the 1970's. A modest marriage, uniformed men in the congregation. The happy couple on a series of military bases.

David receiving medals.

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

(continuing)

"The wife was proud that her husband was such a good hunter. But it also scared her a little, and her fear made her curious. What was it like to kill those big animals? Did they try to bite him? Did he ever get scared out there in the woods all by himself? But he wouldn't tell her. 'You don't want to know,' he would grumble, and then he would roll over and fall sound asleep. Anyhow, the wife didn't have time to worry about her husband all day. There were meals to cook, clothes to mend, floors to sweep, pots to wash... she had to make her own soap and candles and socks and pillows... and just when she was finished all her chores, it was time to start them all over again."

She pauses, steeling herself for the next sentence.

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

(continuing)

"And then one day, the hunter left early in the morning, as always... and he never came back."

She looks at the sentence she has just written and sighs.

INT. HALLWAY - ALMOST MORNING

She is about to head into the living room. She can't bear to go back to that couch. She looks up the stairs.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUING

And there is her bed (their bed), untouched. Perfect hospital corners. Devoid of life.

She slowly crosses the carpet. Sits on the bed. Takes off her slippers. Neatly pulls down the covers. Buries her face in the pillow.

Her face crinkles, and she sobs once. That's it. The closest she's come to crying yet.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

She wakes up with a start.

MISSY
David? David?

A figure walks out the bedroom door. She follows.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUING

MISSY
David? What is it?

She is at the top of the stairs, sees David disappear around the corner downstairs. She rushes after him.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUING

She enters the dark kitchen in time to see the figure disappear into the basement, closing the door after him.

She crosses the kitchen. Opens the basement door. Looks at the dark stairs. There is no door behind her anymore -- she's on a ledge.

She gingerly tries the stairs. At the touch of her foot, they fall down into an inky void. She manages to hold onto her foothold.

MISSY
Oh god, David! Where are you? Help me!

There is a whispering voice coming from the darkness, mocking her.

VOICE
(mocking)
Help me! Help me!
(sinister)
I'll help myself....

A foot grabs her ankle, pulls....

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUING

She wakes, panting with fear.

INT. STUDY - MORNING

It is the next day, and a harried-looking Missy looks through the files in David's desk, putting papers that look they might be important in a pile to take to the attorney.

She looks at the computer, rather uncertainly. She tries a couple of buttons until it turns on. She watches expectantly.

AN HOUR OR SO LATER

She has an iced tea and is already a little more comfortable navigating her way through the files. David kept a very tidy desktop. The folder called "finances" has everything broken up into years.

There is another folder called "correspondence," and in there a folder called "personal." Missy bites her lip as she goes through the names. All people she recognizes. She opens a few letters, just to check. Very boring letters to family and old friends. "How's your family," "How's the weather" and "We're doing fine."

She sighs. If there were only something interesting, even scandalous.

Like a sullenly bored teenager, she opens the folder titled "business correspondence." She looks through the names of companies she hears David talking about all the time. Boring, boring names.

Except one.

MISSY

Toolshed?

There is a folder called "Toolshed." She tries to open it.

A window comes up, prompting her for a password. She looks surprised. She pushes "cancel."

She tries another folder. No password necessary. A list of letters. Odd. She goes back to Toolshed. The window, asking for a password. She tries to remember her PIN number, tapping at a keypad in the air. Then enters it in.

That password is incorrect. Please try again. She thinks.

She tries another one.

MISSY (CONT'D)

(continuing)

L... A... O... S?

That password is incorrect. Please try again.

She tries again.

MISSY (CONT'D)

(continuing)

How about Missy, stupid? Duh.

Password incorrect. Deleting files.

The window shows the rapid progress in deleting all the files in the folder. Missy is shocked.

MISSY (CONT'D)
(continuing)
What?! Wait!

After a moment frozen in indecision, she dives under the desk and unplugs the power strip. The computer is off. She takes a moment to catch her breath.

INT. HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

Missy answers the door, taking off her gloves from washing the dishes. It's Kate with her teenage son, KEVIN, who seems unable to look Missy in the eye.

MISSY
Kate! Hi!

KATE
Hi, Miss. How are you doing?

MISSY
Oh, you know.
(shrugs, nothing to say)
Kevin! How are you? God, it's been a while since I've seen you....

KEVIN
Hi, Mrs. Hunter.
(beat)
Your grass is really long.

MISSY
(confused)
Oh. Okay....

KATE
We were just thinking that with David... not around, you could use some help around the house. And Kevin said, you know, why don't I mow her lawn.

MISSY
Kevin, that's so sweet. But you don't have to --

KEVIN
Cool. So why don't I get started?
He abruptly walks away.

MISSY
Is he... all right?

KATE

I thought college would loosen him up a bit. But he probably spoken a hundred words since he got back.

MISSY

Oh.

KATE

The question is, how are you doing?

MISSY

You already asked, Kate, and I'm fine.

KATE

Need another casserole?

MISSY

Oh, God -- please, no.

They laugh.

KATE

I, uh... someone at work gave me this number? Some social worker who runs a support group for, you know, people like you.

MISSY

People like me.

KATE

(sighs)

Widows. Younger widows. And um, what do you call them? Widowers. Which is weird, because it makes it sound like they make widows.

MISSY

Sorry, I don't do widows.

KATE

What?

MISSY

Nothing. A joke.

KATE

A lot of people don't like that word. Widow.

MISSY

(absently)

Hmm. Yeah. No. I'm a widow, all right. Yep.

She lights a cigarette with a sour expression on her face. Kate watches her with concern.

KATE
You should call.

MISSY
Yeah, that might be a good idea....

Kate gives Missy an awkward hug. After a moment of hesitation, Missy hugs her back. Kevin passes in the background, mowing the lawn.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Missy goes to make the bed. All she has to do is fold back a flap of blankets and sheets on her side of the bed, tuck it in, and the bed is made in about five seconds.

She looks at the bed and sighs. Then she gets under the covers and thrashes about until the bed is a mess. She gets out and leaves the room.

EXT. PARK BENCH - AROUND NOON

Missy is talking to RITA, a Hispanic social worker in her thirties. Rita has a bag lunch that she is eating with enthusiasm and gusto. She holds half her sandwich in front of Missy's face.

RITA
Want half? It's good. Tuna salad is my specialty.

MISSY
No, thanks. I've kind of lost my appetite.

Rita covers her mouth.

RITA
Oh, God. I'm sorry. I was chewing with my mouth open, wasn't I?

MISSY
What? No!

RITA
Yes, I was. I apologize -- my father raised me on his own. He didn't spend too much time on manners. But I'm very handy around the house.

MISSY
I just meant that I don't eat so much since... my husband....

A pause. Rita puts down her sandwich.

RITA
How long has it been?

MISSY
Two... no, three weeks.

RITA
It's hard, huh?

MISSY
I think I'm only now realizing how hard it is.

RITA
That's pretty normal, especially when your loved one dies a sudden death. You're completely unprepared.

She puts her hand on Missy's shoulder, which twists slightly, as if Missy controlled her instinct to pull away.

RITA (CONT'D)
(continuing)
It's a little early for you to go into group. You need time to stabilize. Maybe two weeks from Thursday? How does that sound to you?

MISSY
Right now, two weeks feels like a lifetime.

Rita writes on a little piece of paper.

RITA
That doesn't mean you can't call me at any time to talk. Here's my number. Whenever you need an ear....

MISSY
Okay. Thanks.

A moment of silence.

RITA
That's a... unusual ring...

Missy holds up her hand. She's wearing a gaudy man's pinky ring on her ring finger -- from a high school in Indiana. She smiles.

MISSY
It is, isn't it?
(MORE)

MISSY (CONT'D)

(beat)

There was a pawn shop near David's work. Every once in a while he would stop in there and pick something up that caught his eye. I think he just got a kick out of bargaining with the old guy who worked there. He didn't wear jewelry, so even if it was men's jewelry, he'd give it to me.

(looks at it)

I think it's kinda fun.

She smiles sadly.

RITA

I agree.

MISSY

Actually, can I try that sandwich?

RITA

(beaming)

You are going to love this.

MISSY

It just looks so good in your mouth, all chewed up like that....

They both laugh.

INT. LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Kate is sitting on the sofa, pulling a huge bottle of wine out of a grocery bag.

MISSY

Good Lord, Kate, what are you trying to do to me?

KATE

We're going to finish this, if I have to sleep over.

MISSY

It's three in the afternoon!

KATE

There's two liters!

Missy searches for a rebuttal.

MISSY

What are we going to do for dinner?
What are Joe and Kevin going to do?

KATE

They're getting out the barbecue, so they'll be perfectly happy grilling meat without having to eat any of the vegetables that I'd force on them. And as for us....

From the grocery bag she pulls out a tube of cookie dough.

MISSY

Cookies?

KATE

Fuck that. I'm not cooking. You got any spoons?

FEW HOURS LATER

The two of them are pretty tipsy. Missy is cutting wedges of cheese and putting them on crackers.

MISSY

I'm telling you. It's really the most surreal thing that could ever happen to you. Every conversation is strange and awkward.

KATE

Sounds like my house.

MISSY

The other day, these people called me from some pedestrian group in the city....

KATE

Pedestrian group?

MISSY

Yeah. They're anti-car, I guess. They asked if they could put an outline of David on the sidewalk where he got killed.

KATE

How will they know what his outline looked like?

MISSY

(giving Kate a look)

An outline representing him. To show people how dangerous cars are in the city. I said yes, not that David would have approved.

(impression of David)

"Bleeding hearts...."

KATE

How morbid. Are you going to go see it? Have you been there, where it happened?

MISSY

God, no. The police brought me his things... that he had with him. That's really... as close as I need to get.

She looks down, suddenly very sad. Kate refills her wine glass. Missy changes the subject and gets up to get something.

MISSY (CONT'D)

(continuing)

So I have a cell phone now.

KATE

I don't know how you lived without one. I use mine constantly.

MISSY (O.S.)

It's David's. I guess it's the reason he died.

Kate winces, but changes her expression by the time Missy comes back with the cell phone in hand.

MISSY (CONT'D)

I recharged the batteries, I think. What does "send" mean?

KATE

You push that after you put in the number.

MISSY

And this dial on the side? What does it -- oh, look! He's got a phone book in here!

KATE

Isn't that cool? Once you have the person highlighted that you want to call, you just push send and calls them automatically. Let me show you....

But Missy isn't paying attention. Among all the names in the phone's memory, one name stands out.

"CUNT."

KATE (CONT'D)

(continuing)

Honey? What is it?

MISSY
 There's... it says...
 (whispering)
 "cunt."

KATE
 What?!

MISSY
 It's right here! The c-word!

KATE
 Well, it's gotta be -- it's probably
 an abbreviation or something....

MISSY
 Well, I guess we're going to find
 out.

KATE
 What do you mean? Missy -- you
 can't--

Missy pushes "send." She listens as the phone RINGS.

Only now there are two sounds: the phone RINGING in her ear...

... and the MUFFLED SOUND OF A PHONE RINGING somewhere else
 in the room.

Her mind races. She looks at Kate who looks like the
 proverbial rabbit caught in the headlights.

After what seems like hours, Kate reaches into her bag and
 pulls out her cell phone, which is RINGING. She slowly puts
 the phone to her ear. Maybe it's just a coincidence.

KATE (CONT'D)
 (continuing)
 Hello?

It isn't. They are now talking to each other from across the
 room.

MISSY
 Cunt?

KATE
 I... I have no idea....

MISSY
 Kate, what's going on?

KATE
 It's probably... I don't know...
 maybe he was mad at me, because of
 the time I... that time when....

There's nothing she can say. She clamps her lips shut, hangs up the phone, looks at her feet. When she looks up her expression has changed. She has angry tears in her eyes.

KATE (CONT'D)
(continuing)
Fucking bastard.

MISSY
Kate?

KATE
Typical.
(beat)
Son of a bitch!

She is up now, pacing back and forth in a rage. Missy can only stare.

MISSY
You... you were having an affair?

KATE
That son of a bitch. Missy, I don't know what to....
(beat)
He came after me! It was all him. That doesn't excuse me, I know. I'm a terrible person. And let me tell you, he never let me forget that.
(beat)
He treated me like shit, and when I wanted out, when I had to get out... he started threatening me!

MISSY
I think you should leave, Kate.

KATE
Oh, great. Great. I mean, it makes sense. I don't blame you. He dies a saint, right? "He was a good man, Missy." "A good husband." And what does that make me, the neighborhood nympho? Just looking for another notch in my belt?

MISSY
Kate! Jesus Christ! I can't do this! What do you expect me to --

KATE
Missy, listen for a second --

MISSY
Can you just get out of here?

KATE

Fine. Fine!

Kate gathers her stuff while Missy sits down, stunned. Kate is about to walk out of the room when she turns around.

KATE (CONT'D)

(continuing)

But damn it, Missy -- you must have known. What he was like.

(pause, then calmer)

Maybe not. If you didn't, well, you should. David was not the man you thought he was.

She waits for a reaction. There is none. She walks out. In a few moments, we hear the front door SLAM.

INT. STUDY - THAT EVENING

Missy, in a drunken frenzy, rifles through the drawers of David's desk, looking for further signs of his treachery. She finds nothing out of the ordinary. Her search becomes ever more frantic. She overturns whole drawers and thrashes at the piles of paper.

She notices in the corner the box given to her by the NYPD containing David's belongings: it contains his briefcase. She crawls across the room and dumps everything from the briefcase. Nothing interesting. She finds a greeting card -- it says "To My Darling Wife." He had just bought her an anniversary card.

MISSY

(overwhelmed)

Oh... fuck me...

Her eyes alight on his appointment book. A few numbers scratched in, but no suspicious names. But she notices that on certain days there are little symbols in the corner of the page: asterisks, crosses, stars grouped in twos, threes and fours. She flips through the book. They only occur every couple of months or so.

But what does it mean? She'll never know. Having run out of steam, her shoulders sag as she limply tosses the appointment book on the pile of papers.

EXT. FRONT STEP - MORNING

Missy, grim-faced and disheveled, sits drinking her morning tea and playing with the cell phone. She scrolls through the numbers in the memory, stopping of course at "CUNT." She looks down the street at Kate's house, thinks she sees a curtain shut suddenly as if Kate has been watching her.

MISSY
 (under her breath)
 Cunt. Cunt cunt cunt cunt cunt.

She smiles to herself. That was fun. She continues to scroll down the list, looking at each name and trying to figure out who it is.

MISSY (CONT'D)
 (continuing)
 Alicia Sims, Barry Weiss, Beth? Who's Beth?

She auto-dials Beth.

BETH (V.O.)
 Technical Solutions. Can I help you?

Missy hangs up, satisfied. She continues to scroll down the list.

MISSY
 Bill... Bill Gold. Bill Kaplan,
 doctor, doctor, doctor... who's Dr.
 Jaffee? Francis. Francis?

Odd. She's never heard him talk about a Francis before.

Francis is a man's name, right? She auto-dials. A couple of rings. She is about to give up when someone with an intense, creepy whisper answers.

CREEP (V.O.)
 David?

Missy freezes. The person on the other end sounds frighteningly unstable. She opens her mouth, but can say nothing.

CREEP (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 (continuing)
 It's you, isn't it? I knew it. I
 knew you weren't dead, I knew it, I
 knew it....

Missy's eyes widen. Who is this person?

CREEP (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 (continuing)
 David, why aren't you talking? Is
 she there? Does she know you're not
 dead?

MISSY
 Who is this?!?

CREEP (V.O.)

You! What are you doing on this phone?

MISSY

What is this all about?

CREEP (V.O.)

You fucking bitch! What have you done with him?

MISSY

(angry)

Listen to me --

CREEP

No, you listen to me, whore! You tell me where David is right now. What have you done with him, or I swear to God I'll rip your --

Missy hangs up the phone and reflexively throws it away from her.

Seconds later, from its nest in a small clump of grass clippings, the phone RINGS.

She doesn't want to, but she retrieves the phone, brushes off some of the clippings, and answers, holding the phone cautiously against her ear.

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

(still in a harsh
whisper)

Sorry, sorry. Just tell me. Where is he, really? What does he want me to do?

MISSY

He's dead.

She doesn't answer. Who the hell is this guy?

CREEP (V.O.)

LIAR! FUCK YOU! FUCK YOU, YOU GOD DAMN WHORE! I'LL --

She hangs up, gasping. The phone RINGS again. She tries her best to turn off the phone, and finally just rips off the battery and throws it to the ground.

Just then, she notices a car passing her house, slowing down.

A man in sunglasses, who appears to be talking on a cell phone, looks directly at her. She quickly runs into the house as the car speeds away.

INT. PARK BENCH - AFTERNOON

Missy is in the park with John, the attorney. He's holding her cell phone. She looks frightened.

MISSY

You should have heard him... or her.

You couldn't even tell -- he... it was speaking in this horrible whisper. I mean, until he started screaming at me.

JOHN

I'll have someone check this out.

It's probably nothing. Some unstable kook we used to serve with, or a guy that was fired from the mail room at the firm.

MISSY

But why would he have his number on speed dial?

John just shrugs.

MISSY (CONT'D)

(continuing)

How well did you know David?

JOHN

Playing golf with him and doing his taxes?

MISSY

You fought together...

JOHN

I knew David well enough to know that I would never really get to know him.

This doesn't comfort Missy.

JOHN (CONT'D)

(continuing)

But look -- no one knew him better than you did. Probably not even himself.

INT. CLOSET - DAY

DARKNESS. Then a door opens, and there is Missy, who seems to be wandering through the house like she's the ghost instead of David. She turns on the light.

David's suits hang neatly in a row. She runs her fingers along them. She looks at herself in the mirror. She looks exhausted.

A FLASHBACK OF DAVID looking at himself in the same mirror.

He is immaculately dressed. He adjusts his cuff links. This memory is interrupted by...

BACK TO SCENE

A DOORBELL. Missy snaps out of it.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Missy answers the door. It's Kevin, holding a pineapple upside-down cake.

KEVIN

Hey. I have a pineapple upside-down cake.

MISSY

Wow. Look at that.

KEVIN

It's, uh... it's from Mom, actually.

MISSY

I kinda figured.

They stand there for a moment.

MISSY (CONT'D)

(continuing)

Why don't you come in for a minute.
I need you to help me with something.

INT. BEDROOM - HALF AN HOUR LATER

Missy is sitting on the bed eating a piece of cake. A muffled voice comes out of the closet.

KEVIN (O.S.)

It doesn't fit.

MISSY

Let me see.

KEVIN (O.S.)

I look like a clown.

MISSY

Would you get out here?

He comes out of the closet, wearing one of David's suits. It is big for him, but not ridiculously so.

MISSY (CONT'D)

(continuing)

Not bad! I give you about six months,
at the rate you're growing. And you
can always get it altered.

KEVIN

I don't wear suits all that much.

MISSY

You will. The ladies love a sharp
dressed man.

KEVIN

Thanks Mrs. Hunter, but I wouldn't
feel right --

MISSY

You'd be doing me a favor.

He thinks about it for a second. He looks at himself in the
mirror, then swirls around striking a silly, swanky pose.
She laughs. He hams it up, acting like a suave guy, reaching
into the inside pocket as if to pull out cigarettes or a
billfold.

He pulls out a box of matches.

MISSY (CONT'D)

(continuing)

You dork.

KEVIN

Light your cigarette, madam?

He lights a match with a flourish. The box catches her eye.

MISSY

Can I see that?

He hands it to her. It's from an Irish bar called Houlihan's.

KEVIN

Is everything OK?

MISSY

Yeah. It's weird... when you lose
someone, little things can suddenly
seem really important....

(snaps out of it)

Just... you know... maybe he used to
go to this bar. Maybe it was his
favorite. I don't know.

Kevin nods, arms akimbo. Looking temporarily adult in his
oversized suit.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER - EVENING

Missy is speaking at her first group therapy meeting.

MISSY

I feel like I'm losing my grip on reality.

Everyone looks at her politely. The group is comprised of about ten people, the majority of them under 40 -- men and women who never expected to lose their spouses at such an early age. They're sitting in a circle.

When it becomes clear that Missy isn't going to continue, Rita speaks up.

RITA

Maybe you have to. You're in a whole new reality now.

MISSY

I'm not sure that I knew what was real even before this happened. I feel like I was living in a fantasy world before. Like I just pretended things were normal because it was easier that way.

People in the group nod. They know that feeling.

RITA

Everything's different now. Your life is changed. But that doesn't mean your old life was less real.

Missy shakes her head no.

MISSY

I didn't know him. There was so much we didn't talk about. His war experiences, his childhood... so many bad things happened to him that he didn't want to relive. So we said, that's all in the past. We don't talk about that anymore. And now...

(changes gears)

I think he was abused as a child. He doesn't talk to anyone in his family anymore. He was also a prisoner of war in Vietnam. So many scars.

(sighs)

I just... didn't know him.

GINA

Did you... find something?

GINA is slightly overweight, in her late twenties. Even in her grief she seems like someone more accustomed to smiling than frowning. Missy looks at her, not understanding.

GINA (CONT'D)
(continuing)
Dirty magazines? A phone number?

An Asian woman, MICHELLE, puts her hand on Missy's.

MICHELLE
We were just talking about this last week. How you find things. Little secrets.

JEFF
Or big ones.

GINA
I'm just glad the videos I found were of women. Not men, or... worse....

Missy looks around at the group, who are waiting to see what she has to say. She doesn't want to share, but she knows it's expected of her.

MISSY
There were... things. I didn't know everything. I feel like I didn't know anything.

RITA
It's important to remember that when someone dies suddenly, they're at their most vulnerable. Everyone has a way they want to be perceived. If we knew when we were going to die, we'd all be saints the day before.

JEFF
Speak for yourself, lady. I'd be boozin' and whorin' until the bitter end.

The group laughs, happy for the moment of levity.

RITA
But it's not wrong to be angry at him, either. If he were alive, and he'd had an affair, or even just left you alone for a long time, you'd be angry, right?

Missy nods, unconvinced.

RITA (CONT'D)

(continuing)

So let yourself be angry. Throw a dish or two. Who cares? You're the one that has to live through this.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Missy is drinking tea and reading the paper. She peers over the top of the paper -- the basement door.

MISSY (V.O.)

"For days, the wife asked everyone in the village if they had seen her husband. But it was no use. No one was of any help."

WHISPERS from her nightmare: HER HUSBAND'S VOICE, mocking.
"Help me, help me...."

She gets a shiver, and hides behind the paper again.

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

(continuing)

"She knew what she had to do. Even though it scared her half to death to even think about it, she was going to have to walk into the big, dark forest and look for her husband."

Suddenly, she slams the paper down and stomps across the kitchen to the door. She starts to lose heart for a moment, then throws open the door.

The stairs are still there.

INT. BASEMENT - CONTINUING

The light turns on and Missy creeps down the stairs, as if expecting to get attacked at any moment. When she sees the basement looking utterly normal -- stacked boxes, a dartboard, David's work area with its neatly arranged tools along one wall, she breathes deeply and collects herself. It was just a nightmare. This is just a basement.

She walks over to the work area, starts idly opening drawers.

Nothing out of the ordinary. Tools, nails, power cords. She hums to herself.

She finds an interesting-looking glass bottle with a rag folded neatly next to it. She picks it up. Uncorks it. Takes a whiff.

FADE TO BLACK

The sound of a DOORBELL RINGING.

INT. BASEMENT - LATER

FADE IN. A shadowy figure towering over her.

FADE TO BLACK again.

FADE IN. Missy is on the floor, her face in a puddle. She comes to. What's going on? What's that sound?

She lifts her head. Simultaneously winces at the smell around her and feels her face, noticing that she is bleeding from the shards of glass she fell upon.

The doorbell RINGS again.

She struggles to her feet, gagging. The CAMERA, still at the level of her face, catches just her feet as they stumble up the basement stairs.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - CONTINUING

Kevin is standing there, looking shocked. When we see what he is looking at, we know why. Missy looks awful. There is still glass in her face, her hair is sticking up from lying in the puddle, and she looks as if she could throw up at any time.

Kevin wrinkles his nose.

KEVIN

Mrs. Hunter? What's that smell?

MISSY

(sighing)

I don't know, Kevin.

INT. KITCHEN - MINUTES LATER

Kevin and Missy are sitting on chairs facing each other. He is gently pulling tiny shards of glass out of her face and dabbing at the cuts with an alcohol-soaked cotton ball.

MISSY

It just seemed so strange -- an unlabeled glass bottle -- it was so out of place in a workshop where everything is so, you know, practical and sturdy.

KEVIN

It's generally not a good idea to sniff unidentified liquids. Particularly in a workshop where everything is more or less toxic.

MISSY

Do you suppose they were some sort of knockout drops or something?

KEVIN

My chemistry professor told us a story about a time when he was mixing chemicals. He was in a hurry but he wanted to make sure he'd got the formula right. The end product had a very distinct smell, so he took a little whiff directly from the beaker. Half an hour later he was seeing beasts slithering around in his peripheral vision. In the parking lot he saw a woman get pulled into a car, where she was torn limb from limb by some maniac.

MISSY

Oh my god!

KEVIN

Of course, he was just hallucinating. But talk about a bad trip. His wife had to come pick him up. He was tripping for like two days. When his wife called into work the next day, the first thing his co-workers asked was, "He didn't sniff one of the compounds he was working on, did he?"

MISSY

Sounds like I got off easy.

KEVIN

It was probably just some kind of solvent. Chloroform? The stuff they used to use to knock people out for surgery and stuff? That's used as a solvent. There are thousands of chemicals that would knock you out.

She stares at him, marvelling. How can this kid know so much?

Their faces are very close.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

(continuing)

This one's so tiny....

MISSY

You lick your lips a lot.

He pulls back a little, embarrassed.

KEVIN

Oh. Yeah. I guess... they're dry or something.

MISSY

They don't look dry....

She puts her hand up to his face, in an awkward tender moment. He looks ready to panic for a moment, then eagerly puts his hands up to her face, about to pull her in for a kiss. She YELPS in pain.

MISSY (CONT'D)

(continuing)

Ow!

KEVIN

Sorry! Sorry!

MISSY

No, it's just, you know. Found another piece of glass.

KEVIN

Yeah. Right. Let me get that.

He gets back to work with a pair of tweezers, as they both try to pretend nothing just happened.

INT. KITCHEN - ANOTHER DAY

Missy is making some sort of batter. She cracks a couple of eggs and puts them into the bowl. Without looking, she opens a drawer to get out a whisk. She realizes that something's wrong. The drawer is full of socks.

She looks around, confused. None of the cabinets or drawers look quite familiar, or even normal. Some cabinets are too thin. The drawers seem to be randomly placed. She searches through them. Nothing makes any sense. The kitchen seems to change behind her back -- wasn't there just a drawer there?

Isn't that pan too big? Where the hell is her whisk?

In the corner she sees a lazy susan. She looks at it as if she can't remember whether it is supposed to be there. She rotates it open, but it sticks halfway. Reaching in, past cans of baking soda, Jell-O (does Jell-O come in cans?), spray paint; she sees it: the whisk. She strains to reach it.

A hand grasps her wrists and pulls her in. She is face to face with a furious David.

DAVID

And what the hell do you think you're doing?!

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Missy wakes with a start. She's fallen asleep at the kitchen table, next to her typewriter. A cigarette smolders in an ashtray.

David's cell phone is RINGING. She looks at it -- it's Francis. She doesn't answer.

It stops.

Then STARTS again.

Tentatively, she answers it.

MISSY

Hello?

CREEP (V.O.)

"One night, the wife woke up and found a note waiting for her on the kitchen table. It was from her husband! He must have been in the house!"

Missy gasps. She looks at the typewriter. Everything he's saying is typed on the page!

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

(continuing)

"She read the note. 'Dear wife,' it said. 'You are a BUSYBODY and a WHORE. If you don't stop sticking your nose where it doesn't belong, I will cut it OFF with my HUNTING KNIFE.'"

In a frenzy, Missy runs around the first floor checking windows and doors... everything seems to be locked....

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

(continuing)

"And if anyone from the VILLAGE sticks his THING where it doesn't belong, I will cut you both into pieces and feed you to the wolves. Love, your husband. The hunter."

The phone goes dead. Missy is on the kitchen floor, trying to look in every direction at the same time like a panicked animal.

INT. FRONT STEP - AN HOUR LATER

Missy sits with John. She has a whiskey on the rocks; he, a coffee. He's reading the typewritten paper.

JOHN

I can tell you one thing -- it's not going to make a good children's book.

MISSY

The doors were locked, I checked all the windows -- no one broke in....

JOHN

And no one has the keys?

MISSY

No one. That I know of, anyway.

JOHN

And you're sure you weren't dreaming?

Missy grabs the paper and rattles it in front of his face.

JOHN (CONT'D)

(continuing)

Well, I was just thinking that maybe this is something like sleepwalking.

Maybe you were in a semiconscious state, some kind of trance, and you typed the words yourself while you "heard" someone reading them to you.

MISSY

(annoyed)

I was wide awake. And I'm not that good a typist.

JOHN

Okay. It's just that... well, there's no sign of forced entry, and then there's the phone....

MISSY

What about the phone?

JOHN

I checked out that number. It's unassigned.

MISSY

You mean unlisted?

JOHN

I mean, no one has that number.

Missy doesn't know what to say. She looks away.

JOHN (CONT'D)

(continuing)

I'm just trying to figure this out.

MISSY

And there was the guy in the car --
I've seen him driving slowly past my
house at least four times....

JOHN

Look. If there is someone stalking
you, you're going to have to be more
careful. But I don't think you should
panic, either.

MISSY

Who would do something like this?

JOHN

(guessing)

There are a lot of weird vets out
there. David was like a father to a
lot of the men who served underneath
him. Maybe some of them are still
going to try and come to him if
they're feeling unstable, if they
want to talk to someone who will
understand.

He puts his arm over her shoulder.

JOHN (CONT'D)

(continuing)

Just, you know... if someone calls,
tell them what happened, and that
you can't really talk because you
need time. Whatever this is about,
this guy probably isn't dangerous.
But if he keeps calling after you've
asked him to stop, call the police.
Just don't count on them to save
you.

MISSY

This guy... kept saying that David
is still alive.

John shrugs his shoulders.

JOHN

Denial's a powerful thing.

He looks at her. She looks unconvinced, which worries him.

JOHN (CONT'D)

(continuing)

Do you think he's still alive?

She looks at him for a moment.

MISSY
Of course not.

JOHN
I'm going to keep this phone. Maybe have someone look at it. You should get a new one. And I would feel a lot better if you got a security system put in.

MISSY
I have one. I just didn't arm it.

JOHN
Well, next time, do.

He sips his coffee.

JOHN (CONT'D)
(continuing)
You want me to stay for a while longer?

MISSY
Would you mind?

JOHN
Of course not. Let me call my wife.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER - EVENING

RITA
Let's start with Missy.

Missy, in the middle of a daydream, rouses at the mention of her name.

MISSY
I'm sorry. I was...

RITA
Not paying attention, young lady?
You'll have plenty of time to daydream in detention.

Laughter from the group.

RITA (CONT'D)
(continuing)
No -- I was just saying that I would like us, for this session, to concentrate on positive feelings. I thought maybe you could share a good memory of your life with David.

MISSY
Oh. Hmm. Let's see.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

A MUFFLED YELL from somewhere in the house. Missy is jolted awake. She listens, looking panicked.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER - BACK TO SCENE

MISSY

There was one night -- I guess it was about three years ago. I woke up in the middle of the night because I heard someone cry out. At first, I thought it might have been a dream.

But then I noticed David wasn't in bed.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Missy looks around in the dark.

MISSY

David?

Some MUFFLED BANGING SOUNDS.

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

David used to have trouble sleeping.

I usually fell asleep with the light on, and him reading next to me. But if he couldn't sleep at all, he used to go down to his workshop in the basement.

Missy gets up, putting a robe around herself. Listening.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Missy cautiously inches towards the kitchen, which is already lit up. There is a louder sound of SOMEONE RUNNING UP THE BASEMENT STAIRS. She breathes heavily.

MISSY (V.O.)

I heard him -- or at least I hoped it was him -- running up the basement stairs just as I got to the kitchen. He had cut himself on something --

The basement door slams open and David storms past Missy without looking at her, heading for the kitchen sink. There's blood all over him.

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

(continuing)

-- and there was blood everywhere. I was really scared, especially because he was -- I'd never seen him like that before. He was panicking.

RITA (V.O.)
This is your happy story?

Missy looks at him, then at the door. David is washing himself.

DAVID
(yelling)
You think you could get me a fucking bandage?

Missy runs to a pantry and grabs some bandages. He keeps his back turned. She tries to turn him to see where he is hurt, but he reacts violently.

MISSY
David, here. Let me see.

DAVID
Get off. GET OFF!

He jerks violently out of her grasp. She stumbles backwards, scared and hurt. He wraps one of his fingers up. Then freezes. She is crying. He turns slowly, looking beaten and apologetic.

DAVID (CONT'D)
(continuing)
Honey, I'm sorry...

MISSY
(crying angrily)
You didn't have to yell at me! I was Just --

DAVID
I know, I know. I was just scared...

He embraces her.

MISSY
I was too! I still am! There's so much blood -- I think you should go to a hospital!

DAVID
Shhh. I'm okay. Really. It was just a scare.

He starts kissing her neck. She is flustered.

MISSY
But your finger....

DAVID
Is fine. Now how about you help me wash this off and we go to bed.

He kisses her passionately.

MISSY (V.O.)

It was like -- well, you know how married couples get. Everything gets so comfortable and routine. But after this really scary moment, after the fear and anger and yelling and making up, all in the space of a minute or two, there was so much adrenaline... it was like we were teenagers again.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER - BACK TO SCENE

The group is watching Missy with rapt attention.

MISSY

Washing the blood off him in the shower... God, it sounds sick but it was really... well....

GINA (O.S.)

Come on, Missy. Say it!

Everyone laughs.

MISSY

Let's just say I didn't get much sleep after that.

Everybody says "woo" like they're in junior high or on Jerry Springer. Missy blushes.

GINA

That's all we get? Come on! I'm a lonely woman, Missy! I need details!

They laugh. Rita has a quizzical look on her face.

RITA

What was he doing in the basement, anyway?

MISSY

He was making a birdhouse. Because he couldn't sleep. Isn't that the stupidest thing you've ever heard?

EXT. OUTSIDE THE COMMUNITY CENTER - NIGHT

Missy stands outside smoking as the members of the group bid each other goodbye. She watches Michelle, who walks off on her own without talking to any of the others. Rita walks up to Missy.

RITA

Got one for your spiritual advisor?

MISSY

Hmm? Oh, yes. Of course.

She gives Rita a smoke and they take a couple of puffs in silence.

MISSY (CONT'D)

(continuing)

So, what's the deal with, um, the Asian woman?

RITA

Michelle.

MISSY

Yeah. She never talks. About herself, anyway.

RITA

Well, she hasn't really come to terms with her husband being gone.

MISSY

Have any of us?

RITA

It's different with her. She doesn't know for sure he's dead. He just disappeared.

MISSY

My God....

RITA

He was last seen talking to a guy in a parking lot outside a bar -- but beyond that no one really knows anything.

MISSY

That's terrible!

RITA

It's especially hard not knowing anything.

MISSY

Could he have -- I mean, he might have run off, right?

RITA

Could have. But not likely. He didn't take anything. No clothes, no money... his car was still in the parking lot. Chances are, unfortunately, that he's dead.

(MORE)

RITA (CONT'D)

They just haven't found the body.
And they may never find it. There
are people all over who lose family
members and never find out what
happened to them.

It's more common than you might think.

MISSY

That's horrible.

RITA

Yes it is. If I were her, I'm not
sure I'd have anything to say either.
She wants to move on -- he's been
gone since January -- but what if
he's still alive? How can she give
up on him if he's somewhere praying
to be saved? So she calls the police
twice a week, puts up flyers at the
supermarket and the library... what
else can she do?

Missy watches Michelle turn the corner and disappear. There
are no words. She shivers and takes a last drag of her
cigarette.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Somewhere a lawn mower DRONES. Missy has just done a load of
laundry and is bringing it up to the bedroom to put it away.

She puts away shirts, jeans... when she gets to her sock
drawer she pauses for a moment, reflectively.

She crosses to David's dresser and opens up his sock drawer.

Everything is very neat and tidy. She moves some of the socks
and underwear, looking for anything interesting. But there's
nothing there. It's too neat to hide anything under the socks.
She laughs at herself.

For the hell of it, she opens up one of the other drawers.

Sweaters, densely packed. She looks underneath. Pay dirt. A
stack of skin mags.

MISSY (V.O.)

"Now, the hunter's wife had lived in
their cozy house for so long, cooking
and knitting and making arrows for
her husband's bow, that she knew
very little of the strange world
outside their house. And what she
used to know, she had forgotten."

Missy refills her wine glass. She is lying on the bed, with the magazines spread out in front of her. These aren't Playboys. These women spread their legs wide open, and some of the magazines feature men and women copulating in every possible permutation.

She seems intrigued.

The lawn mower that has been DRONING throughout the scene comes to a stop. Missy listens for a moment. She pushes all the magazines off the bed, kicks them under the bed, and hurries off downstairs.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUING

She looks out the window. Kevin is putting the lawn mower away in the shed. She knocks at the window and waves him in.

MISSY (V.O.)

"Still, scared as she was of what might lie beyond her front door, she set out to look for her husband, and bring him back home. With everything she thought she would need in one small bag, she walked along the paths that led through the deep, dark forest. And before she knew it, she was hopelessly lost."

She gets a pitcher of lemonade out of the refrigerator, and a glass. She lets him in the back door. He is wet with perspiration, wearing just shorts and sneakers.

KEVIN

(shyly)

Hi.

MISSY

Lemonade? It looks pretty hot out there.

KEVIN

I'd love some. Thanks.

She pours him a glass and he drinks it in one breath. A little dribbles out the corner of his mouth. He looks at her nervously, turning the glass around in his hands. She looks great -- jeans and white T-shirt, a sad, vulnerable look in her eyes.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

(continuing)

I, uh... my shirt is in the front yard. Sorry to be, you know....

MISSY
I wouldn't want you to feel
uncomfortable.

She bites her lip nervously, and peels off her T-shirt. Kevin stares, flabbergasted. Missy squirms, now unsure of how he's going to react.

MISSY (CONT'D)
(continuing)
I've... been kind of lonely.

He hurries to her and kisses her passionately, as he might devour a meal.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

Missy is passed out in bed. Kevin lies next to her, leafing through a book. Slowly, Missy comes to. She registers that he's in her bed and laughs shyly.

MISSY
Wow. I feel like I've been out for
days.

KEVIN
Only like an hour. You make cute
noises when you sleep.

MISSY
Oh, great.

KEVIN
Every time I moved, you said
something, like "Yeah" or "Uh-huh."

MISSY
That's just what I want to hear.

KEVIN
I liked it. It was like you were
away and you left your 3-year-old
self in charge until you came back.

MISSY
Charming.

She lets out a huge yawn and cuddles up next to him.

MISSY (CONT'D)
(continuing)
It's the wine. It always does that
to me. David used to bring home
wine sometimes and after we finished
the bottle, I'd be dead to the world
but he'd have insomnia.

(MORE)

MISSY (CONT'D)

One time he made me up like a clown
and I never came close to waking up.
(notices him reading)
Whatcha got there?

KEVIN

A charming little story.
(reading)

"At first she could make out nothing,
since the windows were shuttered.
After a short time, though, she began
to perceive that the floor was
covered in clotted blood of the dead
bodies of several women suspended
from the walls. These were all the
former wives of Blue Beard, who had
cut their throats one after the other.
She thought she would die from fright,
and the key to the room fell from
her hand."

MISSY

Charles Perrault. They don't write
children's stories like they used
to.

KEVIN

Thank God.

MISSY

(laughing)
Well, Blue Beard specifically told
her not to go into that room. It's
not his fault she couldn't obey
orders. There's a lesson to be learned
there.

KEVIN

What -- don't marry a psycho?

She shrugs. Maybe....

KEVIN (CONT'D)

(continuing)
I should probably go....

He gets up and starts getting dressed. Missy looks
disappointed.

MISSY

Is... everything all right?

KEVIN

I shouldn't be here. It's wrong.

MISSY

No. Well, yes. By most people's standards, it's pretty damn wrong.

What I mean to say is... it's what I wanted.

KEVIN

It's disrespectful.

MISSY

(amused)

Oh, come on!

KEVIN

Besides, if Mom knew about this, she'd kill me.

Missy's expression changes -- Jesus, he's still a kid!

MISSY

Fair enough....

He finishes putting on his sneakers and stands at the door.

KEVIN

I'll just go out the back door.

MISSY

(looking away)

Okay, then.

He stands at the door, sorry, not wanting to leave.

KEVIN

Mrs. Hunter?

MISSY

(not turning around)

Oh, Jesus, Kevin, don't call me that!

KEVIN

Uh, okay. You're name's Melissa, right?

She laughs and shakes her head.

MISSY

Call me Missy.

KEVIN

Can I come back tomorrow?

She looks at him.

MISSY

Better make it Thursday.

He beams. Then turns around and barrels down the stairs making the sort of RACKET that only a teenager can. She hears the back door SLAM.

She covers her head with a pillow, laughing as if she can't believe that she's gotten herself into such a mess, and can't pretend for a moment that she has any regrets.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Missy watches TV, a glass of wine in her hand. She's looking a little tipsy. She's not watching anything in particular, just flipping through the channels: an old horror movie, the John Edwards psychic show, a Bugs Bunny cartoon with Red Riding Hood and the Big Bad Wolf....

She dozes off.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Missy wakes with a start. She's in the dark. Outside. She can barely see her hand in front of her face, or the silhouettes of the trees looming all around her.

Hyperventilating, she scrambles to her feet. She tries to feel her way through the woods. Crashing into things.

Scratching herself while stumbling through brush. She stops, trying to control her breathing.

There's SOMETHING BEHIND HER, walking through the brush. Then it STOPS, too, as if waiting to hear what she's going to do.

After a tense moment, she breaks into a run. Whatever's behind her, FOLLOWS.

EXT. BACK YARD - CONTINUOUS

She finally breaks through the brush, finding herself in her own back yard. She runs to the back door, which is open...

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE-UP of typewriter as Missy, in the background, slams the door shut and locks it tight. Eventually, she approaches the typewriter and reads the words we see typed on the page:

"Grandma told you not to leave the path. Just look at yourself. What do you see?"

Her hand rips the paper from the typewriter as she walks zombie-like to the bathroom....

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

She looks at herself in the mirror, written backwards on her forehead, so it appears the right way in the mirror, is the word "WHORE," in lipstick. Also in lipstick, a line across her throat, cartoon drops of blood dripping underneath. She looks at herself in horror and disbelief.

MISSY

I've gone completely insane....

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Missy sits up in bed, shell-shocked and exhausted. The phone RINGS, and keeps ringing. Finally, when she realizes she can't ignore it any longer, she picks it up with a jerk.

MISSY

What do you want?!

WOMAN'S VOICE (V.O.)

(flustered)

I'm sorry, I must have misdialed. I was trying to call David Hunter?

Missy is taken aback. She opens her mouth and closes it, searching for something to say.

MISSY

He's... he's not here right now. Can I take a message?

WOMAN'S VOICE (V.O.)

I'm Dr. Jaffee, from the state hospital. I was just calling to see if... well, he hasn't been to visit for a while, and his brother's been asking for him....

INT. HOSPITAL OFFICE - DAY

Missy is sitting talking to DR. JAFFEE, a friendly psychiatrist a bit younger than her.

DR. JAFFEE

I'm very sorry about your loss, Mrs. Hunter. It's just -- well, usually someone lets us know.

MISSY

I never knew. He told me he hadn't seen anyone in his family since he got back from Vietnam.

DR. JAFFEE

That's probably mostly true.

(MORE)

DR. JAFFEE (CONT'D)

David was the only one who ever visited Matthew. Or even called. Did David ever talk to you about his parents?

MISSY

Not much. Just that they were... not nice people.

DR. JAFFEE

I suspect that that's a generous description. With Matthew's condition, he is prone to fantasy and hallucination, so it's hard to determine what's true in his stories. But it seems obvious that he was abused by their father.

MISSY

Yeah.

They sit quietly for a moment.

MISSY (CONT'D)

(continuing)

Which means... he... chances are David was abused, too.

Dr. Jaffee shrugs. Probably.

DR. JAFFEE

Abuse is often passed down from parent to child. Or...

She stops herself. Missy looks at her, suspicious.

MISSY

Do you think... do you think David might have been abused by his brother, as well?

The doctor shrugs again. Possible.

DR. JAFFEE

I can't say.

MISSY

God....

DR. JAFFEE

You can see why he might have hidden Matthew from you.

MISSY

Yeah.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - MINUTES LATER

Dr. Jaffee and Missy walk down a corridor crowded with patients, nurses and orderlies.

MISSY

Let me ask you -- would Matthew have access to a phone in here?

DR. JAFFEE

Not outgoing calls, no. Can you imagine?

MISSY

No cell phone?

DR. JAFFEE

No no no. Why?

MISSY

Just... you know. Getting the occasional hang-up call.

DR. JAFFEE

I hate those. They give me the creeps.

They come to the door.

DR. JAFFEE (CONT'D)

(continuing)

You don't have to do this, you know.

You could always come back later.

MISSY

No, I want to.

DR. JAFFEE

Matthew can get a little scary.
Especially if you've never met someone with schizophrenia before.

MISSY

It'll be fine. We're family, right?

Dr. Jaffee gives her a look somewhere between admiration and doubt.

DR. JAFFEE

Okay. But the door will be open.

Malcolm will be right outside -- call him if you need any help. Malcolm, this is Melissa Hunter, David's wife.

MALCOLM, A huge African-American orderly, is waiting by a door. He holds out his hand.

MALCOLM

Hi, Mrs. Hunter. Pleased to meet you.

He opens the door for them.

INT. MATTHEW'S ROOM - CONTINUING

MATTHEW sits on the bed. He is a little over 50, and looks like a child and a weathered old man at the same time. You wouldn't mistake him for a sane person.

Dr. Jaffee enters first, talking in the loud and clear voice of an elementary school teacher. Missy tries not to cower behind her.

DR. JAFFEE

Matthew, you have a visitor. This very nice lady is Melissa Hunter. She was your brother's wife, so that makes her your sister-in-law.

MISSY

Hi, Matthew. I'm very glad to meet you.

Matthew eyes her suspiciously.

MATTHEW

She was never a queen.

DR. JAFFEE

Why don't you start by saying hi, Matthew.

MATTHEW

No, no. No. First we have to establish some things. That she is not a queen, nor was ever a queen, nor a queen bee, be that as it may, a May Queen -- she is none of those things, and that being established is the establishment of our relationship. I was a king once, so these things are very, very important.

He shakes his head, as if marveling at how stupid they both are. Dr. Jaffee glares at him. He looks away, out the window.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

(continuing)

Hi.

DR. JAFFEE

A promising start. I'll leave you two alone.

Dr. Jaffee leaves. Missy pulls up a chair. She doesn't look anxious to speak, but she gives it a shot.

MISSY
It's good to finally meet you,
Matthew.

He doesn't acknowledge her.

MISSY (CONT'D)
(continuing)
You must be sad about David, huh?
Me, too. I really miss him.

MATTHEW
(without turning around)
Fuck off, whore.

She is shocked for a moment, but then her face hardens with sudden rage. She leans in and whispers to him.

MISSY
You bastard. I know what you did. I
know what you did to David, you
disgusting piece of filth. I hope
you rot in here.

He tries his hardest to ignore her, but he is visibly agitated. She pinches him hard. He yells out. She walks out the door in the hurry, past the concerned orderly who is standing in the door.

MISSY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I don't know what's happening. I'm
turning into some kind of monster.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER - EVENING

Missy is talking to the group again. They all look at her sadly, unsure of what to say.

RITA
(lamely)
Sometimes we all feel a little like
monsters....

MISSY
No. No. Bullshit. I'm not talking
about what I feel like, damn it.
Don't make apologies for me. I'm
talking about what I am. What I'm
doing. I'm now the kind of person
who hurts mental patients.

She lights up a cigarette. Rita starts to tell her not to smoke, but decides against it.

RITA

That was very childish of you, wasn't it.

MISSY

Yes.

RITA

Well, maybe it's about time you did something childish.

MISSY

You have no idea.

RITA

Jeff here was telling us a couple of weeks ago how he ripped up all the sympathy cards from the funeral the first chance he got.

JEFF

As soon as they walked out the door! But you forgot the best part. I smashed all of the homemade ceramic chotchkes his mother had been giving us for the past five years. You can't imagine how good that felt.

GINA

I can't get over that. That is so terrible!

JEFF

What? Our house looks so much better. And she's like 100 years old anyway -- I just told her that Andy loved them so much he wanted to be buried with them.

GINA

(laughing)

You're going to hell!

Rita looks at Missy with a knowing look.

RITA

You see? You do what you gotta do. Be a child once in a while, if it gets you through the night.

Missy looks around the room, unconvinced.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

It is raining outside, and the room is dark. Missy is lying on the couch with her head in Kevin's lap, staring off into the distance.

Kevin rubs her head as if he were comforting a child, glad for the chance to stare at her without making her uncomfortable.

KEVIN
Maybe you should see him again.

MISSY
I can't.

KEVIN
It wasn't his fault. He had a bad childhood.

MISSY
Well, so did David. Worse, thanks to him.

KEVIN
I don't know. Maybe it's worse to be abused and then abuse someone else -- your own brother -- before you're old enough to know what you're doing. Maybe he was just weak. Mr. Hunter was strong. He got to have a normal life, you know, do whatever he wanted while his brother was put in a mental institution.

Missy looks at him, shocked, then looks back out the window.

MISSY
Maybe you're right.

KEVIN
I don't know. Maybe I'm full of it.

MISSY
Yeah. Good point.

They laugh.

MISSY (CONT'D)
(continuing)
I guess I ought to go find out for myself.

She thinks for a moment, troubled.

MISSY (CONT'D)
(continuing)
Did he seem normal to you?

KEVIN
Who? Mister... your husband?

MISSY

Yeah.

KEVIN

I... I wouldn't... I didn't really know him.

But he looks nervous and evasive, and Missy notices it.

MISSY

What?

KEVIN

What? Nothing.

MISSY

Suddenly, you're... are you hiding something?

KEVIN

No! Swear to God! I don't know anything!

She looks at him incredulously.

MISSY

You're the worst liar I've ever seen!

KEVIN

I'm not lying!

She glowers at him, arms folded. He tries to act affronted, but soon realizes he's not fooling her.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

(continuing)

I caught them together.

MISSY

Who?

(realizing)

Oh, God. Oh, God -- oh, Kevin, I'm sorry....

KEVIN

I came home for the weekend, earlier than I was supposed to. One of my classes got canceled.

MISSY

During the day? In your house?!?

KEVIN

I think you were away. Maybe not. I didn't know what was happening. I thought she was being attacked.

(MORE)

KEVIN (CONT'D)
So I went upstairs... I saw them, in
the middle of it...

MISSY
You saw them... together... I mean...

KEVIN
In the middle of it. Yeah. I, uh,
walked in on them.

He looks away. Missy looks at him, overwhelmed. Her hair is
disheveled. She smokes a cigarette with a shaking hand. She
finally goes to hug him.

MISSY
I'm so sorry.

KEVIN
(coldly)
Nothing for you to be sorry about.

He pushes her away.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
(continuing)
I've gotta go...

MISSY
Kevin... stay for a minute....

KEVIN
I can't.

He walks out. She lets him go.

INT. MATTHEW'S ROOM - DAY

Missy is on another visit with Matthew.

MISSY
David must have really loved you,
because... you know... he kept you
all to himself.

MATTHEW
(without turning around)
This dead business... it's not true,
you know.

MISSY
Oh yeah?

MATTHEW
I mean, come on! He was chosen.
Therefore, no death.

MISSY

Chosen? Who chose him? What for?

MATTHEW

I CAN'T BELIEVE I have to explain this again!

MALCOLM (O.S.)

Keep your voice down, Matthew.

Matthew points at Malcolm menacingly, but does nothing else.

MISSY

Was he chosen by God?

MATTHEW

If that's what you want to call him.
He goes by names that only I can
hear, unpronounceable. Through torture
he makes you invincible, bulletproof.
I was his chosen one. Not David. Me.
I was a king. Presidents kissed my
ring, did the king ring thing.

Missy smiles, despite herself. Matthew sees her and turns away angrily.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

(continuing)

Then he went to war and came back an
angel. He was all black, all black.

Missy's expression changes.

MISSY

What... what happened to him in the
war?

MATTHEW

(triumphantly)

The All Black rugby team of New
Zealand, champions of the world!
Founded by David Hunter! He gives
them a new head every month and they
kick it and grab it and throw it
into the ground.

MISSY

Matthew, was David ever tortured
when he was a prisoner? Did he tell
you about it?

MATTHEW

(angrily)

He tricked me! Took away my powers!
Usurper!

MALCOLM (O.S.)

Matthew! I'm warning you. Keep your voice down.

MATTHEW

(whispering)

He makes angels in his basement....

Missy's eyes go wide.

MISSY

What do you mean? Whose basement?

MATTHEW

He has the bat. That's the only reason. If I had the bat it would be me.

MISSY

(impatiently)

Matthew! Try... try to focus. Did David tell you something about the basement?

MATTHEW

It wasn't the basement. It was the toolshed.

Uh-oh.

MISSY

What toolshed? Matthew, what toolshed?

Malcolm pokes his head in, eyeing Missy suspiciously.

MALCOLM

Everything okay in here?

Matthew gives him the finger.

MISSY

Yes... please! Everything's... I just need to ask him something... it's very important.

Malcolm continues to stare at her. She attempts to act more sane.

MISSY (CONT'D)

(continuing)

Everything's.... everything's fine.

Malcolm ducks back out. When she turns around again, she finds Matthew staring at her with a serious look on his face.

He is focused. He has something to tell her.

MATTHEW

It was my bat. He gave it to me.

MISSY

(trying to follow)

It was your bat?

MATTHEW

But I failed. He was disappointed.

MISSY

David? David was disappointed?

MATTHEW

No! Not David! Daddy!

Missy swallows. He suddenly sounds like a scared and hurt child.

MISSY

Your daddy gave you the bat?

MATTHEW

He was mad. I was doing bad things to David.

MISSY

What kind of bad things, Matthew?

MATTHEW

(upset)

I didn't know!

Missy looks worriedly at the door.

MISSY

Shh. It's okay.

MATTHEW

I was doing bad things, and I should know better 'cause I'm older...

INT. DARK TOOLSHED - DAY - FLASHBACK

In a heavily stylized (blurry, impressionistic) flashback, five-year-old YOUNG DAVID gasps in pain. Something is happening we can't see.

Seven-year-old YOUNG MATTHEW is doing something. He is intent on his task. Something he does causes David to cry out.

MISSY (V.O.)

"Once upon a time, there were two little boys, an older brother and a younger brother, and they lived with a terrible giant...."

YOUNG DAVID

Owww!

YOUNG MATTHEW

(whispering fiercely)

Shut up! I swear to God I'll kill
you if you don't keep quiet!

David bites his lip and tries not to cry.

A hand grabs a baseball bat that is leaning against the wall
as someone creeps up without a sound.

THUD! The bat hits Matthew in the side. He cries out as he
is thrown to the ground. David turns around, tugging at his
pants, and sees their DADDY, towering over him like a furious,
alcoholic giant.

DADDY

What the hell's going on here?

David opens his mouth but can't talk. His father glares at
him. Matthew, gasping for breath, finally calls out from the
floor.

YOUNG MATTHEW

(crying)

Ow! Daddy, I can't breathe! Ow!

Their father looks at Matthew with disgust.

DADDY

You stupid, goddamn son of a BITCH!

He raises the bat over his head and brings it down. Matthew,
still on his back, holds his arm out to protect his head.

David flinches at the sound of A BAT BREAKING BONE and the
subsequent screams from his brother. He is afraid to move.

Off camera, the beating continues.

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

That hurt? Huh?

YOUNG MATTHEW (O.S.)

Ahh! Please, Daddy! No!

DADDY (O.S.)

You want to be nasty? You want to
be a pervert? This is what happens
to perverts!

Thud. David shakes his head. This isn't happening.

YOUNG MATTHEW (O.S.)

Oww!

DADDY (O.S.)
Stop crying. You're so anxious to
become a man? Well, you're gonna get
a man's punishment....

Thud. Coughing. We are as close in on David's eyes as we can
be. He is shaking.

DADDY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(continuing)
Get up. Get up, goddamn it, or I'll
keep hittin' you!

Matthew gets up, crying, bloody. He is holding his broken
arm and keeping an eye on his father. His father lunges at
him every couple of moments, making him jump back, back
towards the entrance to the toolshed.

DADDY (CONT'D)
Look at you. You make me sick.

Matthew tries to stand tall and look tough.

YOUNG MATTHEW
That's my bat.

His father looks at him, incredulous, amused.

DADDY
What?

YOUNG MATTHEW
That's my bat. Give it to me.

DADDY
Hell no.

YOUNG MATTHEW
You said it was mine, long as I stayed
quiet.

DADDY
All right. Come get it from me.

He stands, legs apart, holding the bat in one muscular hand,
a hateful expression on his face. Matthew takes a step forward,
holding out his hand. His father tenses. No one in their
right mind would try to take the bat.

Matthew steps back.

DADDY (CONT'D)
(continuing)
You don't want it anymore?

Matthew looks at him with hatred in his eyes.

DADDY (CONT'D)
(continuing)
No? Suit yourself. Maybe your brother
will want it.

He turns around and hands it to tiny David, who takes the
treasured item into his hands and looks at his brother.

Matthew stands alone. His world has collapsed.

DADDY (CONT'D)
(continuing)
Get the hell out of here.

Matthew backs out, not wanting to leave his brother behind.

Hating both of them, but afraid of what will happen.

DADDY (CONT'D)
(continuing)
Get out!

And Matthew bolts out, into the backyard, leaving the rickety
tool shed behind. His eyes are dead.

MATTHEW (O.S.)
I lost everything. Now David has the
bat.

INT. HALLWAY - LATER THAT DAY - FLASHBACK

Young Matthew peeks out of his door as David walks by, his
father's hand on his shoulder. David is rubbing tears out
of his eyes, trying to be brave, and is hugging his baseball
bat.

MATTHEW (O.S.)
He's the chosen one now. I'm nobody.

Matthew's eye fills with tears...

INT. MATTHEW'S ROOM - BACK TO SCENE

... and in the present, it is the same. Missy looks at him
sadly. She can't bring herself to touch him.

MATTHEW
Go away now.

MISSY
Matthew, you know that --

MATTHEW
Go away.

Missy sighs.

MISSY

Okay, Matthew. I'll see you later.

She gets up and walk out.

INT. CAR - DAY

Missy, drives back from the hospital, shaken (and shaking).

She lights a cigarette and takes a deep drag.

She looks at the box of matches in her hand. Houlihan's. Why does this trouble her? She tosses it onto the passenger seat.

EXT. KATE'S FRONT YARD - AFTERNOON

Kate sits in a lawn chair, drinking what is either an iced tea or an awfully big glass of whiskey. She doesn't look happy.

Missy's drives by, on her way to her driveway. Kate gets up and follows.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - CONTINUING

Missy shuts off the car. She sees Kate storming up in the rear view mirror. She sighs and gets out of the car.

KATE

Missy! We need to talk.

MISSY

Not now, okay, Kate? I've had a pretty rough --

KATE

What the hell are you up to with my son?

Missy keeps walking, trying to get in the house and away from Kate.

MISSY

I'm paying him to mow my lawn, if that's what you mean.

KATE

You know, I don't think that's the only chore you're having him do.

Missy turns around.

MISSY

Why don't you tell me what you mean by that.

KATE

I see him going into your house. And
I see how he looks when he comes
out.

MISSY

Look, just because you were sneaking
around having sex with people behind
everyone's back --

KATE

He's nineteen, Missy. I think you're
a little old for him.

Missy opens her mouth as if she were going to argue with
that point, then snaps it shut. Not a good idea.

KATE (CONT'D)

(continuing)

I know I've been a bitch. And I know
you don't like what you've found
about David --

MISSY

(furious)

First of all, you have no right to --

KATE

Just don't take it out on Kevin.
You're a better person than me, okay?
Stay that way. Leave Kevin alone.

Kate walks away. Missy watches her from inside the front
door. Conflicted.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Sounds of CREAKING and MUFFLED SCREAMS from somewhere far
away. Missy peeks around the corner from her bedroom, looking
terrified.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUING

She looks around in the dark. There is a light shining from
under the cellar door. She's afraid to go near it, but she
does. The CREAKING and SCREAMS are a little louder now. She
puts her ear up against the door...

... but that's not where they're coming from. She looks across
the room, to another door.

INT. GARAGE - CONTINUING

The door to the house opens. Missy enters, slowly, letting
her eyes adjust to the darkness. It's cold enough that her
breath is showing. She freezes in her tracks.

MISSY'S P.O.V.

David's sports car is rocking back and forth as if it were possessed. This explains the CREAKING. The MUFFLED SCREAMS are a little louder.

Missy, panting from fear, inches around the rocking car. It looks as if it might lunge at her at any time. She gets to the back of the car. The screaming is definitely coming from the trunk. She reaches out her hand to open it....

It's Kevin. Naked. Bound and gagged. Wrapped in plastic.

Wide-eyed, screaming, trying desperately to escape. (Though the car does seem still to be rocking almost on it's own.)

MISSY

Kevin! Oh my God! Kevin! What are you doing here?

She takes off the gag, and he immediately starts to babble.

KEVIN

Jesus Christ, get me out of here before he comes! Holy shit! Hurry, please! He's coming! He's coming!

She struggles with the plastic. FOOTSTEPS APPROACHING. A shadow under the door. The door flings open, filling the garage with light. She screams....

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Her eyes open. It was a dream again. She is covered in sweat and breathing heavily. After a couple of moments of figuring out where she is, she starts yelling and beating the bed in a rage.

INT. KITCHEN - MINUTES LATER

She is pouring herself a shot of cheap brandy. She belts it down in one gulp, coughs. Looks over at the basement door.

MISSY

(muttering)

Making angels in the basement...

(suddenly)

All right, damn it. Let's get this over with.

INT. BASEMENT - MINUTES LATER

The light comes on. Missy stands at the top of the stairs, taking a moment to collect her nerve. She walks down.

She walks around the perimeter of the basement, idly running her fingers against the walls.

Looks under the stairs at all the boxes of accumulated junk. Finally returns to David's workbench. Everything is neat again, her spill cleaned up.

She opens drawers -- nothing unusual. She doesn't know what everything is, but nothing looks suspicious. There is an organizer for nails and screws -- a chest with lots of little plastic drawers. She opens the drawers idly. Nails, screws, picture hooks of all different sizes. Then she stops, confused. Tilts her head.

One drawer is full of little plastic thingies, the sort of things you don't know the name for and never think to buy unless you need them for something. That in itself isn't so strange. But there seems to be something of a different color underneath. She digs in. Finally overturns the drawer on to the workbench.

There are two pills -- capsules, actually -- among the little plastic things. One of them makes a break for it and rolls off the table. Missy picks up the other one and looks at it.

Xanax. A thought dawns on her.

The pill falls through the air in SLO-MO....

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Hands break apart a capsule over a glass of wine. They put a spoon in and stir.

MISSY (V.O.)
 (to Kevin - from
 earlier scene)
 It's the wine. It always does that
 to me. David used to bring home
 wine sometimes and after we finished
 the bottle, I'd be dead to the world
 and he'd have insomnia.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT - FANTASY

Missy drinks from a glass of wine, laughing. David is kissing her neck. She looks wasted, her eyes practically rolling back in her head.

INT. BASEMENT - BACK TO SCENE

Missy thinks. She shakes her head and laughs.

MISSY
 No. That's... no....

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT - FANTASY

He takes the glass from her and lays her down on the bed. He reaches over her to put the glass on the night table.

By the time he gets back to his side of the bed, her eyes are closed. She is smiling. He strokes her face. After a moment, he gives her a little push. She flicks her wrist at him, but otherwise doesn't stir. He rolls off the bed. The light goes off.

INT. FRONT HALLWAY - NIGHT - FANTASY

David lets Kate in the door. They are laughing. They kiss.

INT. BASEMENT - BACK TO SCENE

Missy, angry. Plagued by these thoughts again.

MISSY

Shit!

INT. FRONT HALLWAY - NIGHT - FANTASY

David and Kate kissing passionately.

INT. BASEMENT - BACK TO SCENE

Missy, angrily crying.

MISSY

MotherFUCKER!!!

She sweeps the plastic things off the surface of the workbench in a rage. In a tantrum, she proceeds to trash his work area. She throws the organizer across the room. She starts ripping drawers out. One of the drawers gets stuck and she yanks at it viciously, and a whole section of the workbench pulls away from the wall.

She stops. She never really noticed that a part of the workbench was a separate section from the rest of it. She leans on it to try to look behind it, and it gives easily.

Moves as if it were on wheels. She tries to pull it out, but something is stopping it.

She gets on her knees and looks under. There are two pieces of wood wedged under the baseboard. She grabs a screwdriver off the floor and gets them out. Now the section moves easily back and forth. There must be wheels hidden behind the baseboard.

She gets up and moves the section out of the way. There doesn't seem to be anything behind it. The wall behind it is bare, unfinished concrete. She tries to move the rest of the workbench, but it won't budge. She looks around, confused.

Then she looks at the wood-paneled wall against which the removed section had stood.

She feels the edge of the paneling. Then pulls at it. It comes away from the wall.

She moves around to the front and pulls it all the way off the wall. This removable piece of wall has padding on the other side, like the padding in a mental hospital. There is a dark space inside. Breathing heavily, Missy enters.

INT. HIDDEN CHAMBER - CONTINUING

It is dark at first, with only a sliver of weak light coming from the rest of the basement. Then Missy finds the light hanging from the ceiling.

SHE SEES:
Hand and ankle cuffs hanging from
the wall.

A ball gag hanging from a hook.

A mop standing next to a faucet and a couple of bottles of bleach.

A drain in the floor.

She puts her hand to her mouth.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

A repeat of her earlier flashback, but edited faster...

MISSY
(continuing)
David?

Some MUFFLED BANGING SOUNDS.

MISSY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
David used to have trouble sleeping.

I usually fell asleep with the light on, and him reading next to me. But if he couldn't sleep at all, he used to go down to his workshop in the basement.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Missy cautiously inches towards the kitchen, which is already lit up. There is a louder sound of SOMEONE RUNNING UP THE BASEMENT STAIRS. She breathes heavily.

MISSY (V.O.)
-- and there was blood everywhere.
I was really scared, especially
because he was -- I'd never seen him
like that before. He was panicking.

The basement door slams open and David storms past Missy without looking at her, heading for the kitchen sink. There's blood all over him. Missy looks at him, then at the door.

David is washing himself.

DAVID
(yelling)
You think you could get me a fucking
bandage?

Missy runs to a pantry and grabs some bandages. He keeps his back turned. She tries to turn him to see where he is hurt, but he reacts violently.

MISSY
David, here. Let me see.

DAVID
Get off. GET OFF!

He jerks violently out of her grasp. She stumbles backwards, scared and hurt. He wraps one of his fingers up. Then freezes. She is crying. He turns slowly, looking beaten and apologetic.

JUMP CUT TO:

Them kissing passionately, as before, but now it looks disturbing. Blood on their faces as they grapple at each other.

MISSY (V.O.)
-- after the fear and anger and
yelling and making up, all in the
space of a minute or two, there was
so much adrenaline... it was like we
were teenagers again.

THE CAMERA PANS AWAY from them and ZOOMS IN ON THE DOOR. We are transported through the door....

INT. BASEMENT - CONTINUING

... rushing down the stairs, taking a sharp left, where we see the workbench, the one section removed, the wall/door to the chamber removed, and we speed towards it...

INT. HIDDEN CHAMBER - CONTINUING

... and into the chamber, where Missy is sobbing, in a complete panic, unsure of what to do with her hands as she spins drunkenly in the opposite direction of the spinning room.

FADE TO BLACK. The sound of heavy breathing, crying, shovel sounds.

EXT. BACK YARD - NOT QUITE DAWN

Still wearing her nightshirt, Missy labors at something in the dark. Still crying.

She is digging a hole in the back yard.

LONG SHOT - ENTIRE BACK YARD FROM ABOVE

Missy is in one corner digging. The entire yard is full of freshly dug holes.

INT. HIDDEN CHAMBER - MORNING

Missy has changed into jeans and an old T-shirt. She's kneeling on the floor, putting on a pair of rubber gloves.

She picks up a flashlight and shines it down the drain.

P.O.V. UP FROM DRAIN - MISSY'S EYE AND FLASHLIGHT

The light illuminates the rusty but otherwise clear walls of the drain.

BACK TO SCENE

Not seeing anything, she dips her finger reluctantly into the drain and scrapes along the inside. She brings it out to look at it. Nothing but rust. She hopes.

She looks around -- she sees something behind the bottles of bleach. A can of Drano.

INT. GARAGE - EARLY MORNING

Missy opens the trunk of David's car. There's almost nothing in it. But there is a sheet of plastic protecting the floor of the trunk. She lifts it up. There are more plastic sheets underneath.

She looks around, unsure of what to do next, and notices a stack of old, yellowing newspapers against the wall.

Abruptly, she grabs the whole pile and takes it into the house.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

She throws the pile of papers down on the floor and runs out of the room.

She returns carrying David's day planner. She frantically flips through it, looking for the most recent entry with the mysterious little symbols she noticed before.

She finds it, then rifles through the papers, looking for one with the corresponding date.

She finds it, then opens the following day's paper. Nothing.
The day after that....

A rectangle cut out of the "Police Records" column in the local section. She sticks her finger through it. This isn't happening.

EXT. SUPERMARKET PARKING LOT - TEN MINUTES LATER

Missy's car comes screeching to a halt at the entrance to the supermarket.

She runs up to the bulletin board, which is covered with layers of sun-bleached photocopied flyers. She runs her fingers over them, lifts them up to see the flyer's underneath, rips off anyone that says "MISSING" and has a picture of a person. People stare at her as they walk by, keeping their distance from the crazy person.

She stops, staring at one of the flyers in her hand.

Steven Chang.

Husband of Michelle Chang, from her support group.

Disappeared on the same date as the marking in the address book.

From the parking lot at Houlihan's.

Wearing his high school ring. South Bend, Indiana.

She looks around, reeling in horror, and her eyes rest for a moment on the entrance to a Vietnamese restaurant in the same shopping plaza...

MISSY (V.O.)
David? What's the matter?

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY - FLASHBACK

David and Missy are loading their car with groceries in the same parking lot. David has stopped and is staring at something. The Vietnamese restaurant is having its grand opening. The family that appears to run the shop is out on the sidewalk, jovially greeting friends or relatives that have just arrived.

MISSY
David?

David snaps out of it and smiles at her.

DAVID
I was just noticing that they're
opening up a Vietnamese restaurant.

MISSY
Yeah. I see that.

DAVID
It's been a long time since I've had
Vietnamese food.

He stares at them as they all walk into the restaurant. Missy looks at him sadly.

MISSY
Are you okay?

DAVID
Hmm? Yeah. What do you mean? Because
of -- don't be silly.

He closes the trunk and walks around to the driver's side.
Unlocking the door, he speaks to her over the car's roof.

DAVID (CONT'D)
(continuing)
That was a long time ago. I can't
waste my time with anger. The bastards who held me, who shot
at me... they'll get theirs. Karma, right? They'll get theirs.

INT. CAR - CONTINUING

David starts the car and pulls out. Missy still looks at him thoughtfully.

MISSY
David? What did they do to you?
He looks at her and turns up the radio.

DAVID
Shhh. I love this song.
He proceeds to hum along with "Mack the Knife." She smiles weakly, watching him.

EXT. PARKING LOT - BACK TO SCENE

As Missy snaps out of her memory, her knees buckle and she falls to the ground.

People rush to help her.

MISSY
I'm okay, really. Please! Get your
hands off of me! Get away!

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Missy sits with a bottle of vodka and a glass. As she takes each swig, she shudders. In front of her is a pile of misfit jewelry. She looks at each piece with horror.

In the middle of one of the swigs, she stops and stares into space, lost in thought.

MISSY (V.O.)

You mean you can't recover anything?

INT. COMPUTER STORE - DAY

Missy is talking to a COMPUTER TECHNICIAN. Kevin hovers in the background.

COMPUTER GUY

I recovered what I could and put it on this floppy. But it isn't much, and I don't think it's what you're looking for. The entire hard drive was corrupt. I had to re-initialize it.

Missy looks at him quizzically, then turns to Kevin for a translation.

KEVIN

He had to erase most of what was on the computer because it wouldn't start up, including all the programs.

COMPUTER GUY

It's generally not a good idea to unplug a computer in the middle of using it. But I'm not sure that's what caused the disk to become corrupt. It looks like he might have had the encryption program delete not only the encrypted files, but portions of the operating system and the program itself. The computer probably would have crashed anyway, whether you unplugged it or not.

Missy looks at him and sighs.

MISSY

You want to buy a used computer?

INT. CAR - MINUTES LATER

Missy and Kevin are driving down a commercial highway loaded with strip malls.

KEVIN
Were they important?

MISSY
Who?

KEVIN
The files? On the computer?

MISSY
Oh. Maybe. No. I hope not.

KEVIN
Is everything okay, Mrs. Hunter?

MISSY
(exasperated)
Kevin! Come on: Mrs. Hunter? We've talked about this. I mean, you may get off on the whole Mrs. Robinson thing, but personally, it kinda --

She trails off. She has become distracted by a sex shop coming up on their left. It's a standard suburban smut shack: a windowless concrete building with a multicolored sign peppered with Xes.

MISSY (CONT'D)
(continuing)
Creeps... me... out...

She takes a sharp left across oncoming traffic into the porn store's parking lot, putting her arm across Kevin's chest like a Mom.

KEVIN
Jesus!

She pulls into a spot and jerks to a halt.

MISSY
Sorry.

KEVIN
Uh, what are we doing here?

MISSY
I'm not sure, really.

KEVIN
You gonna go in there?

MISSY
I reckon so. You coming with me?

KEVIN

I'll, uh, stay out here. Watch the car.

She smiles and tousles his hair.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

(continuing)

Think you can get me something?

She looks back in the car before closing the door.

MISSY

OK. But just one thing. Then I don't want you to ask for anything else until we get home.

She closes the door, and he smiles to himself.

INT. PORN SHOP - MINUTES LATER

Missy stands at the cash register. The middle-aged, slightly effeminate CLERK is holding a photograph. His eyes move back and forth between the photograph and Missy's anxious face.

PORN CLERK

Ma'am, I don't know....

MISSY

I can show you other pictures....

PORN CLERK

I mean, even if I did recognize him, I don't know if I'd tell you. Every guy in the town's probably been here once, and a lot of the women. It's not my place to report them to their families.

(looks at the picture)

Besides, he's smiling. People don't smile in here.

MISSY

(angrily)

Well, would you remember him if he bought this?

She pulls the ball gag out of her purse. He sighs.

PORN CLERK

Ma'am, look. A lot of very respectable people...

MISSY

Oh, Jesus....

PORN CLERK

Why don't you just talk to him? Maybe he's just afraid to tell you --

MISSY

I can't fucking talk to him, okay? He's fucking dead! He got hit by a car, and now I find out he had a fucking dungeon in the fucking basement, and I would like to know what the fuck is going on!!!

The store is quiet except for the far-off sound of video sex.

Heads peep from behind racks of tapes. The clerk's mouth opens and closes. Missy wipes a tear from her eye.

PORN CLERK

(announcing to store)
Store's closed!

CUSTOMER (O.S.)

Bullshit! You're open till 2 am!

PORN CLERK

Closing early. John Holmes' birthday.

CUSTOMER (O.S.)

Bullshit....

INT. BACK ROOM - MINUTES LATER

The room is cluttered with boxes of video tapes and obscene posters. Missy sits in a chair, trying to find some direction she can look in without having to look away. The clerk gives her some tea in a paper cup.

PORN CLERK

Sorry about the decor. The owner isn't known for his taste. Hence his occupation.

MISSY

It's okay. I... can't stay long. I've got a kid waiting out in the car.

PORN CLERK

Oh... do you want to let him in?

She looks at him, as if to say, "Are you kidding?"

MISSY

No. I don't think it would be a good idea.

PORN CLERK

Yeah, I guess not. I guess I'm just used to it. When you work in a place like this, you start to realize that we don't live in the same world that our parents taught us about. You know? What I mean is, there's no such thing as normal. Everyone does things that they wouldn't want their neighbors or their kids or even their spouses to know about, and that's usually nothing compared to the shit that goes on in their minds.

He walks over to a pile of tapes and holds one up.

PORN CLERK (CONT'D)

(continuing)

Look at this. A tape of men and women having sex with animals. Dogs, horses, sheep, goats. Doesn't do it for me. But I can't keep them in the store. Maybe guys just buy them as a joke for bachelor parties -- I don't know. But you know, I've got tapes with pregnant women, transsexuals, old women, girls in schoolgirl outfits....

MISSY

(standing up)

I should go.

PORN CLERK

I'm just trying to say... it's sad that you're husband couldn't talk to you about... what he was up to. Whatever he was up to. But that doesn't mean he didn't love you. People are just weird when it comes to sex. And men... they're twice as weird.

MISSY

You know... I get that.

She looks away, scared to ask the question she has to ask.

MISSY (CONT'D)

(continuing)

This, uh... this bondage stuff? The stuff you sell? Could it hold someone who... didn't want to be held?

He tries to think of a way he can put this.

PORN CLERK

What can I say?

MISSY

Oh, Jesus....

PORN CLERK

Look... ma'am... thousands, maybe hundreds of thousands of people buy stuff like this every day. All over the country. They have their own bars, their own magazines. What makes you think your husband's any different?

She looks at him, wanting to believe what he's saying. He can see he's getting somewhere.

PORN CLERK (CONT'D)

(continuing)

I mean, Jesus. What makes you think you're so special? How do you know your neighbor doesn't have an even bigger dungeon?

She laughs, shaking her head.

MISSY

At this point, nothing would surprise me.

(pause)

I'd better go. Kid's in the car.

He nods. As she leaves, he points to a stack of outdated porn magazines.

PORN CLERK

Here -- take him some magazines.

MISSY

What?

PORN CLERK

Go on. Grab a handful. I'm supposed to shrink-wrap them into 3-packs, but they're just gathering dust.

She shrugs, and gathers up a handful.

INT. PORN SHOP - CONTINUING

The clerk lets her out.

PORN CLERK

Take care.

MISSY

Thanks. I'll try.

He watches her walk out to the car. It's dark now. She opens the door and hands the pile of magazines to Kevin. He shakes his head.

INT. CAR - CONTINUING

Kevin looks at her, as she starts the car and drives out of the parking lot.

KEVIN

What were you doing in there? I was worried about you. I thought I was going to have to call the cops.

MISSY

Oh, that would have been good!

KEVIN

What was the deal with that creepy guy?

MISSY

Shut up and read your porn.

He smiles and looks out the window at passing cars.

INT. CAR - MINUTES LATER

They are pulling into their neighborhood. Kevin is looking at one of the magazines. Missy pulls up to Kevin's house. Kevin notices and looks up at her.

KEVIN

Um... you know, I'm not in any hurry to get home.

MISSY

Oh... do you want me to drop you off somewhere else?

KEVIN

(awkwardly)

I was thinking... we could go back to your place.

MISSY

I don't think so.

He looks worried.

MISSY (CONT'D)

(continuing)

My lawn doesn't need mowing.

KEVIN

I wasn't thinking of mowing your lawn....

She doesn't say anything. He knows what's going on. He's staring at her with the sad puppy eyes and Missy couldn't feel worse about it.

MISSY

I'm sorry. I'm sorry for everything.
I'm a terrible person.

KEVIN

I knew this was going to happen.

MISSY

Kevin, how could it not have happened?

KEVIN

I don't know. I obviously don't have any experience with this sort of thing.

MISSY

(sadly)
Neither do I.

They sit for a moment in silence, Kevin's head hanging almost comically low.

KEVIN

If I'd only known last time would be our last time, I would have... it would have been better.

Missy looks at him. Something about that makes her think.

MISSY

How? What would you have done?

He doesn't answer, embarrassed by the question.

MISSY (CONT'D)

(continuing)

Seriously. What would you like to do to me? If you could do anything to me, with no consequences, just me and you on a desert island, in your darkest fantasy, what would you do?

He doesn't answer. Outside, his mother is waiting on the porch, watching them, her arms folded.

MISSY (CONT'D)

(continuing)

I'll tell you what. You tell me, and I'll let you do it to me. Whatever it is. What is it? Something dirty? Do you want to tie me up? Would you like to hit me? Spit on me? Shit on me?

(MORE)

MISSY (CONT'D)

All you have to do is say it. Say it, Kevin. Tell me what you want to do. Just say the word.

Kevin is crying now. He looks at her with anger and spite.

KEVIN

You're fucking crazy.

He gets out of the car, slams the door and walks toward the house. Missy watches him for a moment, then pulls away, crying.

MISSY

That's right. I am fucking crazy.

MICHELLE (V.O.)

Sometimes I feel like I'm going crazy.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER - EVENING

Michelle is talking to the group. As she talks, the CAMERA PANS slowly across the faces of the others in the circle, listening.

RITA

Go on...

MICHELLE

It's just that... everyone has been talking about how hard it is to move on. How hard it is to let go. With me, I know it's really terrible, but... I want to let go. I need to move on. I can't keep living in this limbo -- I need to know what happened to him. Is he dead? Is he happy? Is he out there waiting for me to find him?

(sobbing)

Where is he? Where is Stephen? I just want to know what happened....

She breaks down, and everyone rushes to comfort her. Everyone but Missy, who hangs back, her eyes filled with tears, practically hyperventilating. She abruptly gets up and rushes out of the room.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE COMMUNITY CENTER - MINUTES LATER

Missy hurries out towards her car. Rita follows, calling after her.

RITA

Missy? Hey! What's going on?

MISSY

Who is she kidding? She may think she wants to know... what happened to her husband... but she -- I had to identify David's mangled corpse at the morgue! She wants that? Is she jealous that she didn't get to have that particular experience? Believe me, she doesn't want that!

Rita looks at her as if she were from another planet.

RITA

Missy! Jesus, you know what she's talking about....

But Missy is facing in the other direction, refusing to turn around.

RITA (CONT'D)

(continuing)

Hey. Come back inside.

MISSY

No.

RITA

You need to get this out.

MISSY

(shaking her head)

I don't belong here.

RITA

What do you mean?

They've reached her car. Missy fumbles with the keys.

MISSY

I don't belong here. I have to go.

She gets in the car.

RITA

Missy....

But Missy drives away, leaving Rita confused and concerned.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - AFTERNOON

Missy is talking with Dr. Jaffee outside Matthew's room. In his bed, Matthew sits propped up, looking out the window with a blank stare, one hand pressed against his face.

MISSY

How long has he been like this?

DR. JAFFEE

After the last time you visited, he was very agitated for about two days. The next morning -- he was in a catatonic state. There hasn't been much change since.

MISSY

Wow. I wish, you know, you'd given me a call or something.

Dr. Jaffee looks at Missy with discomfort and sadness.

DR. JAFFEE

Ms. Hunter....

MISSY

Please. Missy.

DR. JAFFEE

Missy... I don't want to tell you you can't visit him. But your visits... I don't think they're helping him.

Missy wasn't expecting this.

MISSY

Oh. Right.

Dr. Jaffee puts a hand on Missy's shoulder.

DR. JAFFEE

You understand.

MISSY

Yeah. Of course. I'll, uh, I'll just say goodbye to him.

Dr. Jaffee nods. Missy starts to go in, but turns at the last second.

MISSY (CONT'D)

(continuing)

Do I... seem crazy to you?

DR. JAFFEE

Not any more than the rest of us.

MISSY

That's what I was afraid of.

INT. MATTHEW'S ROOM - CONTINUING

Missy walks up to Matthew and takes a seat next to him, putting her hand on his, the one that rests in his lap.

MISSY

It's okay, Matthew. No one can hurt you. You're safe.

Nothing.

MISSY (CONT'D)

(continuing)

He told you stories... about what he was doing in the basement, didn't he?

Nothing.

MISSY (CONT'D)

(continuing)

It was never your fault, Matthew. You were just there. None of that ever really happened. He was lying. He was just picking on you. You know how brothers are.

Nothing. She continues, but it's becoming more evident that she doesn't believe what she's saying. She's saying it for him.

MISSY (CONT'D)

(continuing)

Sometimes I feel like he's still around. Like he's haunting our house. But he's not. He's really dead. I promise. Sometimes I wasn't so sure myself, and I saw his body. But he is. You have to believe me.

She is visibly shaking now. She doesn't believe herself.

MISSY (CONT'D)

(continuing)

Bye, Matthew. Sweet dreams.

She kisses him on the cheek. Without moving, he says something in the faintest whisper.

MISSY (CONT'D)

(continuing)

What? Matthew, did you say something?

She puts her ear as close as possible to his mouth. His lips barely move.

MATTHEW

You're... next...

She looks at him in horror.

EXT. CAR - NIGHT

Missy drives home, her face streaked with tears.

HEADLIGHTS appear behind her. She notices them and, worried, makes a sudden turn. They follow.

She guns the engine and makes some more turns, until she has lost the other car.

Missy is plagued by a series of images, true and imagined, from the past:

- Missy and David getting married, flashbulbs going off
- A close-up of David in the jungles of Vietnam, firing an automatic weapon and yelling
- The toolshed, as David's father closes the door, a glimpse of two young, terrified faces
- David, in a happy moment, chasing a younger Missy around the house and grabbing her
- Two feet struggling for purchase as someone is being dragged away in a parking lot
- David's hands around Missy's neck in a moment of passion - Kevin walking in on David and Kate
- David's hand leaving a bloody smear on the kitchen counter
- The glint of a knife being wielded

... and throughout this montage, Missy driving erratically, overwhelmed with emotion...

MISSY (V.O.)

There once was a woman who lived in a small house in a deep, dark forest. She, like everyone else in the forest feared a terrible monster, who came out at night to feed on the villagers while they slept. Everyone except her husband, that is. Her husband was a hunter and wasn't afraid of anything.

As the images swirl in her head, she is left with one final image....

David, standing alone in the middle of the kitchen, drenched and dripping in blood. Missy, surreally, across the room, looking at him, not sure what to make of it or what to do.

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

(continuing)

Then, one day, the woman woke up to find that she had been married to the monster all along.

Missy's eyes widen with terror.

EXT. CAR - NIGHT

The motor is RUNNING and a wheel spins idly. The car has left the road. It isn't wrecked, but given about six inches, it would have been. She narrowly missed several trees.

Missy looks catatonic herself. She has her seatbelt on, so she's okay. Eventually, she snaps out of it and notices her surroundings.

She pulls out her cell phone and dials a number. She waits.

MISSY

John... John, this is Melissa Hunter. You know, David's wife. I've -- well, I don't know how to say this but I've found some things. I think... I think David may have done some very bad things. I don't know. Maybe I'm crazy. Maybe both. Just... please call me, okay? I need to talk to someone about this. I'm so scared. Call me.

She puts away the phone, puts the car in reverse, and slowly backs out onto the road. She's blown a tire, probably bent the axle, but she's going to get home.

INT. FRONT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Missy enters, looking tired as death. She is halfway down the hallway when she stops in her tracks.

The light is on in the kitchen.

And someone is making some kind of WET BREATHING SOUNDS.

Trying not to breathe too heavily herself, she grabs the nearest weapon she can find, an iron candlestick, and inches toward the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUING

She bursts into the room, the candlestick over her head, but stops short when she sees....

Kevin, standing there with his arms at his sides, tears running down his cheeks.

MISSY
Kevin! Oh, God --

KEVIN
I needed to see you.

MISSY
Jesus! You scared me senseless!

She hugs him. In her arms, he starts to sob anew.

MISSY (CONT'D)
(continuing)
Oh, honey....

KEVIN
What did I do? Why don't you want to
be with me?

MISSY
It's not that I don't want to be
with you!

KEVIN
Then why are you breaking up with
me?

MISSY
Kevin! You're nineteen! I should
never have --

KEVIN
What difference does that make?

She holds him at arm's length so she can look into his eyes.

MISSY
Listen to me, Kevin. I'm... I'm fucked
up. I'm a bad person. You don't want
to be with me.

KEVIN
I do!

MISSY
No, Kevin. You should be with --

KEVIN
No, you don't understand! I'm a bad
person, too!

She hugs him again.

MISSY
But you're not! You're one of the
sweetest people I --

She stops abruptly. Over his shoulder, leaning against the wall, she sees...

... an old baseball bat.

KEVIN

I am. I'm a bad person. I'm a bad person....

MISSY

(worried)

Kevin, what is that?

KEVIN

I didn't know....

She pushes him away.

MISSY

That bat... is that what I think it is? That's not... Kevin, is that David's bat?

KEVIN

(wiping his eyes)

It's mine.

MISSY

But... why would you bring a bat to my --

KEVIN

Forget the bat! Don't --

MISSY

That's so strange, because... I just...

KEVIN

I said, leave it!

She bends down to pick up the hat, and before she knows what's happening, he grabs her hair and throws her to the ground.

MISSY

Ahh! Kevin! What --

KEVIN

It's my bat! Don't fucking touch it!
It's mine!

He grabs the bat and holds it loosely in his hands. He is breathing heavily, as if he's just been in a fight.

MISSY

(confused)

Okay... I believe you....

KEVIN
He gave it to me.

Missy stares at him. She's just realized.

MISSY
Oh my God... you're... you're Francis.

He seems surprised by this, for just a moment. Then he snorts disdainfully.

KEVIN
Kevin Francis Caldwell. You didn't know that? Huh?

MISSY
I don't understand. What were you -- oh, my God --

KEVIN
He said he was passing it down. He said I was like the son he never had.

MISSY
Oh, no no no....

KEVIN
(sarcastically)
You never gave him a son. Why was that? Too busy with your writing career? Too busy supervising the cleaning lady?

MISSY
This isn't happening....

KEVIN
I think I know why, why you didn't have kids. Because you knew! You fucking knew all along!

MISSY
(crying)
Know what? Kevin, what are you talking about?

KEVIN
Oh, fuck you! You had to know! Alone in the house all day, writing children's stories, because you love kids so much, right?

MISSY
We tried to have children --

KEVIN

You didn't have children because you
knew what he was like. That's why
you had two abortions, you whore!

Missy clasps her hand to her mouth in horror.

MISSY

You... he knew?

KEVIN

You didn't fool him! You can't just
fool him!

He squats down to be closer to her, propping his chin on the
end of the baseball bat and staring off into space almost
nostalgically.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

He knew about it. Just like he knew
there was something wrong with me.
As soon as he saw me in the doorway.

INT. KATE & KEVIN'S FOYER - DAY - FLASHBACK

Kevin in his front hallway, his backpack over his shoulder.

Looking up the stairs.

KEVIN

(weakly)

Mom?

Upstairs there is BANGING. Violent, muffled cries. Kevin
barrels up the stairs in a panic, stopping for a moment
outside his parents' bedroom door. The NOISES continue, now
more distinct.

KATE (O.S.)

You're hurting me!

DAVID (O.S.)

Yeah? That fucking hurt?!

KATE (O.S.)

Stop!

DAVID (O.S.)

I'll show you what hurts, you fucking
bitch!

Kevin, eyes wide with panic, bursts into the room....

INT. KATE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUING

He sees a naked man kneeling on the bed. A woman who may be
his mother on all fours, also naked, facing in the other

direction. She is yelling in pain. She doesn't hear Kevin come in. Mr. Hunter, the man from across the street, does. He turns and sees Kevin, his hand still clutching a tangle of his mother's hair. His expression is wild. He smiles maniacally.

KEVIN (V.O.)

He looked at me, into my eyes, and
in a second, he knew....

KATE

What are you doing?

DAVID

(still looking at
Kevin)

You want me to stop?

KATE

No, don't stop... fuck me harder...

Kevin backs out of the room, closing the door behind him.

EXT. KEVIN'S FRONT STEP - LATE AFTERNOON - FLASHBACK

Kevin sits on the front step, staring out into space in shock.

KEVIN (V.O.)

Before that moment, I probably didn't
think I was any more fucked up than
anyone else in the world. But as I
sat there on the front step, playing
the image over and over in my head,
I wasn't angry. I wasn't sad, or
disillusioned, or... whatever. I
felt like... like Picasso must have
felt the first time he saw some guy
painting in the park.

David walks out, in SLOW MOTION. He stops and looks down at Kevin.

DAVID

So? What'd you think? D'you like
that?

Kevin says nothing. Just looks at David in wonder as he turns and walks across the street.

KEVIN (V.O.)

I did like it. I wanted more. It was
like I found my calling.

INT. KITCHEN - BACK TO SCENE

Missy is shaking her head in horror, crab-walking slowly away from Kevin and his terrible revelations.

KEVIN

A week later I came over here. I
don't know what it was.

MISSY

I do...

Kevin looks at her moment. His expression changes from his
past sense of wonder to his current nightmare.

KEVIN

It's like I invited a vampire into
my house. Now he comes and goes
whenever he pleases....

Missy stands up carefully.

MISSY

Kevin... he's dead. It's going to be
all right....

KEVIN

(panicking)

Oh, yeah? It's going to be all right,
huh?

He swings the bat and knocks some plates off a shelf.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

Then tell me this... why won't he
shut the fuck up? Huh?

He holds his hand to his eyes, then swings the bat around
again in a frenzy. Missy is backing away from him, keeping
an eye out for exits.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

When will I stop dreaming about him
coming after me? Huh? At what point
is he finally going to stop telling
me what to do?!? He's in my fucking
HEAD, "MISSY"! And he's not gonna
come out without a fight!

MISSY

Kevin, you're scaring me....

KEVIN

Oh, you're scared?!?

He swings the bat again, knocking things down.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

WELL, GUESS WHAT! I'M FUCKING
TERRIFIED!

He breaks down into sobs. Missy, unsure for a moment, eyes the bat hanging limply in his hands and decides to talk him down.

MISSY
It'll be okay, Kevin....

KEVIN
(weakly)
No, it won't....

She reaches tentatively for the bat.

MISSY
Sure it will. Come on, why don't you
put down the --

KEVIN
(suddenly enraged)
No it WON'T!!!

She reaches for him and he swings the bat, which hits her head with a PING. She stumbles, looking at him with shock, a trickle of blood already streaming down the side of her face.

Her eyes want to roll back in her head. Kevin is almost as shocked as she is.

She loses her balance and stumbles into the open doorway to the basement. She almost falls, but grabs on to the door jam with one hand. She's too dizzy and leaning too far back to right herself. Her hand is the only thing keeping her from falling.

She looks at Kevin, who is just watching her as if she were a television show.

MISSY
(groggily)
Why, Kevin?

KEVIN
He told you not to go in there... he
told you...

Missy's grip slips, and she tumbles down the stairs, falling off the side and onto the hard floor.

FADE TO BLACK

INT. BASEMENT - CONTINUING

FADE UP ON MISSY

...once again, sideways on the basement floor. Kevin's
FOOTSTEPS approaching.

She tries to get her arm out from under her, but instead she howls with pain. Her shoulder is dislocated.

Kevin stands over her, watching her almost without emotion, like a hunter standing over his wounded prey.

MISSY
Kevin... please...

KEVIN
Please what?

MISSY
(almost inaudibly)
Kill me.

KEVIN
What?

He turns over and she screams. He drops to his knees, straddling her chest. She's sobbing. He leans in.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
I'm sorry... what did you say?

MISSY
(sobbing)
I said, kill me! Kill me, you little son of a bitch! I don't deserve to be alive....

She is wailing now, racked with pain and guilt. He stares at her, not knowing whether to trust her.

MISSY (CONT'D)
I should have known... I should have known....

As she cries, he is overcome by her sadness and his own.

Tears in his eyes, he caresses her face lovingly. He still loves her.

Then, just as lovingly, he puts the bat down and places his hands around Missy's throat.

Her eyes bulge wide. She struggles with her one good arm.

Tears flow down his cheeks. He bends down and kisses her cheek.

KEVIN
Shh. Shh. It's going to be over soon.

He tightens his grip. It looks like a done deal. He stares into her glassy eyes, his expression changing every second: love, fascination, hunger, horror.

Finally, he seems to have a revelation.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

No, no, no... this isn't right.

He lets go. Missy gasps and coughs.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

If we're going to do this, let's do it right.

He stands up, grabbing her feet and dragging her, still coughing, along the basement floor.

Towards the chamber.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

You know, David showed me some amazing things down here. I didn't even know what jumper cables looked like, let alone how many uses they had....

Missy, still coughing and in a panic, has grabbed on to a post to stop them from getting any further. After a few tugs, Kevin gives up and kicks her in the stomach and they're soon on their way.

INT. HIDDEN CHAMBER - CONTINUING

He drops her feet, and stepping on her for a second, turns on the light.

KEVIN

He taught me what power felt like. Real power. He let me decide. Finish our prisoner off? Or... let him hang there for a while? Take it up a notch?

After a second's contemplation, he grabs Missy's arm -- the side with the dislocated shoulder -- and yanks her up by it.

There is an audible POP as her shoulder pops back into place and she screams. In one deft move, he has her wrist up in the shackle and buckled. He barely needs to breathe in between sentences.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

This guy's future, his present -- all mine. I controlled his whole world. Well... we did. David and I. I wasn't ready to handle the responsibility myself.

Missy recovering, from the shock of her shoulder, lunges for his face with her other hand, her nails tearing into his cheek. Though she seems seconds away from ripping his whole cheek off, he barely reacts.

He just grabs her little finger and peels her hand off.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

I was too weak. Not my body. My soul.

He gives her a quick elbow to the solar plexus, which takes the wind out of her just long enough for him to get her other hand in the shackle, twisting her around so she's facing the other way.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

He hated when I talked about right or wrong. "Nothing that happens tonight will change anything," he would say. "Tomorrow the world will be just the same as it was today. No better, no worse. You take what you want, eat when your hungry, and kill for one reason and for one reason only. Because you can."

Missy is panting with fear. As of now, she is FUCKED.

She flinches when Kevin starts shouting in an uncanny impression of David, shortly after walking out of the room as he looks for tools.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

"Quit crying, you little girl. You think this is bad? Hell, this guy has it easy! You know how long I was a P.O.W.? Two and a half fucking years!"

SOUNDS of him rooting through the mess she left in the work area.

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

"Two and a half years of being beaten, starved, burned, being tied up and left out for the mosquitoes and the rats, sleep deprivation..."

(as Kevin)

Aw, man, Missy! You broke the power sander! Okay... make do... make do...

Missy struggles at her bonds. It's no use. She looks around for something that can help.

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

(as David)

"Two and a half years and I never broke. You know why?"

He re-enters the room, holding a lit acetylene torch and a chisel.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

"Because those slant-eyed bastards
had nothing on my Daddy."

MISSY

Kevin, for God's sake....

Kevin starts pacing back and forth, almost joyfully, heating the chisel's blade with the torch.

KEVIN

(still as David)

"Pain was my wet nurse! I am all
scars and calluses. My scars are the
only thing that holds me together."

MISSY

Kevin. You're not him.

KEVIN

Shut up, Missy.

MISSY

You're different. You know this is
wrong --

KEVIN

SHUT UP, MISSY!

She might be getting somewhere. She rushes to be heard.

MISSY

You don't want to do this to me...
if you go down this road, you'll
never be the same.

KEVIN

(calmly)

Exactly. That's exactly what I want.

Having put down the torch, and holding the plastic end of the chisel in his mouth, he takes a box-cutter and abruptly rips Missy's shirt down the middle, exposing her back. He has a tear or two in his eyes as he drops the cutter and waves the chisel rhythmically inches from Missy's back.

MISSY

Kevin... no... please....

KEVIN

In ten, twenty minutes, I'm hoping....
you'll stop being Missy. You'll just
be... the latest one. My first girl!

(laughs)
It might take three hours or so before
you stop being human. That's when
I'll probably have to call it a day,
before boredom sets in.

MISSY
No....

KEVIN
After a good night's sleep, I can
start fresh, but, you know, it'll
never be the same from that point...
it's all downhill from there....

MISSY
Please....

KEVIN
Kind of exciting now, though, huh?
Where to begin? Nothing more daunting
than a blank canvas. Where's it gonna
be, Missy? Can you guess? Where's
it gonna be?

MAN'S VOICE
Put it down, Francis.

Kevin turns slowly. There is a backlit, shadowy figure at
the bottom of the stairs. Could it be...

KEVIN
(voice shaking)
David?

MAN'S VOICE
Put it down, son.

Kevin strains his eyes, looks around in confusion. Missy is
in a state of shock -- she can't even call for help.

KEVIN
No....

He looks back at the figure. His face turns into a mask of
hatred and rage.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
NO!!!

He runs at David, chisel raised.

Two BLAZES in the darkness.

Two SHOTS from a silenced gun.

Two HOLES, one in Kevin's forehead, and one in his heart.

Missy screams. Kevin, stopped in his tracks, has a split second to smile gratefully before he crumples to the floor.

Missy wails. Emotional overload.

David steps out of the shadows. Only... of course it's not David.

It's John, the attorney, gun smoking, his finger to his lips.

JOHN

Shhh. It's all right now.

He crosses the room in a few steps, his cell phone already out and his gun holstered as he begins to free Missy from her shackles.

JOHN (CONT'D)

It's okay. Just a sec....

(into the phone)

This is the Woodsman. Baby Bear down.
Goldilocks injured but fine. We're
going to need a cleanup.

INT. KITCHEN - LATE NIGHT

About a dozen OFFICIAL-LOOKING PEOPLE are moving around the house, busy at work. They take boxes out of David's study and the basement, and studiously ignore Missy.

Missy sits at the kitchen table with a cup of tea, idly tapping one key on her typewriter again and again. Her arm is in a sling; her expression, zombie-like.

A hand on Missy's shoulder, her good one. Missy starts, then relaxes. John sits down next to her.

JOHN

Doc got you all taken care of?

MISSY

Yeah.

(indicates sling)

Ta-da.

JOHN

Everything else OK? Body-wise, I mean?

Missy shrugs. Her eyes get teary. John puts his hand on hers, but she pulls away.

MISSY

John, what the hell's going on? Who are all these people? For that matter, who the hell are you?

After a moment, he decides to answer, giving a quick look around.

JOHN

There's not too much I can tell you.

And most of it, you wouldn't want to hear anyway. Let's just say this is... family business. Our family.

MISSY

Family. So, what are you -- CIA?
FBI?

He gives her a "sort of" nod.

JOHN

How can I put it? There are gray areas, between Special Forces, military intelligence, the CIA, private "security" companies.... We -- David and I -- we worked the gray areas.

(sighs)

Often a pretty dark shade of gray.

He rubs his hands together, staring at them.

JOHN (CONT'D)

As you know, David barely took a moment to catch his breath after he got back from Vietnam. I'd gotten involved in intelligence, and I brought him in. He just kinda took the ball and ran with it.

INT. BASEMENT - CONTINUING

The "cleaners" attend to different chores in the basement: cleaning up blood and fingerprints, dismantling the dungeon, organizing the work area.

JOHN (V.O.)

All the time the two of you were living on the different Army bases? He was setting up... ventures. Making important friends. Always working several angles at a time. Triangulation, he called it. Which inevitably led to him making enemies, as well. I know this doesn't make sense, but I can't go into detail. You understand.

One of the cleaners, dressed all in plastic, is starting up some sort of silenced, hand-held circular saw.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUING

JOHN

Trouble is, he started leaving a trail.

(takes a moment)

Just missing persons, never bodies. But eventually, it must have caught up with him.

Missy looks at him, shocked at the enormity of what she's hearing.

MISSY

You knew....

JOHN

(looking away)

No. Not then, anyway. But someone did, I think. We suspected that David's "retirement" was actually coerced, some sort of blackmail. So we started digging.

Missy is shaking her head.

JOHN (CONT'D)

It goes way back, Missy. And there's no way to untangle it from... everything else. This?

(gestures)

This can never, never come out.

MISSY

Well, it's going to have to.

JOHN

You can't imagine the size of the scandal --

MISSY

Fuck the scandal! Do you know what these people, their families are going through?

JOHN

Damn it, Missy! This isn't about your "conscience," or mine, or making some sad people feel better!

(whispers fiercely)

This is about a house of cards! This gets out, everything gets out -- people go to jail, get killed, our national security is compromised....

(calms down)

Put it this way.

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

You don't have a choice. There will
be no disclosure. By you or by anyone.
This case is closed.

Missy doesn't want to accept this, but she has no choice.
She waits a moment for her anger to subside.

MISSY

What about Kevin?

JOHN

We'll take care of that.

MISSY

You'll take CARE of that?!?

JOHN

Listen to me. You've been robbed. A
burglar threw you on the ground,
took some silver and jewelry.

MISSY

My silver?

JOHN

A black man, early twenties, about
6'2". We'll file the report.

MISSY

A white man.

JOHN

Excuse me?

MISSY

No black man had anything to do with
this. If I'm going to do this, the
burglar is white.

JOHN

Fair enough.

He makes a note in his notebook and hands it to a passing
cleaner, who nods.

JOHN (CONT'D)

You're going to need to go on vacation
for a couple of weeks.

MISSY

And Kevin?

JOHN

You haven't seen him since...

He checks his notes.

PASSING CLEANER

Thursday.

JOHN

Since Thursday. You talked in the car. After the, uh, adult video store.

Missy, shocked, starts to say something than stops. Of course they were following her.

MISSY

One more thing.

JOHN

Shoot.

MISSY

Was it one of your people? Driving the car, the one that hit David?

JOHN

Missy...

MISSY

Or... Kevin?

JOHN

The sooner you stop asking questions, the better.

He gets up to leave the room, but stops at the door.

JOHN (CONT'D)

But no. It was just a random accident.

MISSY

I'm not sure that I believe you.

John shrugs.

JOHN

Sorry.

He leaves. Missy stares into space.

MISSY

Kevin....

EXT. FRONT STEP - DAY

Missy sits on her front step, battle-worn and strangely calm, watching the neighborhood as, thankfully, nothing happens.

There is a HONK. A taxi pulls up into the driveway.

Missy stands and starts trying to get her carry-on onto her good shoulder, so she can drag her suitcase behind her, but the CAB DRIVER hurries to help.

CAB DRIVER
Please... let me....

MISSY
Oh, thanks. I can --

CAB DRIVER
Don't be silly.

He takes both bags, as Missy notices a figure running across the street toward her. Kate.

KATE
Missy!

Missy waits with a worried expression as Kate runs up.

KATE (CONT'D)
(continuing)
Hi.

MISSY
Hi, Katie.

KATE
You're, uh, you're going somewhere?

MISSY
To New York for a day or two. Then I fly to Ohio. Thought I'd spend some time with my Dad and my niece and nephew.

KATE
Which means seeing your sister.

MISSY
Yeah.
(laughs)
Would you believe I'm actually looking forward to seeing her?

She doesn't know what to say. What about Kevin?

KATE
(awkwardly)
I heard about what happened the other night, the burglary. You all right?

Missy shrugs, then winces.

MISSY
Ow. Yeah. Except when I do that.

KATE
I hope they catch the fuckers.

MISSY
Yeah. Well.

Kate suddenly hugs her, holding her in a desperate embrace.

Missy gives a "wait a minute" sign to the driver.

KATE
You're coming back, right?

MISSY
Yeah. In a couple of weeks. I promise.

KATE
I missed you. I'm so sorry....

MISSY
Me too...

Kate has begun to sob.

MISSY (CONT'D)
(continuing)
Honey! What's wrong!

KATE
He's gone!

MISSY
Who's gone? What are you talking about?

Kate searches her pockets and comes out with a crumpled piece of paper. She straightens it out and gives it to Missy, wiping tears from her eyes.

Missy reads the note.

MISSY (CONT'D)
(continuing)
This is from Kevin?

She can't believe this.

MISSY (CONT'D)
(continuing)
He ran away?

KATE
He said we're "fucked up" and he needed to get away from us.
(MORE)

KATE (CONT'D)

A bunch of his stuff was gone, but
he didn't go back to school... and
the police haven't found him yet...
he could be anywhere....

Missy hugs her again.

MISSY

Oh Kate... I'm so sorry....

KATE

I don't blame you. It's my fault.

Missy's brows furrow.

MISSY

It's not anyone's fault, Kate. Maybe
he's just doing what he thinks he
needs to do.

KATE

Right. He'll come back, probably.
This is normal, teenagers do this,
right?

MISSY

Of course. Perfectly normal. He'll
be back. Just you wait and see.

But her eyes are filling with tears. There's nothing else
she can say.

EXT. TAXI - DAY

Missy sitting upright in the back seat of the cab....

EXT. TRAIN - DAY

...leaning her head against the window as she watches the
world go by...

INT. HOTEL ROOM - EVENING

...tipping the bellhop, closing the door and collapsing back
on to the cleanly made bed...

EXT. NEW YORK SUBWAY EXIT - DAY

Missy comes out of the subway station that David came out of
the morning he was killed. She looks at the cars rushing by.

She looks at her feet. Painted on the sidewalk is a silhouette
of a man. The stenciled words, "Killed by a car 4/20/2002."

She squats and runs her hand along the concrete.

The vendor notices her and walks up to talk to her, holding his hat in his hands. She stands and shakes his hand.

FADE OUT.

THE END.