

Memories of an Owl

Written By

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Based on, if any

Address
Phone Number

1. EXT. COURTYARD - NIGHT

It's a summer night and the street lamps are lit up along the sidewalks and in front of the libraries. Students pass in tee shirts and shorts, with backpacks on and phones out, as they walk along the sidewalks under dense trees.

2. INT. LIBRARY - THAT MOMENT

A clean cut white guy in a red tee shirt sits at a table in the busy main lobby of the library. His name is JACK (20). He leans forward with arms folded on the table, tapping his left forefinger on the tabletop.

A thin guy with well groomed hair and thick tortoise-shell rimmed glasses sits across from Jack. His name is DMITRI OLAKOVICH (19). He reads a small packet of pages.

Dmitri finishes the last page and puts the packet on the table. He looks to Jack with half an unconvincing smile.

DMITRI

Yeah, it's not bad.

Jack shifts.

JACK

What worked, what didn't?

Dmitri shifts and glances left-right and back to Jack.

DMITRI

I thought the dialogue was good.

JACK

Nice nice.

DMITRI

Yep.

JACK

And?

DMITRI

Well...

Dmitri scratches his neck. Jack swallows.

DMITRI (CONT'D)

I don't see why the main guy-

JACK

Ken.

DMITRI
-Doesn't just leave the house,

JACK
Well he's stuck there.

DMITRI
Or why the crazy guy doesn't just
kill him when he goes to the
basement.

JACK
Well he wants to-

DMITRI
Or why the cop doesn't shoot him
when he sees him with the knife,

JACK
Well he's just a guy, he-

DMITRI
But it's good. Y'know it's good, I
was just kinda confused.

JACK
Right.

Jack sort of nods.

3. INT. LIBRARY - SOME TIME LATER

JACK sits waiting again. A brown-haired girl in a turtleneck
sits across from him reading his story. Her name is OLIVIA
GIANNOPOLOUS (20).

She puts the story down and looks at him.

JACK
So?

OLIVIA
It's good.

JACK
Thanks.

OLIVIA
Yep.

Olivia looks out to the rest of the library.

JACK
Do you think you'd read it if you
(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)
 didn't know I'd wrote it?

Olivia pauses.

OLIVIA
 Oh sure, of course, yeah.

She looks back out at the library. Jack nods and sucks in a deep breath as he takes the story back.

4. INT. LIBRARY - SOME TIME AFTER THAT

JACK sits waiting once more. Now a black guy in a winter coat sits across from him reading. His name is JOSH (20).

Josh puts the story down.

JACK
 So?

Josh looks him in the eye.

JOSH
 No.

Jack lets out an audible sigh as he takes the story back. He looks at the front page, then looks up to Josh.

JACK
 Well, thanks for takin' a look at it.

Josh stands up.

JOSH
 Sure.

Josh walks AWAY.

Jack plops an elbow on the table and drops the side of his head into his palm. Then he sighs and shakes his head.

He puts the story in the folder page of the notebook on the table, then he turns and puts the notebook in his backpack.

5. INT. THE APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

JACK comes in through the front door with his backpack on. He sees MIKE (20) sitting on the couch playing video games.

JACK
 What's up?

Mike doesn't look over.

MIKE

Not much.

Jack walks over to the couch and puts his backpack on the ground against the base of the couch. Then he sits down and looks at the TV.

He watches for a second.

JACK

Austin or Jeff back yet?

Mike continues to play, eyes glued to the screen. Then:

MIKE

Nope.

Jack nods.

JACK

Okay.

Jack watches the screen and keeps nodding.

MIKE

Where were you?

JACK

Library.

Mike slightly nods and keeps playing, never really breaking concentration. Jack nods more and looks at the screen. Then he sort of sits up.

JACK (CONT'D)

Yeah I was gettin' feedback on this short story I gotta' turn in tomorrow.

MIKE

The one with the guy stuck in the basement?

JACK

Well he's trapped.

MIKE

Right. Yeah that had a lot of plot holes.

Jack rubs his neck.

JACK

Well... I dunno. I think it works.

MIKE

Course you do, you wrote it.
Doesn't mean it makes sense.

Jack throws up a hand.

JACK

Well...

Jack stands up and starts towards the kitchen, which is in no way divided from the living room.

JACK (CONT'D)

Anyway...

Jack walks into the kitchen and gets himself a glass from the cupboard.

JACK (CONT'D)

I still think it's the best story
I've written so far.

MIKE

(to himself)

Don't make me read your older shit.

JACK

What?

MIKE

I said that's good.

Jack nods as he gets a water jug out of the fridge. He takes it to the glass.

JACK

Yeah I think I'll get the Albert on
it. The A.

MIKE

Nice.

Mike still hasn't looked over.

Jack pours himself some water.

JACK

I'm feeling an upward trend,
y'know? Like every new thing I
write is exponentially better than
the last.

Jack puts the water jug back in the fridge and closes the

fridge door. Then he grabs the glass of water and takes a sip.

JACK (CONT'D)

What's most important is that I just keep workin, y'know? Just build a body of work, get through all the bad stuff so by the time I graduate, I'm writing at a professional level.

MIKE

Nice.

Jack takes the glass and heads back into the living room. He sets the glass down on the dining table and heads towards the couch for his backpack.

Mike's game ends and he puts the controller on the couch next to him, then turns to Jack.

MIKE (CONT'D)

A couple guys are coming through soon to pick some stuff up.

Jack grabs his bag.

JACK

Yeah, I don't care.

Jack turns around as Mike sits back.

MIKE

Well. Just thought you should know.

Jack takes his bag over to the dining table, sets it down on the tabletop, and pulls out his laptop. He sets it down in front of his chair, next to the glass of water.

Then he leans the bag on the floor against the leg of the table and sits before the laptop. He opens it. Mike stands up and walks OUT of the living room.

Jack checks his email to see a new one from the Creative Writing Program. It reads:

Young Writer's Novel Competition - Deadline Approaching!!

Jack opens it and starts to read.

Mike walks BACK IN behind him with a small box in one hand and a small lockbox in the other.

JACK
Listen to this. There's a novel
competition for young writers this
fall. The winner could get a
publication deal!

Mike opens the small box and pulls out a scale. He puts it
on the table.

MIKE
Huh.

JACK
Yeah the deadline is in October.

Mike looks over.

MIKE
You're gonna write a novel by
October?

Jack looks to Mike.

JACK
Maybe.

He looks back at the computer screen as Mike opens the
lockbox.

MIKE
How long does it have to be?

JACK
Uh... Well a novel, I think, is
40,000 words or so.

Mike glances over and back down to the lockbox.

MIKE
What're you gonna' write a fuckin'
novel about?

Jack shrugs.

JACK
I dunno, maybe I'll adapt this
short story I just wrote.

MIKE
Uh... Is there like an application
fee?

Jack looks at the screen. Then he looks to Mike.

JACK

Yeah.

Mike chuckles.

MIKE

Then maybe don't adapt that short story.

Jack looks away and scratches his forehead.

JACK

Uh... Alright. I'll think of somethin'. I'll write somethin' ten times better than that story.

Then he looks up through the far wall and thinks. He breathes deeply through his nostrils and exhales hard back out.

There's a KNOCK at the door. Mike looks up.

MIKE

That must be them. Can you get the door?

JACK

You get the door.

MIKE

You're closer.

JACK

And they're your customers.

MIKE

Fuck's sake.

Mike stands up and heads OUT of the room towards the front door. Jack looks at the screen.

JACK

Ten times better. You'll see.

6. INT. ENGLISH CLASSROOM - NEXT DAY

JACK sits at his desk with the other classmates. The writing professor, MICHELLE ANDERSON (35) sits behind a slightly larger desk off to the left.

MICHELLE ANDERSON

Alright, that's it for today...

Students start to get up, zip up backpacks, gather papers.

MICHELLE ANDERSON (CONT'D)
I need stories from Annelise and
Jack. You got all the copies?

JACK
Yep.

Jack has a stack of papers, roughly eighteen copies of his story. He taps them on his desk to get them neat, then he stands up among all the students leaving the room.

ANNELISE turns her stack of papers in ahead of him. Then Jack walks up to Michelle with his stack of papers. He puts them down next to Annelise's stack. Then he looks to Michelle.

JACK
Hi, I heard about a novel
competition for young writers, do
you know anything about that?

Michelle takes the two stacks of papers and brings them over to her side of the desk.

MICHELLE ANDERSON
Yeah, the one through the creative
writing department?

Jack nods as he goes back to his desk. He looks over his shoulder at her as he packs up his things.

MICHELLE ANDERSON (CONT'D)
I know the novel is due in October,
there's a small fee, maybe fifteen,
I don't remember. And uh... I think
it's gotta' be at least 40,000
words.

Jack nods and puts his notebook in his bag. He slings the bag over his shoulder.

MICHELLE ANDERSON (CONT'D)
Are you gonna'... Submit? You
think?

Jack walks over towards her desk, not too close.

JACK
Yeah, I'm thinkin' about it.

MICHELLE ANDERSON
Okay. Well y'know it's a little
late to start if you don't have
(MORE)

MICHELLE ANDERSON (CONT'D)

anything written. I mean you've only got a little under two months.

JACK

Right right. I still think I could do it.

MICHELLE ANDERSON

Um... Okay. Well, y'know, give it a shot if you think you can.

Jack slowly makes his way to the door.

JACK

Yeah I'm gonna' try.

Michelle puts on a polite smile.

MICHELLE ANDERSON

Alright.

JACK

Alright, thanks.

Jack sort of motions a wave.

MICHELLE ANDERSON

Yep, see you Thursday.

Jack turns and heads OUT of the classroom. Michelle puts the papers in a folder as she raises her eyebrows and shakes her head.

MICHELLE ANDERSON (CONT'D)

Best of luck.

7. INT. DINING HALL - AFTERNOON

JACK sits at a table with a couple other guys, JEFF (20) and COREY (20). Jack sits next to Jeff and Corey sits across from Jeff.

COREY

I mean people never talk about how much of it's Obama's fault, man. I don't remember racial tensions being this bad when I was growin' up. Back when Bush was president.

Jack keeps eating his food.

JEFF

You were in elementary school. You
(MORE)

JEFF (CONT'D)

didn't know shit about racial tensions, you didn't care!

COREY

No, I ask my dad and he says the same thing.

JEFF

Your dad is a drunk fuckin' idiot.

Corey sits back.

COREY

Jesus, Jeff.

JEFF

And how did Obama make racial tensions worse? What evidence do you have for that?

Corey sips his drink.

COREY

Alright, that's a good point.

Jeff laughs and shakes his head as he goes to take a bite of his sandwich. Jack keeps eating, Corey looks off to the right. He looks to Jeff.

COREY (CONT'D)

You hear about that shooting on Tuesday?

Jeff has food in his mouth, but he responds:

JEFF

The one in the school or the one in the church?

COREY

The one in the school. The church one was last week.

Jeff wipes his mouth.

JEFF

Yeah, what about it?

COREY

Well what makes me angry is the media focusing on, you know, how the guy had a bump stock. And so now they're talking about banning

(MORE)

COREY (CONT'D)

bump stocks. And it's like... They don't even know what a bump stock is. They show these animations of a bump stock and it's - they're not even showing them right. I mean they don't even know what they're talkin' about.

JEFF

They're talkin' about banning them.

COREY

That's so dumb.

JEFF

Why's that dumb.

COREY

If you want a bump stock you can get one off the black market. Besides, that's gonna be so annoying on the range.

JEFF

So we should keep letting just anyone use them?

COREY

Law abiding citizens, yeah.

Jack sighs and continues eating.

7aA. INT. LECTURE HALL

JACK sits among the crowd of students in the hall. He has his notebook out in front of him. His ANTHRO PROFESSOR goes on about something. He picks up his pencil and scribbles down what is on the big screen (o.c.).

7A. EXT. CLEMONS LIBRARY - AFTERNOON

CRANE DOWN from the sign that says CLEMONS LIBRARY to watch JACK walk into the building.

8. INT. ROBERTSON MEDIA CENTER

EMILY (21) sits at the front desk. JACK enters from the stairwell and walks past.

JACK

Hey there.

EMILY

Hi.

He goes into the backroom.

Just after that, he comes out with a name tag on a lanyard that he is placing around his desk.

EMILY (CONT'D)

Are you up here?

JACK

No I'm in the back.

Jack walks AWAY.

9. INT. DIGITAL MEDIA LAB

JACK sits down at the employee desk and opens his laptop. Then he leans back in the chair and places his hands on top of his head.

Google Docs is open on his screen and the type cursor is blinking.

Jack looks at the screen.

The cursor blinks.

He leans forward and types in big Times letters, centered:

Chapter 1

Then he leans back in his chair, folds his arms, and watches the screen again. He sighs and looks out the window.

There's a PATRON at a computer to Jack's left. The Patron turns around.

PATRON #1

Excuse me, do you work here?

Jack shows them his nametag.

PATRON #1 (CONT'D)

Can you help me with something?

JACK

Of course.

Jack looks to his blank screen, closes his laptop, then walks over.

10. INT. THE APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

JACK walks in to see AUSTIN sitting at the dining table and MIKE playing video games on the couch.

JACK
Austin. Feels like it's been a while.

AUSTIN
Yeah, well, y'know... I'm a busy guy.

Jack puts his bag on the floor by the dining table and heads into the kitchen.

MIKE
I'm here too.

JACK
Yeah I know.

Jack opens up the pantry and grabs a bag of RAMEN. He closes the pantry door and heads for the stove. He puts the bag by the stove.

JACK (CONT'D)
(to Mike)
Still haven't thought of what I gotta write, Mike.

MIKE
What?

Jack looks over his shoulder as he gets out a pan.

JACK
I said I still haven't thought of what I'm gonna write.

MIKE
For what?

Jack fills the pot with water from the sink.

JACK
For the novel!

MIKE
What novel?

Jack takes the full pot over to the stove.

JACK
The novel for the competition,
(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

christ, I told you about it
yesterday.

MIKE

Right.

Jack leans over the stove and turns the burner on as Mike
turns to Austin.

MIKE (CONT'D)

I don't remember that.

AUSTIN

How high were you?

Mike shrugs.

MIKE

Very.

Jack turns around and leans on the counter by the dining
room.

JACK

C'mon, what should I write about?

MIKE

Fuck if I know, you're the writer.

Jack heads over towards the coffee table and stands to watch
the TV.

JACK

Yeah but I just need an idea,
somethin' to go off of.

Austin rubs his eye.

AUSTIN

Jack, if you don't have ideas,
maybe you shouldn't be a writer.

Jack raises his eyebrows and turns.

JACK

Well damn, that's a... Pretty...

Jack looks away and kind of shrugs.

JACK (CONT'D)

Pretty true. But uh...

Jack sits down at the dining table.

AUSTIN

You don't have to be a writer
though, you could do the whole
writing thing on the side.

Jack scoffs and scratches his forehead. He looks out the far
window.

JACK

Maybe I'll write something about
the students of an elementary
school after a school shooting.

AUSTIN

That's bold.

JACK

It is, but you gotta' be daring.

AUSTIN

You'lls have to do a bunch of
research.

JACK

Ah true. That's... I don't have
enough time for research.

Jack looks away.

JACK (CONT'D)

Maybe I'll write... I dunno, about
a man who... Raises dogs for
dogfights. And it takes him into
this seedy underworld of drugs and
crime.

AUSTIN

You always write about seedy
underworlds and drugs and crime.

JACK

They say write what you know.

The water is boiling on the stove. Jack turns and gets up.
He heads over to the stove and breaks open the pack of
ramen.

AUSTIN

You don't know shit about any of
that.

JACK

Alright alright.

AUSTIN
But you make a good point.

JACK
What's that?

AUSTIN
Write what you know?

JACK
What do I know?

MIKE
Jack shit.

Jack puts the ramen in the boiling water.

AUSTIN
What do you know?

Jack leans against the counter and his brow knits as he thinks about it.

11. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

JACK lies on his side in the dark and stares at the far wall. The clock on his bedside table reads **12:20**. He breathes deeply through his nose and sighs.

He rolls onto his back and looks up at the ceiling. He sort of squints and purses his lips.

JACK
Shit.

Then Jack rolls onto his other side and pulls the covers up over him. He closes his eyes.

FADE IN:

12. INT. THE GREEN BASEMENT - DARK

The room is very dark and the carpet is green. There is a closed door to the right farther down the hall, out of which light pours from the crack beneath the door.

We DOLLY SLOWLY IN past a pool table. The sound of MOANS echo, muffled, from that room. There are HITS and SCUFFLES within the room.

Then silence.

The door opens and DANNY BARBACOA (20) starts to walk out. He turns in the doorway and points to someone (o.s.).

DANNY

I'm getting my guitar, okay? Stop screaming.

Then Danny closes the door and walks AWAY past the camera.

The camera continues to DOLLY IN towards the door. Behind us, we can hear Danny walking around.

The camera PANS RIGHT and TRACKS LEFT to keep the door in frame. Then Danny walks up, guitar in hand, and opens the door.

Through the door, we see CHUCKIE HOFFMAN (21) lying on the floor, leaning back against a post, with duct tape over his mouth, red puffy eyes, and blood that has run down his chin and dripped onto his shirt. There is a pair of bloody pliers on the ground next to him.

Danny turns to close the door.

DANNY

Now where'd I put your tooth?

He closes the door.

13. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - 3:32 AM

JACK's eyes flutter open and he WAKES UP. Half asleep, he rolls over. He takes a deep breath and exhales.

Then he hears a BUZZING. It is a deep, bassy BUZZ.

Jack props himself up on one elbow and looks around.

The buzz goes away. But now Jack's eyes are open wide. He sits up in bed and rubs his forehead.

Then he falls back against the mattress and rolls onto his side. The clock reads 3:32.

Jack rolls onto his other side.

Jack rolls back. Now the clock reads 3:42.

Jack lies on his back and closes his eyes.

The clock reads **3:50**.

Jack opens his eyes and looks up at the ceiling.

The bassy BUZZING returns. Jack sits up. He looks around.

Then he throws the covers off and turns to go into the

study. There he sees his DESK LAMP is ON. He very cautiously approaches his desk, still in a sleepy daze.

He reaches the desk, where his laptop is plugged in next to his typewriter. He looks at the typewriter in the white light of the desk-lamp. Then he turns his head as an idea strikes him.

He pulls out the desk chair and sits. Then he opens his laptop. He navigates the tabs and opens up the Google Doc.

Underneath the words **Chapter 1**, Jack returns to the left and indents.

He starts to type.

JACK (V.O.)

In the green darkness, a moan echoed from the light of a closed door.

Then Jack grins and sits back. He nods and puts on a self-satisfied smirk. Then he types some more.

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

The door swung open and out walked a black-haired man by the name of...

Jack stops typing. He looks away, eyes wide, then he looks back.

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

Danny Barbacoa.

Jack looks at the name on the screen: **Danny Barbacoa**. He smiles and nods some more.

JACK

Alright.

Jack types some more.

JACK (V.O.)

He turns to the bloodied soul at the foot of a post and says, "Stay right there. I need my guitar."

Jack keeps on typing.

14. INT. THE APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

JACK sits at the dining table with a cup of coffee in front

of him. He leans, quite tired, against the palm of his arm propped on the table.

JEFF walks in, clearly having just woken up. His hair is disheveled and he squints.

JEFF
You're up?

JACK
Uh-huh.

Jeff yawns and heads into the kitchen.

JEFF
Why? You got an 8AM?

Jack sips his coffee.

JACK
No, I just woke up in the middle of the night and couldn't fall back asleep.

Jeff nods and grabs a mug from the cupboard.

JEFF
That sucks.

JACK
Yup. There's coffee in the pot.

Jeff turns and looks at him.

JEFF
Thanks.

He pulls the coffee pot out of the maker and pours some joe into his mug.

JEFF (CONT'D)
You should do this more often.

15. INT. MID-SIZED CLASSROOM - NEW CABELL - DAY

JACK sits with sunken eyes at his little desk in a row of little desks.

There's a guy sitting to Jack's left named PHIL (20). Jack leans over to him.

JACK
Hey Phil, you get a chance to read the story I sent you?

PHIL

Yeah.

JACK

And?

Phil raises his hand and does a so-so kind of motion.

PHIL

Eh.

Phil turns back and focuses his attention on the professor. Jack lingers for a second, his eyes drift away, he scratches his forehead with his middle finger, and then he leans back into his seat. He looks down and nods dejectedly.

16. INT. DINING HALL - LATER

JACK sits at a table by himself. He languidly eats some pasta. Behind him sit two girls, REBECCA (20) and JENNY (19).

JENNY

You're working on the Hill this summer right? Congrats!

REBECCA

Thanks!

JENNY

How'd you.. how'd you get that?

Jack eats some more pasta.

REBECCA

Oh my mom has a friend who's sister worked for some senator, so he has all these connections and stuff and uh.. yeah!

JENNY

That is super cool.

REBECCA

Yeah! What about you?

JENNY

Um... Still looking. Yeah, I don't really know anybody. I mean my parents didn't do anything related to, y'know, what I want to do, so...

Jack puts his fork down and reaches for his drink.

REBECCA

Well you'll find something.

JENNY

Yeah, yeah, for sure, yeah...

Jenny nods and nods as she goes for her drink and takes a sip. Jack shakes his head and drinks his soda.

17. INT. DIGITAL MEDIA LAB - LATER

JACK sits at the employee desk. He has a textbook out and a notebook beside it. He scribbles notes in the notebook. Then he turns the textbook page, scans it, and closes the textbook.

He closes the notebook, puts it on top of his textbook, puts the pencil down, and opens his laptop.

He navigates to the Docs page where there are a few paragraphs written. The cursor blinks at him.

He sits back and looks out the window. The cursor blinks on the screen.

He turns to the computer and goes to Facebook. We see him. We his hand scrolling.

He comes across a post by one **Michael Milloy**. In the post, there is a picture of a 21 year old man with greasy dark brown hair combed back over his head. He smiles at the camera and stands before a photo-shoot background board and holds a small AWARD.

The post reads:

So honored to be recognized by the Virginia Young Writer's Association...

JACK (V.O.)

With their award for excellence in a novella. Much love to-

Jack grimaces.

JACK

Much love?

Jack continues to read, his face full of contempt.

JACK (V.O.)

To all who helped me on my journey
(MORE)

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

to finishing this work. So proud,
so grateful.

Jack sighs and looks away. He rubs his forehead. And then he rubs it more forcefully. Then he rubs his eyes and lets out a frustrated grunt.

He sits back in his chair, folds his arms, and looks at the screen.

JACK

Just...

Jack shakes his head.

JACK (CONT'D)

You're full of shit.

Jack leans forward, tabs over to the Docs page, scrolls up to where it says **Chapter 1** and adds a colon. He writes:

Chapter 1: The Artist at Work

Then Jack sits back and looks at those words. He closes the laptop.

17aA. INT. THE GREEN BASEMENT - DAY

Afternoon sunlight pours in through the windows.

DANNY BARBACOA sits at a drum kit in the corner. He starts to lay down a bass kick in 4/4, crashes the cymbal, and starts up a beat with the snare.

17aB. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - 2:48 AM

JACK wakes up. He looks around, gathering his bearings. He looks over to the clock. It's **2:48**.

He tosses the covers up and, very tired, starts to stumble out of bed.

17A. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY

JACK trudges out of his bedroom in his pajamas and comes over to the desk. He sits down before his laptop.

Then he opens it up.

He YAWNS and pulls his seat up closer to the desk. He rubs his eyes and then navigates to the Docs page.

He looks at the screen. He leans forward and gets his hands poised above the keyboard. He looks off to the middle

distance beyond the right of the screen. Then he starts to type.

20. INT. THE GREEN BASEMENT

DANNY plays the drums.

He starts to complicate the beat, adds some fills with the toms, gets the hi-hats going.

Then he stops. He turns his head.

A faint SCUFFLING can be heard somewhere near. Danny slowly stands, ear turned out to listen.

He gets out from behind the drum kit and starts to head out into the basement.

He reaches the door beyond the pool table to the right, the same door we saw Chuckie Hoffman in earlier. Danny looks left, then right, then opens the door.

20A. INT. THE TORTURE ROOM

CHUCKIE is against the post with his hands tied behind his back with tape. He is moving one hand up and down, his knees are tucked close to his chest. He looks up at DANNY in fear and stops.

DANNY

The fuck are you doing?

Chuckie's mouth is covered in duct tape, and he shakes his head.

CHUCKIE HOFFMAN

(muffled)

Nothing, nothing!

DANNY

Whatdyou got?

Danny rushes over, gets on a knee, and feels around where the ties are around Chuckie's hands. Chuckie's WALLET is on the ground next to his hands. Danny pulls something out of Chuckie's hand and holds it up: a QUARTER.

DANNY (CONT'D)

A quarter, Chuckie? To cut through that tape? A fuckin' quarter?

Chuckie's head drops and he looks away. Danny bends over, GRABS Chuckie's chin, and points it towards him.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Look at me!

Chuckie blinks a few times and tries to make defiant eyes at Danny. Danny laughs, lets go of Chuckie, and stands up.

He looks at the quarter.

DANNY (CONT'D)

I gotta' respect the uh...

Danny sort of freezes as he looks at the quarter.

DANNY (CONT'D)

The uh...

21. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY

JACK scratches his chin and stares off.

JACK

The...

He looks back at the screen.

22. INT. THE TORTURE ROOM

DANNY looks at the quarter.

DANNY

The ambition. But you know what you get when you try to escape, Chuckie.

Danny starts to take his belt off. CHUCKIE starts to kick and squirm. He shakes his head, eyes wide, and he tries to stand up using the post as support.

Danny takes the belt, folds it in half, and raises it. Then he approaches with the belt held high and Chuckie CRIES OUT.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Get up, Chuckie.

Chuckie scrambles to his feet. Danny raises the belt.

JACK (V.O.)

Uhhh...

23. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY

JACK sits back in his chair and brings a hand up beneath his chin. He looks away.

JACK
What's his motivation? What's...

Jack looks out the window. Then he looks back to the screen and gets back to TYPING.

24. INT. THE TORTURE ROOM

DANNY lowers the belt.

DANNY
Hold on.

CHUCKIE watches, confused, as Danny goes over to the desk to the right and opens a laptop. Danny puts the belt next to the laptop as he starts mousing around and opens up LOGIC.

Chuckie's eyes close and he shakes his head. Danny looks back over his shoulder.

DANNY
Can't believe I almost forgot!

Danny walks away from the screen and goes to grab a MIC on a STAND. He brings the mic stand over to where Chuckie is, and he sets it up so that the mic is pointed towards Chuckie's mouth. Not too close, the mic is maybe a foot and a half from Chuckie's face.

Danny goes over to the laptop. He turns on a metronome and starts to adjust TEMPO. Danny turns to Chuckie.

DANNY (CONT'D)
Is 120 too fast?

Chuckie GROANS. Danny turns back to the computer. He taps the desk in time with the metronome.

DANNY (CONT'D)
I like that.

He presses RECORD. Then he grabs the belt and comes over to Chuckie.

DANNY (CONT'D)
Let's lay down a nice driving beat.

He raises the belt over his head. Then he BRINGS it down.

25. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY

JACK sits back from the laptop and grins. He clasps his hands together.

JACK
 Alright. Alright.

Jack nods with self-satisfaction, then he looks around. He gets out of the chair and heads back into his bedroom.

26. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM

JACK gets in bed and pulls the covers over him. He closes his eyes.

A moment passes.

Jack rolls over.

Another moment passes.

Jack rolls onto his back.

He sighs. His eyes open and train on the ceiling. He clicks his tongue.

JACK
 Man.

27. INT. THE APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

JACK trudges into the room. He flicks on the kitchen light, and heads to the cupboard. He gets a cup.

28. I/E. THE BALCONY

JACK steps out with a cup of water and takes a sip. He leans on the railing and looks out.

The sound of trees rustling in the wind and bugs chirping in the night.

Then there's the distant sound of SLAM. And a VOICE IN THE NIGHT, let's call this voice STEVE MACADAMIA.

STEVE MACADAMIA (O.S.)
 Jesus fuck!

Jack's brow furrows and he looks out, squinting. He hears running feet on the pavement. He looks out to the sliver of 14th street he can see.

Steve runs by.

STEVE MACADAMIA
 Stop followin me, Carlo!

Then another figure comes LIMPING along behind Steve,

ostensibly CARLO. Carlo let's out a garbled cry.

CARLO
Come back, Steve!

Jack can hear them run off into the night. Then he rubs his eyes and shakes his head.

JACK
Jesus I'm tired.

Jack looks around a second longer, then he turns and heads back inside.

29. INT. ENGLISH CLASSROOM - THE NEXT DAY

JACK leans over his desk with sunken eyes and his cheek firmly in his palm, hair dangling around his face, staring off into the middle distance, while a CLASSMATE named GRACE CARPENTER talks about his story.

GRACE CARPENTER (O.C.)
I thought the imagery was pretty good, but I had a real problem with the character motivations.

Another classmate, BOBBY QUINN, chimes in.

BOBBY QUINN (O.C.)
Me too.

GRACE CARPENTER (O.C.)
Like I didn't understand why the crazy guy - um Carter I think - why he doesn't kill Jason when he has him tied up in the basement.

Jack slowly lifts his head with a deep breath, turns to look at Grace, and drops his chin on his palm. Grace looks at him.

GRACE CARPENTER (CONT'D)
Is it cuz of the ransom money? Or is it cuz he doesn't want to kill him?

The STUDENTS by Grace, Bobby included, look to Jack. Jack looks around.

JACK
It's cuz of the ransom money.

BOBBY QUINN

Ohhh.

Grace looks at the page.

GRACE CARPENTER

Okay, well I think that could've been clearer.

Jack nods to her, picks up his pencil very deliberately, and writes in his notebook:

Spell out character motivations in BOLD FUCKING CAPS.

Then he puts the pencil down and returns to his position of chin in the hand. Michelle looks around.

MICHELLE ANDERSON

Thanks Grace, who else had comments?

Bobby raises his hand.

BOBBY QUINN

Hi, yeah, I had a problem with the dialogue. It didn't sound realistic to me. It sounded almost like the characters were talking in code. Which, y'know, can be cool I guess, but... It really just broke the diegesis for me.

Bobby nods as he talks and looks at the other students. Jack looks at him with a low brow. Bobby looks over at him and Jack nods and shrugs.

JACK

Okay.

Then Jack returns to his former position. There is a brief silence in the room.

MICHELLE ANDERSON

Alright, good feedback. How about things that worked in the piece?

Michelle looks around. Everybody looks around at each other.

Silence. Jack makes a "That figures" sort of face and looks at the ground, not moving his head from its resting place.

Grace tentatively puts her hand up.

GRACE CARPENTER

Like I said, I thought the imagery
was good.

Bobby and a couple other students nod. Jack nods. Michelle
looks around.

More awkward silence.

MICHELLE ANDERSON

Alright, let's move on to
Annelise's.

Everybody starts shuffling papers to put away Jack's story
and get out Annelise's. Jack doesn't move at first. Then he
sighs, leans back, and gets out Annelise's story. He plops
it on his desk.

30. INT. DINING HALL - LUNCH

JACK sits with JEFF and COREY and flips through a copy of
the Cavalier Daily.

JEFF

I was there, man, I was in D.C.

COREY

Ah I wish I coulda gone.

Jack notices something on the page. Under an article
headline. He looks closer.

JACK

Grace Carpenter, lead editor.

Jack sits back and says in a whiny kind of voice:

JACK

Look at this...

Jeff looks over as Jack points to the paper.

JEFF

What?

JACK

This chick is in my writing class,
Grace Carpenter. She got promoted
to lead editor. Or elected I guess.

JEFF

Oh good for her.

JACK

No. Not good for her. She's not even a good writer.

COREY

She must be, she's lead editor.

JACK

No, she's likeable, she gets people on her side. It's all just people skills man.

JEFF

Yeah, something you have none of.

Jeff leans back over to his food. Jack watches him and opens his mouth, takes a breath, then:

JACK

Well.... yeah... I know that. But Grace Carpenter is a talentless hack.

JEFF

To you maybe, but not to society. To society, she's a capable journalist. To society, you're the talentless hack.

Jeff bites a forkful of some dish, doesn't matter what it is. Jack leans away from Jeff and looks at him.

JACK

Well shit, Jeff. Some friend you are.

Jeff shrugs. Jack scoffs and stands up.

JACK (CONT'D)

I'm gettin' coffee.

JEFF

More coffee?

Jack pushes his chair in.

JACK

I didn't say anything when you got more ice cream.

Jeff throws his hands up.

JEFF

Alright.

Jack walks AWAY. Jeff turns to Corey and scoffs.

JEFF (CONT'D)

What an asshole.

COREY

He's got a point.

31. INT. DIGITAL MEDIA LAB

JACK sits slumped in his chair at the employee desk, but his leg is bouncing rapidly under the table. His expression is very weary and tired. His eyes glaze over and fixate on the horizon beyond the wall.

The Docs page is open in front of him. The cursor blinks.

Jack's hands are in his lap. His eyes drift over to the clock.

The time is **9:16**.

Jack rubs his face.

Then he hears a rustling behind him. He turns around. There's nobody there. Jack leans to look into the offices in back: still nothing.

Jack turns back around and returns to his position of sitting and staring.

Then he hears a BUMP back there. He turns around and stands up. He cranes his neck to look.

Then he goes around the side and heads into the back offices. He passes the filing cabinet, opens it, and pulls out a NERF GUN.

Very cautiously, Jack walks past cluttered offices full of old equipment. He scans the old recorders, tape machines, scanners, obsolete VHS gear, cassettes. He peers into a tiny room lined with post-it notes and tools. He holds up the Nerf gun as he goes.

He looks right at a desk that hasn't been used in years. Still everything remains untouched. Some of the drawers are still pulled open. Jack trains his gun and keeps searching.

He whips around a corner with his gun and strafes the wall. Back here the buzzing of the AC unit is eerie and

overbearing. Jack peers into darkened offices that are locked.

He gets to the end and lowers his gun. He turns around to see his BOSS, ADAM, standing at the end of the hall.

ADAM
What're you doing?

Jack points into the offices with his gun.

JACK
I heard a noise.

ADAM
Get back to work.

Jack nods and heads for his desk.

32. INT. THE APARTMENT

JACK comes in with his bag dangling from his shoulder. He sees MIKE playing video games on the couch with BILLY NASH III, who stares at the screen with a vacant gaze and mouth hanging slackjawed.

JACK
Hey Mike.

Mike GRUNTS, maintaining focus on the TV. Jack puts his bag down on the dining table and looks over.

JACK (CONT'D)
How's it goin, I'm Jack.

Billy keeps staring at the TV. Jack pauses, scratches his ear, and looks down with an odd half-smile, half-grimace.

JACK (CONT'D)
Uh... Mike who's this?

MIKE
Billy Nash, the Third.

Jack nods.

JACK
Oh. What's up, Billy?

Billy looks at Mike. Mike props his hand on his knee and looks at Jack.

MIKE
It's not Billy. It's Billy Nash,
(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)

the Third, okay?

Jack looks at Mike. Then Billy swivels his head slowly over to Jack. Jack looks at him.

JACK

Alright.

Billy keeps staring at Jack as Mike continues playing. Jack stands there very self-consciously looking at the screen and glancing at Billy. Jack pulls an awkward white-guy smile and nods at Billy. Billy swivels his head back to the screen.

Jack heads to the kitchen.

33. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY

JACK sits before his laptop in the dim light of the desk lamp. He starts to type.

JACK (V.O.)

Chuckie Hoffman had never seen such darkness in his life. It was the kind of darkness that began to breed shapes as time passed. It was the kind of darkness so dark it exceeded black and became something beyond. Something endless. And then the light turned on.

34. INT. THE TORTURE ROOM

The room is dark. Then the lights come on and Chuckie shuts his eyes with a YELP. He squints up as DANNY walks in with a zombie-like figure behind him.

DANNY

Chuckie, this is Jeff Sessions. Not to be confused with the limp-dick white raisin in DC of the same name. Don't mention the attorney general or Jeff will get mad.

JEFF SESSIONS looks at Chuckie and nods with the same slackjawed expressions that Billy had in the scene prior. Danny turns to Jeff and motions to a seat in the corner.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Go ahead, Jeff.

Jeff swivels his head, nods to Danny, then heads to the seat

in the corner and sits down. Chuckie cranes his neck to look around the post at Jeff in the corner. Chuckie's eyebrows are raised and his expression is one of confusion. Chuckie turns back around to look at Danny.

DANNY (CONT'D)

He's here to watch.

Chuckie's head drops. Danny comes over to Chuckie, gets down on one knee, and strokes Chuckie's hair down the back of his head.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Don't worry, Chuckie. How's your tooth?

Chuckie looks at him and tries to say.

CHUCKIE HOFFMAN

(completely muffled)

How the fuck do you think?

Danny laughs and looks to Jeff in the corner.

DANNY

I like this one. He's got real passion. Real energy.

Chuckie tries to SHOUT and Danny puts his finger over the tape over Chuckie's mouth.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Shhhhhh. It'll be over eventually.

Danny shrugs.

DANNY (CONT'D)

When the song is finished.

Danny stands up and heads to his computer. He opens it up and looks back at Jeff.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Wanna hear what I have so far?

Jeff nods very deliberately. Danny grins and turns around to face the computer. He clicks PLAY.

A twangy guitar riff starts to play. Danny turns around to look at Jeff. Jeff looks at him.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Wait for it...

A bass drum kicks, then a drum fill, and the rhythm guitar comes in from some acoustic strumming a chord progression. As the sound of the BELT-SLAP comes in to aid the percussion. Danny starts bobbing his head and looks to Chuckie.

The song plays and the verse starts up, Danny's voice rings through the speakers. Danny grins and looks to Jeff. Jeff stares vacantly into the distance and bobs his head vigorously to the music.

Danny raises a finger.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Now to the chorus.

A splash of the cymbals takes the song into the chorus, Danny singing out in the music, and moans in the background. Chuckie looks up with a bewildered mix of fear, disgust, and confusion on his face.

Danny dances around the room as the music plays. He circles the post Chuckie is tied up to, dancing around as he goes, and he gets back over to the computer. He looks to Jeff.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Whatdyou think?

Jeff keeps bobbing his head and he raises a thumbs-up. Danny grins and fist pumps.

35. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY

JACK chuckles to himself as he types. Then he sits back and exhales. Then his smile fades and he scratches his eyebrow.

JACK

What in the hell did I just write.

36. INT. THE APARTMENT

JACK sits at the dining table, leaning the side of his head on his fist. He doesn't move as he brings the coffee cup up to the side of his mouth and pours some coffee in.

MIKE emerges from the hallway and YAWNS. He sees Jack and STARTLES. His eyebrows raise as his face still tries to wake up, and he stretches as he walks into the living room.

He goes over to the couch and lies down. Jack turns.

JACK

So what's the deal with Billy Nash

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

the Third?

Mike throws up his hands and YAWNS.

MIKE

Whatdyou mean?

JACK

I mean the way he was acting. He was just sitting, looking, he didn't say anything. What's the deal?

Mike shrugs and glances at the TV.

MIKE

I dunno.

Jack looks at him. Then he looks away. Then he sort of shrugs and turns around as he sips his coffee.

37. INT. MID-SIZED CLASSROOM - NEW CABELL

JACK stares off with his usual sunken eyes as the PROFESSOR goes on. Then Jack comes to attention when he hears:

NEW CABELL PROFESSOR

So just get into groups with the people around you... And discuss.

Jack sits up and looks around. There's PHIL to Jack's left, who turns to face Jack. The STUDENTS to Jack's right turn away. Then Jack looks forward.

The girl in front of him turns around. She has bright eyes, which lock onto Jack's, and her name is GABRIELLE DILLON (21).

GABRIELLE

So, uh...

Jack looks to Phil. Phil chews his gum.

PHIL

Alright, I'll start. I think in this scene, the whole idea is the presentation of this new unexplored world, like a new planet, and Aguirre is the crazy explorer. He kinda' lumbers around, limping, with that chick who I guess is his daughter. We get the new world and the main guy all right away.

Jack nods and looks to Gabrielle.

JACK

True. What did you think?

GABRIELLE

Well, I was struck by the juxtaposition of this grand, operatic music, with these images of the mountainscape. It's majestic, yet also haunting. And all these men weaving through, down the trail, back up, pulling these llamas, it's like a romantic ode to this magnificent spectacle of nature, with clouds rolling between the peaks and these people who – as we know, having seen the movie – are doomed to fall, to be overpowered by the raw force of nature in these mountains and in the river valley below. Just an amazing way to start the film and set up everything that's to come.

Then she nods and looks to Jack. Jack has his eyebrows raised and he looks to Phil.

JACK

Uh.. well... I agree with all that. Can't really put it any better, well said.

NEW CABELL PROFESSOR

Alright folks, let's reconvene here, who wants to share?

Jack sits back in his chair, saved by the bell, as Gabrielle turns back around, and Phil leans away. Then Jack sorta chuckles.

38. INT. ALDERMAN MAP ROOM

JACK sits at a table, writing into his notebook and reading from the .pdf on the screen of his open laptop. There is a paper cup of coffee to his right of the laptop.

The light is almost a greenish-yellow, bouncing up off the tan chairs and tabletops, and the green of the carpeting. Jack puts his pencil down and looks out the window.

He can see people walking by in the afternoon sun. He looks

forward into the map room, which is mostly empty.

JACK (V.O.)

Like finding a traveler in the woods, wandering for the same reasons as you. Holding a lantern against the imposing darkness, and approaching from some unseen direction.

Jack then looks at the computer screen, opens up Notes, and starts to type. A smile creeps up at the corner of his mouth for a flash of a second.

40. INT. THE APARTMENT

JACK walks in to see BILLY NASH III playing video games on the couch. Jack puts his bag on the floor by the dining table and looks around. Billy has a headset on and is grinning.

BILLY NASH III

Maaaaan, fuck off.

Jack looks around.

JACK

Billy Nash the Third.

Billy glances over.

BILLY NASH III

Hey there, Pete.

JACK

Hey. Uh. Where's Mike?

Billy keeps playing.

BILLY NASH III

Got someone at 205.

He plays on.

JACK

Billy Nash the Third, where's Mike?

BILLY NASH III

Think he's in his room.

Jack nods, then heads down the hall a few paces.

JACK

Mike!

MIKE (O.S.)

What?

Jack looks away, realizing he had nothing to say.

JACK

Uh... Nothing.

Mike comes out of his room.

MIKE

What?

JACK

Nothing. What's going on?

MIKE

Nothing. I got someone coming through in a few though, lemme know when he gets here.

Mike heads back into his room. Jack stands there for a moment, scratches his ear, then heads back into the living room.

41. INT. THE APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

JACK sits on the couch next to BILLY NASH III, who plays video games. Billy talks into the mic as Jack vacantly watches the game.

BILLY NASH III

I thought she was gonna' do a little more, but she just licked my face. I said, 'No ma'am.' and I walked away.

(beat)

Well I surely did. Yessir.

(beat)

I know it.

Billy laughs.

BILLY NASH III (CONT'D)

If you'da been there, you'da known. Nobody wants their face licked by some hoe. Oh shit, I'm gettin' shot at.

There's a KNOCK at the door. Jack hops up and heads over to open it. He looks through the peephole to see a very tall dude in a BUCKET HAT and a CAMO JACKET, holding a SODA. This is DUKE SARDUCCI (20).

Jack OPENS the door.

JACK
What's up.

Duke has some kind of Brooklyn-ish accent.

DUKE
How you doin'.

Duke walks in and Jack closes it behind him. Then Duke wraps an arm around Jack's shoulder and looks down at him as he keeps walking, dragging Jack along.

DUKE (CONT'D)
Who ah you?

JACK
Jack Stevens.

DUKE
Duke Sarducci, nice to meet ya -
hey look who it is!

Duke takes his arm off Jack and walks over to Billy.

DUKE (CONT'D)
Billy Nash the Third! How's it
goin'?

Jack looks down the hall.

JACK
Mike! Duke is here.

MIKE (O.S.)
One sec!

Jack looks back over. Billy looks up.

BILLY NASH III
Hey, Duke.

Duke drinks his soda.

DUKE
You guys lookin' to buy anything?

Duke points to Jack.

DUKE (CONT'D)
You want acid? Shrooms? You look
like a shrooms guy.

Jack shakes his head.

DUKE (CONT'D)
No? Okay... Coke? I got coke.

He turns to Billy.

DUKE (CONT'D)
Don't be tellin' everybody.

He turns back to Jack.

DUKE (CONT'D)
You want molly? DMT? I got DMT, you
want mescaline? I got that too,
give you a good deal.

JACK
I'm good, thanks.

Duke puts up his hands.

DUKE
Alright, suit yourself. Billy?

BILLY NASH III
How much for some mescaline?

DUKE
Ahhhh, gotta love Billy. I got
little mescaline pellets, I'll sell
you three for 60, five for 80.

Mike walks in with his lockbox.

MIKE
So I'll give you ten vives for
fifteen addy, sound good?

DUKE
Hey, Mike, alright. Lemme...

Duke fishes around in one of his jacket pockets.

DUKE (CONT'D)
Wanna smoke somethin'?

MIKE
Sure, it's Thursday.

DUKE
Alright. Stevens?

JACK

No thanks, I gotta be goin' to sleep.

DUKE

Sleep? Jesus fuck, it's 9:00 on a Thursday, what is your life?

Jack shrugs. Mike waves him off.

MIKE

Forget him, he's got no life.

Jack glances away like "Whoa".

42. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

JACK lies on his side in bed. The sound of some party rumbles through the room, with the thumping of a sub-woofer and the chatter of muffled voices.

Jack rolls onto his back and looks up at the ceiling.

43. INT. THE GREEN BASEMENT

DANNY looks back at Jack. He stares dead into the camera, background obscured, and breathes. The sound of a distant, jazzy, drum beat echoes, brushes on a snare drum and the restrained touch of a cymbal.

44. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM

JACK rolls onto his side. He closes his eyes.

45. INT. MID-SIZED CLASSROOM - NEW CABELL

GABRIELLE turns around and looks at the camera, her eyes piercing, glinting in the light.

The strum of a guitar, heavy with reverb, and:

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

46. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - AFTER MIDNIGHT

JACK wakes up. The world is silent. Jack sits up.

47. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY

JACK sits down at his desk and opens his laptop. He navigates to the Docs page and rests his hands in his lap. He looks at the white screen, face illuminated in blue. Then

he sighs and his shoulders sag.

He looks to his left. Then he walks back into his bedroom.

He returns with his clothes on, and he walks over to the laptop and shuts the screen. Then he walks OUT.

48. EXT. 14TH STREET - NIGHT

JACK walks out onto the street, looks left, looks right. He heads right, down the hill, towards all the houses and apartment buildings with trampled lawns littered with crushed cans and solo cups.

In the back of his mind, the faint jazzy beat returns with that same reverberating guitar and an accompanying Wurlitzer chiming in on chords.

Jack walks down the hill, looking up at the glowing streetlamps and the muddy sky. The trees hang thick over the sidewalks and the driveways.

SOMEBODY walks down the opposite sidewalk up ahead. Jack glances at them with slight trepidation and curiosity.

A CAR passes by and Jack watches it over his shoulder as he starts up the next hill.

There is a house past a couple tall hedges and a telephone pole to Jack's right as he comes up the hill. There are no trees looming over it, nor the one next to it, just the night sky overhead. There are cars in the lawn and lights strung up on the front porch.

Jack continues on and reaches the intersection of 14th and John St. He looks right down John, and keeps on down 14th.

ANOTHER SOMEBODY sits on the low stone wall at the edge of the corner house's lawn by the bus stop. They have their hands on their knees and their head hung down, eyes on the ground, lids heavy over the eyes but not closed.

Jack walks up with caution, and as he passes the Somebody LOOKS UP quickly at him. Jack looks away. They put their head back down.

As Jack gets a little further away, he glances back at the Somebody, then he carries on.

49. EXT. VIRGINIA AVE - NIGHT

JACK walks on under the heavy trees that loom over Virginia Ave. He comes to the curve in the road and sees the train

track to his left. He looks over at it as he goes along, staring at the tracks until he has to go right and the trees cut off his eyeline.

50. EXT. RUGBY ROAD - NIGHT

JACK comes out of the cut-through to Virginia Ave, just right of Beta Bridge, and he looks around at the deserted Rugby Road. Somewhere in the distance he can hear VOICES and people LAUGHING. The faint music in his head still plays.

As he crosses Beta Bridge, he looks once more over his left shoulder at the train tracks that run below. He turns his attention forward.

JACK (V.O.)
What the hell am I gonna write?

Jack looks around as he wonders to himself.

JACK (V.O.)
Does Danny kill Chuckie?

Jack grimaces at the thought.

JACK (V.O.)
I'm tired of writing about people killing each other. It's becoming a trope.

Jack sighs and looks at the sidewalk. Up ahead, a car rounds the corner and comes down Rugby. Jack looks to his left again to see Mad Bowl down below. It's dark and hard to make out, but it's there. The car passes.

JACK (V.O.)
But what else can he do?

51. EXT. UNIVERSITY AVE - NIGHT

JACK reaches the corner of Rugby and University Ave. He looks up at the Rotunda on its little hill. Then he turns left to head down University towards Main.

Down the street, Jack walks along in the dim light of the streetlamps.

52. EXT. THE CORNER - NIGHT

JACK walks down the hill of Main towards the train-tracks which go over the road. He passes White Spot, which is still open, and looks in at the drunks still sitting at the counter over their burgers and fries. He looks at the cooks

still begrudgingly cooking and serving, dealing with the drunk idiots.

JACK (V.O.)
 Danny needs some kind of enforcer.

Then Jack turns and heads towards the intersection, under the tracks overhead.

53. INT. THE TORTURE ROOM

DANNY opens the door and flicks the light on. CHUCKIE yelps and squints in the bright white light. Another man, brawny and square-jawed, follows Danny into the room. This is ELLIS. He wears an olive drab military cap on backwards and a tight tee shirt, and he stands with his legs apart and hands clasped behind his back.

Danny squats before Chuckie.

DANNY
 Chuckie, this is Ellis.

Ellis waves.

DANNY (CONT'D)
 Take a look at Ellis.

Chuckie looks at him, then looks at Danny.

DANNY (CONT'D)
 I'm gonna' let you go now. But!
 Just know... That Ellis will be
 watching. If you say anything to
 anyone, we will know. He will know.
 And he will break you.

Chuckie and Danny look over at Ellis again and Ellis nods matter-of-factly.

Danny turns back around.

DANNY
 Look at you. You're not even that
 bad.

Danny slaps Chuckie on the cheek.

DANNY (CONT'D)
 Not the worse for wear. Missing a
 tooth. Bruised. But you'll be fine!
 Right?

Chuckie nods.

DANNY (CONT'D)
So you're not gonna talk to anyone.

Chuckie shakes his head.

DANNY (CONT'D)
You're not gonna' try the ole'
witness protection.

Chuckie shakes his head.

DANNY (CONT'D)
And you're not gonna' mention any
of this to anyone, ever. Got it?

Chuckie shakes his head.

DANNY (CONT'D)
I think you meant to nod.

Chuckie quickly nods and nods and nods. Danny grabs his face.

DANNY (CONT'D)
Okay, enough nodding.

Danny stands up. He throws a thumb over his shoulder.

DANNY (CONT'D)
He's gonna' put a bag over your
head and drop you off in the woods
by your house. Then... You're gonna
say you were staying at a friend's
house and lost track of time.

Chuckie cocks an eyebrow.

DANNY (CONT'D)
What, you don't like that? Come up
with a better story if you have to.
But remember: if you tell anyone
what happens...

Chuckie nods and shuts his eyes. Danny turns to Ellis.

DANNY (CONT'D)
Alright, bag him.

Ellis takes the bag he was holding behind his back and approaches Chuckie. He kneels before him, raises the bag, and pulls it down over Chuckie's head.

Then he turns and grabs the tooth off the counter. He puts it in a Ziploc baggie, then the baggie goes in his pocket.

54. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY

JACK closes the laptop and stands up.

55. INT. ENGLISH CLASSROOM - NEXT DAY

JACK looks down at the graded copy of his short story. It has a red **B+** written on it.

Jack stares at the paper.

Jack's face is haggard and cheeks sallow. He looks quite tired. He half-assedly flips through pages with the professor's notes and comments. Then he just tosses it on the desk and sits back.

56. INT. DINING HALL - LUNCH

JACK sits with JEFF and COREY, and a fourth guy: CHRIS CARLSON. He has a hat on backwards and wears a nice polo. He raises his wrist to show off his watch to the guys.

CHRIS CARLSON
Guess how much this costed?

JEFF
I dunno. Five thousand?

CHRIS CARLSON
Good guess, you?

Chris looks to Corey.

COREY
Three thousand?

CHRIS CARLSON
No, whatdyou think?

Chris looks to Jack. Jack sips his coffee, hunched over and weary.

JACK
I don't care.

CHRIS CARLSON
C'mon guess.

JACK
Couple hundred.

Chris laughs.

CHRIS CARLSON
Someone doesn't know their watches.
This here...

Chris shows it off.

CHRIS CARLSON (CONT'D)
Is a twelve thousand dollar watch.

Corey's eyes light up and he looks at Jeff.

COREY
Wow.

JEFF
Damn dude.

JACK
Your dad get it for you?

Chris lowers the watch.

CHRIS CARLSON
Well yeah.

He laughs.

CHRIS CARLSON (CONT'D)
So what?

Jack shrugs.

JACK
What does he do?

Chris seems to puff his chest up as he responds:

CHRIS CARLSON
Runs a small hedge fund.

He demonstrates 'small' by raising his right hand and extending his thumb and index finger as if they were gripping a one-inch cube. Then he lowers his hand and looks to Corey.

CHRIS CARLSON (CONT'D)
Pretty cool huh.

Corey nods. Jack sips his coffee and rubs his eye.

57. EXT. COURTYARD - DAY

JACK walks down the sidewalk in front of Peabody Hall in slow motion, looking vacantly around and scanning the faces of passersby.

JACK (V.O.)

The streets are crawling with the mad and the starving. And by the water there are mansions with Porsches out front and servants trimming the hedges. Someday, the gelatinous imps within will pry their lips off the rubbery nipples of their mothers and wail to the world that the poor are to blame for their own problems.

Other students walk by, glancing over as they go.

JACK (V.O.)

Then they put on their parents clothes, get into their parents cars, and drive to the schools their parents paid for. Soon they will espouse the virtues of hard work, how much they labored in their life. Oh how painful the cushions of their chairs must have been on their asses. I'm just another baby too. Nothing but dumb luck. That's all I have to thank for my lot in life.

58. INT. DIGITAL MEDIA LAB

JACK sits typing into his Notes.

JACK (V.O.)

Sure, I've had to work, but I don't really know what it means to *work*. I don't know what it means to sit down at the end of a long day and truly know the value of a dollar. What a single dollar means. I'm one of the spoiled masses who whine about the poor, the disabled, the hungry, the unstable, or how it's all so unfair that people come from another country and work harder than me for less money...

The camera dollies around Jack as he types in a mad frenzy, eyes pried open and fueled with caffeine, lips firmly

pressed together, eyebrows raised like Jack Nicholson's.

JACK (V.O.)

Speaking a language they may barely know, surrounded by a culture they don't know and people who don't want them there. What ground does any spoiled trust-fund baby have to bitch about anything? And what license do I have at all to complain about a single thing?

Jack sits back and looks at the words on the screen.

DUKE

Man, everybody knows that.

Jack startles and turns around to see DUKE SARDUCCI leaning over and looking at the screen. He motions to the screen.

DUKE (CONT'D)

Everybody knows that. They figured it out a long time ago, but what're you gonna do! Just keep livin. Life can suck no matter how much money you got. I mean, you don't even look at it from a macro perspective. Think about what we've done to the planet. What we've done to animals! Keeping them in cages, unable to move or live any real kind of life, being bred simply to die, how would you like that?

Jack is so taken aback, he is speechless. He looks at the screen, then at Duke.

JACK

I wouldn't.

DUKE

And yet, I bet you still eat meat every day.

JACK

Maybe not every day.

DUKE

Throwin' stones in glass houses man. Stop whining.

JACK
What're you doing here?

Duke looks around.

DUKE
I dunno, I'm bored. Aren't you
writing a book?

JACK
How'd you know that?

DUKE
Mike told me. Is this it?

JACK
No, this is just a thought I had.

Duke nods.

DUKE
Why aren't you writing your book?

JACK
Uh. I dunno. I write it at night I
guess.

DUKE
Alright, well, good luck.

Duke walks AWAY. Jack shakes his head, very confused.

59. INT. THE APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

JACK sits at the dining table and eats a bowl of spaghetti.
There is a small notebook open to the right of the bowl.
MIKE is on the couch. There is a knock at the door.

Jack gets up, goes over, and opens it. Standing in the
doorway is a sad-sack kind of guy, pale, eyes cast down,
then he looks up at Jack. This is BLUE BENNY.

BLUE BENNY
Hi, Jack, is Mike there?

JACK
Yeah, come on in.

Blue Benny comes in and heads over to the couch and Mike.

MIKE
Hey Benny.

Mike opens the lockbox. Jack sits back down at the dinner table. Jack looks at his little notebook. There is a list of plot points on it.

Jack picks up a pen and writes:

4. Ellis dumps Chuckie at home. They then look for a new victim.

Then he puts the pen down and eats a forkful of spaghetti.

BLUE BENNY

Hey, you hear my poem got accepted to V magazine?

Mike doesn't look up.

MIKE

I did not. But congratulations.

Benny puts his hands in his pockets and humbly beams. Jack looks over.

BLUE BENNY

Thanks.

JACK

Y'know I've submitted to that magazine like four times now.

Benny turns.

BLUE BENNY

Oh yeah?

JACK

Yeah, I got rejected every time.

BLUE BENNY

Oh.

JACK

Lemme read your poem.

Benny rubs the elbow of his down-stretched arm.

BLUE BENNY

I dunno.

JACK

C'mon I wanna read it.

BLUE BENNY

No, that's okay.

Jack lowers his fork and sighs.

JACK

Well it's gonna be in the magazine
anyway, so I'll see it soon enough.

Benny looks away, uncomfortable. Jack turns back to his notebook and writes:

5. After watching what Danny does with the new victim, Ellis is disturbed...

JACK (V.O.)

He starts to question his
involvement.

BLUE BENNY (O.C.)

Do you mind if I smoke some on your
porch?

MIKE (O.C.)

Yeah I don't care.

60. EXT. STREETS OF WAYNEWOOD - DAY

ELLIS drives down the road. There is a faint, muffled sound of shifting and grunts. We pass the red-brick, Virginian houses of Waynewood. House after house, bikes in the lawn, porches out front, cars in the driveway, decorated mailboxes, flowers in the garden, house after house.

Ellis looks around. He turns into a Dead End area by some trees and puts the car in park. He opens his door.

Next, we see him open the trunk and look down. CHUCKIE is bound up with duct tape around his wrists and ankles, folded into the trunk, with a bag over his head. Ellis reaches down and pulls the bag off his head. Chuckie squints up at the bright world.

ELLIS

I'm gonna untie you. And when I do,
don't run, don't scream, just get
out and walk, casual, into your
house. Okay?

Chuckie looks up.

ELLIS (CONT'D)

You got it?

Chuckie nods. Ellis flicks open his knife and first cuts the tape around Chuckie's ankles. He rolls Chuckie onto his side, reaches over, and cuts the tape around his wrists. Then he pulls the tape off Chuckie's mouth. Chuckie grabs his mouth with one hand as Ellis pulls him out of the trunk with the other hand.

Chuckie stands up next to Ellis, and Ellis closes the trunk. Chuckie rubs his wrists and looks around. Ellis raises a finger.

ELLIS

Don't tell anyone. I'll be watching you. Now go.

Chuckie starts away as Ellis heads around to the driver door, and then Chuckie turns.

CHUCKIE HOFFMAN

Why do you do this?

ELLIS

Huh?

CHUCKIE HOFFMAN

Why do you help him?

Ellis looks away, down the street, there's no answer, so he looks back at Chuckie.

ELLIS

Just go home, Chuckie.

Then Ellis opens the door and gets in the car. Chuckie watches Ellis drive away.

JACK (V.O.)

Chuckie stands in the green glow of the summer grass and watches Ellis' car disappear around the bend, back into the unknown distance from which he came.

61. INT. THE APARTMENT - 3 AM

JACK sits at the dinner table with the music in his head playing softly in the background. He has his little notebook in front of him, but he stares with a mad gaze through the far wall. Steam rises from his coffee cup.

A COUGH from the balcony and Jack's gaze is broken. He cocks an eyebrow and looks over. Then he takes a quick sip of coffee and stands.

62. EXT. THE BALCONY - LATE NIGHT

JACK opens the balcony door to see BLUE BENNY sitting in a chair staring out into the night as smoke rises from the ashtray to his right. Benny looks up.

JACK
(whisper)
Benny. What the fuck are you still
doing here?

Benny sits up and glances back out into the courtyard.

BLUE BENNY
I don't know.

JACK
What?

BLUE BENNY
I don't know.

JACK
Why don't you go home, why are you
awake? It's 3 AM!

BLUE BENNY
Some nights I can't sleep. And I
didn't wanna get up and go home, I
got comfy here.

Jack sighs. Then he closes the balcony door and steps out. He sits down in the seat right of the table.

JACK
Benny, you can't just sit on our
balcony all night without us
knowing.

BLUE BENNY
I know.

JACK
So what're you doing?

BLUE BENNY
What're you doing?

Jack hears the faint strum of the guitar and the drums as they lightly splash the cymbal.

JACK
I wake up in the middle of the
(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

night. Every night. It's when I
write.

Benny keeps staring out, he doesn't look over.

BLUE BENNY

What're you writing?

JACK

A novel.

BLUE BENNY

What about?

JACK

About a musician who makes records
using the sounds of people he
tortures.

BLUE BENNY

Oh.

Jack scoffs.

JACK

Yep.

BLUE BENNY

Just the sounds of people he
tortures?

JACK

No, he uses instruments. But
y'know, a lot of the sounds are
like accompaniments. That part
isn't as important.

BLUE BENNY

Okay.

Jack looks out. They both do now. The distant sound of bugs
in the night and animals rummaging through trash bins. Jack
still hears the guitar and the drums and now a synth playing
a stray chord. The distant whir of the wind through the
trees and down the roads.

BLUE BENNY (CONT'D)

How does it end?

JACK

Still figuring that out.

BLUE BENNY
Probably not well, I bet.

Jack looks over.

JACK
Why's that?

BLUE BENNY
Well, he's gotta get caught right?
Or maybe he feels guilty and stops.

Jack looks out again, slightly offended.

JACK
Well... It's more about... How he
sacrifices for his art. He's
willing to do whatever it takes.
All that matters is that the album
is good. Not just good, but great.

BLUE BENNY
Okay.

Then they both look out in a brief silence once again. The music carries on in the distance. The sound of moaning among the instruments, maybe it's Chuckie. A whip cracks.

BLUE BENNY
Is your protagonist always based on
yourself?

Jack sort of looks around with his head and takes a deep breath.

JACK
Uh... No? I mean, I always draw on
my own experience, my own
perspective, that's what I know.

BLUE BENNY
Okay.

Benny looks back out. Jack glances to Benny, then back out, then back at Benny, then back out, an awkward look on his face. He feels judgement, but from Benny of all people? Where does Benny get the balls?

BLUE BENNY (CONT'D)
Is he based on you?

JACK
Kinda.

They both look out and share the silence. The music carries on. There is a voice in the night, maybe it's STEVE MACADAMIA, crying out because he's being chased again.

BLUE BENNY (CONT'D)

This guy in your novel... Sounds like a pretty troubled individual.

Jack looks over.

JACK

Oh definitely.

BLUE BENNY

Is he angry?

JACK

Yeah, I'd say so.

BLUE BENNY

What's he angry about?

Jack shifts.

JACK

Um... I guess it has to do with disappointment. In other people, but in himself. And, y'know, feelings of unworthiness, of needing to make something validating. He's also just reacting to general frustrations with the world.

BLUE BENNY

Hm...

Benny looks out. He takes a deep breath through his nose. Then he slowly lets it out.

BLUE BENNY (CONT'D)

I was walking down 14th the other day, headed to Shenandoah Joe's I think, and... it was raining. And I could see at the top of the hill the reflections of red and blue lights off the windows and the sides of parked cars. I could see the blue light stretching through the falling rain. And when I got to the top of the hill I could see two cop cars blocking off part of the

(MORE)

BLUE BENNY (CONT'D)

road, and an ambulance, and a sedan with its hazards on. An old woman stood, shaking in the rain, talking to a cop in the open doorway of the car. I could see feet in big shoes on a stretcher disappear into the ambulance as an EMT closed the back doors, and it was clear from the blood on the ground, and on the front of the car, that this woman had hit a pedestrian.

Benny scratches his nose.

BLUE BENNY (CONT'D)

And all these students passed by, they looked over, and then they carried on without batting an eye. And I looked over to the dumpster by the train tracks and saw a group of homeless people huddling under an awning and looking over at us. And students passed them by all the same, headphones in, eyes down. Did the pedestrian die? I don't know. What if he did? He certainly wasn't the first to cross that street without looking at the cars. But he was the one, the unfortunate one, who got hit and maybe: killed.

Jack looks over with a hand scratching his chin, elbow propped on the other arm. Blue Benny picks up the butt in the ashtray; he looks at it as he turns it over in his hand.

BLUE BENNY (CONT'D)

A rainy Tuesday night can always be your last. Most people don't care whether or not he lived or died, let alone whether or not he was frustrated or angry or suffering, or had an endless list of hopes and dreams, things he intended to do, things that never got done. Is the best we can hope for to die at a ripe old age, surrounded by loved ones, fading into the warm embrace of death like the sun into the horizon, welcoming the endless night? Maybe, but that doesn't stop a random car, on a random Tuesday

(MORE)

BLUE BENNY (CONT'D)

night, on the wet road without
enough traction to stop in time,
and suddenly the dream is gone...
over.

Jack sighs. Benny stares out for a moment. Then he looks at
the cigarette butt in his hand.

BLUE BENNY (CONT'D)

And two hours later the cars are
gone, the cops have left, and the
rain washes the blood away, off the
asphalt and into the storm drains.

He puts the butt in the ashtray and claps the dust off his
hands.

BLUE BENNY (CONT'D)

Good luck with your book, Jack.
Make it worth the time.

Benny collects his things as Jack watches him, unmoving and
unflinching. Benny takes his things and heads to the balcony
door.

BLUE BENNY (CONT'D)

See ya later.

Then Blue Benny opens the door, walks OUT, and closes it
behind him.

Jack sits there in the dark looking out into the dim night
while the sound of the band plays faintly and the crickets
continue to chirp. There is a comforting whisper coming from
the light breeze through the thick trees that hang below his
balcony.

Jack sits with arms folded and listens. With all sincerity,
he says:

JACK

What a fuckin' poet.

63. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Warm morning light shines through the balcony door and JACK
sits on the edge of his bed, looking out.

64. EXT. JACK'S BALCONY - MORNING

JACK leans on the railing and looks down into the courtyard
below.

A FEW PEOPLE walk across the courtyard dressed up for the football game. Jack looks around, then turns to head in.

65. INT. THE APARTMENT

JACK sits at the dinner table and eats a bowl of cereal. JEFF comes in dressed up for the football game.

AUSTIN
You goin' to the game?

Jack lowers his spoon.

JACK
No, probably not.

Jeff nods.

JEFF
You go out last night?

JACK
No I stayed in, you go out?

JEFF
Yeah man it was a good night.

JACK
Nice, nice.

JEFF
Yep.

Jeff nods.

JEFF (CONT'D)
Alright, well I'll see you later.

JACK
See you.

Jeff leaves and Jack eats another spoonful of cereal.

66. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY

JACK sits at the chair before the laptop with his arms folded and his eyes staring up through the wall. He looks down at the little notebook next to the laptop with all the plot points on it.

He looks at number 4.

JACK (V.O.)
Danny and Ellis go to find a new
(MORE)

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

victim.

Jack then looks up at the screen. He gazes into the daring white page and the blinking cursor. Then he looks to his right and the kitchenette where the light from the bedroom windows shine in. He looks at the clock: **11:15**.

67. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY - SOME TIME LATER

JACK sits in the chair and drums on his legs. He puts his earbuds in and opens Youtube.

68. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY - LATER

JACK sits back in the chair and holds his guitar in his hands. He strums some notes and quietly sings with the chords.

69. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY - LATER

JACK walks in with a cup of coffee and takes a sip as he sits down. He recoils.

JACK

Hot, hot.

And he puts the cup on the desk.

JACK (CONT'D)

This'll help.

He tries a cautious sip.

70. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY - LATER STILL

JACK sits in the corner with his back against the wall and one arm resting on the knee of a leg drawn close to his chest.

He looks to the clock: **3:10**.

Jack lets out an exasperated sigh. His door is closed, but through it he can hear the front door of the apartment closing and AUSTIN coming in.

Jack rubs his forehead.

He looks wearily at the study wall across from him. The paint on the wall is gray and dreary, made duller in the weak light of the overhead lamp.

ZOOM IN on the gray wall, very slow, making it seem to loom nearer and nearer.

ZOOM IN on Jack, sitting up against the wall and staring into the gray.

Then Jack's stomach RUMBLES and he looks down.

VOICES echo through the hall beyond his door, it sounds like Austin and MIKE might be talking out there. Jack stays by the wall.

Then MUSIC starts to play in the living room, muffled through all these walls, and the bass thumping and vibrating in the walls that deep tone.

Jack looks over at the laptop with its black screen. He SLAMS his hand on the carpeting in exasperation.

JACK

God damn it.

Jack leaps to his feet and goes over to the computer. He sits down at the desk, unlocks the computer, and the blank page returns.

Jack's fingers hover over the keyboard and his mouth hangs open as he tries to will himself to type.

He centers the cursor and types in big letters:

Chapter 6

Searching...

Then Jack takes a breath and cranes his neck as if to crack it. His fingers dance above the keyboard, twitching in their hover, anxious to type. The drone of the bass in the other room is rhythmic and entrancing.

Jack starts to type.

JACK (V.O.)

Danny languished in the suffocating confines of his basement studio like a leper with a cause, hunched over his laptop and carefully adjusting levels, smoothing out details not even the trained ear could distinguish. Almost a fruitless task, an effort without effect, cast wholeheartedly into the thankless and consuming artistic endeavor... of searching for perfection.

Jack cracks his knuckles and looks at the words on the screen. He looks at the typewriter to his left and the empty coffee cup in front of it. Then he looks back at the screen.

JACK (V.O.)

This endless pursuit for an un-achievable goal, its worth marked only by the creation of purpose in a purposeless world. He is doomed to fail and fully aware, but with no other recourse against the dullness of his life but this... This car he chases down the road and around the bend even when it is out of sight, for faith guides him on, like all faith, in something unseen and unseeable, un-findable, outside the realm of what's real, where perfection lives alongside other such impossibilities as love, meaning, and truth.

Then Jack takes a sip of cold coffee and grimaces to wipe the residual drip on his lip, back to the keyboard and starts typing again.

There's a KNOCK at the door.

JACK

Yeah?

The door OPENS and AUSTIN stands there.

AUSTIN

Hey is that bag of Dorito's yours?

JACK

Yeah.

AUSTIN

You mind if we have some?

JACK

Sure, just leave like half the bag for me.

AUSTIN

Word, thanks.

Austin LEAVES and closes the door behind him. Jack turns back to the screen and looks at it. He looks away, trying to

remember where he was, or what he was going to say. Then he sighs and casually slaps the desk.

JACK

Dammit.

He props his elbow on the armrest and leans his head on his palm, looks up to try and remember what he was going to say.

71. INT. THE GREEN BASEMENT

DANNY stares into the camera and BREATHES.

72. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY

JACK puts his elbows on his knees and his head in his hands.

73. INT. THE GREEN BASEMENT

DANNY is on the far side of the basement. He PLAYS the drums.

74. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY

JACK's hair dangles in his face as he leans forward.

75. INT. THE GREEN BASEMENT

DANNY vigorously plays the drums and we see his face straining and the sweat coming down.

76. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY

JACK lifts a hand over the keyboard.

77. INT. THE GREEN BASEMENT

ELLIS walks in and slowly makes his way towards Danny, eyebrow cocked, curious.

78. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY

JACK sits up and puts both hands over the keyboard. He starts to type.

JACK (V.O.)

Ellis walks in to find...

79. INT. MID-SIZED CLASSROOM - NEW CABELL

GABRIELLE turns around and looks into the camera.

80. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY

JACK stops typing and glances up.

JACK (V.O.)

Uh...

He looks down again and continues typing.

JACK (V.O.)

He walks in to find Danny behind
the kit in a mad sweat, drumsticks
in hand and...

81. INT. A FANCY ROOM

MICHAEL MILLOY poses with his trophy, GRINS, and looks
towards the flash of a camera.

MICHAEL MILLOY

Thank you. Thank you.

82. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY

JACK frowns, looks up, and grips his face beneath the nose,
rubs downwards to the chin.

He sighs, puts his hand on the desk, and gathers himself to
continue.

83. INT. THE APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

AUSTIN looks into the camera.

AUSTIN

Maybe you shouldn't be a writer.

84. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY

JACK breathes deeply through his nose and looks at the
screen.

85. INT. THE GREEN BASEMENT

DANNY plays the drums.

86. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY

JACK gets ready to type more.

87. I/E. JACK'S BALCONY

BLUE BENNY turns and says.

BLUE BENNY

Commit yourself to it. That's all
that's worth doing.

88. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY

JACK nods and exhales, loosens up the shoulders, tries to think, and leans slightly forward.

He starts to type.

JACK (V.O.)

Ellis approaches with cautious steps in the direction of Danny's frenzied playing.

89. INT. THE GREEN BASEMENT

ELLIS walks past the couch and stands by the red coffee table before DANNY, who continues to play. As Jack talks, the camera dollies in slowly on Danny.

JACK (V.O.)

A mere two yards away, Danny is absorbed, drawn in so deep unto his performance that the world has receded into the gray periphery like a storm cloud fading out beyond the treetops without shedding a drop, and Danny plays on with the sweat collecting on his forehead and the echoes of the drums, the splash of a cymbal, pushing him with an ethereal force further into his severed corner of the universe in the spot he since vanished behind a drumset in the world he left behind, until!

Danny looks up and CRASHES the cymbal, ending the song, and he holds his gaze with Ellis. The cymbal rings out and fades.

DANNY

Can you press stop?

Danny points with a stick to the laptop with Logic open. Ellis leans over and presses STOP. Then he returns to stance.

DANNY (CONT'D)

So?

ELLIS

I dropped off Chuckie.

DANNY

Good.

ELLIS

What next?

Danny wipes the sweat off his forehead and puts the sticks in one hand.

DANNY

Now we find another.

Danny stows the drumsticks and stands up. Ellis scratches the back of his head.

ELLIS

How?

Danny comes around the side of the kit.

DANNY

I have a candidate.

ELLIS

Who?

90. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY

JACK sits back and crosses his arm.

JACK

Who.

He looks right, out to where the evening sun shines in. Then he leans forward, putting his elbows on the desk, and clasping his right hand around his left fist. He rests his closed mouth against his hands and breathes in through his nose.

Then he SMACKS his palm against his head.

JACK

Come on!

He takes in an angry breath. He looks around. Then he SLAPS the desk.

JACK (CONT'D)

Think!

He puts his left elbow on the table and looks through the wall.

The sound of the music from the living room starts to fade

in and grow louder as Jack starts to notice it again. He looks up, exasperated. He runs his hands through his hair and raises a helpless hand.

He stews for a moment, rubbing his forehead, licking his lip, shifting about, trying to focus, unable, wondering if he should go confront them, deciding against it, he shifts and shifts and then he GETS UP.

He heads to his door, OPENS it, and WALKS OUT.

91. INT. THE HALLWAY

We follow JACK down the hall, music growing louder, Jack's steps quick and determined, he rounds the corner and heads into the living room.

92. INT. THE APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

JACK comes in and sees JEFF and MIKE sitting on the couch, eating and watching the TV. The music is blasting from a speaker by the balcony door.

Jack walks past the kitchen, past the dining table, and over to the TV area.

JACK

Can you guys turn it down?

JEFF

What?

JACK

Can you turn it down? I'm trying to write, I can't think, it's too loud.

MIKE

It's Saturday.

JACK

And?

MIKE

I'm gonna play music, I'm allowed to, I live here. It's Saturday. This is my life. You wanna work on Saturday, go ahead, but don't get in the way of me enjoying my Saturday.

JACK

I'm just askin' you to turn it

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)
down, just a little bit!

Jeff stands up.

JEFF
Alright.

MIKE
No, don't, Jeff. Sit.

Jeff looks to Mike. He looks to Jack and starts to sit back down.

JACK
Please, Jeff, thank you.

MIKE
Jeff, you don't have to turn it down, not 'cuz he tells you to. We have every right—

JACK
Says who?

MIKE
To play our music—

JACK
Is that a right?

MIKE
To play our music however we want.

JACK
It's a privilege, and I'm just asking the very least—

MIKE
It's a free country...

JACK
The least you could do is turn it down just a bit!

MIKE
We can do whatever we—

JACK
That's enough.

Jack heads over to the speaker, and turns it down himself. Mike gets to his feet.

MIKE
What the fuck!

Jack turns around and heads out.

JACK
I'm done arguing.

Mike heads over to the speaker, Jack turns by the table and puts a hand on his hip.

JACK (CONT'D)
Don't you.

Mike looks at him as he turns it up. Jack puts both hands on his hips. He rubs his mouth.

JACK (CONT'D)
Alright. Okay.

He backs up towards the hallway and raises his hands.

JACK (CONT'D)
I ask for one favor... Can't get that.

Jack turns and heads OUT.

Mike readjusts himself in the couch. Jeff looks at him.

JEFF
What's it matter? It's just music.

MIKE
It's not about the music, it's about the principle.

Mike looks on at the TV. He glances over to the hallway as Jeff gets comfortable and looks at the TV.

MIKE (CONT'D)
(under his breath)
Turnin my fuckin' speaker down.

93. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY

JACK SLAMS the door closed and paces around his room. The music continues, accompanied by the rising drum track playing from Jack's mind. Jack paces through the kitchenette, past the bathroom, into the bedroom, then he turns around, comes back all the way into the study and STOPS by the desk.

He pushes some hair out of his face. Then he turns towards

the bedroom.

94. I/E. JACK'S BALCONY - BEFORE SUNSET

JACK steps out, squinting into the lowering sun, and takes a deep breath of the fresh air. He looks out into the empty courtyard. Then he puts his hands on the railing and lowers his head.

He takes a couple breaths in this position.

JACK

Who. Who.

Jack looks up.

JACK (CONT'D)

Who? Who?! Who fuckin' cares!

Jack stands up.

JACK (CONT'D)

Just a guy, who cares. Any guy.

Jack wipes the dust off his hands and takes one last look at the sunset sky before he turns and heads back INSIDE.

We linger on the serenity outside for a few seconds.

95. INT. ELLIS' CAR - NIGHT

ELLIS drives along, DANNY is in the front passenger seat.

DANNY

It's up here on the left.

Ellis looks around for it.

ELLIS

The white one?

DANNY

Yeah.

Ellis pulls over and looks to Danny.

ELLIS

Now what?

DANNY

Now we wait.

ELLIS

How long?

DANNY

Shouldn't be more than twenty minutes. He leaves usually right around now, goes to a friend's house. We'll grab him when he heads to his car.

Ellis sighs uneasily and looks out the window. Danny looks out also.

ELLIS

Do I have to help?

DANNY

Of course you have to help, that's what you're here for!

ELLIS

Man. I don't want to.

Danny clasps his hands together.

DANNY

Please. You're doing it. You got the chloroform?

ELLIS

Do your parents know what you're up to?

DANNY

Fuck my parents.

ELLIS

Okay.

Ellis turns away.

96. EXT. VINNY CAVATAPPI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A GUY with long hair and glasses comes out of his house. This is VINNY CAVATAPPI. He closes his front door and heads down his front walk.

97. INT. ELLIS' CAR

DANNY sits up.

DANNY

Here he is. Let's go.

Danny gets out of the car and ELLIS opens his door with a wet rag in his other hand.

They get out of the car and head around to the left of Vinny's yard. VINNY walks down his front walk towards his car. Danny and Ellis walk down the sidewalk to intercept.

Vinny comes to the sidewalk. Danny raises a hand.

DANNY

Vinny!

Vinny looks over, startled and confused, as Danny and Ellis approach him.

VINNY

Do I know you?

DANNY

Sure.

Then Danny LUNGES at Vinny and GRABS him by the arms as Ellis JUMPS behind him and puts the wet rag over Vinny's mouth. He holds it there until Vinny's eyes close and he goes limp.

Ellis pockets the rag and pulls out a roll of duct tape as Danny looks up and down the street over his shoulder. Ellis puts a strip of duct tape over Vinny's mouth and they carry him over to Ellis' car.

They pop the trunk and throw him in as his eyes FLUTTER open. Ellis rolls him over and wraps tape around his wrists, then he does the same for Vinny's ankles. Vinny's head starts to whip around as he tries to take in what's happening. He starts squirming and SCREAMING through the duct tape.

Danny goes around to the front passenger door and Ellis closes the trunk.

98. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY

JACK types away.

JACK (V.O.)

They drove back to the Barbacoa household, where Danny and Ellis would have to sneak Vinny in through the back door without any neighbors or passersby witnessing the abduction - an arduous task - but so far it's all been a challenge.

Jack intently gazes at the screen as his fingers tap away at

the keyboard.

JACK (V.O.)

Down around the side of the house
under the hot, exposed sun with
sweat trickling down foreheads and
Vinny Cavatappi with a bag over his
head, squirming like a wet fish at
the end of a line.

99. EXT. DANNY'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

DANNY and ELLIS come through the backyard as VINNY wriggles around and CRIES OUT through the duct tape. They wrangle him in their arms as they step cautiously around the deck and the light from the living roo.

They come around to the back door, set Vinny down, and Danny opens the door slowly. It creaks with rust and old doorsprings as it opens, just enough, then they slip through with Vinny into the house.

100. INT. THE TORTURE ROOM

DANNY PULLS the bag off VINNY'S head, and he looks around in a wide-eyed panic. Vinny is tied up against the post. He tries and YELLS to no avail, and Danny shushes him.

DANNY

Calm down, Vinny, it's gonna' be
okay. Really, it is. Don't worry.

ELLIS watches by the closed door, hands clenched in front of him and his soldierly pose.

Danny looks back at Ellis.

DANNY

Can I have the tape?

Ellis tosses it over and Danny catches it. He tears off another strip and puts that over the strip they already have over Vinny's mouth. He seals it with his fingers, makes sure it's on there good. Then he throws the tape back to Ellis.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Good luck there, Vinny. See if you
can free yourself.

Vinny writhes and fights against the ropes tied around him. Danny turns around and heads towards the door. Ellis opens it and heads out. Danny turns around and puts a finger on the light switch.

DANNY (CONT'D)

I'll be back soon.

Off goes the light. Then Danny closes the door and the sound of a lock sliding into places ECHOES in the room.

All that remains is the sound of Vinny breathing.

101. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY

JACK lets out a held breath and sits back in his chair. He looks at the screen. Then he looks at the time: **7:45**.

Jack is surprised by how much time has passed. He gets to his feet, a little wobbly, and heads for the door.

102. INT. THE APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

JACK walks in to see JEFF and MIKE sitting deep in the couch, seemingly half asleep, eyes fixed on the TV. There is trash all over the coffee table and side table, empty bottles, plates foodless but sauce-covered, ashtray full, bags of chips and cookies deflated and eaten. Jack puts his hands on his hips.

JACK

Jesus Christ.

There's an empty bag of Doritos on the couch between Jeff and Mike.

JACK

You ate all my Doritos.

Jeff looks over at him, still dazed, then he looks at the Doritos bag.

JEFF

Sorry.

Then Jeff goes back to watching TV. CARL THE PIG turns and looks at Jack from the corner of the room. Jack looks, frozen, at the pig, then over to Mike and Jeff (did they see that?) then back to the pig. He shakes his head and turns.

JACK

I'm gettin' something to eat.

Jack heads for the front door of the apartment, and turns at the entrance to the hallway, looks back at the pig. Stationary. Then Jack LEAVES.

103. EXT. 14TH STREET - NIGHT

JACK walks out and listens to the people out there chatting, driving, laughing, eating, walking, dancing, singing. There's music in the distance from some local band, and music from another direction from some speaker.

Jack looks around and then heads towards the corner. To his left are houses full of people, out on porches, in upstairs rooms, on roofs. Jack passes trash cans set out by the curb and cars dented from drunken passersby. A car drives past blasting music.

The night is alive and Jack wanders through it lost, like a strange imposter coming in from a long voyage.

In the back of his mind, the sparse jazz music plays on as it always does, this time the drums very subdued, full of ghost notes and the brushes on the snare as the guitar strums a chord and the keyboard dances across somber notes.

He comes up to the intersection at Wertland and crosses diagonally across the street.

He passes the salon and the dumpsters, down the sloping sidewalk and the low brick wall in front of Armando's, down past Poke Bowl, looking left towards the street and the cars passing by while people pass on the sidewalk. Jack walks further, down to Main St. and where the train tracks go overhead.

Jack turns the corner beneath the tracks and heads right up Main, looks down at the HOMELESS MAN by the wall, onwards to where the White Spot is, and Jack turns right. He heads INTO the White Spot.

The camera lingers on the street in the night and the HOMELESS WOMAN up the street asking for change. People pass her by.

Then we see Jack, through the window, as he eats his burger and looks around: at the workers, the TV in the corner, the general ambiance. Then Jack hunkers down and focuses on his burger.

104. EXT. RUGBY ROAD - NIGHT

JACK stands on the corner of Rugby and Main, just stands there, looking out into the dead horizon in the light of a streetlamp.

105. EXT. MCCORMICK ROAD - NIGHT

JACK stands below the thick trees like a zombie staring out into the vacant distance.

106. EXT. CORNER PARKING LOT BY COUPES - NIGHT

JACK stands in the orange light of the streetlamps, not too far from the echoes of Coupe's from across the lot. He stands and looks out over the train tracks.

107. EXT. WHITE SPOT - NIGHT

JACK sits in there and eats his burger.

108. INT. THE APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

JACK sits on the couch.

JACK

It's just so frustrating! Carrying on in the chaos and all the shit, nobody cares about anybody, everyone wrapped up in themselves, them, me, it's all about me, that's what they think. Walking by, smiling, happy, what is all this, God! I don't even know what I'm saying, but it's like some kind of fever dream, I'm tired, but it's just the cold sweat of reality, what a dark night it all is, even in the summer, it's so windy and cold, every man for himself, dog eat dog, why do we love these things? Why do we fetishize this hungry, self-centered, rabid, feral american dream. Stuck together on this giant rock severed from each other in different spheres, why don't we care about each other?

Jack takes a breath. Next to him, MIKE and JEFF are asleep on the couch. Claire looks up from her phone.

CLAIRE

What the fuck are you talking about?

Jack smacks his knee.

JACK

I don't know!

Claire shifts in her seat at the dining table.

CLAIRE

What's your book about?

JACK

About the collapse of American culture and the negligent selfishness of the New Western Society. Maybe the new culture of personality. The culture of consumption.

Claire stares at Jack then looks to the hallway.

CLAIRE

Austin!

109. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY

JACK sits at the desk and taps on the tabletop as he tries to think. He types:

Chapter 7: Delirium

110. INT. DIGITAL MEDIA LAB

JACK sits at the employee desk and stares with tired eyes.

111. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY

JACK lies against one propped elbow in his chair and stares off. He groans and gets to his feet.

112. INT. DINING HALL

JACK sits and eats alone, listening. A guy named MARK is behind him with a friend.

MARK

So I was fuckin' her from behind right, and..

113. INT. THE APARTMENT

JACK opens the Keurig machine in the kitchen and pulls out the K-cup in there. He throws it to the trashcan, which is overflowing with trash. The K-cup falls to the ground.

114. INT. ROBERTSON MEDIA CENTER

JACK studies and DUKE SARDUCCI sits at his table with him. Duke unwraps a sandwich, making lots of crinkly paper noises as he does so, much to the chagrin of the GUYS at the table next to them.

DUKE

Anyway, he tells me to fuck off, I say you fuck off, and he grabs me!

(MORE)

DUKE (CONT'D)

I swear, he grabs me by the shirt
and then he pushes me and says 'Get
the fuck outta here', and I'm
like... Nobody gets to talk to me
that way.

The GUYS at this table are doing a video conference, there
is someone on the TV at the end of the table, and one of the
GUYS, his name is PETER MODRIC, grows annoyed. He leans
over.

PETER MODRIC

Excuse me, can you move? We're
trying to do a video conference.

Duke looks over with his sandwich in his hands.

DUKE

It's a free country!

He takes a bite out of his sandwich and glares at Peter.
Peter leans back over to his table, frowning. Jack looks
over.

JACK

Can you sell me some adderall?

114aA. INT. RMC BATHROOM

DUKE hands JACK a baggie with BLUE PILLS in it and Jack
gives Duke some money.

JACK

Thanks.

115. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY

JACK sits at his desk and sips his coffee, looking at the
screen as he does. He pops a PILL in his mouth and washes it
down with coffee.

116. INT. THE APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

CLAIRE sits across from JACK, holding one of his short
stories.

CLAIRE

Do you always write about yourself
or...

JACK

No, but my own life does inform the
life and perspective of the

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

characters.

CLAIRE

It just seems like you only talk about yourself and your frustrations and put that in the book and it's like.. okay we get it.

JACK

Well who else's perspective do I know?

CLAIRE

And why do you always write about high schoolers?

JACK

I don't, you should see my latest short story.

CLAIRE

Ehhh.

JACK

Well...

Jack looks away, uneasy.

CLAIRE

It's just that they're always your own age, the characters.

JACK

Well that's where my mind goes first, y'know? I understand that age, that upbringing, it's the kind of thing I know, that's what you're supposed to write about.

CLAIRE

Just sayin' you should try writing from a different perspective. Like, are there any women in any of your shit?

JACK

Sure!

CLAIRE

Really. Where?

JACK

Look, uh... Whose friend are you again?

117. INT. MID-SIZED CLASSROOM - NEW CABELL

GABRIELLE is turned around in her seat and talking to PHIL and JACK. Jack stares on, somewhat awestruck, as she talks.

GABRIELLE

World on a Wire is definitely a weird movie, in my opinion, but I can totally see the kind of ideological stuff going on. How there's this narrative about technology going too far and capitalist greed taking advantage of it and... All that. You know?

JACK

Yeah! Yeah, I totally agree.

Phil side-eyes Jack.

118. INT. DIGITAL MEDIA LAB

JACK sits at the employee desk and stares.

119. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY

JACK types.

119A. INT. THE TORTURE ROOM

DANNY SLAPS VINNY. Then Danny smiles and Vinny looks over at him. He SLAPS his other cheek and Vinny YELPS.

120. INT. ENGLISH CLASSROOM

JACK looks over at another student with drooping eyes.

The rest of the class is out of frame, except for the arm of one student. MICHELLE ANDERSON says something.

MICHELLE ANDERSON

Grant, I think you've really outdone yourself. The writing, the characters, the dialogue...

121. INT. CLEMONS LIBRARY

JACK leans over to OLIVIA.

JACK
 What're your thoughts on Michael
 Milloy?

OLIVIA
 Oh he's great. Amazing writer,
 really nice, just a good person.

Jack nods and then looks away.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
 What's your book about?

JACK
 Um...

Jack remembers.

JACK (CONT'D)
 It's about a musician who tortures
 people and puts their cries in his
 songs.

OLIVIA
 Oh.
 (beat)
 Well. I could take a look at it if
 you wanted.

Jack lifts his weary head.

JACK
 Oh sure. Thanks.

123. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY

JACK types away, the clicking of the keys audible as his
 face twitches and flinches.

He navigates over to another tab with details of the
 competition on it. The words:

Deadline: October 1st.

And Jack looks at the calendar to see the date:

SEP 20.

Jack POPS a PILL and washes it down with coffee.

124. INT. THE TORTURE ROOM

VINNY's PANTS drop around his ankles. He looks up at DANNY.
 Danny looks Vinny in the eye as he GRABS his BALLS.

Vinny stares wide-eyed and shakes his head. Danny looks focused.

DANNY
Into the mic, okay?

Vinny shakes his head again. Then Danny YANKS down.

125. INT. THE GREEN BASEMENT

We watch the closed door and hear Vinny's muffled scream.

126. INT. THE APARTMENT - 3AM

JACK sits at the dining table wearing SUNGLASSES and drinking coffee. Sitting next to him is CARL THE PIG. There's a coffee cup in front of him.

Jack sets his cup down and looks over at Carl.

They sit there, Jack looks around a bit. He takes another sip of coffee.

Jack looks over at the trash can. It is OVERFLOWING. Jack puts his cup down and sighs.

126A. INT. THE APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Orange light through the blinds in the corner and JACK sits on the couch with AUSTIN and MIKE. Austin looks over.

AUSTIN
You gotta get out more.

JACK
I do get out.

127. EXT. UNIVERSITY AVE - 2AM

JACK walks along the deserted main drag in the middle of the night under the cold streetlamps while the music plays overhead and the sounds of the keyboard still click in the back.

127A. INT. THE APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

AUSTIN smirks at JACK.

AUSTIN
What do you do?

JACK
I do things!

128. EXT. VIRGINIA AVE - 9PM

TWO dudes, NICK JONES and BRIAN GRADY, PUSH each other in the front lawn of Sigma Pi, by the bushes.

NICK JONES
Yo, fuck off, faggot.

Brian wraps his arms around Nick's abdomen to tackle him, but can't bring him down, while Nick punches him in the ribs. Brian pushes away and SWINGS but Nick DUCKS under it and JABS Brian in the gut.

BRIAN GRADY
Pussy!

He LUNGES with a SWING that misses.

JACK watches on with tired eyes.

129. INT. THE APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

AUSTIN laughs at JACK.

AUSTIN
You do things. Maybe you should go out, have a few drinks.

JACK
I'm too tired. I can't sleep.

130. INT. LECTURE HALL

JACK sits up in the fourth row from the top, head propped against his hand, eyes barely open as he tries not to fall asleep.

131. INT. DINING HALL

JACK sits alone, hunched over his plate, once again, trying not to fall asleep.

132. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - SUNSET

JACK looks out into the orange light of sunset through the chiaroscuro and the blinds, with one arm up high against the glass of his balcony door, and him leaning against it.

133. INT. THE APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

AUSTIN cocks a brow at JACK.

AUSTIN
Can't sleep.

MIKE

I've got somethin' for that.

JACK

No I just wake up in the middle of the night.

Austin reaches for a bottle.

AUSTIN

Can't stay asleep.

He takes a sip.

JACK

That's right. I just...

134. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY

JACK sits there and TYPES with wild eyes.

135. INT. THE TORTURE ROOM

ELLIS looks over DANNY's shoulder as Danny BEATS UP VINNY (O.C.) and Ellis recoils in horror, grimacing.

136. INT. THE APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

AUSTIN swallows.

AUSTIN

Well how's the book coming?

137. INT. THE GREEN BASEMENT

DANNY smiles.

DANNY

Good, good. Just a couple more songs to go.

DANNY'S DAD nods.

137A. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY

JACK looks at the Word Count: **28,000**.

138. INT. MID-SIZED CLASSROOM - NEW CABELL

JACK leans against his fist, propped on its elbow, and stares ahead.

His focus shifts onto the back of GABRIELLE'S head. Then he shakes himself and looks away.

139. INT. DIGITAL MEDIA LAB

JACK stares haggard at the screen and POPS a PILL. He sets his fingers on the keyboard and starts to type.

140. INT. THE GREEN BASEMENT

DANNY sits on the RED CHEST and plays the ELECTRIC GUITAR, headphones on, focused.

141. INT. ENGLISH CLASSROOM

JACK looks at the grade he has on his latest short story: **B**. He flips the page and sees a comment in red:

Want to see more development in characters.

He flips the page again, scans down, and reads:

Dialogue needs improvement.

Jack rubs his forehead in consternation.

GRACE CARPENTER (O.C.)

I would've liked more detail, I feel like the story world wasn't very well defined. I didn't have a sense of it, does that make sense?

Jack glances over.

142. INT. DINING HALL

JACK sits and eats, leafing through a copy of V MAGAZINE. He hits a page with a poem on it called:

A Blinding Fury.

He scans beneath it to read:

By Benny Hartman.

Jack glances away, then back down.

143. INT. THE APARTMENT

JACK walks in and looks over into the kitchen. It's a mess. There are pans on the stove, dishes stacked in the sink, cups and mugs on the counters, trash, crumbs, etc. Jack looks over to the couch to see MIKE playing video games.

JACK

How'd the kitchen get so messy?

MIKE

I dunno. Wasn't me.

JACK

You couldn't clean it up?

MIKE

It wasn't me! Everybody's gotta clean up after themselves, I'm not cleaning up for them.

Jack exhales through his nose and looks down.

144. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY

JACK types away.

145. INT. THE GREEN BASEMENT

ELLIS comes out of the torture room and closes the door behind him. Inside, we can hear DANNY hitting VINNY and all of Vinny's muffled screams.

Ellis stares through the floor, brow furrowed with worry, he looks like he has seen unconscionable things. Then he half turns his head to listen. And then he shakes his head and looks down.

146. I/E. JACK'S BALCONY - NIGHT

JACK leans on the railing and takes a sip of his coffee. He looks out. The echoes of far away feet against the sidewalks and conversations on porches down the street.

His hand trembles as he pulls the mug away from his lip and sets his wrist on the railing. He takes in a shaky breath. As he looks around, his eyes gaze over everything rather than at everything. He is lost in the thoughts swirling through his head.

147. INT. THE GREEN BASEMENT

ELLIS looks out the window high in the wall as the orange light of sunset washes over him. The sounds of the torture room echo from behind him.

148. I/E. JACK'S BALCONY

JACK takes another sip as the faint voices of MIKE and AUSTIN float in through the open balcony door to Jack's right.

MIKE (O.C.)

He's delusional! I mean... More power to him, but he just doesn't have it.

AUSTIN (O.C.)

I know, it's sad. He's so committed, but he needs to realize that it.. It isn't for him. He doesn't have what it takes.

MIKE (O.C.)

Yeah. Anyway, where's Claire at?

Jack lowers his cup and runs a hand through his hair.

149. INT. THE GREEN BASEMENT

ELLIS plays pool by himself. He bends over and strikes the cue ball, it rolls on down the table and hits another ball as the door to the torture room opens and we briefly glimpse VINNY on his knees, haggard, with his hands tied behind him around the pole. All we can really see is Vinny's hair dangling over his face. DANNY walks out and closes the door behind him.

DANNY

I'm done with him. Clean up and take him.

Danny walks past Ellis and the pool table. Ellis leans the stick against the wall and walks over to the torture room as the sound of a FAUCET turning on leaks from the bathroom.

150. INT. THE TORTURE ROOM

ELLIS opens the door and steps in. He looks down at VINNY and takes a deep breath. He sighs and grabs the burlap bag from the counter. He stoops down.

151. INT. ELLIS' CAR - NIGHT

ELLIS drives through the night and the streets of Waynewood. He can hear the thumping in the trunk from Vinny as he rolls around. Ellis looks out with a worried eye, takes a glance into the rear view mirror, then focuses out on the road.

The sound of keys typing and the music from before continue overhead.

152. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY

JACK sits with his back against the wall looking burnt out

in the corner of the room, only half visible in the light of the desk lamp.

The pill bottle OPENS, pill goes into his hand, hand to mouth, then coffee to mouth.

Jack sits at the desk again and cracks his knuckles. He looks down at the typewriter. Something is written.

He leans forward to look closer.

153. EXT. STREETS OF WAYNEWOOD - NIGHT

ELLIS stands by the open trunk of his car and VINNY sits on the bumper. Ellis pulls him to his feet and raises a finger in his face.

ELLIS

Dont. Tell.

154. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY

JACK reads the typewriter, which reads:

Don't tell anyone.

JACK (V.O.)

Anyone.

Jack leans back and bite his lip.

JACK

When did I write that?

He looks to the screen.

155. EXT. STREETS OF WAYNEWOOD - NIGHT

ELLIS pulls something out of his pocket.

ELLIS

But if you need someone to talk to.
About... What just happened...

Ellis offers VINNY a Post-It note with a number on it.

ELLIS (CONT'D)

You can talk to me.

Vinny looks at the post-it, then looks up at Ellis. He takes the note and turns, then walks away into the night. Ellis heads back to his car and opens the driver-side door.

156. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY

JACK stops typing and looks over his shoulder to the right. He takes a breath. Then he turns towards the screen and sighs.

The word count is **30,000**.

Jack rubs his eyes, then he lowers his fingers and sets them to a hover over the keyboard.

JACK (V.O.)

The weeping orange streetlamps hang low over the roadways like ghosts from New Jersey watching over the turnpike after missing their exits and crashing into telephone poles, flying without seatbelts through old windshields and cracking their skulls on the asphalt to spew empty pink brains and deep red blood all over the rumble strips along the shoulder. Meanwhile Danny...

157. INT. THE GREEN BASEMENT

DANNY sits with the laptop before him playing his song. He has headphones on and tears in his eyes. He takes the headphones off.

DANNY

Beautiful.

He sighs and takes a look around. Then he wipes his eyes. He grabs his phone.

DANNY (CONT'D)

(to himself)

Where's Ellis.

He texts something and then puts his phone on the couch next to him. Then he stands up and looks around the room. He puts his hands on his hips.

JACK (V.O.)

And the seconds could not pass more slowly, slugs marching across a wide berth, the end of which is miles off, for all that matters is to finally finish this album, at long last, after all the people that Danny has put in that room, the unspeakable, but no mind for that now...

Danny turns back around towards the laptop and looks down at it.

JACK (V.O.)
 Quick, while the juices still flow,
 where is Ellis? Quick, to find
 their final target, oh soon, it
 needs to be now, it needs to be
 right away...

Danny breathes heavily through his flared nostrils, chest rising and falling.

JACK (V.O.)
 Maybe another arrangement can be
 added, maybe to go back, to look
 over all the old tracks he has
 already poured so much time into...

Danny pops down into a kneel before the laptop and looks over the projects, the different songs. He looks back over his shoulder towards the window.

JACK (V.O.)
 Where is Ellis?

Danny looks back at the screen.

JACK (V.O.)
 Forget him, do it yourself, take it
 on, drive into the night, snatch
 the final one from their home, take
 them in their sleep, maybe Ellis
 will be the victim this time,
 maybe...

Danny's phone buzzes. He leaps over and grabs it, looks at it, opens it. Ellis responds:

I'll be back tomorrow

And Danny closes his eyes, pressing the phone against his forehead, then drops his hands to rest on the couch cushion before him. The night sky seeps in through the window behind him.

158. INT. ELLIS' CAR - NOON

ELLIS pulls up in front of Danny's house. He looks over at the house and steels himself to go in with a deep breath, then he opens the door and steps out.

159. INT. THE GREEN BASEMENT

DANNY sits on the couch watching TV. There's a grilled cheese sandwich on a plate. ELLIS comes down the stairs and slowly makes his way into the room.

Danny turns with the grilled cheese in hand, looks over his shoulders, and stands. He swallows.

DANNY

Finally.

He turns the TV off and steps out from the couch. He starts to walk towards Ellis, grilled cheese still in hand.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Alright, I've got a guy in mind who should be real easy to grab... It's almost 1, so we need to get going if we're gonna get him.

ELLIS

I'm done.

Danny stops. Ellis fidgets with his hands but looks at Danny.

DANNY

What?

ELLIS

Yeah, I'm done. I don't wanna do this anymore.

Danny's jaw hangs slack.

DANNY

You don't wanna do this anymore. I got one more song, you don't wanna do this anymore. You knew what the job was, you agreed to help--

ELLIS

But I didn't think it was gonna be like this.

DANNY

Like this? Like how?

ELLIS

Like what you did to Vinny.

Danny's shoulders sag.

ELLIS (CONT'D)

And what you did to all the others—

DANNY

They'll be fine. They're all okay.

ELLIS

No they're not, you ever think about the trauma you caused them?

DANNY

The trauma? What, you're on their side?

ELLIS

I'm on my own side.

DANNY

I thought you were on *my* side, you *FUCK!*

And Danny **THROWS** the grilled cheese at Ellis, who flinches as it hits him above the waist.

ELLIS

What the f—

DANNY

You fucking shit! I thought you were my friend, you were my accomplice, you were here to help me. I thought I could count on you, what the fuck! You backstabbing little bitch, you whore, you motherfucker.

ELLIS

You're the one who tortures people, you're a fuckin' psychopath!

Danny **SLAMS** the wall to his left with his left palm and starts to make his way towards Ellis.

DANNY

Don't call me that! I'm an artist.

ELLIS

You're sick.

DANNY

I'm committed! Like I thought you were.. committed to helping me,

(MORE)

DANNY (CONT'D)

like a friend does.

ELLIS

Yeah I draw the line at torture.

Danny SMACKS the wall again.

DANNY

It's art! It's for the music, don't you care about the music? You're not done.

ELLIS

I am.

DANNY

NO! You're NOT! You're not done til I say you are, you little sack of shit.

ELLIS

Jesus.

DANNY

Listen to me... You agreed to this. You agreed.. to help me. I have come *too far*, and sacrificed *too much*.. to give it all up now.

ELLIS

Find—

DANNY

SHUT THE FUCK UP! Listen! You are helping me, god dammit, cuz you fucking agreed to... and I'm not letting you walk away until you help me with *one. Last.* *Motherfucking-person.* I don't care about your conscience; I don't care about 'Oh, the poor victims, oh how traumatic,' NO! Fuck them! You're helpin' me. You *are!*

ELLIS

No.

Danny is up in Ellis' face now.

DANNY

I WILL SKULLFUCK YOU!

Danny's face is inches away from Ellis', and Danny pants

heavily, glaring into Ellis' eyes, in through the nose, and hard out through the mouth like a pitbull seconds from pouncing. Ellis backs away and puts up his hands.

ELLIS

I'm out.

He turns and starts to walk away. Danny's eyes light up in rage and he stands there heaving for a second, then he LUNGES towards Ellis and TACKLES him from behind.

DANNY

YOU MOTHERFUCKER!

Ellis rolls over and puts his hands up to block his face as Danny PUNCHES down at his face and chest with both hands, raining blows down.

DANNY (CONT'D)

COCKSUCKING...SHIT...BASTARD

Ellis does a jiu-jitsu move to get out from under Danny, then he puts Danny in a triangle and Danny HEAVES and GRUNTS as he tries to break free, spittle flying from behind his gritted teeth.

DANNY (CONT'D)

I'm...gonna... fuckin... Kill you...

ELLIS

Calm the fuck down!

They remain in that position for a moment, then Danny runs out of steam and goes limp. His breathing starts to normalize as he stops fighting.

ELLIS (CONT'D)

I'm gonna' let you go. You're not gonna tackle me again, are you?

DANNY

No.

Ellis lets him go and they get to their feet. They stand a few feet apart. Ellis brushes himself off and turns to leave.

ELLIS

I'm leaving.

Danny watches with drooping shoulders and a pained expression.

DANNY

Ellis. Don't. Please. Come back.

Ellis goes up the stairs.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Ellis!

The front door can be heard closing upstairs. Then silence. Danny's head drops.

He rubs his forehead and sighs. He looks up and slaps his thigh.

DANNY (CONT'D)

I can't do it all myself.

160. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY

JACK finishes typing a sentence then stops. He looks away. His eyes train on his little YODA figurine. Then he looks back at the screen.

161. INT. THE GREEN BASEMENT

DANNY turns and looks into the torture room. He takes a breath.

162. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY

JACK continues to TYPE.

163. INT. THE GREEN BASEMENT

DANNY slowly walks INTO the torture room.

164. INT. THE TORTURE ROOM

DANNY comes in and closes the door behind him. He looks at the mic on its stand. Then he looks over at the laptop. He opens it and Logic is already open. He presses RECORD and puts the headphones on as the music starts to play.

Then he gets a small wooden plank with a nail sticking two inches out of one end, and he puts the plank, nail up, down about a foot from the base of the mic stand.

He bends down and takes his shoe off. Then he takes his sock off and places his bare foot on the ground. He stands up and grabs the mic, brings it over just in front of his mouth.

Then he takes a deep breath, slowly exhales, and raises his foot in the air over the plank. He closes his eyes. The music goes on.

4 beats on the drum pass, one..two..three..four..

Then he brings his foot DOWN.

165. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY

JACK finishes typing as he sucks some air through clenched teeth, then lets it out. He looks at the screen, and he looks down at the word count: **33,000**. The date: **SEP 29**.

Jack sits back in the chair and folds his arms. He looks at the time: **3:28 AM**.

Jack takes a sip of coffee. And then he settles back in the chair. He looks all around for a moment. Then he puts his hands on his legs. He grabs the bag of pills but it's empty, so he throws it away.

He lifts his fingers over the keyboard to type and stops. He holds them in a hover there and thinks. Then he retracts his hands and puts them in his lap again.

He looks away. He scratches his cheek. Then he **SMACKS** the desk.

JACK

Alright! What happens next?

He brings his fingers over the keyboard again and holds them there once more.

166. INT. THE HALLWAY

JACK steps out into the hallway and walks down the hall towards the living room, **MUTTERING** to himself about the various possibilities of what could happen next.

JACK

Hospital... Maybe... Bandages it...
Then... No... But his parents...

167. INT. THE APARTMENT - KITCHEN

JACK comes in through the foyer and spins around to pace back into the hallway. Behind him in the room is **CARL THE PIG** watching him from the dining table. Jack heads back into the hallway.

168. INT. THE HALLWAY

JACK comes back through the foyer, **MUMBLING** about the plot and the characters and what should happen next, as the music plays overhead and the sound of clanging in the vents echoes

on occasion.

JACK

Then we go back to Ellis?....No...
Well... Maybe... Back to
somebody... Chuckie?... Uhhh..
God...

Then Jack SPINS around and paces BACK down the hall.

He goes through the foyer and into the kitchen.

169. INT. THE APARTMENT - KITCHEN

JACK comes in and spins around. Behind him, in the room, AUSTIN stands facing a wall and MIKE plays video games on the blank TV. BILLY NASH III pulls the lever on the slot machine in the corner.

Jack doesn't notice anyone as he turns and heads out of the kitchen.

170. INT. THE HALLWAY

JACK goes back through the foyer and into the hallway once again, raving to himself and pacing, gesturing frantically as he goes down the hall. He can hear the click-clacking of the typewriter keys being pressed.

Then he spins and heads back towards the living room. He goes along, goes along, muttering all the while, until he passes the foyer and heads a third time into the kitchen.

171. INT. THE APARTMENT - KITCHEN

JACK comes in, eyes trained on the ground as he talks to himself about the story. Meanwhile in the background:

MIKE, AUSTIN, BILLY NASH III, JEFF, and A STRANGER all stand in a line facing Jack, gazing without blinking at the camera as Jack comes in and spins around. As Jack leaves the room, ALL OF THEM suddenly SPRINT towards him, but the camera follows Jack into the hallway, and we lose sight of them ALL.

172. INT. ELLIS' CAR

ELLIS answers the phone.

ELLIS

Hello?

A voice responds.

ELLIS (CONT'D)

Vinny. Hi...

173. INT. THE HALLWAY

JACK paces down the hall.

174. INT. THE GREEN BASEMENT

DANNY stands with the headphones on and his eyes closed. He then takes them off, sets them down gently, and closes his eyes once more. He takes a deep breath through his nostrils.

DANNY

It's done.

175. INT. THE HALLWAY

JACK turns quickly and heads into his room.

176. INT. DANNY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

DANNY walks in with his laptop under one arm. DANNY'S DAD sits on the couch.

DANNY

You wanna hear it?

177. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY

JACK hurries over to the desk and sits down in the chair, sets his fingers to the keyboard.

178. INT. DANNY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

DANNY'S DAD puts the headphones on. DANNY hits PLAY.

179. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY

JACK types and then pauses. He puts a hand in the air. Then he looks away.

JACK

And...

He closes his hand into a fist.

180. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY - MORNING

JACK sits asleep in his chair. Then his ALARM goes OFF and he WAKES UP. He looks around in a daze.

181. INT. MID-SIZED CLASSROOM - NEW CABELL

JACK walks down the aisle towards his seat near the back. As

he sits down he notices that SOME OTHER STUDENT sits in Gabrielle's seat before him. He settles back and looks towards the door.

The door opens and GABRIELLE walks in. Jack looks down at his phone. Gabrielle SITS down in the seat directly to Jack's right.

JACK

Hey.

GABRIELLE

Hi.

Gabrielle gets her books out.

JACK

How's it goin'?

GABRIELLE

Good good. How are you?

JACK

Good. A little tired.

GABRIELLE

Yeah?

JACK

Yeah, I was up all night.

GABRIELLE

Doing what?

JACK

Uh -ha- um... writing. I'm working on a novel.

GABRIELLE

Oh yeah? Didn't know you were a writer, I am too.

JACK

Really!

GABRIELLE

Yeah I write plays.

JACK

Wow, that's awesome.

GABRIELLE

Yeah it's—

NEW CABELL PROFESSOR
 Alright guys, lets' get started.

Jack and Gabrielle both snap to attention.

NEW CABELL PROFESSOR (CONT'D)
 Continuing our discussion of
Marianne and Julianne...

As the Professor goes on, Jack glances over to Gabrielle while she looks forward. Jack looks down and tries to hide a smile.

182. INT. NEW CABELL HALLWAY

The door to the class OPENS and STUDENTS start to walk out, slinging bags over their shoulders.

NEW CABELL PROFESSOR (O.C.)
 Don't forget those discussion
 posts! I'll see you Monday.

GABRIELLE walks out and turns right.

Then JACK hurries out, turns right, and nudges Gabrielle's shoulder.

JACK
 Gabrielle.

She turns around.

JACK (CONT'D)
 Can I talk to you?

GABRIELLE
 Sure.

They go around the corner (as we see in a PAN) to a spot where STUDENTS aren't walking by.

JACK
 I was uh... I was wondering if,
 maybe, you'd.. I dunno, wanna grab
 coffee sometime?

He holds his breath and she pauses.

GABRIELLE
 Uh. Sorry, I can't.

JACK
 (beat)
 Whatdyou- You can't at all. Okay.
 (MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

Well uh... That's cool. That's...

GABRIELLE

Yeah. I'm busy.

They both nod.

JACK

Alright, well, see you Monday.

GABRIELLE

Yep.

They walk separate ways. We see Jack go down the hall a ways, down the hall further until he stops, turns to look behind him, then puts a hand on his hip and hangs his head with a sigh, standing there in the middle of the hall, all the way down there.

He stands for a moment like that, then he lifts his head and continues down the hall.

183. INT. THE APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

JACK walks in to see MIKE on the couch as usual. There are a BUNCH of people in the hazy room, including AUSTIN, COREY, THE STRANGER, and SOME OTHERS.

They're all playing video games or at least watching the screen. There is food, plates, cups, all of that littering the coffee table and side tables.

Jack puts his bag down by the dining table. He puts his hands on his hips and looks over.

JACK

Mike.

MIKE

What.

JACK

Can I talk to you?

MIKE

What?

JACK

Can I talk to you for a second.

Mike harumphs and hands the controller off to Corey. He gets to his feet and starts to walk over.

184. INT. THE HALLWAY

JACK comes into the foyer, followed soon by MIKE, and Jack turns around. Mike stops.

JACK
When are you gonna clean all that
shit up?

MIKE
I'll get around to it.

Jack puts his hands on his hips and looks away, pursing his lips.

JACK
You'll get around to it. There's
plates out there that have been
there since Monday. Just sitting
out there getting crusted and—

MIKE
I'll do it. But it's not all mine.

JACK
No it *is* all yours. It *is*. So
actually do it please.

Mike sighs.

MIKE
Maybe.

Jack looks at him.

JACK
Can you sell me some Addy?

MIKE
I don't know.

JACK
Do you have any?

MIKE
Yeah.

JACK
So can you sell me some?

MIKE
I don't think so.

JACK
Wha... Why not?

Mike shrugs.

MIKE

I don't want to.

JACK

You don't. That's just bad business.

MIKE

No I have no problem finding buyers. At UVA?

JACK

Well what the fuck. What's your problem? *Huh?* What's your problem with me? All this time, this semester, just being nothing but a dick to me.

MIKE

Oh I'm the dick? No no, *you're* the fuckin' dick here. Always *bitching* and *moaning* about your problems, ordering me around, always condescending, thinking you know everything, why won't you just shut the fuck up?

JACK

Why won't *I* shut the fuck up? You prick, you and your big fuckin' mouth, what about you? All you do is start conflict, all you do is think about yourself, you self-centered little shit.

Mike just looks at him deadpan.

Jack breathes in through his nostrils.

JACK (CONT'D)

Oh fuck you.

MIKE

Fuck you.

Jack turns and throws a hand up.

JACK

I'm done.

He goes past Mike into the living room.

JACK (CONT'D)
Gettin' my bag.

Mike stands there and watches Jack walk away.

MIKE
Fuckin' pussy.

Jack HUSTLES past with his bag and Mike watches him go by with a smug expression.

Jack's door closes down the hall, and Mike shakes his head and goes back into the living room.

185. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY

JACK sits hunched over at his desk in front of his laptop, face inches from the screen as he furiously types away. He mutters to himself...

In a TIME-LAPSED PAN from RIGHT TO LEFT, going from Jack's right profile all the way around to his left profile, we see him TYPE in a mad frenzy as the time passes and the music plays; Jack hunches over with his face so close to the screen and the cold light of the desk lamp in the black and white world of Jack's bedroom at night.

We see his fingers typing away, here and there, over to the backspace, returning to the space bar again and again, over to the period, a pause, then continue.

Then we see Jack's face, eyebrows raised madly like Jack Nicholson, eyes wide, jaw clenched, almost flinching, twitching, as he tries to get the words down as fast as they come to him.

The screen as words add to the passage:

And Jesus Christ! Ellis watches from the car, thoughts racing through the broken circus of a worried mind - best friend, confidante, entrusted with helping his poor broken friend - and now this, over here, close but too far, as the word comes down from on high; as the men with the power take the reins like white-powder wig-wearers and the British Parliament, Gestapo, KGB, but nothing like that, he thinks, as finally the door swings open and the brutal summer sun strikes the glass of the screen door and burns Ellis' blue-encircled pupils. And there he is!

Back to Jack's face, eyes glancing down to the keys, back up to the screen, down, up, down, up, the tongue comes out between the lips, gripped, done mindlessly in the throes of focused passion.

The fingers dancing across the keys. The music grows louder.

Then the camera PANS LEFT TO RIGHT around Jack in a TIMELAPSE as before, back around to the far side until it settles on the side of Jack's right profile. In the darkness to his left, barely visible, CARL THE PIG.

186. I/E. JACK'S BALCONY - SUNRISE

The morning chorus and the occasional passing car.

Then JACK opens the door and walks out. He trudges up to the railing and throws his forearms onto it, leaning with little strength and weary eyes as he looks out over the courtyard.

He looks down at his hands, with their curled fingers, fixed in a claw-shape from all that typing. He raises them and looks at them. Then he interlaces the fingers and cracks the knuckles.

His arms find the railing once again and he looks out.

187. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY

JACK looks at the screen. The word count: **40,170**. The date: **OCT 1**.

JACK (V.O.)
You are beautiful. My child. You
are perfect.

Jack's face is one of confusion and relief, fulfillment and isolation.

His CURSOR moves towards the button the screen that reads SUBMIT NOW. He clicks.

Then he starts to type as he fills out the application.

His cursor moves to the button that reads UPLOAD FILE. Click.

After a few more clicks and drags, Jack takes a breath, then clicks SUBMIT.

A page opens that reads, **CONGRATULATIONS! YOU HAVE SUCCESSFULLY SUBMITTED YOUR APPLICATION TO THE VIRGINIA YOUNG WRITER'S NOVEL COMPETITION.**

Jack sits back in his chair and exhales. He looks to his right, gets up, and walks away. Onto the screen, text that reads:

Chapter 13: Anhedonia

188. I/E. THE BALCONY - DAY

JACK sits in a chair and stares out, left elbow propped on the rest and his head resting on the balled up fist of his left hand. The sunlight green of the reflection of the grass and trees bounces up and reflect off the walls and paints Jack in a warm palette he seems distant from.

189. INT. ALDERMAN MAP ROOM

JACK sits at the table he usually sits at, book out in front of him, and he stares, with arms folded, into the middle distance.

190. INT. THE APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

JACK sits at the dining table and eats a bowl of ramen, eyes trained on the table.

MIKE is over on the couch, watching TV with JEFF.

191. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY

JACK types in an email to someone named OLIVIA:

If you wouldn't mind taking a look.

192. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM

JACK sits on the edge of his bed as orange light pours in through his windows in stripes rendered by blinds.

193. INT. DIGITAL MEDIA LAB

JACK sits at the employee desk so low in his chair that his head just pokes up beyond the tabletop, his eyes vacant.

194. INT. LECTURE HALL

JACK sits in his seat among the other students with his arms folded and eyes forward.

195. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY

JACK types out another email, this one to JOSH:

Please give me any feedback you can offer.

196. INT. MID-SIZED CLASSROOM - NEW CABELL

JACK sits at his desk in the back, looking at his phone. GABRIELLE walks in through the door to his right. He keeps his gaze on the phone as she comes around and sits two seats in front of him.

He quickly glances up at her and then back down to his phone.

197. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

In the darkness, JACK stares up at the ceiling.

198. EXT. UNIVERSITY AVE - NIGHT

JACK sits on the brick outside of Bodo's, which has long since closed. We see him from behind as he looks around at all the late-night passersby.

199. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY

JACK clicks SEND on another e-mail.

Then he looks away and puts his hands on his knees.

200. INT. DANNY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

DANNY'S DAD has the headphones in, the music is playing. His eyes grow wide and his brow hardens, then he looks at Danny with an expression of befuddled horror.

201. I/E. JACK'S BALCONY - DAY

JACK holds his cell phone to his ear.

JACK

Yeah, mom, I'm doin fine. Just fine.

202. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM

JACK bangs his head against the wall.

203. INT. THE GREEN BASEMENT

DANNY is on his laptop. He has Soundcloud open. Then he clicks the UPLOAD button.

204. EXT. VIRGINIA AVE - SUNSET

JACK walks along as the train passes to his right. He stops and looks at it as it goes along.

205. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY

JACK opens an email from Josh, which reads:

Only twenty pages in and right off the bat I see problems with the writing, the exposition, and the dialogue. I'll go into it further but I have to start by saying that it's just

a little tough to get through.

Jack rubs his forehead and sighs.

206. INT. THE GREEN BASEMENT

DANNY looks at a comment on the screen that reads:

THIS ALBUM IS GARBAGE.

207. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY

JACK looks at a new e-mail from DMITRI that reads:

There is a noticeable narcissism that you're writing with. The very premise, in fact, is based in ego: writing a story that's ostensibly about yourself. So full of self-pity and asking the reader to empathize with a lunatic who so obviously represents you, the author...

208. INT. THE GREEN BASEMENT

DANNY sits across from BILL BAXTER.

BILL BAXTER

Yeah, sorry Danny, but I just don't like it.

209. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM

JACK is on the phone. He stands silhouetted in the white light coming through the closed blinds.

OLIVIA (O.S.)

Can I be honest?

JACK

Yeah of course.

OLIVIA (O.S.)

Alright well...

(beat)

It's... It's kinda obtuse, kinda pretentious... Y'know there's a lot in there that's so tangential to the story. These long rambling passages about the demise of American culture and the perversion of industry, none of which ties into the actual plot—

JACK

Well those are the things Danny

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

thinks about, they're why he makes
the—

OLIVIA (O.S.)

Right, can I finish.. giving my
honest feedback?

JACK

Sorry.

OLIVIA (O.S.)

Yeah so... Where was... And I
remember as I was reading - I
haven't finished but - y'know that
we don't get a sense of *why* Danny
is this way. *Why* he is so..
psychotic. Especially when his
parents seem so normal. And why
doesn't he feel any remorse—

JACK

You should finish it.

OLIVIA (O.S.)

And all in all, I don't like the
style of the writing, no offense,
but it's just so full of itself.
You write like a poor imitation of
Pynchon or something, and the
dialogue, the scenes, it's all so
clearly a ripoff of David Lynch
movies and the imagery is so
extreme. I mean why do you love
violence so much? I get a sense in
the story that Danny just loves
himself so fucking much and it's
exhausting. It's even worse cuz
it's like... He's constantly
complaining and so self-effacing
but at the same time so annoyingly
self-obsessed, y'know? And it's
just hard to root for him. Y'know?

Jack stands there with his free hand on his hip and his head
hung with eyes cast down.

JACK

Yeah. I know what you mean.

OLIVIA (O.S.)

Yeah so... Does that help?

JACK

Uh... Sure. Yeah. Thanks.

OLIVIA (O.S.)

No problem, I'll talk to you later.

JACK

See ya.

Jack hangs up. His posture doesn't change. He flippantly tosses his phone onto the bed. Then he just stands there, unmoving, breathing in and out through his nose, for his jaw is clenched and lips sealed.

210. EXT. DANNY'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

DANNY stands at the top of his steps and ELLIS at the bottom. Ellis holds a roll of duct tape.

DANNY

So did you hear it?

ELLIS

Yep.

DANNY

What'd you think?

Ellis looks to his left, then down at the roll of tape.

ELLIS

Yeah...

(beat)

I just came to give you your tape back.

He offers the tape to Danny. Danny looks confused.

DANNY

You didn't like it?

Danny mindlessly lifts his hand and takes the tape, eyes staying fixed on Ellis.

ELLIS

It uh... It just wasn't for me.

Danny's hand drops to his side. His shoulders sag.

DANNY

Oh. Okay.

ELLIS

Yeah...

Ellis backs away and turns.

ELLIS (CONT'D)
Take it easy, man.

Ellis walks away. Danny watches him go from the top of the steps. Then he looks down the street.

211. INT. CLEMONS LIBRARY

JACK sits at a table with his right arm folded across his chest and the elbow of his left arm propped on his right wrist. He strokes his cheek stubble with the back of his left hand and stares hopelessly through the table.

212. INT. THE TORTURE ROOM

DANNY stands before the pole, looking down at the tile, fixating his gaze on a tiny drop of blood. He takes a breath.

DANNY
(under his breath)
Jesus...

He drops his head in a hand.

DANNY (CONT'D)
What did I do.

213. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - MORNING

JACK lies in bed, staring up.

His alarm goes off. He ignores it.

The alarm keeps going. He keeps ignoring it.

Then it stops. Jack slides the covers off of him and gets slowly out of bed.

214. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY

JACK sits at his desk and opens his laptop. He has some new e-mails. He opens up his inbox.

There is an email from the Virginia Young Writer's Association.

Jack takes a deep breath. He opens the e-mail.

JACK (V.O.)
Thank you for submitting to this
year's novel competition. We
(MORE)

JACK (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 received a large number of
 qualified applicants.

The words on the screen panning left to right as he reads:

We regret to inform you

JACK (V.O.)
 We regret to inform you...

Jack closes the laptop. He closes his eyes and leans back in the chair.

214A. INT. THE GREEN BASEMENT

DANNY sits on the floor with his knees drawn close to his chest and his head in his hands.

214B. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY

JACK sits at his desk with his eyes closed.

The sound of a distant train whistle echoes through his mind.

His eyes open.

A NEWSMAN'S VOICE rings out.

NEWSMAN (V.O.)
 They're calling it the great
 american novel of the 21st century,
 the tragedy being that its young
 author went so unappreciated by his
 peers that...

Jack looks with wild eyes through the wall. He starts to breath very deeply, very heavily. He raises his chin, keeping his gaze fixed on a distant point, and breathes in through his nose.

Jack leans forward, opens a new tab, and types in:

Train schedule charlottesville

Then Jack springs into action. He grabs a piece of paper and feeds it into the typewriter, sets it in place, and TYPES out a long statement we do not see.

Jack closes his laptop, RIPS out the paper from the typewriter, and SLAPS it on the lid of the laptop. He gets out of the chair and steps into the kitchenette to look out through the balcony door window at the afternoon sky.

216. INT. THE APARTMENT - KITCHEN
- The living room is empty and quiet. A single light is on in the kitchen. The room seems cold.
- PAN LEFT to look down the hallway.
- JACK comes out of his room, now dressed for the day, walks down the hall, and goes out the front door.
217. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - STUDY
- The laptop sits closed on the desk. The slip of paper from the typewriter sits on top of it. Slowly, we see what it reads:
- Dear Reader, the book must be published. You will see it open when you unlock the laptop. Password: Cioran1911. Sorry it had to be this way. Love, Jack.**
218. EXT. THE TRAIN TRACKS - SUNSET
- The sun is orange-yellow in the corner of the sky, still with time before it disappears beyond the horizon.
- JACK comes walking down the tracks. His face is cold and sallow, gaze distant. He walks almost in a trance.
- He pulls his phone out and checks the time, then he slips it back into his pocket.
219. INT. DANNY'S HOUSE
- DANNY grabs an extension cord.
220. EXT. THE TRAIN TRACKS - SUNSET
- JACK stands in a clear area by the tracks, sort of mingling about. He looks around. Then he puts his hands in his pockets and looks down.
- He stops walking around and stands there, looking down with his hands in his pockets.
221. INT. DANNY'S HOUSE
- DANNY grabs a chair from the dining room table.
222. EXT. THE TRAIN TRACKS - SUNSET
- JACK settles down into a squat. He looks down at the gravel. His hand reaches down and picks up a small stone.
- Jack inspects the little rock. He turns it over in his hand

a couple times, feels the weight of it. Then he looks up to his left.

JACK
(under his breath)
They'll get it.

He tosses the stone away.

JACK (CONT'D)
(under his breath)
They'll get it.

223. EXT. DANNY'S HOUSE - BACKYARD

DANNY walks into the grass holding the chair under one arm and the extension cord all coiled up in his other arm.

He walks up to a tree and puts the chair down. Then he looks up.

224. EXT. THE TRAIN TRACKS - SUNSET

JACK faces away from the setting sun, ignoring it as it comes down over his right shoulder. He stands watching the distant bend where the train will come from.

His face is grave.

He pulls a hand from one of his pockets and brushes some hair out of his face. Then he looks at his hand.

It trembles.

225. EXT. DANNY'S HOUSE - BACKYARD

DANNY throws the cord over the branch and the slackened cord comes down over the other side. He takes the end and loops it around to tie a knot in itself.

He ties the knot and then pulls to feel it tighten.

226. EXT. THE TRAIN TRACKS - SUNSET

JACK sits on the rail and looks away. His lip quivers and his eyes are clear and worried. He breathes shaky breaths.

Then he firmly seals his lips and clenches his jaw, taking a deep breath through his nostrils to steel himself against the fear.

227. EXT. DANNY'S HOUSE - BACKYARD

DANNY ties the other end of the cord around a fence post.

He walks over to the chair, looks up at the noose in the cord, and then steps onto the chair.

He stands tall, his head next to the loop. Then he grabs the loop.

228. EXT. THE TRAIN TRACKS - SUNSET

JACK stands up from the rail, breathing heavily, and faces east. He gulps.

229. EXT. DANNY'S HOUSE - BACKYARD

DANNY slips his head into the loop.

230. EXT. THE TRAIN TRACKS - SUNSET

JACK looks down at the time on his phone. Then he looks eastward. His face twitches in nervous anticipation.

231. EXT. DANNY'S HOUSE - BACKYARD

DANNY closes his eyes and takes a deep breath.

232. EXT. THE TRAIN TRACKS - SUNSET

JACK wipes the sweat off his palm and his jaw slackens as his breathing grows faster and his gaze fixates on the eastern ridge.

233. EXT. DANNY'S HOUSE - BACKYARD

DANNY brings his foot backward, away from the back of the chair, poised to kick. He blows out through his mouth.

234. EXT. THE TRAIN TRACKS - BACKYARD

JACK huffs and puffs, sweat on his brow, hair dangling around his face, eyes glistening, breathing in and out.

His CELL PHONE rings and his head WHIPS DOWN.

235. EXT. DANNY'S HOUSE - BACKYARD

The DOORBELL RINGS in the house.

Danny's eyes open. In a WIDE, we see him there in the yard under the tree, standing on the chair with orange cord around his neck. He looks down at himself.

He can hear POUNDING on the front door.

He takes the cord off his neck and steps down.

236. I/E. DANNY'S FRONT STEPS - AFTERNOON

DANNY opens the door to see a DETECTIVE and TWO COPS.

DANNY

Hello?

The Detective, TOM COPELAND, nods with a tight-lipped smile.

DET. COPELAND

Hi, my name's Tom Copeland, I'm
with the Fairfax County Police
Department.

He shows Danny his badge.

DET. COPELAND (CONT'D)

Are you Daniel Barbacoa?

DANNY

Uh...

Danny looks down the street. He sees ELLIS sitting in his car watching.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Yeah.

Danny stares back at Ellis. Copeland hands Danny a folded packet of papers, which makes Danny look down.

DET. COPELAND

This is a warrant to search the
premises. They're gonna take a look
around.

The COPS go past Copeland and INTO the house, passing Danny as he holds the door open, dumbfounded. Copeland fishes something out of a pocket and raises it to Danny's face. It's the baggie with the tooth in it.

DET. COPELAND (CONT'D)

You recognize this?

DANNY

(beat)

No.

Copeland puts the baggie back away.

DET. COPELAND

Doesn't really matter.

Copeland takes Danny by the elbow of the hand in which Danny holds the warrant.

DET. COPELAND (CONT'D)
How bout you come with me?

DANNY
What? Why?

Copeland leads Danny down the steps.

DET. COPELAND
Well, Dan, you're under arrest.

DANNY
(softly)
Under arrest...?

DET. COPELAND
That's right, now don't fight me,
you'll just make things harder.

237. EXT. DANNY'S STREET - AFTERNOON

COPELAND bends DANNY over the hood of his dark blue sedan as MUSIC plays over the scene and the sounds of Danny and Copeland continue muffled beneath.

DET. COPELAND
(almost inaudible)
You have the right to remain
silent, anything you say can and
will...

As Copeland cuffs him and his face hovers over the hood of the car, Danny looks at Ellis. ELLIS looks back from behind the wheel of his car.

Danny's eyes are wide and red. Ellis looks out with a somber expression, mouth closed, gaze fixed.

Then Danny nods and sort of smiles. Ellis nods back.

Copeland opens the back passenger door, lowers Danny's head in, and pushes Danny into the car.

238. EXT. THE TRAIN TRACKS - SUNSET

JACK pulls his PHONE out of his pocket as it RINGS. He looks down at the number. It's clear in his expression that he doesn't recognize it.

But he answers it.

JACK
Hello?

MICHAEL MILLOY
Hello, is this Jack? Jack Stevens?

JACK
Yeah. Who's this?

MICHAEL MILLOY
This is Michael Milloy, is it a bad
time?

In a WIDE, Jack looks around at his stead in the middle of
the tracks. He pauses.

JACK
Uh... No, not at all.

MICHAEL MILLOY
Oh good.

JACK
How'd you get my number?

MICHAEL MILLOY
Olivia Giannopolous gave it to me.
She sent me your novel.

Jack catches his breath.

JACK
Uh-huh.

MICHAEL MILLOY
Yeah, she said it wasn't for her,
but that I might be interested.

JACK
Uh-huh.

MICHAEL MILLOY
And I just wanted to call cuz I
think it's really good..

Jack's hand sets onto his chest.

JACK
You do?

MICHAEL MILLOY
Yeah, I really liked it.

Jack looks into the trees, eyes bouncing around, as he takes
in the air.

JACK

I... I'm glad to hear it.

MICHAEL MILLOY

I know Olivia didn't like it. It's certainly not for everyone. It's twisted and weird, and it could use some revisions to, y'know, refine it.. but it's very well written and I think it's a hell of an accomplishment.

Jack starts to get choked up.

JACK

Thank you.

MICHAEL MILLOY

Yeah, of course. I just wanted to say, uh, I hope you keep writing. I'd be very interested to see what you do next, and I want you to know, I showed it to a professor, friend of mine in the English department.

JACK

Yeah?

MICHAEL MILLOY

Well he was very intrigued by it, said he wants to meet you.

JACK

To meet me.

MICHAEL MILLOY

Yeah, he respected, as I do, your commitment to doing it your own way. In your own style. It's very important, especially in a story as personal as this one clearly is.

JACK

Okay..

MICHAEL MILLOY

Did you submit it to the Virginia Young Writer's novel contest?

JACK

Yeah.

MICHAEL MILLOY

And?

JACK

Got rejected.

Michael chuckles.

MICHAEL MILLOY

Well fuck 'em. They're only interested in one particular type of story, all those competitions are. I'm sure they thought it was too weird. So fuck 'em! Who needs em. Anyway..

JACK

Thank you.

MICHAEL MILLOY

What?

Jack clears his throat.

JACK

Thanks for calling. I really... really appreciate it.

MICHAEL MILLOY

No problem, Jack. I'll see you around. But keep at it!

JACK

Alright.

MICHAEL MILLOY

Alright?

JACK

Alright.

MICHAEL MILLOY

Okay then. See ya.

JACK

See ya.

Then Michael hangs up. Jack stands frozen with the phone still to his ear, eyes glistening and fixated on the trees as he holds back the tears.

EXTREME WIDE: Jack, standing on the tracks, as he lowers his phone to his side and rubs his face. He looks around,

finally recognizing the situation, his surroundings, the reality he lives in.

He pockets the phone and steps down off the tracks. The sound of the train RISES in the distance. The whistle blows.

Jack stands along the tracks as the TRAIN draws CLOSER, coming from the east. Slowly, we DOLLY IN, as the train comes CLOSER and CLOSER.

Then it RUSHES PAST.

Jack watches, wind WHIPPING his hair around, as the train hurtles past him.

He watches it go by as the thought hits him, that by now he would have been dead. The MUSIC SWELLS OVERHEAD as the deep BASS of the rushing train fades into the din of the soundtrack and the camera lowers and TILTS UP, until it arrives at a LOW ANGLE: Jack on one side, the train on the other, and the beautiful SUNSET SKY overhead.

Jack looks up at all the oranges, pinks, the light yellows and blues, as the setting sun itself washes Jack in orange light.

Jack wipes the tears out of his eyes and takes a very deep and full breath.

239. INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Silence. The sound of breathing, long and slow. The blinds are open and the morning light outside is bright.

JACK'S hand dangles off the side of the bed. He is fast asleep.

The alarm goes off. Jack turns it off. He slowly rises from his bed, goes over to the balcony door, and opens it.

We see him in the open doorway, leaning on the balcony railing, as the sounds of birds chirping, people talking, and distant cars passing all pour in gently.

Then he comes back in, leaving the door open, and falls into bed.

The scene remains. Stillness. Calm. Peace.

FADE TO BLACK.