

HOW TO JUMP OUT OF A MOVING CAR

OVER BLACK.

A BABY CRYING. DOG BARKING. DOORBELL RINGING bridge to...

INT. FARR HOME/HALLWAY - DUSK

LIAM FARR (33) attempts to feed a bottle to a WAILING INFANT while shepherding a BARKING POMERANIAN down the hallway with his bare foot. His damp hair and razor-nicked neck betray a hurried primping.

The DOORBELL. Liam steps into the bedroom threshold, holding the dog back with his foot. NICHOLE GRAHAM-FARR (28) sits on the bed, pulling on a skirt.

LIAM
Can you get that?

Nichole sighs. She brushes past Jack, fastening an earring.

NICHOLE
She's early.

LIAM
(upbeat)
Better early than late.

Liam nudges the dog into a laundry room and shuts the door. He focuses attention on the baby, JACK (1). With the dog locked up, the baby calms, feeding from its bottle.

Nichole opens the door. CHLOE FARNSWORTH (15) smiles at her. Cute yet plain, she's dressed conservatively in jeans and sweater. A back pack full of books is strapped to her back.

CHLOE
Hi.

NICHOLE
Come on in. Liam is still trying to get him down.

CHLOE
You look really nice.

Nichole flashes a hurried smile.

NICHOLE
Thanks, honey. That's sweet of you to say.

INT. FARR HOME/NURSERY - CONTINUOUS

Shades drawn. A light mobile patterns the room in multi-colored stars.

Liam gently rocks the baby in his arms as he finishes his bottle. Nichole hurries into the room.

NICHOLE

(sotto)

I've got him. Go take care of Chloe.

Liam passes the now-sleeping boy to Nichole. He pauses at the door, studying his wife and child. He can't help but smile. Nichole waves him off, playfully mouthing the word 'Go'.

INT. FARR HOME/HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Liam eases the nursery door shut.

INT. FARR HOME/LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Liam descends the stairs. He pulls on a pair of socks, surveying the home.

Chloe is nowhere to be found.

Liam crosses to an open door.

INT. FARR HOME/OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Liam's office. Littered with photographic equipment. Chloe studies a series of black and white photographic prints decorating the walls. Each print is an extreme close up of the female body. So close, in fact, that the images more closely resemble terrestrial landscapes than human anatomy.

Liam steps into the threshold.

CHLOE

Sorry. I just - I wanted to see them again. They're so beautiful.

(beat)

You should be doing this for a living.

LIAM

I've got more important things to think about now.

CHLOE

What could be more important than doing what you love?

LIAM

Paying the mortgage.

Liam flashes a smile.

LIAM (CONT'D)
Come on. Let's get you situated.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - NIGHT

A dusty 85 VOLVO STATION WAGON RATTLES down the two-lane black top, tailgate wallpapered with bumper stickers.

INT. 85 VOLVO STATION WAGON/MOVING - NIGHT

Liam drives. He steals a smile at Nichole. She smiles back.

NICHOLE
What's gotten into you?

LIAM
I got some good news today. Some really good news.

NICHOLE
Well, are you going to share?

LIAM
I was going to wait until we got to the restaurant, but - I can tell you now if you want me to.

Nichole laughs at Liam's excitement.

NICHOLE
Go on.

LIAM
I got it. I got the promotion.

NICHOLE
Holy shit! Really? That's fantastic, honey! Congratulations!

Nichole kisses Liam on the cheek. Liam beams with satisfaction.

LIAM
Earl brought me aside this morning. I've been dying to tell you all day.

NICHOLE
I'm so proud of you. I really am.

LIAM
I want to warn you though, Nic. It's going to be a change. I'm going to have to be on the road a lot more. And it's going to take a big commitment on my part.

(MORE)

LIAM (CONT'D)

(beat)

But we'll make it work. We always make it work. Right?

NICHOLE

How much more?

LIAM

I don't know yet. More. But it's a big promotion, Nic. A fifteen thousand bump plus twenty percent bonus. We'll be able to trade in this piece of shit. Maybe do some of the remodeling we've been talking about.

NICHOLE

How much do you think, though. I mean - every week?

The enthusiasm drains from Liam's face.

LIAM

I don't know. Maybe. Maybe every week.

NICHOLE

What about my school?

LIAM

What about it?

NICHOLE

How am I going to be able to go to class at night if you aren't home to watch Jack, Liam?

LIAM

I don't know, Nic. We'll figure it out.

Nichole shrinks away. She stares at passing suburbia through the passenger side window.

LIAM (CONT'D)

Hey. Come on. This is a good thing.

They drive in silence, Nichole's tension building. Then...

NICHOLE

Is this really what you want?

LIAM

Of course this is what I want.

(MORE)

LIAM (CONT'D)

This is what I've been busting my
ass the past three years for.

NICHOLE

What about your photography?

LIAM

We both know I'm never going to make
a living as a photographer, Nichole.
Not making the kind of money I need
to make in order to support us.

(beat)

I thought you'd be happy about this.

NICHOLE

(forced)

I am, Liam. I'm happy.

Nichole leans her head back against the head rest, looking
out the window at passing homes.

Liam's face shifts into something grim. We hold on him for
an uncomfortably long period of time. Street lamps pass
overhead, shrouding him in intermittent darkness.

SUPER TITLE: HOW TO JUMP OUT OF A MOVING CAR

INT. OFFICE BUILDING/CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY, THREE YEARS LATER

The room is a testament to corporate excess. Liam (now three
years older) sits opposite a battalion of corporate
executives.

SUPER TITLE: THREE YEARS LATER

MALLORY GIBBONS (30) presents to the room. 'Librarian' glasses
provide a coy contrast to her sexy skirt.

Liam catches several of the executives' eyes dancing from
the presentation to Mallory's legs when she isn't watching.
He's caught noticing and pretends he didn't see anything.

MALLORY (V.O.)

You have a kid, right?

Liam looks at Mallory. Their eyes meet for a brief moment as
she turns to address the executives. A brief and subtle smile
acknowledges her awareness of ogling eyes.

INT. HOTEL ROOM/BATHROOM - NIGHT

Liam showers.

LIAM (V.O.)

Yeah. Two.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Liam sits at a small table dividing his attention between a television and his lap top. He is dressed in pajama bottoms and a tee shirt. He wears glasses. Sips a beer. He looks preoccupied. Distracted.

MALLORY (V.O.)

How old?

LIAM (V.O.)

Five and one. Well, my oldest turns five in November.

EXT. HOTEL ROOM/BALCONY - NIGHT

Liam smokes a cigarette. He watches as a DRUNK COUPLE three stories below splash one another in the hotel pool. They laugh. Then kiss.

MALLORY (V.O.)

It must be hard.

LIAM (V.O.)

What's that?

Liam leans back into the cover of darkness, spying on the couple through the balcony rails. He draws off his cigarette. The ember glow reveals a longing in his eyes.

INT. HOTEL BAR - NIGHT - EARLIER

Mallory sits across from Liam. The top of her blouse is unbuttoned. Her hair let down. Liam's tie is loosened. His eyes shift between Mallory and a television over the bar. Both are a bit drunk.

MALLORY

Traveling as much as you do. Being away from the family.

Liam sips his drink. He smiles.

LIAM

It can be.

MALLORY

What's so funny?

LIAM

You seem pretty interested in my personal life all of a sudden.

MALLORY

And why shouldn't I be? I mean, if we're going to be pitching this bullshit together.

Mallory smiles. Liam takes another swig of scotch.

LIAM

I bet that look has closed you a lot of deals.

MALLORY

What look?

LIAM

You know. The coy, sexy one.

MALLORY

So that's what did it. And here I thought I was just a damn good salesman.

LIAM

Woman. You're every bit a sales woman.

Liam raises his glass. They CLINK. He downs the rest of his scotch, suddenly feeling self-conscious at his thinly veiled flirtation. Mallory waves for another round. She does a slow burn at Liam.

MALLORY

So, tell me a little bit about your wife.

LIAM

My wife...

MALLORY

Do you love her?

A BEAT. Liam thinks a little too hard.

LIAM

(strained)

Yeah. Of course.

MALLORY

Wow. That sounds convincing.

LIAM

Marriage takes alot of work.

MALLORY

I never understood it.

(MORE)

MALLORY (CONT'D)

It's not natural to be with the same person all of your life. Look at the wild: animals don't mate for life.

LIAM

Eagles. Bald eagles do. I remember reading that somewhere.

Liam smiles, amused.

LIAM (CONT'D)

Maybe that's why they're an endangered species.

Mallory laughs.

MALLORY

You're funny.

LIAM

No. I'm just drunk.

MALLORY

Hey. I've got an idea. Why don't we take this little party of ours upstairs? We can prep for tomorrow. Go over our notes.

LIAM

Go over our notes.

Mallory grins at the innuendo.

MALLORY

Yeah.

She touches Liam's forearm. His eyes dance with hers. He covers her hand with his.

LIAM

I can't. I just can't, Mallory.

Liam gets up. He steps up to Mallory, cradles her head in his hands and gives her a heartfelt kiss on the top of her head. Mallory cups his hands in hers for a moment.

LIAM (CONT'D)

Promise me something...

MALLORY

What?

LIAM

Don't screw the bar keep.

Mallory laughs.

MALLORY

No promises. But I'll try not to.

Liam pats her on the back as he staggers away. A smile lingers on Mallory's face. She looks over at the bartender as she sucks down the rest of her drink.

A PHONE RINGING BRIDGES TO...

INT. FARR HOME/BEDROOM - NIGHT

NICHOLE jolts awake at the sound of the phone. She throws aside a tangle of sheet and grabs the receiver.

NICHOLE

Hello?

INT. HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Liam sits on the balcony watching the DRUNK COUPLE in the pool below. A cigarette burns in his hand, mobile phone cradled to his ear.

LIAM

Hey.

CROSS CUT BETWEEN LOCATIONS

NICHOLE

What's going on? Are you okay?

LIAM

Fine. I'm fine.

NICHOLE

What are you doing? What time is it?

LIAM

Late. I'm sorry. It's really late.

NICHOLE

What do you want?

LIAM

I just got in and I wanted to say -
I wanted to see how you guys were
doing.

Nichole fishes the alarm clock off the night stand and squints at it.

NICHOLE

It's one in the morning, Liam.

LIAM

I know. I know. I'm sorry.

NICHOLE

I've got to get up early to take Jack to swim lessons.

LIAM

That's tomorrow?

NICHOLE

It's every Tuesday, Liam.

LIAM

Right. Right. Sorry. I didn't know.

NICHOLE

You did know. I told you last week. Every Tuesday. Swim lessons.

LIAM

Look. I'm sorry. I just wanted to check in. I should've thought of the time.

SILENCE.

LIAM (CONT'D)

Hello?

NICHOLE

Is there something important? Did something happen?

Liam snuffs his cigarette and moves off the balcony into the hotel room. He closes the sliding glass door, shutting out the AMOROUS LAUGHING and SPLASHING of the couple in the pool.

LIAM

No. Nothing happened. We can talk about it tomorrow.

NICHOLE

About what?

LIAM

Nothing. Not about anything - just. We can talk tomorrow.

NICHOLE

Are you drunk?

LIAM

No.

NICHOLE
You are. You're drunk.

LIAM
No.
(more resolute)
No. I just wanted to call to check
in on you guys. I shouldn't have
done it. I'm sorry.

SILENCE. Liam goes to speak then...

NICHOLE
I'm going back to bed.

LIAM
Alright. I love -

DIAL TONE. Liam tosses the phone onto the bed. He falls
backward onto the mattress, staring at the ceiling.

INT. BUICK LESABRE/MOVING - NIGHT, ONE MONTH AGO. FLASHBACK

Chloe (now 17) sits in the passenger seat. She has undergone
a subtle change. Black hoodie. Hair nearly obscuring her
face. She stares through the ghost of her reflection at
passing suburbia.

EXT. STRIP MALL - NIGHT, ONE MONTH AGO. FLASHBACK

The BUICK bottoms out as it turns into the parking lot. The
car approaches a dingy storefront and parks.

INT. BUICK LESABRE - CONTINUOUS

HOWARD FARNSWORTH (48), Chloe's father, throws the car into
park. He shifts uncomfortably. Chloe tries her door. Locked.
Howard fumbles to unlock it. Chloe starts to get out.

HOWARD
Chloe.

Chloe hesitates for a moment.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
If you want me to go in with you -
then I can go in with you.

Chloe shakes her head 'no'. Hops out of the car. Howard
flinches as the car door SLAMS shut. He watches, helpless,
as Chloe shuffles up the curb toward the storefront. The
window is stenciled: *WOMEN'S CLINIC*.

COUNSELOR (V.O.)
Tell me about things with your
parents.

Chloe throws a fleeting glance at Howard. She pulls open the door. It takes all of her effort, emphasizing the vulnerable nature of her thin adolescent frame.

INT. COUNSELOR'S OFFICE - NIGHT, PRESENT

Chloe sulks on a couch opposite the COUNSELOR, the trajectory of her change complete. Black hoodie. Hair dyed black. Faux tattoos stenciled in blue pen pattern her hand. She refuses to make eye contact, knee bobbing up and down with nervous energy.

COUNSELOR
Have you talked to them anymore about
it? Do they know how you feel?

The Counselor leans forward, grasping for a connection.

COUNSELOR (CONT'D)
Chloe. I can't help you if you don't
talk about it.

Chloe doesn't respond. The Counselor leans back, agitated.

COUNSELOR (CONT'D)
So that's it. You're just going to
wait this out.

Chloe throws an insulted look at the Counselor then looks away.

INT. COUNSELOR'S OFFICE/WAITING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The door BURSTS open. Chloe storms out. The Counselor watches her go, disappointment set on his face.

EXT. HOUSING DEVELOPMENT - NIGHT

A SPOTLIGHT traces the skeletal frames of unfinished homes, dirt mounds, and construction equipment. A POLICE CRUISER coasts through an unfinished housing development, on sentry for trespassing midnight revelers.

The BEAM pours over a dirt mound beyond which hides a parked HATCHBACK with fogged windows. Muted BREATHING CRESCENDOS.

INT. HATCHBACK - NIGHT

The lithe contours of a teenage girl shiver at the touch of a teenage boy, his trembling fingers desperate to elicit response. The boy releases a HEAVY BREATH.

EXT. HOUSING DEVELOPMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Chloe sits on the hood of the hatchback. She's dressed in a black hoodie, jeans, and unlaced combat boots. She hugs herself against the cold, inhaling a smoke.

CHLOE

No one asked about me?

CHRIS TWEETY (19) paces in front of her. His hair is shoulder-length. He idly picks up dirt clods, throwing them into the wooden frames of unfinished construction.

CHRIS

No. I mean, Rhonda. But they just figured you were out sick.

CHLOE

I'm afraid of what I'm going to do when I see him. You know? I'm afraid I'm going to freak out or something.
(beat)

They sent me back to that shrink.
Did I tell you that?

Chris lobbs a baseball-sized dirt clod at the roof of an unfinished home. THUNK! It explodes into little pieces.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

My Dad asked me how I was doing this morning. If I'm ready to go back. But he doesn't really want to know. He just wants me to say I'm okay so that he doesn't have to deal with it anymore.

Chloe takes a long drag off her cigarette, watching Chris expectantly. He bends over to retrieve another projectile --

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Are you even listening to me?

Chris preempts his next throw, holding the dirt ball in hand.

CHRIS

Yeah. He doesn't want to deal with it. Your Dad.

CHLOE

Well?

CHRIS

Well what?

CHLOE

Well what? What the hell, Chris?

Chris lobbs the dirt clod. THUNK! He flashes a smile as it explodes against the unfinished home's roof exhaust vent. He turns to see Chloe glaring.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Sometimes you really piss me off.

CHRIS

What?

Chris dusts his hands off. In a single movement he hops up onto the car hood and swipes the cigarette from Chloe's hand, stealing a back-handed drag. Chloe snatches the cigarette back.

CHLOE

God...

CHRIS

Your parents suck. Okay? Your mom is a frigid bitch and your dad is an asshole. Is that better?

Chloe hops off the car hood.

CHLOE

Yeah. Great. Thanks, Chris.

She starts toward the car door. Chris catches her arm.

CHRIS

Hey. I'm sorry.

Chris pulls Chloe back toward him. She glares at him a moment, then melts into his arms, resting her forehead against his.

CHLOE

(sotto)

Tell me it's going to be okay.

Chris turns her chin up. He studies her face with all the sincerity he can muster.

CHRIS

(sotto)

It's going to be okay.

She flashes an uncertain smile. They kiss.

LOUD MUSIC bridges to --

INT. HATCHBACK/MOVING - NIGHT

-- the MUSIC rattles a dashboard, sticker-plastered with a patchwork of alternative band decals and Hello Kitty stickers with the eyes x-ed out.

Chloe drives, hoodie draped low over her forehead. She sings along with the chorus. Her voice trails off as she rounds a corner. She kills the music.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - NIGHT

The hatchback coasts through the middle class neighborhood. It's lights are doused as it nears a split level and turns into the drive.

Chloe gets out of the car. Carefully clicks the door shut. She surveys the neighborhood. A distant dog BARKS. She cautiously rounds the back of the home.

EXT. FARNSWORTH HOME - CONTINUOUS

Chloe navigates a weed infested flower bed. She parts the bushes below a window revealing a lawn ornament: a cement bunny.

It looks forlorn, lost and forgotten to the encroaching foliage.

Chloe steps up onto the bunny's head, getting just enough boost to open the window. She carefully passes her backpack through the window then hoists herself up.

INT. FARNSWORTH HOME/CHLOE'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Chloe carefully creeps across the room, unlocks her bedroom door and peers out down the split level stairs.

A television strobos in the darkness. Howard lies asleep on a recliner.

Chloe eases the door shut and locks it. She examines her smart phone: a wall paper photo of her and Chris mugging for the camera. The phone casts eerie blue light across Chloe's face.

She stands. Pulls off her tee shirt and aims the phone at her bare-chested reflection in the dresser mirror. She studies the screen as --

-- her pixilated image is displayed in a CAMERA APP.

Something catches her attention. A LIGHT BRIGHTENS the second story window of the neighboring home.

Chloe quickly douses her smart phone and ducks for cover. She carefully peers out the window across the side yard at --

-- THE SECOND STORY OF THE FARR HOME. Nichole shuffles into a nursery. She picks up her WAILING BABY. She looks up, staring directly at Chloe. Chloe ducks.

INT. FARR HOME/NURSERY - CONTINUOUS

Nichole stares at her own reflection in the nursery window. She rocks the infant, unaware of her voyeur.

INT. FARNSWORTH HOME/CHLOE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Chloe turns off her DIGITAL SLR'S flash. Frames up Nichole. She zooms in snapping several photos. She slumps to a seat against the wall and navigates the photographs displayed on the camera's LCD.

She serenely looks down, placing her hand on her abdomen. Her face is tortured with regret.

EXT. SUBURBIA - DAWN

Dawn splashes a canvas of sky. Suburbanites go about the mundane tasks of their daily lives. Collecting newspapers off the front stoop. Ushering children into school buses. Starting off on the morning commute.

EXT. FARR HOME - MORNING

A quaint two-story. The home boasts a meticulously manicured lawn. Seasonal decorations adorn the front porch. Ironic counterpoints to the sounds that emanate from within.

A BABY CRYING, DOG BARKING, PHONE RINGING BRIDGE TO --

INT. FARR HOME - MORNING

Nichole carries a SCREAMING INFANT. A diaper bag, bottle cooler, and purse are slung over her shoulder. The PHONE RINGS incessantly.

NICHOLE

Come on, Jack! We're gonna be late!

Nichole nearly trips over a pair of children's shoes. She checks the phone's caller ID: Blocked. The ringing stops.

JACK (O.S.)

Mommy?

Nichole turns to see JACK (4) holding the kitchen receiver in his hands.

JACK (CONT'D)
It's for you.

NICHOLE
(sotto)
Damn it, Jack.

Nichole snatches the phone from Jack.

NICHOLE (CONT'D)
Hello?

ASSOCIATE/PHONE
Nichole Graham?

NICHOLE
Yes.

She strains to hear against the BARKING dog and WAILING infant.

ASSOCIATE (O.S.)
My name is Mike Ripley. I'm calling from Trimark Adjustments on behalf of Chase regarding your accou -

NICHOLE
Look, I'm sorry. I can't talk right now. Just - call back.

Nichole disconnects the phone. She places the receiver back into its cradle. The phone RINGS again. Caller ID: Blocked. Panic grips her. She steps back, unsure of what to do.

NICHOLE (CONT'D)
Come on, Jack. Get your shoes on.

JACK
The phone's ringing, mommy.

NICHOLE
I said get your shoes on. We're late.

Nichole waves Jack past her. She disconnects the phone cord from the wall. The RINGING STOPS.

EXT. FARR HOME - MOMENTS LATER

The garage door GROANS open. Nichole sits in the driver's seat of a MINIVAN. She white knuckles the steering wheel, impatiently waiting for the door to finish its ascent.

The minivan speeds off, bottoming out as it swerves into the street.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAWN

Liam lies awake, staring at the ceiling. The alarm clock BUZZES. He silences it. He grabs his room key, a pack of cigarettes, and heads for the door.

EXT. HOTEL - DAWN

Liam stands outside the side entrance. A hotel robe conceals his pajama bottoms and tee shirt. He sucks on a cigarette, wearing despair like a hangover.

A TAXI rounds the entrance. Stops.

Liam's eyes narrow, recognizing...

Mallory. She hops out barefoot, carrying her shoes. She starts toward the hotel entrance, then suddenly stops, seeing Liam.

They stare at one another.

Mallory waves.

Liam waves back. Unsure.

Mallory smiles and enters the hotel.

INT. FARNSWORTH HOME/BATHROOM - MORNING

Chloe towels off from the shower. She catches sight of her body's reflection. A LEMNISCATE (infinity symbol) is tattooed below her waist. She stops toweling and studies herself in the mirror as if seeing herself for the first time. She averts her eyes.

INT. FARNSWORTH HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Chloe slouches down a hallway. She's dressed in her trademark black hoodie, jeans, and combat boots. A camouflage backpack is slung over her shoulder. A DIGITAL SLR CAMERA hangs around her neck.

She descends the staircase passing a framed photograph of her family.

HOLD ON PHOTOGRAPH: The clean cut version of Chloe grins for the camera. HOWARD and BONNIE stand on either side of her; the consummate happy family.

INT. FARNSWORTH HOME/KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Howard idly sips coffee, staring out of a dew-perspired window. He's primped in a shirt and tie. BONNIE (42) stands at a kitchen island shoveling cereal into her mouth as she thumbs through email on her smart phone.

She wears a meticulously kept suit adorned with a realtor button.

Chloe enters. Howard watches as she opens the refrigerator and pops a can of diet soda. He looks like he doesn't know what to say. Then...

BONNIE

Look at you. You're a mess.

Chloe glares.

BONNIE (CONT'D)

Come on. You're not wearing that.
Get up stairs and change.

Chloe frames Bonnie in her camera's view finder. She snaps a photograph.

BONNIE (CONT'D)

Put down the camera, Chloe. Put down
the camera and change your clothes.

Chloe snaps more photos. Howard stands.

HOWARD

(a command)

Chloe.

BONNIE

Put down the camera, Chloe! CHLOE!
PUT DOWN THE CAMERA! STOP IT AND PUT
DOWN THE CAMERA! DAMN IT, CHLOE! PUT
DOWN THE CAMERA!

Chloe lowers the camera. She glares.

CHLOE

Who's the mess?

Chloe turns and makes a beeline for the front door. The door slams o.s.

BONNIE

I don't know why I waste the effort.

Howard goes to say something but doesn't.

Bonnie snatches her purse and enters the garage, SLAMMING the door behind her. The garage door ROARS open o.s., RATTLING the dishes in the kitchen cabinets.

Howard slumps to a seat. He scans the dew-perspired window pane and repositions his coffee on the table as if searching for something lost.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

A sprawling complex. The building's modern design and numerous sports fields are a testament to its upper middle class tax base.

Chloe's hatchback maneuvers the obstacle course of buses, cars, and teenagers that descend upon the school and parks.

INT. HATCHBACK - CONTINUOUS

Chloe closes her eyes. Takes a deep breath. Opens them. She catches a curious look from a passing student and hops out of the car.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - MOMENTS LATER

Chloe navigates the chaos of criss-crossing adolescent foot traffic, camouflage book bag slung over her shoulder, hoodie pulled down over her eyes. She elicits looks from passers by, avoiding eye contact.

Something catches Chloe's attention --

-- At the far end of the hallway RICK (17) broods amidst a gaggle of BOISTEROUS JOCKS. He is frayed around the edges; a boy distraught. He stares at Chloe.

Chloe averts her eyes. She slouches up to her locker. Spins the combination.

RHONDA (17), bookish plain jane, leans into the neighboring locker, books clutched to her chest.

RHONDA

You're back.

Chloe unpacks her backpack. Rhonda leans closer.

RHONDA (CONT'D)

(hushed)

So what was it? What happened? Are you okay?

CHLOE

I'm fine.

RHONDA

(hushed)

Were you really sick or what? I mean, 'cause some people said you were really sick. And other people said that you were, you know, recovering.

CHLOE
Recovering from what?

Chloe's attention shifts - Rick approaches. She closes her locker, escaping into the moving wall of hall traffic.

RICK
Chloe.

Chloe stutters steps finding a quicker pace. She dodges and ducks around slower students. Rick keeps pace.

RICK (CONT'D)
Chloe!

Chloe turns the corner tracking a bead on Chris. He collects books from his locker. He sees Chloe's panicked expression.

Rick rounds the corner behind her. Chris slams his locker shut and intercepts Chloe.

Rick holds. Chris throws a threatening look at Rick as he escorts Chloe down the hallway.

INT. MALL - DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS: Nichole pores over designer merchandise. Handbags. Dresses. Blouses. Shoes. She pushes a stroller, navigating clothing racks and display cases with frantic compulsion. OLIVIA (32) shops alongside her, equally engrossed in her shopping experience.

OLIVIA (V.O.)
It's just a little get together...

INT. MALL - MOMENTS LATER

Nichole pushes the stroller. Shopping bags hang from the handlebars. Olivia walks alongside her.

OLIVIA
...A few friends, but mostly people from the neighborhood.

NICHOLE
I'll talk to Liam about it.

OLIVIA
You really should come, Nic. There's this guy that Mark knows from the gym who's gonna be there. Mason I think it is. He's a dentist. So, you know - it might be a good lead for you when you finish up school.

NICHOLE

Yeah. Well, we'll see about all of that.

OLIVIA

What? You're not going to pick it up again?

NICHOLE

I don't know. I'd like to. But I think I'm gonna have to be a stay at home mom until Claire is old enough.

OLIVIA

Why don't you guys just put Claire in day care or something?

NICHOLE

(feigning conviction)

I don't want someone else raising my kids.

OLIVIA

Yeah but, Nicki. You can't play super mom twenty four seven. You need a life too.

NICHOLE

We do what we have to, 'Liv. You know? We're fine.

(more resolute)

We're fine.

(beat)

It's just nice to have an adult conversation for a change.

Nichole smiles at Olivia. She spies a window display across the mall: a provocative exhibit of scantily clad male and female mannequins positioned in overtly sexual poses.

The store front reads: *Fever*. THUNDEROUS BASS MUSIC rumbles from the store's dark interior.

NICHOLE (CONT'D)

Oh my God.

OLIVIA

Come on. Let's go in.

NICHOLE

Are you serious?

OLIVIA

We're still hot. We'd look good in that stuff.

NICHOLE
You haven't had two babies.

OLIVIA
Seriously. Come on. We'll have hot college boys waiting on us hand and foot. It'll be fun.

Nichole smiles, unsure.

INT. HOTEL/ELEVATOR - DAY

Liam shares the descent with a family of vacationing beach goers. A swimsuit clad TODDLER stares at Liam as he grips onto his FATHER'S hand. Liam offers an awkward smile and nod.

DING. A bell announces the lobby.

INT. HOTEL/LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Liam crosses the opulent glass and marble affair. He sees Mallory waiting outside the hotel entrance. He steps through the sliding glass doors.

EXT. HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Mallory appears upbeat despite evidence of a long night.

LIAM
You ready?

Mallory grins.

MALLORY
As I'll ever be.

INT. INFINITI M/MOVING - DAY

Liam drives. Mallory steals glances at him. They drive in awkward silence. She goes to say something then reconsiders.

Finally...

MALLORY
So...you smoke?

LIAM
What?

MALLORY
This morning. You were outside smoking.

LIAM

Yeah. Occasionally. But only on the road.

(beat)

Nichole would probably divorce me if she knew.

MALLORY

Then we better not tell her.

Mallory smiles. Liam smiles back. He notices that she has misbuttoned her blouse, exposing an ornate bra. He gestures to his own button.

LIAM

You missed a button.

Mallory notices.

MALLORY

Shit. Thanks.

She unbuttons her blouse, untucks it (fully exposing her bra), then begins re-buttoning. Liam stares at the road, straining not to look.

MALLORY (CONT'D)

So that's her name, huh? Nichole?

LIAM

Nichole. Yeah.

MALLORY

I knew a Nichole once. Didn't like her much. Kind of a bitch.

(beat)

So why are you doing something you know Nichole wouldn't approve of?

LIAM

I don't know. Because I can?

Mallory grins knowingly. She finishes buttoning her blouse. Checks her collar in the visor mirror.

MALLORY

The freedom of the open road. Yeah. It'll do crazy things to you, won't it? Being out here without a tether. Nothing to hold you back. You almost get to thinking you could do anything. Be anyone. You know?

(beat)

Do you have any more?

LIAM
What? Cigarettes?

Mallory nods.

LIAM (CONT'D)
No. I threw them out. Just the thought
of one makes me sick to my stomach.

MALLORY
But you still do it.

Liam nods.

MALLORY (CONT'D)
Why?

LIAM
I don't know. I honestly don't know.

Mallory thinks on it.

MALLORY
I bet you smoked in college. Right?

LIAM
Yeah.

MALLORY
So that's it.

LIAM
That's what?

MALLORY
You still do it because there's
something, I don't know, magical
about it. Some gutter charm about
the thing that takes you back to
when you were some poor college slob
without a care in the world and no
responsibilities to anyone but
yourself. And you miss that. You
want that. And for you smoking is
that.

Liam glances over at Mallory, the truth of her words hitting home.

MALLORY (CONT'D)
We're a lot alike, Liam. You just
don't know it yet.

THUNDEROUS BASS MUSIC BRIDGES TO...

INT. MALL/FEVER - DAY

Nichole and Olivia peruse racks of provocative apparel. Nichole seems tentative, pushing her comfort zone. She notices two male twenty-something STORE CLERKS watching their every move. The men whisper to one another, smiling.

NICHOLE

(sotto)
I think those guys are laughing at us.

OLIVIA

(sotto)
They're not laughing at us. They're checking us out.

NICHOLE

(sotto)
Seriously, 'Liv. This is embarrassing. Let's go.

OLIVIA

(sotto)
They're probably wondering what we would look like in this stuff.

Olivia holds a halter top to Nichole's chest. Olivia speaks loudly so the store clerks can hear her.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)

What about this one? Huh? This is fun.

NICHOLE

(sotto)
I couldn't wear that.

Olivia turns to the STORE CLERKS.

OLIVIA

What do you think, guys? Hot? Or Not?

STORE CLERK #1

Oh, definitely hot.
(to Nichole)
Why don't you try it on?

Nichole grins, embarrassed.

NICHOLE

Are you kidding me?

OLIVIA
Yeah. Try it on, Nic.

STORE CLERK #1
You've got the right body for it.

NICHOLE
Really?

STORE CLERK #1
Yeah. Definitely. And uh - try these
on too while you're at it. They're a
good fit for your curves.

Store Clerk #1 hands Nichole a pair of low riding jeans. She
flashes a tentative smile.

NICHOLE
(indicating the baby)
Can you -

OLIVIA
I've got her.

Store Clerk #1 touches the small of Nichole's back, ushering
her across the store to a dressing room door framed with
velvet curtains. Nichole steps into the dressing room,
throwing a glance back at Olivia. Olivia flirts with Store
Clerk #2. Store Clerk #1 smiles at Nichole.

STORE CLERK #1
I'll be right here if you need a
different size, or color, or whatever.

Store Clerk #1 closes the door behind Nichole.

INT. MALL/FEVER/DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nichole unbuttons her blouse. Then her jeans. She slips them
off and pulls on the low riders and halter top. She studies
her reflection. She looks good. The outfit is something her
younger self might have worn.

STORE CLERK #1 (O.S.)
How is everything in there?

Nichole smiles, liking what she sees. She swings the door
open.

NICHOLE
What else do you recommend?

INT. MALL/FEVER - MOMENTS LATER

SERIES OF SHOTS: Nichole tries on an assortment of apparel. At first, safe outfits. Jeans. Blouses. Then more edgy. Halter tops. Cut-off shirts. Miniskirts.

Olivia hands her a string bikini. Nichole holds the thin swathe of material up to her breasts. The cloth would only barely cover them.

Store Clerk #1 watches open-mouthed.

Nichole and Olivia laugh.

INT. MALL/FEVER - MOMENTS LATER

A CASHIER rings up an assortment of purchases. The register belches out a MECHANICAL SOUND, computing the final tally --

CASHIER

Two twenty-five fifty.

Nichole selects a credit card from her purse. She goes to hand it to the CASHIER.

NICHOLE

No. Wait.

She replaces the card and selects a different one. The Cashier swipes the card. It BEEPS.

CASHIER

Sorry. It's been declined.

Nichole catches a look from Store Clerk #1 as he folds her purchases and bags them.

NICHOLE

That's weird. Try this one.

Nichole flashes a forced smile. She hands another card over. The card is swiped. Desperation mounts as she waits.

And waits.

And waits.

DING.

It goes through.

The baby begins WAILING from its stroller. Nichole looks at the baby without registering her, consumed by her thoughts.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING/LOBBY - DAY

Liam and Mallory hurry across the lobby, footsteps echoing off the post-modern architecture. They board an elevator.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING/ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

Liam and Mallory share the ascent, each monitoring the floor numbers as they BEEP past.

LIAM

I'll give a brief outro: best of breed, dedication to our clients, blah, blah, blah. And then you throw the closing pitch.

Liam studies Mallory's warped reflection in the polished steel doors.

MALLORY

You owe me a dinner if I pull this off. You know that right?

LIAM

I'll owe you more than that.

Mallory smiles.

MALLORY

That's what I'm counting on.

DING. The doors slide open.

LIAM

Show us how it's done.

MALLORY

It's all in the wrist.

Mallory pats Liam on the butt as she steps out of the elevator. Liam laughs. Mallory greets the RECEPTIONIST with a smile.

MALLORY (CONT'D)

Mallory Gibbons and Liam Farr to see Mr. Dartlin.

She turns to Liam. Winks.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING/CONFERENCE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

QUICK SERIES OF SHOTS: Liam and Mallory present to the same battalion of corporate executives. Their movements and expressions are passionate. Sincere. Their performance as well orchestrated as that of dancers in some classical ballet.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING/CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Liam reviews a graphic displayed on a flat screen behind him. Mallory stands with her hands on her hips. Perfect posture. A near pose for her audience.

LIAM

...Our solution is best of breed.
Period. Any one of our clients will
tell you that.

MALLORY

We'll go head to head with any of
our competitors and prove it to you
if that's what you want. But
gentlemen, I'm hoping that won't be
necessary. I'm hoping that we've
convinced you that ours is the most
sophisticated, the most mature
solution you can buy.

Liam drinks in Mallory's performance. He is in awe of this girl.

AN AIRPLANE ENGINE BRIDGES TO...

INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL - DAY

The congested terminal bustles with travelers. Vacationers and business people hurry down a moving sidewalk passing Liam and Mallory. The pair seem to be the only ones not in a rush.

EXT. AIRPORT TERMINAL - DAY

Liam and Mallory emerge from the terminal. Mallory queues up in a taxi line.

LIAM

Well. Back to reality.

MALLORY

What reality is that?

LIAM

The one that makes you wish you were
still living out of a suitcase.

Liam tries to smile.

LIAM (CONT'D)

Life's a lot simpler on the road.
There's you, your luggage, and your
job. Reality is a lot more
complicated.

MALLORY
It doesn't have to be.

LIAM
But it is.

MALLORY
You want to get a drink?

Liam studies Mallory's face. Considers. Then...

LIAM
No. No, I should really get home.
Nichole is expecting me.

Mallory embraces Liam, holding on tightly. Liam savors it.

MALLORY
You're a good man, Lee.

She turns to leave.

LIAM
Hey.

MALLORY
Yeah?

LIAM
That bartender. Did you?

Mallory smiles. She steps up to Liam, hugging him again. She whispers into his ear.

MALLORY
(hushed)
No.

Mallory kisses Liam on the cheek, then squeezes his hand and steps away toward her cab. Liam smiles and watches her go, throwing a wave as the cab speeds off.

A LONG BEAT. Liam's smile fades.

INT. SHUTTLE BUS/MOVING - DAY

Liam hangs onto the railing in the crowded shuttle bus. The bus enters an underground tunnel. He catches his somber reflection in the window, lost amidst the crowd.

EXT. AIRPORT PARKING STRUCTURE - DAY

Liam crosses the top story of the crowded parking structure searching for his car, roll aboard in tow. He stops. Looks around.

He clicks his key fob listening for the distant alarm BEEP from his car.

He realizes that he is lost.

A SCHOOL BELL BRIDGES TO...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL/CLASSROOM - DAY

Chloe grabs her books, hurrying out of the classroom.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - MOMENTS LATER

Chloe grabs her backpack from her locker. She closes it, revealing Rick.

RICK

Hey.

No response.

RICK (CONT'D)

We need to talk.

CHLOE

There's nothing to talk about.

Chloe hurries down the hallway. Rick keeps pace.

RICK

Come on, Chloe.

Chloe rushes out of the school. Rick follows.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

Rick grabs Chloe by the arm, spinning her around. Chloe tries to pull away, but he tightens his grip, pulling her to the side of the school.

CHLOE

Let go, Rick.

RICK

Five minutes, Chloe. That's all I'm asking for - five minutes.

CHLOE

What do you want?

Rick speaks softly. He steps forward as if to embrace her.

RICK

I just want to make sure you're okay.

Tears well up in Chloe's eyes.

CHLOE

How do you think I am? It was awful.
This whole situation is awful.

RICK

I'm sorry. I'm really sorry.

CHLOE

What do you want me to say? That's
okay, Rick? Don't worry about it,
Rick? Fuck you.

Chloe hurries off. Rick moves to keep up.

RICK

Hey! I'm trying here! Okay? I know I
messed up. But -

CHLOE

But nothing! You should have been
there! Instead you disappeared from
my life and left me to deal with all
of this shit on my own. What kind of
guy does that? Huh? What kind of
selfish fucking asshole does that?

RICK

I was scared.

CHLOE

Yeah? Well so was I. But I didn't
have the option of just disappearing.
(beat)
Just go away. Just go the fuck away
and leave me alone.

RICK

I don't like you hanging out with
Tweety, Chloe. He's crazy.

CHLOE

He's not crazy.

RICK

He threatened his mom with a carving
knife.

CHLOE

Says who?

RICK

Amanda Millner. Last year.
(MORE)

RICK (CONT'D)
 He threatened to stab her with a
 carving knife. Their moms work
 together. It's true.

Rick catches Chloe by the arm. He spins her around toward
 him.

RICK (CONT'D)
 I don't want to see you hurt.

CHLOE
 It's a little late for that.

Chloe pulls from Rick's grip. Hurries off.

LOUD MUSIC bridges to...

INT. HATCHBACK/MOVING - DUSK

Chloe drives. Something grabs her attention --

THROUGH WINDSHIELD: Nichole wheels a garbage can toward the
 curb. Infant Claire is strapped to a Baby Bjorn on her chest.
 Jack runs in circles around Nichole. She's too tired to
 correct him.

Chloe lowers the music. She turns the car into her driveway.

EXT. FARNSWORTH HOME/FARR HOME - CONTINUOUS

The hatchback parks. Jack hurries across the side yard toward
 Chloe's car. Nichole abandons the garbage can in pursuit.

NICHOLE
 Jack!

Chloe steps out of the hatchback. Jack waits.

JACK
 Hi, Chloe.

CHLOE
 Hey, Jack. How's it going?

JACK
 How come your hair is black?

NICHOLE
 Jack!

CHLOE
 Well, you know. 'Cause I dyed it.

JACK

Why?

CHLOE

I don't know. 'Cause I felt like it
I guess.

Chloe grabs her backpack from the back seat. She waves at Nichole. Nichole keeps her distance, treating Chloe like a stranger.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Hey.

NICHOLE

Hi.
(scolding)
Jack, what did I tell you?

JACK

(to Chloe)
When are you going to come over and
play?

Chloe squats down in front of Jack.

CHLOE

I don't know, man. Maybe soon.

NICHOLE

Come on, Jack. Chloe doesn't want to
be bothered.

CHLOE

No. It's cool.
(to Jack)
I haven't seen you in a long time,
have I?

Chloe stands.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

He's getting big.

Nichole flashes an obligatory smile.

NICHOLE

Yeah.

CHLOE

You need some help?

Chloe indicates the garbage can deserted mid-driveway.

NICHOLE

No. It's okay.
 (to Jack)
 Come on, Jack. Say goodbye.

CHLOE

No. Seriously. Let me help. It's no
 big deal.

Chloe crosses to the garbage can. She wheels it the rest of
 the way to the curb. Nichole keeps her distance.

NICHOLE

Thanks.

Chloe smiles. She rustles Jack's hair. Nichole watches
 uncomfortably.

The two women stare at one another from opposite sides of
 the driveway, unsure of what to say. Then...

NICHOLE (CONT'D)

(to Jack)
 Say goodbye.

JACK

Goodbye.

CHLOE

Bye, buddy.

Nichole takes Jack by the hand and hurries toward the open
 garage. Chloe watches them go. Jack waves as the garage door
 descends, shutting Chloe out.

Her smile fades.

INT. FARNSWORTH HOME/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Chloe, Howard, and Bonnie sit at the kitchen table eating in
 silence. Howard looks over at Chloe, studying her.

HOWARD

Mom scheduled you another appointment
 to see Dr. Kennison tomorrow night.
 This time you need to talk to him,
 Chloe. He's there to help.

CHLOE

I don't need help.

BONNIE

Look at you. The way you dress. The
 way you act. Of course you need help.

Howard glares at Bonnie.

HOWARD
Dr. Kennison says -

CHLOE
I don't care what Dr. Kennison says.

Bonnie exhales. She lets her fork fall with a loud CLANK.

CHLOE (CONT'D)
You're paying someone to sit and
listen to my problems. For what?
Like he has any idea of what I'm
going through. It's fucking stupid.

BONNIE
I won't have you talking like that
in my house.

Chloe stands up.

BONNIE (CONT'D)
Sit Down!

Chloe drops her dishes into the sink and marches up the stairs.

HOWARD
Chloe!

Howard hangs his head in his hand. Bonnie's mobile phone RINGS. She checks the caller ID.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
Come on. Don't answer it.

BONNIE
It's my job to answer it, Howard.

Bonnie composes herself, putting on a saccharine voice with a smile to match.

BONNIE (CONT'D)
Regal Realty. This is Bonnie.

LOUD MUSIC CRESCENDOS TO...

INT. FARNSWORTH HOME/CHLOE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Chloe sits in a corner, hugging her knees to her chest. She wears bulky stereo headphones. She frantically texts on her smart phone.

INT. FARR HOME - NIGHT

Nichole sits on the couch, curled up in a blanket. Jack munches popcorn, staring wide eyed at the television.

The sound of the door unlocking sets the dog BARKING. Nichole stays seated.

NICHOLE
Brando, Stop! Brando! STOP!

Liam bangs his way over the threshold. He sets down his luggage. The dog GROWLS and BARKS at him.

NICHOLE (CONT'D)
(a condemnation)
The baby is sleeping.

Liam tries to grab the dog, but it nips at his hand.

LIAM
Damn it.

Nichole reluctantly gets up and grabs the dog by the collar, ushering it past Liam and outside.

LIAM (CONT'D)
Hi.

Liam steps toward Nichole to plant a kiss. Nichole flashes a disgusted look, stepping away from him. She hurries over to the couch and sits down. Liam sighs.

LIAM (CONT'D)
(under his breath)
Welcome home, Lee.

Liam steps up behind the couch. He undoes his tie.

LIAM (CONT'D)
Hey, buddy. What're you doing up so late?

JACK
Mom said I could watch TV.

LIAM
She did, huh?

The baby starts CRYING o.s. Nichole stands.

NICHOLE
Well shit.

LIAM
I'll get her.

Nichole keeps on walking. Liam steps in front of her.

LIAM (CONT'D)
Nic. I'll get her.

NICHOLE
Just - let me handle it.

Nichole brushes past Liam and ascends the stairs.

OFF LIAM. Defeated.

INT. FARR HOME/BATHROOM - NIGHT

Liam showers.

INT. FARR HOME/BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Liam brushes his teeth. Nichole brushes her teeth using the sink next to his. Like strangers in an airport rest room.

INT. FARR HOME/BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Darkness shrouds the bedroom. Liam and Nichole lie in bed. Nichole lies huddled to her side of the mattress. Liam stares at the ceiling for a long moment. He suddenly rolls over and drapes his arm over Nichole. He kisses the back of her neck.

NICHOLE
(a command)
Good night, Liam.

LIAM
Good night.

Liam rolls over and stares at the ceiling. A BEAT.

He suddenly gets up, grabs his pillows, and shuffles out of the room. Nichole stares at the wall, eyes open.

INT. FARNSWORTH HOME/CHLOE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Chloe lies awake. A LIGHT BRIGHTENS in the first story window of the FARR HOME, illuminating her ceiling. She hops out of bed and peers out across the side yard.

-- Liam converts the family room couch into a makeshift bed.

INT. FARR HOME/DEN - CONTINUOUS

Jack wanders into the room. Rubs his eyes.

JACK
Daddy?

LIAM
Hey, buddy.

JACK
What are you doing?

LIAM
Daddy can't sleep.

JACK
Me neither.

Liam slumps onto his improvised bed.

LIAM
Come here.

Jack shuffles up to Liam, cat puppet in tow. Liam picks Jack up. The child snuggles into his father's chest, closing his weary eyes.

Liam runs his hand through Jack's hair. He kisses him on the top of the head.

LIAM (CONT'D)
(sotto)
Promise me something, Jack.

JACK
What?

LIAM
(sotto)
Always follow your heart. Okay?

JACK
Okay.

INT. FARNSWORTH HOME/CHLOE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Chloe spies on father and child. She frames the scene with her DIGITAL SLR. CLICK. FLASH! THE FLASH GOES OFF. Chloe ducks down.

INT. FARNSWORTH HOME - CONTINUOUS

Liam stops caressing Jack's head. He douses the lamp. Carries Jack to the window. He stares out at Chloe's bedroom window.

INT. FARNSWORTH HOME/CHLOE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Chloe peeks down at the Farr home from cover of curtain --

-- Liam stares out the window for a moment longer, not seeing Chloe, then returns to the couch. He continues caressing Jack's head, staring suspiciously at the window.

Chloe slumps to the floor. She checks the DIGITAL SLR'S LCD --

-- A photograph of her reflection caught in the camera's flash.

She studies her own surprised face in the LCD.

EXT. FARNSWORTH HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Chloe's foot finds the cement bunny lawn ornament's forlorn head. She puts all of her weight on the bunny, then closes her bedroom window and hops down.

EXT. FARNSWORTH HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Chloe opens her car door, pops the car into neutral, and lets it roll backwards down the drive way and into the street. She pushes against the open car door to get the car rolling down the black top. When she's a safe distance from home she starts the engine and drives off.

SLOW MUSIC BRIDGES TO...

EXT. HOUSING DEVELOPMENT - NIGHT

The HATCHBACK is parked behind a familiar dirt mound, windows fogged. Unfinished homes loom in the moonlight. A puff of smoke escapes from the partially lowered rear window.

CHRIS (O.S.)

Who's this?

INT. HATCHBACK - NIGHT

ON DIGITAL SLR LCD: The photograph of Nichole staring at Chloe. Nichole's photograph is one of a series featuring the FARR FAMILY. Each photo catches Nichole, Liam, Jack, and Claire in candid moments. Some somber. Some heated. Some happy. All shot through Chloe's second story window.

CHLOE (O.S.)

My neighbors.

CHRIS (O.S.)

You know, you could probably get arrested for doing this.

Chloe lies in Chris's arms. Chris fiddles with the DIGITAL SLR draped around her neck, navigating the camera's gallery of digital photographs.

CHLOE

No. No way.

CHRIS

Yes. Yes way. You could. For violation of privacy or something like that. It's fuckin' weird, Chloe. I don't get why you do it.

CHLOE

I don't know.

(beat)

They have this new baby girl. Claire I think. And I just - I sometimes wonder what it would be like. You know? If I went through with it.

CHRIS

Well you didn't. And now you don't have to worry about it. Seriously. Stop thinking about it. You did what you did. It's done. It's over. Okay?

CHLOE

I used to baby sit their little boy. But, you know - that's been like three years now.

(beat)

They used to be a really happy couple.

Chloe takes a long drag off her cigarette and passes it to Chris.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

I guess it's kind of overwhelming to me. I mean, you have your own problems. You know? And then you're supposed to somehow raise these kids and be this role model or something. I just - I don't know if I could do that. I don't know how anybody can do that.

Chris navigates to --

-- a photograph of Chloe and Rick. The conservative version of Chloe. She looks like a different person. Her strained smile betrays insecurity, but Rick beams with confidence.

CHRIS

I thought you deleted these.

Chloe pulls the camera away.

CHLOE
I must have missed one.

CHRIS
So delete it.

CHLOE
Yeah. Okay.

She deletes the photograph. She shows the camera to Chris.

CHLOE (CONT'D)
Deleted.

Chloe sits up. She wipes a swathe of perspiring glass clean, staring out the window at--

-- the unfinished homes. Plastic construction sheets flutter like specters in the midnight breeze.

CHLOE (CONT'D)
He cornered me today. After school.

CHRIS
Who? Rick?

Chloe nods.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
What the fuck, Chloe? Why didn't you tell me?

CHLOE
Because I didn't want you doing something stupid.

CHRIS
What did he want?

CHLOE
He told me this really fucked up lie.

CHRIS
What?

CHLOE
He told me that last year you threatened your mom with a knife or something.

Chris takes a long drag off his cigarette. He is affected by Chloe's words.

CHLOE (CONT'D)
 You didn't do that. Right? I mean,
 that was just a lie. Right?

CHRIS
 How could you think I'd do that?

CHLOE
 I don't. I mean. That's what I told
 him. He's just - I don't know. Guilty.
 You know? And seeing us together.
 The love we have. I mean, we love
 each other no matter what. Right?

Chris doesn't respond.

CHLOE (CONT'D)
 Right?

CHRIS
 Yeah. Right.

CHLOE
 I think he's just - I think it just
 makes him feel really bad.

CHRIS
 He's an asshole.

CHLOE
 He's just scared. That's all he is.

Chris hands Chloe back the cigarette.

CHLOE (CONT'D)
 Do you think I did the right thing?

CHRIS
 You did what anyone would've done.

Chloe stares at Chris, expecting more.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
 Come on. You know you did.

Chloe nuzzles in close to Chris.

EXT. SUBURBIA - DAWN

Dawn encroaches upon night's reign. But only a few rise with
 the sun: the weekend has arrived.

Liam's Volvo Xc70 navigates slumbering suburbia.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - MOMENTS LATER

The Volvo turns into the parking lot, passing...

Chloe and Chris. They sit on the sidewalk outside the coffee shop. Chloe watches Chris, amused as he attempts to lob a cigarette into his mouth from his open palm. He misses. Misses again.

CHLOE

Let me try.

CHRIS

No way. This is the last one.

CHLOE

Okay. So, whoever can get it into their mouth on the first try wins. Okay?

Chris smiles and yawns.

CHRIS

Yeah. Okay. Let's go, superstar.

Chris hands Chloe the cigarette. She puts it into her palm. Slowly practices the lobbing motion. One... Two...

Three! She catches the cigarette in her mouth. First try. She grins, claspng it between her teeth.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Fuck me.

CHLOE

Okay. Give me the lighter.

Chris shoves his hands into his jacket pockets, squeezing his knees to his chest. Chloe tries to fish the lighter from his pocket. It's a losing battle. Chris grins. Chloe laughs.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Come on. Give me the lighter, Chris.

CHRIS

You're gonna have to get it.

Chloe starts to wrestle Chris.

CHLOE

Come on, you shit.

They lose their balance falling over onto the sidewalk, laughing.

Liam removes Jack from his car seat. Carries him toward the coffee shop. Jack sees Chloe. He points.

JACK

Daddy.

LIAM

What, buddy?

Chloe looks up to see Liam and Jack. She quickly passes the cigarette to Chris.

CHLOE

Oh. Hey, Jack. Hey, Mr. Farr.

Liam studies Chloe, not recognizing her.

LIAM

I'm sorry...

Chloe stands, brushing off the seat of her jeans. She moves the hair from her face.

CHLOE

Chloe Farnsworth. Your neighbor? I used to baby sit for you guys.

LIAM

Oh. Chloe. Right. I'm sorry. I didn't recognize you with -

CHLOE

Yeah. The new do.

LIAM

So how are you doing?

CHLOE

Good. You know? Really good.

Liam's gaze falls over Chloe's shoulder. She turns to see Chris lighting the last cigarette.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

How about you?

LIAM

Yeah. Pretty good.

CHLOE

I've been keeping up with the photography.

LIAM

Yeah?

CHLOE

Yeah.

LIAM

That's great.

CHLOE

What about you? Have you done any new projects lately?

LIAM

No. No. I'm afraid I really don't have time for it anymore. The job keeps me pretty - I've been pretty busy.

CHLOE

Yeah.

LIAM

Yeah.

An awkward silence.

LIAM (CONT'D)

Well. Okay. Good to see you, Chloe.

CHLOE

Yeah. You too, Mr. Farr. Bye, Jack.

JACK

Bye bye.

Liam smiles and enters the coffee shop. Chloe makes a face at Chris.

CHLOE

What the fuck, Chris?

Chris laughs, taking a long draw off the cigarette.

CHRIS

You snooze, you loose.

Chloe grins.

A BABY WAILING BRIDGES TO...

EXT. FARR HOME - MORNING

Liam's Volvo XC70 pulls into the driveway.

INT. FARR HOME - MORNING

Liam and Jack step into the house. Jack balances a coffee in his tiny hands, grinning ear to ear. Liam holds his own cup, ushering Jack into the house. Nichole tries to feed the SCREAMING baby. The dog BARKS. Nichole glares at Liam.

NICHOLE

Where were you?

LIAM

We thought you might like some coffee.

NICHOLE

We have coffee here, Liam.

LIAM

I thought you might like something different.

NICHOLE

I've got enough different. I want something that stays the same.

Jack tries to place the coffee down on the kitchen counter. Nichole grabs the cup and the lid falls off, spilling coffee all over Jack and the floor. Jack WAILS, startled by the hot coffee.

NICHOLE (CONT'D)

Damn it, Liam!

LIAM

Come on, buddy. It's okay. It's alright.

NICHOLE

Do you realize how stupid that was? Letting a four year old handle hot coffee?

LIAM

He wanted to surprise you, Nic.

NICHOLE

You probably scalded him.
(saccharine voice)
It's okay sweetie. Mommy's here.

LIAM

Let me help.

NICHOLE

I've got it.

LIAM
Come on. What can I do?

NICHOLE
If I have to stop and explain it to
you then it's not help!

Liam stands there like he doesn't know what to do.

NICHOLE (CONT'D)
Finish feeding Claire!

The PHONE RINGS. Liam goes to answer it. Nichole snatches
it, holding SCREAMING Jack's hand.

NICHOLE (CONT'D)
I've got it, damn it.

Nichole checks the caller ID and picks up.

NICHOLE (CONT'D)
Hello?

Nichole hurries down the hallway with Jack, phone cradled on
her shoulder. Liam tries to spoon feed the baby. It's a losing
battle. He hurries to a cabinet.

Baby bottles line the interior. But no nipples.

He checks the dishwasher. No nipples.

Frustrated, he hurries down the hallway with the empty bottle.
Stepping up outside of --

INT. FARR HOME/JACK'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Liam's former office converted into a bedroom decorated with
stars and planets. Jack sits on the bed, sniffing. Nichole
attempts to remove his coffee-soaked shirt while speaking on
the phone.

NICHOLE
(hushed)
I asked you not to call here anymore.
You're supposed to call me on my
cell phone.
(beat)
No. This is my home phone.

INT. FARR HOME/HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Liam eavesdrops from outside the door. Nichole pulls Jack's
shirt off. Jack spots Liam outside the cracked door.

JACK

Daddy?

Nichole spins around to see Liam. Liam holds up the bottle.

LIAM

I need a top.

Nichole marches to the door. Closes it in Liam's face.

Liam glares at the closed door. He tightens his grip on the bottle. The infant's CRYING grabs his attention. He descends the hall to the kitchen.

LIAM (CONT'D)

It's okay, sweetie. We're going to make this work. Daddy will find a way to make this work.

EXT. FARNSWORTH HOME - MORNING

Howard parts the blinds to the second story window. He looks down at the driveway, discouraged by the sight of...

Chloe's hatchback missing.

INT. FARNSWORTH HOME/CHLOE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

The DOOR KNOB is JOSTLED. A SCRAPING SOUND emanates from within the lock. Then POP! The push button pops out.

Howard steps into the room. He surveys the contents of his daughter's life. Alternative band posters. Discarded laundry. Dog eared paperbacks. A mirror framed with assorted stickers.

Howard frantically rummages through drawers. Tosses aside the closet door. Fumbles through its contents. He moves aside the mattress.

A large manilla envelope lies sandwiched between the mattress and box spring.

Howard opens the envelope revealing a stack of photographic prints. He sits on the bed, thumbing through the photographs.

ON PHOTOGRAPHS: Black and white stills boasting advanced angles and framing. Their quality betrays the photographer's evident talent. The subjects vary, but all carry a constant theme: death by unnatural causes. A trampled flower. A dead spider swarmed by ants. Road kill.

Howard studies the grim photographs. Slips them back into the envelope. A square photograph falls out of the stack.

Howard picks it up off the floor, sadly considering the subject.

ON PHOTOGRAPH: An ultrasound of an unborn child at two months.

INT. FARR HOME/KITCHEN - DAY

Liam sits opposite a satiated Claire. He wipes baby food from her hands and face unaware of the specks that cling to his own.

Jack runs into the room, making a beeline for a train set. Nichole shuffles in behind him. She crosses to the refrigerator and pours herself a glass of juice.

LIAM

I'm sorry about the coffee, Nic. We just - I just wanted to do something special. Something to surprise you.

NICHOLE

I know, Liam. I know.

Nichole leans back against the kitchen counter avoiding eye contact. Liam picks up Chloe. SILENCE. Then...

LIAM

I thought maybe we'd get out of here today. Take the kids to the park. Grab some lunch out.

JACK

The park?

NICHOLE

Yeah. Okay.

JACK

THE PARK?

LIAM

Yeah, buddy. The park.
(to Nichole)
Unless there is something else you want to do.

NICHOLE

I don't want to have to make any decisions, Liam. Just - do what you want to do.

LIAM

Okay. Okay.
(MORE)

LIAM (CONT'D)

(to Jack)

Come on, Jack. Let's get your shoes on.

INT. HATCHBACK/MOVING - DAY

ALTERNATIVE MUSIC emanates from the car stereo. Chloe sips at a cup of coffee, mouthing the words to the song. She turns the car into her driveway.

INT. FARNSWORTH HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Howard watches television. He stands at the sound of Chloe's CAR DOOR. Crosses toward the foyer. Chloe enters, DSLR slung around her neck. She makes a beeline up the stairs.

HOWARD

Chloe.

Chloe stops. Descends the stairs to confront her father.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

Where were you?

CHLOE

Getting coffee.

HOWARD

Where did you sleep, Chloe?

CHLOE

Upstairs. In my bed.

Howard glares.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

What, Dad? I got up early to grab a coffee and shoot the sunrise.

Chloe gestures with her camera.

HOWARD

Then why is your bedroom door locked?

Chloe is caught in her lie.

CHLOE

I don't know. Maybe it locked when I closed the door.

(beat)

I don't know.

HOWARD

Where were you?

CHLOE
I told you. I was out shooting
pictures.

HOWARD
I want you to stop locking your
bedroom door. Okay?

CHLOE
Yeah. Okay.

Chloe turns to hurry up the stairs.

HOWARD
Chloe.

CHLOE
(exasperated)
What?

Howard goes to say something, then reconsiders.

HOWARD
You're okay, right?

The question cuts through Chloe's facade.

CHLOE
(heartfelt)
Yeah, dad. I'm okay.

Chloe marches up the stairs.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY

Jack laughs hysterically as Liam chases him around playground equipment. Over a bridge. Through a plastic tunnel. Down a slide. Liam breathes heavily trying to keep up with his son.

Nichole watches from a bench. Claire sleeps, strapped into a Baby Bjorn criss-crossing her chest.

Liam jumps the railing and runs around the equipment to intercept Jack. The child streaks down a slide with a gleeful SCREAM. Liam grabs Jack. Holds him up in the air. Jack laughs hysterically. Liam beams with happiness. He brings Jack's ear close to his mouth.

LIAM
(whispered)
Go get your mother.

Liam sets Jack down. The boy takes off on a wild sprint toward Nichole. He grabs Nichole's hand. Pulls at it.

JACK
Come on, mommy. Play!

NICHOLE
Careful, Jack. Don't wake Claire.

Liam steps up, catching his breath.

LIAM
Go on. I'll watch her.

NICHOLE
She's sleeping.

LIAM
That's okay. I got her. She's not going to wake up.

Nichole resigns. Liam unbuckles Claire from the Baby Bjorn. Jack tugs at Nichole.

JACK
Mommy, come on!

Nichole smiles.

NICHOLE
Okay. Okay.

Liam sits down. He cradles Claire in his arms, watching as Nichole runs after Jack.

Jack jumps onto a DINOSAUR PLAYGROUND TOY. He bounces back and forth as if riding a horse. Nichole makes noises as she plays with him, her disposition thawing.

JACK
Mommy, get on!

Nichole straddles the dinosaur. She rides it with Jack, both laughing. Suddenly the dinosaur flops backward on its spring. Nichole and Jack topple to the ground.

Liam jumps to his feet. Hurries toward his wife and child. His concern fades at the sound of laughter.

Nichole and Jack laugh hysterically. She rolls over. Finds her footing and stands, brushing off her pants.

Nichole looks over at Liam. They share a subtle smile.

EXT. PIZZERIA/PATIO - DAY

The Farr family encircle a small table, eating pizza. Liam cuts Jack's slice into tiny pieces.

LIAM
This is nice.

Nichole forces a smile.

LIAM (CONT'D)
We always have a good time when we
go out. Don't we?

Jack takes a bite and burns his mouth. He makes a face.

NICHOLE
Careful, Jack. It's hot.

LIAM
It's hot, buddy. You have to blow on
it.

BUZZ. Nichole's mobile. She checks the display. Then silences and pockets the phone.

LIAM (CONT'D)
Who was it?

NICHOLE
Nobody.

A BEAT. Liam can't help but dig.

LIAM
You seem to be getting alot of
nobody's calling you lately.

NICHOLE
It's none of your business who it
is, Liam.

Liam simmers, cutting Jack's pizza.

LIAM
(under his breath)
I just asked who called, Nichole.
You don't need to jump down my throat
over it.

Nichole sets her napkin on the table top.

NICHOLE
I'm ready to leave.

LIAM
We haven't finished eating.

Nichole collects her things. She stands and crosses the patio, leaving Liam and the kids behind.

LIAM (CONT'D)
Nichole. What are you doing?

She keeps walking.

LIAM (CONT'D)
Nichole!
(under his breath)
Jesus Fucking Christ.

Liam flags down a waiter.

LIAM (CONT'D)
Excuse me. Can we get some to-go boxes?

INT. FARR HOME/BATHROOM - NIGHT

Liam brushes his teeth, avoiding sight of his reflection. He rinses his mouth. Spits. Frustration building.

Sounds of a SITCOM emanate from --

INT. FARR HOME/BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nichole is curled up on the bed, bathed in the strobing blue light of the television. Liam enters, dousing the bathroom light. Nichole doesn't acknowledge him, feigning interest in the television.

LIAM
Nichole...

No response. She flashes a smile as a SITCOM CHARACTER delivers an off-beat joke. This infuriates Jack. He steps up to the television. Turns it off.

NICHOLE
What are you doing?

LIAM
I'm committed to working this out, Nic. Whatever it takes. We just need to talk.

NICHOLE
I don't want to talk.

LIAM
We need to, damn it.

NICHOLE
No. *You* need to. *You* need to talk to
make *your* self feel better.

Liam raises his voice.

LIAM
No. No! God Damn It! We need to talk
because this - this everything else
is bullshit!

Nichole quiets her voice.

NICHOLE
Don't talk to me like that. I don't
deserve to be talked to like that.

LIAM
Jesus Fucking Christ!

Nichole grabs her pillow and blanket. Storms toward the door.
Liam blocks her exit.

NICHOLE
Get out of my way.

Liam restrains himself. Tries a more humble approach.

LIAM
Okay. You're right. Okay? I'm sorry.
But I'm just - I'm really trying
here, honey.

NICHOLE
Get. Out. Of. My. Way.

LIAM
Nichole. Come on. We just -

Liam moves to embrace her.

NICHOLE
GET OUT OF MY WAY!

Liam steps aside, throwing the door open for Nichole. She
storms out of the bedroom and down the hall. Jack closes the
door behind her.

He notices his hand. Trembling. He catches sight of his
desperate face reflected in the glass of their wedding
portrait. He slumps to a seat on the floor.

INT. TWEETY APARTMENT - MORNING

WORK BOOTS stomp down the hallway. A door opens. A light is switched on, revealing --

-- CHRIS. He sleeps on the bottom of a bunk bed. The room is wallpapered with DEATH METAL and GANGSTA RAP posters. The dresser is littered with DVD's, broken action figures, COMPACT DISCS, and a HUNTING KNIFE. The balance of the room betrays a similar disordered fate.

GLORIA TWEETY (48) stands in the doorway. She's dressed in a factory uniform.

GLORIA

Chris. Chris! Get your ass out of bed.

Chris MOANS. He blinks awake.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

I need you to make sure Stephen gets on the bus this morning. You hear?

CHRIS

Yeah.

GLORIA

Did You Hear?

CHRIS

Yes. Yes. I heard you. Damn.

GLORIA

And you need to pick up a refill on your prescription. Okay?

CHRIS

Yeah.

Chris buries his face back into his bed, covering it with his blankets.

Gloria slumps her shoulders. She crosses to Chris and rips the blankets off him.

GLORIA

Come on. Get your brother up.

CHRIS

Okay. Okay.

Gloria leans down and kisses Chris on the top of his head.

GLORIA
I'll be home by eight.

Chris gets out of bed and steps up onto his mattress, reaching up and rustling the occupant of the top bunk. STEPHEN (9) moans.

CHRIS
Up! Now!

INT. TWEETY APARTMENT/KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Chris rinses toothpaste from his mouth. Spits in the kitchen sink. He dumps a pill from a prescription bottle into his palm and swallows it.

CHRIS
Come on, Stephen! You're gonna be late!

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET CORNER - MORNING

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS mill about the street corner, waiting for their school bus. They whisper to one another laughing at --

Stephen and Chris. The brothers stand apart from the others. Stephen stares at his shoes through icy puffs of breath. Chris sits on a BMX bike, eyeing the source of the laughter --

-- The largest of the kids. A BRUISER (13).

CHRIS
What are they laughing at?

STEPHEN
I don't know. Just leave them alone.

CHRIS
Are those the kids who have been messing with you at school?

STEPHEN
Come on, Chris. Don't. Please.

Chris's eyes narrow. He launches his bike out into the street.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
(pleading)
Chris...

The bike is much too small for Chris, his knees nearly hitting the handlebars as he pedals. He circles the gaggle of boys. They turn, following him with their eyes.

CHRIS

Hey.

BRUISER

Hey.

CHRIS

What's so funny?

BRUISER

Nothing.

CHRIS

No. It sounded like there was something pretty funny. A pretty funny joke. Why don't you tell it to me.

BRUISER

We were just laughing at something.

Chris leaps off his bike. He rushes Bruiser. Grabs the boy's coat collar. Throws him to the ground.

Bruiser cowers, pushing at Chris. Chris pulls a HUNTING KNIFE from his pocket. Flips it open, holding it to Bruiser's face.

CHRIS

Leave my brother alone you piece of shit.

Bruiser starts to cry.

BRUISER

I didn't mean it. I didn't mean anything.

CHRIS

You so much as fucking look at him I'll cut your ear off.

Chris puts the blade behind Bruiser's ear. The child WAILS.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

You understand me?

BRUISER

I'm sorry! I'm sorry! Please don't! Please! Don't hurt me!

A SCHOOL BUS SQUEALS to a stop. The BUS DRIVER rushes down the steps.

BUS DRIVER

Hey!

Chris leaps to his feet, pocketing the blade. He jumps onto his bike, pedaling away. The bus driver helps Bruiser to his feet. Bruiser explains what happened through a hysterical stream of tears. He points at Stephen.

Stephen watches sheepishly as Chris speeds off.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - CONTINUOUS

Chris pedals furiously. He rounds a corner, patting his pocket for the knife. A sinister grin stretches across his face. He flies through an intersection.

Liam's Volvo Xc70 lurches to a stop as Chris speeds past.

INT. VOLVO XC70 - CONTINUOUS

Liam lays on his HORN, watching as --

-- Chris flashes his middle finger.

Liam glares, proceeding through the intersection.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING/PARKING STRUCTURE - MORNING

The Volvo Xc70 enters a parking structure.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING/ELEVATOR - MORNING

Liam stands in an elevator. DING! A bell announces the sixth floor. A BUSINESS WOMAN exits, leaving Liam to himself.

The doors close. Liam examines himself in the reflection cast in the elevator doors. Tired. Run down.

DING! He exits.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Liam navigates a cubicle jungle. HANK (30's) sips coffee, flirting with Mallory behind the floor-to-ceiling windows of the break room. Mallory laughs at Hank's advances.

Liam opens his office door, eyes fixed on the exchange. He removes his jacket, drops his briefcase, and hurries toward the break room.

Hank notices Liam's approach. He steps out of the break room and passes Liam, grinning.

HANK
Morning, chief.

LIAM
Morning.

Liam turns to catch Hank glancing back at Liam. Liam steps into the break room. Mallory finishes prepping her coffee.

LIAM (CONT'D)

Hey.

MALLORY

Hey there, stranger.

LIAM

What did he want?

MALLORY

Hank. Good old Hank. He's a piece of work, isn't he?

LIAM

What did he want?

MALLORY

Nothing. He just shot off a couple of crude innuendoes about my sales technique.

Liam tenses.

LIAM

Asshole.

MALLORY

Hey. I didn't make junior executive of sales at my age selling girl scout cookies. It's okay.

LIAM

I should say something.

Mallory stops him.

MALLORY

Really, Lee. It's okay.

Liam's jaw sets.

MALLORY (CONT'D)

What's going on with you? You seem so tense.

LIAM

We had a knock down drag out last night.

MALLORY

Who? You and your wife?

Liam nods.

LIAM

I don't know what it says about a man when he feels like a tourist in his own home.

MALLORY

I'm so sorry, Lee. You deserve better.

INT. MINIVAN/DRIVING - MORNING

Nichole drives. Jack sits in the back seat. Claire BABBLES from her infant seat. Nichole's mobile RINGS. Caller ID: Blocked. She silences the phone, jerking the minivan into --

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

A congested parking lot. The MINIVAN queues up behind a parade of vehicles: parents dropping their children off at school.

INT. MINIVAN - CONTINUOUS

The mobile RINGS again.

NICHOLE

Damn it!

Nichole checks the phone, not paying attention.

BAM! The minivan lurches to a stop.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

The minivan has rear-ended a sleek MERCEDES. The luxury sedan's bumper is crumpled from impact.

INT. MINIVAN - CONTINUOUS

Nichole watches as the Mercedes' driver, a suit-draped BUSINESS MAN, hops out of his car. He throws his hands in the air: 'What the Hell?'

NICHOLE

Damn It!

JACK

Mommy. What happened?

NICHOLE

Nothing, Jack. Everything is fine.
It's going to be fine.

Nichole hops out of the minivan.

THROUGH WINDSHIELD: Nichole speaks to the Business Man, showering him with apologies.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING/LIAM'S OFFICE - DAY

Liam types at his computer. He spies Mallory through his office window. She adjusts the strap on her heel, speaking on the phone. She catches sight of Liam watching her and smiles. The PHONE rings. Liam answers.

LIAM

Liam Farr.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

Nichole frantically roots through the minivan's glove box. A POLICE OFFICER interviews the BUSINESS MAN.

NICHOLE

Where's the insurance card?

CROSS CUT BETWEEN LOCATIONS

LIAM

What? What insurance card?

NICHOLE

For the minivan, damn it. Where is it? It's not in the glove box.

LIAM

It should be there. Why? What happened?

NICHOLE

It's not in there.

LIAM

What happened, Nichole?

NICHOLE

I'll call you back.

LIAM

Are the kids okay?

NICHOLE

Everyone is fine. I'll call you back.

LIAM

Tell me what happened.

NICHOLE

I don't have time to go into it right now, Liam.

DIAL TONE.

LIAM

Nichole?

Liam examines his phone: CALL ENDED. He stands. Re-dials, pacing his office as the connection RINGS...then goes to voicemail.

NICHOLE (O.S.)

You've reached Nichole...

LIAM

Damn it, Nichole.

NICHOLE (O.S.)

...Please leave me a message.

LIAM

Jesus Christ, Nichole. You can't just call and ask about insurance and then hang up on me. What the hell? Were you in an accident? Are the kids okay? What God Damn It! Call me back!

Liam disconnects.

LIAM (CONT'D)

DAMN IT!

Heads turn to the OUTBURST, staring at Liam through his office window. Embarrassed, Liam quickly adjusts the window blinds, shutting out --

INT. OFFICE BUILDING/MALLORY'S CUBICLE - CONTINUOUS

-- Mallory's concerned gaze. She watches Liam's enraged face as it is concealed by the blinds. She turns back to her computer, speaking on the phone.

MALLORY

I'm sure we can make that adjustment to the LOA, sir...

Mallory types into an instant message application: 'You okay?'

INT. OFFICE BUILDING/LIAM'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

DING. Liam turns to see the instant message flashing on his desk top.

He types: 'N-O'. Goes to hit enter then back spaces. He goes to type something then stops. He minimizes the instant message application, hanging his head in his hands.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL/BASEBALL DUGOUT - MORNING

Chris paces like a caged animal behind the dugout's chain link fence. He takes long angry draws from a cigarette. Something catches his attention --

-- A RUMBLING '87 MUSTANG navigates the chaos of students. It parks. Rick steps out. He collects his backpack and walks toward the school entrance.

Chris watches Rick enter the school. He slips his hand into his jacket pocket, hurrying out of the dug out.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL/PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Chris approaches Rick's Mustang. He drops down beside the rear wheel. He pretends to tie his shoe for some passing students, then digs into his jacket pocket.

He flips open the hunting blade. Stabs the tire wall. The tire flattens.

Chris pockets the blade, shuffling toward the school entrance.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL/HALLWAY - DAY

Chloe slouches through the current of students. AMANDA MILLNER (17) sees her pass. She breaks off from conversation, pursuing Chloe.

AMANDA

Chloe.

Chloe pretends not to hear her.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

Chloe!

Amanda struggles to keep pace.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

Rick asked me to talk to you.

CHLOE

Tell Rick to mind his own business.

AMANDA

Why do you have to be such a bitch?

Chloe turns to Amanda.

CHLOE

Don't pretend you know me. You don't know me.

AMANDA

He's just worried about you.

CHLOE

So what? That makes him a saint?
That makes him a good guy? You have
no idea what he put me through.

Chloe walks away. Amanda grabs Chloe by the sleeve. Pulls her into an alcove.

AMANDA

Everybody knows why you were out. It
wasn't hard to figure out.

Chloe scans the hallway, suddenly ashamed.

CHLOE

Just leave me alone.

AMANDA

What Rick said is true. Chris did
it. He threatened his mom with a
knife. My mom was there. She saw it.

Chloe spins toward Amanda.

CHLOE

Leave Me Alone!

Chloe makes a beeline down the hallway.

AMANDA

You're a train wreck! You know that?

Chloe races into the girl's rest room.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL/GIRL'S BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Chloe hurries into a stall. Throws the door shut behind her.
Vomits into the toilet.

Her body spasms with each upheaval until she is dry heaving.
Trembling. She flushes the toilet then pulls some toilet
paper with shaking hands. She sits on the toilet seat, wiping
her mouth clean.

She tries to steady her trembling hands.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

The minivan speeds down the street, front bumper dented.
Something SCRAPES along the asphalt.

INT. MINIVAN/DRIVING - CONTINUOUS

Nichole pulls the minivan into the Farr driveway.

A FORD TAURUS sits in the middle of the driveway, making it impossible for Nichole to enter the garage. A COLLECTIONS AGENT steps out of the car.

NICHOLE

Shit.

Nichole lowers the window.

NICHOLE (CONT'D)

You need to move your car.

The Collections Agent approaches her window.

COLLECTIONS AGENT

Ms. Graham, I'm with Trimark Adjustments. We've tried calling you multiple times, but we weren't -

NICHOLE

Move your car.

COLLECTIONS AGENT

I just need a few minutes. Just a few minutes of your time.

NICHOLE

Move Your Car!

The Collections Agent doesn't move.

COLLECTIONS AGENT

You owe upwards of twenty thousand dollars, Ms. Graham. It's time you took responsibility for that.

EXT. FARR HOME - CONTINUOUS

Nichole pops the minivan into reverse. She speeds out into the street. Jerks the wheel. The minivan hops the curb. Parks.

Nichole hurries around to the passenger's side, removing Claire in her infant seat. Claire starts to cry.

The Collections Agent slowly moves to intercept Nichole as she hurries toward the house, Claire's infant carrier in tow.

COLLECTIONS AGENT

This visit is a courtesy.
(MORE)

COLLECTIONS AGENT (CONT'D)
It's charity. Because after this the
lawyers are gonna get involved.

NICHOLE
You're not allowed to do this. I
know my rights. I'll call the police.

Nichole fumbles with her keys. Drops them.

COLLECTIONS AGENT
They'll take everything you have.

NICHOLE
I don't have anything to give you!

COLLECTIONS AGENT
You were on a plan, Ms. Graham. You
were on a plan and we've been - we
were willing to work with you.

Nichole hurries into the open garage. The Agent follows her
inside.

COLLECTIONS AGENT (CONT'D)
What would your husband think? You
want us to contact him?

Nichole grabs a shovel. Spins around, aiming it at the Agent.

NICHOLE
Get out of my garage!

The Agent holds up his hands.

COLLECTIONS AGENT
Fine. Fine.

He back pedals out of the garage. Nichole hits the garage
door opener. She throws the shovel aside. Hurries inside the
house.

The Collections Agent ducks down with the closing door,
yelling after Nichole.

COLLECTIONS AGENT (CONT'D)
You've really left us no choice!

INT. FARR HOME/DEN - CONTINUOUS

Nichole enters the home in a panic. She sets down the infant
car seat, Claire WAILING inside. She frantically paces the
den, eyes swimming. She throws aside a window curtain seeing --

--- The Collections Agent crosses to his car, dialing his mobile.

Nichole stares through Claire as the child cries. She is lost in panicked thought. The sound of the Ford Taurus STARTING snaps her from her trance.

She suddenly turns. Races out the front door.

EXT. FARR HOME - CONTINUOUS

The Ford Taurus backs down the drive. Nichole races after it.

NICHOLE

Wait! Wait! WAIT!

Nichole taps the hood of the car. It stops. The Collections Agent winds down his window. Nichole, chest heaving, steps up to the open window.

NICHOLE (CONT'D)

How much? How much do you need?

INT. HIGH SCHOOL/HALLWAY - DAY

Chloe slouches through the hallway. She turns a corner, seeing --
-- Chris. He waits for her by her locker.

She ducks back behind the corner for cover. She holds for a moment, thinking, then hurries off down the hallway, blending in with the students in an effort to avoid Chris.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL/CLASSROOM - DAY

A small cinder block classroom. Photographs clothes-pinned to dry lines criss-cross the room's interior. Photographic prints collage the walls. Chloe shuffles into the room and takes a seat setting her DIGITAL SLR on her desk.

MR. BELMER (45) addresses the class.

MR. BELMER

Alright everyone. Today we're going to continue our depth of field exercises as a pre-cursor to part two of your photo essay assignments.

Chloe sits slouched in her seat, hoodie pulled down over her eyes. She senses someone looking at her --

MR. BELMER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

So let's remember the key components to depth of field...

-- Rhonda watches Chloe from across the room. She looks concerned.

Chloe turns away.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL/PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Photography students mill about the parking lot. Mr. Belmer idly navigates their ranks, offering occasional direction.

ON CAMERA VIEW FINDER. Rhonda comes into focus.

RHONDA

You think he did it?

Chloe reluctantly frames up Rhonda. Snaps a photograph.

CHLOE

I don't know. There are times where he kind of scares me. Where he turns into this other person.

Chloe examines the camera LCD.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

But he was there for me. You know? When no one else was.

RHONDA

I was. I mean, I would've been if you had told me what was going on.

CHLOE

I couldn't, Rhonda. Not really.

RHONDA

Why not? I'm your best friend. Right?

CHLOE

I don't know. I guess I was ashamed. Maybe Rick made me feel that way. But Chris, you know, he kind of just - he doesn't care what anyone else thinks. He sees through all of the bullshit. And I needed that. I needed someone to teach me that so I could be strong enough to make it through.

RHONDA

Is that what this whole new look is about? Telling everyone else you don't care what they think?

Chloe glares at Rhonda.

CHLOE

Chris loves me no matter what I look like.

RHONDA

Lot's of people love you, Chloe. No matter what you look like. But this isn't you. You're just lying to yourself.

CHLOE

Maybe this is me, Rhonda, and the way I used to be was the lie.

RHONDA

I don't believe that.

CHLOE

I think that is maybe all that relationships really are. Lies to make someone else happy. You keep lying and lying and then one day you wake up and there's nothing real left. It's all just fiction. It's sad.

RHONDA

Is that how you feel about us?

CHLOE

I just know I'm not the person I used to be and it's up to you whether you can accept that or not.

Chloe walks away.

INT. FARR HOME/BEDROOM - DAY

A JEWELRY BOX is flipped open. Nichole frantically scours the contents of the box, placing sparkling item pieces onto the dresser. She throws open tiny jewelry box drawers, scooping the contents. She suddenly stops, eyes fixed on --

-- A DIAMOND PENDANT in the shape of a LEMNISCATE (infinity symbol).

Nichole studies the pendant, painfully reminiscing over a distant and lost memory. The PHONE RINGS. Nichole scoops up the assembled jewelry and races out of the room.

The RINGING PHONE bridges to...

INT. OFFICE BUILDING/LIAM'S OFFICE - DAY

Liam stares out of his office window at the city below. His mobile phone is pressed to his ear.

LIAM'S VOICE
(voicemail)
Hi. You've reached the Farr's. Please
leave a message.

Liam goes to say something then stops. He keeps the mobile pressed to his ear, thinking.

KNOCK KNOCK.

Liam disconnects and pockets the phone. He turns to see the door open. Mallory peeks into the office.

MALLORY
Hey.

LIAM
Hey.

MALLORY
You okay?

LIAM
Yeah. Yeah, I'm fine.

MALLORY
Yeah? Well, get ready to be great.

Liam looks at Mallory expectantly. A grin slowly spreads across her beautiful face.

MALLORY (CONT'D)
We won the bid!

Liam smiles.

LIAM
We won the bid?

Mallory nods.

MALLORY
We won the bid!

She embraces Liam.

MALLORY (CONT'D)
I figured you could use a little
good news.

Mallory kisses Liam on the cheek. Their embrace lingers. Liam looks into Mallory's eyes. They look as though they might kiss.

KNOCK KNOCK.

Mallory and Liam quickly step away from one another. EARL (56) steps in. He senses the couple's surprise, but tries to shrug it off.

EARL

Am I interrupting?

MALLORY

No. No. I was just telling Liam. We won the Dynamics bid.

EARL

So I heard. Congratulations are in order.

MALLORY

Thank you, sir.

LIAM

Thanks, Earl.

EARL

We've been trying to get a foothold over there at Dynamics for the past five years. It's a big win.

Earl looks at Mallory as if to dismiss her. Mallory shifts uncomfortably.

MALLORY

Okay. Well. I'll leave you guys to it.

Mallory points at Liam.

MALLORY (CONT'D)

You owe me dinner, boss.

Liam smiles uncomfortably.

LIAM

That was the deal.

Mallory slips out of the room. Earl closes the door behind her.

EARL

What's going on?

LIAM

What do you mean?

EARL

Hank Pressler came by my office and said you had a bit of a melt down earlier. Whole office heard it.

LIAM

Just some personal stuff, Earl. I'm trying to work through some things on the home front.

EARL

Is it the travel? The missus having trouble with that?

LIAM

No. It's not - No. We're just. It's just a little bit of a rough patch right now. That's all.

EARL

You're a key contributor here, Liam. I can't have you getting burned out or distracted. You should take some time off. Reconnect with the family. Patch things.

LIAM

I appreciate that, Earl. I do. But I'd rather not.

Earl holds a stare. He doesn't blink. Liam looks away.

LIAM (CONT'D)

Seriously. I'll be fine. I'm sorry about the outburst. It won't happen again.

EARL

It's not about the outburst - It's.
(beat)
Something happen out there between you two? Something I should know about?

LIAM

Something like what, Earl?

EARL

Mallory is a hell of a salesman, Liam. She's got an impeccable record. But she's also got a pretty nasty reputation. You know that. Right?

LIAM

She's a good kid, Earl. She's harmless.

EARL

You should know that she came by my office earlier dropping hints at her interest in becoming a partner. Pitching herself as being ready. Pitching the Dynamics bid as hers.

LIAM

It was hers, Earl. She did most of the work.

(beat)

Maybe she deserves that.

EARL

You think so? Really?

LIAM

Really.

Earl sizes Liam up.

EARL

Look. You're an adult, Liam. You can make your own decisions. And I don't care what her methods are as long as she keeps bringing in these kinds of sales. But I don't want it coming back to bite us. Understand?

LIAM

I understand.

EARL

Just be careful.

Earl steps out of the office. Liam slumps to a seat.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL/LUNCHROOM - DAY

Chloe stands in line, holding a tray. Across the lunch room a table of students look at her. She is the apparent subject of conversation. They laugh.

BUZZ. Chloe's phone vibrates in her pocket. She checks the phone --

-- A TEXT MESSAGE FROM CHRIS. 'Meet me outside.'

Chloe looks back at the table of students. They share another laugh at her expense. She places her tray on the cafeteria bar. Hurries across the lunchroom.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL/HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Chloe surveys the hallway. The coast is clear. She rushes toward an exit, slipping through the doors.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL/PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Chloe rounds the building. Chris squats against the brick exterior, smoking a cigarette. He stands when he sees her.

CHRIS

Hey.

CHLOE

Hi.

CHRIS

Where were you before second period?
I was waiting for you by your locker.

CHLOE

I went straight to class.

CHRIS

Really?

CHLOE

Yeah.

Chris goes to kiss Chloe. She pulls away.

CHRIS

What's wrong?

CHLOE

Did you lie to me?

CHRIS

Did I lie to you about what?

CHLOE

About the thing with your mom.

Chris tosses his cigarette. He considers his response. A
BEAT.

CHRIS

That was before, Chloe.

CHLOE

Before what?

CHRIS

Before they put me on the medication.

CHLOE
Then why didn't you tell me that?
Why did you lie?

CHRIS
Because I didn't do it. Okay? It
wasn't me.

Chloe stares at Chris, uncertain.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
I would never hurt somebody I love.

Chloe steps back.

CHLOE
How do you know you won't do it again?

CHRIS
Because - I won't.
(beat)
Are you scared of me? Is that it?

CHLOE
No.
(beat)
I don't know.

CHRIS
Fuck, Chloe. Everything I do for
you! And you're scared of me? You
doubt me?

CHLOE
Chris, come on. Calm down.

CHRIS
No I won't fucking calm down.

Chris grabs her by the hand.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Here. Come on.

CHLOE
What?

Chris pulls her out into the parking lot.

CHRIS
I have to show you something.

CHLOE
What?

Chris moves across the parking lot in long deliberate strides, Chloe in tow. She stutters steps to keep up. He steps up to Rick's Mustang and stops.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

What?

Chris indicates the flat rear tire. Chloe is suddenly afraid.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

You did that?

CHRIS

Yeah. I fucking did that. For you.

CHLOE

For me? How is sticking Rick Borman's tire an act for me?

CHRIS

Because he's a fucking douche bag.
Because he deserves to suffer a
little.

Chloe hugs herself, shaking her head. She walks back toward the school.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

CHLOE

I never asked you to do that.

CHRIS

Come back here.

CHLOE

I never asked you to hurt somebody
on my behalf.

CHRIS

That's the fucking problem with this
world, Chloe. There's no fucking
justice. What he did. How he
disappeared when you needed him.
It's fucking bullshit. It's fucking
bullshit and he deserves to suffer
for it.

Chloe spins around, stepping up into Chris's face.

CHLOE

I never asked you to do that.

Chloe hurries into the school, leaving Chris standing alone. Deserted.

EXT. PAWN SHOP - DAY

The dingy pawn shop resides on the fringes where suburbia and city meet. Nichole's minivan SCRAPES into the parking lot.

INT. MINIVAN - CONTINUOUS

Nichole kills the engine, surveying the SHADY CHARACTERS milling about the parking lot. She hops out of the car.

INT. PAWN SHOP - DAY

DING. A bell announces Nichole's arrival. She steps into the pawn shop, bathed in flickering fluorescents. She struggles with Claire's car seat, soliciting curious looks from the pawn shops PATRONS and STAFF.

She steps up to the counter.

PAWN SHOP CLERK

Help you?

NICHOLE

I need to see how much I can get for this.

Nichole dumps the jewelry from a zip lock baggie. The Clerk picks through the contents, studying each piece carefully. Nichole surveys the shop. Two GRIZZLED PATRONS eye her up and down.

PAWN SHOP CLERK

I can give you three hundred for the lot of it.

NICHOLE

Three hundred? The pendant alone is worth twelve hundred!

PAWN SHOP CLERK

Take it or leave it.

Nichole leans closer, speaking in discrete tones.

NICHOLE

Look. I'm not looking for a hand out here. All of this stuff has got to be worth more than three hundred. Come on. Please. Be reasonable. Give me - three thousand. Thirty five hundred.

(MORE)

NICHOLE (CONT'D)

(beat)

You've got to help me out here.

The clerk starts to laugh.

PAWN SHOP CLERK

Lady, what makes you think I need or want three thousand dollars worth of costume jewelry?

The comment stings. Nichole hurriedly scoops the jewelry into the baggie. Several pieces miss the bag, hitting the floor.

One of the grizzled patrons approaches. Nichole quickly picks up the fallen pieces, hoists Claire, and makes a beeline for the exit.

INT. MINIVAN - CONTINUOUS

Panicked, Nichole crosses from the pawn shop. Jumps into the minivan. She sets Claire down on the passenger seat and starts the car, lunging into reverse.

BEEP!

She slams on the brakes...

EXT. PAWN SHOP - CONTINUOUS

A near miss with another car.

INT. MINIVAN - CONTINUOUS

Nichole glances at the pawn shop entrance. The grizzled patron eyes her from the door. Nichole throws the car into drive. Speeds off.

EXT. SUBURBIA - MOMENTS LATER

The minivan speeds down a suburban street, once again back in familiar territory.

INT. MINIVAN - DAY

Nichole drives, checking the rear view mirror. Claire BABBLES in the passenger seat. Nichole suddenly realizes the safety hazard. She pulls the minivan to the side of the road.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Nichole moves to the passenger side. She transfers Claire back to the safety of the rear car seat mount.

Her face tenses with a sudden realization.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL/CLASSROOM - DAY

Chloe sits in the back of the classroom.

BUZZ. She checks her phone --

-- A TEXT MESSAGE FROM CHRIS. 'I'm sorry.'

She clicks on the sleep button. The LCD dims.

BUZZ. ANOTHER TEXT. 'Come on. Txt me back.'

She clicks on the sleep button.

BUZZ. Another text.

And another.

And another.

The TEACHER turns to the distraction.

TEACHER

All right. You people know the rule
about phones in class. Turn it off.

Chloe sheepishly pockets her phone.

A SCHOOL BELL bridges to...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL/HALLWAY - DAY

Chloe hurries down the hallway. She sees Chris waiting for her at the exit. Their eyes meet. She turns and goes against the student traffic in the opposite direction.

Chris fights the human tide in pursuit.

CHRIS

Chloe!

Chloe starts to run. Rick sees Chloe run past. He spins to see Chris approach in pursuit. He intercepts, blocking Chris's path.

RICK

Leave her alone.

Chloe stops at the sound of Rick's voice. Chris glares at Rick. He goes to move around him. Rick puts his hand on Chris's chest.

Chris grabs Rick's arm. Spins him into the lockers. Students scatter. He grabs Rick's throat. Rick breaks the hold. Punches Chris in the stomach. Chris doubles. Rick steps back. Chris looks up at Rick. A crazed look in his eye.

CHLOE

Chris! Stop!

Chris rushes Rick, tackling him to the floor. Another student stumbles, spilling her books. Chris straddles Rick's chest. Pushes his face into the floor. Grabs a stray text book. SMACK! He smashes Rick's face with the book. Rick SCREAMS, nose gushing blood.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

CHRIS! STOP!

SMACK! The book smashes into Rick's face again. And again. And again.

Mr. Belmer pushes through the crowd of students. Grabs Chris, pulling him off Rick. Arms flailing, Chris breaks Belmer's hold. He turns to see Chloe, mouth agape. Horrified.

Chris rushes off toward an exit.

Chloe rushes up to Rick's aid. Kneels down beside him.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Oh my God. Oh my God.

Rick's hands tremble in a futile attempt to stem the blood gushing from his broken nose.

EXT. PRE-KINDERGARTEN SCHOOL - DAY

The last of pre-k stragglers are picked up by their parents. Jack stands alone, waiting for his ride. A TEACHER steps up to him.

TEACHER

Jack? Why don't we try your parents.

EXT. FIRST PEOPLE'S BANK - DAY

The minivan is parked outside.

INT. FIRST PEOPLE'S BANK/OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Nichole sits opposite a BANK CLERK, feeding Claire a bottle. The clerk studies her computer monitor.

BANK CLERK

There will be a two thousand dollar tax penalty on the withdrawal.

NICHOLE

That's okay.

BANK CLERK

We can talk about some other loan options if you need the money.

NICHOLE

No. I don't think that would work.

BANK CLERK

It's just important that you realize by withdrawing these funds now you're not taking advantage of the interest. By the time the funds you have would mature you'd have your son's first year of college tuition covered.

NICHOLE

No. We just - This is what we need to do. Okay?

BANK CLERK

Okay then. Let me get the paperwork.

The CLERK leaves the office. Nichole's phone RINGS.

NICHOLE

Hello?

TEACHER (O.S.)

Mrs. Farr? This is Janet Davies over at Sunny Dale.

Nichole checks a wall clock.

NICHOLE

Oh shit. I'm so sorry. I'm running late -

TEACHER (O.S.)

We're going to need someone to pick Jack up.

NICHOLE

I know. I know. Let me. Give me a couple of minutes. Okay? Someone will be there.

Nichole disconnects. She sets Claire back into her car seat. The baby starts to cry. Nichole dials her phone. It RINGS to voicemail...

OLIVIA (O.S.)
Hi. This is Olivia. You know the deal.

BEEP.

NICHOLE
'Liv. It's Nichole. I need - I'm in a bind here. I need someone to pick up Jack. I - just call me.

Nichole disconnects. Her eyes swim, panicked. She dials a number.

LOUD MUSIC bridges to...

INT. FARNSWORTH HOME/CHLOE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Chloe sits in a corner, knees hugged to her chest. The stereo pours LOUD ALTERNATIVE MUSIC into the room. Chloe hears the faint sound of the phone RINGING. She kills the music. Answers it.

CHLOE
Hello?

NICHOLE
(on phone)
Chloe? It's Mrs. Farr.

CHLOE
Hi. Uh - what's up?

INT. FIRST PEOPLE'S BANK/OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

NICHOLE
I know this is kind of sudden. But -
I need your help.

INT. HATCHBACK/MOVING - DAY

Chloe turns the car into the pre-kindergarten parking lot. She sees Jack waiting outside.

EXT. PRE-KINDERGARTEN/PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Chloe ushers Jack to the car.

EXT. FARNSWORTH HOME - NIGHT

Chloe and Jack step up to the backdoor of the home. Chloe steps over to the edge of the patio, reaching down behind the bushes. She pulls a muddy key from beneath a rock.

She brushes the key off on her pants and unlocks the door.

CHLOE
Come on, buddy.

Jack and Chloe enter the house.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING/ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Liam and Mallory share the descent with a crowd of business people. They watch one another's reflection in the elevator door.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING/PARKING STRUCTURE - NIGHT

Liam and Mallory walk toward their cars. Mallory turns toward Liam as she approaches hers: a MERCEDES C CLASS.

MALLORY
So...

LIAM
So.

MALLORY
You ready to celebrate our big win?

LIAM
I need to see what is going on at home.
(beat)
Nichole hasn't answered the phone all day. I don't know what happened. If there was an accident.

MALLORY
I'm sure she's fine, Lee. She would've followed up if it was something serious.

LIAM
I have to be sure.

MALLORY
You're not going to get out of dinner that easily. You know that. Right?

Mallory crosses to Liam and kisses him on the cheek.

MALLORY (CONT'D)
(hushed)
You owe me.

Liam smiles. Mallory gets into her car. He watches as she starts the engine and drives off with a wave.

Liam's smile fades.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The VOLVO XC70 speeds down the four lane black top. The front wheel rides the double-yellow line, then corrects back into its lane.

INT. VOLVO XC70/DRIVING - CONTINUOUS

Liam drives. Somber. Lost in thought.

EXT. WESTERN UNION - NIGHT

The minivan is parked outside. Nichole steps out of the building, speaking on her phone.

NICHOLE

I just wired three thousand to the account.

She crosses to the minivan, waiting outside the door to finish the call.

NICHOLE (CONT'D)

Three hundred a month...Yes. I understand...It won't happen again.

Nichole disconnects the phone. She gets into the minivan.

INT. MINIVAN - CONTINUOUS

Nichole gently closes the driver's door. She looks back into the back seat --

-- Claire sleeps in her infant car seat. Peaceful. Serene.

Nichole turns back to the wheel. She starts to cry.

INT. FARNSWORTH HOME/JACK'S ROOM - NIGHT

Chloe tucks Jack in. Jack smiles at her.

JACK

Are you sad?

CHLOE

I don't know. Why?

JACK

Mommy said something bad happened and you were sad.

CHLOE

I guess maybe a little.

JACK

Here.

Jack hands Chloe his cat puppet.

CHLOE

What's this for?

JACK

It's Mr. Jack Jack. Whenever I'm sad
he cheers me up.

Chloe smiles. She rustles Jack's hair.

CHLOE

Thanks, buddy. Now let's get you to
sleep.

Chloe stands and crosses to the bedroom door. She turns out
the light, silhouetted by the door frame.

JACK

Chloe?

CHLOE

Yes, Jack?

JACK

I'm glad you're here. I missed you.

CHLOE

Thanks, Jack. Good night.

JACK

Night.

Chloe closes the door.

INT. FARR HOME/HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Chloe pads down the hallway. She stops at the nursery door.

INT. FARR HOME/NURSERY - CONTINUOUS

Chloe reverently steps into the room. She drinks it all in.
The teddy bear and hearts wall paper. The stuffed animals.
The crib. She gently bats at an animal mobile hanging over
the crib, sending it spinning.

Chloe crosses to a rocking chair and sits down. She holds
the cat puppet in her arms, staring at her reflection in the
nursery room window. (A mirror image of Nichole's reflection
from earlier.) She puts her hands on her abdomen.

A GARAGE DOOR opens o.s. The dog starts BARKING. Chloe stands and leaves the nursery, closing the door behind her.

INT. FARR HOME/DEN - CONTINUOUS

Liam steps into the house. The dog continues BARKING.

LIAM

Hello?

He makes a beeline for the back door, nudging the dog out the door with his foot. He surveys the home. No sign of Nichole.

LIAM (CONT'D)

Nichole?

He notices Chloe's DIGITAL SLR on the kitchen counter. He goes to pick it up.

CHLOE (O.S.)

Hey.

Liam is startled.

LIAM

Shit.

CHLOE

Sorry. I'm sorry, Mr. Farr. I didn't mean to scare you.

Chloe takes the camera.

LIAM

What are you doing here?

CHLOE

Mrs. Farr asked me to pick up Jack and watch him. She said there was some kind of emergency.

LIAM

What did she say? What happened?

CHLOE

I don't know. She didn't tell me.

Liam undoes his tie, confused.

LIAM

Okay. Okay.

He snaps out of it, pulling out his wallet.

LIAM (CONT'D)

How much do I owe you?

Liam checks the wallet for cash. Only a couple of dollars.

CHLOE

It was just a couple of hours. It's no big deal.

LIAM

No. We've got to pay you. Let me find my check book.

Liam crosses the room to a cabinet. He scours the drawers in search of his checkbook. Chloe follows.

CHLOE

I was kind of surprised that you guys would call me. I thought maybe you were mad at me or something. Or that maybe you just didn't want me being around Jack.

Liam finds his checkbook. Scrawls out a check, handing it to Chloe.

LIAM

Why?

CHLOE

You know. Because of everything that happened. All of the drama in my life.

Chloe smiles. An attempt to trivialize her issues.

LIAM

What drama?

CHLOE

You really don't know?

LIAM

No. I'm sorry. I don't.

CHLOE

I won't bore you with it.

Chloe moves toward the door.

LIAM

No. Really. Are you okay?

Chloe starts to cry.

CHLOE

I don't know.

Liam steps up to Chloe. She embraces him, sobbing into his shoulder. Liam is taken back. He holds his arms up awkwardly, unsure of what to do. But then melts, patting Chloe on the back like a brother comforting his younger sibling.

INT. FARR HOME/KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Chloe and Liam sit opposite one another at the kitchen table.

CHLOE

Last semester I started dating this guy, this really popular guy that all the girls liked. And it was this big deal for me. You know? Out of all of the girls in the school he liked me. He wanted to be with me. And I thought - I felt good about myself. For the first time in a long while I felt like I was something special. Well, Rick, that's his name, Rick. He really wanted to - we started fooling around. And I got pregnant. When he found out he got scared and stopped talking to me. He just disappeared from my life. I didn't know what to do. I didn't know who or what to do - so I told my parents. My mom said that it would ruin my life. She wanted me to get rid of it.

(beat)

So, my dad drove me to a clinic and he waited out in the car while I went in. He wouldn't even go in with me. He was so ashamed.

Chloe sobs.

LIAM

It's okay. Let it out.

CHLOE

I'm sorry. This is stupid. You don't even - we haven't talked in months and here I am telling you all of this.

LIAM

It's okay, Chloe.

Chloe hugs her knees to her chest.

CHLOE
 Sometimes I feel like I'm in a car
 speeding down the highway...

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

POLICE CRUISERS are parked curbside. POLICE OFFICERS interview Gloria and Stephen at their apartment door.

CHLOE (V.O.)
 ...And it's like my life, all of my
 decisions, all of my choices...

Chris watches from across the street, smoking a cigarette, some of Rick's blood dried and caked on his hands. His jaw sets.

CHLOE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 ...everything that has happened to
 me is just propelling me faster and
 faster...

He spins his bike around, riding off into the night.

INT. MINIVAN/DRIVING - NIGHT

Nichole drives. Her eyes are red from crying. She checks the rear view --

-- Claire sleeps in the back seat, innocent and unaware of her mother's troubles.

CHLOE (V.O.)
 ...Like I'm caught up in the momentum
 of it. And the only way to save
 myself. The only way to keep from
 crashing is to jump...

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Rick's nose is examined by a doctor. His eyes are black and blue.

CHLOE (V.O.)
 ...To jump out before it's too late.

INT. FARR HOME/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Chloe fiddles with her camera.

CHLOE
 I see you with your kids. And I know
 it isn't easy. I know you've given
 up a lot.

(MORE)

CHLOE (CONT'D)

You've given up a lot of yourself.
But you make it work. Right? Because
you have to. Because that's your
responsibility.

Liam doesn't respond.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

They think I went through with it.
But I couldn't. The doctor started
and I just - I couldn't. I just sat
in the office for an hour while Dad
waited in the car just crying and
crying.

Liam looks surprised.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

I couldn't just erase it like it was
some mistake. I fucked up. I did.
And I love her. I'm supposed to love
her. To take care of her. No matter
what happens to me. No matter how
hard it is.

(beat)

But the fact that she wanted me to
do it. My mom. The fact that she
wanted me to have an abortion. What
does that say about how she feels
about me?

Liam and Chloe stare at one another, the question lingering.

INT. FARR HOME/GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Liam stands on a step ladder, rustling through boxes on the
top of plastic shelving. Chloe stands in the doorway, back
lit by the home's warm interior.

CHLOE

It's okay, Mr. Farr.

LIAM

No. I want you to have it.

Liam moves a milk crate of house paint aside. He grabs a
box, then a frame wrapped in a worn and dusty sheet. He sets
the box down on the floor, rummaging through its contents.
He finds an ANALOG SLR. Hands it to Chloe.

CHLOE

I can't take this.

LIAM
That's not all.

Liam kneels down, uncovering the framed photograph --

-- A HUMAN LANDSCAPE. One of the photographs previously hung in his office. It is water damaged, betraying neglect.

Liam winces at its state of disrepair. He hands it over to Chloe. Chloe watches him, dumbfounded.

LIAM (CONT'D)
Come on. I want you to have it.

CHLOE
Mr. Farr.

LIAM
No. It'll do me good to know it has a good home.

Liam smiles. The GARAGE DOOR RATTLES. Liam turns, shielding his face from oncoming headlights.

INT. MINIVAN/DRIVING - NIGHT

Nichole turns the minivan into the driveway. Her headlights sweep Chloe as she hurries across the driveway to her house. Nichole sees Liam standing in the garage.

EXT. FARR HOME - CONTINUOUS

Liam's attention shifts from Chloe to the minivan. He notices the damaged front bumper. His jaw tightens.

INT. FARR HOME/DEN - NIGHT

Nichole hurries about the room, picking up Jack's toys. Liam follows.

LIAM
How could you do that? Weren't you paying attention?

NICHOLE
It was an accident.

LIAM
And then you hang up the phone on me? I was worried sick! I thought something happened to the kids! Or Claire! I mean, Jesus Christ, Nichole. I come home and here are Chloe and Jack. But no you? No Claire?

Nichole throws the toys into a basket.

LIAM (CONT'D)
STOP FUCKING AROUND WITH THE GOD
DAMN TOYS AND ANSWER ME!

Nichole stops. She glares at Liam.

LIAM (CONT'D)
Where the fuck were you?

NICHOLE
I was out. I had some things to do.

LIAM
What things, Nichole? What things?

NICHOLE
Things, Liam. Things that I need to
do for myself. Things that I do when
you're gone. This is the way things
work around here. Okay? I'm the one
who keeps this house running. I'm
the one who makes sure the kids are
fed. Healthy. Taken care of.

LIAM
No. No. Don't throw that bullshit
back into my face. I work hard -

NICHOLE
You always turn it around! You always
make it about you!

LIAM
IT IS ABOUT ME! IT'S ABOUT US!

Nichole glares.

LIAM (CONT'D)
Tell me what the hell is going on.
Who was on the phone yesterday? Where
were you today?

Liam musters up the strength to say the next few words.

LIAM (CONT'D)
Are you seeing someone?

NICHOLE
Is that what you think? You think
I'm seeing someone? You think I have
time to see someone?

LIAM

Then tell me where you've been.

NICHOLE

You're right. I have been seeing someone. I've been fucking this gorgeous hunk of a man every night that you're gone. And I take Claire with me so that she can watch.

LIAM

Jesus Christ.

NICHOLE

I can't do this anymore.

Nichole brushes past Liam toward the stairs.

LIAM

So you're going to just run away again? You're going to go to your room and sulk?

NICHOLE

NO! I mean I can't do this! All of this! I'm Done!

Liam and Nichole glare at one another from opposite sides of the room, chests heaving.

NICHOLE (CONT'D)

I want a divorce.

Nichole waits as her words sink in. Liam looks hurt. Then...

LIAM

(clenched teeth)

Fine. If you want a fucking divorce, then you've got a fucking divorce.

Liam grabs his jacket and storms out of the house. Nichole slumps to a seat on the stairs. She hangs her head in her hands.

INT. FARNSWORTH HOME/CHLOE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Chloe watches from her bedroom window as --

-- Liam's Volvo Xc70 speeds out of the driveway in reverse. Tires SQUEAL as the car screams off down the road.

BUZZ. Chloe turns to the sound of her phone. She picks it up.

CHLOE

Hello?

EXT. HOUSING DEVELOPMENT - NIGHT

FLASH. Light strobes upon the frames of unfinished homes.

FLASH. Plastic construction sheets flutter in the midnight breeze.

Chloe tours the first story of an unfinished home, meandering through the skeletal frames of invisible walls. She contemplates the nascent structure, flashing photographs as she goes.

Headlights strafe her face. She looks toward their source --

-- A fluttering plastic sheet obscures a car. SLAM. A car door. Someone approaches, their image distorted through the fluttering plastic.

Chloe collects herself. She brushes the sheet aside, revealing --

-- RICK. He wears a bandage on his nose. His eyes are black and blue, but otherwise, he is freshly showered and cleaned up. He approaches Chloe.

RICK

Hey.

CHLOE

You look like shit.

RICK

Yeah. He roughed me up pretty good.

CHLOE

You should've stayed out of it.

RICK

I already made that mistake.

Chloe flashes a tentative smile.

RICK (CONT'D)

Place has changed a lot since we came here.

CHLOE

Yeah. More houses. But it seems like it's taking them forever to finish.

RICK

I used to think that maybe we'd have one of these some day. As if they might wait for us to be ready before they were finished. You know?

CHLOE

I know you were scared, Rick. And I don't fault you for that. But you really hurt me.

(beat)

I loved you so much.

RICK

I know. I really fucked up.

AN AWKWARD SILENCE. Chloe aims her camera at Rick. She takes a photograph. He shifts uncomfortably.

RICK (CONT'D)

Do your parents know that it was me?

CHLOE

I didn't tell them if that's what you mean. But they pretty much figured it out. I mean you're the only guy I ever really dated.

RICK

I never told my parents. They don't know that any of this has happened.

Chloe nods. She examines Rick's photograph in the camera's LCD.

RICK (CONT'D)

But they still ask about you. They wonder why we broke up.

CHLOE

What do you tell them?

RICK

I tell them - I don't know.

(beat)

Why him?

CHLOE

Who, Chris?

RICK

Yeah. How did you end up with him, Chloe?

Chloe shakes her head.

CHLOE

I've been thinking a lot about it. He's always been this outcast. And somehow he survives. Day to day he gets through. I thought maybe I could learn to be like that. To not give a shit what anybody else thought. But that's hard. It's really hard.

(beat)

But there was more to it I think.

RICK

What?

CHLOE

I figured if I could love Chris, this guy that nobody loves. If I could love him unconditionally for who he is, then maybe someone could love me that way too.

Rick cups Chloe's face in his hand. He moves an errant hair from her forehead.

RICK

I'm sorry for what I did. I'll never do it again. No matter what.

Rick kisses Chloe. She kisses him back then pulls away, lowering her head.

CHLOE

There's something else I need to tell you.

DISTANT THUNDER BRIDGES TO...

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - NIGHT

A veil of rain. Chris pedals furiously down the street. He speeds through a familiar intersection.

EXT. FARNSWORTH HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Chris stands outside the home, sopping wet. The door opens revealing Howard.

CHRIS

Is Chloe here?

HOWARD

Who are you?

CHRIS

I'm her boyfriend. Chris.

Howard looks surprised. Chris looks worse for wear.

HOWARD
She's not home right now.

CHRIS
Tell her I came by. Okay?

HOWARD
Yeah. Sure...Chris?

CHRIS
(over pronouncing)
Chris.

Chris hurries back to his bike.

INT. FARNSWORTH HOME - CONTINUOUS

Howard closes the door. Bonnie types away at her computer on the kitchen table.

BONNIE
Who was it?

HOWARD
Some guy who said he was Chloe's
boyfriend. Did you know that she was
dating somebody?

Bonnie exhales. She hangs her head for a moment, then goes back to her work.

BONNIE
I don't pretend to know what she
does with herself, Howard. I've done
all that I can do for that girl.

Howard glares at Bonnie. She keeps working. He ascends the stairs then SLAMS a door O.S.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Rain pours. Liam's Volvo Xc70 speeds down the two lane blacktop. The car rides the double yellow, the rain making it difficult to see.

EXT. HALFWAY INN - NIGHT

The Volvo's brake lights burn crimson through the sheets of rain. The car turns into the parking lot of a run down dive: The Halfway Inn.

LIAM (V.O.)
She wants a divorce.

MALLORY (V.O.)
You sound surprised.

INT. HALFWAY INN - MOMENTS LATER

Liam enters, rain soaked. Red lamps illuminate the dark recesses of the run down bar. Liam wipes the wet from his face, surveying the bar's dark interior. Mallory gestures from a booth.

LIAM (V.O.)
I guess I am. A little.

INT. HALFWAY INN - MOMENTS LATER

Liam and Mallory sit across from one another. The expanse of table creates an unnatural barrier between the two. Mallory peels at the label on her beer bottle. Liam sips a glass of scotch. He is a bit drunk.

LIAM
Things haven't been good for a long time. I think I've known. We've both known. But you get caught up in it - in the momentum of it all. Before you know it you're a stranger to yourself.

Mallory seems distracted, her attention split between Liam and a group of COLLEGE BOYS ogling her from the pool table.

MALLORY
But it's over now. Right? It's behind you.

LIAM
I don't know. She's threatened divorce before. Things are just a lot different this time. She's been hiding something.

MALLORY
What? An affair?

LIAM
I don't know for sure. But yeah. I think so.

MALLORY
It's for the best, Lee. You've been through hell. I see it on your face every day.

LIAM

Yeah, but what about the kids? If we didn't have the kids it would be easy. But I think about them. About them growing up in a broken home.

MALLORY

They're already growing up in a broken home. Who's to say they wouldn't be better off without seeing you two tear into each other?

LIAM

I don't know.

(beat)

How does someone make that decision?

Mallory catches a look from an attractive COLLEGE BOY. Liam notices.

LIAM (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I shouldn't be talking about this.

MALLORY

No. It's okay. I'm here for you.

Mallory reaches across the table, taking Liam's hands in her own. His hands tremble. Mallory notices.

MALLORY (CONT'D)

You're shaking.

LIAM

We're talking about something that - this is a big deal to me, Mallory. This is not just - I'm a good guy. I've always been a good guy.

MALLORY

I know. That's one of the things I love about you.

LIAM

God damn it. You're not going to make this easy. Are you?

MALLORY

No.

Mallory smiles. Liam becomes lost in her eyes. His tension fades.

LIAM

You're beautiful.

MALLORY
Then kiss me.

LIAM
I want to.

MALLORY
Then do it.

Liam's eyes dance from Mallory's eyes to her lips. He looks as though he might kiss her. But turns away.

LIAM
I need a cigarette. Do you have any
cigarettes?

Mallory pulls a pack of cigarettes from her purse. Liam takes one. Stands. Mallory smiles.

MALLORY
Nichole wouldn't approve.

LIAM
Seriously?

Mallory mugs for Liam.

LIAM (CONT'D)
You want one?

MALLORY
Why the hell not?

Liam and Mallory move toward the side entrance.

EXT. HALFWAY INN - MOMENTS LATER

Liam and Mallory stand beneath an overhang. Rain sloshes from a broken gutter. They smoke, Liam's hands still trembling. He shivers against the cold and his nerves.

LIAM
How many men have you been with?

Mallory grins.

MALLORY
A few. Why?

LIAM
You ever fall in love with one of
them?

MALLORY

No. I don't think so. Not really. I mean, I may have *wanted* to be in love with some of them, but - We fool ourselves sometimes, Lee. We trick ourselves into being complacent with our lives. But it's all just - transient. Constantly changing. And you have to take what you can get from the moment you're living in. Right here. Right now.

LIAM

That seems so cynical.

MALLORY

I'd like to think it's pragmatic. Cut all of the bullshit away and that's what's left.

LIAM

I remember growing up thinking that somewhere out there was a person that was made just for me. And I was made just for them. And that it was just a matter of time and we would meet and our lives would be different. Better.

Liam takes a drag off his cigarette.

LIAM (CONT'D)

I thought Nichole was that person. I really did. In my heart of hearts I believed that she was the one. But, I don't know - things change and little by little you lose sight of that thing, whatever it was, that brought you together until you're just strangers in each other's lives.

MALLORY

People change and you can't expect those feelings to last forever. Because they don't. They just - don't.

LIAM

It's a fairy tale. Isn't it? What I want just doesn't exist.

Mallory and Liam smoke in silence. A BEAT. Then...

MALLORY

Marriage is like that double yellow line on the highway. You're not supposed to drive outside the lines, but as long as you are careful. As long as you know what you're doing. You can get away with it and nobody gets hurt.

Liam looks at Mallory. Mallory meets his stare. He suddenly kisses her. They kiss like knives clashing. Liam grabs her breast. Mallory MOANS, slipping her hand between his legs.

A car parks. HEADLIGHTS sweep the couple. Liam pulls away, breathing heavy.

LIAM

Wait. Wait.

MALLORY

What?

LIAM

I can't. I'm sorry, Mallory. I just -
I can't.

Mallory sighs.

MALLORY

Look, Lee. I can't tell you what to do. I can't say anything that you don't already know in your heart.

Mallory cups his face in her hands and kisses him on the top of the head. She turns his chin up, looking into his eyes.

MALLORY (CONT'D)

You're a really sweet guy. And when you're ready you'll do what you need to do.

Liam holds back his emotions. He nods. Mallory starts across the parking lot, then stops. She turns back to Liam.

MALLORY (CONT'D)

Lee...

Liam looks up.

MALLORY (CONT'D)

You're still sponsoring me for partner, right?

Liam stifles emotion.

LIAM

Right.

MALLORY

Okay. Good night.

LIAM

Night.

Mallory crosses to her parked car. Liam watches her go.

EXT. HOUSING DEVELOPMENT - NIGHT

Chris pedals into the unfinished development, kicking up a spray of rain water.

EXT. HOUSING DEVELOPMENT/UNFINISHED HOME - CONTINUOUS

Rick and Chloe huddle together beneath the front stoop of the unfinished home.

RICK

You have to tell them. They're going to figure it out sooner or later.

CHLOE

I know.

A BEAT. Rick takes Chloe's hand.

RICK

I'll go with you. We'll tell them together.

CHLOE

You don't have to do that, Rick. That's not why I told you.

RICK

It's the right thing for me to do. I'm not running away again. I'm not going to just bury my head in the sand and pretend it never happened.

Rick turns Chloe toward him.

RICK (CONT'D)

I love you. And I'll do whatever I need to do. We'll figure it out.

Chloe's eyes well. She kisses Rick.

Chris slides to a stop in the street. Rick tenses. Stands up.

RICK (CONT'D)
What is he doing here?

CHLOE
I brought him here. We used to come
here late at night and talk.

Chris lets his bike fall to the puddling asphalt. He marches across the muddy earth, slipping and sliding as he goes. But his eyes remain locked on Rick.

RICK
Leave us alone, Tweety.

CHRIS
You brought him here? To our place?

RICK
This was our place long before you
ever started stinking it up.

CHRIS
Fuck you! You don't get her back!

CHLOE
Come on, Chris. Stop.

Chris marches up to the foot of the steps. Rick balls his fists. Chloe back pedals to the front door.

CHRIS
I was there for you when no one else
was. I would fucking die for you if
I had to. Would he do that?

CHLOE
Chris, please.

CHRIS
I would fucking die for you.

Chris springs up the stairs. Rick lunges, tackling him into the mud. Chloe SCREAMS. Chris and Rick roll over in the mud. Rick punches Chris in the face. Pins him down. He seems to have the upper hand when suddenly...

RICK
AHHHHH!

Rick SCREAMS! He slumps off of Chris to the side. Chris wields his hunting knife, BLOOD on the blade. His hand trembles. He stands and back pedals away from Rick, horrified.

CHLOE
What did you do! What did you do!

Chloe rushes to Rick. He winces in pain, rolling around in the mud. He grips his hands to his stomach. BLOOD seeps from the wound, mixing with the mud and wet.

Chris is crazed. He dives at Rick, pulling his car keys from his pocket. He wraps his arm around Chloe's throat, hoisting her to her feet. Knife pointed at her face.

CHRIS

Come on! Move it! Move!

Chloe tries to break free. Chris grabs her by the back of the neck and throws her to her knees. She screams. He pulls her up by the back of her shirt collar.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

MOVE IT!

He forces her toward the MUSTANG. Chloe gets into the car. Chris gets into the driver's seat.

INT. MUSTANG - CONTINUOUS

Chris starts the car. Hits the accelerator.

EXT. HOUSING DEVELOPMENT/UNFINISHED HOME - CONTINUOUS

The Mustang fishtails in the mud, headlights sweeping Rick's injured body. Rick rolls over, fishing a mobile phone from his pocket.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The Mustang speeds down the two-lane through the driving rain. The car shimmies, unstable at its breakneck speed.

INT. MUSTANG/DRIVING - NIGHT

Wipers struggle to clear the rain. Chris squints into the rain-soaked night.

CHRIS

You fucking betrayed me. How could you do that? How could you do that!

Chloe sobs.

CHLOE

Chris, stop! Please stop!

CHRIS

Ilovedyounomatterwhat.
Ilovedyounomatterwhat. No matter what! I did things for you! I fucking loved you!

CHLOE
Chris! Slow down!

Chloe's eyes saucer.

TAIL LIGHTS paint the rain-washed windshield in an abstract crimson blur. Chris jerks the wheel.

EXT. HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

The Mustang dodges the back end of a slow-moving PICK UP TRUCK. Tires SQUEAL. Chris loses control. The car slides across the highway, launching off of an embankment in a spiral.

CRASH! The car lands! FLIPS! SLAMS into a stand of trees and raised earth!

INT. MUSTANG - NIGHT

Intermittent HAZARD LIGHTS illuminate the dark interior. Chloe blinks awake. Disoriented, she let's out a WHIMPER. She gains her bearings. Unbuckles her seat belt. Falls against the car door.

REVEAL: The world is inverted, the car flipped on its side.

Chloe tries the door, but it is wedged into the ground. She turns to see Chris. He lies still, face a bloody mess.

Chloe climbs through the car's interior, over Chris's limp body. She throws open the opposite car door. Pulling herself out into...

EXT. COUNTRY HIGHWAY - NIGHT

A torrent of rain pelts the two-lane black top. Chloe spills through the open door onto the muddy earth. The inverted Mustang's RED TAIL LIGHTS reflect off debris littering the pavement. Chloe slumps to the ground. Passes out.

INT. VOLVO XC70/DRIVING - CONTINUOUS

Liam squints through the rain-blurred windshield. Intermittent HAZARD LIGHTS illuminate the canvas of blurred glass. Liam punches his hazards.

EXT. COUNTRY HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

Liam pulls the VOLVO onto the shoulder. He gets out, shielding his eyes from the pick up truck's high beams. He races toward the pick up truck. Knocks on the window.

LIAM
You okay?

The DRIVER nods.

Liam catches sight of the Mustang, flipped over and smoking road side. He runs across the pavement. Slides down the embankment. He notices Chloe's camera lying in the mud.

Realization grips him. He sees Chloe's body face down on the ground. He runs to her. Turns her over into his lap.

Blood streams from her nose. Her eyes flutter.

LIAM (CONT'D)
Chloe? Chloe, can you hear me?

Liam fishes his phone out of this pocket. Dials 911.

LIAM (CONT'D)
There's been an accident!

INT. VOLVO XC70/DRIVING - NIGHT

Chloe's camera sits in the passenger's seat. It's muddy. Battered from the crash.

Liam looks from the camera to the road ahead. Wipers push rain, revealing the FLASHING RED LIGHTS of an AMBULANCE.

INT. HOSPITAL/TRIAGE - NIGHT

Chloe is gurnied through the hallway, attended by an entourage of TRIAGE DOCTORS. Her eyes are closed. Her face battered. Neck in a brace. Her gurney passes an operating room --

-- Rick lies on the operating table, DOCTOR'S feverishly working on his stab wound.

EXT. COUNTRY HIGHWAY - NIGHT

A CORONER TEAM removes Chris's limp body from the Mustang. He's reverently placed into a coroner's bag and zipped up. Chris's waist is exposed, revealing a tattoo of a LEMNISCATE (infinity symbol).

INT. HOSPITAL/TRIAGE - NIGHT

The TRIAGE TEAM moves Chloe to an operating table. Her shirt is cut aside, revealing her LEMNISCATE tattoo. The TRIAGE TEAM check Chloe's vitals. Give her injections. A NURSE recoils from the heart monitor.

TRIAGE NURSE
There is a second heartbeat!

INT. HOSPITAL/WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

Liam sits in the ER waiting room. He holds Chloe's camera, navigating the photographs on the CRACKED LCD --

ON LCD: The images of his family shot through Chloe's bedroom window. The LCD holds on a photograph of Liam holding Jack.

Howard and Bonnie hurry into the waiting room. Liam looks up.

HOWARD

Where's my daughter? My daughter was brought in. Where is she?

Howard notices Liam sitting across the emergency room. A DOCTOR emerges from the back room and approaches Howard and Bonnie.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

How is she? Is she going to be okay?

DOCTOR

There was a bit of internal bleeding, but we were able to stop it. Both her and the baby are going to be okay.

BONNIE

Baby? What baby?

INT. HOSPITAL/RECOVERY ROOM - NIGHT

Chloe lies in bed. IV and monitoring equipment are connected to her body. Howard and Bonnie enter. Tears well at the sight of their daughter. Howard rushes to her side. He gently takes Chloe's hand. Bonnie watches from the foot of the bed. Cold. Distant.

HOWARD

Chloe? Chloe can you hear me?

Chloe's eyes flutter open.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

Chloe, honey. Oh God. I'm so sorry.

CHLOE

Is the baby -

HOWARD

It's fine. The baby's fine.

Chloe starts to cry.

CHLOE

I'm sorry. I just couldn't do it.

Howard sobs, embracing his daughter.

HOWARD

No. No. It's okay. It's okay. It's going to be okay.

CHLOE

I'm sorry I let you down.

Chloe turns attention to her mother.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, mom.

Bonnie doesn't respond. She does her best to stifle the tears welling in her eyes. Howard faces Bonnie.

HOWARD

Tell her it's okay, Bonnie.

Bonnie just stares through a stream of tears. Jaw set. Angry.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

(pleading)

Tell her it's okay.

Bonnie shakes her head in judgment. Steps out of the room. Chloe sobs. Howard comforts her.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

It's okay. It's all going to be okay. I'm here now. I'm here now and I'm sorry. And I'll never let them hurt you again. No one. I'm so sorry, baby.

Chloe holds onto her father's neck, sobbing into his shirt.

INT. FARR HOME/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nichole lies in bed. A door SLAMS o.s. She opens her eyes, staring at the wall for a moment. Then gets up.

INT. FARNSWORTH HOME/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Nichole pads down the stairs. She notices Liam sitting at the kitchen table, back to her. He is sopping wet, water puddling the floor at his feet.

He takes a swig of scotch, then refills his cup from a half empty bottle. Chloe's camera sits in the middle of the table.

NICHOLE

Liam?

Nichole approaches Liam.

NICHOLE (CONT'D)

Liam, what are you doing? You're soaking wet.

Liam looks up at Nichole. It's clear that he has been crying. He's a bit drunk.

LIAM

What happened to us, Nic?

The question hits her like a punch to the stomach. She sits down across from him.

A BEAT. Then...

NICHOLE

I don't know.

Nichole folds her arms. Liam nods at Chloe's camera.

LIAM

Look at it.

NICHOLE

What is it?

LIAM

Chloe's camera.

NICHOLE

How did you get it?

LIAM

She was in an accident.

Nichole looks confused.

LIAM (CONT'D)

Just - look at it. The pictures. Go on.

Nichole grabs the camera. She navigates the photographs.

LIAM (CONT'D)

It's us. It's all of it - us. But I look at those pictures and I don't recognize a single face.

Nichole holds on the picture of her in the nursery.

LIAM (CONT'D)

We were talking tonight. Earlier. Me and Chloe. And she started telling me about her life. About this feeling she had that it was out of control. Like all the things in her life had been pushing her forward to do things she didn't want to do. To be who she didn't want to be.

(beat)

I can't help feeling the same way.

Liam looks up at Nichole.

LIAM (CONT'D)

Do you really want a divorce?

NICHOLE

I don't know. I've thought about it. But - I don't know.

Nichole takes Liam's glass of scotch. She takes a swig and makes a face at the burn. She passes it back to Liam. He refills the glass.

NICHOLE (CONT'D)

I've had some trouble, Lee. I've had some trouble and I've hidden it from you.

LIAM

What trouble?

NICHOLE

I ran up some debt.

LIAM

How much?

NICHOLE

A Lot. A Lot of debt. And I think I need some help. I think I need your help.

LIAM

Why wouldn't you tell me about that? Why wouldn't you just come to me and tell me?

NICHOLE

I don't know. I've just been so - so sad lately. So depressed. I'm already such a burden to you.

LIAM

No.

NICHOLE

Yes. Yes. I am. I know you're not doing what you want with your life. And I know this is just one more thing. But these things I buy, they just - they make me feel like maybe I'm in control of *something*. I just - I look in the mirror sometimes and I see a stranger, Liam. I see this person I swore I never would be.

LIAM

(sotto)

I know. I know.

Liam takes another swig of scotch. He musters up the courage to confess.

LIAM (CONT'D)

There's this woman at work. This girl. I met up with her tonight. After we fought. I met up with her and I had every intention of sleeping with her.

NICHOLE

Did you?

LIAM

No.

NICHOLE

Why not?

LIAM

I don't know. I couldn't. I couldn't help but feel that I shouldn't give up on this. On us.

NICHOLE

I'm so tired of hating you. And I'm so tired of you hating me.

LIAM

Maybe we're just bad for each other.
(beat)

Maybe we're just caught up in the momentum of it all and we are too scared to consider what we both know is the right thing to do.

NICHOLE
Do you believe that?

LIAM
I don't know what I believe, Nic. I
just know that I love our kids. And
that I love you.
(beat)
Or at least I use to.

NICHOLE
How do we get back to that? How do
we get back to being who we really
are? How do we get back to loving
each other again?
(beat)
Can we even?

LIAM
I don't know.

Liam and Nichole sit opposite the expanse of kitchen table,
an unnatural distance between them.

LIAM (CONT'D)
I don't know.

Liam looks up at Nichole.

LIAM (CONT'D)
But I'm willing to try.

CLOSE ON TABLE TOP: Liam reaches his hand out into the middle
of the table. A BEAT.

Nichole's hand reaches out and takes his.

THE END