

NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET

by

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based on A Nightmare on Elm Street

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FADE IN:

EXT. DEAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

It's the kind of two-story home that screams rich suburbia. Tall, wide, on a roomy plot of land.

Music thumps inside. All the lights are on.

Following KRIS (17, next-door cute) as she reaches the front door, entering:

INT. DEAN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Clusters of TEENS are immersed in their cliquish school talk. Everyone has a longneck or a plastic cup in their hands.

As Kris moves past the foyer, a random teen nods:

PARTYGOER

Hey, Kris.

KRIS

Hey.

PARTYGOER

What was the final tonight?

KRIS

Twenty-eight to ten, Panthers.

PARTYGOER

Rock.

The teen high-fives his friend nearby. Continuing to --

INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS ACTION

A handful of high schoolers are huddled around QUENTIN (18, boyish energy). In mid-conversation:

QUENTIN

That's the thing, though, we just need an FCC license and we're set. They don't have a college radio station, we'd be the only shop in town.

KRIS

Hey, Quentin.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

QUENTIN

Hey, girl.

KRIS

Where's Dean?

QUENTIN

Around here somewhere.

Kris continues into --

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Lots of beer on the counters. A teen COUPLE kissing by the fridge.

Kris sees a large jar half-filled with crumpled bills. A handwritten sign taped to it: "Booze Restockage."

Underneath someone has added "Dean's College Fund!"

Kris adds some cash to the jar, grabs a beer and moves to --

INT. FAMILY ROOM - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Kris passes into this darker room where the rest of the party is gathered.

Nearby, NANCY (18, petite, approaching goth) leans against a wall, iPod headphones in her ears, beer bottle in hand. She's here but she's not social. There's one in every class.

Yet another group is playing and watching Guitar Hero (or some other rhythm game) on the HDTV.

It's a competition, and the focus is JESSE (18, wild hair, coiled, anxious) intensely concentrating on the game.

He's against DEAN (also 18, clean-and-preppy) whom you can tell must own the game, because he's not even watching the screen. He's just rocking out.

Kris hovers here to wait for Dean.

The song ends. Scores totaled. Dean wins.

JESSE

What do you do, sleep with this thing?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEAN

Who says I sleep?

DRUNK TEEN

(re: Dean's score)

Dude, perfect score on hard?
Cheat.

DEAN

I'm out. Who's up?

DRUNK TEEN

Dude, I'll play Jesse.

JESSE

Bring it, skippy.

Jesse's grin vanishes when he sees Kris.

Dean invades the awkward beat by hugging Kris.

DEAN

You made it! Good to see you.

KRIS

Yay, Dean, patron saint of good
times.

DEAN

You need a drink? C'mon I'll show
you the good stuff.

He leads her away. Kris gladly follows.

INT. LAUNDRY ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Dean digs into an ice-filled cooler of imported beer and
wine coolers.

DEAN

You're a wine cooler girl aren't
you?

KRIS

Guilty as charged. Where's your
brewski?

DEAN

Oh, I'm not drinking. I'm on meds
right now. Sucks to be me, heh.

Dean fidgets. Kris picks up on it and softens.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KRIS

You okay?

DEAN

Me? Yeah. Just, you know, when I got way stressed about finals... Dad sent me to see a shrink, someone to 'help with anxiety.' Since then, it's gotten weird.

KRIS

Weird how?

DEAN

Sleepwalking. Shit like that.
(changing topics)
Hey, I hope it's okay Jesse's here.

KRIS

Yeah, no biggie.

DEAN

I didn't know if you two were back together or not.

KRIS

We broke up.

DEAN

What's that make, four times? Five?

Kris playfully slugs Dean in the shoulder.

KRIS

Psh! It's over this time. I'm serious.

DEAN

Hey, can you stay over? Help me clean up before the folks get home --

CRASH. Two punch-drunk GIRLS giggle over a broken beer bottle in the entry hall, in view of the door to the laundry room.

Dean starts that way, Kris stops him.

KRIS

I got it, you go be host.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Kris dumps the last of the broken glass in the trash.

Jesse enters, grabs a fresh drink off the counter.

JESSE

Kris. You look nice.

KRIS

Jesse. You look... sweaty.

Beat.

JESSE

How you been?

KRIS

Fine.

JESSE

Yeah. Me too. So, I was thinking.

KRIS

You're doing that now? Good for you. I'll see you around, Jess.

JESSE

Okay. Yeah, no that's cool.

Kris leaves. Jess gently bonks himself on the forehead with his beer bottle, a self-afflicted "Dude WTF" gesture.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

Quiet now. The clock on the TV reads 4:01 A.M.

Several TEENS including Jesse and Quentin are asleep on the couch and floor.

Finding KRIS curled up on a large soft-back chair. Her eyes are closed.

A loud THUMP wakes her. She looks around... No one else heard it. But, no sign of Dean.

Beat. THUMP.

Kris gets out of her chair and goes to the back hall.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS ACTION

She steps in, checking left and right.

KRIS

(hushed)

Dean?

At the end of the hall, a set of stairs rise around a corner.

Catching sight of DEAN'S LEGS disappearing around the corner up the stairs, as if he were being dragged while unconscious.

Thump, thump, thump.

Kris frowns. She follows.

AT THE STAIRS

She looks up to the second floor.

No sign of Dean. But shadows play on the wall in the dark.

KRIS

Dean, you okay?

Kris ascends.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALL - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Dean's bedroom door closes -- not quite all the way.

Kris looks at the thick carpet here.

TWO PARALLEL LINES form a path into Dean's room, like the heels of shoes dragged.

The wind picks up. A draft. Kris pushes Dean's door open...

INT. DEAN'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Empty energy drink cans rattle when she pushes the door fully open. His bed has been stripped of its sheets and a pile of books and games cover its surface. You can't sleep there.

The small balcony door from his room hangs open. Kris hears:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEAN (O.S.)
 (sotto)
 No, please no...

Kris steps out onto the balcony to find Dean standing precariously on the ledge.

His breathing is shallow; panicked.

KRIS
 Dean, what, what are you doing?
 Hello? Oh god are you asleep?

Dean suddenly stops breathing and:

Four parallel slashes RIP through Dean's shirt, as if by an invisible bladed weapon --

His eyes snap open and he stares right at Kris, half-whispering a warning as his last words:

DEAN
 He's back --

He falls backward off the ledge --

INT. ATRIUM BELOW - CONTINUOUS ACTION

-- smashing through GLASS into a sun room where other teens are sleeping.

His body shatters a glass-top coffee table, sending shards and blood in all directions as the other kids are awakened, spattered in Dean's blood --

TITLE SEQUENCE. (Continued through following scene.)

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

A hilly plot freckled with yesterday's snow.

A crowd of maybe a hundred MOURNERS sit in rows of fold-out chairs under an open-air tent at a gravesite. The MINISTER stands in front of the open grave, speaking to the group.

Everyone is bundled up, dressed in black.

MINISTER (O.S.)
 And so we send Dean to his final resting place, knowing he ascends to the world beyond. The world of eternal dream.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GLIDING PAST the faces of STUDENTS, among them ones we recognize: Quentin, Jesse, Nancy, one or two others from the house party.

Most wear expressions of tragedy. Sorrow. Regret. One or two snicker in mockery of the affair, and other kids nearby glare at them: "Dudes, not cool."

Beside them, their PARENTS. Stoic. Some even seem angry.

MINISTER (O.S.)

And in that world, he will face
God for what he has done in this
world.

ARRIVING at Kris. The one person in the crowd who looks frightened and nervous.

MINISTER

Let us pray now, that he is
accepted into God's Kingdom.

As the Minister speaks, a LITTLE GIRL (maybe 5 years old) in a blue dress steps forward, a wilting flower in her hands. The Minister and others seem to ignore her.

Kris looks around -- whose girl is this? -- Then back at the girl who drops the flower into the open grave...

When she turns back around, she reveals FOUR SLASHES down the front of her dress. Just like Dean's wound.

Kris' eyes boggle at this, and she stands up.

The Girl looks up at Kris when --

A ROTTING ARM reaches from the open grave and GRABS the Girl's leg --

EXT. GRAVESITE SERVICE - CONTINUOUS ACTION (REALITY)

Kris snaps awake in her seat. The mourners are moving indoors. Her mother NORA has a hand on Kris's shoulder.

NORA

Come on. We're going inside.

Kris nods, adjusting, then glances back at the open grave.

No sign of the little girl.

INT. FUNERAL HOME - DAY

The regalia for the wake of a child: Log book, tons of flowers, soothing music, and a wall of PHOTOS chronicling Dean at various ages.

A banner over the collage reads "IN MEMORIAM."

Dean's PARENTS hold onto each other like they were passengers on the Titanic waiting for a life raft. Visitors soothe them, other parents in the room.

Kris ventures to the photos and peruses them.

THE PHOTOS show Dean's active young life:

-- At a soccer game.

-- In a stage play in middle school.

-- On vacation with his parents at some touristy locale...

Kris smiles even as she starts to tear up. Then she stops cold when her eyes lock onto one photo.

THE PHOTO is of a very young Dean, maybe 5 or 6, smiling for the camera at a playground.

It's not Dean that's the unnerving element, but off to the side, by a swing set --

THE LITTLE GIRL from Kris' daydream. Wearing the exact same dress. She's real, and she's Dean's age. Those eyes, that hair, it's clearer now... This has to be YOUNG KRIS.

Kris leans in closer, suddenly crept out, when --

A HAND touches her shoulder, causing her to jump.

JESSE

Hey, hey, it's me. Sorry.

Kris lets out a nervous breath.

KRIS

Yeah.

JESSE

Wow, is that you with Dean?
You're adorable.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KRIS

I guess... You know, I don't even remember knowing Dean back then. I mean, we all grew up together...

(then)

I'm a mess, God I was right there when it happened.

JESSE

Hey, it's okay...

Jesse hugs her. She hugs back. Sniffs. Then says while they're still close:

KRIS

Dean said something.

Jesse pulls back to face her.

JESSE

When?

KRIS

Right before he died. He looked at me and said, 'He's back.' Does that mean anything to you?

JESSE

No. Maybe his dad?

KRIS

He was out of town. Also, I saw on Dean these, these cuts.

JESSE

He's been cutting himself?

KRIS

No, not like that... I saw slashes appear on his chest. Out of nowhere. Does that make sense?

JESSE

I don't know, maybe your eyes were just playing tricks on you...

Jesse looks past Kris and frowns.

At some point, NANCY has stepped up to the photos, behind Kris. Quiet in her mourning.

JESSE

Do you mind?

Nancy ignores Jesse but moves off. Kris watches her go.

INT. KRIS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

A rack of clothes hanging in a closet scrape along the rod as Kris pushes them OUT OF VIEW.

Kris digs around in her closet a few moments more but comes up empty-handed.

INT. ELSEWHERE IN KRIS' HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Kris descends the stairs to the front hall.

KRIS

Hey, Mom?

A loud BARK and Kris turns to greet RUFUS, a rescue mutt wagging his tail at her.

KRIS

Rufus, you sweetie.

NORA (O.S.)

Let's keep Rufus inside at night.
A skunk sprayed the Jansens' dog
the other night.

KRIS

Okay, fine, Mom.

Her mother emerges from the kitchen.

NORA

Wash up for dinner and help me
with the plates.

KRIS

Hey, do we still have any of my
stuff from when I was young?

NORA (O.S.)

Young? How young?

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Kris appears at the kitchen entry, leans against the frame.

KRIS

I don't know. When I was little.

Nora gives her a sidelong glance.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NORA

Well, sure, what kind of mother do you think I am? Lot of it's in storage, over the garage. Why?

KRIS

No reason.

(beat)

Did I ever come home with torn clothes? Like one of my dresses?

This stops Nora. She recovers, but it's too late. Kris knows the question triggered something.

NANCY

I don't think so. C'mon, go wash up. Let's eat.

Kris studies her mother a beat before leaving.

INT. KRIS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Kris lies in bed. Eyes open, focused on her door.

The light from the hall finally goes out. Mom's in bed.

Kris pulls back the covers: She's still dressed. She gets up.

INT. GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Kris opens the door and turns on the light. She grips a large flashlight in her hands.

A car partially blocks the garage floor space, and the walls are lined with boxes and paper bags of junk.

Kris struggles with the pull-string to the trap door in the ceiling.

It finally gives way and creaks open.

A set of wooden steps unfolds. Kris goes up into --

INT. CRAWL SPACE - CONTINUOUS ACTION

The only light in here comes from a single naked bulb high in the center of the storage space.

Kris can't stand fully upright without hitting a support beam. The space is crammed with boxes of more junk, allowing a narrow aisle down the middle.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Kris' flashlight shines into the corners and finds a file box labeled KRIS -- SECOND GRADE.

She looks around finding a FIRST GRADE box and then one at the far end that has no label. Instead, it's SEALED with packing tape.

Kris uses her nail to tear the tape and opens the box.

INSIDE

A photo of Kris at age 5. A glassy-eyed doll with a limp pull string. And a stash of her early clothes including...

A blue dress with a lace collar.

WIDER

Kris holds the dress up, turns it over... to find FOUR SLASHES in its fabric, just like her dream.

The doll's pull string spools up and in a music-box child's voice:

CHINA DOLL (V.O.)
One, two, Freddy's coming for you.

Kris picks up the doll, disturbed. On its own, the doll's HEAD TURNS TOWARD KRIS, its face now a painted scowl --

Kris drops it in horror --

BEHIND HER

A set of boxes in shadow is crowned by a FEDORA. The fedora rises to reveal the silhouette of a HEAD and then the sweater-wearing TORSO of a man --

Kris turns and SCREAMS in shock at the sight of him --

-- tripping backwards and spilling into some boxes --

The boxes topple, scattering GARDENING TOOLS onto the floor ahead of her --

Kris tries to get up but she can't because --

HER FOOT has slipped into a knothole in the wood plank... yet the hole is barely wider than her ankle.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

How her foot fell in, or how she could pull it out now, is impossible.

TIGHT ON A BURNED HAND

with bone exposed at the knuckle, as it reaches for something among the spilled tools...

THE GLOVE.

Like a gardening glove, but with a set of razor-sharp blades welded onto the back of the hand.

WIDER

Kris tries to crab-crawl away from the Man in the room, but she's still stuck.

Half in shadow, his face shrouded by the brim of his hat, the Man says in a raspy, guttural voice:

FREDDY (MAN)

Remember me?

The blades on the glove GLINT as it's raised up --

Kris SCREAMS and he lunges right at her -

INT. KRIS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

-- and she sits straight up awake in her bed, her scream from her nightmare finishing here.

The hall light switches on and her mother Nora comes to her door.

NORA

Kris? You okay?

Kris catches her breath.

KRIS

Yeah, Mom, just a... just a bad dream.

NORA

You want me to make you some hot cocoa? That used to do the trick.

KRIS

Psh, Mom, what am I, eight?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NORA

All right then.

Nora starts to shut the door when --

KRIS

(sounding eight)

Wait, Mom! Can I have that cocoa?

Nora smiles that mother's knowing smile and heads downstairs.

Beat. Kris absently rubs her ankle --

But then she catches herself doing it. Her ankle is tender to the touch. Off Kris' worried expression --

A bell RINGS.

EXT. SPRINGWOOD HIGH SCHOOL - MORNING

ESTABLISHING. Students pour into the building entrances as school is back in session.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALL - MORNING

Nancy approaches her locker, spins her combo lock.

She's dressed inconspicuously. Pretty-girl image is not her priority. Getting out of town after graduation certainly is.

She opens the locker...

INSIDE

small matte paintings for art class, each painting a rich, vibrant landscape of some dream-like destination.

The opposite of what you'd think a girl like Nancy would paint.

WIDER

A hand touches her on the shoulder --

QUENTIN

Hey, Nancy --

Nancy reacts, nearly elbowing Quentin in the face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

QUENTIN

Jesus!

NANCY

Oh. Sorry. I just, I don't like being touched is all.

QUENTIN

Whatev. So I'm doing a podcast tonight, taking calls for people to share stories about Dean, kind of a tribute thing.

He hands her a flyer from a small stack. A glance at the headline -- "INSOMNIA RADIO."

NANCY

Oh. Yeah, cool.

QUENTIN

Wow. You're the first person not to blow me off.

NANCY

Well, you start the thing at midnight. That could be it.

QUENTIN

Hey, that's some beautiful work. Is that for art class?

NANCY

No. Those are my rejects.

She shuts her locker door. As if to say: Don't look.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

History class. The round-faced TEACHER drones on at the head of the class, the chalkboard behind him with homework assignments listed.

HISTORY TEACHER

But in the seventeenth century, peasants couldn't own weapons.

FINDING Kris at her desk among the students, by a window.

The sun on her arm and neck is warming her. Making her drowsy. Her eyes get heavy...

She blinks awake. Rubs them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HISTORY TEACHER
Open your books and read pages
eighty-four to ninety-six...

Kris flips open her book.

INSERT - TEXTBOOK

Two illustrations of strange, ancient hardware tools fill
pages 84-85.

HISTORY TEACHER (O.S.)
The bloodiest invasion of this
region was fought with improvised
weapons made from common tools.

Flipping to the next spread... Another set of wicked
devices. Always with a sharp edge or blade.

BACK TO SCENE

KRIS flips again, more concerned now --

INSERT - TEXTBOOK

-- stopping at a page with a diagram of THE GLOVE.

BACK TO SCENE

KRIS sucks in a breath, looks up and --

The classroom has changed. It now looks like a small
preschool classroom, modified from a living area in a
house.

Blankets instead of desks. Only Kris' desk remains.

Immediately, Kris knows what's happened. She snaps her
eyes shut and whispers to herself:

KRIS
Wake up, wake up, wake up --

SLAM, a deep sound like a heavy book dropped --

Kris opens her eyes again but now --

THE WHOLE ROOM is charred and smoldering as if a fire had
devoured it moments before.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Where the Teacher was, now FREDDY stands at the charcoal desk, shrouded in shadow.

Behind him, a crude chalk drawing on the damaged board:
A stick-figure girl with X's for eyes and red chalk in
lines on her dress. The name KRIS written above it.

FREDDY

Time for a new lesson, Kris.

Kris panics and sprints for the door --

INT. IDENTICAL CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Finding herself entering back INTO a clone of the
classroom.

Kris looks back into the first room just as FREDDY grabs
her by the hair and pulls her all the way into the room.

Kris struggles. Freddy pins her down.

The air is thick with ash, and the light never seems to
fall on Freddy's face. He's still this enigmatic figure.

Short on breath, panicked, Kris looks up at Freddy.

KRIS

Who -- are -- you?

FREDDY

You know my name. We used to
play.

The back of his gloved hand goes to stroke her cheek.
Kris recoils.

Freddy FLICKS the blades by her nose, slicing a lock of
her hair --

Kris squirms away from it, cutting more of her hair --

Freddy scrapes them along the floor, right for her face --

Sound of some book SLAMMING as if dropped and --

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Kris sits up at her desk, SCREAMING.

She has the attention of everyone in class, and the
History Teacher, who picks his book up from his desk.
All heads are turned toward her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HISTORY TEACHER

Did that wake you, Miss Fowles?

Kris tries to gain her composure. She's shaking like a leaf.

KRIS

I... I'm sorry...

HISTORY TEACHER

Sorry to have bored you to sleep.
Everyone, heads down and eyes on
your books. C'mon.

The students obey, not wanting to get in trouble.

Kris then looks down at her own history book.

A lock of her hair rests on the pages.

Kris checks her hair and finds where it had been cut,
just like in the dream.

She puts a hand over her mouth -- this is the first proof
her dreams can affect reality.

SAME SCENE - A MINUTE LATER

The bell RINGS.

Kris packs up her things. Three rows over, NANCY
watches, as she hefts her backpack.

As the room empties, she approaches Kris.

NANCY

Seems like it's all a bad dream.

Kris whips around, wide-eyed.

KRIS

What? What did you -- ?

NANCY

Being back at school, after what
happened to Dean...

KRIS

Oh. I guess so.

NANCY

Anything you want to talk about?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KRIS

Have we ever really talked?

NANCY

Forget I asked.

Nancy moves off. Kris watches her go, than takes the last look at the lock of hair in her hand...

INT. STUDENT CENTER - LATER

An energy drink VENDING MACHINE. With appropriate slogans: "Twice the caffeine!" "Who needs sleep?" Etc.

REVERSE

to find Kris standing at it, shaking, trying to straighten a wrinkled dollar bill.

KRIS

(sotto)

C'mon, c'mon...

She feeds the bill into the slot... it spits it out.

KRIS

Shit.

She smooths a corner and tries again. This time it works.

KRIS

Yesss.

Kris pushes a drink button and grabs it from the dispenser. The machine spits out change.

Kris counts the change, pauses before leaving, and puts the change into the machine.

She buys a second drink.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALL - DAY

Kris finishes one of the cans with a final swig and puts another in her locker. Jesse steps in.

JESSE

Hey, babe, I need to talk to you.

KRIS

Not now, Jess. I don't have time.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jesse grabs Kris by the arm before she steps away.

JESSE

Hey, this is serious, we gotta talk about us. You and me.

Kris wrenches her arm free, on edge.

KRIS

We broke up, you remember that?

JESSE

Yeah, but, that's nothin' new --

KRIS

That's the problem! You don't take this seriously until it's too late and now it's too late, Jesse!

Her tone and volume causes Jesse to bristle. Other kids are watching, as kids love melodrama. Jesse starts to reply when:

PRINCIPAL (O.S.)

Kristen Fowles.

Kris turns around to see the school PRINCIPAL standing just outside his office door.

PRINCIPAL

See me in my office, please.

Students nearby AD LIB "oooooh" and "oh snap," etc.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Kris enters to find the Principal with an older MAN, rather distinguished-looking.

PRINCIPAL

Kris, I heard about your little episode in history earlier. You want to tell me about it?

KRIS

Not really... Who is this?

PRINCIPAL

This is Doctor James Britt, he's a therapist and part of our school's mental wellness program.

DR. BRITT

Hello, Kris.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PRINCIPAL

I just wanted to make you aware that there are people you can talk to here, if you need to. After what happened, I mean.

KRIS

Uh. Yeah. Thanks.

DR. BRITT

You've been through a terrible ordeal, Kristen. It's okay to be wounded by it.

KRIS

I'm okay, really...

DR. BRITT

You have bags under your eyes. Having trouble sleeping? I can prescribe something to help you...

Kris backs for the door. She's done.

KRIS

No thanks.

The bell rings.

EXT. ELM STREET - TIGHT ON THE STREET SIGN - DAY

"ELM ST."

DRIFTING OFF to catch sight of Kris driving home.

EXT. KRIS' HOUSE - DAY

Kris heads to her door.

At the front door Rufus barks excitedly. Kris fumbles with her keys --

KRIS

Okay, Rufus, hang on --

She unlocks the door and then, with her key still in the lock, is seized by a memory. Reciting the next lyric:

KRIS

Three, four, better lock your door.

Rufus barks at her from inside.

INT. GARAGE - DAY

Kris enters from the kitchen and grabs a sack of dry dog food by the door. Rufus wags his tail inside.

Before she takes the food in, she looks up...

The string for the trap door to the crawl space hangs limply over the hood of her mother's car.

Kris stares, unnerved...

CLOSE ON HER NOW

The blurry shape of someone behind her --

NORA (O.S.)

Kris --

BACK TO SCENE

Kris drops the dog food in shock. She turns around: Now we get to see Nora fully. She's dressed in a flight attendant's uniform, fastening an earring.

NORA

Oh sorry, honey.

KRIS

Jesus you scared me!

NORA

I think you need to lay off the caffeine, young lady.

(fixes Kris' hair)

I got a red-eye tonight, so we're gonna go over some ground rules before I leave.

FOLLOWING Nora and Kris as Nora moves to --

INT. KRIS' LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Nora's travel bag stands upright near the front door.

NORA

Now, I'll be back on Thursday. Meantime, you aren't to leave this house except to go to school, and no one comes over. You hear me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KRIS

Shyah.

NORA

I mean it. The neighbors know to
look for any cars parked out
front. No TV after ten, either.

(softer)

Try and get some sleep, okay?

KRIS

I'll try.

Nora opens the front door to leave --

NANCY is standing there.

NORA

Oh! Oh, hello, Nancy.

NANCY

Is Kris home?

NORA

Yes she is but she can't see
anyone tonight, I'm sorry.

Kris frowns. What's Nancy doing here? Peering over,
from a few feet behind her mother, out at her schoolmate.

NANCY

I just brought this over. You
know. As a get-well gift.

She hands Nora a small shiny bag of some sort of candy.

NORA

Oh, well that's, that's nice of
you, dear. Now if you'll excuse
me...

Nora shuts the door and turns to Kris. She hands off the
gift to her daughter.

NORA

No friends over. I mean it.
Especially her.

KRIS

She's not really my...

Kris looks down at the gift:

Chocolate-covered espresso beans.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Kris puzzles over it.

The door shuts again -- Nora has left.

Kris goes to the front window and pulls the curtain back, watching her mother get into her car and drive out.

Across the street, Nancy pauses to look back at the house. Looking right at the window where Kris is.

Beat. Kris pulls the curtains closed again. Swoosh.

INT. CRAWL SPACE - NIGHT

From the darkness, light spills in as the trap door opens up.

We're inside the dark storage space looking toward the steps as Kris climbs up.

She pulls the switch for the light and looks around.

Moving quickly to the back of the storage area... Past the SECOND GRADE box and the other ones...

The spot where she found the sealed box is EMPTY. Nothing is there.

But Kris notices: the dust-carved footprint of a box. Something was here, right here. Now it's gone.

OFF Kris' look of concern...

INT. KRIS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Kris sits at her computer desk. Researching online.

On her monitor: Dean's obituary.

She scrolls down, where the article describes Dean growing up. "... in Springwood since he was two years old..."

Accompanying the obituary story is a PHOTO of Dean as a little boy. He smiles for the camera. The shot was taken outdoors somewhere.

Kris rubs her eyes. She's been at this for some time.

Looking back at the monitor:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE PHOTO now shows little Dean crying and FREDDY can be seen just behind him, the photo cropped right at Freddy's neck so we can't see his head.

BOOM BOOM BOOM -- the noise rattles Kris who sits up with a start. She dozed off for half a second. Turning to see --

JESSE at her window.

JESSE

Hey! Let me in before someone sees me out here!

Beat. Kris doesn't immediately go to the latch.

JESSE

Come on!

She looks back at the article --

THE PHOTO is as it was before. Little Dean smiles at us.

Kris lets out a breath and opens the window for Jesse.

KRIS

What the hell are you doing here?
You nearly scared me to death.

JESSE

We gotta talk.

KRIS

My mom isn't home now.

Kris peers out her window for signs of any snooping neighbors.

JESSE

Don't worry, I parked down the block.

Jesse settles down in her desk chair.

JESSE

Look, I don't like how we left things at school. It's been eating at me.

Kris goes and sits on the edge of her bed.

KRIS

I know you want to talk about us... But I need to talk about something else right now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Her voice trembles. Jesse sits up.

JESSE
Yeah, sure. What's up.

Kris takes a deep breath.

KRIS
I've been having nightmares.
Like, really bad ones. There's
this man in them, I think he's
trying to kill me.

JESSE
In your dreams?

KRIS
No... For real. Like, if I go to
sleep I... I might not wake up.

Jesse relaxes. That's just crazy talk.

JESSE
Kris, hey. That can't happen.
You're just making yourself nuts
over it. We all have bad dreams.
Hell, I had one last night.

KRIS
These are different. The same man
is after me every time, with this
weird glove made of knives --

Jesse reacts to this last bit.

JESSE
What? Wait. This man, does he
wear a hat? And a striped --

KRIS
(joining in)
Striped sweater, ohmigod, you've
seen him too?

Now the tables have turned. Jesse takes a breath.

JESSE
My nightmare, I saw this dude
attack you. Cut you up, and the
whole time, I couldn't do a thing.
Made me feel helpless. I hated
it.

Kris' mind is reeling.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JESSE

How are we dreaming about the same person? Is that even possible?

KRIS

I think Nancy has seen him too.

JESSE

Creepy Goth girl Nancy down the street?

KRIS

She's not that creepy.

JESSE

This, this doesn't make sense...

Kris starts crying. Sleep deprivation and nerves have finally broken her down.

KRIS

I don't wanna go to sleep, I'm scared, Jesse, I didn't do anything wrong, why is he in my head?

Jesse immediately moves to her side, holds her.

JESSE

Hey, hey, shh shh, it's gonna be okay. I'm here. I won't let him get to you.

KRIS

You promise? Promise me.

JESSE

I promise.

Their noses touch. They both meet the final inch for a long kiss. One kiss leads to another.

Hands find their way under shirts and blouses. The tension and fear converts to raw passion.

Clothes peeling off, Kris pulling them both fully onto the bed, it's what Jesse has wanted for months and what she wants only right now.

Before they go all the way, Kris holds him back enough to plead with wet eyes:

KRIS

Stay with me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JESSE
I'll keep you safe.

He moves to kiss her again.

INT. KRIS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

The couple are under the covers, both sound asleep. Kris is tucked up against Jesse.

In the distance, a dog BARKS.

Kris' eyes snap open. Oh god -- she'd fallen asleep.

Kris sits up, listening to the dog. Looks around.

All is normal.

She goes to the window.

On the lawn out back, RUFUS is in the corner, barking at something unseen.

Part of the back yard is being redesigned for a large garden with a statue or two. Plastic sheeting crackles in the breeze, hanging over sections of loose soil.

Kris opens the window and calls out in that whisper-shout:

KRIS
Rufus! Shh!

Rufus keeps barking. Kris slips into sandals and a nightgown.

EXT. KRIS' BACK YARD - MOMENTS LATER

Kris steps out the back door and calls to Rufus again.

KRIS
Roofy, stay away from the skunk!
Rufus...

Rufus tears off into the half-built landscaping.

Kris almost goes after him, but pauses, startled.

The garden area is populated with two dozen realistically-painted porcelain FIGURES.

Kris cautiously enters the rock path, paying close attention to the figures.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They're all CHILDREN. In macabre poses. Creepy lawn jockeys.

Some of them are covering their eyes.

One seems half-buried in the ground, crawling out.

One peeks out from behind a young tree.

The sound of Rufus YELPING in pain puts Kris in motion again --

KRIS

Rufus!

She approaches a bend in the rock path toward the farthest corner of the fenced-in lawn, where the crowd of child-statues is the most dense, and --

TRIPS to the ground, catching herself before she busts a lip. Kris gets up again --

All the children are now pointing in the same direction.

With growing panic, Kris looks that way to see --

FREDDY, slightly larger than life, in the corner, smiling.

Rufus lies dead and bloody at his feet.

More blood drips from Freddy's glove.

KRIS

(whispered)

No --

Kris flees.

THE BACK DOOR to the house is in sight --

Kris gets to the door and tries the knob --

Freddy is coming for her, laughing as he gets closer and closer, like he knows something she doesn't --

Kris gets the door open and flings herself inside --

INT. PRESCHOOL HALL - NIGHT

She slams the door shut and leans against it, catching her breath. A beat later Kris becomes aware of her surroundings:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She's not home.

This is the interior of a home converted to a children's daycare or preschool. But something about the place is off.

The children's finger-paintings pinned to the bulletin board are a mix of typical happy stick figures and dark, disturbing images in red and black and green canyon.

From a classroom, a dozen FIVE-YEAR-OLDS spill out, screaming like hyper little kids, running in all directions.

From the group, a LITTLE GIRL in a blue dress stops and looks up at Kris. This is her self-image, thirteen years ago. It's the same blue dress.

FREDDY (O.S.)

Hide and seeeeek...

The Little Girl looks back into the room, then urgently grabs Kris' hand.

LITTLE GIRL

(hushed)

Hurry. We have to hide.

CREEPY GIRLS (O.S.)

One, two, Freddy's coming for you...

The Little Girl leads Kris down the hall...

Kris looks into the classroom as they pass the open door --

FREDDY stands with his back to the door, standing in a corner with his glove's blades resting on a chalkboard.

Nearby, a set of three little blonde CREEPY GIRLS jump rope (two spinning the rope for the third).

CREEPY GIRLS

Three, four, better lock your door...

Kris is pulled away and down the hall, past other open doors.

There is no sign of other children now; they've all hidden.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KRIS

Wait, wait --

CREEPY GIRLS (V.O.)

(echoing)

Five, six, grab your crucifix...

The Little Girl leads Kris down a set of stairs, into a basement room.

CREEPY GIRLS (V.O.)

Seven, eight, gonna stay up
late... Nine, ten, never sleep
again.

The house gets darker as she goes.

FREDDY (O.S.)

Ready or not, here I come!

The Little Girl breaks from Kris as Kris looks up the stairs:

The stairs now look like they go up forever. There's no end to them. The steps are swallowed in the dark.

Up there, sounds of children SCREAMING but this time it's not the giggly hyper screams like before.

Kris turns back to see the Girl in the blue dress crawl into an overturned cardboard box (the size of a TV box).

LITTLE GIRL (O.S.)

In here, quick!

KRIS

Damnit, Jesse, wake me up!

Boom-boom-boom, someone is coming down the endless stairs.

Kris crawls into the TV box --

INT. NARROW TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS ACTION

A squared-off hole dug into the dirt. It goes for a dozen yards ahead, to the promise of flickering light.

KRIS

Come back!

She hears sounds behind her and crawls deeper.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The tunnel begins to COLLAPSE behind Kris, burying the entry and filling in onto her feet, threatening to smother her alive.

Kris crawls fast as she can move until she can stand --

INT. DIRT ROOM - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Only candles light this underground bunker of a room.

A door on cinder blocks serves as a table in the center of the space.

Behind Kris, the tunnel passage fills with dirt until it's seamless with the wall. There's no way out.

Kris backs against it, eyes wide.

KRIS

You.

FREDDY stands on the other side of the table, toying with a small raggedy doll.

The brim of his hat doesn't hide the wicked smile that spreads across his face.

KRIS

Who are you!

FREDDY

You know me.

Freddy puts the doll on the table.

FREDDY

Say my name.

KRIS

No --

FREDDY

Say it.

Beat. Kris is on the verge of a nervous breakdown.

KRIS

(sotto)
Freddy.

In a flash Freddy is at her throat. Predatory. Smiling; a shark's smile.

A car horn HONKS, Freddy turns his head and --

INT. KRIS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Kris suddenly sits up awake to the sound of a CAR HORN.
She catches her breath. Jesse is asleep next to her.

KRIS

(sotto)

Thanks a lot, asshole.

He nudges him. He rolls away a bit. She nudges him again. Jesse puts the pillow over his head.

Kris notices her hair is damp with sweat. She gets up.

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Kris looks at herself in the vanity mirror. Water running in the sink.

She bends down, splashes her face... straightens up again...

And it's still just her reflection in the mirror. All is normal.

Kris pats her face with a towel and leaves.

INT. KRIS' BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Kris shuffles back into bed, getting under the covers, rolls over to cuddle with Jesse --

But it's FREDDY.

FREDDY

Found you.

Kris SCREAMS --

Freddy is on her in a flash --

INT. KRIS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Out of the dream world. Sleeping Kris is breathing shallowly, arms flailing.

It's enough to wake Jesse.

JESSE

Kris, whoa hey, Kris --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He sits up and goes to shake her wake --

Blood soaks into the covers in a widening pool around
Kris --

JESSE

JESUS!

Jesse flings the covers down to reveal several deep cuts
into her flesh, through the nightgown.

Kris thrashes and whimpers, still asleep. Jesse tries to
hold her down, against the mattress. This only makes
Kris (still in the throes of her nightmare) fight harder.

JESSE

Kris! Wake up, baby, wake up!

Kris bucks and another cut slices her arm near where
Jesse is trying to hold her.

He lets go and tumbles to the foot of the bed just as --

Kris' body jerks upright. She remains asleep despite the
violent motion.

Jesse gapes as Kris vertically levitates out of bed.

Her eyes shut, deep asleep still; arms hanging, legs
kicking. Floating in midair. Gurgling on her own blood.

JESSE

This is a dream, I'm dreaming
again, c'mon wake up --

Kris is SLAMMED, as if by an invisible force, against the
ceiling. A sickening CRUNCH as her neck wrenches and her
head hangs at an unnaturally skewed angle.

Jesse watches, frozen, as Kris' blood cascades down onto
the bed below.

And then, a final act of brutality: Four deep parallel
gashes appear in a quick arc down her front -- collarbone
to pelvis.

Her eyes snap open, but they're blank. Her mouth gapes,
but no sound emerges. She continues to bleed out.

Jesse gulps. He moves, slowly, toward Kris' floating
body, his arms extended as though to pluck her out of the
air...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Abruptly, Kris drops like a giant broken rag doll back onto the bed, splashing Jesse and the four walls with all the blood that had been pooling beneath her.

Jesse backs to a wall, horrified. He doesn't know whether to puke or run.

He goes with run. Almost sprints off in his boxers.

But before he leaves he grabs his jeans by the door --

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS ACTION

-- putting on his jeans as he makes for the door --

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Moments later, Jesse bursts out of Kris' house, shirtless and shoeless.

Behind him, the house security alarm for the front door wails in a high-pitched tone for ten seconds then starts BLARING --

Jesse, already in panic, runs down the sidewalk toward his bike half a block down.

It's the dead of night. Only a few street lights shine on Elm Street. But the alarm --

Over Jesse's shoulder we see porch and interior lights awakening --

And already a MAN in a bathrobe and a broom steps out onto his lawn --

Jesse makes a quick course correction and dives behind a parked minivan in a driveway.

But he moves too close to the garage of this home and trips the motion-activated light.

Jesse stays low and half-runs into the side-lawn corridor between the two houses.

EXT. SIDE LAWN - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Hopping over a chain-link fence.

Jesse can hear neighborhood dogs all BARKING at the alarm.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A light to a bedroom at Jesse's back flickers on.

He ducks down and for the first time sees the shape he's in: Kris' blood is spattered across his chest, arms, and face. He's a horrible mess... and still barefoot.

POLICE SIRENS in the distance now.

Jesse gets moving again.

EXT. BACK YARD - MOMENTS LATER

Jesse climbs over a nine-foot wooden privacy fence just as a back porch light flickers on in the yard where he was...

EXT. ADJOINING BACK YARD - CONTINUOUS ACTION

... Landing in a quiet one here, but wrenching his ankle in the process.

Jesse bites down to keep from howling in pain, then tries to walk it off in a tight circle, limping.

After a beat he pauses to listen to the advancing sirens.

Moving through the darkened side lawn toward Elm Street --

EXT. ELM STREET - CONTINUOUS ACTION

-- where Jesse's motorcycle is parked at the curb, behind a pickup.

Jesse can see it from where he is.

But a SQUAD CAR rolls by, lights and sirens, and Jesse pauses.

A beat later, the Neighbor with the broom steps up to the sidewalk maybe five feet from Jesse's bike, and stares down the street at the police.

Jesse reverses his course, back to the back yards.

EXT. KRIS' HOUSE - CONTINUOUS ACTION

A middle-aged NEIGHBOR greets the two POLICE OFFICERS at the front door in her pajamas and a long coat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NEIGHBOR

I heard a scream and then the
alarm went off --

Her HUSBAND is with her, stepping on her testimony --

HUSBAND

I told her not to go in until you
showed up --

NEIGHBOR

-- saw a boy, I saw him run --

EXT. NANCY'S BACK YARD - MOMENTS LATER

With no other direction to go, Jesse feels trapped. He rakes his hands through his hair, then turns around to face the house whose back yard he's trespassed...

The house is dark save for one bedroom on the second floor.

Brief glimpse of NANCY passing by the thin curtains.

INT. NANCY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Nancy stands staring at us, her head crooked to her side. She's dressed in a well-worn tank top and panties, her iPod tucked into its waistband on her hip.

Her shoulders move to the beat of whatever is piping into her ears. Her hands are black with charcoal as she holds a large stick of it, rolling it around in her fingers.

The walls behind her are papered with amazing art and photography from the great masters.

REVERSE ANGLE

to reveal the charcoal illustration on canvas. It's a head shot of QUENTIN. A blown-up yearbook photo has been tacked to one corner, as her reference.

CLOSE ON NANCY

as she adds a few new strokes, then steps back again.

Her hair flutters from a breeze that makes her shiver, and Nancy starts to turn toward the window when --

JESSE'S HAND clamps over her mouth from behind --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JESSE

Don't say a word --

Nancy -- having already demonstrated she freaks when someone touches her by surprise -- freaks out. Her head jerks back and cracks Jesse's nose, hard. He falls back onto her bed, holding his nose.

Now Nancy sees who it is.

JESSE

Ow...

She pops out her earbuds and lets down her guard.

NANCY

Jesse Braun, what the fuck are you doing?

(beat)

Is that blood?

She notices some has smeared onto her skin.

JESSE

Just listen to me, listen. I was with Kris, and something really fucked-up happened.

Nancy gasps as she realizes:

NANCY

Holy shit, this is Kris' blood? What did you do?

JESSE

(getting up)

Nothing! It wasn't me! That's what I'm trying to tell you --

NANCY

Get away from me --

JESSE

Okay, okay. Just hear me out. Something is going on here.

NANCY

What happened to Kris, Jesse.

JESSE

(beat)

Someone killed her in her sleep.

Nancy's expression changes from guarded to vulnerable just like that; with that one statement.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NANCY

... What?

JESSE

You know what I mean, don't you.
Because you've been having the
nightmares too.

Nancy's focus stops being Jesse. Her attention wanders.

NANCY

I don't know what... what you're
talking about.

JESSE

Kris said you were! What are you
doing awake at this hour, huh?

NANCY

I don't want to talk about it.

JESSE

Because there's a guy who stalks
you in your sleep, his flesh is
all burned and peeling...

Beat. Nancy is wrestling whether or not to say
something.

NANCY

All I can remember is the song.

JESSE

What song.

Nancy half-sings the first lyric:

NANCY

One, two, Freddy's coming for you.

This registers with Jesse.

JESSE

Freddy... That's him. He's in all
our heads, Nancy.

Nancy shakes her head. She doesn't want to believe it.

NANCY

Jesse, how --

GWEN (O.S.)

Nancy? Who's in there?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A knock on Nancy's bedroom door. Her mother GWEN tries it but it's locked.

GWEN (O.S.)
Open this right now! If you don't
I'm gonna unlock it.

Jesse makes for the window again, but before he leaves, he makes direct eye contact with Nancy:

JESSE
We gotta stop this.

NANCY
... How? How do you stop a dream?

JESSE
I don't know yet, just... Stay
awake. You sleep -- you die.

Gwen gets the door open, her eyes immediately finding the blood-soaked JESSE --

Jesse bails out the window at Gwen's SHRIEK.

EXT. ELM STREET - NIGHT

A squad car does its best to barricade one end of the block, likely some deputy who wants to be a big-city cop.

Down the block, Jesse makes a dash for his bike.

With a shaky hand he gets the key in the ignition --

KICKS it alive and peels out --

Jesse is in third gear by the time he passes the second driveway --

AHEAD, another squad car (half the local force) --

POLICE hear him coming and run onto the street, guns out --

Jesse really has nowhere to go, he skids and heads the other direction --

But an OFFICER yanks him off the bike before he can get enough momentum.

ANGRY OFFICER
Down! On the ground! Now!

Jesse lies face-down like he's about to do push-ups.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AS HE'S BEING HANDCUFFED, Jesse stares at someone O.S.

LOW ANGLE

It's at Nancy, on the front porch with Gwen.

Plenty of other neighbors are here to rubberneck.

BACK TO SCENE

Jesse shouts as he's dragged off to the back of a car:

JESSE
I didn't kill her! It wasn't me!
(right at Nancy)
It wasn't me!

BACK TO GWEN AND NANCY

Gwen shakes her head in disapproval, clearly believing Jesse is guilty of something.

Beside her, Nancy -- horrified that Jesse speaks the truth.

INT. HOMICIDE OFFICES - NIGHT

Jesse's MOTHER and FATHER confront a police LIEUTENANT.

JESSE'S FATHER
You have to wait on his lawyer.
You can't talk to him until then.

LIEUTENANT
Lawyer's on his way. Meantime,
he's free to talk and we're free
to ask.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Jesse sits cuffed to the metal table.

Two DETECTIVES work the room opposite Jesse. One paces, the other sits facing their suspect.

DETECTIVE #1
So, let me see if I get this
straight.

Jesse sits back in his chair, staring at his cuffs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DETECTIVE #1

You show up at the girl's house,
and sneak up to her window. She
lets you in and complains about
having nightmares.

JESSE

Not just any nightmares, the same
ones -- the same guy is in them.
Do you get that?

DETECTIVE #1

Riiiiight. 'Fred.'

JESSE

Yes.

DETECTIVE #1

The guy who also snuck into the
house and murdered Kris.

JESSE

Yes.

DETECTIVE #1

Only he's invisible.

JESSE

He's real -- he's gotta be real
somehow, to do these things --

DETECTIVE #2

This is blushed.

DETECTIVE #1

Maybe the kid's going for some
insanity plea.

JESSE

I'm not a schizo, if that's what
you're saying.

DETECTIVE #1

We're not saying anything. But
your girlfriend was cut to shreds.
Maybe you didn't do it, but you
were right there, and you didn't
do anything to stop it.

This strikes at Jesse's heart. It's his worst fear
spoken aloud. He puts his head in his hands.

INT. BOOKSTORE - MORNING

A young BOY (12 years old) sits at a table with his head cradled in his hands. While it's a similar pose to Jesse, this boy is just reading a comic book.

The store is a large upscale retail outlet.

Nancy enters and crosses to the STORE CLERK at the counter. The Clerk is around Nancy's age.

STORE CLERK

Hey, Nancy. What's up.

NANCY

I'm looking for any non-fiction reference books on nightmares, sleep disorders, that sort of thing. Where do I find that.

STORE CLERK

Dreams and nightmares, huh? What, you and Quentin working on some school project?

Nancy reacts -- this is news to her.

NANCY

Quentin?

INT. REFERENCE SECTION - MOMENTS LATER

A tall pile of books sits on a reading table in this section. One look at the titles on the spines tells us it's all about dreams and nightmares.

Quentin sits by the stack and skims through one of them, but it's clear he's tired and unfocused.

He turns another page, and hears a small squeak. Looks around; what was that?

A small RAT sniffs the air on the edge of the table, then crawls off the end, out of sight.

Quentin glances to see if anyone else saw it. He's alone. He hears more squeaking, and gets up, moving around to see --

A FEW DOZEN RATS, all streaming down one of the aisles.

Frowning, Quentin follows the rats.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

As he traverses the aisle, we see the telltale glimpse of FREDDY'S SWEATER through the bookshelf into the next aisle. Keeping pace with Quentin, one row over.

Quentin arrives at --

THE CHILDREN'S SECTION. Little chairs and tables. Under one table, a SWARM of rats converge, and on that table rests one book. A children's book. THE PIED PIPER.

Quentin sees the title, and as Freddy's gloved HAND reaches and grabs him --

Quentin SNAPS AWAKE back in the reference section. Nancy stands before him, having gently grabbed him.

NANCY

Nightmares?

QUENTIN

... Yeah. I can't explain --

NANCY

(interrupting)

Freddy?

The name stops Quentin cold. Beat.

QUENTIN

Yes.

NANCY

We need to talk.

QUENTIN

We need coffee.

INT. JAIL CELL - DAY

Jesse sits on his bunk, dressed in prison orange. His knee bounces nervously.

In the bunk across from him: A rugged INMATE with tattoos.

INMATE

You should calm down, fish. Ain't going nowhere.

JESSE

I need to sleep.

INMATE

So? What, you scared of me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JESSE

If anything weird happens, wake me up. Okay? Or call a guard.

The Inmate smiles wickedly and shakes his head at Jesse, then returns to reading his book.

Jesse rolls onto his back on the bunk and stares up.

ANGLE ON JESSE

looking straight down at him. He looks drained and overtired. He may have been crying earlier; his eyes are bloodshot.

Jesse closes his eyes and takes a breath.

Beat. All is quiet.

Then the Inmate STARTLES Jesse by slapping him on the chest.

INMATE

Boo! Hahah.

JESSE

The fuck!

INMATE

Just messin' with ya.

The Inmate smiles and goes back to his bunk, grabs his book.

Jesse stands up.

JESSE

Dude. Not cool. I'm serious, man. Don't do that shit.

The Inmate grins wickedly; knowingly.

INMATE

Watch your step, fish.

Jesse steps for the Inmate but then --

THE FLOOR gives way, the concrete crumbling --

Jesse FALLS down a shaft of dirt, landing HARD --

He looks up from where he fell --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The bunks of his cell are still bolted into the walls, three stories up. It's just the floor that has sunk. He's at the bottom of a deep shaft.

The walls around him aren't entirely dirt. The sides of COFFINS jut out here and there. Like a breakaway view of a cemetery.

JESSE

HEY! Wake me up!

Scratching. The sound of long fingernails on wood. Some of the coffins start to crack and splinter.

Jesse backs up to the far wall.

At waist-level something pushes through the dirt beside him.

Jesse looks down at it:

It's a metal doorknob.

Behind him, an ARM bursts through a coffin wall. The familiar sweater sleeve of Freddy.

Jesse grabs the knob and pushes against the dirt.

Freddy begins climbing out of the coffin...

Jesse puts his weight into the dirt wall and the dirt falls away to reveal the rest of the door, which bursts inward, spilling Jesse in --

INT. DARK TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Long and narrow, like a catacomb.

Jesse runs.

The shadow of Freddy bounces behind him, chasing.

Ahead: a wan light coming from the end of the tunnel. Jesse reaches it to find --

It's a window looking in at a BOY'S BEDROOM. Faded baby-blue, illustrations of airplanes.

Jesse stares out, watching.

Jesse's FATHER standing with a little BOY who looks very nervous. And very much like a five-year-old Jesse.

The little boy sits on his bed with his head down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JESSE'S FATHER

Now I know you and Dean play rough
at school sometimes. So tell me
the truth. Did you hurt him?

LITTLE JESSE

It wasn't me.

JESSE'S FATHER

I told you no more rough-housing --

LITTLE JESSE

Freddy did it!

JESSE'S FATHER

... What?

LITTLE JESSE

It was Freddy.

Jesse's Father pauses, suddenly deeply concerned.

IN THE TUNNEL

Jesse whirls around.

JESSE

Is that what this is about? Is
it? Face me like a man, Freddy!
Come on, let's see you!

The claw-glove SMASHES through the window behind him and
Freddy grabs Jesse --

INT. BOILER ROOM - CONTINUOUS ACTION

-- pulling him into this underground room lined with
hissing pipes and junk dumped here as surrogate storage.

Jesse gets up, clutching his shoulder. He's been cut.

Freddy smiles. Scrapes his knives along a pipe.
SCREEECH.

Jesse backs up a few steps, then runs around a corner.

AROUND THE CORNER

It dead-ends at the hanging bodies of KRIS and DEAN.
Bound tightly to the pipes. Their flesh singed, still
cooking against the metal.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Nowhere to run now. Just Jesse and Freddy.

FREDDY

This is where you said all those
bad things happened.

Jesse swings to punch, but it's like he's underwater, his
limbs moving sluggishly --

While Freddy's blades rake across Jesse's gut.

Jesse doubles over --

Freddy swings again --

Jesse's face is badly cut now --

Freddy hamstringing Jesse --

Jesse collapses back on the floor, bleeding profusely.
He gets up on his hands and knees...

Freddy picks him up.

FREDDY

You told them I hurt you.

JESSE

Maybe you did... What do you want
me to do?

FREDDY

I want you to spill your guts.

Freddy SLICES Jesse along the abdomen.

Jesse falls to the floor at sounds of his guts
spilling...

But just before he hits, the boiler room washes away to
be replaced by --

INT. JAIL CELL - CONTINUOUS ACTION

-- and Jesse's face hits the floor.

His blood seeps out in all directions.

His Inmate freaks out as GUARDS storm in --

INMATE

Hey! Hey, this wasn't me, HEY!

They slam the Inmate into a wall as an ALARM goes up --

INT. BOILER ROOM IN NIGHTMARE - CONTINUOUS ACTION

-- but sounds distant; far off here.

Freddy has hoisted Jesse's bloody frame up next to Kris'.

Jesse coughs up blood, eyes rolling in his head.

FREDDY

The brain keeps working for up to
seven minutes after the body dies.

Freddy leans in close to Jesse's face.

FREDDY

I still have four minutes with
you.

Freddy stabs Jesse again and TWISTS as Jesse SCREAMS --

INT. BOOKSTORE - EVENING (REALITY)

Nancy is seated at a small table on the fringe of the in-house coffee shop. The stack of books has migrated here.

Quentin arrives with two large coffees.

QUENTIN

I had them add an extra shot. How
you holding up?

NANCY

Going on forty-three hours since
any actual sleep. Other than that
I'm fine.

Quentin grabs a notebook and a pen. Some doodles and key words have already been written down.

QUENTIN

Okay, so what do we know.

Nancy notices a thin book among the pile. The Pied Piper.

NANCY

Why is this here?

QUENTIN

Oh, it was just in a dream I had.
I don't know what it means, but I
kinda feel like Freddy's trying to
tell me something. You know?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Nancy opens the storybook.

A richly-colored ILLUSTRATION shows the Piper leading children out of town. The Piper wears a striped shirt of two contrasting primary colors. A "pied" shirt.

NANCY

Children is definitely a theme in my nightmares too. And a house, or a school. I can't tell which.

QUENTIN

Maybe it's our childhood. Maybe that's the thing we have in common. Otherwise, why us?

NANCY

(sipping coffee)
How long have you lived here?

QUENTIN

I was born here. Why do you think I'm so eager to get out?
(grabs another book)
Maybe it was like a summer camp we all went to.

NANCY

I skipped those. Almost went to Crystal Lake one year, but no.

QUENTIN

How about kindergarten. I went to Davison for K-through-five.

NANCY

I was at Bering until third grade.

They share a look of frustration.

NANCY

This is gonna take a while.

QUENTIN

Yeah, but we don't have the time.

NANCY

What do you mean.

Quentin rifles through the books to find one he's bookmarked: Mastering Sleep.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

QUENTIN

(reading)

'At the seventy-hour mark, an insomniac will begin to experience 'micro-naps' every eight to ten minutes. These are periods where the brain will shut down some of its cognitive function for several seconds in an attempt to recharge itself. Clinically, the subject is asleep for those brief moments.'

Nancy gets worried.

NANCY

That's involuntary?

QUENTIN

(still reading)

'At ninety-six hours, the insomniac risks permanent brain damage for every minute they avoid slumber.'

NANCY

We'll figure this out before then. I'll dig around in mom's old photo albums.

QUENTIN

And if we don't find any leads?

NANCY

There's always one way to get more information...

Quentin starts to ask "What" but then the look on Nancy's face clues him in. He shakes his head.

QUENTIN

No. Oh no.

NANCY

If I time it right, I could learn something important and get out before he gets to me.

But now Quentin is looking past Nancy, over her shoulder.

Nancy turns to see the muted TV by the barista counter.

ON SCREEN: The caption "Murder Suspect Fatally Stabbed" under a live report outside the county jail facility as Jesse is loaded into an ambulance.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

QUENTIN

... Shit. He got to Jesse.

INT. NANCY'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

A knife SLICES carrots on a chopping block.

Gwen works the carrots and adds them to a salad. The front door shuts and Nancy passes by.

GWEN

Hey kiddo, how you doing?

Nancy stops and pulls up at the bar in the kitchen, dropping her book bag at her feet.

NANCY

Mom...

GWEN

You look awful. Go take a bath.

NANCY

Well, that's confidence-inspiring. Mom, how long have we known Kris and her family?

GWEN

Oh, I don't know. A long while. You were both learning to walk at the same time.

NANCY

What about Jesse? Did we ever get together with his family for anything?

GWEN

Well. I suppose there were a few school functions and such.

NANCY

What about Dean and Quentin? Were the five of us ever enrolled in something together?

Gwen's tone changes to suspicion.

GWEN

What has prompted all this?

NANCY

Look, this is going to sound loopy and paranoid, but I don't care...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NANCY (CONT'D)

Is there anything I should know?
About when I was young?

GWEN

Like what?

NANCY

I don't know. Something to do
with a man named Freddy.

Nancy is waiting for the reaction this time. Gwen regards her carefully.

GWEN

Sweetie, does this have anything
to do with what's been going on,
like with Jesse?

NANCY

That's what I'm trying to figure
out!

GWEN

You want to tell me about it?

NANCY

I can't.

GWEN

Yes, you can. I'm your mother.

NANCY

I mean, I don't know how it fits
together yet. I was hoping you
did.

GWEN

I know this must be really rough,
what you're going through now.
What with the loss of your
friends... But sometimes bad
things happen to good people.
There's no big mystery to it,
really.

Nancy slowly shakes her head. This was a failure.

Gwen goes back to prepping dinner. She turns on a
faucet --

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

The tub's faucet runs hot water.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Nancy plugs the drain and stands up. She's half undressed. She add bath salts to the running water.

Foam spreads along the surface of the water.

SAME SCENE - MOMENTS LATER

Nancy eases into the bubbly bath.

As she settles in, she lets out a long, deep breath. Slicking her hair back with her hands.

Her cell phone rests on a towel rack nearby.

She grabs it and presses some buttons.

INSERT - CELL PHONE SCREEN

Showing the alarm timer feature: "15 min."

Then, "Timer Set."

ON NANCY

feeling like she can finally relax.

She eases back into the tub. Closes her eyes.

Beat. It's her one moment of peace.

From the bubbly bath water at her knees, FREDDY'S GLOVED HAND rises, its blades extended --

A knock on the bathroom door sends the hand back underwater just as Nancy opens her eyes --

 GWEN (O.S.)
You okay in there?

 NANCY
Fine, Mom!

 GWEN (O.S.)
Just checking.

Nancy checks her phone's clock.

 NANCY
(sotto)
Twelve minutes? No way.

Looking at her fingers: They've pruned.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Nancy climbs out of the tub and puts on a robe.

NANCY
(calling)
Hey, Mom?

Opening the door and stepping out --

INT. UPSTAIRS HALL - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Right across from the stairs down. Voices get Nancy's attention. She peers downstairs at the foyer --

A stern-looking MAN in his 30s enters the living room with a slightly younger DR. JAMES BRITT.

Nancy's jaw drops.

NANCY
Dad? Dad, is that you?

She hurries downstairs in her robe to look into --

INT. NANCY'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Gwen sits with Little Nancy (about 5 years old) on the couch. Little Nancy has been crying. Gwen holds her close. A small cassette recorder sits on the coffee table.

Nancy's Father speaks quietly with Dr. Britt, away from Gwen and Little Nancy, near the foyer. No one reacts to Nancy entering the room -- they can't see or hear her.

NANCY'S FATHER
I don't want my daughter scarred
for life. There's gotta be
something you can do.

NANCY
Dad, what's going on?

DR. BRITT
Memories this traumatic take time
to heal. But I can help.

FREDDY (O.S.)
So can I.

Nancy looks upstairs to see FREDDY at the top. Starting down toward her. His GLOVE raking along the banister.

She yanks on the front door and runs out to escape him --

EXT. PRESCHOOL BUILDING - DUSK

She's now outside the front door of the preschool.

Nancy steps back to get a better look at the building.

Leaves rustle from a breeze along the front steps. The place seems deserted.

The SIGN for the school is overgrown with ivy.

Nancy pulls at the ivy to get a good look at it.

She gets as far as the first six letters: "STILLM -- "

FREDDY (O.S.)

Little Nancy. All grown up now.

Nancy turns and backs away.

Freddy appears and for the first time we get a clear look at him. The leathery, peeling flesh, sometimes stripped away to expose bone. Teeth blackened and rotting.

Freddy carries a pitchfork that looks like another one of his personal inventions.

Nancy has backed up to the preschool building. There's nowhere else to run.

Freddy SLAMS the pitchfork at Nancy, trapping her arm and neck in the gaps between the blades as it buries into the wall behind her.

NANCY

I set an alarm.

FREDDY

Yes, you did... in your dream.

Nancy panics -- oh shit.

Freddy stands very, very close. Nancy cringes.

FREDDY

We have plenty of time.

NANCY

Stop -- please stop --

Freddy licks her cheek, then whispers in her ear:

FREDDY

As long as your little voices call me a monster, I will never stop.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Somewhere, a phone RINGS.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Nancy snaps awake in the tub, sucking in a breath.

Her phone rings again. She answer it:

NANCY

Hello?

QUENTIN (V.O.)

Hey, just checking in.

NANCY

Ohh, God. Thank you. Quentin,
you're awesome.

QUENTIN (V.O.)

Remarks like that will have me
calling you every hour.

(beat)

Did you fall asleep? You have a
nightmare?

Nancy's panic subsides.

NANCY

I have a lead.

INT. QUENTIN'S BASEMENT ROOM - NIGHT

Quentin sits at his computer, his cell phone at his ear
in one hand.

QUENTIN

I get a few hits on a Stillman
Preschool here in town that was
around in the '90s, but nothing
more than a brief mention.

NANCY (V.O.)

(filtered)

No address or criminal file?

QUENTIN

Maybe my Google-fu is weak.

NANCY (V.O.)

(filtered)

Wasn't your mom on like city
council or something?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

QUENTIN

Yeah, but she can't remember what happened last week, much less thirteen years ago.

NANCY (V.O.)

(filtered)

We'll look it up at the library tomorrow.

QUENTIN

Yeah. Okay. Sleep tight --

(d'oh)

I mean... You know what I mean.

NANCY (V.O.)

(filtered)

Good night, Quentin.

Quentin snaps his phone shut and ponders a beat.

INT. QUENTIN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

It's dark. The room is a study, or library.

Quentin searches the bookshelves with a flashlight.

The light lands on a filing cabinet.

Quentin picks the lock and opens the drawer.

A creak from somewhere else in the house alerts Quentin. He clicks off the flashlight and holds his breath.

Beat. Nothing.

He clicks the light back on and rifles through the drawer.

It's filled with manila folders stuffed with old files.

CLOSE ON ONE FOLDER

his thumb finds: "STILLMAN."

Flipping through it to find papers and a PHOTO.

The photo is of the same school from their nightmares. The one we've been seeing.

In front of the school, PARENTS and their CHILDREN for that year stand for a group shot. Little Quentin and his mother are in the picture.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

So are Nancy and her mother, Gwen.

Dean's father, Kris and her mother, and Jesse's father are also recognizable in the photo.

Lastly, off to one side, a MAN wearing a FEDORA and leaning against a rake he's planted into the dirt at his feet. The Man is smiling.

ON QUENTIN

Holding the photo up to the light.

QUENTIN

(sotto)

Is that you, you son of a bitch?

The tight beam of the flashlight reveals black-ink handwriting on the flip side.

Quentin turns it over to find first initials and last names of everyone in the photo.

TIGHT ON ONE NAME

"F. KRUEGER".

NANCY (V.O.)

(pre-lap)

Krueger.

INT. NANCY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Nancy stands by Quentin, holding the photo in her hands.

QUENTIN

I think that's him.

NANCY

Could be. So hard to tell with normal skin...

QUENTIN

We're all there. You, me, Jesse, Kris, and Dean.

NANCY

And a few other kids.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

QUENTIN

Point is, we got a full name. We
can track him down, see how he
fits with the -- where you going?

Nancy storms out of her room.

INT. GWEN'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Nancy's mother Gwen is still in bed when Nancy bursts in
and turns on the light.

Gwen sits up in her nightgown.

GWEN

Nancy, what on Earth -- what time
is it?

NANCY

Freddy Krueger.

Gwen is suddenly sober-awake.

Nancy holds up the photo as evidence.

NANCY

You knew him. You know something
you're not telling me.

Gwen looks down at her hands. She lets out a tired sigh.

GWEN

I didn't want to keep it a secret,
I just hoped you would forget all
about it. And we'd put it past us
for good.

NANCY

Forget about what? Tell me!

Gwen's eyes grow distant as she remembers thirteen years
ago.

GWEN

We didn't know. Not at first.

FLASHBACK - EXT. PRESCHOOL YARD - DAY

Schoolchildren play and laugh in the small playground
behind the converted house of a school.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A rather HANDSOME MAN tends to some flowers along the exterior, wearing gardening gloves and using a hand-held gardening claw. It takes a beat to realize: It's Freddy. Without the burns and exposed bone he's a different man.

GWEN (V.O.)

He was just hired help. Walked in from out of town and got a job as a caretaker for the school.

Little Dean flees from two other children in a game of tag. Giggling he runs and hides behind Freddy. Freddy smiles and plays like a protective bear, growling at the other kids.

GWEN (V.O.)

He got along so well with the children.

The other kids just eat it up, fleeing from Freddy. Freddy laughs and it's a joyful, warm laugh. Avuncular. To see him as just a man -- and happy -- he's unrecognizable as the same person in their nightmares.

EXT. FRONT PATH TO SCHOOL - DAY

The children are hiding as Freddy prowls around the front, in search of a child. Playing he doesn't see anyone yet.

GWEN (V.O.)

And you all loved to play games with him.

SCHOOLGIRLS

(playing jump rope)

One, two, Freddy's coming for you --

INT. GWEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Gwen shakes her head. Ashamed.

GWEN

But sometimes evil hides behind a smile.

FLASHBACK - INT. KRIS' HOUSE - DAY

Nora pulls off Little Kris' dress in the bathroom, getting ready for her bath.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

On Kris' back: four long scratch marks. Still fresh.

NORA

Baby... What happened? Did
someone at school do this to you?

CLOSE ON LITTLE KRIS' FACE

Fearful. Nods.

INT. QUENTIN'S HOUSE - DAY

QUENTIN'S FATHER stands in the kitchen on the phone. He looks over at his son who's sitting at the breakfast table in front of a plate of hot food. Little Quentin stares at the floor. Ignoring the meal.

QUENTIN'S FATHER

(into phone)

Yeah, he has been acting strange
lately. Why?

INT. JESSE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The parents are all gathered around in this room, in the middle of a heated discussion.

JESSE'S FATHER

What do we know about this
gardener? Krueger.

NORA

This all started after he showed
up at school.

OFF Gwen's reaction of growing horror.

INT. NANCY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Gwen is on the end of Little Nancy's bed. Nancy has her back to the corner, the sheets pulled up around her protectively. Trembling.

GWEN

Nancy, tell me. Did Freddy do
this? Tell me it was him and I'll
make it all better.

Nancy finally nods weakly at her mother.

INT. GWEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Gwen gets cold at the thought. Behind Nancy, Quentin has arrived and stands at the door. He's heard the story.

GWEN

Sweetie... Freddy was a child molester.

Nancy is hit sideways by the bold admission. Finally:

NANCY

Was there real proof? Evidence?

GWEN

Audiotapes. Your testimony. Dean's father brought in a shrink... It took some time, but eventually every child had some Fred Krueger horror story to share.

NANCY

Jesus...

(then)

Mom. Tell me the truth. What happened to Freddy.

GWEN

He skipped town. Left before the cops could make an arrest.

In shock from this news, Nancy gets up. She stares at the photo in her hands.

GWEN

All I wanted to do after that is have you grow up normal. Put this behind you, Nancy.

Nancy is slowly shaking her head. MOVING WITH her as she leaves the bedroom with Quentin, picking up pace...

GWEN (O.S.)

It's okay. He's long gone!

Nancy's look says: Oh how wrong you are.

INT. NANCY'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Quentin is at her computer, typing names into a search engine. Nancy paces.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NANCY

I don't buy it. Just disappeared?
There's more to it.

QUENTIN

I'm trying to track down any of
the other kids in the photo, but
it's a haystack with just a last
name. It would be easier if we
could get into the school
database.

NANCY

I can do that.

QUENTIN

(yeah right)
You can hack into the public
school network.

NANCY

I was aide for Mrs. Garriott last
semester. I know her password. I
can probably get in from one of
the PCs in the school library.

Quentin gets up.

QUENTIN

I'll drive.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - MORNING

ESTABLISHING. It's way early.

Quentin's Mustang is parked in the first spot.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALL - MOMENTS LATER

Nancy and Quentin round the corner in a quiet, empty hall
before school starts.

They try the door to the school library hall -- it's
locked.

QUENTIN

They're not open yet.

NANCY

When are you free today?

QUENTIN

After swim team.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NANCY

Meet me here then. We gotta find
out what happened to Freddy.

Quentin nods. At the sound of a coach's WHISTLE --

INT. INDOOR OLYMPIC POOL - DAY

A trio of student SWIMMERS rocket down lanes while their female coach KELLY BARBER (short hair, muscular) shouts at them, a stopwatch in her hand.

COACH BARBER

Go, go, go! Two seconds behind!

At three other lanes, another group of STUDENTS wait against the wall, standing in the water.

Quentin is one of them. He rests his head on the concrete lip of the pool and he stares straight up. It's impossible to tell at this angle through his goggles if his eyes are open or closed.

SWIMMER #1

-- and Paul was gonna take her to
the prom.

SWIMMER #2

NO SHIT?

SWIMMER #1

Yeah, she and Jesse were broke up
for good this time, I heard.

SWIMMER #2

You think Jesse knew she was --

Drifting to Quentin who doesn't move until the coach's WHISTLE startles him.

COACH BARBER

Team two: Positions!

Quentin shakes off the fatigue and prepares to launch himself forward through the water.

The coach whistles AGAIN and they're off --

Arms wheeling. Legs pumping.

QUENTIN'S POV

-- Underwater. The lanes marked on the bottom of the pool. Muted splashing around him.

-- Above water. The lip of the pool, a few dozen yards away. The door to the locker room beyond that. Coach Barber with her stopwatch shouting at them.

-- Underwater again. He's pulling ahead in his lane.

-- Above water and now its ocean as far as the eye can see.

ON QUENTIN

Stopping, in shock.

PULLING BACK... the pool is gone. He's --

IN THE MIDDLE OF THE PACIFIC

No sign of land. A fog draping the sky above him.

Quentin looks panicked.

QUENTIN

Oh shit. Oh sh --

Something TUGS at him from underwater --

Quentin sucks in a breath, treading water in fear --

CLOSER ON HIM

As a second time he's YANKED under --

A beat later he surfaces again, gasping for air, to find --

EXT. ABANDONED FACTORY GROUNDS - NIGHT

-- he's in a retaining pond at a closed down chemical plant.

He's still in the nightmare.

Quentin climbs out onto the grass and catches his breath.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Over the rise, the silhouette of FREDDY appears, running for him.

Quentin gets up and runs the other way; toward the abandoned plant.

He's out of breath and cramping --

He stumbles and falls --

Freddy gets right up on him --

And keeps running, right past Quentin.

Headlights swing around until they light Freddy's back.

Freddy looks back -- he's not burned. No glove in hand.

Quentin gets up as several PARENTS (who look a decade or so younger) pass by him in pursuit.

DEAN'S FATHER

Krueger, you sick son of a bitch!

They're all crazy-angry.

JESSE'S FATHER

Pedophile!

They make for the small containment building Freddy entered.

Quentin follows, confused.

NORA, Kris' mother, is among the lynch mob. She's been drinking. She holds a half-empty bottle of vodka. (NOTE: This matches the bottle Kris found in the box in the crawl space.)

Dean's Father tries to shoulder his way into the door. Freddy has barricaded it.

DEAN'S FATHER

You come out, or we'll force you out!

No response inside.

Jesse's Father swings a baseball bat and bashes a vertical window near the door.

Another MAN passes by Quentin, holding a flashlight.

QUENTIN

Dad? What are you doing --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

QUENTIN'S FATHER

I say we smoke him out.

Dean's Father grabs Nora's bottle of vodka and jams his handkerchief into the neck.

NORA

Wait, shouldn't we wait for the police?

But Dean's Father is past the point of no return. There's only rage in his heart now.

DEAN'S FATHER

He touched my son!

The Molotov cocktail is lit, and just as Dean's Father hurls it through the broken window --

JESSE'S FATHER

Wait -- that building is --

A glimpse at the variety of FLAMMABLE warning signs precedes the light show when the bottle erupts inside.

The blast wave knocks Quentin off his feet.

Inside, Freddy SCREAMS, his voice curdling from within the walls of the building and then --

He bursts out through the door, a man of living fire --

Right at Quentin --

Quentin is still on his back, starts to crab-crawl away --

Freddy FALLS right atop Quentin who covers up his arms --

Freddy's burning face SCREAMS at Quentin and --

INT. INDOOR OLYMPIC POOL - DAY

Quentin coughs up pool water, spitting it on the concrete.

He's lying on his back with Coach Barber over him in roughly the same position Freddy was a moment ago.

COACH BARBER

Quentin. Hey. You swim in it, son, you don't drink it.

(stands up)

C'mon. Walk it off.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Quentin props himself up on his elbows. He's back.

INT. SCHOOL LIBRARY - DAY

Approaching Nancy who sits at a computer.

NANCY

There you are. I did a search of enrollment records and figured out the full names of the other kids in the preschool photo, but I still don't know what happened to...

Nancy finally does a double-take on QUENTIN who steps up urgently.

NANCY

Is your hair still wet?

QUENTIN

I know what happened.

SAME SCENE - MOMENTS LATER

Nancy and Quentin sit opposite at a small reading table by the computer station.

NANCY

Burned to death?

QUENTIN

You know that old processing station out by Route Nine? I think that was it.

Quentin brings up an online article on the monitor.
HEADLINE: "BODY FOUND AT PENNICON PLANT."

NANCY

Jesus... They killed him...

QUENTIN

They were just trying to smoke him out. But something caught fire --

The bigger picture is hitting Nancy.

NANCY

Quentin. They went after him because of what we said. What a bunch of five-year-olds told them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

QUENTIN

Yeah.

NANCY

What if... What if we made it up?

QUENTIN

What? All of us?

NANCY

Do you know how easy it is to lead a little child? To make them say what you want them to? Or what you're afraid they'll say?

QUENTIN

Nance...

NANCY

Do you remember what Freddy did to you back then?

Quentin has been trying to remember, but...

QUENTIN

No.

NANCY

So, it's possible we, some of us, we lied --

QUENTIN

-- and those lies killed Freddy. Jesus...

(then)

How can we stop him now?

A realization dawns on Nancy.

NANCY

He said something.

QUENTIN

What? Who.

NANCY

Freddy. In my nightmare. He said, 'As long as your little voices call me a monster, I will never stop.'

Quentin doesn't follow.

QUENTIN

He's a cryptic asshole, so...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NANCY

The only evidence that would paint him as a pedophile are those audiotapes. Our testimony. Our voices. We destroy those tapes --

Quentin gets it now.

QUENTIN

-- maybe Freddy goes away.

NANCY

We have to find those tapes.
(then)
How the hell do we do that.

QUENTIN

Someone in that photo has to know.

Quentin taps the PHOTO on the desk, by the keyboard.

Nancy hands him her handwritten list of names.

NANCY

Read me a name.

QUENTIN

(reading)
'Lisa Harper.'

ON THE MONITOR

Nancy clicks the first search result link from that hit...

An online article appears on screen. The headline:
"TEEN GIRL DROWNS IN BATHTUB."

BACK TO SCENE

NANCY

Oh no...

QUENTIN

What?

Quentin can't see the monitor from where he's sitting. Nancy shakes her head.

NANCY

Read me another one.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

QUENTIN

Why, what's wrong with Lisa?

NANCY

She's already dead.

Beat. It hits Quentin. Freddy's been busy. He reads another:

QUENTIN

'James Burkleo.'

ON THE MONITOR

Nancy clicks a new link. Another article: "TRAGEDY - 'HE NEVER WOKE UP.'"

NANCY

Jesus...
(to Quentin)
Another.

QUENTIN

'Agatha Moore' and 'Marcus Greene.' That's it, that's all of them.

ON THE MONITOR

Yet another snippet: " -- ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL"

BACK TO SCENE

NANCY

Quentin, they're all dead...

Quentin gets up, starts pacing.

QUENTIN

Okay, so we go back to our parents --

NANCY

Like they're gonna help us? They killed Freddy and covered it up. They've kept this buried for over ten years.

Nancy halfheartedly keys in the last name into the search engine. A web page starts to load.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

QUENTIN

So we go to the police. Tell them.

Nancy pulls away from the computer to challenge Quentin:

NANCY

Tell them what? We have no proof!

A young man's voice (MARCUS) speaks from the computer:

MARCUS (V.O.)

Day seven. I saw the preschool again.

Quentin and Nancy stare at each other for a moment -- what was that? Nancy leans back to see her monitor.

ON THE MONITOR

A video blog site has loaded and plays an entry from MARCUS GREENE.

He speaks to the webcam from his bedroom.

MARCUS (V.O.)

(on screen)

I didn't get much exploration this time. The guy with the burns shows, and I have to run. But I added the school building to my map...

Marcus grabs the webcam and shifts it to reveal...

A large POSTER tacked to his wall, with a variety of lines, sketches, and landmarks in black and red markers.

The title at the top of the poster-paper: "NIGHTMARE MAP."

MARCUS (V.O.)

(on screen)

The burned man is leading me somewhere, trying to show me something.

BACK TO SCENE

QUENTIN

We gotta warn him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Quentin looks at the website on the screen, then after finding what he was after --

QUENTIN

There -- that's a Chicago number.

He grabs his phone from his backpack and starts dialing.

Nancy clicks on another link to find a high-resolution scanned image of the Nightmare Map.

Marcus has uploaded it to his blog site.

NANCY

He's been mapping out the nightmare world. Wow.

(sotto)

Why didn't we think of that?

QUENTIN

It's ringing.

Nancy clicks back to the blog entries and finds the most recent.

She clicks "PLAY."

ON SCREEN

An exhausted-looking Marcus sits at his computer, his bedroom partially visible behind him. Bags under his eyes, messy hair... He's about to fall down sleeping.

MARCUS (V.O.)

(on screen)

Day nine. I'm in and out. Can't last. Gonna sleep here. Set cam to record, it will kick in when it detects motion.

Marcus clicks around on his own PC, sluggishly.

MARCUS (V.O.)

(on screen)

Okay. Should auto-upload now. Just gonna... close... my...

Marcus nods off in his chair.

BACK TO SCENE

Quentin hangs up and shakes his head at Nancy, then leans in to watch the video on screen with her.

ON SCREEN

The image records for a few seconds, then it --

HICCUPS, advancing to the next time the webcam sensed motion. Marcus has leaned back in the chair now, still slumbering. Another five seconds of stillness, then --

HICCUP -- another skip in recording. Marcus is twitchy now. The light in the bedroom has changed, it looks darker.

Slowly, Marcus' chair eases backward, away from the webcam. It seems to move all on its own. Marcus goes still and then --

HICCUP -- the recording skips to find the chair rotating around. Now its back is to us. We can't see Marcus. But we can hear him. Breathing shallow. Choking. A rending sound. His hands spasm on the arms of the chair ... then nothing.

Beat. Two. Is it over? Then --

THE CHAIR ROTATES again, revealing Marcus slumped, bare-chested in the seat, his shirt shredded --

Carved into his chest are the words "DIE NANCY."

And then his body seems to get sucked right into the chair, vanishing in a sudden YANK from reality just as --

Smashing to STATIC --

BACK TO SCENE

NANCY REELS from the computer, hand over her mouth. Trembling.

Quentin is speechless. Beat.

INT. LIBRARY PRINTER TERMINAL - MOMENTS LATER

At the printer as it spits out a color printout of Marcus' Nightmare Map.

Quentin and Nancy stand and wait for it to finish printing. Nancy is still in shock. Quentin's edgy.

NANCY

We're the only ones left.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

QUENTIN

He's not gonna get you. We can stop this. We have something to show the cops now. Okay? They have to hear us after seeing that.

Nancy nods, but her heart isn't in it.

NANCY

Maybe.

The school bell RINGS, making them both jump. Sleep deprivation taking its toll.

QUENTIN

Come on.

They head for the hall.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALL - MOMENTS LATER

Quentin leads, Nancy follows. It was the second bell, so the hall is empty. Nancy keeps her head down as she walks.

NANCY'S POV

Floor passes by, following Quentin's feet, but then we intersect a trail of blood.

BACK TO SCENE

NANCY STOPS and looks left, right.

Down one of the intersecting halls, Marcus' bloody corpse marks the end of the trail, half his body already obscured around another corner.

His torso is dragged out of sight --

A hand reaches for Nancy --

She jumps but it's just Quentin --

QUENTIN

Hey. Let's keep moving.

Nancy looks again down the hall. It's empty. No blood trail.

NANCY

What time is it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

QUENTIN

Two-fifteen.

NANCY

I'm at hour seventy-five.

QUENTIN

(realizing)

Micronaps?

Nancy starts to panic.

NANCY

I need something strong.

QUENTIN

Okay, okay, we'll get some No-Doz,
uppers, something. C'mon. I'll
stop at a pharmacy.

She nods and they hurry for the door.

EXT. PHARMACY PARKING LOT - DAY

Overcast. The lot is mostly empty. Quentin's Mustang
screeches into a spot.

INT. MUSTANG - CONTINUOUS ACTION

He puts it in park, shuts off the engine, and looks over
at Nancy.

QUENTIN

I'll be right back.

NANCY

Hurry.

QUENTIN

I will.

NANCY

Please.

He gets out and rushes to the front doors.

Nancy sits in the car. Breathing. Beat.

(NOTE: It's important to note that at no time does she
close her eyes -- micronaps occur while you're still
awake, the brain just shutting down for a few moments.)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She grabs the printout of the Nightmare Map and studies it.

INSERT - PRINTOUT

One corner shows a hand-drawn tree dotted with black. Marcus has labeled it "TREE OF CROWS."

Another corner shows a line drawing of the PRESCHOOL.

ON NANCY

Now, she checks the time on her phone and just then Freddy opens her car door and yanks her out of the car --

He drags her onto the lot which is now dark and foggy --

Nancy SCREAMS and struggles against Freddy --

Freddy gets her to stop by placing his claws on her stomach, ready to punch them into her --

FREDDY

You got my message.

And Nancy snaps AWAKE back in the passenger seat of the car, catching her breath.

Tears streaming down her cheeks now. She looks around. Zeroes in on the in-dash cigarette lighter.

She punches it in.

Beat. Looking out toward the door to the pharmacy.

NANCY

C'mon, Quentin, where are you...

Pop! The lighter ejects.

Nancy grabs it and turns it over to look at the burner.

It glows orange-hot.

Still shedding tears, Nancy takes the lighter and holds it close to her forearm. Sucks in a breath. Two.

Then she mashes the lighter against her flesh.

Wincing in pain, she lets out a primal WAIL.

Pulling back, a nasty BURN on her arm now. Sizzling.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Nancy tries to control her breathing. Wipes her eyes.

Beat. Coming down from the pain-rush.

NANCY

Come on, QUENTIN!

Nancy gets out of the car.

EXT. PHARMACY PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS ACTION

She hugs herself and paces a bit. Then goes for the pharmacy front doors.

They slide away as she enters.

INT. PHARMACY - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Dull Muzak playing on the speaker system. Bright, sterile lighting. A preoccupied CASHIER at the counter.

Nancy starts down one aisle, looking for Quentin.

Halfway down the aisle, the power shuts off.

The whole pharmacy plunges into darkness. Nancy holds her breath.

The power then flickers on again and Nancy is in --

NIGHTMARE - INT. BOILER ROOM - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Dank, lined with pipes, a basement space to some very old building above her.

Shaking, Nancy starts to run --

NANCY

No no no no --

Turning the corner to find a row of BODIES tied to the pipes along the back wall.

It's Freddy's previous victims. Among them: Dean, Kris, and Jesse. Nancy pauses and the world seems to flicker BACK TO REALITY, REVEALING she's in the aisle at the pharmacy but in the next moment it PLUNGES BACK TO the boiler room.

Nancy turns back around and stumbles upon a little sort of living area where the main oven for the boiler room is housed, and a couple of chairs and a rug are furnished.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Freddy stands up from a chair behind Nancy and throws her to the rug on the floor.

Nancy shakes off the trauma and starts to struggle.

FREDDY

This is where you told them I did those things to you. Right here.

Nancy, struggling to free from his grip:

NANCY

Stay -- away --

Nancy punches Freddy --

Freddy snarls and slashes her, cutting deep into her arm --

Nancy yelps and KICKS back while grabbing Freddy's fedora and blinding him with it --

QUENTIN (V.O.)

Nancy, wake up!

Nancy shudders as if being shook --

INT. MUSTANG - AFTERNOON

-- and finds herself struggling in Quentin's grip.

Nancy's left arm is bleeding from the nasty cuts Freddy gave her; the wound has crossed over.

Nancy sucks in a breath; it hurts badly.

QUENTIN

I've been trying to wake you for like a min-- WHOA!

Quentin backs off, startled by something in Nancy's hands:

THE FEDORA.

Nancy sees it too. She sits up in shock, staring at it.

NANCY

I'm still dreaming?

QUENTIN

You're awake.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NANCY

No --

QUENTIN

Yes.

She looks out the window at the parking lot. Then back at the hat in her hands.

NANCY

How...

She feels the worn material with her fingers.

Quentin regards it like it's potentially dangerous.

QUENTIN

It just -- that's his, isn't it.

NANCY

I pulled it out with me... How is that possible?

Quentin finally shakes off the shock of it and notices Nancy's wounded arm again.

QUENTIN

Nancy. You're bleeding bad.

He starts to work on a makeshift sling using a spare button-down shirt from his back seat.

Nancy moans in pain when he puts pressure on it.

The shirt soaks up blood way too fast.

QUENTIN

Ahh, oh man, Nancy, we need to get you to a hospital.

NANCY

Just drive --

Quentin cranks the engine and slams it into gear --

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - AFTERNOON

Quentin carries Nancy in.

QUENTIN

I need some help here!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NURSE #2

Hon, this is liable to be very painful without it. Take it from me you want this.

NANCY

No NO get it AWAY --

Nancy's mother Gwen arrives, pulling the curtain aside.

GWEN

Oh my god, baby, what happened?

NANCY

Mom... Hold my hand. Just hold my hand.

NURSE #2

Your daughter is refusing painkillers.

GWEN

What in the world is going on? Nancy, who did this to you?

NANCY

Look at it. You know who.

Gwen sees the slices. She frowns, shaking her head.

GWEN

No...

The Nurse begins suturing the wound. Nancy cringes in pain.

NURSE #2

I have to do this now, hon.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Quentin paces alone in this badly decorated area.

His FATHER shows up.

QUENTIN'S FATHER

Son, what the devil is going on?

Quentin stops pacing and faces his father. There's anger in his body language.

QUENTIN

Dad.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

QUENTIN'S FATHER

First I hear you skipped class and now you're with the Thompson girl at the hospital? Who stabbed her?

QUENTIN

It's Krueger.

Dad reacts to the name like a slap.

QUENTIN'S FATHER

Who did you say?

QUENTIN

Freddy Krueger is after us. He's killed Dean, and Kris, and Jesse, and every other kid that went to that goddamn school.

QUENTIN'S FATHER

Who told you about Kreuger?

QUENTIN

Certainly not you. What did you do to me back then, huh? To make me forget about Freddy.

Dad grabs Quentin's arm and pulls him to a corner, speaking in a lower voice:

QUENTIN'S FATHER

I don't know who you've been talking to, but Fred Krueger is dead. You understand? He's dead.

QUENTIN

Because you killed him! And now he's back for revenge -- he's killing us for what you did!

QUENTIN'S FATHER

Son, listen to yourself. You're talking about ghosts and fairy tales. Krueger is no Pied Piper.

Quentin reacts to the reference. He gives up trying to prove it to his father.

QUENTIN

Where are the tapes, Dad. The things we said Krueger did. The audio tapes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

QUENTIN'S FATHER

He did those... those things. You
wouldn't have lied to us --

QUENTIN

I was five! I said whatever got
me attention!

QUENTIN'S FATHER

No... You don't remember it --

QUENTIN

Where. Are. The tapes.

INT. E.R. STATION FIVE - MOMENTS LATER

The Nurse tugs on her thread and Nancy makes an agonizing
sound that says: I am beyond my threshold for pain.

The RESIDENT (30s, harried) enters.

RESIDENT

(to Nurse)

Why is she still up for God's
sake?

Gwen is still right there.

GWEN

Please, can you help her.

The Resident grabs the syringe from the tray --

NANCY

No, Mom, please please --

The Resident turns around with the needle but now --

NANCY'S POV

It's not the Resident anymore, it's FREDDY.

NANCY SCREAMS and thrashes --

THE RESIDENT gets kicked, dropping the syringe --

Gwen is in tears now, brought on by panic.

The Resident recovers and looks to Gwen.

RESIDENT

A word?

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY OUTSIDE E.R. - MOMENTS LATER

The Resident holds a clipboard of paperwork, and a pen.

RESIDENT

We need to sedate your daughter
before she busts any stitching.
She's a danger to herself. But we
can't go against her demands
unless a parent gives us
authorization --

GWEN

What are you saying, just tell me
what to do to make my girl better.

The Resident hands her his clipboard.

RESIDENT

Sign here. We'll take good care
of her.

Gwen hovers over the signature line with the pen.

And she signs it.

INT. RECOVERY ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Nancy finds the strength to get off the exam bed.
Holding her arm gingerly, she goes to the door and pulls

-- it's locked.

She then turns around and starts looking for another way
out. Desperation in her eyes.

Behind her, the door swings open and --

QUENTIN steps INTO VIEW.

QUENTIN

Nancy.

NANCY

Oh my god, Quentin, oh god --

She wraps her arms around him and hugs him. He hugs
back.

QUENTIN

I told you I wouldn't leave you.

NANCY

Thank you, thank you...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

QUENTIN

We gotta keep moving -- can you walk?

NANCY

Yeah, okay. Yeah.

She understands, they're not out of the woods yet. They hurry for the door.

EXT. ELM STREET - EVENING

A sedan pulls up at Nancy's house, and both Gwen and Quentin's Father get out. Gwen is on her cell phone.

They go to the door and meet Jesse's Father.

Down the block, Quentin's Mustang glides to the curb and parks, its engine cutting off.

INT. MUSTANG - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Quentin watches the house as the parents go inside. Nancy sits shotgun. Both look like they could use a long bath and a lot of sleep. NOTE: Quentin wears a crucifix necklace.

NANCY

Why are we here?

QUENTIN

I pushed my dad into talking about Freddy. About the tapes.

NANCY

Did he know?

QUENTIN

None of the parents wanted to keep the evidence in their home, so they locked it up at the preschool.

NANCY

Did he say where the school was?

QUENTIN

Said it didn't matter, it closed a long time ago.

NANCY

But the stuff could still be there. Right? Couldn't it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

QUENTIN

I spooked Dad enough, I'm hoping
he leads us right to it.

Kris' mother Nora crosses the street toward Nancy's
house.

QUENTIN

Look at that. Band's getting back
together.

(then)

How you holding up?

NANCY

I'm sure I look beautiful.

Quentin chuckles. They're both punchy; laugh or cry
mode. Nancy grins and stares out her window at her
house.

A distant roar foreshadows a sudden SHIFT --

QUICK BEAT:

ELM STREET IN NIGHTMARE REALM

The same street except the skies are dark, the clouds the
color of fresh bruises.

A naked TREE stands in her lawn where none exist in the
normal world. The tree is infested with crows.

Nancy sits up in the car and stares out at the tree --

Thunder CLAPS and the crows scatter like buckshot --

BACK TO SCENE

Nancy is back in the normal world, staring out at her
treeless lawn. She turns to face Quentin.

NANCY

Give me the map. Marcus' map.

Quentin pulls it from the back seat and hands it.

Nancy stares down at a label on the page: TREE OF CROWS.

A straight line runs from beside the tree all the way up
to the top of the map where it dead-ends at the
PRESCHOOL.

Nancy's attention snaps forward, down the long street.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NANCY

The school is on Elm Street.

QUENTIN

What? Where does it say that?

NANCY

Just, trust me. It's on the other end, that way.

QUENTIN

Nancy, this street doesn't even --

But he stops himself and grabs a road map from the center compartment. Tracing a line north:

QUENTIN

Elm Street turns into Treeline two miles out, it doesn't -- wait. It goes back to Elm Street on the old side of town. You think...

NANCY

Drive. Just go.

Quentin starts the car.

EXT. TREE-LINED ROAD - NIGHT

The Mustang speeds by, alone in the night. No other traffic.

INT. MUSTANG - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Quentin drives, white knuckles on the wheel.

Nancy hugs herself in the passenger seat, absently rubbing the bandage around her wounded arm. After a quiet beat.

NANCY

Hey. Talk to me.

QUENTIN

About what?

NANCY

Anything to keep me awake.

QUENTIN

Okay. Let's see. What music are you listening to? What do you like?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NANCY

If you looked at my iPod it would look eerily familiar. I don't think I told you, but I listen to your podcast every week.

QUENTIN

Oh? So you're the one.

Nancy smiles.

NANCY

You got me hooked onto some great stuff. It's what I listen to when I paint.

QUENTIN

Get outta town. Really?

NANCY

It's true. I've been working on a piece for you, inspired by your latest playlist. I love that track by Justice.

Quentin smiles, too. For the first time in many hours, they enjoy regular teen conversation. It feels good to feel normal, just for a few moments.

QUENTIN

I wanted to ask you something, earlier.

NANCY

Ask me.

QUENTIN

When this is all over, and we've finally slept soundly for, like, a week straight, I was wondering, if you'd --

NANCY

(immediately)

Yes.

Quentin laughs.

QUENTIN

Well, that was fast.

NANCY

Wait, did you just ask me out?

Quentin's smile vanishes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

QUENTIN

Uhh, yes?

NANCY

Oh. Okay. Then yes; yeah.

QUENTIN

Wait, what did you think I asked you?

Nancy, suddenly bashful:

NANCY

I thought you asked if I wanted to have sex with you.

QUENTIN

Oh.

(beat)

Oh! So, I have another question for you now, oddly enough...

Nancy grins.

NANCY

How odd, yes.

The Mustang's headlights illuminate a HITCHER on the side of the road. As Quentin passes by, it's clearly FREDDY, holding out his gloved hand.

Quentin snaps out of his flirtation and checks the road behind him.

NANCY

What?

QUENTIN

I saw him on the side of the road.

NANCY

Freddy?

QUENTIN

Yeah.

NANCY

How long have you been up?

QUENTIN

Long enough.

NANCY

Let me drive, then.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Quentin checks the road: Still no sign of other drivers.
No sign of Freddy either.

QUENTIN

Okay. Yeah.

He peers in the rearview mirror --

FREDDY is in the back seat.

QUENTIN

Nancy, look out, he's --

Before Nancy can turn, Freddy YANKS on her seat belt to trap her flat against the car seat and then STABS through the seat and up through her chest.

The blades punch out her blouse, blood spraying onto the windshield --

Nancy's eyes roll up --

QUENTIN

NO!

Freddy un-skewers Nancy and leans up into Quentin's face, one hand pressing down hard on his accelerator-pedal foot:

FREDDY

That felt good.

QUENTIN

YOU SON OF A BITCH!

The world outside is traveling at ridiculous speeds now. It's like the Mustang has reached 300 miles per hour.

The Mustang's engine squeals in combustive agony.

Freddy starts shaking Quentin, pulling at his arms --

FREDDY

(in Nancy's voice)

Wake up, Quentin, wake up!

Quentin looks at him --

It's NANCY now, trying to wake him up --

NANCY

Get off the gas! Quentin!

Quentin looks back at the road --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They're fishtailing onto the shoulder, losing control --

EXT. TREE-LINED ROAD - CONTINUOUS ACTION

The Mustang skids and slides in a desperate battle to put itself back on the road --

But loose gravel spins it and it SLAMS nose-first into a large tree --

Metal, glass, and plastic explode --

The entire windshield detonates into a million shards as --

The air bags POP inside --

And the rear wheels land on the ground again.

Beat. Smoke billows from the mauled engine block.

INT. MUSTANG - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Quentin coughs and pushes against his airbag. It deflates.

He winces and holds his ribs, then looks at Nancy --

She's out cold in her seat. Her scalp bleeds from a head wound. Her airbag didn't keep her from hitting the window.

QUENTIN

Nancy...
(coughs)
Nancy!

He gently shakes her.

She slowly comes to. Groaning.

Quentin breathes a sigh of relief and gets out.

A beat later he opens Nancy's door and pulls her free.

QUENTIN

C'mon, easy now, easy...

EXT. ROADSIDE - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Nancy and Quentin hold onto each other as they stumble back onto the road.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Nancy's head is swimming. She's lost and unfocused.

NANCY

My head...

QUENTIN

You got a concussion. Hold tight.
I'm calling nine-one-one.

He dials and puts the phone up to his ear.

Nancy grabs it from him and disconnects the call.

With a teardrop of blood leaking down her face from her forehead, she looks in desperate need of a hospital.

NANCY

We can't go back to the hospital.
Not yet.

QUENTIN

Then what now! It's another three
miles to the end of Elm Street!

Nancy turns and looks out the way they were driving.

And she starts walking.

She's wounded and limping slightly.

STAYING ON Nancy, her breath pluming in the cold night air.

After a dozen steps or so, Quentin catches up by her side. He keeps stride with her.

The two broken, bruised, sleep-deprived kids walk into town.

EXT. ELM STREET - TIGHT ON THE FAMILIAR STREET SIGN -
NIGHT

DRIFTING DOWN to find Nancy and Quentin crossing a set of railroad tracks.

They march like zombies.

NANCY'S POV

That distant roar leads to another reality SHIFT --

QUICK POP-IN NIGHTMARE LANDSCAPE

The winds howl and a demonic-looking dog in a yard BARKS at us. On the street, a long streak of blood runs like a line parallel to the curb.

BACK TO SCENE

Shifted back to reality. No blood on the street.

NANCY

This way.

SAME SCENE - A MOMENT LATER

The couple arrives at a cul-de-sac. They stop in the middle of the dead end, their attention focused at the last house at the very end of the road:

THE PRESCHOOL.

The house has been converted into a school-ish building with the sign out front.

"CLOSED" reads the sign attached to the Preschool sign.

Another dull roar and SHIFT --

QUICK POP IN NIGHTMARE REALM

The blood trail leads to a POLE in the yard where Marcus' body hangs, the words "DIE NANCY" still carved into his chest. Nearby, the creepy SCHOOLGIRLS jump rope:

CREEPY GIRLS

One, two, Freddy's co-

BACK TO SCENE

-- snapping to reality. The shift causes Nancy to stumble.

NANCY

They're getting worse. Must hurry.

Approaching the front porch now. Quentin peers in through the front window.

QUENTIN

Nobody's home.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NANCY

Good.

Nancy throws a brick through the window, startling Quentin.

With her jacket she pushes out the last of the glass still clinging to the pane, and ducks inside.

Quentin looks out at the street, then follows, one hand absently moving to the crucifix around his neck.

INT. PRESCHOOL CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Little desks and little chairs, facing a teacher's desk. An old chalkboard on the back wall. Homemade arts-and-crafts decorations from two holidays ago smother the bulletin boards.

Nancy doesn't linger.

INT. PRESCHOOL HALL - MOMENTS LATER

Nancy follows the hall to the door to the office. Quentin wants to be watching every door at once.

QUENTIN

This is seriously creepy. I keep thinking I'm dreaming.

INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Small and sparsely furnished. Quick sound of a child's laughter -- but it's just an echo.

Nancy quickly checks the desk drawers.

Quentin scans the bookshelf, pokes his head into the little coat closet.

NANCY

Anything?

QUENTIN

Nothing.

Nancy goes back into the hall.

INT. PRESCHOOL HALL - CONTINUOUS ACTION

She pauses at an interior door marked "STORAGE." Opens it.

A set of stairs plunge down into darkness.

Nancy fumbles for a light switch, flips it on.

She descends, into --

INT. BOILER ROOM - CONTINUOUS ACTION

The room extends the length and width of the preschool.

Pipes and ventilation ducts snake this way and that.

A row of old black filing cabinets line one wall.

Household tools are strewn about.

In the center: An old wood-fire oven that serves as the trunk to a set of black pipes. It may have been the building's original heating system.

Nearby, a tattered recliner.

Nancy ducks under a cobweb and looks around.

The filing cabinets seem to be their last resort.

QUENTIN

I don't like this.

NANCY

Start a fire.

He nods and gets to work at the oven.

SAME SCENE - MOMENTS LATER

Nancy yanks at a cabinet drawer, rifles through files.

NANCY

They have student records going
back for decades...

Quentin adds more wood to the fire. It's burning well now.

He leaves the door open so the boiler room is warm, instead of the rest of the house.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

QUENTIN

We just need one decade ago.

He moves to another cabinet and begins looking.

Nancy, out of patience, kicks at her cabinet and sits down on a box to start looking through the files of a bottom-most drawer.

When she scoots forward a little to reach the next drawer, the box rustles.

Nancy gets up and stares down at the box.

She blows off the dust to reveal "EVIDENCE / KRUEGER."

NANCY

Quentin...

Nancy rips open the box.

INSIDE

A row of audio cassette tapes. And manila folders stuffed with glossy photos and paperwork.

Quentin helps her pull out the contents of the box. He gets distracted by the number of audiotapes.

One pair has the name "Quentin" written on the side.

QUENTIN

Jesus, there's more than I thought.

(reading labels)

Dr. James Britt -- isn't he the shrink who works for the school system now?

But Nancy is preoccupied with the stuff in the file folders.

In particular: A folder labeled "THOMPSON, NANCY (AGE 5)."

She stares into it as if it were a carnival horror show.

The fear and disgust grows more pronounced as she flips through one photo after the next.

She doesn't realize when she starts crying.

(NOTE: We never see the photos or the contents of the folder.)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NANCY

(sotto)
Dear God...

Quentin is still absorbed in the tapes. He looks around:

QUENTIN

I wonder if there's a tape player
somewhere. We should play a
little before we burn -- Nancy?

Nancy drops the folder and bends over behind the filing cabinet, emptying her stomach.

QUENTIN

Shit, are you okay?

Nancy's dry heaves tell him "No."

Quentin sees the file folder atop the box and reaches for it.

He opens it to look inside --

INSERT - FILE FOLDER

THE FIRST PAGE on top is a category label for the contents. Quick pops of choice phrases --

"Sexual Abuse Evidence", "Photo Batch 4," "Use of Garden Tools," "Risk of Permanent Damage."

BACK TO SCENE

-- the folder is YANKED from Quentin's hands.

Nancy, still queasy, pale as a ghost, clutches it.

Quentin seems more unnerved now than ever before.

NANCY

We were wrong.

QUENTIN

What?

NANCY

Freddy is a monster. He always was.

QUENTIN

But, I thought...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NANCY

He's not after us because we lied,
he's after us because we told.

The realization sends Quentin reeling. He rakes his hand through his hair.

He starts pacing. Their only solution to stopping the nightmares just evaporated.

QUENTIN

Fuck fuck FUCK!

He kicks a cabinet.

QUENTIN

What are we gonna do now! How can
we stop him!

Nancy is mentally elsewhere. But then her eyes suddenly focus on something else in the room --

A workman's sun hat. Old and ratty, dangling from a shovel's handle.

NANCY

There is one way.

QUENTIN

How?

NANCY

I could pull him out.

Quentin stops. What?

NANCY

Like I did with his hat.

QUENTIN

Pull Freddy... out? Out here?

NANCY

Yes.

QUENTIN

It's not bad enough he can kill us
in our sleep, you want him to kill
us while we're awake?

NANCY

He doesn't have any real power out
here. In this world, he's just
human. We can take him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

QUENTIN

Nancy, hang on. Even if you could pull this off, and I ambush him when he shows up... You have to go to sleep to make this work.

NANCY

I know.

QUENTIN

You have a concussion. Never mind Freddy, the sleep alone could put you in a coma.

NANCY

I know.

QUENTIN

Then please, don't do it. Let me try instead.

Nancy lays down on the lone throw-rug in the boiler room, near the warm heater-oven.

NANCY

I'm about to fall asleep anyway.

Quentin follows her down, sitting close by. He's not giving up on the debate just yet.

QUENTIN

It's crazy.

NANCY

Trust me. I'll bring him out.

QUENTIN

I trust you. I'm just worried.

NANCY

Just, be ready to jump him when it happens. Okay? I may not be much help by then.

QUENTIN

Hey.

Quentin gets close, hovers over Nancy, and kisses her.

She kisses him back.

When they finally part lips:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

QUENTIN

Trust me. I'll kick his ass.
Here, take this.

Quentin pulls off his crucifix necklace and puts it on her.

Nancy tenderly holds the tiny silver cross in one hand.

Quentin grabs the shovel and sits down in the old recliner.

Nancy takes a breath and closes her eyes.

Quentin sits forward. Leans on his shovel. His knee bounces nervously.

Nancy's breathing relaxes.

CLOSING ON her face...

A satin cushion lining a plank of stained wood flips upright along one side of her body as if on hinges.

Another plank snaps into place, creating a corner.

The lighting shifts, growing darker.

Nancy opens her eyes --

NIGHTMARE - INT. COFFIN - NIGHT

-- she's inside a coffin. Nancy pushes and kicks at the lid...

EXT. HEARSE - CONTINUOUS ACTION

The coffin in the back of this hearse bursts open.

Nancy climbs out, cautious. She scans the immediate area.

The cemetery is abandoned.

Nancy puts her hand to her neck but --

THE CRUCIFIX NECKLACE is gone. It's not on her dream-self.

Nancy starts running down the small road, passing GRAVE STONES with names on them: Dean. Jesse. Kris. Marcus.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NANCY

Krueger!

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE CEMETERY - MOMENTS LATER

Nancy makes it to the middle of this street.

Fog prevents her from seeing beyond a block in either direction. No one is here.

NANCY

Where are you?

INT. BOILER ROOM - NIGHT

Quentin rubs his face with his sleeve. Blinks. Checks his phone for the time.

He starts playing with the settings.

QUENTIN

Alarm, yes. Custom ring tone?
Don't mind if I do.

At his feet, Nancy twitches in her sleep.

Quentin blinks again, then settles back in his chair.

QUENTIN

C'mon, let's get this done...

A strange noise gets his attention. What is that?

He tries to sit up, but he can't move.

He's stuck to the chair. When he tries to lift his arms, the fabric clings to him like sap.

From the shadows, Freddy emerges.

FREDDY

That was my chair.

QUENTIN

Shit shit shit --

FREDDY

I used to tell you stories in that chair.

Freddy steps to the filing cabinet and opens a drawer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FREDDY

You remember what scared you?

QUENTIN

Fuck you, Freddy!

Freddy pulls out a very large jar. Dozens of dark shapes skitter inside the glass.

He steps into the light and we see what they are:

FREDDY

Spiders.

Quentin pales. He stares at the jar in the terror.

FREDDY

Especially the ones with enough
venom to kill you.

(smiles)

Like these.

Freddy shakes the jar, and the mass of spiders inside react like an angry swarm.

QUENTIN

Don't -- don't -- DO NOT DO THIS --

Freddy opens the lid and dumps the jar on Quentin --

INT. BOILER ROOM - NIGHT (REALITY)

Quentin, asleep in the chair, spasms and thrashes.

Large red welts appear all along his face and hands, and his breathing turns shallow.

At his feet, Nancy slumbers restlessly...

NIGHTMARE - EXT. ELM STREET - NIGHT

Nancy reaches the end of the street and faces the preschool.

NANCY

Where are you, Freddy!

Quentin SCREAMS from within the school building.

Nancy rushes inside.

INT. BOILER ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Nancy moves down the stairs into the slightly off-kilter boiler room: Like the real one except the colors are off, and the furnishings look like they did ten years ago.

Spiders scurry past her feet. She backs up to the steps.

From here she can see Quentin in the chair.

A handful of spiders still crawl on his corpse.

Nancy recoils, then steels herself.

NANCY

(sotto)
It's not real.

FREDDY (O.S.)

Poor Quentin. Must have been
tired.

Nancy cautiously steps toward Quentin.

NANCY

This is my nightmare. He's not
dead.

Freddy is somewhere in the darkness of the boiler room, behind the pipes, around a corner... somewhere.

FREDDY (O.S.)

Oh, were you relying on your
boyfriend to wake you up?

Nancy, in tears, finally accepting that Freddy got to him.

NANCY

You son of a bitch!

Freddy is suddenly right behind her, grabbing her and pulling her close -- hoarsely flirting into her ear:

FREDDY

I'm your boyfriend now, Nancy.

Nancy elbows him and stomps to get free --

Freddy hits her hard enough to launch her into the chair --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She topples the chair, Quentin's body spilling out beside her and his phone clattering nearby.

FREDDY

Let's play like we used to play.

Nancy gets up again, and rushes him when --

QUENTIN'S PHONE lights up. It plays her favorite track from his playlist. Justice.

Freddy charges back at Nancy, their collision sending them both to the floor with Freddy on top.

The music-alarm keeps playing. Freddy gets up and SMASHES the phone, silencing it. He looms over her.

FREDDY

Can't have you waking up, can we.
Not until I've had my fun.

Nancy coughs, tries to get up again, but the best she can manage is her hands and knees.

Something dangling from Nancy's neck catches her eyes. A glimmer in the dark:

The crucifix necklace.

Nancy's hand finds the wood shaft of the shovel. Grips it. She musters the strength to stand up.

NANCY

Too late. You're in my world now.

The phone alarm was real, and in that moment of collision Nancy pulled Freddy into reality.

INT. BOILER ROOM - NIGHT (REALITY)

Freddy's smile suddenly vanishes as --

Nancy CRACKS him with the shovel --

Freddy loses teeth and stumbles back --

Nancy advances, swinging again --

Freddy holds up an arm to protect himself --

But the shovel just breaks his arm, such is Nancy's
rage --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Freddy staggers backward against the open heating oven --

Nancy advances, cracking the shovel on his knee --

Freddy WAILS --

NANCY

That was for Dean!

WHAM another hit --

NANCY

Kris!

(wham)

Jesse!

(wham)

Marcus!

(wham)

Quentin!

Freddy is a mess now, clutching the door to the heater.

The shovel comes in for another swing but this time
Freddy swipes it, SLICING the shovel in half.

Freddy then TRIPS Nancy, rearing his glove at her face --

Nancy grabs it with both hands, it's a fight of pure
muscle now, the blades venturing close to her eyes --

FREDDY

You can't -- kill -- me --

But she starts to overpower him, turning the glove's
points back at Freddy until --

NANCY

Watch me.

She JAMS the knives into his chest, and Freddy collapses
backward into the wood-burning oven --

Instantly catching fire -- Freddy's WAILING turns more
and more inhuman, his whole head quickly engulfed --

Nancy steps back, grabs a container of some cleaning
solution on a shelf.

She pops the lid and throws it on Freddy (ironically,
like he tossed the jar of spiders on Quentin).

Instantly, the fire spreads across his body, consuming
him and the rug in flames.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Nancy turns and goes to Quentin's body. Quentin's eyes shift -- he's still barely alive, somehow.

She picks him up as the fire spreads near her.

EXT. PRESCHOOL BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Nancy walks out of the school carrying Quentin.

The fire has spread to the ground floor, licking out the windows behind her. Freddy's DEATH-WAIL echoes into the night.

She keeps marching, never looking back.

EXT. ELM STREET - NIGHT

Fire engines and emergency vehicles crowd this dead end.

An ambulance heads off, sirens clearing the way ahead of it.

INT. AMBULANCE - CONTINUOUS ACTION

PARAMEDICS manage Quentin in the stretcher.

Nancy sits wrapped in a blanket on the bench beside him. Her head wound and arm have been professionally bandaged.

She's holding Quentin's hand.

Quentin manages to open his eyes and look at Nancy.

His voice cracks. He's barely hanging on to life.

QUENTIN

Did you get him?

Nancy nods.

Quentin smiles.

PARAMEDIC

Don't try to speak, please. Just lie still. Get some rest.

Quentin's smile is contagious. Nancy grins back at him.

NANCY

Yeah. Get some rest.

They know what value those words hold.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Quentin closes his eyes again.

Beat. Nancy lets out a long sigh. It's finally over.

Quentin's vitals suddenly spike --

Paramedics start scrambling when --

FOUR GASHES APPEAR across Quentin's chest --

Nancy opens her mouth to scream and we --

SMASH TO BLACK.

THE END

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