

k n o w i n g

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DIRECTOR'S 5TH DRAFT

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OVER DARKNESS, we hear strange garbled sounds -- a mix of static and radio interference. Then A NEW SOUND. Soft at first, but rising in volume until it dominates the white noise... Never clear enough to be understood... but eerie, persistent:

VOICES, WHISPERING...

FADE IN:

ON THE FACE OF LUCINDA EMBRY

A pretty seven year-old girl, her fine blonde hair blowing in the wind. She's staring up at something, hypnotized.

The eerie envelope of whispers surrounding her trance is punctured by distant, dreamlike cries of CHILDREN PLAYING.

WE PULL OUT to reveal she's standing in an

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - DAY

KIDS swarm about the schoolyard behind her. Tossing balls. Jumping rope. The girls wear modest dresses and skirts, the boys, drainpipe jeans and button-up shirts, hair short and neat.

It's clear we're not in the here and now.

The schoolbell RINGS, and students abandon the playground at the instruction of their youthful teacher, MISS TAYLOR.

MISS TAYLOR (O.S.)
Everyone inside now! Come on!
(beat)
Lucinda, we're going in! Lucinda...?!

Lucinda doesn't react. She remains motionless. Only now do we reveal the object of Lucinda's interest. She's been staring at

THE SUN

Its golden disc is visible behind wind-blown clouds, which have dimmed it enough to make it observable.

Lucinda remains transfixed until Miss Taylor approaches and takes her hand. Gently tugs her out of frame.

As the clouds finally move aside -- the sun's brilliant glare fills the screen, whiting the frame.

SCHOOL ENTRANCE

Miss Taylor shoos Lucinda into the building with the other kids, passing WORKMEN finishing a paint job on the doors. Another WORKER fixes letters above the entrance.

P A U L R E V E R E E L E M E N T A R Y S C H O

It's a new school, the finishing touches almost complete.

SUPER THE TITLE: **Lexington, Massachusetts. 1958.**

MISS TAYLOR (O.S.)

Now you all remember tomorrow is our
official opening day, don't you?

INT. CLASSROOM

The students are at their desks, hands folded, all eyes forward.
MISS TAYLOR stands at the blackboard.

STUDENTS

Yes, Ma'am.

MISS TAYLOR

And you remember Principal Clark ran a
competition last month to find the best
ideas for celebrating this special day.

Her students sit up excitedly, suddenly awakened.

VARIOUS STUDENTS

Ooh! / ooh! / Me! / Mine!

MISS TAYLOR

Well, yesterday the staff selected the
winning idea, and it came from this class!

Thrills of anticipation ripple down the aisles as Miss Taylor
pauses for effect...

MISS TAYLOR (CONT'D)

The winner is our own Lucinda Embry!

Miss Taylor points out Lucinda at the back of the class, and
everyone looks round at her. Some kids CLAP and CHEER while
others just stare. Lucinda doesn't look excited or interested.

MISS TAYLOR (CONT'D)

We'll be closing our dedication ceremony
with the burial of a time capsule!

The children go quiet. Frowns of confusion everywhere.

STUDENT

...What's a time capsule?

Miss Taylor's hands reach into a cardboard box and produce a
SMOOTH STEEL CYLINDER. Two feet high. Gleaming with newness.

MISS TAYLOR

This is a time capsule. It's a way to send a message to the future.

She sets it upon her desk for all to see, and everyone starts talking at once. Miss Taylor raises a hand for quiet;

MISS TAYLOR (CONT'D)

All right, everyone. I know it's exciting.

KID WITH GLASSES

But Miss Taylor... when is the future?

MISS TAYLOR

Well... the future can be tomorrow, or it can be a long time from now. For instance, this time capsule will be opened in fifty years.

VARIOUS STUDENTS

Fifty years?! / Wow! / Geez!

MISS TAYLOR

Now put your thinking caps on, because I want each of you to draw what you think the future is going to look like. Then we'll put your pictures in the capsule and fifty years from today a group of children just like yourselves will open it to see what you drew. Does that sound like fun?

STUDENTS

Yes, Ma'am!

Excitement builds in the room, as we

TIME CUT TO:

PENCILS AND CRAYONS fly across paper as the students draw rocket ships, people walking on Mars, a man with mechanical wings flying through the air. Pure 50's sci-fi. A few girls draw futuristic outfits and hairstyles with elaborate coloring.

Miss Taylor CLAPS HER HANDS together --

MISS TAYLOR

Time's up! Everyone hand your work in.

She walks the aisles collecting pictures. Reaching the back, she finds Lucinda's head is still lowered, working away furiously.

MISS TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Lucinda, you need to finish up now.

Lucinda doesn't respond, so Miss Taylor leans in to see what she's scribbling. It isn't a picture at all. She is filling her sheet with LONG LINES OF NUMBERS. Crammed on top of one another, leaving no space. The bottom line is almost complete...

Overcoming her initial surprise, Miss Taylor deflates.

MISS TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Oh Lucinda, the assignment was to draw a picture.

(whispers, exasperated)

This was *your* idea...

Lucinda just keeps writing, utterly focused. There's an inch of space left to fill when Miss Taylor snatches up the sheet, adding it to her pile. She returns to the front.

Lucinda's eyes follow her sheet with dismay, yet she seems unable to cry out in protest.

PRINCIPAL (O.S.)

We, the students and faculty of Paul
Revere Elementary...

EXT. PAUL REVERE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL/ENTRANCE STEPS - DEDICATION DAY

The students are gathered around A CLEAN HOLE BORED INTO THE CONCRETE, ABOUT THREE FEET IN DIAMETER. Each one holds a helium balloon on a string.

THE PRINCIPAL reads from a round bronze PLAQUE that rests on an easel, addressing a gathered crowd of teachers and parents.

PRINCIPAL (CONT'D)

...hereby bury this time capsule in
dedication of our new school, and we
charge our descendants to open this vault
of history fifty years from today.

The steel TIME CAPSULE is lowered into the hole.

AT THE BACK OF THE CROWD, Miss Taylor looks down at LUCINDA. She's holding a yellow balloon... so sad and preoccupied.

Miss Taylor turns back to see the PRINCIPAL wrap up his speech.

PRINCIPAL (CONT'D)

To the future, and the promise it holds!

The crowd breaks into thunderous APPLAUSE.

Miss Taylor glances down again... and Lucinda is gone.

She scans the area. No one on the school field... the playground is empty. The teacher glances up... and there's Lucinda's YELLOW BALLOON, floating into the sky all alone.

MISS TAYLOR

Lucinda?

WORKERS lower THE BRONZE PLAQUE over the hole. It THUNKS heavily into place, the time capsule sealed.

The crowd is still APPLAUDING. ALL THE CHILDREN release their balloons. Dozens of colored spheres drift heavenward.

Now some TEACHERS and PARENTS notice Miss Taylor... seeing the panic in her eyes. Sensing something has gone wrong.

MISS TAYLOR (CONT'D)

LUCINDA!!!

FLASHLIGHTS SWEEP THROUGH A DARK FRAME as we cut to...

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - NIGHT

A SEARCH PARTY combs the school perimeter with flashlights.

VOICES

Lucinda?! Lucinda -- where are you?!

Lucinda's distraught PARENTS stand in the inky schoolyard... her MOTHER crying. The PRINCIPAL does what he can to comfort them.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - NIGHT

Miss Taylor and a POLICE OFFICER move quickly down the hallway. Both holding FLASHLIGHTS as they search empty classrooms.

The OFFICER moves on, as Miss Taylor enters a

CLASSROOM

The rows of empty desks are ghostly in the moonlight. Her beam probes the shadows, and she's about to leave when a SCRATCHING sound emanates from inside the students' coat closet.

Miss Taylor cautiously approaches, reaches out to open the door --

-- and inside it her beam illuminates... Lucinda staring out at her. Miss Taylor GASPS --

MISS TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Lucinda! Thank God!

Then the teacher realizes Lucinda isn't staring at her; she's staring *through* her, trance-like.

MISS TAYLOR (CONT'D)

What are you doing in here?

Lucinda doesn't respond. The flash beam dips to outline Lucinda's curiously raised hands. They're making circular scratching motions in the air... and now we realize HER FINGERTIPS ARE COVERED WITH BLOOD, THE NAILS RIPPED TO SHREDS.

Miss Taylor's face blanches in horror. Her flashlight plays over some kind of inscription painfully carved into the wood -- but returns to the girl's crimson fingers before we can read it.

Before Miss Taylor can speak, Lucinda shudders. Whispers;

LUCINDA

Stop it!... Stop talking!

Lucinda clamps her blood-caked fingers over her ears.

MISS TAYLOR

Lucinda... what on earth...

LUCINDA

(tears streaming)

Please make them stop whispering!

She stares helplessly into Miss Taylor's

FLASH BEAM

AND WE PULL BACK from its circular white disc until it becomes a pinpoint of light against black. All sound drops away. More pinpoints of light appear against the dark, until we realize...

...we're gazing at a BLACK SKY FULL OF STARS.

RUN OPENING TITLES AS -- WE PAN OFF THE COSMOS...

WE ARE HIGH ABOVE THE EARTH looking down on the globe.

Quadrants of the planet. Familiar cloud covered land-masses drift past, as day turns to night.

A SERIES OF ANGLES -- EVER CLOSER -- like satellite photos...

...the northern seaboard of the United States...

...then the Northeast Corridor -- the metropolitan expanse from Boston down to Washington DC, New York City squarely in the middle. A necklace of millions of twinkling lights which cluster densely around the major cities...

...then the darker edge around one of the city clusters...

...CLOSER STILL until we look down on a suburban area -- houses sparsely scattered amidst a sea of dark trees...

...then one particular house -- TWO TINY FIGURES in the backyard in the warm glow spilling from the house.

TIGHTEN ON PROFESSOR TED MYLES, early forties, unkempt like he's seen better times, pressed up against the eyepiece of an expensive amateur telescope, searching for something...

SUPER THE TITLE: **50 Years Later**

EXT. TED'S BACKYARD - NIGHT

Ted straightens up, satisfied. Looks over his shoulder.

TED
Caleb -- come look!

While he waits, something SIZZLES beside him. Ted looks down, flips a couple of hot dogs on a BBQ grill.

We're in the tree-lined backyard of a neat, two-story Colonial home. Across the grass, playing Keep-Up with a soccer ball is his son CALEB, eleven years old going onto twelve. Nearly a teenager, and the day can't come fast enough.

The ball bounces off his foot, knee, head... but he mis-times a second header and it hits the ground. He jogs over, resigned.

CALEB
What is it?

TED
(proudly nods skyward)
Saturn's rings await your approval.

Caleb squints through the eyepiece for a moment. He clocks them... and pulls back, unimpressed.

CALEB
Has anyone found life on other planets?

TED
Not yet. Guess it's just us for now.

Caleb ponders this a moment...

CALEB
Have we seen any that might have life?

TED

A few. But we'd need a telescope better than anything we've got now to be sure.

Caleb eyes his Dad's scope, shrugs with simplistic kid logic.

CALEB

Then what's the point? Why keep looking?

Before Ted can answer, Caleb trots back toward the house.

TED

Where are you going?

CALEB

To watch that Discovery program.

Ted spears a dog off the grill -- holds it up. It's almost black. Cooking isn't Ted's forte.

TED

Hey! Take your dog!

Ted scoops the hot dog into a roll as Caleb stops by the kitchen door, turns back with a groan.

CALEB

I can't eat it. I'm a vegetarian.

TED

What? Since when?

CALEB

Since today.

TED

Were you planning on telling the guy who buys the groceries around here?

CALEB

I just told you now, dad.

Caleb turns and hurries inside. Ted just stands there, rejected. He takes a bite out of the unwanted dog.

INT. CALEB'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - LATER

A typical kid's room. Toys, clothes and gadgets everywhere. Ted enters to find Caleb lying on his bed watching tiger cubs on TV.

Seeing his Dad make for the TV 'off' switch:

CALEB

It's almost over!

TED
You won't be able to concentrate in class tomorrow...

CALEB
We don't have class: it's the fiftieth anniversary, remember?

Actually, it had completely slipped his mind

TED
Sure I remember...

He notices Caleb is avoiding eye contact with him.

TED
Hey, look, when I said that it's just us out there -- you know I was talking about space, right? I didn't mean...
(embarrassed to say it)
Heaven or anything. I'm sure wherever mom is, she's looking down--

CALEB
You don't even *believe* in heaven, dad.

TED
I never said that, Caleb. I just said we can't know for sure, that's all.
(then, awkward)
If you want to believe, that's okay...

Ted sounds pretty unconvincing. He shuts the TV off, motions for Caleb to climb into bed.

TED (CONT'D)
Okay, bed-time...

Caleb burrows under his bedsheets. He turns away, pulls a HEARING AID out of his ear, and lays it on the bedside table.

TED (CONT'D)
Hey --

Caleb looks back at him, and Ted makes a conciliatory GESTURE with his hands -- in SIGN LANGUAGE. Talks the words out softly:

TED (CONT'D)
You and me -- together.

Caleb SIGNS something back, whispering halfheartedly.

CALEB
Forever.

They bump fists, and Ted turns off the light, heads for the door.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

As Ted shuts Caleb's door his expression changes. Darkening, like he's been keeping a brave face on for his son for too long.

INT. TED'S HOME OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Ted enters. Flicks on a stereo beneath crammed bookshelves. The scratchy chords of an old DELTA BLUES RECORDING bleed out.

Ted gazes disconsolately out of the window for a few moments: alone and lonely, drowning in memories...

Across the room HIGH UP on a crowded bookcase is A SMALL BRIGHTLY-WRAPPED GIFT BOX with a card hanging from it.

TED focuses on the box for a moment... then he pours himself a tumbler of scotch from a hidden cabinet, walks across the room and shuts the door in our faces, BLACKING THE SCREEN.

EXT. CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS - DAY

Sunrise over the Boston skyline. Golden rays glint off the lapping waves of the Charles River, college crews plying their rowboats back and forth across its shining surface.

WE PAN ACROSS the cluster of modern buildings on the north bank that form M.I.T., Harvard's ancient spires visible beyond them.

EXT. MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY - DAY

STUDENTS wander the tree-lined quad, kicking through piles of fiery orange foliage steadily raining down from above as -- WE PUSH IN on the Astrophysics Building.

INT. ASTRONOMY LECTURE HALL - DAY

Ted addresses A GROUP OF FRESHMEN in frayed jacket and jeans.

TED

Okay, to finish up today, I want to pose a topic to get you thinking along the right lines for your term paper.

(GROANS ripple)

The subject of randomness versus determinism in the universe. Anyone care to jump in?

A student, SPENCER, sticks up a hand.

SPENCER

Well, determinism says that occurrences in nature are causally decided by preceding events or natural laws.

(beat)

You know... that everything leading up to this point has happened for a reason.

Ted absorbs the notion as he walks over to a scale model of the SOLAR SYSTEM. Small spheres on a wire support frame represent the planets. Ted takes hold of THE SUN -- and removes it from the model.

He holds it in his hands, to curious glances from his students. It's the size of a soccer ball. He walks toward Spencer...

TED

Spencer --

...and LAUNCHES the "sun" at Spencer, who catches it.

TED (CONT'D)

Tell me something about the sun.

Surprised, Spencer turns the ball over in his hands. Thinking.

SPENCER

It's hot...?

The class LAUGHS.

TED

Elaborate. Please.

SPENCER

Temperature is about ten-thousand degrees Fahrenheit at the surface... twenty seven million degrees at the core.

TED

Good.

Ted gestures for Spencer to toss the "sun" back. He catches it, then throws it to someone else.

TED (CONT'D)

Stacy -- a word or two about the composition.

STACY

Mostly hydrogen. Also helium and a bit of carbon and nitrogen thrown in there.

TED

Excellent.

Stacy tosses the "sun" back to Ted, who quickly shoots it off to a third student way in the back.

TED (CONT'D)

Think fast, Donald.

Donald catches it.

TED (CONT'D)

Size...

DONALD

The diameter is, like... one hundred times larger than our planet. But volume-wise it's big enough to hold over one million Earths.

OUTSIDE IN THE HALL -- SOMEONE peers in through the rear doors.

BACK WITH TED -- he catches the "sun", returns it to the model.

TED

And yet, think of the perfect set of circumstances that put this celestial ball of fire...

Ted lifts the "Earth" sphere out of the model, then holds it in proximity to the sun.

TED (CONT'D)

...at just the correct distance from our little blue planet for life to evolve.

(beat)

Making it possible for you to be sitting here today in this riveting lecture.

The class LAUGHS. Ted lets them settle.

TED (CONT'D)

That's a nice thought, right? That everything has purpose, order to it.

Ted sets the model of the Earth back into its cradle, and he wanders toward the window as he continues --

TED (CONT'D)

But the other side of the argument -- the theory of randomness -- says it's all simply coincidence. The very fact that we exist is the result of a complex-yet-inevitable string of chemical accidents and biological mutations.

(MORE)

TED (CONT'D)
(stares out the window)
No purpose... No grand meaning...

Suddenly Ted seems to be lost in his own thoughts, fixed on some distant point beyond the glass. His students wait quietly for a moment, expecting him to return to them. When he doesn't --

SPENCER
What about you, Professor Myles?

TED
Excuse me?

SPENCER
What do you believe?

Disarmed by the question, Ted stares bleakly into the middle distance -- pain leaking out for a moment. The class wait awkwardly for his response... and finally --

TED
I think shit just happens.

A few chuckles, but the tone in his voice says Ted isn't joking.

TED (CONT'D)

See you next time. ...And don't forget to
note next week's excursion to Haystack
Observatory in your busy social calendars.
You finally get to see what we academics
do to earn our keep 'round here...

As the students gather their things and file outside, THE MAN who was waiting outside enters, approaches Ted. He is a fellow professor named PHIL BERGMAN, about the same age as Ted.

PHIL
...and it's some especially heavy shit for
a Monday morning, by the sound of it.

Ted looks up, pleased to see Phil.

TED
Since when does a Harvard psychology
professor audit my lectures?

PHIL
Since an M.I.T. astrophysics professor
owes him coffee.

EXT. CAMPUS QUAD - DAY

Ted and Phil fetch two coffees from a campus cappuccino stand and stroll across the student-packed quad.

TED
So... what's up?

PHIL
Can't we just hang out? Does there always
have to be an ulterior motive?

Ted just looks at Phil in silence. Phil holds up his hands --
guilty as charged.

PHIL (CONT'D)
Alright, alright. Remember Kim's sister?
Ph.D. Killer body.

TED
Is it ethical to say things like that
about your sister-in-law?

PHIL
Just a factual observation. Anyway, she's
in town this weekend --

TED
Really.

Off Ted's underwhelmed reaction --

PHIL
-- and she thinks you're 'intriguing',
which I thought was code for 'gay'... but
apparently not, because she asked if you'd
join us for dinner on Friday.

TED
Yeah... I don't know about Friday.

PHIL
You owe me one, Ted. After the escape
manoeuvre you pulled last time--

TED
Caleb was panicking about his homework.

PHIL
-- and the time before that he developed a
sore throat at the last minute. Hardly a
life-threatening condition...

Ted suddenly stops, remembering something.

TED
Wait. What time is it?

Phil holds out his watch so his friend can see.

TED (CONT'D)
Dammit. Caleb's ceremony. Sorry Phil...

And he's off and running.

PHIL
(calling out)
Hey... *Friday?*

TED
Let me think about it...

Ted keeps running, rounds a corner and is gone.

CUT TO:

THE PLAQUE we saw earlier -- worn and tarnished from a half century of age. Set firmly into concrete.

A broom enters frame as a janitor starts to sweep it clean.

EXT. PAUL REVERE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

At the front entrance of the school -- which is getting on in years, barely altered or upgraded since it was built -- TEACHERS set up chairs on the grass, while others hang a banner that reads: "CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF EDUCATION."

INT. PAUL REVERE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

Fifth graders bustle around the classroom. Cleaning the chalkboard. Straightening up. Getting it ready for visitors.

Caleb and another boy stand at a cage, feeding the class pet -- a small gray RABBIT.

TEACHER
Alright everyone, let's wrap it up. The ceremony starts in about five minutes.

The other boy rejoins the class, but Caleb dallies at the cage. Peers through the bars at the shuffling rabbit.

EXT. PAUL REVERE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

ALL THE STUDENTS file out of the building, their TEACHERS arranging them in groups on the front steps of the school.

WE PICK UP CALEB as he slips away from the group to cross the lawn. He squats in the grass, unfolds his shirt to reveal --

-- the rabbit.

Caleb sets the animal down on the grass, a secret smile on his face as he watches it hop away. He stands and turns... to find A GIRL from his class is walking past. She's seen him do it -- and she's pretty too. Caleb stands frozen, totally busted.

PRETTY GIRL

I won't tell.

She smiles at him, and walks on past to join the gathering. Caleb turns to watch her go, obviously sweet on her.

Suddenly, out of nowhere, he detects a strange buzzing in the air. WHITE NOISE and WHISPERING, similar to the opening.

The INTERFERENCE increases in volume, causing him to squint with discomfort. Caleb adjusts his hearing aid... and it dissipates. He follows the girl back to the crowd.

When Caleb has departed, WE PAN AFTER THE FREED RABBIT as it scampers into the woods... past A TALL MAN wearing a long dark coat who stands at the edge of the trees. His face is like a mask. Pale and implacable features.

We'll call him THE STRANGER. He's been watching Caleb.

In pre-lap dissolve we hear the sound of CHILDREN SINGING. Their voices bright and hopeful.

SINGING CHILDREN (O.S.)

The sun comes shining, as I was
strolling... the wheat fields waving, and
the dust clouds rolling...

EXT. PAUL REVERE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

THE STUDENTS stand on the steps, SINGING for parents and guests. The TIME CAPSULE PLAQUE is roped off with colored ribbons. A photographer takes pictures.

WE FIND CALEB amidst the singers. He glances around and spots his father. Ted signs "hello". Caleb signs back as he sings:

CALEB

The fog was lifting, a voice comes
chanting... this land was made for you
and me...

LATER IN THE CEREMONY -- A FEMALE PRINCIPAL addresses the crowd. Standing beside her is MISS TAYLOR, now in her late 70's.

PRINCIPAL

Fifty years ago the students and faculty of Paul Revere Elementary imagined what the future might hold. Today we unveil their legacy...

Polite applause all round.

PRINCIPAL (CONT'D)

Now I'd like to introduce you to someone very special: Miss Priscilla Taylor. Since Miss Taylor was there for the original dedication, it's only fitting that we have her do the honors today.

More applause as MISS TAYLOR steps up to the area cordoned-off around the plaque holding a pair of oversized ceremony scissors.

MISS TAYLOR

Just as my students fifty years ago looked to the future... let us now remember the past.

Miss Taylor slices through the ribbons. More applause as WORKERS pry the bronze plaque out of the concrete...

CALEB WATCHES WITH INTEREST as...

HANDS REACH INTO THE CONCRETE HOLE... and hoist the TIME CAPSULE into daylight. Dirty and rusty, but intact.

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

The place is packed with parents and their kids. Ted walks with Caleb through the crowd, an arm draped around his shoulder.

TED

I heard you singing. You were the best one up there.

CALEB

You could not hear me...

TED

As clear as day. I swear.

Just then, Caleb sees the pretty girl from class up ahead. He instantly pulls free of his father's arm, like he's embarrassed. He scoops the hearing aid from his ear too. Ted sees this and frowns, as Caleb tries to slip it into his pocket --

Caleb stops short, unhappily fits it back into his ear. Pulls away --

CALEB

Gotta go. They're starting.

He scampers off to join his classmates as they gather around the time capsule. Ted watches Caleb go... a little hurt by this reminder that his son is growing up rapidly.

WITH THE STUDENTS -- gathered around a table where Miss Taylor stands with the TIME CAPSULE. The air is electric as kids peer around each other for the best look.

MISS TAYLOR

Everyone's going to receive an envelope.
Open them gently now. They're very old.

A MALE TEACHER helps Miss Taylor open the time capsule... the seal CREAKING against years of rust.

The top comes off. Miss Taylor reaches inside the cylinder and pulls out a stack of ENVELOPES... yellowed with age.

Miss Taylor starts handing out the envelopes to a sea of eager reaching hands... one for every student.

KIDS OPEN THEIR ENVELOPES -- checking out these treasures from the past. We see familiar drawings of spaceships... the man with flying wings... people living on Mars.

Caleb filters through the crowd toward Miss Taylor. He's one of the only kids who doesn't have an envelope yet.

Miss Taylor looks down and she sees Caleb... empty-handed.

MISS TAYLOR (CONT'D)

This is the last one. You must be very special.

She hands him the remaining envelope. Caleb wanders away from the commotion... finding a private space in the cafeteria.

He reads the name on the envelope -- LUCINDA EMBRY. Some of the letters are written backwards, like a child who's still learning to spell. Caleb regards it for a beat, and slowly opens it.

He gently extracts the aged paper from within... unfolding it to reveal -- a PAGE OF NUMBERS. Row after packed row of RANDOM NUMBERS scribbled out in crayon.

As Caleb studies the sheet, he glances up to see a BOY looking over his shoulder.

BOY

What'd you get?

The boy glances down at the PAGE OF NUMBERS, and makes a face.

BOY (CONT'D)

Boring. Everyone else got a drawing.

Caleb looks back at the paper... trying to figure it out.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Caleb sits at the kitchen table doing homework. Ted cleans dishes at the sink, and Caleb looks over at him. He wants to bring something up, but needs to pick his words carefully...

CALEB

Hey, dad -- you know that kid Jason from soccer practice?

TED

Sure. I think I've met Jason before.

CALEB

He's having a sleep-over this weekend with some of our friends from school. He wants to know if I can go...

TED

Sounds like fun.

CALEB

They have a boat... Jason's dad might take us out on the lake.

Ted keeps washing the dishes.

TED

I'll think about it.

Caleb looks disappointed. He's been through this before.

CALEB

That means "no".

TED

It means I'll think about it.

Ted notices Caleb's stuff has spilled out of the backpack onto the floor, so he bends to collect it up...

...then, in amongst it all, he spies THE TIME CAPSULE PAPER.

Ted picks it up. Regards the random digits filling the page --

825674512896255

279912911012996
101405271019053

TED (CONT'D)

What are you doing with this?

Caleb sheepishly shrugs --

CALEB

I wanted to look at it some more... try to figure it out.

TED

Caleb, you weren't supposed to bring this home. It belongs to the school.

CALEB

But maybe it means something.

Ted glances at the TIME CAPSULE PAPER again.

TED

I don't know, but it's not ours to keep. You return this as soon as you get to school tomorrow. Got it?

(Caleb nods, then)

Let's go. Bed time.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT - LATER

It's quiet in the house. Most of the lights are turned out. Ted comes up the stairs... picking up one of Caleb's shoes. And then he hears A WOMAN'S VOICE... singing. He stops. Listens.

Ted pushes open Caleb's door and peeks in. The boy is lying on his bed in front of his TV in the dark, watching a home video.

ON SCREEN -- a PRETTY WOMAN sits beside a FIVE YEAR-OLD CALEB on the edge of his bed, singing him a lullaby. This is ALLISON -- Ted's wife. Caleb's mother.

ALLISON (ON SCREEN)

...sleep, little baby, lie still and slumber. Guardian angels will watch over thee... all through the night.

ON TED AT THE DOOR as he backs away, quietly closing it -- like he can't even bear to see her image.

INT. CALEB'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Caleb is comforted by the video of his mother, yet saddened at the same time. So near and yet so far...

ON SCREEN -- ALLISON turns out the light, and waves warmly.

ALLISON
Goodnight, baby.

ON CALEB as he flips off the TV. Draws the covers over himself.

INT. TED'S HOME OFFICE - NIGHT - LATER

Ted opens the cabinet again and pours another tumbler of scotch.
He sinks it in one go. Pours himself a second double shot.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ted settles into the couch. Surveying the TiVo menu on screen, he scrolls down the list titled TED, then continues on through CALEB'S MENU. In amongst The Simpsons and Malcolm In The Middle episodes he notices the program TIGERS UNDER THREAT/Discovery.

Intrigued -- and secretly keen to brush up on the subjects Caleb is interested in -- he presses SELECT. The documentary begins.

Ted leans forward to pour himself a third shot, but distracted by the start of the program he spills neat scotch over the rim. Annoyed at himself, Ted gets up from the couch.

KITCHEN

Cupping a hand under the dripping tumbler, Ted locates a roll of paper towels, but he can't rip one off with both hands occupied so he sets the glass down on the counter and tears off a sheet.

Returning to the drink... he realizes he accidentally set it down on the TIME CAPSULE PAPER. Ted snatches up the tumbler, but the wet bottom has imprinted a circular WATERMARK on the sheet.

TED
Damn... damn...

Ted dries the page carefully with the paper towel, but there's something about the way the water mark BREAKS UP A PARTICULAR LINE OF NUMBERS that makes him stop and take a closer look.

Ted scans the numbers... then his curiosity overtakes him. He wipes Caleb's spelling words from the DRY ERASE BOARD. Copies out the sequence of numbers in their place. Considers them for a beat, then he makes some slash marks, dividing up the numerals.

29/969/110/1

Ted looks at the sequence. It doesn't make any sense, so he erases the slash marks with his sleeve and tries again.

29/96/91101

The sequence still doesn't seem to have any meaning. Ted erases the slash marks a second time... stares at the numbers, and tries one more time -- his eyes filling with understanding.

2996/9/11/01

TED (CONT'D)

Nine... eleven... oh-one.

INT. TED'S HOME OFFICE - NIGHT - LATER

Ted enters his office. Stumbling in the dark. His movements are sloppy... slightly inebriated. He locates his computer and hits the power... the monitor glowing to life.

MOMENTS LATER, Ted sits before his computer. Draining the dregs of the scotch and scanning information on the internet. He types something into a search engine and a web page pops up.

ON THE COMPUTER SCREEN -- is a memorial webpage featuring a classic photograph of THE WORLD TRADE CENTER. Those majestic twin towers above a caption that reads:

9/11/01: A DAY WE WILL NEVER FORGET

Ted scans the screen urgently. Finally finds what he's looking for. He speaks quietly as he reads...

TED

-- in memory of the two-thousand, nine-hundred and ninety six lives that were lost that day...

Ted stares. Thunderstruck. He picks up the TIME CAPSULE PAPER... running his finger along the remaining numbers after the date -- 2996. Ted sits frozen in his seat...

TED (CONT'D)

What the hell is this?

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

We're on the DRY ERASE BOARD in the kitchen. Suddenly, it's RIPPED FROM THE WALL... leaving a conspicuous blank spot.

Ted takes the board, marches back down the hall with it.

INT. TED'S HOME OFFICE - NIGHT

Ted has the board propped up on his desk. He's now copied ALL THE ROWS OF NUMBERS... just finishing the last few digits.

Then with his marker Ted starts making SLASH LINES... pulling sequences out of the long rows of numbers that look like DATES.

Any two consecutive numbers that could signify a year since 1957 -- 65, 72 near the top of the page: 88, 94 around the center: 01, 03 towards the bottom -- Ted focuses on. Potential months and days are underlined in pencil beside them too.

Ted crosses to the computer. He starts typing information.

HOURS PASS as --

-- Ted clicks through various WEB PAGES.

-- ON SCREEN... the aftermath of the OAKLAND EARTHQUAKE.

-- Ted prints out IMAGES... ARTICLES...

-- photos of a catastrophic FREEWAY PILE-UP in freezing weather are taped on to the dry erase board beside a row of numbers.

-- Ted drinks as he types away at the keyboard. VARIOUS PRINT-OUTS now cluttering his desk...

-- an archived VIDEO NEWS CLIP runs on the computer screen... New Orleans houses being swallowed by rising FLOOD waters.

-- Shots of an IDAHO MINING DISASTER, the CHALLENGER DISASTER, the SIOUX CITY PLANE CRASH, the OKLAHOMA CITY BOMBING...

Ted works his way down the dry erase board, cross-checking DATES AND FATALITIES against the information on the internet. So far he's found matches for all of them.

WE PULL BACK FOR A WIDE SHOT OF THE DRY ERASE BOARD -- to reveal a faithful reproduction of every number line from Lucinda's paper. Each confirmed 'mortality/disaster date' combination has been divided with slash marks then circled off into groups.

The top half of the number string has been processed up to 1988, and a pattern is emerging -- between each circled group sits a smaller group of three to eight uncircled random digits. Little bursts of chaos breaking up the order.

9/11 aside, the bottom ten rows haven't been touched yet.

TED STANDS BEFORE THE BOARD to take stock of his progress...

THEN HE KEEPS GOING... working late into the night. Fueled by alcohol and a burning need to figure this out.

He types the next date into the search engine, then as Ted examines the screen...

...his face fills with disbelief. He reaches for the TIME CAPSULE PAPER and reads carefully to ensure he's entered the information correctly.

CLOSE ON LUCINDA'S HANDWRITING... a row of numbers reads:

122706

Ted's eyes widen with shock. This date means something to him.

TED

My God...

His empty tumbler slips off his desk as he recoils... and strikes the floor... glass SHATTERING all over the hardwood.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

PULL BACK from the blank wall where the dry erase board hung.

Caleb stands in the middle of the kitchen, holding his pack lunch and dressed for school. He stares at the vacant wall, wondering what happened here last night.

CALEB

(shouting)

Dad! We're gonna be late!

EXT. PAUL REVERE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL GATES - DAY

Ted's ride -- a sturdy Dodge Ram -- draws up in front of the school amongst the other parents dropping off their kids.

TWO CARPOOL CLASSMATES of Caleb's hop out of the cab backseat.

KIDS

Thanks for the ride, Mister Myles.

They slam their doors and head into school. Caleb stays behind in the passenger seat. He looks worried.

CALEB

Dad?

REVEAL TED at the wheel. He hasn't shaved. Hair uncombed. Still wearing yesterday's rumpled clothes.

CALEB (CONT'D)

Are you sick?

Ted glances over at his son with tired eyes.

TED

I'm fine. Just had a lot of work to do last night.

Caleb nods, but he's not buying it. He gets out of the car.

As he walks through the gates he passes the PRETTY GIRL he likes. She doesn't acknowledge him, and now Caleb sees she is focused on a HANDSOME BOY hanging round her who is taller than he is. She giggles at his jokes, obviously into him.

CALEB'S FACE FALLS. He looks back toward the car, toward safety, but Ted has driven off. Dropping his head a little, Caleb pushes on to class alone.

CLOSE ON IMAGES OF THE WORLD TRADE CENTER ATTACK. The collapsing towers... survivors staggering through ash-filled streets... the devastation of Ground Zero...

PULL BACK. More images. Ted's printouts of floods... hurricane aftermaths... plane crash sites.

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

And look at this --

PULL BACK FURTHER to reveal we're in the...

INT. ASTRONOMY LECTURE HALL - M.I.T. - DAY

It's empty except for two people. Phil sits at the front lecture desk... the IMAGES spread out before him.

Ted paces back and forth, running on fumes. He has the TIME CAPSULE PAPER on an overhead projector... the rows of numbers magnified on the chalkboard wall. 'Deaths & Date' sequences circled in pen spread from top to bottom at regular intervals.

Ted steps in front of the projection, pointing out a particular row of numbers three-quarters of the way down the page.

TED

-- look at the numbers beside the date.

(points)

Two-thousand-nine-hundred and ninety-six.

That's how many people died in the attacks that day.

Phil just watches Ted... doesn't say anything.

TED (CONT'D)

I've matched these number sequences to the dates of every major American disaster for the last fifty years --

(beat)

-- except for three.

Ted indicates the BOTTOM ROW OF NUMBERS on the large projection. Three number sequences are circled on it -- in pencil, not pen.

TED (CONT'D)

These last events haven't occurred yet, starting with this one.

(he points out the date)

Tomorrow, somewhere in the United States, forty-five people are gonna die in some kind of disaster...

PHIL

-- Whoa, Ted... listen to you.

TED

Listen to what?

Phil picks up a stack of Ted's disaster print-outs... and gestures at everything spread out on the lecture desk.

PHIL

All this. It's crazy.

TED

Crazy...? That's your professional diagnosis?

He stares at Phil -- frustrated his buddy doesn't get it. From his satchel he produces a MANILA FOLDER, drops it in Phil's lap.

PHIL

What is this --

TED

Open it.

Phil opens the folder. We see its contents in CLOSE FAST SHOTS:

-- PHOTOS of a fire damaged hotel.

-- a Xeroxed copy of a police report.

-- paperwork from LEXINGTON HILLS FUNERAL HOME.

-- an obituary. The name... ALLISON MYLES.

Phil shifts in his seat... uncomfortable.

PHIL

Why are you showing me this?

Ted points to a NEWS ARTICLE paper-clipped to the inside of the manila folder. The headline: "Hotel Fire Claims 12 Lives."

TED

The day Allison died in that hotel fire -- it's on the list too. From a piece of paper that's been buried in the ground for five decades. Explain that, Phil.

Ted's RISING VOICE echoes across the hall as some laughing, joking STUDENTS enter from the back. Ted shoots them a look.

TED (CONT'D)

Can you guys wait outside, please?

Sensing the tension in the room, the students quickly withdraw. Ted sits across from Phil, and lowers his tone.

TED (CONT'D)

I spent all night going over this. I went through the list again and again and I tried to fault it... but I couldn't.

Phil picks up the time capsule paper. Studies it.

PHIL

Maybe someone's playing a joke...

TED

I saw them dig it up! I watched them pull the time capsule from the ground and hand a sealed envelope to my son!

Phil eyes Ted a second, then nods towards the projected numbers:

PHIL

What do the other numbers mean? The uncircled groups?

TED

...I don't know yet. Maybe nothing. But the circled ones--

PHIL

Maybe *all of them* mean nothing, Ted.

TED

But the odds of--

PHIL

Okay, it's spooky, I grant you -- but step back a second.

(MORE)

PHIL (cont'd)
 Those uncircled sets of numbers aren't
 constant. Look:
 (points some out)
 There are gaps of three digits here...
 six there... then four, six, eight...

Ted sees it's true and a sliver of doubt takes hold of him. Phil leans forward, concerned. His voice is calm, soothing...

PHIL (CONT'D)
 One thing I've learned from twenty years
 of practice is that when people stare into
 the shadows for long enough... they'll
 see whatever they want to see in them.

Ted blinks, insulted by his friend's patronizing tone.

TED
 So you're not interested in what I'm
 telling you.

PHIL
 Ted, I think Allison's death has put you
 under a great deal of stress. It's
 clouding your judgement.

Ted gathers his papers together. He loads them into his briefcase, then heads for the door.

PHIL (CONT'D)
 Where are you going?

Ted opens the lecture hall doors to reveal a crowd of his STUDENTS gathered outside, listening in on the conversation.

Ted makes his way through them. Then, almost as an afterthought... he turns back to them, distracted --

TED
 Class is cancelled today.

CUT TO:

AN OLD BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOGRAPH OF LUCINDA EMBRY.

It's a class yearbook photo. Lucinda sits on the front row... her slack expression prominent among the other kids' smiles.

WOMAN'S VOICE
 Yes, I remember Lucinda.

EXT. BACK PORCH - DAY

Ted sits in a rocking chair across from the elderly MISS TAYLOR. A pitcher of iced tea sits on a wicker table in front of them.

Ted closes the yearbook. Sets it aside.

MISS TAYLOR

She was a sad little girl. Seemed like
there was nothing I could do to help her.

Ted nods, filtering this information.

MISS TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Would you like some iced tea?

TED

No, thank you.

Ted watches as Miss Taylor opens a small bottle of gin, pours a
shot into her tea.

TED (CONT'D)

Do you remember when your students buried
the time capsule?

MISS TAYLOR

Oh, yes. The children were so excited.

TED

And what about Lucinda?

Miss Taylor's face darkens as she recalls that day.

MISS TAYLOR

That was the day we couldn't find her.

(struggles to remember)

She was hiding in a classroom closet.
Scratching something into the door with
her fingernails, like an animal.

(shudders)

Horrible... Something frightened her, the
poor dear. We never could get her to tell
us what it was...

TED

She was scratching something on the closet
door?

(Miss Taylor nods)

What was it?

Miss Taylor looks off... wizened eyes straining to recall...

QUICK FLASHES of --

-- a yellow balloon rising in the sky.
-- flashlights cutting through the dark.
-- Lucinda standing in the closet. Her eyes haunted.
-- blood-stained fingers SCRATCHING shapes into the air...

BACK TO SCENE. Miss Taylor's eyes flick over to Ted, and she laughs. A little embarrassed.

MISS TAYLOR

Oh, just scribbles and nonsense I think...
Professor, you are testing an old woman's
memory... It's so long ago now. Can you
believe it's been fifty years?

(beat)

Oh, how rude of me. I never offered you a
drink. Would you like some iced tea?

Ted looks into Miss Taylor's eyes... and sees that age and
alcohol have taken a toll on her mind.

TED

Thank you... I'm fine.

Miss Taylor pours another shot of gin into her glass.

MISS TAYLOR

Why are you so interested in Lucinda,
Professor Myles?

Ted tries to seem offhand:

TED

My son got her time capsule message.
I thought we could meet her.

MISS TAYLOR

Oh, I'm sorry. You didn't know?

(beat)

Lucinda passed away several years ago.

Off Ted's look --

INT. TED'S TRUCK - DAY

Ted drives homeward, past suburban homes and open fields...

His own house edges into view... and he slows to a stop. Ted
stares through his windshield to observe A BLACK SEDAN idling by
the roadside, just past his mailbox. Caleb is talking to someone
inside the car, his soccer ball abandoned on the lawn.

Concerned, Ted accelerates... as a hand emerges from the sedan's
window to give something to Caleb, then it drives off.

EXT. ROADWAY BY TED'S HOUSE - DAY

Caleb watches the car roll away, then turns to see his dad's truck pulling up in it's place. Ted gets out, stares after the receding sedan with suspicion. He approaches his son.

TED
Who was that?

CALEB
I don't know. Somebody wanting directions to the highway.

TED
(eyes Caleb's closed fist)
What did he give you?

Caleb opens his palm to reveal a smooth, shiny BLACK STONE.

CALEB
Just this. Kinda cool, isn't it?

Ted confiscates it, sticks it in his pocket.

TED
What did I tell you about talking to strangers, Caleb? Now, you've got homework to be getting on with.

CALEB
Give me ten more minutes of practice.
(Ted is insistent)
Please! I'll play in the back yard!

TED
I don't want to tell you twice, Caleb.

Caleb scoops up the ball and slouches inside. Ted stares off down the road... but the mysterious dark car has vanished.

INT. TED'S KITCHEN - EVENING

Ted stuffs laundry into the machine. Straightening up, he is surprised to see the cheery face of a MID-THIRTIES WOMAN staring at him through the window. She's dressed in a nurse's uniform.

GRACE
Hey, stranger.

TED
Geez! What are you doing out there?

He opens the back door, and GRACE enters --

GRACE

On my way to work... graveyard shift this week. Just my luck. I said I'd drop in, remember? You didn't get my message?

TED

I've been busy.

GRACE

You're always busy.

Clocking the messy, unwiped counter behind him --

GRACE (CONT'D)

You sure are missing a woman's touch around here. How's my nephew?

TED

(sighs)

He's decided to become a vegetarian.

GRACE

A what...? Have you been feeding him Ted's famous dogs again?

(Ted looks away, guilty)

If you want someone to take him off your hands one evening, so you can go out -- you know, like normal people do...

TED

I appreciate the offer, sis, but we're fine. Really.

GRACE

(eyes him skeptically)

Mm-hmm...

(then)

Dad says hi.

Ted sighs even deeper, like he knew this was coming --

TED

Don't, Grace...

GRACE

He asks after you every time I see him. He worries about you.

TED

He said that?

GRACE

He doesn't have to.

There's an awkward moment of silence between them. Grace takes a step toward him and touches his arm. Gives it a comforting, sisterly squeeze. Ted can't bring himself to reciprocate.

GRACE (CONT'D)

You've gotta speak to him again one day.
This can't go on forever... and you know
it's what Allison wanted more than
anything: for Caleb to have a grandfather.

Her words have clearly impacted Ted, but he just can't deal with it right now. He grabs the door handle pointedly...

GRACE (CONT'D)

I'm going. I'm going. 'How are you,
Grace? What's up with your life? Well,
Ted, I'm glad you asked me that...'

TED

I have to get up early in the morning...

GRACE

(stepping outside)
Yeah? What have you got going on
tomorrow? I'll say a prayer.

TED

I hope nothing...

CLOSE ON - A DIGITAL CLOCK

As it flicks over from 11:59 p.m. to 12:00 a.m.

INT. TED'S LIVING ROOM/WIDER - LATER

Ted sits alone on his couch, nervously monitoring the time. His attention switches to the TV in front of him.

HE FLIPS IT ON... to a 24-hour cable news channel.

ANCHORMAN

-- the union threatening a walk-out if
their demands are not met --

He flips to another nightly news bulletin using the remote.

ANCHORWOMAN

-- experts say that solar flares this
weekend may disrupt cell phone
communications and some satellite --

Not what Ted's looking for either. He flips again -- CLICKING
through game shows... infomercials... talk shows...

LATER. Ted has sunk deeper into the sofa. Empty plates and cups around him like he's been up for a while. A fresh tumbler of scotch poured out to help with the digestion. With his laptop set up beside him he surfs news sites, flicking his eyes back to the TV for a channel change every few moments.

Ted cycles through to CNN.

CNN NEWSCASTER
-- and tonight in the Gulf of Mexico --

The television cuts to images of an OIL RIG ON FIRE. Flames leaping in the dark. Ted sits up sharply. Turns up the volume.

CNN NEWSCASTER (CONT'D)
-- Officials do not yet know the exact cause of the explosion, but they believe a malfunction in the cooling system --

IMAGES now of oil rig WORKERS being evacuated by helicopter off the deep sea drilling platform.

CNN NEWSCASTER (CONT'D)
-- emergency teams were on the scene within minutes of the blaze --

ON TED -- as he glances down at the TIME CAPSULE PAPER in his hands. The number "45" is circled along with today's date on the bottom row of numbers. Like a grim lottery ticket.

BACK ON THE TV as it cuts to a COAST GUARD OFFICIAL, mid-speech:

COAST GUARD OFFICIAL
...due to the prompt response of our rescue unit, the structure has been evacuated with no loss of life.

Ted takes a breath and sinks back into the sofa.

WE PAN OFF TED... and through a gap in the hallway door behind him... to spy CALEB. Wide-awake and sitting quietly at the top of the stairs in his pajamas... WATCHING HIS FATHER.

CUT TO:

THE REMOTE CONTROL laying on the floor. PAN UP to find Ted sprawled out asleep on the sofa -- the news blaring. It's daylight outside.

NEWSCASTER (ON TV)
And here's Carl with the weather. Looks like a scorcher's on the way.

WEATHERMAN (ON TV)
That's right, Bob. The forecast shows
more high pressure moving in later this
week. Seems our Indian Summer is set to
last a little while longer.

INT. TED'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ted groggily wakes up. He mutes the television... and can now hear a phone RINGING. Ted pushes himself to his feet -- groans as he walks to the kitchen, half-full scotch bottle in hand.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

TED
(answering the phone)
Hello.

CALEB (ON PHONE)
Dad, where are you? You're on carpool
this afternoon.

Ted looks up at the clock -- it's 3:30. Now he's fully awake.

TED
Buddy... I'm so sorry. I'll be there in
ten minutes. Okay?

CALEB
Okay. Bye.

Ted hangs up, grabs for his car keys. He turns for the door... and the sight of the TV arrests him. The muted screen running with all the chaos and scrolling banners of the day's news.

TED
What the hell am I doing...?

He shuts off the TV. Then he turns to the sink and pours the remains of his scotch bottle down the plug hole with remorse.

EXT. I-93 FREEWAY - DAY

Humid gray skies. Afternoon drizzle. Ted's car moves down the road with the rest of the traffic.

INT. TED'S TRUCK - DAY

MILES DAVIS plays on the car stereo. Cool and soothing. Ted comes down from his frantic mood as the music washes over him.

Rain droplets are falling, so he hits the intermittent wipers...

Ted notices all three lanes are slowing to a crawl around him... and he kicks the wipers up to a faster speed to get a better look through the trickling water.

There is a huge TRAFFIC JAM ahead. LANES OF STATIONARY CARS flowing forward into the distance. Ted BRAKES to a halt.

He sighs. Looks across to see an EXIT RAMP a hundred yards ahead. Cars peeling slowly up it, one by one.

Ted FLIPS ON HIS SAT NAV computer. Selects PAUL REVERE ELEMENTARY from his Favorites list. Hits ALTERNATIVE ROUTES, while he pulls out his cell phone and dials. The line rings --

ANSWERING MACHINE (V.O.)

Kim and Phil can't get to the phone right now, so please leave a message.

TED (INTO PHONE)

Hey Phil... it's Ted. Look, I'm sorry about yesterday. I kind of freaked out on you, didn't I?

(eyes the SAT NAV SCREEN)

Anyway, if it's not too late I'd like to take you up on your offer of dinner. Might do me some good to get out, so --

-- Ted halts, his attention captured by something on his

SAT NAV SCREEN

A MAP displays the local area, an asterisk marking his position on the freeway. Above it are two boxes, each containing a short set of numbers. **LAT - 42.22 LONG - 71.1**

TED narrows at the numbers. He's seen them before.

He hurriedly fishes the TIME CAPSULE PAPER out of his pocket, unfolds it then scans down the page to the

BOTTOM ROW OF NUMBERS

Between the last two circled groups of numbers WE ZOOM ON the unmarked digits **422711**.

Ted reacts with astonishment. Hit by the sudden realization --

TED (CONT'D)

...They're latitude and longitude, Phil! The uncircled numbers are locations! It's gonna happen here! This is where they're gonna die!

(MORE)

TED (CONT'D)
(eyes the drivers around
him)
Forty-five people...

-- he punches out. Contemplates the screen again in disbelief.

ON TED'S EYES... as he realizes the disaster is meant to happen
sometime today, right here.

His paranoia rises, gaze shifting in every direction, his
breathing rate increasing as he rationalizes like crazy...

He sees motorists climbing out of their vehicles despite the
rain. They stand around with umbrellas, talking on cell phones.

EXT. FREEWAY - CONTINUOUS

Ted buckets out too, and he stares forward over a sea of car
roofs glistening in the wet... to register a cluster of FLASHING
EMERGENCY LIGHTS spanning the freeway.

TED
No...

Ted sprints forward between rows of stopped cars. The drivers
milling around aimlessly frown at him as he thumps by in a hurry.

Reaching the front of the jam... Ted finds PATROL CARS,
AMBULANCES AND FIRE TRUCKS forming an impermeable barrier across
all six lanes.

Beyond them lies a messy knot of BASHED UP CARS AND TRUCKS.

Craning around for someone to talk to, he snags the attention of
a HIGHWAY PATROLMAN, who approaches the yellow tape...

TED (CONT'D)
Is everyone okay?

PATROLMAN
Sir, you need to return to your car.

TED
Was anyone killed?

The Patrolman gets in his face. He doesn't have time for this.

PATROLMAN
Sir, go back to your vehicle.

TED
Please, I just wanna know if--

PATROLMAN

It looks worse than it is. A couple of injuries, but nothing serious...

Ted's face flushes with relief. He gladly follows the Patrolman's pointed glove and starts to back off... but then he notices the Patrolman's expression stiffening with disbelief.

He isn't looking at Ted anymore. He's looking past Ted, and up into the sky. His face has turned white as a sheet.

Suddenly the Patrolman's legs kick in and he turns tail, runs like hell from the spot where Ted's standing, as a RISING ENGINE RUMBLE strikes his ears. Not a car engine. A plane engine.

Ted's eyes register a traffic sign off to the side of the road, pointing drivers up the exit ramp towards LOGAN AIRPORT...

...then he turns to see what the Patrolman has seen -- A HUGE TWIN-ENGINE PASSENGER JET is plunging out of the clouds and hurtling right toward the freeway! Swooping in for a devastating impact at two hundred miles per hour!

Ted is momentarily frozen in the plane's searing white lights, and he is deafened by THE ROAR OF ITS STRAINING ENGINES.

The plane is off-beam by thirty degrees, its right wing dipping... scything mercilessly toward him...

Ted hits the tarmac as the wing's leading edge streaks overhead, almost decapitating him with lethal force...

...then it strikes the tarmac between the crashed cars and stationary emergency vehicles, SCRAPING A FOUNTAIN OF SPARKS as it churns through the blacktop like a knife through butter.

Ted is pinned to the concrete by a hurricane of turbulence, and when he is able to look up... he sees the jet disappear into the neighboring field and SLAM INTO THE EARTH.

The ground shakes. He glimpses the plane fuselage pinwheeling end over end... then A HUGE EXPLOSION MUSHROOMS INTO THE AIR.

Ted is stunned. Drivers SCREAM AND YELL from rolled-down windows. On instinct, Ted gathers up, stands shakily to his feet... and WE FOLLOW HIM as he traces the furrow ploughed by the wing off the carriageway...

Through some bushes... BREATHING HARD, disoriented...

...and into the field. Before him lies a scene of utter carnage. Fifty meters ahead the muddy furrow widens into a huge crater that contains the back half of the fuselage. It is flaming fiercely, belching thick black smoke.

The front half of the plane has come to rest, upside down and back-to-front, beyond a carpet of burning shrapnel. The wings have separated too, lying shattered off to each side.

Ted beats through the downpour. Leaving the inferno that is the rear of the plane for dead, he makes for the forward section.

To his utter astonishment, he finds a few survivors stumbling around in the wreckage, shell-shocked. Unsure where they are.

He comes across a FLIGHT ATTENDANT, her face streaming with blood, uniform ripped and charred. He grabs her shoulders, gently helps her to lie down, at the same time YELLING;

TED

How many are on there???

(she stares, dumb)

HOW MANY WERE ON THE PLANE???

She can't answer. Leaving her, he sees black smoke issuing from the ripped fissure around the back. Picks his way toward it over an obstacle course of suitcases, chairs, body parts...

...and he finds A WALL OF FLAME masking the opening from sight: everything is doused in burning jet fuel. SCREAMS FROM INSIDE draw him forward, desperately wanting to help... but the intense heat drives him back. He can't get near them.

Ted glances back to the flight attendant. She mouths words at him. He scrambles closer:

TED (CONT'D)

...WHAT???

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Fifty-one... Forty-three passengers...
and eight crew... Fifty... one...

Ted counts the handful of other survivors lying and wandering in the field. Two... Three... Four... Five... Six.

The awful number returns to him afresh amongst all this chaos:

TED

Forty-five...

Ted whirls to face the busted fuselage again, shaking his head -- no. Then something screws up inside him. Anger. Defiance. He stumbles back to the plane...

SOMETHING IS MOVING where the fuselage curves into charred black earth. A blackened arm. Poking out of a jagged meter-long tear in the steel skin.

Ted sprints toward it, kneeling to examine the hole. It is oval-shaped. Large enough for someone to crawl through perhaps.

Ted grabs the passenger's hand and squeezes. CALLS INSIDE:

TED (CONT'D)
I'M GONNA PULL YOU OUT! GET READY!

He tugs, gently at first. Gets a little give from the passenger so he keeps on pulling, encouraged. AN OLD MAN'S HEAD emerges... barely recognizable beneath the layer of grime coating him.

Ted notices AN ADVANCING GLOW... and turns to see THE FIRE IS SPREADING TOWARD HIM from the broken stub of the fuselage, flames licking their way along the outer skin.

Ted squats for leverage... and HEAVES the old man through the crack. Grabbing both his arms, Ted yanks him clear. He keeps going until they're both at a safe distance... then he looks back to see FIRE ENGULFING THE OPENING.

Exhausted, Ted returns to the old man lying beside him... but he's not moving. Ted checks for a pulse, but detects nothing.

TED (CONT'D)
No..... no, no, no!

SIRENS HOWL in the b.g. as emergency vehicles from the car crash burst through the bushes and race toward them.

Ted sits astride the old man and carefully but aggressively THUMPS HIS CHEST... blows into his mouth...

TED (CONT'D)
YOU CAN MAKE IT! YOU CAN MAKE IT!!!

Suddenly he's surrounded by PARAMEDICS, who ease him off the victim so they can take over. At first Ted struggles against them, utterly focused on keeping this man alive.

PARAMEDIC 1
Are you okay, sir? Are you hurt???

Ted sees blood on his arms, his own dishevelled clothes, and --

TED
-- I'm not from the plane!
(points to the man)
Help him! Help all of them!!!

PARAMEDIC 2
Okay, step back, sir! Step away!

One of them guides Ted clear of the detritus as his comrades go to work... and suddenly Ted is alone, watching the carnage unfold before his eyes. Helpless to do any more.

Off his blasted expression WE CUT TO:

BODY BAGS

WE PAN ALONG a whole line of them, laid out on the dirt. The last one is unzipped, revealing the ashen face of the old man Ted rescued. A HAND ENTERS FRAME, and zips his closed too.

ON TED -- shutting his eyes in disbelief. He turns away from the scene.

Ducking beneath the Police cordon to return to his truck, Ted passes a gathering of NEWS CREWS spaced apart at three-meter intervals to record simultaneous live broadcasts. He can't help but overhear the closest FEMALE REPORTER as he passes by;

FEMALE REPORTER (TO CAMERA)
--all we know is Flight 80 from Pittsburgh was due into Logan at 3.45, but she came down twelve miles short of the runway. First estimates put the confirmed dead at forty-three, with two passengers missing presumed killed, and only six survivors.

ON TED -- absorbing the inevitable death toll statistic from someone else's mouth.

WE SWITCH TO A CAMERA POV of the REPORTER facing us, waiting expectantly for the studio news anchor to ask a question. Ted is visible amongst the melee, a few meters past her shoulder.

As the ANCHOR'S VOICE is heard, THE IMAGE ASSUMES TV GRAIN...

STUDIO NEWS ANCHOR (O.S.)
Jane, there's speculation this alleged technical fault could be linked to the increased solar activity reported by NASA. Have the National Transportation Safety Board made any comment--

...and WE PULL OUT TO REVEAL we're watching this on TV now.

INT. TED'S LIVING ROOM - EARLY EVENING

Grace sits on the edge of the couch staring at the reporter on TV -- and Ted in the background -- in utter disbelief. Hearing the front door open she startles, SHUTS OFF THE TV.

Caleb enters from the kitchen. She shoos him toward the stairs.

GRACE

Wait upstairs while I talk to your Dad.

Caleb ascends obediently, and Grace enters the hall, where she sets eyes on her haggard brother. Ted's clothes are ripped in places, and his thousand-yard stare has stayed with him.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Dear God... Let me help you--

TED

(lifts a staying hand)

I'm okay. Just a little shaken up. You didn't tell him anything...

GRACE

Of course not. What an awful thing to witness...

(an awkward beat)

Do you want to talk about it?

Ted hauls his aching body past her...

TED

I just wanna sleep. Thanks for getting Caleb. Thanks for everything, sis.

-- and he stumbles up the stairs. She watches him go, worried.

UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

Ted is making for his bedroom when Caleb opens his door and steps out. Scrutinizes his fatigued father with concern --

CALEB

What happened, Dad...? What's going on?

TED

The truck broke down on the freeway. Sorry I couldn't pick you up.

As he reaches his door and opens it:

CALEB

It's more than that, isn't it? Why won't you tell me what's going on?

Ted pauses on the threshold. Looks back...

TED

I'm going to bed. Get your homework done, then you should hit the sack too. I don't want you watching any TV tonight, okay?

CALEB

Why? I always watch an hour before--

TED

No more questions, Caleb. Not tonight.

Caleb is mad. Mad enough and brave enough to hit back --

CALEB

I can ask questions when you tell me to do things that don't make sense! Things that are stupid and aren't fair!

Surprised by Caleb's anger, Ted opens his mouth to reply, but --

CALEB (CONT'D)

You won't let me play soccer! You won't let me stay over at Jason's -- and now you won't tell me why you're acting so weird all the time! I'm not a baby anymore!!!

Caleb storms back into his room -- and SLAMS the door shut.

Ted reels, surprised and stung by his son's angry tirade. He has no idea how to respond to it.

Approaching Caleb's door, he is about to follow his son inside... when he thinks better of it. Returns to his own room instead.

INT. TED'S BATHROOM - NIGHT - LATER

Ted splashes water on his face at the bathroom sink. As he stares at himself in the mirror... the sight of his wife's side of the bathroom counter catches his eye.

Ted regards his wife's things still laid out -- a hand mirror... a brush... pots of make-up... toothbrush in a cup. Everything left just the way it was.

Ted picks up the hand mirror. Wipes dust from the glass surface, then replaces it right where it was.

CUT TO:

ROW OF NUMBERS - TIME CAPSULE PAPER

PUSH IN ON the second last group of numbers, separated from the date beside them by a vertical slash mark.

WE PAN RIGHT across the date - 10/18/07 - then WE HOLD ON the numbers which follow the date. TED'S THUMB traces over this ominous prediction: 78.

INT. TED'S HOME OFFICE - NIGHT

TED, unable to sleep, sits at his computer -- a man possessed. He is focused on Lucinda's numbers.

COMPUTER SCREEN

MapQuest.com uploads -- numbers are typed in -- an image appears:

AN INTERSECTION in downtown Boston. Prince & Hanover.

Ted stares at the screen, his face drawn with concern. The next event: In two days, seventy-eight people will die.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT - LATER

A POV MOVES through trees. WE HALT on the edge of a clearing... to observe Ted's house. All windows dark except for Ted's study.

INT. CALEB'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Caleb lies asleep in bed. Silence reigns... until a familiar WHITE NOISE drifts in...

Caleb stirs... his eyes opening. He looks around the room.

The noise continues... and now the WEIRD WHISPER.

He feels a presence. Then he notices MOVEMENT --

Across the room, in a shadowy corner -- SOMEONE STANDING THERE.

Caleb's blood runs cold.

A CREAK of the floor-board as the shadow figure MOVES FORWARD -- one step. Then another. Approaching Caleb's bed.

Caleb is so frightened he can't move. He can't see the figure's face -- too deeply shadowed -- but it's clear this is THE STRANGER who has been following him.

The Stranger tilts his head, obviously looking at Caleb, but his features remain impossible to see. There is the smallest glint where the Stranger's eyes should be. Almost cat-like in their reflectivity.

Caleb wants to cry out for his father, but he can't.

The Stranger raises his hand into the air -- pointing over to the window. He wants Caleb to look out.

As Caleb turns to face the window with dread, the room starts to fill with an eerie golden light.

Caleb can suddenly move again. He forces himself up -- goes to the window. Looks out.

OUTSIDE

The woods around the house are ON FIRE. Not just a forest fire -- an INFERNO. The sky is blood red as far as the eye can see.

A surreal incandescent terrain: EVERYTHING IS BURNING. There isn't a tree or a house or a distant hill not on fire.

And as Caleb looks to the clearing across the street he sees:

A DARK MASS pushing through the flaming treeline into the open...

ANIMALS

Hundreds of animals of all kinds -- running in wild panic out of the woods. Flames peeling back their charred fur and skin...

A terrible SOUND RISING -- the combined SHRIEK of the creatures' anguish.

CALEB

Opens his mouth. For a moment no sound comes out -- then he too starts to scream.

INT. TED'S HOME OFFICE - NIGHT

Ted, having fallen asleep at his desk, is startled awake by his son's cries from the next room. Primal instinct kicks in, and he's up in a split-second, running blindly DOWN THE HALLWAY to:

CALEB'S BEDROOM --

-- BURSTING inside he sees Caleb at the window, crying.

But outside all is normal. No animals. No fire.

Ted runs to him, holds him in his arms, frantically scans for the source of Caleb's distress --

TED
Everything's okay, buddy...

Finally Caleb calms down and seems to snap out of whatever nightmare had possessed him.

TED (CONT'D)
Just a dream... a bad dream. It's okay.

He puts an arm around Caleb, gently guides him back to bed and starts to tuck him back in. Ted strokes Caleb's hair, and that seems to calm him a little.

Ted takes a last glance out the window... and he glimpses something in the trees. Someone. A DARK FIGURE watching them.

Ted is shocked, but for Caleb's sake he controls his reaction.

EXT. TED'S BACK YARD - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

Ted marches off the porch and across the grass, flashlight in one hand and a baseball bat in the other. Ready for bear.

His beam probes the darkest recesses of the trees before him... but there's no one there. Just CREAKING branches...

He halts at the tree line. Puffs up his chest angrily, hoping they can see him even if he can't see them...

When no one materializes, he YELLS into the depths:

TED
STAY AWAY FROM US!!! YOU HEAR...???

There is no reply from the shadows. Ted strikes a trunk with the bat in frustration -- at this, and everything else that's happened to him over the last 24 hours, then storms back inside.

INT. TED'S KITCHEN - DAY

Caleb enters with his backpack. Ted is preparing breakfast.

CALEB
...Where's my pack lunch?

TED
You're not going to school today.

Caleb stares at him in surprise and disbelief.

CALEB
...I'm not? Why?

TED
You don't feel well.

CALEB
...I don't?

Ted approaches Caleb. Looks him over with exaggerated concern.

TED

You had a tough night and didn't sleep much. You can help me run some errands.
(eyeing his backpack)
Unless you want to go to school of course...

CALEB

No! No -- that's okay.

Caleb throws the backpack on a chair to underline his decision and heads upstairs.

CALEB (CONT'D)

Weird...

Satisfied, Ted returns to the stove. When Caleb isn't looking he shoots a furtive glance out the window, toward the trees where he saw the Stranger last night...

CUT TO:

MOVING POV -- A ROAD SIGN: "DOWNTOWN EXIT 1" flies past.

INT. TED'S TRUCK - MORNING

Ted drives, stares ahead as Caleb sits beside him listening to his iPod.

EXT. DOWNTOWN BOSTON - MORNING

Heat vapor rises from parked cars. The temperature on a BANK SIGN reads '90F.'

Ted stands at the intersection he pin-pointed the night before. He cranes up at a sign on a lamp post -- two street names:

Hanover & Prince

Tall buildings on all sides, traffic moving, people rushing about. But there's nothing out of the ordinary.

What is going to happen here tomorrow...?

CALEB O.S.

Dad?

Ted turns to Caleb, who is sat in the truck nearby. It is parked in a 'no parking' zone.

CALEB

What are we doing here?

Ted can't do anything right now -- so he heads back to the truck.

CUT TO:

MICROFICHE scrolls by on an illuminated screen. It's a blur of distorted faces and obituary headlines.

INT. LEXINGTON MINUTEMAN OFFICE - DAY

Ted sits in the dark at a cramped microfiche deck. Several film canisters are stacked around him.

Caleb is perched on a desk behind him. Still listening to his iPod, swinging his legs back and forth. He lets out a DRAMATIC SIGH -- loud enough so Ted can hear it... then turns round.

TED

Just a few more minutes, okay?

Caleb rolls his eyes. Keeps on swinging his legs as Ted returns to the monitor. Shoves a fresh canister into the deck.

CLOSE ON IMAGES scrolling past, and then --

-- A WOMAN'S FACE flashes by. Something familiar about it.

Ted rewinds back to the image. Stops on the grainy B/W PHOTOGRAPH of the WOMAN. Her face is chilling. She stares into the camera unsmiling. Challenging. Her eyes dark and haunted.

Underneath the photo is the name LUCINDA EMBRY WHELAN. The headline reads LOCAL WOMAN FOUND DEAD.

Ted scans the article, reading extracts aloud.

TED (CONT'D)

...thirty-three years of age... cause of death unknown... survived by her husband Richard and daughter Diana.

Ted hits the PRINT BUTTON on the microfiche machine... and a copy of Lucinda's obituary slowly scrolls out.

INT. TED'S TRUCK - DAY

Ted drives through a residential area in a middle-class section of town. Modest homes line the street. Caleb sits in the shotgun seat with his head bobbing, wrapped up in the music.

Ted's car approaches a brick house on the corner. The name on the mailbox reads "WHELAN." Ted glances down at the obituary he printed the night before -- the name WHELAN is highlighted.

Suddenly... Ted spies a WOMAN and her LITTLE GIRL leave the house. They get into a car in the driveway.

Ted slows his truck to a crawl and waits until the WOMAN pulls out onto the street. Ted makes a decision to follow her.

EXT. BOSTON CITY STREETS - DAY

Ted trails the WOMAN'S CAR. She changes lanes in the busy traffic and Ted loses sight of her. He waits for an opening then shifts into the other lane as well... finding her again.

Ted subtly accelerates... keeping pace.

Caleb continues rapping inside his head, watching the world go by. Unaware his father is following someone.

EXT. PARKING STRUCTURE - DAY

The WOMAN turns off the road into a large parking structure. A sign reads -- WELCOME TO THE BOSTON SCIENCE MUSEUM. A beat... then Ted's truck curls into the garage as well.

INT. TED'S CAR - DAY

Caleb registers the sign. He shuts off his iPod, confused.

CALEB

Aren't we supposed to be running errands?

TED

I thought we'd go to the museum instead.

Astonished, Caleb smiles. Things seem to be looking up again.

CUT TO:

A magnificent prehistoric ARCTIC WOLF. Taxidermied in mid-pace across an artificial glacier. His mate posed next to him.

INT. BOSTON SCIENCE MUSEUM - NATURAL HISTORY WING - DAY

Ted and Caleb wind through the exhibits of stuffed creatures and bones in illuminated display cases. Caleb's backpack is slung over his shoulder. Ted continues to follow the WOMAN.

The WOMAN snaps a photo of her LITTLE GIRL. The girl then runs to look at the wolves while her mom stays behind.

TED
(to Caleb)
Why don't you go look at the wolves? I'll
catch up with you.

FOLLOW CALEB as he crosses to the wolf display for a closer look.

THE LITTLE GIRL is standing a few feet away from Caleb. This is
ABBY. She's slight and pretty. About Caleb's age. She turns,
and notices Caleb. Notes the HEARING AID in his ear.

ABBY
Do you know that all wolves are born deaf?

Caleb turns to her, surprised by this bit of trivia.

CALEB
Really?

ABBY
But when they get older they can hear
another wolf's howl from a hundred and
twenty miles away.

CALEB
(impressed)
How did you know that?

ABBY
Read it in a book once.
(beat)
I like your backpack.

Caleb smiles, enjoying this conversation.

ABBY (CONT'D)
Are you off school?

CALEB
(nods)
I'm sick, sort of. I'm not infectious,
though. You?

ABBY
(shrugs)
The same.

BACK WITH THE WOMAN. She fans herself with a folded museum map
as Ted casually wanders over to her.

TED
Is that your daughter?

WOMAN
Yeah -- Abby.

TED
That's my son, Caleb.

They watch Abby and Caleb chatting away with each other. Making easy conversation like kids do.

TED (CONT'D)
Looks like they're already best of friends.

WOMAN
She's probably telling him about the animals. Even as a baby she was completely fascinated with them.

TED
Caleb's the same. Extinct and endangered species are his specialty.
(beat)
I'm Ted Myles, by the way.

WOMAN
Hi. Diana...

They shake hands.

Across the room they notice:

Caleb and Abby now standing looking at TWO SABRE TOOTH TIGERS stalking through a jungle diorama.

Caleb makes a gesture with his hands, and Abby copies him -- doing the same gesture.

DIANA
What do you think they're doing?

TED
Caleb's showing her something in sign language.

DIANA
I'm sorry. I didn't realize he was --

TED
-- oh, Caleb's not deaf. Sounds just get jumbled sometimes. The doctors could never figure out what was wrong, but the hearing aid seems to help. Anyway, he became obsessed with sign language.

WITH CALEB as he turns back to the sabre teeth as Abby moves on to another exhibit of dinosaur bones.

A NOISE begins to rise... that PULSING TONE Caleb's heard before. He adjusts his hearing aid, but it does no good.

What Caleb does not notice, in the shadows of a nearby doorway into another exhibition space, is THE STRANGER. Watching him.

TED & DIANA

An awkward silence has descended. Ted shifts uncomfortably, wondering how to explain why he's here.

Sensing his discomfort, but mistaking the reason as him not knowing how to hit on her, Diana fans herself.

DIANA

I don't think it's ever been this hot in October. Air conditioner must be broken.

TED

They say it's gonna be worse tomorrow.

Ted observes Diana out of the corner of his eye, winding up for the pitch. A long pause as he prepares to speak when...

Caleb runs up.

CALEB

I'm thirsty. Can we get a drink?

TED

Okay. Would you and Abby like to join us?

DIANA

Sure... that'd be nice.

INT. MUSEUM CAFETERIA - DAY

Caleb and Abby play outside - seen through the glass window in the kid's playpen area.

TED AND DIANA watch them interacting from a nearby booth, as they sip at their drinks.

DIANA

It's a tough job to do single-handed.

TED

...but we wouldn't trade it, would we?

DIANA

No, we wouldn't.

A beat. She can tell Ted is wondering about it, so...

DIANA (CONT'D)

I kicked him out. Couldn't keep his hands to himself -- so I said he couldn't expect to keep *me* to himself either.

TED

(absorbs this, and)

His loss.

Diana smiles, embarrassed, taking in the compliment. Ted is surprised at himself too, and smiles.

DIANA

What's your story..?

Ted's smile falters, and he deliberates between telling her the truth... or the *other* truth. Neither one is gonna be easy...

TED

I have a confession to make, Diana.

(she waits expectantly)

We didn't meet here by accident. I need to talk to you about something... difficult.

Ted hands Diana the piece of paper he pulled from his pocket. She glances down at the printed newspaper OBITUARY OF LUCINDA.

TED (CONT'D)

I need to ask you about your mother.

Diana stares at the obituary, confused.

DIANA

What are you doing with this?

Ted isn't sure how to say it, but he gives it a shot...

TED

You have no reason to believe anything I'm going to tell you...

(beat)

...but I think your mother had some kind of gift.

Diana straightens away from Ted, suddenly feeling unsafe.

DIANA

Who are you?

TED

I'm sorry. I don't mean to scare you. My son goes to Paul Revere Elementary. Your mom went there too. Fifty years ago she put this in a time capsule...

Ted produces the TIME CAPSULE PAPER from his jacket...

TED (CONT'D)

It's a list of dates -- events she predicted.

Diana is now completely freaked-out by Ted.

DIANA

Look, I don't even know what this is about, but if you --

TED

-- I thought if I could talk to you -- talk to your father --

DIANA

My father's dead.

Ted isn't giving up. He tries another approach.

TED

I think there are people, like your mother, who can see things before they happen.

Diana slides out of the booth.

DIANA

Abby! We're leaving!

Ted stands, pursues her.

TED

I think something bad is going to happen. Tomorrow. Seventy-eight people are going to die in one place.

Diana walks faster, and in his desperation Ted reaches out -- GRABS HER ARM, stopping her momentarily.

TED (CONT'D)

I followed one of your mother's predictions...

(suddenly choked)

...and I watched forty-five people burn to death in that plane wreck yesterday before my eyes. WHEN she said it would happen. WHERE she said it would happen. And there was nothing I could do about it.

(beat)

She says seventy-eight people will die tomorrow, and in two days time -- october nineteenth -- thirty-three more.

Diana glares at Ted... then YANKS her arm free of his grip.

DIANA
Stay away from me -- and my daughter.

EXT. KID'S PLAYPEN - CONTINUOUS

Diana hurries outside.

DIANA
Abby! Now!

Abby eyes Caleb, disappointed.

ABBY
It was nice meeting you.

CALEB
See ya.

Diana takes her by the hand and they hurry off, not looking back.
Ted shoots Caleb a look --

TED
Stay right there.

EXT. PARKING STRUCTURE - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Diana helps Abby into the back. Opens her driver door --

TED
Diana, please!
(catches up)
If I'm wrong about this... in seventy-two
hours you'll never have to hear from me
again!

Diana can't bring herself to turn and face Ted, but she halts by
her half-open door, allowing him to continue...

TED (CONT'D)
But I think this has something to do with
my son. I don't know how or why, but I
think he's in danger... so if you won't
do this for me, please do it for him.
(beat)
I'm asking you to help us...

Diana is conflicted. Caught between the impulse to run away, and
the desire to ease his burden...

DIANA
...I can't.

She climbs into her car without looking at him. Shuts her door and drives away. Ted can only stand there and watch her go.

CUT TO:

INT. TED'S HOME OFFICE - NIGHT

Ted is unwrapping something. He pulls a new HAND GUN out of its box, holds it up for a moment, then lays it on the table beside him and speed-reads the instructions.

TV NEWSCASTER (O.S.)
...response to an FBI warning of a possible terrorist plot. Authorities are on high alert after intelligence reports suggested an attack may be imminent on a major east coast city...

The newscaster's words grab Ted's attention. He enters

INT. THE LIVING ROOM

Stares at the TV with a mounting sense of dread.

TV NEWSCASTER (CONT'D)
Security around the transport network has been tightened, while the national threat level has been raised to red. A Transportation Security Administration official has admitted a security briefing took place today, though he could not confirm any credible evidence of a plot. Nevertheless, the police have urged citizens to stay vigilant.

Ted turns away, thoughts churning anxiously...

TV NEWSCASTER (CONT'D)
In other news today, the investigation into yesterday's air crash continues...

...and his eyes come to rest on a phone.

EXT. STREET CORNER PHONE BOOTH - NIGHT

Ted hangs on the RINGING line under harsh sodium light, his eyes darting nervously around the street beyond the glass.

WOMAN ON PHONE (V.O.)
FBI Boston, how may I direct y--

TED

(blurts out)

The attack will take place tomorrow, at Prince & Hanover. Cordon off the area from midnight. Are you clear on that?

WOMAN ON PHONE (V.O.)

...Sir, let me patch you through to our--

TED

Please do exactly as I say, or many people will die! This is NOT a crank call!

He slams the phone into its cradle, then stares at it a moment like it may come alive and bite him. Calming a degree, he hurries outside, climbs into his truck.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Caleb is eating his Cheerios in front of the TV as Ted enters, already dressed. He sees the traffic news is on.

TV NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

...turnpike is running smoothly, but jams are developing on Mass Avenue so steer cl--

TED

I've got some important business in town. I'll be back tonight.

CALEB

Am I going to school today?

TED

Not today.

Ted hears someone DRIVE UP and steps to the window.

OUTSIDE -- his sister is getting out of her car.

TED

Aunt Grace will take care of things.

He hovers near Caleb for a moment, looking down at his son, not really sure if he should go. Then he decides. He kisses Caleb on top of his head, and makes for the door.

Caleb watches his dad leave for a moment -- then throws down his spoon and sticks his head in his hands. No appetite.

CUT TO:

MOVING POV -- "DOWNTOWN EXIT 1" flies past -- faster this time.

INT. TED'S TRUCK - DAY

Ted drives, stares ahead, spinning through the dial on his car radio for any more reports, but it's all just commercials, music, talk-back...

EXT. DOWNTOWN BOSTON - DAY

Ted swings into the "no parking" space and gets out of his truck. He walks a few short steps and he's back at the intersection. He checks the sign-post -- it's the right place: **Hanover & Prince**

Traffic & people rushing about - just like yesterday. No Police lines or barricades have been erected here -- nothing. Outraged, and doubly anxious now, Ted scans the bustling intersection... and sights a BEAT COP across the way.

Crossing the street, he approaches the officer, animated:

TED

You didn't get a tip-off about the attack?
Why isn't this junction sealed off?

POLICE OFFICER

Sir, please calm down... What attack are you referring to--

TED

You have to shut this place down -- now!
It's gonna happen right here!

The cop stares over Ted's shoulder for a split-second, and before Ted can rant any more a hand pats his arm. Ted whirls to regard a man in a dark suit and shades flashing an FBI badge at him.

FBI AGENT

Sir, did you call the FBI Field Office last night at 11 p.m. in reference to the terrorist threat?

TED

I... Yeah. I called. Why hasn't something been done?

FBI AGENT

Sir, we need to collect some more information from you in order to assess the threat. Would you come with me?

The FBI AGENT nods toward a black van idling at the curb nearby, and Ted suddenly realizes he's about to be arrested. He thinks fast: can't let himself be taken away from here...

TED

I... Look, the voices are never wrong, okay? They talk to me! That's right! We *must* obey them! They want to help us, understand? The... ah, planets are aligned, y'hear!

The agent and cop trade 'nut-job' glances, then:

COP

Sir, if you don't calm down I'll have to arrest you.

TED

Okay, okay... you don't wanna listen to the voices? Fine by me, mister!

(backs off, annoyed)

On your heads be it when it happens! You and... and...

(nods to FBI guy)

...and your buddy in the shades...

Ted turns, hurriedly crosses the street to get away from them, and we glimpse nervous relief on his face. It worked.

Losing himself in the crowd, he scans around helplessly, adrift in an ocean of humanity... until he notices A DARK-COATED STRANGER like the one he saw in the woods standing a hundred yards away. The man is watching him calmly.

For a moment Ted is unsure what to do, then moves forward, shoving past people, making his way towards THE STRANGER.

TED

Hey, you!

He loses sight of THE STRANGER, but keeps on pushing through. Reaching the place where the man stood a moment before...

Nobody there. The Stranger has vanished.

Ted glances around frantically. Searching faces... Then he notices something unusual on a metal grate before him:

A SMALL PILE OF DARK STONES. Delicately balanced on top of each other and very intentionally placed.

Ted picks up one of the stones. It is flat, smooth and black. Like the one THE STRANGER gave to Caleb. Ted looks around again... then he hears a RUMBLING from below, and looks down.

The sound is emanating from the grate beneath his feet.

The 'T'.

INT. 'T' SUBWAY PLATFORM - DAY

Ted runs down the stairs onto the crowded platform. It is double-sided, with trains coming and going on both sides.

Ted looks around uncertainly. The platforms are JAMMED with commuters heading into work.

He notices A TRANSIT OFFICER standing by a barricade, and is about to walk up to him... then thinks twice and keeps moving.

Ted makes his way down the platform searching for clues. What is going to happen here?

Through the crowd, Ted notices A MAN IN A DUFFLE-COAT standing by the edge of the platform. Something about him makes Ted pay attention. The man is gaunt, small, cagey. Not a STRANGER. Just a normal guy. HIS JACKET is a couple of sizes too big for him -- he holds it shut tightly around his body. Is he hiding something underneath?

DUFFLE-COAT looks up, and notices Ted looking at him. For a moment the man stares at Ted, then a fleeting expression -- fear? He looks away.

Ted steps forward, trying to get a better look at the man. Edgy, Duffle-Coat heads through the crowd, pushing down the platform.

Ted notices the TRANSIT OFFICER again, and runs up to him.

ON DUFFLE-COAT

He's definitely frightened now. THROUGH THE CROWD he sees:

Ted talking to the Transit Officer. The Officer looks attentive, concerned -- both men look towards...

DUFFLE-COAT, who once again moves down the platform, still hugging the edge.

A TRAIN is arriving, slowing, pulling up.

Ted and the Officer move off, weaving through the crowd. The Officer speaks into his walkie...

TRANSIT OFFICER
Platform 3. I need back-up.

THE TRAIN slows to a stop. Doors hiss open. Along with hundreds of others, Duffle-Coat crams onto the already crowded carriage.

As Ted and the Officer reach the edge of the platform TWO MORE TRANSIT OFFICERS appear at the stairs, then beat towards the train as the Officer and Ted enter the

INT. REAR SUBWAY CAR

A mere THIRTY FEET behind Duffle-Coat who pushes toward the back of the car, glancing nervously over his shoulder.

TRANSIT OFFICER
Hold it right there, sir.

The man hears, but still he keeps moving.

TRANSIT OFFICER (CONT'D)
Transit Police. I'm asking you to stop.

People are looking around now, starting to get frightened. The situation is reaching crisis point.

Ted is holding back, knowing he has to warn people somehow, to get them out of here. He goes up to A WOMAN holding her baby.

TED
Listen to me. You need to leave the train. It's for your own safety.

WOMAN
But I have to get home...

TED
Please do what I say.

Now A LARGE MALE COMMUTER looks around.

COMMUTER
What's the problem, buddy?

TED
Please get off the train. Right now.
Everybody... EVERYBODY GET OFF THE TRAIN!

COMMUTER
...Is this a joke?

Suddenly, the car doors close. Ted panics. He lunges to pry them open, but too late: the train starts to move off.

An OLD LADY spooks at his wild-eyed approach --

TED
YOU'RE ALL IN DANGER! PLEASE!

-- and in a panic she yanks the emergency cord. The train JERKS TO A HALT, half-in, half-out of the station... and the doors open again. People spill back onto the platform in confusion.

Ted SEES the other two officers step through the freshly-open doors to rejoin the pursuit. Drawing their weapons.

Duffle-Coat isn't stopping. Refusing to turn around as passengers pour off the train all around him.

TRANSIT OFFICER
Transit Police. Turn around. Now! Keep
your hands by your sides!

All three officers train their weapons on the man's back.

Commuters flee from his path. Panic builds.

DUFFLE-COAT finally runs out of carriage and halts, starts to turn, his eyes glazed in fear.

ON TED watching from behind them. This is the moment -- it's going to happen now, and he's caught in the middle of it.

ON THE MAN IN THE DUFFLE-COAT -- who lets his hands drop down by his sides. His jacket falls open, allowing an assortment of colorful boxes to tumble onto the carriage floor --

DOZENS OF DVD'S -- still shrink-wrapped. Obviously stolen. Nothing more.

The man looks up at the officers -- and Ted beyond them -- incredulous.

MAN
How did you know? Please... I'll give
them back...

Just a petty thief.

Ted feels so foolish -- he completely misread the situation. But as he's breathing a sigh of relief...

...his eye is attracted to sudden movement through the glass of the end carriage door, behind the thief. Something is looming toward them out of the black tunnel -- at speed.

The SCREECH OF BRAKES ECHOES through the cavern.

Someone screams.

It's the next train approaching. Too fast: trying to slow down now it's seen the train ahead is still half-adjacent to the platform. Eyes widening --

TED
God, no...

A brief glimpse through the forward cabin window of the horrified TRAIN DRIVER battling the controls, then --

A shrieking of train tracks buckling and BREAKING...

As the train reaches the front edge of the platform it is OFF THE RAILS and isn't slowing down. It veers wildly OFF ANGLE -- scraping the tunnel wall in a shower of sparks... THEN ZIG-ZAGS to the opposite side as...

Commuters turn, react, scream, try to out run the UNSTOPPABLE steel juggernaut.

The front carriage SMASHES into the leading edge of the platform in an explosion of concrete debris. Half on it's side, the car scythes across the platform. Fleeing commuters are crushed underneath, others thrown through the air like rag dolls.

TED

In shock, through the windows of the stationary train.

He hits the floor as razor shards of window glass explode like machine-gun fire, eviscerating the transit cops and petty thief.

THE CRASHING TRAIN

Its second car JACK-KNIFES, also sliding across the platform, smashing concrete pillars like dominoes. Roof sections collapse as the station plunges into darkness.

Eerily illuminated by BURSTS of electrical sparks, the CAREENING TRAIN finally slows its nightmarish course... coming to a shuddering stop against the barricade at the end of the platform, in a confusion of dust and debris.

Ted lies face down, his hands covering his ears, trying to shut out the terrible noise of death around him -- nothing he can do.

TED

No. No. No.

Emergency lights start to flicker on -- deathly silence...

EXT. STREET - AFTERNOON

THE FRAME IS OBSCURED BY A THICK GRAY FOG. No sound -- just a high ear-piercing whistle...

Ted appears, stumbling forward in a daze, covered from head to toe in concrete dust. His clothes are soiled, torn in places. Paramedics and firemen race past him into the fiery pit.

WIDER -- Survivors stumble out of the 'T' entrance into daylight, many covered in blood. Dozens of emergency vehicles, ambulances, news trucks have congregated at the intersection.

Ted stumbles down the street. Dumb-struck. Not knowing where to go -- just far away from here.

EXT. TED'S HOUSE - EVENING

A SHAKY POV

Grace walks out the front door, locks it and crosses to her car in the driveway.

PULL BACK to reveal Ted watching from his truck, parked down the street so Grace won't see. Waiting here with his lights off. Shell-shocked and dust-caked. He's been to hell and back. He can't let his sister see him like this again -- easier this way.

Grace's car drives off in the other direction. Only then does Ted start the engine and roll forward to his house.

INT. TED'S HOUSE

Ted comes through the front door, to find A HANDWRITTEN NOTE in the front hall. Numb, he picks it up and reads:

"Dearest Brother O Mine, Had to go to work. The little man is fine. We had veggie burgers for dinner. Love U. xxx Grace."

He lowers the note and stands rooted to the spot, eyes unfocused.

INT. CALEB'S ROOM

Ted inches the door open to see Caleb in bed with his back turned, watching another Discovery Channel documentary.

Ted quietly withdraws.

INT. TED'S BATHROOM

Ted showers the day's horrors away.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Ted stands before the flashing TV screen in the dark, displaying red lights and smoke pouring out of the ground behind a REPORTER. His voice plays out at low volume:

REPORTER (V.O.)

Elizabeth, the first investigative efforts naturally focused on human error, but fresh speculation is emerging tonight that the culprit may be this unseasonable extreme heat we're experiencing. An iron rail was found to be buckled eighty meters from the platform, possibly as a result of sudden expansion from the heat wave conditions.

All the strength seems to drain from Ted's body as he absorbs the news that his actions may not have caused this tragedy. He sinks to his knees, a flood of relief amid his shock and pain.

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

This caps the worst week in US transportation history excluding 9/11, after the plane crashes here in Boston yesterday and in Milwaukee on Monday. The heat wave is also a focus of NTSB investigation in those tragedies, and climate experts are warning of more unpredictable consequences--

INT. TED'S HOME OFFICE - NIGHT

His emotions barely under control again, Ted unfolds the TIME CAPSULE PAPER in the focused beam of his desk light, and once again he contemplates the ROWS OF NUMBERS.

PUSH IN ON the first two digits of the last group of numbers, separated from the date beside them by a vertical slash mark.

The ultimate mortal number is '33'.

WE PAN RIGHT over the last date -- 10/19/07 -- then HOLD ON an inch of blank space that precedes the end of the sheet.

TED'S THUMB traces over the unexplained gap... as if to try and summon a few final digits to the surface of the paper.

Ted frowns at the anomaly with confusion...

...as the DOORBELL SUDDENLY RINGS, startling him.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

His weapon clutched behind his back, Ted cautiously cracks the door open... and Diana is standing there. Ted sees Abby waiting in the back of her car across the street.

Diana appears awkward. Nervous. Churned up about something.

DIANA
That date, tomorrow -- October
nineteenth...
(beat)
My mother talked about that day all the
time.

Ted quickens. Suddenly hopeful, yet fearing the worst too...

DIANA (CONT'D)
She said it was the day I was going to
die.

A chilling moment passes between them.

EXT. HILL COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

A ribbon of black road cuts through the wooded slopes. It is dark and quiet out here in the dead of night. A low mist wafts across the road. HEADLIGHTS appear over a rise...

TED'S TRUCK WHIPS PAST -- stirring up the mist.

DIANA(O.S.)
It's just up ahead.

INT. TED'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Ted drives in silence. Diana sits in the passenger seat, clutching the time capsule paper. Abby and Caleb are fast asleep in the back.

Diana glances over to the dark trees whipping past her window.

DIANA
(whispers)
Someone's been following us. Abby and me.

Ted reacts to this with alarm.

TED
They've been following us too.

For a moment Diana is too traumatized to speak. Until now she'd hoped she was imagining things -- but now it's clear she isn't.

DIANA
Do you really think it's possible for
someone to see into the future?

Ted doesn't answer for a moment. He just stares ahead... Then:

TED

Last year, a few days before my fortieth birthday, my wife was on a business trip to Phoenix.

(a heavy beat)

A fire started in her hotel at five in the morning. The investigators said Allison died in her sleep from smoke inhalation. She wouldn't have known a thing about it.

Diana is utterly shocked. Ted tries his best to be measured and in control of his emotions as he spills out the remembrance...

TED (CONT'D)

What gets me isn't that I couldn't help her... it's that while she was dying I was in the front yard, blowing leaves off the lawn.

(beat)

I figured I'd get some chores out of the way while she was gone, you know?

(Diana can barely react)

I always thought you were supposed to sense when your loved ones are in danger.

(eyes searching, lost)

I didn't feel anything at all. Nothing.

DIANA

I'm so sorry, Ted.

She lays her hand on his shoulder. Squeezes it comfortingly.

TED

From that day on I believed none of us could know what was coming; that life was nothing but a string of random accidents and mistakes...

(beat)

From that day... until I got that list of numbers.

They roll on... unknown territory scrolling through the headlights.

EXT. PRIVATE DRIVE - NIGHT

The car swings down a narrow gravel drive, off the main road. Tree branches brush past the cab of the truck. The woods are so dark... as if anything could be out there.

Something large comes into view. Headlights sweeping over --

-- a MOBILE HOME. Tucked away at the edge of some trees... and a field of tall swamp grass stretching beyond them. Where someone would live if they were trying to hide from the world.

One of the corners has fallen off its cinder block support, the structure tilted at an angle like a boat that's run aground.

INT. TED'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Ted turns off the ignition, but he leaves the headlights shining. Diana stares at the mobile home through the windshield.

DIANA
It's still here...

She turns around in her seat. Abby and Caleb are still asleep.

Ted climbs out to investigate. As Diana moves to join him, she glances down at the TIME CAPSULE PAPER in her hands -- and notices something she hasn't seen before. Ted has folded the sheet in half around the original ENVELOPE it came in.

EXT. TRUCK - NIGHT

Diana follows Ted from the truck, frowning at the envelope --

DIANA
What's this...?

Ted looks behind him as Diana holds it up to the moonlight... which reveals Lucinda's HANDWRITTEN NAME on the front... certain letters printed backwards in a childlike way.

Lucinda 3mbry

Diana halts in mid-stride. Looks again at the time capsule paper... carefully running her finger over THE LAST ROW OF NUMBERS. Her eyes accentuate with a sudden understanding.

DIANA (CONT'D)
We were wrong.

Ted has stopped now too. Retraces his steps to join her.

TED
What do you mean?

DIANA
Abby used to do this sometimes... write things backwards.

Diana turns the envelope upside down for him, so the backwards "E" looks just like the number "3." Then she compares it against the "33" on the time capsule paper. They match perfectly.

DIANA (CONT'D)

The last number. It's not thirty-three.
It's 'E.E.'

Ted grapples with this new revelation.

TED

Who is 'E.E.'?

Diana shrugs in response: no idea.

They make their way over crunching leaves to the trailer's tilted porch, Ted sweeping his flashlight this way and that. As the beam pans past the tall grass nearby it outlines TINY PINPOINTS OF LIGHT somewhere in amongst the vegetation. There were three pairs of them. Like cats eyes, watching...

Ted double-takes, sweeping the beam back over the same expanse... but this time there's nothing there. A trick of the light...?

Ted tries the trailer door. It's locked. He finds a large rock nearby and SMASHES it against the handle, which falls loose. Ted pushes... and the door creaks open into darkness.

He steps inside. Turns to see Diana hesitating at the threshold.

DIANA

When I was little, my mother said she
could hear voices... calling to her...
telling her horrible things. She called
them the whisper people.

(beat)

Then one day my dad took me away from her.
He said she was sick.

(beat)

I was nine when she overdosed... The only
time I came out here was with my father
when he identified her body. I never
returned for her things, even though she
willed the property to me.

Ted offers his hand to help her up... reassuringly as if to say:
It's gonna be alright.

She considers it... and takes hold.

INT. MOBILE HOME - NIGHT

Ted and Diana move further inside... finding their balance on
the tilted floor. Ted works the flashlight around the dwelling.

With the exception of the thick layer of dust, everything is neat and orderly. The place hasn't been touched in twenty-three years... like a giant time capsule.

An 80's era TV sits across from a recliner. A pair of house slippers lay on the floor in front of the chair.

Diana takes it all in -- trembling with bad memories.

DIANA

She moved out here by herself. Said she had to get ready.

(beat)

I never knew what she meant by that.

Ted moves over to a shelf. There are a few ceramic figurines. A framed photograph of the older LUCINDA and DIANA as a girl.

Diana comes up behind him to eye the picture too. She picks it off the shelf and studies it for a long moment. A photo of happier times, before everything fell apart.

Diana picks up a little ANGEL ORNAMENT from the shelf.

DIANA (CONT'D)

I made this for her one Christmas.

(tears well in her eyes)

I never knew she kept it...

Ted squeezes her shoulder in sympathy, then continues to search the living room. Suddenly BRIGHT FLASHES puncture the darkness like strobe lighting. Ted looks round, sees Diana has brought a CAMERA and she is methodically taking photos of her mother's things. Trying to recapture a sense of her past.

A sheet of plastic hangs over an opening ahead instead of a door. Ted reaches out... brushes it aside, revealing --

-- a makeshift STORAGE AREA built off the back of the mobile home. Walls made of cobbled-together plywood and old signs.

Not much here except some art supplies. Old paintings laid out on a table... others on easels. The paintings don't seem to portray anything. Just random slashes of dark reds and yellows.

TED

What are these?

DIANA

I have no idea...

Diana takes a photo of each painting. FLASH... FLASH...

Ted notices a strange sketch pinned to the wall. It looks like some kind of surreal chariot born up by intersecting wheels that are covered in what seem to be hundreds of eyes. Three multi-winged angelic figures in white stand beside it, and from above them shines a piercing light. The word EZEKIEL 1 is scrawled.

Ted eyes the drawing a moment. Weird... Diana SNAPS a photo.

MOMENTS LATER -- They find their way down the narrow HALLWAY... to arrive at a halfway open door.

Diana hesitates again... nervously hanging back...

DIANA (CONT'D)

That's where they found her. In there...

Diana stops short, unable to speak in case she cries. The tears surface anyway. She weeps for a moment, Ted placing comforting hands around her shoulders until it subsides.

INT. TED'S TRUCK - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON CALEB... his eyes flutter open as that familiar WHITE NOISE slowly rises. WHISPERS low and distant...

Caleb glances around... disoriented by his environment...

It's such a hot, humid night that there's condensation on the car windows. Caleb sits up...

INT. MOBILE HOME BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Pitch black in here. Windowless. Like being at the bottom of a cave. Ted's light cuts through it to reveal a very small space. Bare walls. Just a twin bed and a Bible on the nightstand.

Ted approaches a closet. He opens its cracked door wider, shines his beam inside to reveal wire hangers, a few items of clothing, long out of fashion. But other than that... nothing.

Diana picks up the Bible and thumbs through the pages. Nothing out of the ordinary. She looks in the nightstand drawer. Empty.

DIANA

Have you seen enough?

Ted puts his hand on her shoulder.

TED

Let's go.

They move together toward the door... then Ted stops in his tracks. He notices something on the floor by the foot of the bed...

A small pile of smooth black STONES.

EXT. TED'S TRUCK - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

From the reverse angle, we see Caleb wipe his hand across the steamed glass and look out.

He seems to notice something outside...

INT. MOBILE HOME BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ted hurries back across the room to the bed. He bends down to look at the stones, then shines his flashlight under the bed.

Nothing there -- just years of dust. But wait. There is something -- he notices MARKS on the timber underside of the mattress.

He stands, places the flashlight on a small bureau behind him.

TED
Give me a hand.

Diana steps up behind Ted... as he reaches down and grabs the bed with both hands. Together they lift it so it's sitting on its end propped up against the back wall.

Stepping back to examine what Ted saw underneath... their eyes widen. Their faces go slack as a sudden realization dawns.

TED
E.E. isn't a person...

NOW WE REVEAL WHAT THEY SEE -- In the glow of the flashlight something is scrawled all over the underside of the timber bed -- slashes carved with a sharp object... just two words written over and over...

everyone else everyone else everyone else

Diana turns to Ted. A startling dread washing over them.

INT. TED'S TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

CALEB'S POV THROUGH THE GLASS

-- THE STRANGER has stepped out of the tall grass.

CALEB jerks back from the window. Reaches round to Abby --

CALEB

Abby...?

Caleb gently shakes her, hissing in abject fear...

CALEB (CONT'D)

Abby... wake up...!

She stirs, but doesn't wake. Petrified, Caleb reaches across Abby and WIPES A CLEAN PATCH out of her misted window...

...to reveal ANOTHER FIGURE emerging from the woods beyond.

Caleb shakes Abby harder... the WHISPERS growing louder...

A THIRD FIGURE silently steps out in front of the car into the headlights. His features pale and blown out in the bright light... but we can see it's THE STRANGER.

The car is now literally surrounded.

The WHISPERS reached a deafening pitch in Caleb's ears. He sits there trembling, staring out at THE THREE STRANGERS...

Then, as if he can't take the noise in his head any longer, Caleb yanks out his HEARING AID. The noise persists, though... getting louder and louder.

Caleb BOLTS into action. He scrambles into the front seat, slips behind the steering wheel and SLAMS ON THE HORN!

INT. MOBILE HOME - CONTINUOUS

Ted and Diana are JOLTED by the sound of the HORN BLARING outside just as Diana has photographed Lucinda's carved message.

They exchange a look -- 'the kids!' -- and bolt out of the room -- hastily making their way up the dark sloped hallway.

INT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Caleb keeps his hand pressed down on the horn.

Abby finally wakes up into a world of BLARING HORNS and FIGURES closing in on the truck... and she starts to cry.

Caleb looks sideways... and THE STRANGER is at his window. That pale face leering down at him, as the door handle RATTLES -- and the door is flung open. Caleb totally vulnerable as THE STRANGER leans in toward him...

One of the STRANGERS looks to the mobile home, sensing something from within. The OTHER TWO mirror his 'alarm' a beat later...

EXT. MOBILE HOME - CONTINUOUS

Ted and Diana finally make it outside --

-- and the STRANGERS HAVE GONE. They see Caleb in the driver's seat of the truck... still laying on the horn... the door wide open. Abby is crying hysterically in the backseat.

They beat to the truck, and Ted eases Caleb off the horn...

TED

It's okay...

Silence returns as Diana takes Abby in her arms to comfort her.

CALEB

They were here! They wanted to take us away!

TED

Who? Who was here, Caleb?

Caleb looks too frightened to answer.

TED

Did they hurt you???

CALEB

No... They were talking to us...

TED

What did they say???

CALEB

I don't know! They were all talking at once!

Abby has remained quiet so far but she wants to say something...

ABBY

Mom... I know who they are...

DIANA

Yes, baby?

ABBY

The whisper people.

Ted and Diana exchange a horrified look of recognition --

Caleb reacts -- he's just seen one of them -- and Ted SWINGS HIS FLASHLIGHT ROUND... shines it at the long grass just as A STRANGER'S LONG COAT is swallowed by its waving strands.

Ted angrily grabs his gun from the locked glove box. He sprints after the shadowy apparition, into the

FIELD OF TALL GRASS

It stretches thickly to head height so Ted can't see where he's going. His flashlight can't penetrate very deep either. He keeps running anyway. A primal rage has overtaken him.

He looks this way and that as he batters through undergrowth. Suddenly he catches A BLACK MASS MOVING up ahead -- for a moment -- and homes in on it, picking up speed to catch it...

...then he breaks into a small clearing.

THE STRANGER is suddenly right there in front of him. Standing utterly, spookily still with his back to Ted.

Ted raises his weapon and edges toward his quarry, clumsily flipping off the safeties...

TED

What do you want with my son???

The Stranger turns around to stare at Ted, and he opens his mouth as if to answer...

ON TED - FROM OVER THE STRANGER'S SHOULDER

A pulse of searing white light bursts from THE STRANGER'S FACE. Far brighter than Diana's camera flash. Ted falls backwards, clutching his eyes. He trips and hits the ground, dropping his weapon. Stunned.

The glare evaporates as suddenly as it appeared... and THE STRANGER retreats into the grassy vines again.

Ted casts about for his gun like a blind man.

And indeed, A BRIEF POV through Ted's eyes confirms he has blurred, distorted vision. A DARK PATCH in the center of the frame dissipates as he recovers from his temporary sight loss.

...and finally, he can see well enough to locate his gun.

Suddenly it doesn't seem to be much of a protection anymore.

INT. TED'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

ON A TV REPORTER WEARING SHADES -- to do a lighthearted piece.

REPORTER (V.O.)

Now, these flares aren't visible to the human eye. This isn't like an eclipse --

Diana watches it from the couch. Ted descends the stairs and enters the room, shutting the door softly behind him.

DIANA

...You got them down finally?

He nods.

DIANA (CONT'D)

Thank you for letting us stay--

TED

You can stay here as long as you want.
There's strength in numbers, right?

Diana nods gratefully and Ted notices she's sorting through a PILE OF PRINTED DIGITAL PHOTOS laid out on the coffee table in front of her. They're her own shots from the mobile home.

DIANA

I used your printer.

Ted sits beside her on the couch. Eyes the top image of the 'Everyone Else' closet inscription...

TED

That's why Lucinda went insane. She could see the end. She could see tomorrow.

He spreads LUCINDA'S SHEET OF NUMBERS beside the images -- and points out the inch of blank space at the end of the bottom row, between the circled '33/10/19/07' and the edge of the page.

TED (CONT'D)

It's why she didn't write any coordinates after the final date. Because there isn't a single location this time. Because this is it for everyone.

This is too big a concept for Diana to fully comprehend. She tries to talk herself out of even entertaining the notion --

DIANA

My mother was disturbed. She could have just... made it all up.

TED

Your mother has been right so far, Diana.
About everything.

Diana's head lowers disconsolately, barely holding it together.

DIANA
 Abby's all I've got, Ted... I can't let
 anything happen to her.

He gently touches her head. Diana searches his eyes a moment...

DIANA
 What can we do...

Diana's gaze persists, undeterred... looking to Ted for
 comfort...

TED
 I don't know yet.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM - LATER

Diana lies down beside Abby, who is fast asleep.

INT. CALEB'S BEDROOM

Ted settles in beside Caleb... and he's surprised to find his
 son is still awake. Eyes wide open, staring ahead.

TED
 Caleb, you really need to sleep.

Something's plainly eating the kid up...

CALEB
 Abby said Lucinda heard the whisper people
 too, and she died.
 (beat)
 I can hear them, dad. Am I gonna die too?

Ted grabs hold of Caleb: not to frighten him -- to reassure him.

TED
No. I will never let that happen, Caleb.
 Do you hear me? Never...

CALEB
 ...Okay.
 (Ted relents, shaken)
 Don't go.

He resolutely signs the mantra 'Together...' -- and Caleb joins
 in, signing 'Forever' with him. More in hope than certainty.

Caleb puts his head down, shuts his eyes. Ted lays there
 watching him, processing all that's happened...

TIME DISSOLVE - A FEW HOURS LATER

Ted has fallen asleep. He wakes up suddenly... to find Caleb isn't lying beside him anymore. He has left the room.

LIVING ROOM

Ted enters to find Abby cross-legged on the carpet. She has just assembled nine of Diana's printed photos into a square comprising three rows of three. Ted steps closer... to see they're shots of the RED AND YELLOW SLASHES Lucinda had painted.

Apart they meant nothing, but together they form a collage of...

ABBY
(looks up proudly)
It's the sun.

Ted stares -- amazed -- at his combined image of THE SUN. A ball of fire in the sky. Looking round at the TV NEWS --

TV NEWSCASTER (V.O.)
--earlier today there were rolling black-
outs throughout the Midwest--

-- Ted springs into motion, heading for the

DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Ted whispers to Diana, the living room door shut behind him.

TED
I have to check on something at the
observatory -- just up the hill.

He produces the gun, hands it to her with a firm look:

TED
This has a safety catch by the trigger.
I'll be back soon.

Before Diana can protest or question, Ted is out the door.

EXT. NEARBY HILL - DAY

A LARGE RADIO DISH juts skyward above the tree-clad hillside, its antennae pointed toward space.

Ted's truck winds up the narrow access road to --

INT. M.I.T. HAYSTACK OBSERVATORY - DAY

Ted races down a narrow corridor, narrowly misses a GEEKY ASTRONOMER walking in the opposite direction.

GEEKY ASTRONOMER
 Hey, Ted. How's tricks?

To the astronomer's annoyance, Ted doesn't even seem to notice him -- just zooms past at lightning speed --

INT. M.I.T. HAYSTACK OBSERVATORY - TED'S OFFICE - DAY

Bursting into his cramped, cluttered room, Ted shuts the door firmly.

Surrounded by SOLAR CHARTS pulled off the walls and PAPERS pulled from his files, he stares at his

COMPUTER SCREEN

A SIMPLE GRAPHIC displaying a perfect circle in the center. This is surrounded by a shimmering larger circle that ebbs and flows unceasingly, like the tides circulating round the earth.

Only these aren't tides of water -- they're tides of fire. The title above the graphic reads CORONAL MASS EJECTION - PLEIADES 466114A - 1/7/01. A 24 HOUR CLOCK READING elapses beneath it to show these graphics are playing out as a time-lapse sequence.

Suddenly the shimmering outer circle EXPANDS RAPIDLY, FILLING HALF THE SCREEN... BEFORE CONTRACTING to its original size.

TED -- Types a request, narrows even closer at the

SCREEN -- A second perfect circle pops up -- but ON THE RIGHT of the screen this time. TO ITS LEFT, a series of tiny circles pop up, of varying sizes. There are ten in total, spaced out in a line. And there is something familiar about their relative dimensions.

The title above reads SOL. This is our solar system.

TED -- Nervously hits a command key.

SCREEN -- The message TRANSPOSE - EXECUTING flashes... and the FIRST CIRCLE IMAGE is SUPERIMPOSED over the map of our solar system. Finding its way to the graphic of our sun, it OVERLAYS the orb, REDUCING IN SIZE to match its smaller dimensions perfectly.

The 24 HOUR CLOCK sequence starts afresh... and the burning star's outer circle EXPANDS RAPIDLY ONCE AGAIN, engulfing the four planetary spheres closest to it.

WE PUSH IN ON THE THIRD TINY SPHERE, WHICH REPRESENTS EARTH... as it is enveloped by the wave.

Ted stares at the screen in complete shock.

TED (V.O., OVERLAP)
 No, please... don't transfer me again. I
 need to speak with Doctor Gerard in
 Atmospheric. It's very important.
 (beat)
 Thank you.

TIME CUT - SECONDS LATER

Ted holds on the phone, frustrated. On tenterhooks...

VOICE
 Hello?

TED
 Doctor Gerard?

GERARD (ON PHONE)
 Yes?

TED
 This is Professor Ted Myles. We met a
 couple of years ago at NOAA. I published
 that paper on Coronal Mass Ejections...

GERARD (ON PHONE)
 ...Sure. I remember you.

TED
 Doctor Gerard, I know you're busy so I'll
 make this brief. In my paper I had shown
 evidence of a series of superflares from a
 star in the outer Pleiades region.

GERARD (ON PHONE)
 ...Right. The CME's were off the chart.

TED
 I was wondering if NOAA has seen any
 anomalies with the sun over the last
 quarter cycle?

GERARD (ON PHONE)
 Anomalies on the Pleiades star -- ?

TED
 -- no. With our sun. I've looked at the
 data... and the patterns match up. I
 believe our recent solar flare activity is
 an indicator of a bigger problem.

Long beat...

GERARD (ON PHONE)
 Professor Myles. What are we talking
 about here?

TED
 A superflare... in our own solar system.
 (beat)
 We're talking a one thousand nano-tesla
 wave of radiation that would destroy our
 ozone layer... killing every living
 organism on this planet.

Silence on the other end of the phone. Then --

GERARD (ON PHONE)
 I'm sure you've made a mistake somewhere
 in your data.

TED
 Please. If someone at NOAA could look
 into this and call me back...

GERARD (ON PHONE)
 I'll see what we can do, Professor.

Ted lets out a breath... unsure if he's made any difference.

TED
 Thank you.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON DIANA'S TEAR-STAINED FACE. She's just been told.

INT. TED'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Diana turns away from Ted to stare out the window, collecting her
 thoughts for a moment in the light of the inevitable...

TED
 I just need someone to tell me they
 believe me, Diana.

Diana shrugs, unsure how to respond other than to say --

DIANA
 I believe you. But how is this happening?

TED
 I don't know... but it *is* happening.
 (reflects)
 Did you ever hear of "The Law Of Large
 Numbers"?
 (she shakes her head)
 (MORE)

TED (cont'd)

No... No, of course not. It's a mathematical theory.

(then)

The Law states that at the micro level of any system, random anomalies occur all the time. Chaos rules. Life on Earth being one of those systems.

Diana looks lost, but Ted is compelled to continue:

TED (CONT'D)

We call this randomness coincidence.

(beat)

But when you look at the macro level... the big picture... all those tiny coincidences offset one another, giving balance to the whole. Life literally evens out the odds to establish order: a pattern.

Ted produces LUCINDA'S LIST OF NUMBERS, then he holds it up between them with a look of frustration.

TED (CONT'D)

There's a pattern here... a purpose. *I just can't work out what it is.*

(stares out the window)

I was sure the numbers came to me for a reason. So I could stop something terrible happening before it was too late...

He eyes the sheet, then Diana again:

TED (CONT'D)

Why did I get this prophecy if there's nothing I can do about it? How do you stop the end of the goddamn world...?

There is nothing Diana can say to this. Her overloaded mind turns to practical matters --

DIANA

There are some caves off Route 40, past Groton. Hardly anyone knows about them, but I used to play there as a child.

Ted considers, and nods -- though we can tell he's only going along with this for her sake.

TED

Okay. Get Abby ready to leave.

Caleb appears in the hall.

TED (CONT'D)

Caleb, we're going on a trip. Put some things into your backpack: clothes and shoes only. Soccer ball, but no gadgets.

INT. TED'S HOME OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

As Ted shoves a few things into a duffle bag, his eye catches:

THE SMALL GIFT-WRAPPED BOX on the shelf that we saw earlier.

He steps across, reaches up and pulls it down. He looks at it for a moment then steadies himself: now is the time.

He walks across to his desk, sits down. Opens the small card and reads it: "Happy 40th, My Love - Allison."

Now he rips open the paper, his hands trembling. A SMALL JEWELRY BOX. He opens the box and looks at what's inside:

It is a SMALL SILVER LOCKET on a thin chain. He turns it over in his hands, then opens it up to see what's inside.

Suddenly he's overcome with emotion, his eyes fill with tears and he breaks down, as a year of grief comes flooding out.

The chain slips from his hand and it falls to the rug, as he continues to cry.

CLOSE ON THE LOCKET -- inside is an image, a portrait of Ted, Allison & Caleb in happier times. And on the back of the cover the inscription:

TOGETHER FOREVER.

DIAL TONE OVER -- we hear a phone pick up --

TED (O.S.)

Dad...?

EXT. TED'S BACKYARD - DAY

Ted is some distance from the house, pacing back and forth as he speaks on his cell-phone.

On the other end of the line... his FATHER'S authoritative bass voice calmly replies --

TED'S FATHER (ON PHONE)

Theodore.

It's too late to turn back now. Ted searches for the words...

TED

We need to talk. The day before Allison died, she made me promise her something. She asked me to call you, to invite you for dinner on my birthday. She wanted--

TED'S FATHER

I know, son.

TED

(absorbs this, then)

Dad, we haven't spoken for so long... I don't even know why anymore. I just remember being a Pastor's Kid, and choosing to follow science instead...

This is hard, and the word's aren't coming easily.

TED (CONT'D)

I'm calling to tell you something...

Ted hesitates.

TED'S FATHER (ON PHONE)

Yes...

Ted had been hoping for more of a response than this. Something to build a rapport with. He decides to change tack --

TED

Remember that sermon you preached every year at Pentecost about the Gifts of the Spirit? One was the Gift of Prophecy...

TED'S FATHER (ON PHONE)

1 Corinthians 12. Yes, I remember it. The church must respect the prophet.

TED

I've got a prophecy of my own now, Dad, that's about to be proved accurate... and I hope you'll respect it, and receive it as the truth. This heat we're experiencing isn't gonna get better -- it's gonna get worse. Much worse.

(beat)

I need you to get Grace and whatever supplies you can, and get below ground tonight. The basement, the sewers, the T: as deep as you can, and as fast--

TED'S FATHER (ON PHONE)

I'm sorry, Ted, but I'm afraid I won't be going anywhere tonight. Or any night.

A beat. Ted's familial frustration flares to life again --

TED

Look, you don't understand--

TED'S FATHER (ON PHONE)

I understand you, son, so please understand *me* now. I appreciate your concern, but if it's my time to go... it's my time to go. I'm ready whenever the Good Lord calls me. Are you?

The line starts to CRACKLE...

TED

Dad, I knew you'd say something like that, but please listen to me. For once in your life!

Suddenly, Ted gets a BEEPING TONE. He glances down at his cell display: "SYSTEM INTERRUPTED" -- and he lowers the phone...

TED (CONT'D)

Goddammit!

Just then, from the back porch --

DIANA (O.S.)

Ted!

At the sound of Diana's startled voice, Ted hurries back inside.

A TV SCREEN

Displays the chilling words EMERGENCY BROADCAST SYSTEM...

INT. TED'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

...then it cuts to LIVE FEED of a packed press conference.

Ted joins Diana at the TV, and together they watch a SPOKESMAN from N.O.A.A. (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) address a gathering of press and reporters. There's a trace of nervousness in his voice as he speaks into bundled microphones:

NOAA SPOKESMAN

Today we have received information which suggests tomorrow's solar flares could be more serious than we originally thought. We are recommending that people stay indoors until further notified. Bring your pets inside, stock up on extra water -- and if possible... seek out fortified underground shelters--

ON THE TV -- The official isn't even able to finish his statement as a wave of commotion rocks the press conference -- "underground shelters?" REPORTERS immediately begin firing off questions.

NOAA SPOKESMAN

Please, let me answer one question at a--

ON TED -- swallowing hard. He whispers to Diana, horrified:

TED

It's starting. We have to go.

Hurrying to the stairs, Ted calls upward --

TED

Caleb! Let's move!

UPSTAIRS HALL - MOMENTS LATER

Ted sees Caleb's door is ajar, no response from inside --

CALEB'S BEDROOM

Caleb is sitting at his wooden desk with his back to the door, writing something furiously.

TED

Caleb...?

Caleb doesn't respond. He keeps on scribbling intensively.

Ted approaches. Peers over Caleb's shoulder to see what he's doing... and his blood runs cold:

Caleb is madly writing out a STRING OF NUMBERS on a piece of paper -- the exact same sequence as Lucinda's number list.

He's on autopilot: utterly entranced by what he's doing. Unaware of his dad's presence.

TED

My God!

Horried, Ted snatches up the sheet to stop him writing... but Caleb carries on regardless, scrawling more numbers onto the wooden desk beneath, staining it with ink.

Shocked, Ted tugs the pen free of Caleb's fingers...

TED

Caleb, STOP!

...but Caleb's fingers only stiffen in response, claw-like, and he scratches at the wood with his nails, employing uncommon strength to continue the number sequence. He strikes one digit into the desk, then a second...

Horrorified, Ted sinks to his knees beside Caleb, grabs him by the shoulders and shakes his son firmly, crying --

TED

CALEB!!!

Suddenly, Caleb snaps out of it. He looks sideways at Ted.

CALEB

...Huh?

TED

What were you doing?

Caleb looks around, wondering why he's sitting at his desk... and he sees the numbers inked, scratched into the wood.

CALEB

Did... Did I do that?

Ted stares at the scored digits more closely, a thought occurring... and he produces LUCINDA'S LIST OF NUMBERS.

Staring at the blank space after the bottom row, he places Caleb's sheet alongside it. The number sequences are identical -- only Caleb has written fewer digits, only filling half his sheet.

A light bulb goes off in Ted's eyes, as he suddenly realizes:

TED

She was interrupted...

CALEB

...Who was?

Animated by this fresh revelation, Ted lays Caleb's sheet back on the desk, and sticks the pen back between his fingers.

TED

Keep writing, Caleb! Don't stop!

CALEB

But I don't know what to--

TED

Can't you write any more numbers down?
Maybe you can remember them...

CALEB

Dad, I can't remember anything. I don't--

TED
Just concentrate, son. Write whatever
comes into your mind...

Caleb stares helplessly at the numbers like he doesn't recognize them. Like somebody else wrote them.

CALEB
But... but I don't think I can--

TED
Try!

A beat.

Tears well up spontaneously in Caleb's eyes, and Ted is mortified at what he's done. He throws his arms around Caleb. Hugs him tightly, whispering:

TED
I'm sorry... I'm so sorry...

Staring over Caleb's shoulder at the digits scratched into the wood.

LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Diana turns away from the TV... to glimpse Ted making for the door in a hurry.

DIANA
Ted, where are you going?

TED
There's something I've gotta do, Diana.
Wait here. I'll be back as soon as I can.
(seeing her concern)
Trust me.

Before Diana can utter a word of protest, he's gone. Out to his truck, which he guns -- then peels out of the driveway.

BACK ON THE TV -- The press briefing is continuing. One REPORTER'S VOICE rises above the rest:

REPORTER #3
What's the worst case scenario here?

NOAA SPOKESMAN

Flares commonly interfere with cellphone
and satellite communications, but more
intense flares could theoretically affect
our magnetic fields... the ozone layer...
We simply don't know.

CUT TO:

A SCREEN DOOR

A hand peels it back. RAPS INSISTENTLY on the door behind it.

EXT. MISS TAYLOR'S HOUSE - DUSK

After a moment, the inner door opens... and Miss Taylor peers
through the crack -- her security chain still latched.

MISS TAYLOR

Yes?

ON TED -- standing on the porch.

TED

It's Ted Myles, Miss Taylor...

For a moment, she doesn't seem to recognize him.

TED

I came to see you about Lucinda...

MISS TAYLOR

(remembering)

Oh, Professor Myles! Of course!

Miss Taylor shuts the door to remove the chain, then opens wide --
to find Ted presenting LUCINDA'S LIST OF NUMBERS for inspection.

TED

You couldn't remember what she scratched
on the closet door, Miss Taylor, I know...
but do you remember this?

Her wizened eyes stare at the digits, scrawled in a child's hand.

TED

It's her time capsule message. Look here.

Ted's finger points out the blank space in the bottom right
corner. Miss Taylor narrows at it with dim recognition...

TED

You took it away from her, didn't you?
Before she'd finished writing. Please try
to remember...

She concentrates harder... and it all comes flooding back --

MISS TAYLOR

She was holding up the class... I
couldn't keep everyone waiting...

TED

So you took it from her... and she
scratched the final numbers into the
closet door, didn't she? Six of them.

Miss Taylor looks up at Ted and nods, confirming his theory.

MISS TAYLOR

All in a row.
(sighs)
They were just numbers... silly numbers.
The other children made such pretty
drawings...

Ted leans in, fixing her intently to ask:

TED

Is the closet where you found Lucinda
still there, Miss Taylor -- or has the
classroom been remodelled?

Miss Taylor seems mystified by the question -- and amused too.

MISS TAYLOR

Paul Revere isn't a wealthy school, Mr.
Myles. They've always had to make the
best of what they were given.

Ted takes Miss Taylor's hands in his, squeezes --

TED

Thank you, Miss Taylor. Thank you.

-- and he hurries back to his truck.

CUT TO:

EXT. PAUL REVERE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DUSK

The school is deserted. Locked-up for the day.

Ted's truck rolls up beside the back fence. He peers out at
fifties-era buildings. Painted up, but unchanged beneath.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM - MOMENTS LATER

GLASS SHATTERS... and Ted's hand opens a window from inside. He climbs through. Straightens before the white closet door.

He opens it... to find the back is as smooth and thickly-painted as the front. Any inscriptions long covered over.

MOMENTS LATER, IN THE CORRIDOR OUTSIDE -- Ted SMASHES a glass panel, triggering the FIRE ALARM. He extracts a FIRE AXE.

BACK AT THE CLOSET DOOR -- Ted hacks around the steel hinges, severing it from the frame with six mighty blows.

CUT TO:

INT. TED'S LIVING ROOM - SUNSET

Diana waits with Caleb and Abby, watching the clock nervously. The TV is switched off so they can't see the announcement. Their packed bags sit by the door.

ENGINE RUMBLE breaks the silence and Diana hurries to the window... to see Ted's truck barreling into the driveway.

He buckets out, hauls the severed door out of the back... then drags it toward his work shed wearing the focused determination of a man on a mission.

Concealing her alarm, Diana turns to the kids --

DIANA

Wait right here.

-- then she hurries outside to pursue him.

INT. TED'S WORKSHED - SUNSET

GOLDEN BEAMS scythe through gaps in the slatted walls to split the shadows, heating the shed into a furnace.

Ted has stripped down to a tank top in the sweltering gloom. The monolithic white-coated rectangle of wood rests against a workbench, and Ted focuses a HEAT GUN at its center.

Burning hot air attacks the paint work... until it bubbles... blisters... and ultimately evaporates -- revealing an older layer of GREEN PAINT beneath.

Opening the door to peer inside, Diana overcomes his surprise at Ted's strange activity and calls to him --

DIANA

Ted...?

Ted doesn't acknowledge her. He just keeps on blasting, so she steps closer, shouts over the noise:

DIANA (CONT'D)

Ted! What are you doing...? We have to get to the caves!

TED

We're not going to the caves!

DIANA

...What???

TED

I was wrong, Diana! Your mother wrote a latitude and longitude for this event too -- it just wasn't on the sheet!

The green paint evaporates... giving way to crimson beneath...

TED (CONT'D)

She tried to write it down, but ran out of time -- so she scratched it into this door instead! She's trying to tell us something -- where we need to go!

Diana can't believe what she's hearing.

DIANA

Ted, you're not making any sense! Look at you! Look at what you're doing!

TED

These numbers are the key, Diana -- to everything!

DIANA

No! The numbers are a curse! They're evil! Now, please: we need to go...!

The crimson layer dissipates too, revealing sand-polished wood... but no numbers. The wooden plane is smooth, unmarked.

Diana hovers a moment, hopeful that Ted will admit defeat...

...but instead he re-applies the heat gun. Starts widening the exposed area.

TED

I just need a few more minutes...

He's so focused on the task, he doesn't even notice her leave.

EXT. TED'S DRIVEWAY - MOMENTS LATER - SUNSET

Diana ushers Caleb and Abby from the house, each of them carrying their own stuff. She guides them toward her car.

DIANA
C'mon, we're taking my car.
(pops the trunk)
Throw your stuff inside.

Caleb does so... then he eyes Ted's work shed, uncertain.

CALEB
What about dad?

Diana opens the rear passenger door, points them inside.

DIANA
He needs to finish what he's doing.
(nods to Ted's truck)
He's gonna follow us. Now jump in!

Caleb tarries a moment longer... then he climbs in after Abby.

INT. TED'S WORKSHED - SUNSET

Ted's heat gun works in a circular motion, exposing more wood.

Some curved indentations emerge from beneath the crimson, and he burns at them hard... then shuts off the flame to survey --

-- a sequence of scratched numbers: **423471**.

ON TED'S AWED FACE -- beholding Lucinda's final revelation.

Dropping the gun, he collects his Sat Nav device from the sawdust floor and types in the coordinates...

ON THE SAT NAV SCREEN -- A solitary back-road halts at the edge of the map. The LOCATION MARKER seems to have settled in the middle of nowhere.

Ted narrows at the map segment's broad geographical layout: it looks familiar to him. Then suddenly it dawns --

TED
Dear God...

EXT. TED'S DRIVEWAY - DUSK

Ted emerges from the shed, the excited bearer of truth...

...only he discover Diana's car has vanished from the driveway.

He runs to the house, peers through the front window...

TED
Diana...? CALEB???

No-one is inside. All the lights are off.

Ted beats down the driveway and runs out into the street, looking both ways frantically -- no tail lights are visible in either direction. His disbelief quickly gives way to rage:

TED
NOOO!!!

Dashing back to his truck... Ted jumps in, slots the Sat Nav into its dashboard holder then guns the engine.

Punching Diana's number into his cell phone with one hand, he steers onto the road with the other and accelerates.

INT. DIANA'S CAR - SUBURBS - EARLY EVENING

Diana drives. Abby and Caleb are perched quietly in the back.

Her cell phone display FLASHES SILENTLY with Ted's incoming call on the passenger seat beside her. She considers answering it... but decides against.

Caleb stares out the window at a STRIP-MALL going by.

Crowds of people have thronged the few stores that are open late. A small mob are besieging a grocery store, ferrying food out through its SMASHED PLATE-GLASS WINDOW.

A POLICE CAR shoots past, SIREN WAILING. Racing to the scene.

Abby eyes her mom's nervous expression in the rear-view mirror.

ABBY
Where are we going, Mom?

DIANA
We're going camping.

ABBY
To hide from the whisper people?

Diana is disturbed by her mention of them, but she plays along --

DIANA
Yes, baby. They won't find us where we're going.

ABBY
 (like she's being silly)
 Mommy, they know where we are.

DIANA
 How do you know that...?

ABBY
 They told us so.

Diana is anxious now, her gaze flitting to Abby in the mirror more and more, her focus distracted from the road --

DIANA
 -- You've seen them again???

ABBY
 (eyes Caleb, who agrees)
 No, they just talk to us.

DIANA
 How, Abby? How do they talk to you?

ABBY
 (like it's obvious)
 They whisper. Into our heads.

Diana can't contain it anymore. She starts crying at the wheel. Tears spilling down her cheeks uncontrollably as she frets that her daughter may be going crazy just like her mother did...

SUDDENLY A CAR SWINGS out from a side road, speeding somewhere in a hurry. Diana doesn't see it until the last moment --

-- SHE YANKS THE WHEEL IN TERROR, and her car swings out into the other lane. There's an oncoming car bearing down. Diana wrestles the vehicle back into her lane amid BLARING HORNS, SCREECHING TIRES...

DIANA
 Oh God! Oh God!

Diana hyperventilates sighs of relief. Abby and Caleb both look scared in the back -- Caleb particularly.

CALEB
 I wanna call my dad!

DIANA
 We'll call him when we arrive, Caleb.

CALEB
 I wanna talk to him now!

DIANA

Well, you can't at the moment! The cell phones aren't working properly! I'm sorry!

Just then, a dull DING, DING, DING! drones from the dashboard. Diana notices a RED GAS PUMP ICON IS FLASHING:

DIANA

Goddammit!

A GLOWING TEXACO SIGN revolves in the distance. A line of cars trails from each of its pumps -- the panic buying has begun.

EXT. GAS STATION DRIVEWAY - NIGHT - MINUTES LATER

Diana's car rolls up to a pump. She gets out to fill up.

INT. DIANA'S CAR

Caleb looks out at a PHONE KIOSK across the driveway. Looking past Abby, he sees Diana crossing the driveway to pay at the

EXT. CASHIER WINDOW - ACROSS DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

Diana passes a twenty under the glass. The CASHIER, seeing her nerves are hanging by a thread, smiles comfortingly at her. Tries to make conversation as he opens the till --

CASHIER

You believe this shit? We're all gonna wake up tomorrow feeling pretty stupid. Same thing happened with Y2K, man...

INT. TED'S TRUCK - SUBURBAN ROAD - NIGHT (MOVING)

Ted is driving hard, scanning the streets looking for any sign of Diana's car, when his cell phone RINGS. He picks up --

TED (INTO PHONE)

Yes...?

INTERCUT - CALEB ON DRIVEWAY / TED IN TRUCK

Caleb is at the phone kiosk, eyeing Diana at the cash window.

CALEB

Dad???

TED

-- Caleb! Are you okay? Tell me exactly where you are...

CALEB

We're at a gas station. I don't know where. When are you coming to meet us?

CASHIER WINDOW

As Diana scoops up her change, she looks back at her car... and Caleb isn't inside.

Her eyes sweep the driveway -- and fasten on him standing at the kiosk along the wall.

Diana hurries over to him, sticks out her palm for the phone --

DIANA

Caleb, get back in the car now.

Caleb hands over the phone reluctantly. He withdraws as we

INTERCUT - DIANA ON DRIVEWAY / TED IN TRUCK

DIANA

I'm sorry, Ted, but I had to do this -- for Abby and Caleb.

TED

Where are you?

DIANA

We're in Westford, and we're going to the caves. We'll meet you there.

TED

Diana, listen to me! I found the numbers -- they're the latitude and longitude of your mother's mobile home! That's where we're supposed to go!

Diana can't believe what she's hearing. The whole world seems to be going crazy around her. Her red eyes moisten again...

DIANA

Ted, don't do this to me... Please...

TED

Look, I know how it sounds crazy, but this is something we have to--

DIANA

(hysterical)

You want us to head towards the place where this is supposed to happen??? You're insane, Ted! Those people are behind this -- and if we go back there, they'll be waiting and they're gonna kill us!!!

TED

In twenty-four hours we'll *all* be dead, Diana!!! It's a chance we have to take! Stay where you are! I'll be right there!

DIANA

(shakes her head)

No! If we go to the caves, we've got a chance! The sun can't reach that--

TED

The caves won't save us! Nothing can! The radiation will penetrate a mile into the earth's crust, do you hear me?

(Diana is rocked)

I was going along with this so you wouldn't lose hope, Diana -- but now I'm telling you the truth! Our only hope is to go where the numbers are telling us to go! This is what we're meant to do!

Diana can't take this anymore. It's too much. She turns away from the driveway to clear her head -- and sees something Caleb hadn't seen because of his height. Lying on top of the kiosk is a small dark stone. Smooth, black and eerily familiar.

Diana picks it up, examines it, recognizing it from somewhere...

TED (CONT'D)

...Diana?

DIANA

I don't believe you... you're lying to me... I'm taking the children to the caves! We have to save the children!

TED

-- Don't you move, Diana! Caleb is my son, and I'll decide where he--

SCREEEECH! Diana spins at the sound of burning rubber... to see HER CAR PEELING AWAY FROM THE GAS STATION!

Someone is behind the wheel -- driving off with Abby and Caleb.

Diana's eyes bulge with horror, and she SCREAMS:

DIANA

ABBY -- !

Dropping the phone, she breaks into a blind SPRINT. Beating after her car as it tears out onto the highway.

At the other end of the line, Ted has heard her scream --

TED (INTO PHONE)

-- Diana ???

His CRACKLING VOICE SPITS from the abandoned phone speaker as it swings, pendulum-like, beneath the kiosk --

TED (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)

DIANA, ARE YOU THERE??? CALEB!!!

Hearing no response, Ted punches out of the call, and floors it.

GAS STATION DRIVEWAY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

As her car pulls away, Diana sees Abby and Caleb screaming soundlessly through the back window, hands pressed to the glass.

DIANA

MY DAUGHTER! SOMEBODY HELP ME!

The CASHIER steps out of his booth to investigate the commotion. Other customers look on... unsure exactly what just happened.

Diana stops running. Turns to see their faces staring at her.

DIANA (CONT'D)

CALL THE POLICE!

Returning to the pumps, she looks around. Catches a JEEP at the pumps with its driver door open. The DRIVER is at the cashier window waiting for him to return so he can pay.

Diana sees the keys are in the ignition so she leaps in. Gunning it, she ROARS OFF in pursuit. The driver sees --

JEEP DRIVER

What the... HEY!!!

-- but it's too late, as his Jeep fishtails onto the highway.

EXT. WESTFORD STREETS - NIGHT

Diana races up the two-lane, HONKING for cars to clear a path.

Up ahead, TRAFFIC IDLES at a red light. Diana jerks the wheel and slingshots into the right-hand emergency lane -- speeds past the stopped traffic. Finally, she catches a glimpse of her car up ahead... making its way through an intersection.

Diana propels the Jeep up the emergency lane, gaining on her car -- and she makes it onto the empty intersection --

-- as an 18 WHEELER comes barreling in from the other direction. Diana doesn't see it coming until the last second... and it PLOWS INTO HER JEEP.

The vehicle crumples horrifically on impact as the 18 WHEELER shunts the SUV aside. It tumbles across the grass.

The 18 WHEELER slams on the brakes. Hydraulics HISS... and it seems like forever until the big rig comes to a complete stop.

The DRIVER hurries down out of his cab to view the steaming wreckage. There's no movement inside the vehicle.

INT. DIANA'S STOLEN JEEP - NIGHT

CLOSE ON DIANA'S BLOOD-STAINED FACE, sandwiched amongst busted metal panels in the cramped, upside-down interior. Her eyes flutter open, and stare dimly past camera...

...at the roof, which has become the floor. Amongst shattered chips of glass WE STEADILY FOCUS ON... the smooth dark stone.

INT. DIANA'S CAR - NIGHT

Abby and Caleb stare out of the back window at the road.

ABBY
Where did she go???

Caleb can't answer. Slowly they face forward, scared rigid... to regard THE STRANGER, silently driving them who knows where.

His eyes meet theirs in the rear-view mirror as PASSING HEADLIGHTS illuminate them.

EXT. GAS STATION DRIVEWAY - NIGHT - SOON AFTER

Ted's truck bypasses the cars waiting for the pumps by cutting across the grass, then SLAMMING to a halt by the cashier window. He buckets out, looks around. Can't see Diana or her car.

Ted rushes to the glass, barging a customer aside.

TED

A half-hour ago something happened here!
There was a woman screaming... and a kid
on your pay phone --

He points out the kiosk. The CASHIER sadly nods to him.

CASHIER

Some guy took the lady's car with her kids
inside. Drove right off with 'em.

Ted reacts in horror, his worst fears confirmed.

TED

The woman -- where did she go???

The CASHIER somberly directs Ted toward the top of a ridge...
where he spies THE FAMILIAR RED SWIRL OF EMERGENCY LIGHTS.

TED (CONT'D)

Oh God, no...

SLAM CUT TO:

EXT. CRASH INTERSECTION - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

Ted's truck BRAKES TO A STOP at the roadside. He jumps out to
survey the wreckage of the Jeep, its collapsed door peeled back
like a tin can by a FIRE CREW'S jaws of life.

No ambulances. Ted runs over to a TRAFFIC COP who's directing
cars around the scene.

TED

Officer -- please! The woman driving this
car??? Is she okay???

TRAFFIC COP

She's at County Hospital, ten miles up the
Highway.

He points off, and Ted sees the route. Returns to him --

TED

There were two kids! Do you know what
happened to them?

TRAFFIC COP

There's an APB on the lady's car, but
nothing's turned up yet...

SLAM CUT TO:

HOSPITAL EMERGENCY DOORS BASH OPEN INTO CAMERA...

...as Ted barges up to the reception desk, twitching with concern.

TED

The crash victim who just came in!

THE ATTENDING NURSE points him through double-doors marked

EMERGENCY ROOM - SECONDS LATER

Ted enters... and the main treatment room is dead-ahead. Beyond the glass, DOCTORS and NURSES in green scrubs work furiously around DIANA, who is laid out beneath a green sheet on the operating table. Unconscious. Masked and tubed.

Ted approaches the glass, emotionally shattered... and all he can do is look on as the HEAD TRAUMA SURGEON lifts a pair of DEFIBRILLATOR PADDLES that WHINE as they charge...

...and applies them to her chest. THUMP! Diana jerks off the table, then collapses back. Ted desperately tunes into the CARDIAC MONITOR behind them. It is flatlining...

HEAD TRAUMA SURGEON

Raise it to four hundred!

ANOTHER WHINE... and Ted's eyes lift to the CLOCK ON THE WALL above them. The hands read 11:59...

...as a fresh charge is applied. She rises... and falls. The flatline persists... and the doctors are starting to flag now. The team members eye their leader as he considers...

Ted shakes his head. Mouths the word 'no', but the sound won't come out. This can't be happening...

HEAD TRAUMA SURGEON (CONT'D)

Okay, people... call it.

NURSE

(eyes the clock)

Time Of Death -- twelve midnight exactly.

TED'S EYES lift to the clock again... and it's true. The hands are unified at 12 midnight, the second hand ticking on past it.

Diana has died on the very day her mother predicted.

Ted steps away from the glass... and his body crumples with anguish. He sinks down the wall into a heap on the floor.

After a moment... the treatment room doors open and the Trauma Surgeon emerges. He sees Ted sitting off in a heap and removes his surgical mask, takes a few steps toward him.

HEAD TRAUMA SURGEON

Did you know this woman?

Ted nods, without looking up at him. Staring straight ahead --

TED

I'm a friend...

(looking up)

Can I see her a moment?

Off the surgeon's sympathetic expression --

TREATMENT ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Ted approaches Diana's lifeless body. Reluctant, yet compelled to see her face one more time. It is pale and bruised.

He reaches out. Touches her hand, racked with regret.

TED

(whispers haltingly)

I'm sorry...

Ted hears soft footsteps behind him... until the surgeon is standing at his shoulder.

TED (CONT'D)

There were two kids with her. The police can't find them. Did she say anything, before she died?

HEAD TRAUMA SURGEON

No. Sorry.

(then, curious)

She kept something with her, though. The whole time she was conscious. She fought to hold onto it until the end.

Ted turns, searching the surgeon's eyes for understanding. Hoping... and the medic offers him a closed fist. His fingers open to reveal... the smooth black stone resting in his palm.

Ted takes it. Lifts it up to the light, amazed.

Hardening with fresh resolve, his fist closes around it.

CUT TO:

EXT. BACK ROAD - NIGHT

Ted's truck hauls down a remote county highway... into the wild.

INT. TED'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Ted's eyes are laser-focused on the road ahead as he drives. His face bathed in eerie green light from his dashboard display.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
 --state of emergency has been declared in
 all major cities... Officials are urging
 citizens in urban centers without subway
 systems to evacuate--

EXT. GRAVEL ROAD - NIGHT

Silent darkness is broken by the sound of an APPROACHING ENGINE,
 TIRES CRUNCHING ACROSS GRAVEL...

...and searing headlights, whose turning arc illuminates
 LUCINDA'S MOBILE HOME.

INT. TED'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Ted slows to a halt, and stares out at the abandoned shell.

SATNAV VOICE (V.O.)
 HIGHWAY ENDS. DO YOU WISH TO PROCEED TO
 YOUR PROGRAMMED COORDINATES OFF-ROAD?

Ted consults his glowing SATNAV SCREEN, which displays the
 terminus of the marked road at the foot of the screen... and a
 FLASHING RED ARROW pointing him north above it.

Ted punches in: YES.

SATNAV VOICE (V.O.)
 MAPQUEST CAN TRACK YOU, BUT CANNOT DIRECT
 YOU. GOOD LUCK -- AND DRIVE SAFELY.

Ted rotates the vehicle sideways. His headlights leave the
 mobile home... and focus on the TALL GRASS behind it.

They pick out something unfamiliar leading up to the field. Tire
tracks. Where they enter, the grass has been flattened.

Ted carefully checks his HAND GUN is loaded, then replaces it
 beside his baseball bat and flashlight on the passenger seat.

TED
(urges his truck)
Okay. Do what you do...

Ted shifts into gear. Accelerates into the thick green stalks.

EXT. TALL GRASS - NIGHT

Ted's truck traces the flattened grass, beating a wider path through the foliage than the vehicle he's pursuing.

His head lamps barely penetrate a meter in front of him, so his progress remains slow and steady.

INT. TED'S TRUCK - TALL GRASS - NIGHT

Ted squints as his hi-beams strike something up ahead.

He slows as he recognizes Diana's car.

Halting before it, Ted sees it has been abandoned, so he steers around it. Presses on into the unknown.

EXT. SHALLOW BANK - NIGHT

Ted's truck emerges from blinding, suffocating grass... to CLATTER DOWN a dirt slope. His wheels roll out upon a flat surface that CRUNCHES under the weight of his tires.

INT. TED'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Ted leans forward to see his headlights illuminating what looks to be a bed of stones. He has driven out onto a DRY RIVERBED --

EXT. TED'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Ted climbs out. His flashlight beam shines over the stones and he squats to pick one up. It is a smooth dark stone, like the one the surgeon gave him, and the Stranger gave Caleb.

He shines a wide arc. All of these stones are the same type. This is it, Ted realizes. This riverbed is the path.

Ted stands. Looks north, toward the source. In the distance, barely visible under a blanket of stars, the surrounding plains rise steeply to form hills...

INT. TED'S TRUCK - DRY RIVERBED - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

Ted drives forward, searchlights penetrating a veil of mist.

The banks incline on either side of him to fashion a steep canyon. This riverbed seems to be the only path into it.

EXT. CANYON CLIFF - NIGHT

WE'RE GAZING DOWN upon the shadowy gully from above. Ted's truck lights are visible down in the mist... white in front, red behind... venturing deeper into the crevice...

INT. TED'S TRUCK - DRY RIVERBED - NIGHT

Ted squints ahead, scanning for shape or form...

...and suddenly he sees something. A glimpse of MOVEMENT in his headlights for a split-second, then it vanishes again.

Ted rolls to a stop, and --

SATNAV VOICE (V.O.)
COORDINATES REACHED.

Ted checks his SATNAV SCREEN MAP... and its true. The marker asterisk and the red arrow are finally overlapping.

Ted applies the handbrake, gathers up his pistol and flashlight and he climbs out, leaving the ENGINE CHUGGING in readiness...

EXT. DRY RIVERBED CANYON - NIGHT

Ted hears a LOW HUM coming from somewhere. It seems to emanate from all directions, ECHOING around the canyon walls.

TED
Caleb...!

There is no answer. He stalks forward carefully... parallel to his truck's penetrating hi-beams... flashlight searching the mist on either side to locate the source of the movement.

Suddenly he's aware of another sound in the vicinity. Footsteps.

He can't tell where they're coming from either... and his search beam sweeps in paranoid arcs.

Behind Ted -- SOMEONE runs past, like a flash. Ted SPINS --

TED (CONT'D)

Caleb???

Then from another direction, SOMEONE ELSE darts through the mist. Ted whirls quickly -- raising his gun.

TED (CONT'D)

Who's there!?

Ted circles around and around... gun trained and ready for whichever of the two entities lunges first.

Then through the veil, SOMETHING appears. Low to the ground.

Ted takes a step back... and A WOLF materializes from the fog. A perfect WHITE WOLF.

The wolf stands there... staring at Ted with intelligent eyes.

Ted instinctively lowers his gun... just as ANOTHER WOLF appears out of the woods to join the first one.

It's an oddly calm moment. As if the wolves sense no threat from Ted. He's not there for them.

A beat... then the wolves turn and sprint off into the mist ahead of him... like phantoms.

Ted is left standing there all alone. Just the silence and that LOW HUM... now it's closer than ever.

Ted edges forward again. Following the direction of the wolves.

The canyon widens and deepens around him, descending into a shallow pit... and up ahead no stars are visible, as if the chasm terminates there in some kind of blockage or landslide.

Ted ventures forward to investigate, but before he gets very far, out of nowhere... THE STRANGER IS STANDING IN FRONT OF HIM! Staring directly at him.

Ted FLINCHES BACK... one hand raising his gun in self-defense, the other shielding his eyes in case he's blinded again.

TED (CONT'D)

Where is he...?

The STRANGER just stands there... staring blankly at Ted.

Ted takes a bold step toward THE STRANGER, gun shaking in his hands -- but THE STRANGER doesn't move.

TED (CONT'D)

WHERE IS CALEB?!!

Ted takes another step. Angry. Determined. He points the gun right at THE STRANGER'S face... and still the STRANGER doesn't budge. As if he doesn't understand the volatile situation.

Ted trembles with fury. Like he might pull the trigger --

TED (CONT'D)
I WANT MY SON -- NOW!

CALEB (O.S.)
Dad -- don't!

Ted looks past THE STRANGER... to see Caleb stepping from the shadows. Safe and sound. Backpack over his shoulders. Something small and soft cradled in his arms.

Ted rushes toward Caleb and enfolds him, tears of relief streaming down his face. He runs his hands through his son's hair... then his face, to confirm he's really real.

TED
Are you hurt? What did he do to you?

Caleb gently brushes away his father's tears.

CALEB
It's okay, dad. I'm okay.

Caleb is holding the RABBIT he set free at his school. The animal is calm... happy to be in the arms of the young boy. Caleb strokes the rabbit's fur.

CALEB (CONT'D)
This is my friend.

Ted laughs through his tears... even in the midst of all this madness his son is able to remain preternaturally calm.

CALEB (CONT'D)
They said I could keep him.

Beat... Ted's expression darkens. They...?

Ted glances up at THE STRANGER... and suddenly TWO MORE STRANGERS HAVE MATERIALIZED to flank their leader. Their trio of faces are unsmiling. Unsettlingly stoic in aspect.

Ted returns to Caleb... talks very quietly.

TED (CONT'D)
Caleb... I want you to come with me.
We're going now.

CALEB
But we have to go with them...

Ted looks at his son -- but he doesn't understand.

At that moment, ABBY appears out of the mist beside Caleb. She seems a little more nervous than him, though she's not scared. She's also cradling a RABBIT in her arms.

TED

-- Abby!

ABBY

Where's Mommy...?

Ted realizes Abby doesn't know. They didn't see the crash...

TED

She's safe in the caves, baby. I told her
I'd come find you. Are you okay?

Abby nods with certainty. She's wearing her backpack too.

ABBY

They aren't going to hurt us.

CALEB

They've been protecting us all along, Dad.
They sent a message ahead of them in the
beginning, to prepare the way... and now
they've come for us.

Sensing this situation is about to reach a whole other level of reality, Ted turns from the kids to confront THE STRANGERS.

TED

Who are you...?

They don't answer... but suddenly the wind rises... as if on command... blowing against Ted's face... and this causes the MIST BEYOND THEM TO DISSIPATE a little...

Looking past them, Ted realizes the canyon ahead isn't encased by rock or blocked by a landslide at all...

SOMETHING MASSIVE is squatting in the cavernous space. Smooth and undulating. The height of a seven-story building... and as long as two football fields.

It is a collection of globes surrounding one larger globe. Their combined structures reflect the color of black pearl, perfectly camouflaging them amongst the shadows. Huge scale renderings of the smooth dark stones carpeting the riverbed underfoot.

It's form is so unearthly that it could only be one thing. Ted sinks to his knees in shock before the logic-defying sight of...

AN ALIEN SPACECRAFT.

Between two of the smaller globes, A ROUND PORTAL irises open in the ship's belly... and a ramp floats to the ground.

Tiny veins of light begin to appear all over the surface of the craft. The LOW HUM rising in pitch...

TWO OF THE STRANGERS quietly pass Ted and the children, and they vanish into the ship.

THE LEAD STRANGER remains behind. Waiting...

CALEB

It's time to go, Dad. They've chosen us,
so we can start over.

Caleb looks down at his rabbit.

CALEB (CONT'D)

So everything can start over.

It hits Ted like a revelation. The world really is going to end... and this spaceship is the last vessel of survival.

He looks up at the night sky above them... and in the last few moments its hue has lightened a degree from black to dark blue. Strange colors dance in the atmosphere...

Caleb takes his father's hand... and guides him toward the ship. Abby accompanies them.

The trio approach the STRANGER, who steps sideways into Ted's path, blocking him. Ted halts, searching the mysterious humanoid's gaze for an explanation.

Suddenly Caleb reacts to something only he hears. WHISPERS. The STRANGER is communicating with him.

Caleb becomes distraught, steps closer to the Stranger.

CALEB

(angrily)

What do you mean? I don't understand!

Caleb turns to his father.

CALEB (CONT'D)

Why's he saying that, Dad?

TED

(fearing the worst)

What...? What is he saying, Caleb?

CALEB

He says 'only two must go'...

Ted is stopped in his tracks by this. By what it means... Ted eyes THE STRANGER with a dawning understanding.

TED
No... Please...

But Ted knows it's no use. THE STRANGER just looks at him. Ted looks down at Caleb, who is tugging on his arm, questioning...

...and something changes in Ted.

Ted realizes all this time he has been clutching the locket -- Alison's gift -- through his shirt. He slips the locket from around his neck. Looks at the picture inside. Together Forever.

Ted's nervous confusion has receded. Replaced by a strange, growing certainty...

TED (CONT'D)
I can't go with you, Caleb...

Caleb frowns. Doesn't understand.

TED (CONT'D)
There's something I have to do here.
Something really important...

Caleb takes a step toward Ted, unaware he's concealing the real reason why he can't come. Annoyed he's even suggesting this --

CALEB
More important than me???

TED
(this is hard)
No-one is more important to me than you are.

CALEB
Then come with me! Right now! They've chosen us to go!

TED
They haven't chosen us, Caleb. They've chosen you. Both of you.

Ted squats before Caleb, and nods past him toward Abby --

TED (CONT'D)
You have to take care of Abby now. You have to be strong for her.

Caleb can't speak anymore. Tears stream down his face at the awful thought of being separated, and Ted's heart is breaking at the sight of it. He whispers encouragingly --

TED (CONT'D)

You were right. You're not a baby anymore. I know you don't feel ready for this, but we're never ready for what life has in store for us. We weren't ready to lose Mom, but we found a way through it, didn't we?

Caleb looks round at the waiting STRANGER, and regards him with uncertainty again. Fear even. Turning back to Ted --

CALEB

I don't wanna go! I wanna stay here with you! I don't know them...

Ted fixes his son to calm him down. To reason with him --

TED

They could have snatched you away from me at the start, Caleb -- and I couldn't have stopped them. But they didn't, because they've led you here to make a choice. They've chosen you... but you have to choose them too.

Ted glances toward THE STRANGER... whose implacable, expressionless features somehow seem to confirm this truth.

TED (CONT'D)

I can't make the decision for you, son. You have to become a grown-up now -- and choose your own path.

Caleb's anger wavers... his eyes moistening with fresh tears.

CALEB

But you promised...! You said we'd be together forever!

TED

We will be. We'll see each other again. We'll all be together one day. You, me and Mom. I believe that now.

(beat)

Take this...

He thrusts the locket into his son's hand.

TED (CONT'D)

Keep it with you. One day you'll understand what it means...

Caleb looks at the locket, thinks about it for a long beat... and blinking away his tears, he finally gives a little nod to his Dad. His decision. His assent to go with the STRANGERS.

Ted pulls his son into a final, lingering embrace and they hug each other tightly... not wanting to let go.

Ted reaches up to Caleb's ear and gently removes his HEARING AID. Cups it in his palm for his son to see.

TED (CONT'D)

You don't need this anymore.

Caleb smiles, touched by his Dad's confidence in him.

Looking round, Caleb sees Abby is holding one of THE STRANGER'S hands now... and he leaves Ted's side to take the other hand.

THE STRANGER swaps a brief glance of mutual respect and understanding with Ted... then he leads the children down the stony slope... and up the ramp toward the ship's mouth.

In the entrance, Caleb turns to survey Planet Earth one last time, silhouetted against the heavenly glow of the interior.

He signs to his father -- 'You and me -- together.'

Ted signs back to his son -- silently mouthing 'Forever.'

Caleb vanishes into the ship behind Abby, and THE STRANGER turns to bid Ted an expressionless farewell from the opening.

As he does so, Ted witnesses HIS FACE BRIGHTEN... darkness transforming into light all over his body... until the alien creature is glowing with energy. HE BECOMES A FIGURE OF PURE LIGHT... almost angelic in aspect.

Ted stares in absolute awe...

Then he hears that WHITE NOISE again in his head... and the alien is gone. The ramp withdraws into the ship, and the portal irises closed to make the spacecraft seamless again.

SUDDENLY, A STRANGE SOUND EMANATES from the stones beneath Ted's feet... and he watches in amazement as thousands of them gently rise... to hover in the air a few feet off the ground.

AS THE LOW HUM INCREASES IN VOLUME the stones start to move toward the craft as if they're magnetically attracted to it...

And Ted notices swarms of bugs squirming out of the ground...

Birds circling overhead, all drawn by its call...

Finally, the glowing veins of light that cover the skin of the assembled globes BRIGHTEN TERRIFYINGLY... THE WHOLE CRAFT transforming from darkness into a SHELL OF HEAVENLY LIGHT just like THE STRANGER did...

...Its GLARE IS NUCLEAR IN ITS INTENSITY, and Ted has to shield his face with his hands. Straining through the wash he is briefly able to glimpse CURVED GOLDEN SURFACES amongst the blazing white cloud... resembling INTERLOCKING WHEELS...

This is the alien realization of the sketch of Ezekiel's Chariot that was hanging in Lucinda's mobile home.

The HUGE SHIP begins to LIFT OFF THE RIVERBED... the air throbbing with the most intense SONIC VIBRATION imaginable.

Ted watches, speechless, as the ship rises higher and higher, clearing the canyon walls, and climbing into the sky.

The glowing, pulsing white globes shuffle around its core like neutrons circling a proton... then the ship rockets into the sky, changing direction twice as it goes with impossible agility... then, finally, it is gone.

The floating black stones collapse to the riverbed as one, released from their spell... and Ted is standing alone in the shadowy canyon with just the whistling winds for company.

He falls to his knees again. He simply can't hold back the emotions anymore... his body racking with sobs over the loss of everything significant in his life.

THUNDER rolls... and Ted lifts his tear-streaked face to the sky to watch DARK CLOUDS rolling in. A sudden morning RAIN SHOWER begins to descend. Ted looks up into the rain...

...and he stands to his feet. The tears have passed and he surrenders to the flood, letting it wash over him.

INT. TED'S TRUCK - DAWN

Ted drives. The orange light of dawn washes across his face. It has stopped raining and Ted sees a vibrant spectrum of COLORS shimmering in mid-air. An intense rainbow that seems to strike the road right in front of him.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
--and we're getting reports of power grid
failures in the western states--

Ted turns off the news and slips a CD into his car stereo. AN OLD-TIME SPIRITUAL. A scratchy, time-worn recording from the 1930s. A WOMAN'S SOULFUL VOICE filled with exquisite sorrow...

Ted glances out of the window at THE STREETS OF CAMBRIDGE.

There is debris everywhere... broken glass... loose papers fluttering in the wind. Wisps of smoke blow past. A temperature gauge on a building glitches at '114F', flashing on and off.

Ted keeps driving, his air-con working overtime.

Up ahead a man rocks on his heels on the sidewalk, Bible in hand. Preaching to the empty thoroughfares -- a lone voice crying in the wilderness, like the prophets of old.

MAN ON SIDEWALK

When he has judged and destroyed all sin,
the Kingdom of Heaven shall rule every
corner of the Earth!

Then Ted looks beyond the man to spy A CHURCH at the next street corner. Its doors wide open... small huddles of people streaming inside, fanning themselves with the Good Book.

Reaching HARVARD SQUARE, Ted rolls past the 'T' SUBWAY STOP -- and a few COPS guard the entrance, directing a line of refugees into it's gaping maw. They're huddled together, sweating and scared, clutching whatever possessions they can.

Ted keeps driving toward a bridge over the Charles River -- and WE WIDEN to survey the scope of the destruction on the streets.

It's like the aftermath of a riot. Overturned cars. A building on fire... the flames raging out of control.

EXT. BEACON HILL BROWNSTONE - DAY

Ted mounts the porch, and KNOCKS on the door. He waits... and finally it opens to reveal an older man, his head crowned with silver hair. This is Ted's father, the REVEREND BARNARD MYLES. He stands with an erect regal bearing, dressed in a dark jacket and tie despite the cloying heat. Refusing to be cowed.

Upon seeing his son standing there, a rush of warmth softens the old man's proud features.

REV. MYLES

Theodore.

A beat passes as the two men stand in each other's presence for the first time in years, then we

CUT TO:

A TELEVISION MONITOR. A NEWS ANCHOR is at his desk. Exhausted... scared... trying to keep professional to the end.

NEWS ANCHOR

We're going to stay on the air for as long as possible. We've been told that the satellite could go at any minute... so if our station signal cuts out... that's goodbye.

(MORE)

NEWS ANCHOR (cont'd)

(beat)

All we can say is what we've been
repeating all morning. Get to any kind of
underground shelter --

Suddenly the screen degenerates into STATIC.

WIDER - INT. TED'S FATHER'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Rev. Myles turns off the TV, cleansing the shadowy parlour of its
STATIC HISS. WIDEN TO REVEAL Grace has been sitting in an
armchair watching it, sad and pensive.

Rev. Myles turns to face his son, who stands across the room,
reacquainting himself with the house he grew up in.

In this safe, familiar place Ted at last lowers his head,
overcome by a wave of sadness mixed with a surging inner relief.

He isn't the responsible father anymore. He's a child again,
returning to Daddy after a fall for comfort and reassurance.

TED

I miss Allison so much, dad.

His father stares back at him, deeply affected.

REV. MYLES

You'll be with her again soon, son. This
isn't the end.

TED

I know.

Ted advances and boldly hugs his father, who embraces him back.

Grace quickly crosses the room too, throwing her arms around both
of them.

The three of them stand there a moment, locked in their quiet
embrace, drawing strength from each other in the face of the
inevitable... as the razor-thin SHAFTS OF SUNLIGHT cutting
through the window blinds steadily increase in their intensity.

A distant RUMBLING begins to rise, and we...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BEACON HILL - DAY

We're looking down upon TED'S FATHER'S HOUSE from above -- like a
close-up satellite image.

WE PULL BACK to include the street...

...then the city of Boston...

...a high-altitude shot of the eastern United States...

...and finally Planet Earth...

...the RUMBLING noise grows louder and louder... building to a deafening pitch. The sound of the cosmos unraveling. At the point where we simply can't bear the volume any longer...

An immense wave of translucent fire billows across its upper atmosphere, blowing out the screen into blinding WHITE LIGHT.

Everything fades into TOTAL SILENCE.....

And then, very slowly, dreamlike... an image bleeds in.

LOW ANGLE ON - A PLAIN OF WILD GRASS

...As two pairs of shoes step out onto it from a ramp. They are male and female shoes, belonging to a teenage boy and girl.

WE PAN STEADILY UP THEIR LEGS to frame...

A SLIGHTLY-OLDER CALEB, the silver locket around his neck, looks over at A SLIGHTLY-OLDER ABBY... and he smiles.

ON THEIR HANDS resting by their sides. CALEB'S HAND spans the narrow gulf... and confidently holds ABBY'S HAND.

ABBY smiles back slightly at CALEB.

CAMERA RISES UP FROM BEHIND THEM... to see what they're seeing. A lush, almost earth-like, yet tangibly alien landscape sloping gently upwards toward the brow of a hill.

At the crest of it, Eden-like, stands a lone green tree.

T H E E N D