

SCREAM
F
T
ME
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SUPER - *"He who fights with monsters should be careful lest he thereby become a monster. And if thou gaze long into an abyss, the abyss will also gaze into thee."*

--Nietzsche

FADE IN:

EXT. SUTTER HOME - PORCH - DAY

An old two-story house in a forgotten neighborhood in the burbs.

A package sits at the front door. A delivery truck pulls away.

The front door opens. Nerdy bachelor for life, and socially disconnected JACOB SUTTER (40's), stares down at the box with excitement. He rubs his hands together, picks up the box, returns inside.

INT. SUTTER HOME - DAY

Jacob rushes into the unkempt kitchen. He makes room on the table, pushes a pile of electronic parts out of the way. Project drones of all sizes lie about the room, on top of the fridge, on the counters, atop the microwave.

He begins unboxing, then pauses. He takes out his phone, dials.

A BEAT, then his ego-driven and overconfident foster brother, GABE (40's), picks up.

GABE (V.O.)
Better be good, dude. I'm takin' a
dump.

Jacob has stuttered since early childhood. It gets worse when he's excited or stressed.

JACOB
Oh, uh, I can c-call you back,
Gabe. I'm really s-sorry, man.

GABE (V.O.)
Relax, Jacob. When you gonna learn
to not give a fuck, huh?

JACOB
Yeah, right...um, Gabe, y-you'll
never guess what sh-showed up!

GABE (V.O.)
I don't know, man. Another one of
your toys?

Nervous excitement takes over. Jacob fumbles with the phone.

JACOB
Uh, right, okay, just hold on a
sec. F-face time comin' up, bro.
You have to s-see this.

Jacob establishes connection, Gabe appears in a small WINDOW.
Not on a toilet, but in his kitchen, Gabe smokes a cigarette.

GABE
Hey, slow down. I know you're
excited...

JACOB
Wait a m-minute, you're not taking
a dump! Oh, oh, you got me, you
really got me th-this time, Gabe!

GABE
Gullible as ever. Just open the
box, eh?

Jacob places the phone on the table, props it up on a project
drone he's been working on. He positions it so Gabe can see.

Jacob rips apart the outer packaging. He's left with a black
satin box. He opens the box, carefully removes the drone
inside. His mouth opens, eyes bulge. Total bliss.

Jacob carefully places the drone on top of the box, bends
down and marvels at it.

JACOB
Hello, beautiful.

GABE
Don't just slobber on it, Jake. Get
those batteries charged!

EXT. REMOTE MOUNTAINOUS AREA - DAY

Gabe's Toyota 4-Runner weaves its way through a serpentine
forest road.

FURTHER TO...

A semi-open area. Gabe parks.

Jacob and Gabe get out, remove a small table from the back. Set it up.

JACOB
Geofence n-near town is beyond
crazy these days...so, so thanks
for bringing me out to the r-r-
reservation. FAA can k-k-iss our...

GABE
Butts?

JACOB
Oh, y-y-yeah...you know it!

Jacob removes the drone from its case. Sets it on the table along with a drone headset. He talks and sets up simultaneously.

JACOB (CONT'D)
Besides, nobody to get in your way
out here. It's j-just us...
(gestures outward)
...and all of this. Gonna n-need
this space for m-my range test.

GABE
But you already know the range,
man. YouTuber's beat you to it.

JACOB
Bunch'a chickens! They brought'em
back too soon. I d-did some tests
on the batteries, you see. They,
they, um, they are
underrated...voltage rating is w-
way off. Way off!

Jacob holds a battery up to Gabe's face.

JACOB (CONT'D)
Eight m-miles. You watch.

Gabe scoffs.

MOMENTS LATER...

Jacob stands before the vast openness, controller in hand.

He has on a FPV (First Person View) headset and the drone hovers in front of him.

POV - HEADSET VIEW

The drone sees what we see--the landscape in full glory. It begins its ascent, rising above and moving out, first slow, then faster, then to max speed.

BACK ON JACOB

Big smile on his face.

JACOB (CONT'D)
This thing r-really scoots!

GABE
Range testing a drone with a headset. Not cool.

JACOB
Unless y-you build your own headset like I did.

GABE
You are good, I'll give you that...or you don't mind tossing money down the shitter.

JACOB
Thanks...I think. Now j-just, just, let me fly this thing. K? Shh.

FOREST - AERIAL

It cruises...into the open skies, above the forest canopy below.

In the distance, black clouds, foreboding skies become real.

BACK ON GABE AND JACOB

Gabe raises binoculars.

GABE
Looking good, but the clouds out there, not so much. You seein' that weather pattern?

JACOB
Yup, see it.

GABE
You're heading right for it.

JACOB
Not even close. Like, n-not even.

POV - HEADSET VIEW

ON SCREEN - Telemetry data indicates a 399 foot altitude, 2 miles out, 80% battery...and the ominous storm cell in the distance.

BACK ON JACOB

His beaming smile becomes pursed with concern. Agitated, his body begins moving with the controller.

Gabe notices.

GABE
What's going on there, Jake?

Gabe raises his binoculars again.

POV - GABE'S BINOCULARS

The drone appears to be off track, erratic.

BACK ON JACOB AND GABE

JACOB
I got it...I do, nothing new here.
Sheesh...a little t-turbulence is
all.

GABE
I don't know, man. You're flying
right into the belly of the beast.
You should bring it back.

JACOB
I ain't bringin' it back! I'm goin'
f-for the r-range record!

POV - HEADSET VIEW

Black clouds and lightning flashes FILL FRAME.

JACOB (V.O.)
Whoa!!

BACK ON JACOB AND GABE

He fumbles with the controller, frantically moves the sticks.

JACOB
Something's wrong. I...I lost
control of it!

GABE
You're gonna lose it!

JACOB
I'm trying! It's like
it's...it's...

POV - HEADSET VIEW

The drone flies away from the storm, ascends to a lower altitude, rallies around rocks and trees...as if to fly with a mind of its own.

BACK ON JACOB AND GABE

Gabe watches through the binoculars.

GABE
What are you doing?

JACOB
It's not me! I'm not...not the
pilot now. It's...f-flying itself!
I'm not the p-pilot!

GABE
Come on, man, quit fucking around.

Jacob releases his hands, holds them up.

JACOB
See that? You see what it's doing?!
I'm not the p-pilot, man!

Gabe hunts with the binoculars.

POV - BINOCULARS

The drone maneuvers around the landscape as if piloted by a pro flyer.

BACK ON JACOB AND GABE

GABE
Hit return to home. Hit return to
home!

JACOB
I tried that! Nothing's working!

ON DRONE - MILES AWAY

The erratic yet meticulously flown drone flies around on its own, super-piloted, then it stops...hovers.

JACOB (V.O.)
Okay...okay. It stopped. Hovering
now. Hovering! But I s-still can't
control it.

It slowly turns towards a densely forested cliff.

MOVING FORWARD, the drone slowly approaches the cliff.
Through the umbrage, a cave entrance becomes apparent.

Darkness approaches, THUNDER ROLLS, the entrance grows in
shape.

BACK ON JACOB

JACOB
I can't b-believe...what the hell?

GABE
You have control yet?

JACOB
No, s-something or someone else d-
does. I'm ha-hand's off.

GABE
Want me to try?

JACOB
Hold on. Just, you know, ch-chill,
and, and be patient. K?

Jacob becomes a bit more agitated, annoyed, and worried.

JACOB (CONT'D)
A cave. I don't g-get it. Don't get
it! Something is f-flying it into
the cave! I can't stop it!

INSIDE CAVE

The drone approaches...makes its way inside, then lands.

The motors spool down.

BACK ON JACOB AND GABE

JACOB (CONT'D)
Okay, it just l-landed...in the c-c-
c-ave.

GABE
See anything?

JACOB
No, it's too d-d-damn d-dark.

GABE
Nothing?

Jacob is silent, stands motionless.

GABE (CONT'D)
Hey, you with me, Jake? Jacob?

POV - HEADSET VIEW

The drone camera picks up a flicker of light in the cave. The flicker becomes a flashlight beam. Behind the light, a PERSON walking towards the camera.

The person kneels before the drone, picks it up. The person brings the camera to his face to reveal...Jacob's face covered in blood.

BACK ON JACOB AND GABE

Jacob SCREAMS, rips the headset off, sets it on the table. In shock, he backs away from it.

GABE (CONT'D)
What?? What is it??

Nervously pointing to the headset, Jacob shakes a finger at it, stutters uncontrollably.

JACOB
L-l-look a-a-t it. I-I-I...

Gabe picks up the headset. Then tries to grab the controller from Jacob who has a death grip on it.

GABE
I need the controller to replay the footage, Jake.

He rips it from Jacob's hand, dons the headset.

POV - HEADSET VIEW

ON SCREEN - playback footage indicator illuminates. Screen remains black. No flashlight, no person, all black.

BACK ON JACOB AND GABE

Gabe removes the headset.

GABE (CONT'D)
Nothing. It's all black. What did
you see?

JACOB
M-m-m-me...

A THUNDER CRASH, a lightning FLASH...

CUT TO:

EXT. REMOTE MOUNTAINOUS AREA - AERIAL - DAY

SUPER - "SCREAM AFTER ME"

Above the forest floor, skies remain cloudy and foreboding.
The afternoon light diminishes.

BELOW...Jacob and Gabe march through the forest.

GROUND LEVEL - CONTINUOUS

Jacob's brisk pace through grass, sticks, and branches leaves
Gabe gasping for air.

Gabe stops, leans on his knees, takes a few breaths.

GABE
Hold up, Jake, I need to stop for a
sec.

Jacob stops and turns, shakes his head.

JACOB
If...if you just stop that smokin',
Gabe, you'd be all r-right. Now,
come on. We need to r-eally, really
find my d-drone before it gets
dark.

GABE
Yeah, so maybe we should come back
tomorrow morning. Get an early
start.

JACOB
No, has to b-be today. Just has to.

GABE
This is fucking nuts. It's three
miles out!

JACOB

No...no, nuts is leaving my three thousand dollar d-drone in a cave somewhere...with s-some crazy thief!

Gabe shakes his head, takes another breath, then lights a cigarette.

JACOB (CONT'D)

See? See? That's wh-what I'm talkin' about. You're gonna d-die out here if ya' k-k-keep that up.

GABE

Then I'll die a happy man. Now get movin', I'm on season three of Lost and don't want to miss the next episode.

EXT. FOREST - BASE OF CAVE - LATER

Both men look up the cliff face. Much of it is surrounded by plants and brush. A small cave entrance can be seen twenty feet above.

Jacob shows Gabe the tracker on his phone.

JACOB

See? T-t-tracker says it's here.

GABE

Yeah, I see. No way we're making it up that.

JACOB

I can.

Gabe lights another cigarette.

JACOB (CONT'D)

Do you have to k-keep doing that? I thought y-y-you were here to help me.

GABE

I am here you fucking moron. And quit yankin' my shit about the smokes.

(coughs)

You ain't my mommy.

JACOB

Good for you I'm n-not. I'd b-beat
you like she...like mom used to b-b-
beat you.

GABE

I'd like to see you try.

Gabe gets in Jacob's face, blows smoke. Jacob coughs.

JACOB

Even though you saw her l-laying
there with that, that t-tube in her
throat...

FLASHBACK - DANK AND DARK HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Sick and dying, an old woman, GABE AND JACOB'S MOTHER,
breathes through a tube.

ON TUBE - Jacob's voice ECHOS through it as the air escapes
in and out...

END FLASHBACK

JACOB (CONT'D)

...you, you still s-s-smoke them
things.

GABE

Maybe I don't give a flying fuck
anymore. In fact, I think I'm outta
here.

Gabe marches away. Jacob becomes more frustrated...desperate.

JACOB

You, you, know what sh-she told me
before she died?

Gabe ignores. Continues on...

JACOB (CONT'D)

Th-that you were the reason sh-she
was smokin' in the first place!
That's what killed her in case ya'
don't re-remember!

Gabe stops. Thinks. Returns. Gets in Jacob's face again.

GABE
You know what she asked me to do?
She asked me to take care of your
sorry ass...against my better
judgement! But alas, here I am!

Jacob processes.

JACOB
Thank you. I think. Yeah, th-
thanks.

Gabe takes the last puff, puts the cigarette out with his
fingers while staring at Jacob. His anger subsides.

GABE
Ah, Christ. You are pathetic, you
know that? I think we should...

VOICE (O.S.)
--hey, up here!

GABE
...just come back tomorrow and--

Jacob puts his hand up.

JACOB
Wait...shhhh! You hear that?

GABE
Hear what?

VOICE (O.S.)
Up here!

JACOB
That! Right there. It's coming
from...from the c-cave up there!

GABE
You're hearing shit.

JACOB
No, I bet he has my drone! Listen!

GABE
I don't hear anything in this
fucking forest but you gassing
about stuff. Head case!

VOICE (O.S.)
Tell him to shut up! I need help up
here!

JACOB
Okay, j-just shut up, Gabe. Shhh! I
need to concentrate.

Jacob grabs Gabe by the collar, pulls him close, whispers in
his ear.

JACOB (CONT'D)
Drone th-thief is...is up there.

Jacob pushes Gabe away, steps back, looks up at the sketchy
wall before him.

He takes a deep breath, begins the climb...

GABE
I ain't doin' no mouth to mouth if
you fall!

Jacob's ascent is surprisingly smooth...at first. With each
hand/foot placement, the ascension soon brings uncertainty
as...

...the sun tickles the horizon, casting harsh shadows on the
wall.

A FLASH, and Jacob has another vision of his bloody face.

Jacob slips, panics, then holds on to the rock face with all
his strength.

GABE (CONT'D)
You okay?

Jacob breathes heavily.

JACOB
Yeah...I'm...just fine. Almost
there!

GABE
Far from it, brother!
(sotto)
*C'mon, Jake, you fuckin' klutz, get
your ass movin'.*

INT/EXT. CAVE - SUNSET

A black beetle crawls across the ledge. Jacob's hand meets
it...CRUNCH.

Jacob SCREAMS, recoils, barely catches himself from falling.

Jacob's head pops up over the ledge, eyes peering into the dark cave.

INSIDE CAVE

Jacob pulls himself up, celebrates briefly, then turns to look down at Gabe.

JACOB
Made it!

GABE
A fucking miracle! Congrats!

Jacob looks around, takes out a small LED pocket light...searches for his drone.

JACOB
But no...no drone! I know it landed here. I j-just know it.

GABE (O.S.)
Maybe it's further inside the cave!

Jacob turns and looks into the cave. The flashlight too weak to illuminate the long, black hole.

He searches, moving slowly, scuffling and shuffling, deeper he walks...light outside dissipates, the led becoming less affective...he stops.

Behind him, a presence. He senses something...someone.

He turns. A tattooed face wearing a POV headset, stares back at him. His second foster brother, SIMON (30's), grins, exposing a single gold tooth.

SIMON
Hello, Jake-uh!

JACOB
S-S-Simon.

Simon removes the headset. Stares into Jacob's eyes.

SIMON
Long time no see.

JACOB
How d-did you...um, get in the cave...here.

SIMON
Used the rope.

JACOB

Rope?

SIMON

Yeah, you too stupid and blind to see it hanging outside the cave.

A silhouette, Gabe's, appears over Simon's shoulder. Gabe approaches. Shines an LED on Jacob and Simon.

JACOB

W-w-what'ya guys doin'?
What's...up? Thought you were in j-j-jail, Simon?

SIMON

Got kicked out!

Gabe and Simon share a laugh. Jacob stands blank-faced.

JACOB

That headset y-you got there..you, uh, you take control of m-my drone?

SIMON

Like a pro.

Jacob gives Simon a curious look.

JACOB

They let you f-fly in j-j-jail?

SIMON

Took a crash course after I got out. What's it to you, momma's boy?

JACOB

Okay, can I have it...b-back, please?

Another shared laugh between Simon and Gabe. Then silence. A stare-down follows.

JACOB (CONT'D)

Hey, guys...is this a joke or somethin'? Are you m-messin' around, or wha--

Simon belts Jacob in the mouth. Jacob falls to one knee, clutching his face.

Gabe picks Jacob up by the shirt, pins him against the wall.

GABE
You talk too much. Always have.

He knees Jacob in the groin. Jacob doubles over.

JACOB
W-w-what did...I...

Simon kicks Jacob in the ribs.

SIMON
What was that, Jake-uhhhh???

JACOB
(coughing blood)
Brothers...supposed to p-protect...

GABE
We ain't brothers, foster boy.
Never were.

Gabe and Simon laugh again, continue with the beat down.

JACOB
Mom wouldn't...w-w-want you to
do...th...this!! Stop! Just...STOP!

Simon gestures to Gabe for help.

SIMON
Hold him.

Simon kneels next to Jacob who is in tears and pain.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Mom isn't here anymore, you fucking
twerp. The fact that she crawfished
her own blood to take favor to a
stranger...well, we ain't havin'
any of that.

Without compunction, Simon drops the flashlight, proceeds to
rip the pants off of Jacob while Gabe holds him down.

SIMON (CONT'D)
You...don't...get...to come into
our lives and take over! You know
what it feels like to be betrayed?
Huh? You want to know what jail is
like, foster boy? I'm gonna show
you what it's like!

Jacob fights it, writhing and SCREAMING. Gabe continues to hold him down. The beam of light touches Jacob's face, illuminating his tears and bloody teeth.

SIMON (CONT'D)
And then you're going to tell us
where that pile of gold is she left
with you. Tell...me...now!
Tell...me...now!

The rape is brutal, the SCREAMS begin to diminish. Even Gabe can't watch any longer. Gabe stands and backs away.

Jacob's strength is tapped, unable to fend off Simon.

SIMON (CONT'D)
This is jail, foster boy.
This...is...prison!

GABE
Simon, hey, man. He's out of it.
Come on, stop.

Simon continues.

GABE (CONT'D)
Simon! He can't help us if he's
dead!

Gabe yanks Simon off of Jacob. Simon pushes Gabe away.

SIMON
I heard ya', man!

Gabe kneels next to Jacob. Jacob is unresponsive. Gabe gives him a light slap on the cheek.

GABE
Jake. Hey, Jake!

Nothing.

Simon gives Jacob a kick. No response.

GABE (CONT'D)
Fucking-A!

SIMON
He'll come out of it. Just gotta
kick it out of him.

Simon starts kicking Jacob. Gabe stops him.

GABE
There's no letting up with you!
What the fuck, man!!??

Gabe reaches down, places two fingers on Jacob's neck.

GABE (CONT'D)
Nothing. Great. You fucking idiot!
Put your dick back in your pants!

SIMON
Wasn't just me, man! You belted
him, too!

Gabe shines his LED directly at Simon as he secures his pants.

GABE
You need to stop thinking with your
other brain! That's what got you in
trouble in the first place. Got it?
(beat)
How are we gonna find the gold now?

SIMON
Simple. We tear his house apart.

They both look down at Jacob.

GABE
Leave him here?

SIMON
Why not? The rats need to eat too,
ya' know.

Simon kneels, picks up a huge boulder. He holds it over his head, ready to drop it on Jacob.

GABE
What are you doin'?

SIMON
Making sure.

GABE
Come on. We've done enough.

Simon breathes, grits his teeth.

GABE (CONT'D)
Come on, little brother...

Simon slowly lowers the rock, drops it, and the two head for the cave entrance.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Simon leads, Gabe follows, as they scale the cave wall.

Simon gasps. Gabe breaks out in laughter.

SIMON

What's so fucking funny?

GABE

You! Mr. Tough Guy. Has no problem becoming a killing machine, then pisses his pants climbing out of a cave.

GABE (CONT'D)

You! Mr. Tough Guy. Has no problem becoming a killing machine, then pisses his pants climbing out of a cave.

SIMON

Fuck you. Why didn't you go first, Tom Cruise? Killing machine...shit.

GABE

You are now. How you gonna live with that on your conscience?

SIMON

No regrets. Not sorry. Would do it all over again. Having second thoughts, brother?

The rope slips, both freeze.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Whoa, man! What did you do?

GABE

Not me! The rope--

...snaps. Sending both to the ground atop one another.

Out cold, Simon comes to first. Pushes Gabe off of his chest.

Gabe opens his eyes, looks up at the sky, sees Simon looming above. He grins maniacally, spits dirt out of his mouth, holds his hand out.

SIMON
Gotta say, that was a fucking ride!
You hurt?

Gabe takes his hand, Simon pulls him up.

GABE
No. Nothin' broken. That fall
should have killed us.

Simon pulls a small backpack out of the bushes, hands it to Gabe. Gabe opens it, inspects the contents.

Gabe tosses the bag to the ground.

SIMON
What the fuck you doin'?

GABE
Don't need all that crap. Too much
to carry.

Simon picks up the bag.

SIMON
Don't come cryin' to me when you
need food or water. Moron.

FOREST - LATER

Gabe and Simon walk through the woods. LED lights offering little help in the dark.

Gabe looks at the GPS app on his phone as they slowly make their way through the umbrage. He stops.

GABE
Wait a minute.

SIMON
What's up?

GABE
Ah, this fucking phone.

SIMON
Battery?

GABE
No, lost GPS signal. This app
sucks!

SIMON

This LED sucks, too. Why don't we just bed up here, head back in the morning.

GABE

I don't know. Just hate leaving my truck out there.

SIMON

You'll be able to afford a new one soon. Don't worry about it.

EXT. SUTTER HOME - DAY - GABE'S DREAM

The black and white dreamscape is otherworldly, off-axis, surreal...

A fist connects with a cheek, SMACK. Pre-teens, Gabriel and Simon, wrestle young Jacob to the ground.

Simon straddles Jacob's body, holds his arms from moving. Gabe holds Jacob's feet.

Simon dribbles a long, sticky string of spit from his mouth. It nearly connects with Jacob's eye. He sucks it back into his mouth. Jacob squirms. Simon does this in quick succession over and over again until the huge loogy plunges into Jacob's eye.

Jacob sobs, gives up. Gabe and Simon continue to badger him. Simon pounds a finger in Jacob's chest.

SIMON

You don't get to have a mom if we don't. Understand? She's our mom and you're just a fake! Fake! Fake! You stole her from us, foster boy!!

Jacob stares into Simon's eyes. He no longer sobs, his face becomes enraged, his teeth clench. He begins a painful laugh that transitions to maniacal, fearless...

GABE

Hey, Simon, let him go. He's nutso, man.

Simon stands and backs away from Jacob who is rolling around in a fit of craziness, directing his laughter at Jacob and Gabe.

Jacob's laughter becomes louder and louder, drowning out all other sound. Gabe and Simon hold their ears.

Sutter mom, ETHYL, looking twenty years past her forties, wheels slowly into the room and stops before the group.

The laughter stops, all attention is now on their mother. She pulls out a cigarette. Lights it. Smokes the cigarette through a tracheostomy tube in her throat.

She exhales, then plugs the tube with her finger to speak. Almost synthesized, her voice is low, a chest growl, animal-like.

ETHYL
Come here, boys.

Simon and Gabe look at each other.

ETHYL (CONT'D)
Yes, you two. Come here, now.

They slowly approach the chair, stand before her.

She puffs the cigarette, exhales.

ETHYL (CONT'D)
You two bothering Jacob again?

Silence. Simon's lip begins to quiver, trying to hold back a laugh.

Another puff and an exhale.

ETHYL (CONT'D)
Hold out your hand, Simon.

Simon reluctantly holds his hand out, palm open.

ETHYL (CONT'D)
Spit in it.

Simon spits in his hand, holds it back out. Ethyl puts her cigarette out in his hand. It SIZZLES and Simon whimpers. She closes his hand over the cigarette.

ETHYL (CONT'D)
Both of ya' turn around. Drop your drawers.

The boys turn slowly. Pants fall to ankles.

Ethyl pulls her rather heavy duty switch from its holster on the wheelchair.

Jacob watches, a small bit of satisfaction showing on his face, as the boys get their lashings.

THWAP...THWAP...THWAP!

END DREAM - BACK TO SCENE

Gabe bolts upright, covered in sweat, breathing heavily.

He looks over at Simon, who remains asleep. Their campfire nearly out.

Gabe rises, looks for the backpack. It's gone.

He looks around, gives Simon a shove with his foot.

Simon wakes up, groggy and upset.

SIMON

What!

GABE

Where did you put our stuff?

SIMON

What stuff?

GABE

Pack is gone.

SIMON

I don't know. I didn't touch it!

GABE

Come on, man. You fucking around?
Nobody else here but us!

SIMON

I don't know! Maybe a bear took it,
or, or a squirrel. Who knows!? Why
you worried about it? You didn't
even want to bring it!

GABE

I'm thirsty. Help me find it.

SIMON

Fuck off.

Gabe walks over to Simon and kicks him.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Hey!

GABE
You check that way, and I'll check
over there.

Gabe turns his light on and pulls Simon up to his feet.

They split up, head into the trees.

ON SIMON - FOREST

Forty yards in, the light flickers, then dies. Visibility is now limited to the constellations above.

A shadow, PERSON OR ANIMAL, passes in front of him quickly. FOOTSTEPS can be heard trailing off.

SIMON
Gabe, you messin' around? Not
funny, man!

Simon cycles the light on and off, pounds it against his hand. It flickers and fizzles.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Christ!

More FOOTSTEPS, another SWOOSH of the shadow.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Gabe! Stop!

Through the thick, a silhouette. Simon locks onto it.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Gabriel, you and I are gonna go
round and round if you keep this
shit up!

The silhouette disappears. A BEAT, then more FOOTSTEPS, closer, then...

Simon is SLAMMED up against a tree, face first. He's powerless, unable to get free.

The entity, a PERSON in shadow, binds Simon's hands above his head.

The sharp tip of a pocket knife reflects the stars above. It's brought up to Simon's hands. A quick slice, and one finger is severed, not completely, but hangs by a single tendon. Simon SCREAMS.

Simon is released, the person slips away quickly.

GABE (O.S.)
Simon! Where are you? Simon!!!

Simon holds his hand tight, the finger dangles. Gabe's LED can be seen weaving through the forest.

SIMON
Gabe! Over here...fuck!

Simon staggers towards Gabe. They meet. Gabe sees the blood.

GABE
Holy shit! What happened?

Simon holds up his hand, finger dangling, blood oozing.

SIMON
You tell me, motherfucker! My fuckin' finger! Why?!

GABE
You think I had something to do with this?

SIMON
Who else could have done it, asshole?

GABE
Keep pressure on it and let's get you back to the camp.

AT CAMP

Gabe stokes the fire, it illuminates the area. Simon MOANS and turns white while clutching his hand.

Gabe searches for something, anything, to tend to Simon's wound.

GABE (CONT'D)
Wasn't me, man! I don't even own a fuckin' knife!

SIMON
Then someone's out there!

GABE
Can't believe you thought it was me!

SIMON
Well, you look all calm and shit!

GABE
I am not calm! There isn't much I
can do right now except try to fix
you up!

SIMON
I'm dyin' over here! Think of
something! Now!

Gabe looks at the fire, then to Simon's shoe.

GABE
I have an idea.

SIMON
Well take your fucking time, why
don't ya!

Gabe finds a rock and shoves it into the fire. He then kneels
down, grabs Simon's foot, begins removing a shoelace.

SIMON (CONT'D)
I'm gonna need that.

GABE
Not if you're dead. Besides, only
taking part of it. Where's your
pocket knife?

SIMON
In my pocket.

Gabe reaches into Simon's pocket.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Other pocket.

Gabe tries the other pocket. Nothing.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Someone's fucking with us. Or your
playing games.

GABE
You stop that shit, right now. I'm
not playing games with you. You got
that? If I wanted you dead, you'd
be dead by now. Fuck's sake!

Simon nods reluctantly.

GABE (CONT'D)
We don't sleep, we stay together,
and we wait it out.

(MORE)

GABE (CONT'D)
Whoever did this is obviously alone
or we would have been ambushed by
now. Strength in numbers, little
brother.

Gabe takes the shoelace to the fire, burns it in half. He
returns and begins tying off Simon's stump below the dangling
finger.

GABE (CONT'D)
You need to hold still.

SIMON
It hurts, goddammit!

GABE
Hold it...hold it up!

Gabe ties, Simon belts out more SCREAMS.

GABE (CONT'D)
Okay, gonna hurt.

SIMON
It already hurts!!

Gabe reaches down, picks up a small chunk of wood.

GABE
Open wide.

Simon opens his mouth. Gabe shoves the chunk in his mouth.

GABE (CONT'D)
Bite.

Simon bites down.

Gabe gives a yank on the knot. Simon grunts, splits the wood
in his teeth. It CRUNCHES, but remains.

GABE (CONT'D)
Turn your head.

Simon shakes his head no.

GABE (CONT'D)
Turn your fucking head! Do it!

Simon reluctantly turns away. Gabe grabs the finger with one
hand, Simon's wrist with the other, and yanks.

The finger comes off, Simon freaks out, writhes around on the ground, the chunk of wood flying out of his mouth. SCREAMS follow.

LATER...

Simon has calmed, the pain not as intense. He stares into the fire. They both enjoy a cigarette.

Gabe gets close to the fire, licks his finger, touches the rock he put into the fire. It sizzles.

GABE (CONT'D)
Get over here.

SIMON
Huh?

GABE
You ain't done yet.

SIMON
What'ya mean?

GABE
Just get over here!

Simon scooches over. Get's close to the fire, tosses his cigarette in.

GABE (CONT'D)
Gotta cauterize it.

SIMON
Burn me?

GABE
Well, kind'a, yeah. Or you'll lose more than your finger.

Simon holds his hand close to his chest. Stares at the fire.

GABE (CONT'D)
Best to do it quickly and get it over with.

SIMON
I don't know...I can't do this.

GABE
I thought prison might have toughened you up, boy.

SIMON
You have no idea.

GABE
You're right. Now, see that stone
there? It's hot as fuck and I'm
gonna hold your finger to it.

SIMON
I can do it by myself.

GABE
No, you can't.

Gabe tosses his cigarette into the fire. He grabs Simon's hand and forearm. He slowly forces Simon's finger to the hot rock.

Simon won't have it...resists.

Gabe forces his finger on the stone, presses with all his weight. Time stands still for Simon. Smoke and steam escape from the wound....more SCREAMS from Simon.

The SCREAMS resonate, echo, and finally dilute into the blackness...

LATER...

Simon sits close to the fire, stares into it while holding his hand. Still mildly shocked, his lips quiver when he speaks.

SIMON
What if the gold's not in the
house?

GABE
Where else could it be?

SIMON
I don't know. What if he buried it?

GABE
Nah, Jacob was lazy and wouldn't
even know how to operate a shovel.
It's in the house, bet your life on
it.

WHOOSH, THWAP! A rock strikes Gabe in the head. He lurches back, hits the ground...out cold.

Simon jumps back from the fire.

SIMON

Whoa!

He runs over to Gabe, gives him a shake. Sees the blood pouring out of his head.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Yo, Gabriel! What the fuuuuck! Hey man--

TWO HANDS grab Simon's legs. He hits the dirt, THUD! He's quickly jerked away, dragged across the camp, through the fire, and into the forest. Simon SCREAMS the entire way.

Remnants of the campfire spit embers into the sky. Gabe's head continues to ooze blood as he sleeps...

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. JACOB'S HOUSE - NIGHT - GABRIEL'S DREAM

Ethyl sits in her wheelchair, smokes through her tube.

She puts the cigarette down, pulls her wheelchair close to teen (15) Jacob. He sits on his bed, head down.

She uses a comb and works it through his hair. His head raises, revealing a very black eye and bruised face.

OUTSIDE ROOM

Teen (14) Gabriel peeks through a crack in the door. He watches jealously, sits down on the floor, bites his nails.

BACK IN ROOM

ETHYL

Lucky is what we got with you and we don't question it. You hear?

JACOB

I hear, momma.
(beat)
Th-th-thank you.

ETHYL

And we don't keep secrets, do we?

JACOB

No, m-momma.

ETHYL
But you have something to say,
don't you?

JACOB
Say...I...I...

She yanks the comb out of his hair, smacks his hand.

ETHYL
Don't you!

Jacob pouts, his lip quivers.

ETHYL (CONT'D)
(raising the comb)
Boy, I'm gonna thwap you again--

JACOB
I do! I wanna s-s-say it.

ETHYL
Go on, then.

JACOB
I-I-I'm n-not like...them.

ETHYL
You're not, and that's why your so
special.

OUTSIDE ROOM

Gabe huffs, holds his hands to his ears as the conversation inside the room blitzes his senses.

More CHATTER emanates from within. Gabe releases his hands from his ears, leans in to hear more despite the self-torture.

INSIDE ROOM

JACOB
They're blood. I-I'm j-just...not.

ETHYL
It was never about blood with us.
Right is right, wrong is wrong.
They will pay for their sins...just
like their father.

OUTSIDE ROOM

Gabe cries Simon's name, and the cries becomes SCREAMS for Simon, echoing, resonating as...

BACK ON GABE - FOREST - PRESENT

Gabe awakens from his dream in pain, holding his head, calling out for Simon.

He shakes it off, looks around. Sees the dying fire only.

GABE

Simon!

He continues to call for Simon as he stands, looks at the fire, sees the trail of rocks, wood, and ash leading into the forest.

GABE (CONT'D)

Simon!

O.S., Simon's VOICE can be heard. Faint but desperate.

Gabe digs for his LED, turns it on. It flickers, struggles.

He heads in the direction of Simon's voice.

GABE (CONT'D)

Simon! I hear ya'! Keep talking,
okay? Simon?

Gabe continues. Simon's CRIES become LOUDER as he gets closer.

ON SIMON

Gabe approaches, searching.

SIMON

Right here, man!

The flashlight wanders.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Over fuckin' here, Gabriel!

Gabe catches up, sees Simon waving a bloody hand.

GABE

What happened? Why you out here?

Simon holds up his hand, a second finger is missing.

GABE (CONT'D)

Fuck!

Gabe reaches down, helps Simon up.

AT CAMP

Gabe helps Simon back into the camp, Simon's good arm draped over Gabe's shoulder. Simon is weak and limp.

The backpack has reappeared, sits next to a freshly stoked fire. Gabe stops.

SIMON

Found the pack?

GABE

No.

SIMON

Huh?

GABE

Looks like it found us.

Simon has a moment, a burst of energy, breaks away from Gabe.

SIMON

What?! No way, man! No way!

GABE

Hey! You're bleeding! Let's get that finger taken care of.

SIMON

You're doing this. Aren't you??!!

GABE

Oh, come on. That's ridiculous.

SIMON

How come you still have all your fucking fingers? Huh? Look at me. Look at this!

Simon shoves his stumps in Gabe's face. Simon gets light-headed, falls to his knees, clutching his hand.

GABE

In case you haven't noticed, got my skull cracked while you were away!

Gabe looks over at the pack. He walks over, picks it up. He unzips it and finds a hydro-flask.

Gabe removes the flask, shakes it. He walks it over to Simon, kneels beside, opens it.

GABE (CONT'D)
Here, drink.

Simon grabs the flask without hesitation, tilts his head and chugs. He gets two gulps in and sprays it out, choking and coughing.

SIMON
Ahhhh! What the fuck, man!!

He tosses the bottle at Gabe.

GABE
We need that water!

SIMON
It's not water, asshole!

Gabe picks up the bottle, takes a whiff, wrinkles his nose.

GABE
Piss.

Simon scowls, gives Gabe the evil eye.

GABE (CONT'D)
Don't look at me! It was your
fucking water bottle!

Gabe unties his shoe, takes the shoelace out. Simon takes a deep breath, looks at his bleeding stump, then the hot rock in the fire.

SIMON
I'm doing it by myself this time.

CUT TO BLACK:

We hear the CRACKLING FIRE, the SIZZLING of flesh, Simon's SCREAMS...

FADE IN:

AT CAMP - LATER

Gabe brings some sticks to feed the fire. Simon sits hunched over, a cigarette in his good hand, pale as a ghost. He stares helplessly at his two charred stumps.

SIMON (CONT'D)
It's him.

GABE
Him?

SIMON
Jacob.

GABE
(scoffs)
Don't be ridiculous.

SIMON
I could smell him. I know that
smell.

GABE
You think that little twerp is out
there fucking with us? Seriously?
You do remember his condition when
we left, right?

SIMON
Yeah, I'm just sayin'...

GABE
You're an idiot.

Simon finishes his cigarette. Tosses it into the fire.

SIMON
Give me another one.

Gabe pulls the pack from his pocket. It's nearly crushed, and only two smokes remain. Gabe removes the cigarettes, places them carefully in his pocket out of view. He tosses the empty pack into the fire.

GABE
We smoked'em all.

Gabe pulls out his phone. Checks for signal. Nothing. He pulls out his LED light, switches it on. It flickers, goes out.

SIMON
We need to get out of here. I need
to get to a hospital. Why don't we
just head that way through the
woods? Take a chance.

GABE
We don't have enough light to make
it.

SIMON
Your phone has a light, don't it?

GABE
For about 20 minutes.

SIMON
That'll get us somewhere.

GABE
It'll get us nowhere. Whether we stay put here or end up a half a mile in the wrong direction, we're still stuck in the fucking forest. Get it?

SIMON
Okay, we make a torch.

GABE
With what fuel?

SIMON
A stick.

GABE
Won't burn long enough.

SIMON
You know, you've always been like this: Mr. Fuckin-Know-It-All. How about we try one of my ideas for once?

GABE
Oh, yeah, convict. You've got some great ideas. Doozies. Including that stunt back in the cave.

SIMON
What stunt?

GABE
Couldn't keep your dick to yourself, as usual, and we didn't get the location of the stash from Jake before you fucked him to death! Now we gotta spend all this extra time looking for it, and eventually he's gonna show up on a missing person's report. Not part of the plan.

SIMON

He wasn't walking out of here, that was the plan. By the time anyone realizes he's gone, the critters will have cleaned his bones and we'll be drinkin' margaritas. Can we just keep moving for crying out loud?

GABE

Go for it. Don't let the door hit you in the ass.

Simon gets in Gabe's space. Sweaty and serious, he spits as he digs in.

SIMON

The shit going on here, all of this...this crap! It ain't right. Don't feel right. I'm missing two fingers and you got a bloody head. How can you be so calm? We need to get the fuck. Out. Of. Here.

Gabe thinks for a moment. Processes Simon's request.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Look, the moon is right there. That means the truck is probably that way. If we just continue on in that direction, we'll make it.

GABE

(whispers)

We are being watched. You can count on that.

Simon looks around. Grits his teeth.

SIMON

(whispers)

We use the light on your phone as long as we can and we crawl the rest of the way if we have to. If it gets too crazy, we just stop and build another camp. If we stay we're fucked...if we go, at least we have a chance.

Gabe looks around the forest, the sky above, Simon's pathetic condition. He gives a reluctant nod to Simon.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT - AERIAL

From above, Gabe's phone light bounces through the forest floor below. Gabe and Simon slowly make their way through the trees.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Gabe and Simon are but a step apart. They stick together like glue, staying vigilant, moving slowly.

Gabe's phone light illuminates the path ahead.

SIMON

Let me ask you something. All those years I was in prison, and you never tried to get the gold from Jacob.

GABE

What makes you think I didn't try?

SIMON

I don't know. I figured you were always the smart one. You'd figure something out.

GABE

Tried like hell.

BEHIND GABE AND SIMON

The entity follows...listens. Remains stealth.

BACK ON GABE AND SIMON

GABE (CONT'D)

Had to pretend to be his friend for so fucking long. Torture.

INT. JACOB'S HOME - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Jacob works on a homemade drone. Soldering iron in hand. Magnifying glasses strapped to his head.

Gabe sits across, drinks a beer, half shit-faced. He sees a picture of Ethyl on the counter.

GABE

She really loved you.

Jacob continues soldering.

GABE (CONT'D)
We never really knew her, I guess.

Jacob listens, but continues soldering. Gabe continues to chug his beer.

GABE (CONT'D)
But that's the way she wanted it.
Huh, Jacob?

Gabe stands, opens the fridge, takes out two beers, cracks them both open.

GABE (CONT'D)
She sure as hell didn't want to
know her own boys...let alone
love'em.

He places a beer next to Jacob, takes a seat.

Jacob peers up long enough to see the beer, but dismisses it.

GABE (CONT'D)
You know, that gold stash she left
isn't only for you...

JACOB
I-I'm in ch-charge of it, Gabe. You
kn-know that.

GABE
Oh, we know. Fifty percent for you,
and Simon and I split the other
fifty.

JACOB
M-mom said you guys h-have to wait
till S-Simon gets out of the p-p-
pokey...her words.

Gabe guzzles his beer, crushes the can in his hand. He reaches over, grabs Jacob's beer, kicks back, puts his feet on the table.

Jacob finishes soldering, hooks up a wire, flips a switch. A PC board lights up. Success.

GABE
How about we make a deal? You go
get that gold right now, give me my
portion, and I'll in turn give you
ten percent of my cut.

Jacob looks up at Gabe, stares at him expressionlessly, without batting an eyelash. The moment lingers. Gabe can't wait for the answer...

JACOB
F-four years, seven m-months,
twenty f-f-five days.

GABE
Fifteen percent...

JACOB
F-four years, seven--

GABE
--yeah, yeah! I know what you said,
Jake! I got it!

END FLASHBACK - BACK TO SCENE

Gabe and Simon continue their shuffle through the forest.

Gabe's phone vibrates. He looks at the screen. Stops. Simon stops.

SIMON
What is it?

GABE
Battery. Ten percent left.
(squinting)
Nine percent...shit!

SIMON
We gotta keep movin', man. My hand
is killing me.

RUSTLING behind them, movement in the brush.

Gabe and Simon react. Gabe points the phone light towards the sound. Sees nothing.

Simon nudges Gabe, gestures for him to continue walking.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT - LATER

Gabe's phone finally gives up.

GABE
Crap.

The light extinguishes. He pulls out his lighter, flicks it on.

Around them, more forest, pockets of brush.

GABE (CONT'D)
Not a great spot.

SIMON
Go through that brush, I think I
see somethin' back there.

Gabe pushes through the trees, breaks off branches and sticks. Holds his lighter up. Simon follows.

They come to a small pocket and see...

The backpack hanging from a branch.

Gabe and Simon are stunned. They stare at each other, unsure what to do next.

GABE
We don't touch it.

Simon slowly walks over to the pack.

Gabe grabs him.

GABE (CONT'D)
You fucking crazy? That's what they
want!

SIMON
Let go.

Simon breaks away. Slowly approaches the pack. He removes it from the branch.

He gives a look over to Gabe who is shaking his head no.

Simon opens the pack.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Well, look what we have here.

Gabe holds the lighter next to the bag.

Simon pulls out Jacob's drone and a headset from the pack with his good hand.

Gabe inspects the find.

GABE
Okay...

Simon reaches in the pack one more time, pulls out the controller. Staked to each controller stick is Simon's fingers. He immediately drops it.

SIMON

Jeeezus!

Gabe kneels, picks up the controller. He holds it up.

SIMON (CONT'D)

What the fuck, man?

Gabe pulls each of the fingers off. Tosses them into the bushes.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Why?!

GABE

Can't save'em! They're gone!

SIMON

That's bullshit!

The lighter burns Gabe's finger. The area goes black.

GABE

Owe, shit!

SIMON

Why'd you toss'em?

GABE

Can't sew'em back on, you idiot!
Need to keep that shit on ice for
it to work.

Gabe flicks his lighter on. Looks in the pack. He sees something shiny. He reaches in and pulls out a pack of AAA batteries.

GABE (CONT'D)

Looks like we got some light back.
(hands lighter to Simon)
Here, hold this.

He bites the battery package open. Places batteries in the LED light. Clicks it on.

He points it down at the drone. He raises a brow at Simon.

SIMON

What?

GABE
Fly it.

SIMON
Here? Why?

GABE
Go up above the forest, take a
peek. Maybe we can get our
bearings.

Gabe hands Simon the controller. Simon hesitates before taking it. Looks at the missing pinky and ring fingers of his hand.

SIMON
(Holds his hand up)
I use these two anyway, I guess.

Simon dons the headset and Gabe switches the drone on.

POV - HEADSET

A few blips, some static, and the screen illuminates text over black.

BACK ON SIMON AND GABE

SIMON (CONT'D)
Hey, I have some news for ya'. That
sim program I used never had a dark
mode.

GABE
How's this?

Gabe shines the light around the area, points up.

GABE (CONT'D)
Okay, there is a hole about ten
feet that way. You can go straight
up from there. I'll guide you. Once
you get above the trees, should be
some ambient light to help us out.

SIMON
Here goes.

Simon activates the drone. It fires up, hovers.

GABE
Okay, good. Follow my light on the
ground if you can.

The drone hovers above the light.

GABE (CONT'D)
Okay, stop. Now, straight up...

POV - HEADSET

Black, black, black, filtered light, and then...

Treetops, as far as the eye can see. Just enough moonlight to lightly illuminate them under spotty cloud cover.

SIMON (O.S.)
Yeah, there we go...

The screen begins to warp and wave, disturbed and distorted.

SIMON (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Oh, yes, up...we go!!!

Simon continues his vertical climb...his voice guiding the way...

SIMON (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Oh, we are almost there, ladies and gentleman...doo, da dee, da daaaaa...

GABE (O.S.)
Just fly the fucking thing!

BACK ON SIMON AND GABE

He does a little shuffle with his feet as he babbles on...

GABE (CONT'D)
Simon!

Simon turns face to face with Gabe despite wearing a blinding headset. He grins maniacally, exposing his gold tooth.

GABE (CONT'D)
Helloooo! Simon, what do you see up there?

SIMON
I see you...

POV - HEADSET

FLASH, Jacob's face appears in fragments, disappears, and repeats. The screens ZOOM in on Jacob's mouth whispering the words, "I see you...". It ECHOES through Simon's ears only.

BACK ON SIMON AND GABE

GABE
Quit messin' around and let me know
what you see.

Simon's grin gets bigger, his good fingers manipulate the sticks.

Gabe HEARS the drone above, looks up. Coming straight for him, two small green lights.

SIMON (O.S.)
I see you...

The drone BUZZES past Gabe's head.

GABE
Whoa! What are you doing, Simon?

Simon commands the drone perfectly, threading the needle, racing between branches and trees.

The drone BUZZES through again, heads straight for Gabe, he hits the deck.

GABE (CONT'D)
Fuckin' A!

Gabe rushes to his feet, approaches Simon. Slobber runs out of Simon's mouth, his face is flush, veins pop out of his neck.

GABE (CONT'D)
Simon! Stop!

The drone can be heard BUZZING through the forest. Simon's trance continues. It makes a few more close passes by Gabe.

Gabe reaches over, rips the headset off of Simon.

GABE (CONT'D)
Stop!

Simon, eyes bloodshot and distant, remains frozen, stoic. Slobber continues to drip. The controller falls to the ground.

The drone continues O.S., weaving in and out of the trees.

GABE (CONT'D)
Shit, shit, shit! Hey, Simon, wake
the fuck up!

The drone BUZZES by Gabe's head. He ducks.

GABE (CONT'D)
Fuck this.

He picks up a branch, uses it like a bat. Stands and waits for the drone to return. It does, he swings and misses.

GABE (CONT'D)
Come on, motherfucker...

The drone suddenly ascends, disappears into the sky.

Simon comes out of the trance.

SIMON
Jacob.

GABE
What the fuck happened to you?

SIMON
It was Jacob.

GABE
What was Jacob?

SIMON
He was in control. I...I don't really know what the fuck just happened.

Gabe picks up the headset, puts it over his head.

SIMON (CONT'D)
No!

Simon grabs the headset, tosses it to the ground, stomps on it.

GABE
Hey! Whoa! What are you doing? We still need to see where we're going!

Simon puts a missing finger to his mouth, shh...

SIMON
(whispers)
No, no, no. You see, you don't actually get to fly that thing, because...
(screams)
Jacob is flying it!
(MORE)

SIMON (CONT'D)
Yeah, that's right, you may have
the controller in your hand, but
you're not in control! You don't
actually fly it! He does!

Simon's maniacal response catches Gabe off guard.

GABE
Simon, hey, man.

From out of nowhere, the drone makes a quick comeback, flies
full speed into the back of Gabe's head. CRACK! Black. Out.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT - LATER

FROM ABOVE - We see a small campfire below.

FOREST FLOOR - CAMPSITE

Gabe out cold. Simon tries to wake him up.

SIMON
Gabe. Gabriel. Wake up, man.

He gives Gabe a kick.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Gabe. Come on, wake up.

On Gabe's head, a cloth bandage with blood on it. He slowly
opens his eyes.

GABE'S POV - He sees Simon's blurry figure lurking above. He
panics, tries to crawl away backwards.

SIMON (CONT'D)
(filtered)
It's just me, Gabriel...

BACK ON SIMON

He watches as Gabe continues to scurry backwards.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Gabe! It's me, Simon!

Simon follows him, throws his body on top of Gabe.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Hey, calm down, brother! It's just
me!

GABE
Simon?

SIMON
Yeah, Simon.

Gabe rubs his eyes, shakes his head.

GABE
What the fuck happened?

SIMON
You tell me. Come on, let's get you
back to the fire.

Groggy and still a bit dizzy, Gabe slowly returns to the fire
and sits.

GABE
What's this on my head?

Touches his wound. Sees blood on his fingers.

SIMON
You got clobbered.

GABE
You did this?

SIMON
Nope.

GABE
What happened to the drone?

SIMON
That's what clobbered you.

GABE
Well, what the fuck happened? You
were flying that thing!

SIMON
I don't fucking know, Gabriel! Why
are you drillin' me? Last thing I
remember was flying above the
forest. After that, it's all a
blank.

GABE
So, you did see something up there.

SIMON
I didn't see shit.

GABE

Great, so we still don't know where the fuck we are...and we're being played...and SOMEONE IS OUT THERE, AND YOU'RE NOT GOING TO GET AWAY WITH THIS, WHOEVER YOU ARE!!!

The pain of shouting is too much. Gabe grabs his head.

SIMON

You probably remember more than I do, anyway. After I put the headset on, I was out. Don't remember shit.

GABE

You were talking jibberish...I see you...ha ha ha, and some other crazy mumbo jumbo about Jacob. You were flying the drone all over the place, buzzing us...like a crazy fuck. I took the headset off, and the drone kept flying. It disappeared and you were out there in la la land and pow! Something hit me and that's all I remember.

SIMON

Jacob.

GABE

There you go again with Jacob. Are you listening to yourself?

SIMON

Jacob was flyin' the drone. Looks like he cocked ya' pretty good.

GABE

I don't believe that shit, and you know it. Jacob is dead!

In the forest, FOOTSTEPS, the FANNING of brush, the CRUNCH of a stick. Someone or something approaches...

Simon and Gabe freeze. The movement is now in the trees. There is motion in the branches above.

They both peer up into the umbrage...

...and see a white cloud descend upon them. A dusting of ashen or powdery material falls deliberately into the camp.

GABE/SIMON

You've got to be.../What the hell
is...

Gabe and Simon have no time to escape it. The white ash covers them, nearly choking them out. They hold their shirts up to their face, but they've already taken it in.

POV - GABE AND SIMON

Distorted ambience, time stretched, a warping of reality. The effects of the ash become apparent.

High as a kite, Gabe and Simon crawl along the ground, groping for something...anything. Confusion, helplessness, partial paralysis sets in.

Out of focus, a FIGURE approaches from the darkness. It's Jacob. He moves in, kneels before Simon. Jacob now speaks articulately and stutter-free.

JACOB

(distorted)

You have yourselves a real party
going on here. Would you look at
that. Hello, Simon.

Jacob moves to Gabe. His face gets within inches.

JACOB (CONT'D)

(distorted)

Hello, brother. I still can call
you that, right? I mean, it's
axiomatic and we are bound and
determined to carry the family
name, so long as we...shall...live.

Jacob wipes some of the ash off of Gabe's nose.

JACOB (CONT'D)

(distorted)

Sorry for the mess. But not really.

Jacob stands, wipes his hands together to remove the ash.

JACOB (CONT'D)

(distorted)

Since you both have limited, and I
do mean limited, vocal ability for
the time being, I ask that you lend
me your ears for a moment. This
won't take long.

CAMPSITE - ON JACOB

Jacob arranges Simon and Gabe in sitting position against a fallen tree.

JACOB (CONT'D)
There we go. I need your full attention for this. I'm sure you're surprised to see me and have questions of your own, but we will not be addressing those this evening.

Jacob sits cross-legged a few feet in front of Gabe and Simon.

JACOB (CONT'D)
You both know how much I hate profanity, right?

Gabe and Simon's heads bobble, a positive nod, but just barely.

JACOB (CONT'D)
I'll take that as a yes. Good. Okay now, that said, and in complete understanding by you both, I'd just like to say one thing. Well, four things: YOU TWO ARE FUCKED!

Jacob looks up to the heavens and presses his prayer hands together.

JACOB (CONT'D)
Sorry, momma! I'm so sorry, but it has come to this.

Underneath the drug, Gabe and Simon are terrified. Each quivers and strains. A tear runs down Simon's cheek.

JACOB (CONT'D)
Simon. Let's start with you. In the words of the one and only Malcolm X, *"To have once been a criminal is no disgrace. To remain a criminal is the disgrace."* You find this perpetual life of crime attractive? Hmm?

Jacob reveals Simon's pocket knife. He opens it.

JACOB (CONT'D)
Nice knife, by the way. I myself
consider you completely
disgraceful.

Jacob crawls over to Simon. He works the knife up his leg...

JACOB (CONT'D)
But you knew that when our mother
chose me over you. She found you
disgraceful as well...more so,
perhaps. I'm not sorry that the
child porn I discovered on your
computer when repairing it led to
your arrest. I still hold firm that
it was the right thing to do. You
fucked up big time. You are still
fucking up. And you will always be
a fuck up.

Simon's eyes lock on the knife. Jacob slowly moves to his
waist, unbuttons Simon's pants. More panic in Simon's eyes.

Jacob steers the knife into Simon's pants.

JACOB (CONT'D)
This last fuck up, well, I think it
carries with it a pretty hefty
punishment. Penectomy anyone?

Gabe appears to be dozing off...tips over.

JACOB (CONT'D)
Gabriel! Eyes over here, buddy! Hey
there, sleepy head!

Jacob moves to Gabe, lifts him back up, straddles his legs.
He slaps him awake. Gabe's eyes struggle to stay open.

JACOB (CONT'D)
There you go. Maybe you could use a
little encouragement...a pick-me-
up, perhaps?

Jacob pulls Gabe's mouth open, reaches in, grabs his tongue.

JACOB (CONT'D)
You always were the chatty one.

He brings the knife up to Gabe's mouth and...

SIMON
No!

Simon tips over, lays flat on the ground.

Jacob stops, laughs at Simon.

JACOB

No?

Jacob retracts the knife and stands.

JACOB (CONT'D)

Ah, you're right. I think I'll head
on out that way...take a stroll...

Jacob picks up Simon, props him back up against the log.

JACOB (CONT'D)

I just want you both to know, that
things are going to get much, much
worse from here. We're just getting
started.

Jacob walks off into the woods.

JACOB (CONT'D)

Good luck.

He tosses the knife over his shoulder. It lands near Gabe.

Gabe begins to come to. He topples himself over, landing next
to the knife. He tries to move his hand towards the knife.
Fingers barely graze it, then...

Jacob pounces out of nowhere, takes the knife, buries it in
Gabe's shoulder. Gabe's silent scream offers only sputters
and swollen neck veins.

JACOB (CONT'D)

On second thought...I think I want
this back.

He yanks the knife out, wipes it on Gabe's shirt, then folds
it up.

JACOB (CONT'D)

Over an inheritance. Knuckleheads.
Pathetic excuses for human beings.

Jacob stares at Gabe and Simon. Shakes his head.

JACOB (CONT'D)

Gonna make you work for it.

Jacob leaves the camp, disappears into the woods.

AT CAMP - LATER

Gabe stares quietly into the fire, keeps pressure on his shoulder wound. Simon slowly shakes off the drug effects, moves next to Gabe.

SIMON
How's the shoulder?

GABE
Okay, I guess.

SIMON
(Eyes his groin)
Thanks for saving us back there.

Gabe smirks.

GABE
I don't know what the fuck happened to Jacob, but that's not the same dude we knew before.

SIMON
Back from the dead, ya' think? Or just, I don't know...maybe we knocked some sense into him.

GABE
Will the real Jacob Sutter please stand up?

SIMON
He's not done, ya' know.

GABE
So he says.

SIMON
If we don't come up with some kind of plan, we're gonna die out here.

GABE
Maybe that's not so bad.

SIMON
Speak for yourself. He did mention he was going to 'make us work for it.' Sounds like he wants us alive.

GABE
Yeah, to torture us. Looks like he's really enjoying it, too.

Gabe becomes distant, deep thought consumes him.

SIMON
What is it?

GABE
You don't remember seeing anything
when you flew above the forest?

SIMON
Everything went haywire...

GABE
Think, Simon. It's really important
that you try to remember something.

FLASHBACK - HEADSET - POV

The drone rises above the forest canopy.

SIMON (V.O.)
Well, before the screen started
going silly on me, I saw only
trees. Lots of 'em. Moon was poking
through a bit...

The drone picks up bits of light in the distance.

SIMON (V.O.)
Some hills very briefly...and a
creek...

A creek far off, some hills, then...black.

BACK ON SIMON AND GABE

GABE
A creek.

SIMON
Yeah, but it seemed far away.

GABE
(exhales)
Far away. Okay, so where was the
moon in relation to the creek.

SIMON
Dude, I have no clue.

Gabe lightly smacks him upside the head.

GABE
Try!

Simon looks up at the sky. Sees the glow of the moon.

GABE (CONT'D)
(gesturing)
Okay, so, it's been an hour or so
and the moon is moving this way.
That means it was over here
approximately when you flew.

Simon turns, points to the left of their location.

SIMON
That way.

GABE
You sure?

SIMON
No...but yeah! Fuck, man.

GABE
The creek isn't far from where we
parked, so we'll follow the water
all the way back.

Gabe peers up through the trees, looks for the moon, tries to
get his bearings.

GABE (CONT'D)
We're gonna pick up the pace this
time. No more pussyfootin' through
the forest.

SIMON
Like how fast? I'm dying as it is.
Not sure if this is a good idea.

GABE
Oh, I don't know, Simon. Stay here
and die. Go that way and die. Go
towards possible water and have a
fighting fucking chance.

Simon sighs heavily. Nods in agreement.

Gabe turns the light on. Points into the woods. They head
out.

FOREST - FROM ABOVE

Over the forest canopy, Gabe's vehicle can be seen only a
half mile away.

Gabe and Simon veer ninety degrees, heading away from Gabe's truck and straight for the creek.

FOREST FLOOR - BACK ON GABE AND SIMON

They move at a brisk pace, clearing branches, walking over brush. In clear areas, they are at near running pace.

Simon struggles to keep up with Gabe. Weakness taking over more and more with each step.

GABE (CONT'D)
Gettin' close the creek. I think I
can hear it!

Gabe trips over a root...something. Hits the dirt hard. Simon trips over Gabe, deflects to one side.

GABE (CONT'D)
Goddammit!

The LED light is a short reach away. Gabe hunts for it.

GABE (CONT'D)
Smells like shit out here!

Gabe grabs the light, shines it in front of him. Two sunken, milky white eyes stare back at him. He's face to face with a deer skull, freshly skinned, tongue hanging out, maggots feeding.

GABE (CONT'D)
Awe, shit!

Gabe backs away and stands, brushes himself off, dances around as if to shake away a swarm of bees.

SIMON
What are you doing?

Gabe shines the light back on the skull.

GABE
Check this out.

Simon gets up, approaches.

SIMON
Yeah, a skull, so? What the fuck is
wrong with you?

GABE
Freshly skinned. Eyes are still
mushy. Where's the rest of it?

Entrails, internal organs, and blood, rain down from the tree above, covering Gabe and Simon.

SIMON
Fuckin' Jacob!

GABE (CONT'D)
Goddammit!

Covered in goopy, bloody deer fluids and chunks of internal body parts, they try to shake it off.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Unbelievable.

Gabe hunts for his LED light. It's buried under body parts.

GABE
Help me find my light.

SIMON
In that shit?

GABE
Come on, you pussy! Help me find--

A piercing animalistic SQUEEL emanates from within the forest. Unbearably painful, Gabe and Simon press their slimy hands to their heads, fall to their knees.

The SQUEEL continues as Jacob walks out of the forest wearing the deer head skin as a mask. The SQUEELING subsides...

Jacob approaches Gabe and Simon. Kneels before them.

GABE (CONT'D)
(screaming)
Jacob! What do you want from
us!!!??? What!? Whaaaat!?

JACOB
She chose me, we've already
established that. But, she knew you
two were not worth saving long
before I came into the picture.

Jacob rips an antler out of the skull on the ground. He taps it on Gabe's foot. Teases.

He brings it up to the skies, as if to bury it in Gabe's foot.

JACOB (CONT'D)
I think she was right!

GABE
 (hands up)
 Jacob! Wait!

Jacob holds the antler, is about to bring it down then...

Simon springs, throat punches Gabe, then rushes Jacob, tackles him backwards. Jacob grabs Simon by the throat, flips him to one side, then straddles his chest. Clean and quick.

Gabe retreats, cowers in his own space, holds his throat.

Jacob scratches Simon's cheeks with the antler.

JACOB
 Ah, ah, ah. You see the futility in your efforts here, Simon? Pathetic. Why is it I'm constantly using that word when referring to you and your silly, reckless determination? Hmm? You have a death wish, that's for sure. Absolutely impetuous, without the tiniest bit of forethought. But that's how you've always rolled.

SIMON
 Sh-she didn't ch-choose you. You b-barged into our l-lives.

JACOB
 Ah, how the tides have turned. As I sit here, I kind of like being on top for once. And I see that the piss in that bottle has done wonders for your speech.

He pats Simon on the face.

GABE
 Leave him alone, Jake.

Jacob scoffs, then smells Simon. Twists his nose upwards.

JACOB
 Whew, pretty ripe.

Jacob stands, offers a hand to Simon. Simon refuses. They lock eyes.

SIMON
 You ain't J-Jacob.

JACOB
 And you ain't wrong.

SIMON
Then who are y-y-you?

JACOB
I am he as you never knew me.

Jacob makes eye contact with Gabe.

JACOB (CONT'D)
I see you over there trying to
figure everything out, Gabriel.

Gabe purses his mouth, sighs.

JACOB (CONT'D)
This place is special. It has a way
of making you see every time you
close your eyes. Your life-long
pursuit of savage behavior is
inexcusable.

GABE
Jake, we--

JACOB
Save it. Too late for that now.

Jacob puts the deer skin mask back on his head.

JACOB (CONT'D)
Getting close to the objective,
gentleman. You'll be happy to know
that a fresh bath is only a skull's
throw away...

Jacob walks into the woods, disappears.

Gabe rushes over to Simon.

SIMON
Why is he d-d-doing this shit, man?
Listen to m-m-me! I sound like h-
him now.

GABE
Can you get up? You feel like
moving?

SIMON
No. I've never f-f-felt more like d-
dy-ying than I do right n-n-ow.

Gabe tries to help Simon up. They both stand, exhausted and
spent.

GABE

Are you sure you're just not stressed?

SIMON

I've been s-s-stressed before. N-n-never stuttered l-like th-th-th-th...

GABE

Okay, okay! Save your breath, I get it. Now let me see your hand.

Simon holds it up. It looks rancid.

SIMON

Smell that? I'm fucking rotting away!

GABE

We gotta keep movin' and we have to stay alert. Never see his shit comin' if we don't.

EXT. FOREST - CREEK - NIGHT

Simon and Gabe make their way to water's edge. Relief!

SIMON

Oh, yes!

Simon doesn't hesitate, walks ankle deep into the water, kneels, and soaks himself.

Gabe approaches the water and his phone BUZZES/RINGS. He pulls it out of his pocket. Looks at the screen.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Thought that thing was dead.

GABE

It was.

SIMON

I wouldn't answer it. That's Jacob, man. That's what he wants.

Gabe can't resist. Hits the green answer button.

ON SCREEN - Their mother Ethyl on video. Gabe is immediately transfixed, drawn into the image on the screen.

GABE'S DREAMSCAPE - ETHYL'S HOME - LIVING ROOM

ETHYL

Hello, you little brat. Come here
and let mommy give you a big hug...

Gabe is sucked into her BLACK AND WHITE world. He now stands
before her at the age of ten. She smokes.

ETHYL (CONT'D)

To birth the unwanted offspring of
a man gone crazy...

(puffs)

...is to die a slow death in a pit
of despair.

Gabe is locked, unable to move, tears rolling down his face.

ETHYL (CONT'D)

Your father would beat your ass if
he saw you crying like this. He
chose you and that little demon
spawn brother of yours over me.

(puffs)

You were forced upon me, not once,
but twice, by that cheating piece
of shit you call a papa. The only
good comin' out of his death...

(puffs)

...is the fact that he's fuckin'
dead! But I still got you two
little shits and the sooner you
grow up and get the hell out of my
life, the better off we'll all be.

Ethyl reaches her hands out, gestures for Gabe to approach.

ETHYL (CONT'D)

Come here, I need you to prove your
worth something to me.

Gabe takes an apprehensive step. Slowly shuffles to her. He
gets close.

Ethyl holds the cigarette out to Gabe.

ETHYL (CONT'D)

Take it.

She grabs Gabe's arm and brings him close to her throat. She
helps him center the butt at the tube entrance.

Gabe is repulsed. He panics, the cigarette falls in her lap.
Ethyl rages.

ETHYL (CONT'D)
Aaahhhhhh!

She pushes so hard to speak through the tube that spittle flies from her mouth.

ETHYL (CONT'D)
Worthless...piece...of...

Gabe picks up the cigarette, Ethyl knocks it out of his hand.

ETHYL (CONT'D)
No! Leave it! Jacob! Jacob, get in here!

Eight year-old Jacob, timid and shy, shuffles into the room.

Ethyl need not say a word. She simply directs her eyes to the cigarette. Jacob follows.

He picks up the cigarette, sends Gabe a glaring smirk, then approaches Ethyl.

ETHYL (CONT'D)
That's my baby...

She holds her arms out, brings him in close.

He carefully places the cigarette up to the tube in her throat. She inhales, the cigarette glows, her eyes roll back into their sockets as...

...Simon's VOICE can be heard coming from another room O.S.

SIMON (O.S.)
...Gabe! Gabriel!

Ethyl exhales, the smoke fills the room, washing out everyone and everything in a grey cloud.

Simon's VOICE continues, as if he's being pulled in and out of water...

SIMON (O.S.) (CONT'D)
G-Ga...Ga-be! Hel...

Gabe coughs and sputters, the smoke choking him out.

GABE
Simon! Where are...

Ten year-old Jacob emerges from the smoke, gets in Gabe's face. Gabe continues to choke and cough.

JACOB
We do take breathing for granted,
don't we?

SIMON (O.S.)
Gabe...help...Ga...

GABE
Simon needs help!

JACOB
He sure does...

Jacob holds up Gabe's phone, shows the screen to Gabe. On it, Simon floats face down in a creek. The screen gets bright, the world washes out and...

FLASH CUT:

BACK ON GABE - FOREST - PRESENT

...the smoke dissipates. The phone is dead. The world becomes familiar as Gabe shakes off the vision. He returns to find Simon face down in the creek.

He rushes into the water, tries to pull Simon ashore.

He struggles, drags, struggles, drags...his strength all but gone.

He gets Simon close enough to shore. Turns him over. Pats him on the cheek, shakes him...

GABE
Simon!...Simon!

He checks for pulse...feels nothing.

GABE (CONT'D)
Shit, shit, shit!

Gabe begins a haphazard attempt at CPR. A few chest compressions, a few breaths, and repeats.

Simon is limp, unresponsive. Gabe continues until he loses all strength, collapses on Simon's chest.

Gabe stares at Simon's partially open mouth. His gold tooth missing. He peers inside Simon's mouth, sees nothing. He scans the area, sees nothing.

GABE (CONT'D)
Sorry, little brother.
(clenches fists)
Arrrrghhh! Fuuuuuck! Fuuuuuuck!

Gabe stands, wobbles, continues to SHOUT into the forest.

GABE (CONT'D)
Jacob! Jacob! Do you hear me?! Come
on out here now, you little
bastard! Face me! Face me, you
coward!! Coward!!

He breathes heavily, gathers his thoughts, looks into and around the forest and stream.

The only sound or movement is the stream next to him. Gabe pulls out the two cigarettes, both in bad shape. He kneels, places one in Simon's mouth. He takes the other, lights it, sits next to Simon and smokes. Hands trembling.

Moments pass, the cigarette is down to the butt. Gabe tosses it in the stream, begins picking up rocks, laying them around Simon's body.

TIME TRANSITION - Gabe completely covering Simon with rocks.

Gabe rests beside the pile. He looks up at the sky, sees two lights flashing high above.

A HUMMING can be heard. The drone descends slowly. Dangling from a string a foot or two below the drone is a set of car keys...Gabe's.

He can feel the wash from the props as it gets closer and closer...

He stands, looks at the now hovering drone...the keys. He reaches for them. The drone rises, then descends again.

Another failed grab as the drone toys with him.

GABE (CONT'D)
Okay, I get it.

Gabe takes a long look at Simon's rocky grave.

The drone rises above the trees. The marker lights barely visible.

Gabe follows the drone away from the stream, carefully looking up between the trees...tracking.

LATER

The drone disappears into the sky as Gabe...

...sees his truck where he parked it. He races to it, trips while reaching the door. He stands, tries to open the driver door. Locked.

GABE (CONT'D)
Shit! Shit!

He peers into the driver side window. Sees the keys on the dash.

Gabe looks around the area for a rock. Finds one and breaks the driver window. It shatters to bits.

Weak but relieved, he puts the key in the ignition and starts the engine. It fires up. In near tears, he rests his head on the wheel, begins to sob and laugh at the same time.

From his left, he hears the drone HUMM...

He raises his head, looks out the broken window, sees the drone hovering. Hanging below it, Simon's head.

He panics, puts the truck in reverse. Races away from the area.

EXT. GABE'S HOUSE - SUNRISE

Gabe skids into his driveway.

INT. GABE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

He opens the fridge. Empty. Looks for a cigarette. Nothing. Finds a near empty bottle of Wild Turkey and chugs it. Takes it with him into the...

BATHROOM

...and tends to his shoulder wound. He pours the remaining Wild Turkey on the wound and SCREAMS. He covers it with a compress, some tape, puts his shirt back on.

LIVING ROOM

A computer monitor sits atop stacked milk crates. The computer sits on the floor next to an antique side table with magazines, a filled ashtray, and a POV headset, and some mail.

An old velvet recliner, stuffing popping out and stained to no end, sits like a throne before the computer.

Gabe takes a seat, sifts through the ashtray for the longest butt. Finds one half-smoked. Lights it. The first inhale is like a cure to a painful illness...he savors it, leans back.

The moment lingers, then he leans forward, grabs the headset and a controller connected to the computer. He scrutinizes both, becomes annoyed, rips the controller out of the computer. He tossed the gear at the wall. Pieces fly.

He picks up a pile of papers/mail from the table. One of the documents is a drone simulation manual, the other, an eviction notice. He focuses on the notice, fuming inside.

He torches the notice with the lighter, tosses the burning paper into the ashtray.

He stands, kicks the milk crates, sending the monitor flying.

He returns to the chair, collapses, falls asleep.

LATER...

The day passes, transitioning to night...

The monitor FLASHES and FLICKERS. A CRACKLING of sound spits out of the tiny desk speakers. Simon's voice can be heard, tinny and broken as the audio cuts in and out...

SIMON (V.O.)

G-gg...abe...

Gabe shifts in the chair, unconsciously dismissing the sound.

SIMON (V.O.)

G-gabb-briel...

He shifts again, too tired to be bothered.

SIMON (V.O.)

Wa-key, w-w-akeeey, big b-brother...

Gabe's head rests in his right hand. He parts his fingers, looks through to see the monitor.

The broken screen shows bits and pieces of Simon's face.

SIMON

(on monitor)

W-what are y-you waiting f-or?

GABE

Huh?

SIMON

(on monitor)

The g-gold! Go-go-get it! It's yours! You-u-u earned i-ittt.

GABE

Nah, you got it wrong. Jacob will not just let me walk into his house and take it.

SIMON

(on monitor)

Do you-u-u evennnn here your-sself? Jacooob? L-let you? He's a-a a wimp!

GABE

Says the guy he fucking killed!

Gabe stands and crushes the monitor until it no longer functions.

The speakers SPUTTER and FIZZLE, Simon's voice fades out with...

SIMON (V.O.)

You-ou...havvv, noth-thing to l-looooooose...noooooothingggg...

The speakers go silent.

Gabe looks around his messy and utterly destroyed room, down at his hands, his clothes...the filth.

BATHROOM

Gabe splashes rusty water on his face. Looks up at the mirror.

GABE

(sotto)

...nothing to lose.

He steps over to the toilet, evacuates. Tries to flush, but the handle breaks off.

A KNOCK O.S. steals his attention away from the toilet. He zips and heads out.

FRONT DOOR

He looks outside, sees a COP and a CIVILIAN.

He opens.

COP
Gabriel Sutter?

Gabe nods yes.

COP (CONT'D)
You've exceeded the fourteen day
notice of eviction and are hereby
ordered to leave the premises at
this time. Please gather your
belongings and surrender the keys
immediately, or you will be
forcibly removed with only the
items currently on your person.

Gabriel, stoic, unwavering, stares at the cop. The civilian,
a middle-aged man, is actually the homeowner with a new lock
set in his hand.

COP (CONT'D)
Sir?

GABE
Yeah...yeah. Can you give me a few
minutes?

COP
You have five mi--

Gabe shuts the door in their faces. He walks into the
kitchen.

KITCHEN

Gabe marches in, grabs his keys off the counter, pulls a
chef's knife out of the drawer. Looks at it, tosses it back
in the drawer.

He heads for the back entrance.

EXT. GABE'S HOUSE - EVENING

Gabe walks out to the shed. Opens the door.

INSIDE SHED

He searches for a weapon, anything bigger than the chef's knife.

He tosses paint cans, tools, moves shelves and yard equipment until he finds...

...an axe. Rusty and well-used. He carries it out of the shed.

INT. GABE'S HOUSE - EVENING

Gabe approaches the front door. Axe in hand.

He opens the door. The cop and homeowner are still there.

The cop sees the axe in Gabe's hand. Backs up a bit, places his hand on his weapon.

Gabe slowly leans the axe against the house, pulls his keys out of his pocket and removes the house key. He picks up the axe, tosses the keys to the homeowner, and marches towards his truck.

GABE

The axe is mine. You can keep everything else.

He tosses the axe in the back of the truck, races out of the driveway.

INT. GABE'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Gabe stuffs a fast food burger into his mouth while driving. Nearly chokes on it. Washes it down with a fountain drink. Finishes the burger and drink. Tosses the cup to the floor.

Gabe's in another world, eyes and head forward. Cars, signal lights, buildings...a blur.

EXT. JACOB'S HOME - EVENING

Gabe's truck in the driveway. The motor runs.

INSIDE GABE'S TRUCK

Gabe sits motionless, stares at the house. INDISTINCT CHATTER overwhelms him. His mom's VOICE, Jacob, Simon, drones BUZZING...it all ECHOES and resonates.

Anxiety and panic take over. He pounds his head with his hands.

GABE
Shut up! Shut! Up! Shut! Up!

OUTSIDE TRUCK

He throws the door open. Reaches in the bed of the truck, grabs the axe.

The VOICES continue to resonate. LOUDER as he approaches the house.

He makes it to the front porch. Drops the axe, collapses, grabs his head.

The front door opens. The VOICES disappear.

Gabe looks up to see Jacob as he knew him before the trip.

JACOB
Hey, G-g-gabe.

Gabe raises his head, tries to process what he's seeing.

JACOB (CONT'D)
You okay?

GABE
Yeah, no...I uh...

JACOB
Did you walk all the way here?

GABE
No, I drove.

Jacob peers over to the driveway, sees nothing.

JACOB
Where's your truck?

GABE
Driveway...

Gabe turns to the driveway. His truck is gone. Confusion washes over his face.

GABE (CONT'D)
...what the...

He turns back to Jacob. Jacob is gone. The door remains closed.

He stands and grabs the axe. He raises it up to smash the door, then decides to try the door knob. The door opens, he walks inside.

FLASH CUT TO:

EXT. CAVE ENTRANCE - EVENING - FLASHBACK

Gabe and Simon stand at the edge of the cave entrance, look down at ground below with their lights.

SIMON
This ain't cool.

Gabe pulls the rope up, hands it to Simon. Simon is apprehensive.

GABE
We talked about this. You knew what we were gonna do. Now take the fucking rope!

Simon begins the descent. A bit wobbly and unsure, but he takes each step carefully.

Gabe allows Simon some room, gives him a few feet before taking the rope himself.

Simon's attempt is careless at best, struggling to find solid footing with each step.

Simon pauses, searches for secure footing. Looks up at Gabe.

SIMON
Can't see shit on this wall...

GABE
You got it. Keep going.

Simon slips, hugs the wall. Has a death grip on the rope.

GABE (CONT'D)
You okay?

SIMON
No. Going down sucks. Can't see the bottom! I told you this ain't cool!

Simon gasps. Gabe breaks out in laughter.

SIMON (CONT'D)
What's so fucking funny?

GABE

You! Mr. Tough Guy. Has no problem becoming a killing machine, then pisses his pants climbing out of a cave.

SIMON

Fuck you. Why didn't you go first, Tom Cruise? Killing machine...shit.

GABE

You are now. How you gonna live with that on your conscience?

SIMON

No regrets. Not sorry. Would do it all over again. Having second thoughts, brother?

END FLASHBACK - BACK TO PRESENT

INT. JACOB'S HOME - EVENING

The house is mainly dark, lit only by the street lights outside. Gabe reaches for the light switch, only one dim entry light illuminates.

He drags the axe behind him, looking cautiously around the entry.

LIVING ROOM

Gabe looks at the meager confines of Jacob's domain. His mother's old sofa, chairs, and end tables are uncarefully placed.

A coffee table holds electronics magazines and drone publications. An old RCA console television sits alone, layers of dust covering the cabinet.

Gabe kneels, looks under the sofa, the table, in and around the console television area.

JACOB'S BEDROOM

Gabe rummages through Jacob's room. Tosses bedding, clothing, opens the dresser.

Top drawer is full of women's undergarments. Gabe pulls out a pair of grandma undies.

GABE

Oh, Jacob.

He throws it all to the floor, finds a trans-gender magazine, porn, and a ball gag.

GABE (CONT'D)
Looks like you and Simon had a lot
in common...

A 16x20 photo of their mom hangs on the wall. Gabe walks over, stares momentarily at her youthful portrait.

He removes the photo. There is nothing behind it. He's about to place the portrait on the dresser when he feels something rattling behind it.

Turning the portrait, a key dangles from the wire hanger.

GABE (CONT'D)
Ah, Jacob. Thank you.

He removes the key and turns the photo. Kisses the portrait.

GABE (CONT'D)
And thank you, momma. You bitch.

KITCHEN

CRASH! Thunder CLAPS, lightning FLASHES, the lights go out. Momentary silence, then...

A faint unintelligible WHISPER O.S., ominous, foreboding.

Gabe braces himself against the counter. Looks around cautiously.

GABE (CONT'D)
Jacob?

A crack of light illuminates from under the bathroom door down the hall.

LIVING ROOM

Gabe moves into the living room. Checks the light switches. Nothing.

O.S., an electronic WHIRRING and REVVING SOUND can be heard.

KITCHEN

Jacob's electronics junk pile on the kitchen table lights up like a Christmas tree. Drone parts illuminate, motors spin, WIZZING and BEEPING and FLASHING ensues, taking over the kitchen...

Gabe walks in. Sees four drones hovering at head level. Evil little creatures with minds of their own. They pounce...giving Chase to Gabe. He heads for the...

HALLWAY

...running top speed towards the bathroom.

BATHROOM

Gabe rushes in and slams the door behind just in time. The drones SMASH into it, fall silent.

Average sized bathroom with a double sink and a tub/shower combo covered by a shower curtain.

Gabe holds his arm up to his nose, hides from an overwhelming stench. He coughs and gags. Composes.

A light emanates from gaps in the cupboard under the sink. Gabe kneels, opens the door.

A firebox/safe sits alone. The light FLASHING and BEAMING from the crack in its lid...

Gabe sticks the key in the lock, opens the box. He peers in. Disappointment immediately washes over him as the light disappears.

He reaches in the box, pulls out Simon's gold tooth. Holds it up, shakes his head, then begins crying maniacally.

He places the tooth back in the box, shuts it, then tosses it at the wall. He sits, head in hands as...

...WHISPERS take over the bathroom. The bathtub ERUPTS! Water cascades over the side of the tub.

Gabe gets up, walks over to the tub, cautiously pulls the curtain...

...and the rotting head of Simon bobs and floats, the eyes staring directly at Gabe.

He lurches away from the tub. Bumps into Jacob who is now holding the axe at the bathroom entrance.

Jacob grins big, runs his thumb over the axe blade, draws blood.

Jacob brings the axe up as if to strike. Gabe recoils.

GABE (CONT'D)

Jake! No!

Jacob laughs hysterically, withdraws, turns the axe around...

JACOB
Right. Too easy.

...and shoves the handle into Gabe's forehead. Knocking him out.

CUT TO BLACK:

INT. JACOB'S HOME - BASEMENT

A single drop light illuminates the stale basement.

Gabe's body and hands are roped to a wheelchair that balances high atop an old picnic table. A noose is tied around his neck.

He wakes up. Jacob stands before him. Stares into his face.

JACOB
Nice bruise ya' got there.

GABE
Huh...?

JACOB
So clever how you lured me out there, Gabriel. You playing dumb...the storm...Simon controlling the drone. You must have had this planned for quite some time...

Jacob walks around the wheelchair. He has an electrical cord, circuits, and stepper motors connected to its wheels. He checks the integrity of his work.

JACOB (CONT'D)
...wipe me out. Take the money. You even had that drone delivered to me pre-programmed so Simon could take it over. Helluva plan.

Gabe, groggy, looks at his surroundings. Wiggles in the chair. Begins to panic. The chair tips.

JACOB (CONT'D)
Careful there. You fall over, and it's...
(gestures a neck break)

Gabe looks around the basement. Junk everywhere, old boxes, tools, a work bench.

Ten feet in front of him, a door to a makeshift room the size of a closet.

Satisfied with his work, Jacob returns to face Gabe.

JACOB (CONT'D)

The good news is, you've made it.
The inheritance is all yours. More
of this if you play the game
intelligently.

Jacob holds up a single ounce gold piece, gives Gabe a good look, stuffs it into his shirt pocket.

GABE

Right. That's why you got me tied
to this fucking chair!

Jacob walks over to the closet door. Places his hand on the knob.

JACOB

No, it's yours. Momma and I talked
about it, and we want you to have
it as much as you want to have it.
And we both know, you want to have
it.

GABE

What is this, Jake? Why don't you
just kill me like you did Simon?

JACOB

I never told you this, but you were
my favorite brother. I actually
pleaded with momma, convinced her
that you deserved the money more
than any of us.

Jacob opens the door.

JACOB (CONT'D)

Isn't that right, momma?

Inside, the skeletal remains of Ethyl. She sits upright, clothing rotted and hanging from her bones. Her skull, fitted with a drone headset and a tracheostomy tube still attached to her smoke-stained bones. The lower jaw hangs agape.

Gabe takes a moment to process. The horror of it nearly choking him.

GABE
Sick! Fuck! You dug her up?

JACOB
She wanted to come home, Gabriel.
So I brought her home.

Gabe is silent, drops his head into his chest. Having a hard time processing, he tries to work his hands free.

GABE
I don't understand all of this.
Why? Why are you doing this, Jake?
Why the silly games? I don't get it.
You could have just killed me a long time ago. Tell me why!!!

JACOB
No.

GABE
No?

JACOB
No. You of all people know why we're here.

GABE
You're pissed. So what. Fuck you.

Jacob pulls the headset from Ethyl's remains.

He walks it over to Gabe. Places it around his head.

GABE (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

JACOB
We're gonna fly.

GABE
Serious?

JACOB
Yep.

GABE
I don't get it.

JACOB
Simple. There is a drone behind this table. All you have to do is fly it to a destination of my choosing.

GABE

You already said it was mine.

JACOB

I did, but I also said I was going to make you work for it. Remember? If you're able to get the drone to the right spot, you live, and it's yours to spend as you wish. If not, your spinal column becomes two pieces and, well, no moola for you obviously.

GABE

You're a bastard.

JACOB

I know that, Gabriel. But momma helped me deal with it, and quite frankly, I don't care.

GABE

What if I refuse to play your little game?

JACOB

Well, you'll still be broke. There's that. But you'll probably be more concerned with how I reclaim my share of the inheritance. I can tell you that it will involve a lot of pain and suffering and gore and blood and screeeeeeaming on your part. You won't survive it. So, there's that, too. K?

Jacob unties the rope restraining Gabe's hands.

Gabe clenches his fists, reaches for the noose around his neck.

JACOB (CONT'D)

No, no, no. I'm afraid the hands are only for flyin'.

Jacob pulls Gabe's hands down into his lap. Places a drone controller in his hands. He wedges a small block of wood between Gabe's wrists then duct tapes his wrists together.

JACOB (CONT'D)

You try to break free and you lose your pee pee and a whole lot more.

Gabe feels the controller. His hands/fingers shaking.

GABE
I've only flown a simulator, Jake.
I can't see shit!

Jacob presses a button on the headset. The power indicator lights up.

HEADSET - POV

There is black, then the drone powers up.

Gabe sees the floor of the room from the drone camera.

BACK TO SCENE

JACOB
Got visual now, Gabriel?

GABE
Yeah, but what's going on, Jake?
What do I do?

JACOB
Simple. Well, for a seasoned pro like me it is. For an amateur like you, a bit of a challenge...Oh, I love a good challenge! You'll need to navigate your way through the house until you find the Simon's head. You crash and, well...

GABE
Oh, fuck, oh, fuck! Then what?

JACOB
Take a pic of his head.

Jacob puts Gabe's finger on the camera button on the controller.

JACOB (CONT'D)
Feel that button? That's the camera.

GABE
Okay, okay...uh, Just let me...

JACOB
You ready? Remember, no crashing.

GABE
No, wait! Uh, I need to feel the
controls again!

Gabe's hands shake as he searches and feel around the
controller.

JACOB
Find Simon's head. The money is in
a case below it. You do that, and
we're done here. You are rich, and
I am gone forever.

GABE
Lucky me.

JACOB
Just one caveat, Gabriel.

GABE
What's that?

JACOB
Mom's wheelchair will be moving.

GABE
Moving.

JACOB
Yeah, I have a stepper motor rigged
to it. When activated, the gear
reduction should afford you about
three minutes of flight time before
the chair reaches the end of the
table...then you reach the end of
the rope. Then it's lights out.

Gabe lets out a guttural SCREAM. Spit flies, the headset
nearly comes off. Jacob repositions it, tightens the strap.

GABE
Come on, man. Why do you have to
play games? Let's just talk this
out. I don't need all that money.
Seriously. Just let me go and I'll
forget this even happened! We part
ways and it's over.

JACOB
It will never be over. Ready?

GABE
No! Look, I'm sorry! I'm fucking
sorry!

(MORE)

GABE (CONT'D)
What we did to you...unacceptable.
I didn't want to....!

Jacob puts his finger over Gabe's mouth.

JACOB
Shhh...

Jacob walks over to the wall, plugs a cord into the wall socket. The motors on the wheelchair energize, a BEEP on a circuit board indicates power on.

Gabe hyperventilates. His hands shake more...uncontrollably.

GABE
Come on, man. Come on, don't do
this. Please!

JACOB
You'll need to get a grip or you'll
be dead before you know it. Now,
that beep you heard, you'll
continue to hear it as you get
closer to the end of the table. The
closer you get, the louder and
faster the beep gets. A solid beep
is the end, and you hang...right
there in front of momma so she can
see you swing. Understand?

Gabe fights the anxiety, breathes heavily.

JACOB (CONT'D)
Gabriel? You got it?

GABE
Yeah...I got it! Now fuck off!

Jacob reaches over, presses the launch/hover button on Gabe's controller.

JACOB
Here. We. Go.

The drone fires up and goes into hover.

Jacob presses the button on the circuit board to get the wheelchair moving. It lurches briefly, goes into crawl mode. An audible BEEP comes from the chair.

Gabe reacts. Breathing intensifies.

JACOB (CONT'D)
Better get to flyin', pal.

GABE
Yeah, okay...okay!

INTERCUT - GABE/DRONE - THROUGHOUT HOUSE

Gabe moves the sticks. The drone moves up the stairs and into the main hallway near the kitchen.

HALLWAY

It hovers, turning in each direction.

GABE (CONT'D)
Too damn dark, Jake! Can't see
shit!

JACOB
Button near left trigger. Push it.

Jacob presses.

Two drone lights turn on, illuminating the hallway, but only a little.

GABE (V.O.)
Can't you just turn on the fucking
house lights?

JACOB (V.O.)
Nope.

The drone moves down the hall, approached the bathroom. The door is partially open.

GABE
How am I supposed to get through
that?

Gabe brings the drone closer to the door, nearly touching it with the props.

GABE'S POV - The drone peers inside. No sign of Simon's head.

The drone moves back down the hall towards the kitchen.

KITCHEN

It turns inside, pans around the room.

Gabe's chair continues its path, the BEEPING picking up speed.

GABE (CONT'D)
That beeping is so annoying!

JACOB
I could turn it off.

GABE
No! I'll deal with it.

Gabe steers the drone into the living room.

LIVING ROOM

The drone pans, finds nothing, then heads up the stairs.

STAIRS

It's tighter, the prop wash becomes an issue. The drone skates left to right, nearly hitting the walls.

GABE (CONT'D)
(sweating profusely)
Shit! Shit!

The drone slowly rises...

UPSTAIRS

Some ambient light makes it through the windows, bettering Gabe's visibility.

Gabe pans the drone around. Three bedroom doors remain closed.

GABE (CONT'D)
Okay, what now, Jake? Doors are fucking closed.

JACOB
Oh, so cold...

GABE
Cold, what do you mean, cold? I've been all over the house except these rooms.

JACOB
So very cold...

The chair continues to crawl...the BEEPING intensifies...

GABE
Come on, Jake! Open the fucking doors for me! You're cheating! You made this so I can't possibly win!

More panic and frustration, Gabe's chair becomes unstable from his movements.

JACOB
Careful there, you still have time!
Think, Gabe!

GABE
Yeah...yeah...so cold. I'm cold.
Not close. Fuck!

He calms himself long enough to have an epiphany.

GABE (CONT'D)
Cold! Basement! Fuck! It's in here,
isn't it!

Gabe turns the drone around, heads for the stairs.

LIVING ROOM

The drone slowly descends into the living room. One of the props tickles the wall. Gabe freaks.

BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP. BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP.

GABE (CONT'D)
Come on!

The drone recovers, remains aloft.

More sweat, more panic from Gabe. Hands unstable.

BACK IN BASEMENT

The drone descends.

GABE's POV - He's looking at himself in the chair. Sees how close he is to the edge...

BEEP BEEP BEEPBEEPBEEEP

He works the drone around the table, heads for the back of the basement, past the closet, past Jacob...

BEEP BEEPBEEEPBEEEPBEEEP...

GABE (CONT'D)
GO! GO! GO! COME ON!

Simon's head is propped up on a small suitcase.

The drone approaches, nearly runs into Simon's head.

GABE (CONT'D)
I'm there! I'm there! Fucking stop!

JACOB
Take the photo, Gabriel, for fuck's sake!

Gabe searches for the button on the controller...hands are useless now.

BEEEPBEEEPBEEEBEEPBEEEEEEEE

GABE
Okay, okay! I found it! Stop the chair! Stop the chair!

JACOB
Take the shot! Take it!

BEEEEEEEEEEEEEE...

Gabe SCREAMS as the chair slowly tips off the table. The BEEPS and SCREAMS ECHO into oblivion.

ON GABE - his eyes widen...into his pupils...

CUT TO:

EXT. CAVE ENTRANCE - NIGHT

...then out of Gabe's pupils...the basement scene blending with the forest world around him. Time stands still, slowly morphs into reality, as he and Simon fall towards earth, SCREAMING at the top of their lungs.

GABE'S POV - He sees Jacob standing above at the cave entrance with a knife in one hand, the tethered rope in the other...and a big grin on his face.

CRACK! Simon lands, then Gabe lands on top of Simon, crushing Simon's head.

Gabe's eyes are open, the last bit of life escaping his body.

GABE
S-sorry, Jake...

He gets one last look at Jacob before his eyes close permanently.

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

Jacob shines the LED light on the ground. Searches for his drone. He finds it, picks it up, stares into the camera...

CUT TO BLACK:

THE END

MAIN CREDITS - THEN...

SUPER - "EPILOGUE"

EXT. CAVE - DAY

A breeze sweeps in, tree branches sway, the grassy soil bends and contorts. Footsteps appear in the soft soil. Two moccasined feet DISSOLVE into view just below the cave entrance.

A now corporeal NATIVE AMERICAN WOMAN (60's) stares up at the entrance.

INT. CAVE

The woman sits beside a small fire. On the wall before her, petroglyphs portraying sacrifices and burial scenes.

The woman burns herbs over the fire.

She CHANTS as the smoke fills the cave.

CUT TO BLACK:

CONTINUE CREDITS