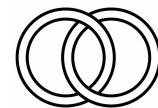


TWIN SOUL



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6.24.24

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BLACK SCREEN.

Cough.

Throat clearing.

HOWARD (V.O.)

*Okay, and we're recording. Hello all. Welcome to the Feel Great podcast. My name is Dr. Howard Lacey, psychiatrist and adjunct professor emeritus in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at the Connecticut University School of Medicine, and the author of the book *Feel Good: How to Calm Your Mind*.*

FADE IN:

CLOSE ON a framed wedding photo of a happy-looking couple. The man towers over the woman and is giving her a big bear hug. Both are beaming.

INT. HOWARD'S PSYCHIATRY OFFICE - MORNING

We pull out from the framed picture.

HOWARD (50s. An older version of the man from the wedding picture) sits behind an elegant desk, and facing him is DAVID (30s). There's an old school recording device between them.

Howard has a distinct southern drawl.

HOWARD

I have specialized in seeing twins and their families for over twenty years. I am here with David, and this is session number two. Like the previous session, it is being recorded for educational purposes. David has kindly agreed to record his sessions for our ongoing podcast series. So David, how are you feeling today?

DAVID

Fine. I guess today, I'm OK.

HOWARD

(looking at his notes)
That's good to hear. David, last week we discussed how your twin
(MORE)

HOWARD (cont'd)
brother's death had made you feel guilty and how you've blamed yourself. For those listeners who are joining us in this week's episode, David had a twin brother who was born with cerebral palsy, which is more common in twins. In fact 1 in 200 are born with this condition. David: can you tell me more about him?

David shifts uncomfortably in his chair. This is clearly painful for him. He cracks his knuckles one by one, and takes a deep breath.

DAVID

Trevor was... more than a twin brother. We had a deep connection. We really did. I'm not sure if it's because we were twins but, I remember when I was little, my brother would sometimes sleep in my room just for fun. Due to his condition, he could not stand, sit up, speak, or even chew solid foods. He was always on his back or in a wheel chair and was tube-fed through his belly button. He could only make noises or blink to have any communication...

CUT TO:

INT. DAVID'S CHILDHOOD ROOM - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

Sports posters and model airplanes decorate the room. YOUNG DAVID is in his bed, and there's a mattress on the floor next to him with TREVOR lying on it.

DAVID (V.O.)

I remember one night, the lights were out and he was on a mattress on the floor beside me, since it was a hazard having him on a high bed in case he fell.

We see Trevor on the mattress lying on the floor. He has occasional spasms and is drooling. He grunts in response to David. His feeding tube protrudes from his belly button. It's a striking and unnerving image.

DAVID (V.O.) (cont'd)
We were just lying there and I was talking away for probably over an hour before we fell asleep. He would respond by making noises.
We had full-on hour long conversations with each other in a way that we could banter back and forth. It seemed natural and made sense to me, that I could pick up what type of response he had by his noises.

END FLASHBACK

INT. HOWARD'S PSYCHIATRY OFFICE - MORNING

DAVID
We had a deep connection, but it was hard being the healthy twin.

HOWARD
(taking notes with pen and paper)
I can only imagine. It must have made you feel sad. Guilty as well?

DAVID
Yeah. It made me feel extremely guilty. Anytime I'd be playing sports, or out and about with some friends, it just didn't feel right.

HOWARD
Last week you mentioned everything changed eight years ago... when unfortunately Trevor passed.

David shifts.

HOWARD (cont'd)
Do you want to talk about it?

DAVID
Trevor died a couple of weeks before what would have been our 28th birthday. In a terrible, terrible accident. Trevor really insisted on being as self-sufficient as he could. He worked so hard, and he achieved what most doctors felt was impossible. He ended up living by himself. He had a lot of help of
(MORE)

DAVID (cont'd)
course, but he managed to live a life almost completely independent of others. One day though, his clothing caught fire as he was cooking his evening meal.

We hear a distant, haunting agonizing scream.

HOWARD
I'm so sorry David. That must have been so difficult to deal with.

DAVID
It was.

HOWARD
Do you want to talk about how you felt at the time?

DAVID
I tried to commit suicide for the first time that year. I just couldn't... I... couldn't live with the guilt.

HOWARD
Understandable. Survivor's guilt is extremely common.

David has been holding back tears this entire time, but no more. He starts weeping uncontrollably.

HOWARD (cont'd)
(he leans forward)
David, tell me about the first time you saw Trevor after his death.

DAVID
(weeping)
Oh God. At first... at first it just happened in dreams you know? I would have extremely vivid dreams in which I'd have conversations with him... just like we did when we were kids. But then... I started seeing him in real life.

HOWARD
You mean when you'd be awake?

DAVID
Yeah, just randomly. At first, I'd hear him... in the middle of the night...

CUT TO:

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

David is fast asleep. An increasingly loud grunting sound awakens him. David rises in bed, and looks at his dark bedroom, his eyes adjusting to the darkness. There seems to be a dark shape in the opposite corner of the room. David turns on the night lamp next to the bed, only to reveal the shape as a bunch of clothes on a chair.

DAVID (V.O.)
*Or when I'd wake up to go the
bathroom... he'd just... be there...*

David leaves the bedroom of his tiny studio apartment to go use the bathroom.

INT. DAVID'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

David walks into the bathroom, turns on the light, and takes a piss. While he's peeing, he hears a grunting behind him. He slowly turns his head, and notices a shadow behind the shower curtain. He flushes the toilet, turns around and slowly pulls back the curtain.

DAVID (V.O.)
*...looking at me... with his face
burnt off.*

We see David's shocked face, but don't reveal what he's seeing.

END FLASHBACK

INT. HOWARD'S PSYCHIATRY OFFICE - MORNING

We're back in the office.

DAVID
After that, I started seeing him more often. Just randomly. When I'm with the company at the theater, rehearsing scenes. Or at a restaurant. He'd always just be looking at me, grunting, like he used to. And I know what he's saying. He's saying: you let me die.

Note: we see quick flashes of Trevor seated among audience members at the theater, and at a booth opposite David at a diner.

David breaks down.

HOWARD

David, I'm so sorry. That must have felt awful. Experiencing this sort of hallucination after a traumatic event is not that uncommon.

Howard leans closer to David.

HOWARD (cont'd)

But David, listen to me, it wasn't your fault. You didn't let Trevor die.

DAVID

Yes I did. I did.

HOWARD

I know it feels that way, but your brother's condition, and his death, was not your fault. It's completely normal to feel that way, but we all must try to be objective about the things we deal with in life. To observe rather than perceive. The perceiving eye sees more than what there is. The observing eye sees events, clear of distractions, exaggerations, and misperceptions.

David nods.

HOWARD (cont'd)

Now, we've been exposing your emotions and thoughts. As you know, our thoughts and emotions are symbiotic. You feel ready, David? You feel ready to start challenging these thoughts and letting these emotions you've been carrying dissipate?

DAVID

I do.

HOWARD

That's great, David. You've made tremendous progress. And I promise
(MORE)

HOWARD (cont'd)
you, you will feel a whole lot
better.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

Howard walks down a busy, chaotic street later that morning. We note how tall he is: around 6'4".

It is a dark, overcast day, and thunderstorm clouds threaten a torrential downpour any second. He is wearing a raincoat, and has a closed umbrella in his left hand. He is speaking on his cell phone via earpods. We only hear his side of the conversation:

HOWARD
Hey honey, leaving the office now.
Sorry it's a little late, it's just
been crazy. You have everything
ready? We can eat something along
the way and make it to East Burke
early afternoon. I know... so ready
for the long weekend... yeah, will
be great. Love you, see you soon
hon.

INT. HOWARD'S APARTMENT - ENTRANCE HALL - DAY

Howard walks into his apartment. It's beautiful and full of natural light with park views. There's a couple of Louis Vuitton suitcases ready by the entrance.

HOWARD
Hey hon!

Howard's wife KAREN, early 50s, emerges from the living room. An older version of the bride from our opening photograph. She wears a satin robe and colorful slippers. She is perfectly groomed.

The TV on the background is playing a *Real Housewives of Somewhere* type show.

HOWARD (cont'd)
(pointing to the suitcases)
Honey, why did you do that? You
shouldn't have moved around the
luggage.

Howard leans over to kiss her.

HOWARD (cont'd)
You aren't supposed to exert
yourself. You know what the doctors
said.

KAREN
Yeah, yeah I know, but I can't live
my life feeling useless. Might as
well be dead.

HOWARD
(laughing)
Hon, I think it's quite a stretch to
not be able to exert yourself after
having open-heart surgery, and being
completely useless. Where's Maria
anyway? Why isn't she helping you?

KAREN
Oh I sent her home early. She told
me a story about not having seen her
family in years and they're in town
all the way from Guatemala and with
Thanksgiving weekend coming up, you
know I can't deal with feeling
guilty.

HOWARD
I do know that.

KAREN
She hasn't seen her sons in over 2
years. Can you imagine?

HOWARD
I can. Imagine having children. How
awful. Having them in a far off
country sounds great to me.

KAREN
Poor woman.

HOWARD
OK! Ready to go? You got everything?

KAREN
Yeah, let me just grab my purse.

INT. HOWARD'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

We see Karen change her satin robe for a jacket, and her
slippers for shoes.

She grabs a bottle of pills and as she throws it in her purse we quickly get a glance of the label:

BETA BLOCKERS. KAREN LACEY. DOB 9/10/1972

INT. UNDERGROUND GARAGE - DAY

Howard and Karen pull out of their underground garage and drive away in their BMW.

INT. CAR / EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY

Howard connects his iPhone to the car's Bluetooth speakers.

HOWARD (V.O.)

(over the car speakers)

Hello all. Welcome to the Feel Great podcast. My name is Dr. Howard Lacey, psychiatrist and adjunct professor emeritus...

HOWARD

Sorry hon, promise we don't need to listen to this the whole way there. Wanna make sure the audio is good.

KAREN

Oh I don't mind. It's a fascinating case.

HOWARD

So you have listened to the podcast.

Karen takes one of the beta blocker pills with some bottled water.

KAREN

You know I always do. Well, almost always.

HOWARD

How many days now... without the side effects? A whole week right?

KAREN

Yeah. Thank God. I was this close to quitting those pills.

HOWARD

Over my dead body. Honey, you need to take this seriously, or I'll be the one having a heart attack next.

KAREN

Yes yes, don't worry. I'm taking my pills, we're off to the countryside like the doctor prescribed. Pure air and all that. You have to admit Dr. Lacey, I'm a great patient.

DAVID (V.O.)

(over car speakers)

...it seemed natural and made sense to me, that I could pick up what type of response he had by his noises.

KAREN

What an awful story. Poor guy.

HOWARD

Yeah. I really hope I'm helping him. He was especially agitated today. Medication doesn't seem to have helped him. I worry about him.

KAREN

You worry about all your patients.

HOWARD

Yeah, but there's something about David that just feels so... fragile. Like he's right up against the precipice. I hope I'm wrong.

Karen looks concerned. Howard stops the playback and shuffles some Frank Sinatra music.

HOWARD (cont'd)

Anyway, enough of that. Our weekend starts now.

KAREN

I should probably let you know, I invited George and Megs for dinner tonight.

HOWARD

Tonight? I thought it would just be the two of us.

KAREN

I felt sorry for them. Their kids aren't coming for the holidays and they get so needy and lonely. But don't worry, it'll be fun. Is it a problem?

HOWARD

No, no. No problem. But I don't want them staying too late.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - AFTERNOON

Bird's eye view of the BMW: it twists and turns as the road spirals around a snowy mountain range.

A series of cuts show the car venturing deeper into the mountainous forest, until...

EXT. LOG CABIN - AFTERNOON

...it finally pulls into a large beautiful property with a few acres surrounding a picturesque log cabin. It's like something straight out of a Vail postcard.

The BMW comes to a stop in front of the cabin. Howard and Karen exit the car. He grabs the bags from the trunk and we follow them into the house.

INT. LOG CABIN - AFTERNOON

A beautiful, rustic log cabin, tastefully decorated. The living room has very tall ceilings with domes bathing the house with natural sunlight. A massive chimney occupies half the wall opposite the entrance. The other half of that same wall is occupied by floor to ceiling French windows with beautiful views of the property. It's truly a magical place, and what would surely be a writer's paradise.

HOWARD

(sighs deeply)

Ahh. Hear that hon?

Silence.

KAREN

No?

HOWARD

Exactly. I've said it before, this place has saved my life and health over the years. Without it, I'd have had a heart attack a long time ago.

KAREN

Oh well, then I guess it didn't help me.

HOWARD

Of course it did. Or it would've happened sooner. Doctor's words, not mine. We need to spend more time here. The purer, lower oxygen here reduces blood pressure among other things.

KAREN

Yeah, yeah Dr. Lacey. I do get immensely bored here. I just can't help it. Too much... nature around. I would've sold it in a heartbeat after dad passed away.

HOWARD

Sacrilege! Your dad is still looking after you. That's why he left it to you, he somehow knew down the road it would save your life.

They both sit down on a large leather sofa in front of the chimney. Between the chimney and the sofa sits a large glass coffee table. Karen removes her shoes. Howard grabs Karen's legs and places them over his knees, and he rubs her feet.

KAREN

(rubbing her forehead)

Ahh why did I invite George and Megs for dinner. Why why whyyy.

HOWARD

That, is a great question.

KAREN

(playfully hits him)

Hey!

HOWARD

I meant 'cause you're a good person?

KAREN

Better.

HOWARD

What time are they coming over?

KAREN

(looking at her watch)

I told them to swing by at 7 so we can kick 'em out early. So... I'm gonna go get things ready.

Karen starts trying to get up from the sofa, but Howard holds her legs.

HOWARD
Just another minute hon.

KAREN
Come onnn. The sooner I get dinner ready, the sooner they'll leave.

HOWARD
(letting her go)
Okey-dokey.
(pointing at the chimney)
I'll go get some wood from downstairs and fire up this bad boy.

CUT TO:

EXT. LOG CABIN - EVENING

The cabin sits in almost complete darkness and is deadly silent except for the occasional owl hoot. We only see the light from the kitchen window, against which the silhouettes of Howard and Karen move around, and the light from a lamppost by the entrance.

A car pulls up to the driveway. GEORGE and MEGAN (both in their late 50s) exit the vehicle. George carries a bottle of wine. They approach the front door and ring the doorbell.

INT. LOG CABIN - FOYER - EVENING

Howard unlocks and opens the door.

HOWARD
Hey guys! Happy pre-Thanksgiving!
Come in, come in.

George and Megan walk into the foyer. They remove their coats, which Howard places on a coat rack by the door.

GEORGE
How was the drive up here? Did you hit any snow?

HOWARD
No, thank God. It was all clear.
Yeah I heard there's a big storm coming. Might get two to three feet of snow.

GEORGE

Yeah. Hope you don't have many plans back in the city anytime soon.

HOWARD

You know what? Being stuck here would be great. And just what the doctor ordered.

MEGAN

How is Karen?

HOWARD

She's good! No more side effects thank God. And you know her, it's hard to keep her still.

MEGAN

Yeah. We were all so scared when we heard, Howard. We're so sorry. Glad to hear she's doing better. And glad you guys finally took the time to drive up here. We missed you.

HOWARD

We did too. Come in, come in! Karen is just finishing cooking dinner.

INT. LOG CABIN - KITCHEN - EVENING

Howard leads the way round a hallway from the foyer into a large kitchen. Karen is stirring some mashed potatoes.

KAREN

Hi guys.

She leaves the wooden spatula in the pot and goes over to hug George and Megan, without realizing she has a dirty apron on.

KAREN (cont'd)

Oh shoot sorry George, look at that. I just got some raspberry on you.

MEGAN

Oh don't you worry. That is George's vest which he hasn't taken off in a week. It's overdue for a wash. Now I have an excuse to finally wash it. I mean look at it, it even has cigar holes in it.

George shrugs. They share a laugh. George hands over the bottle of wine to Howard, who proceeds to open it.

Howard is clearly a wine connoisseur: he has a foil remover, an electric wine opener, a decanter, and an aerator.

CUT TO:

LATER THAT EVENING.

INT. LOG CABIN - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The two couples are finishing dinner. They're animated and a little tipsy. A fire crackles and pops in the chimney in the background. Classical music plays on an old-fashioned record player.

MEGAN (cont'd)
(as she pours herself
another glass of wine)

Howard, how are your patients? Any new crazies?

HOWARD

"Crazies" isn't an appropriate term to refer to our patients, Megan.

MEGAN

Oh, sorry.

HOWARD

The correct term is fucking psychos.

They laugh.

HOWARD (cont'd)

No, my patients are well. I can't really discuss them. Well, other than David.

GEORGE

Oh, from your podcast right? I've been listening. It's fascinating.

HOWARD

Yeah, it's quite a case. But hey, if we're gonna talk about psychos, you've dealt with more than I have, I bet. And at least mine haven't murdered anyone.

GEORGE

Well, maybe.

MEGAN

Oh most definitely. I am so glad you're no longer involved with those cases.

HOWARD

You miss it, George? It must be hard to leave behind that adrenaline.

GEORGE

Sure. It is hard, you get so used to it. But I can't say I miss it. I've seen murderers walk free, often when the case was right there, and you just wonder what the fuck the jury was thinking? What else they need? I swear all those true crime shows and podcasts have completely fucked up the expectations people have of what constitutes "reasonable doubt". Nowadays, they expect DNA and almost video footage of the crime before they convict. So I am glad I don't have to keep doing criminal law today.

MEGAN

God, I'm glad too. I couldn't bear seeing you go through that anguish again.

KAREN

What was the final straw? That made you say "that's it, I'm done"?

GEORGE

Oh definitely the Morrison case.

KAREN

Oh I remember. That was the father that murdered his little girl, right? Claimed she had been kidnapped for ransom, then the body was discovered in the attic?

GEORGE

Yeah. I defended that fucker. He was my first client after I transitioned from prosecutor to criminal defense work. Look I believe everyone deserves a fair defense, and I've defended my share of confessed murderers. But when they say they didn't do it, even when it looked
(MORE)

GEORGE (cont'd)

bad, I've always separated feelings from facts, and gone with the evidence. But that fucker lied straight to my face, for years. So when the DNA evidence proved he not only murdered her, but had raped her... that poor little girl, well, it was just crazy. I couldn't believe it. I knew this man for 20 years, throughout the multiple trials and mistrials. 20 years he'd look straight into my eyes and swear he didn't do it. I gotta wonder if he actually had convinced himself he was innocent.

Megan places a hand on George's back to reassure him, as he pours himself another glass of wine.

The vibe has suddenly changed.

Howard leans forward.

HOWARD

I have a riddle for you.

They all look at him.

KAREN

Oh honey. You and your riddles. It's not the one with the man who walks into a restaurant and orders ostrich soup and after tasting it shoots himself.

HOWARD

It's albatross soup, not ostrich soup. And no, no, no. Though that's a great one. I don't think you know this one, honey. Bear with me, I think you'll find it relevant George.

Howard clears his throat, somewhat theatrically.

HOWARD (cont'd)

So there's a woman and her mother dies. She goes to the funeral, she's sitting up front where people tend to sit when a family member dies. The funeral is about to start when the doors to the church open, she turns and she looks back and a man walks into the church and

(MORE)

HOWARD (cont'd)
immediately, despite the circumstances, despite how sad she may feel that her mother is dead, she immediately falls in love with him. It is love at first sight, not a great meet cute moment, but it is love at first sight. Since the funeral is about to begin, the man sits in the back of the church. So the funeral ends, the woman jumps up, she wants to make her way to the back to say something to this man, but there are all these mourners and they're stopping her and they're giving her their condolences, and by the time she gets to the back of the church, the man is gone. So she turns around, she asks everyone there if they know who that man is and every single person she asks says no, don't know who it is, no idea. Two weeks later, this woman's sister is murdered. The police do an investigation and they realize the woman is responsible for her sister's death. They bring her in, and she confesses to everything. So here's the riddle: why did the woman kill her sister?

A beat. They all look at each other, intrigued.

KAREN
Ohhh. Interesting.

MEGAN
The man was really her sister?

HOWARD
No. Weird? But no.

KAREN
The man was having an affair with his sister. She was the jealous type.

HOWARD
Nope.

GEORGE
Don't ever cheat on Karen!

HOWARD

Oh that's for sure. My life is on
the line. She doesn't mess around.

(he playfully leans over
and kisses her on the
cheek.)

Come on George. Mr. Criminal Defense
Lawyer.

GEORGE

Ex. Ex criminal defense lawyer.

HOWARD

Sorry my bad. Ex criminal defense
lawyer. But what's the saying? You
can take the profession out of the
defense lawyer but... not the lawyer
out of the... mind... ah, of the ex
lawyer?

GEORGE

Yeah, that's how the saying goes.
No, it's obvious. It's obvious. The
man was secretly their brother, but
her mother and sister had kept it
from her. So that's why the man
shows up to their mother's funeral.
But then when she finds out, she
goes on a rage, because she had
remained single all her life,
waiting for the perfect man, and
when she had finally found the love
of her life, she couldn't be with
him.

HOWARD

WOW! That's quite impressive. Damn
George, you should've been a writer.

GEORGE

(raising his glass)

Thanks.

HOWARD

But no, that's wrong.

KAREN

Shit Howard, just tell us. We're
clearly not gonna guess.

HOWARD

Alright, alright. You guys give up?

ALL
YES!

MEGAN
He has quite a taste for the
theatrics.

HOWARD
Oh you have no idea. OK, so the woman killed her sister because she figured if the man went to her mother's funeral, he would probably come to her sister's funeral as well. That's why she did it. You see, this riddle is a test for psychopaths. There's a reason for that. Most everyone that hears this riddle probably did not come up with that answer. Everyone tends to come up with something strange like, the man was really her sister. The man was having an affair with her sister. Something along those lines. The reason you're doing that is most people, and the reason this is a psychopath's test, is because psychopaths think of things as... they treat people as a means to an end, they use people for their own end. For good people: people are ends on to themselves. You're trying to make them happy or whatever. Most people would not murder someone for their own ends. A psychopath would do that, because they use people for their own end. So when you hear this riddle, you invent reasons as to why she killed her sister.

A log in the fireplace splits under the fire and crackles loudly. Karen jumps.

KAREN
Shit that scared me! That riddle spooked me... kinda creeped me out. The... coldness of it.

GEORGE
That's good, Howard. There's nothing in the riddle to make you believe the sister has become a man and this woman didn't realize it and then murdered her sister when she found out. There's nothing in the riddle
(MORE)

GEORGE (cont'd)
to make you think the sister is
having an affair with the man.
There's no evidence of those
theories. If you look at what you
have, the evidence you have in the
riddle, that is the only conclusion
you can come up with. You can only
come to another conclusion if you
add evidence.

HOWARD

Exactly.

GEORGE

Damn! I've always been one to
separate feelings from facts and
focus on the evidence. But you got
me.

MEGAN

What's the one with the guy shooting
himself over ostrich soup?

HOWARD

That one... will have to wait for
another day. It's late, gotta get
this one to bed.

MEGAN

Yes, sorry. It's so late, and you
guys must be tired from the drive.

KAREN

No, don't be sorry. It was a lovely
evening. I really needed that.

Karen stretches her hand to meet Megan's hand.

KAREN (cont'd)

But I think the doctor is right.

They all stand up and George and Megan grab their plates and
walk them over to the kitchen.

INT. LOG CABIN - FOYER

George and Megan put on their coats. The couples hug.

MEGAN

This was lovely. We missed you guys.

KAREN

We did too.

GEORGE

Come over for lunch or dinner in the
next few days.

MEGAN

And Thanksgiving at our place!

HOWARD

For sure.

George and Megan leave.

INT. LOG CABIN - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Howard is rinsing the dishes and placing them in the dishwasher. Karen is cleaning the burners.

Howard's cell phone rings. It's sitting on the counter top. He ignores it.

Karen leans over and looks at it.

KAREN

No Caller ID.

HOWARD

Goddamn spam calls. It's 10pm.
Almost Thanksgiving weekend.

The phone stops ringing.

A beat.

Phone starts ringing again.

KAREN

No Caller ID again. Are you having
an affair?

HOWARD

Yeah, very funny.

Howard dries off his hands and takes the call. We only hear his side of the conversation.

HOWARD (cont'd)

Hello? Yeah ... who is this? Whoa,
whoa calm down. David? Is that you?

Karen looks very concerned.

HOWARD (cont'd)

David, listen to me. Calm down. Calm down David... no, David no. He isn't there. David, your brother passed away eight years ago, he's not there. David listen to me, you're suffering from a paranoid delusion. Breathe... breathe... have you been taking your medication? David, remember the exercises... write down the thoughts you're having, and challenge them. David?? Hello???

Howard looks at his phone and turns to Karen.

HOWARD (cont'd)

He hung up. He's having a massive episode. Fuck, I thought we were past those.

KAREN

Jesus. How did he get your cell phone number?

HOWARD

I don't know.

The phone starts ringing again.

KAREN

Don't answer it.

HOWARD

What do you mean don't answer it.

KAREN

I know your patients are important Howard, but you need to draw boundaries.

HOWARD

I know, but Karen, remember what I told you on the drive here? I'm scared... he could do... something. He's on the edge.

Howard answers.

HOWARD (cont'd)

David... that's it, breathe. Calm down. Where are you?

Howard's face changes immediately to horror.

HOWARD (cont'd)
Um, what do you mean, you're driving
over here?

Karen freezes.

HOWARD (cont'd)
David, listen to me. I'm not there.
Um, I'm in the city, so really
you're just wasting your time.

Howard lowers the phone, looking at it in disbelief. He then looks at Karen with deep concern.

KAREN
What happened? What did he say?

HOWARD
He said... he said he knows we're
here... 'cause he can see our lights
are on. Fuck.

Howard sprints towards the front door.

INT. LOG CABIN - FOYER - NIGHT

Howard stumbles as he jumps to the front door. He turns the key locking the door. Karen appears behind him, visibly concerned.

He looks through the peephole.

HOWARD
Fuck. He's pulling into the
driveway.

KAREN
Are you fucking kidding me. Should
we call the cops?

HOWARD
He's my patient, Karen.

KAREN
No fucking shit. A crazy patient.

HOWARD
Don't say that. If we call the cops,
the whole thing will escalate. I
think it's better for me to handle
this myself. Don't worry.

KAREN
Don't worry?

HOWARD
Honey everything will be fine, I
promise.

KAREN
What's he doing? I don't know that I
can handle this, Howard.

Howard looks through the peephole again.

HOWARD
He just got out of the car. He's
coming to the door. Just relax,
okay? Let me handle this.

We hear heavy, slow footsteps approach the front door. After
a beat, three loud knocks reverberate throughout the house.

DAVID
(O.S.)
Howard? It's me.

HOWARD
David, what are you doing here?

DAVID
(O.S.)
Why did you lie to me, Howard? Why
did you say you were in the city?

HOWARD
How did you know I was here? How did
you find this place?

DAVID
(O.S.)
Your wife's name was listed in the
property deed. Those are public
record. I... tried coming over to
your place in the city, but you
weren't there so I figured you'd be
here, with it being Thanksgiving
soon and all. Can I come in?

Karen is leaning from a column past the foyer.

HOWARD
David, I can't let you come in. You
know I can't see patients outside
regular hours. This is my home.

DAVID

(O.S.)

I know, and I'm so sorry. But I didn't know where else to go or who to go to. I have no family. And my brother is after me. Please let me in!! He's right behind me!!

HOWARD

David, listen to me. Your brother is dead. He is not out there.

DAVID

(O.S.)

I'm telling you doc, he's right outside the property. You might not be able to see him, but I guarantee you he is here. Please. Please. I'm begging you. PLEASE!!

Howard leans back from the door. Mutters under his breath 'FUCK'. He looks over to Karen.

HOWARD

Honey, if I don't let him in, this will escalate. I know him, I can calm him down, I have a sedative I can give him, and once he's more relaxed, we'll call the police so they can come pick him up. But if I call the cops now, he could end up getting shot. And if he leaves in this state, he could crash and kill himself or someone else.

Howard grabs her hands.

HOWARD (cont'd)

Honey, it's going to be OK. I promise you.

Karen nods her head, in agreement. Howard turns around and walks up to the door. He pauses in front of it, takes a deep breath, and opens it. On the other side is David, relieved.

HOWARD (cont'd)

David. Come in.

DAVID

Thank you.

David enters the house and quickly closes the door behind him.

DAVID (cont'd)
Quick, lock the door! He's just outside.

HOWARD
David, your brother is not out there.

DAVID
(looking through the peephole)
He is. Look, I can see him. Look!

HOWARD
David, come inside. Let's get you warm.

Howard leads the way into the living room. David follows. Karen stares from behind the column.

INT. LOG CABIN - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Howard leads the way and sits in a rocking chair with his back to the fire, he indicates for David to sit on the sofa in front of him. Karen also enters the living room, but sits at the dining table, a few feet away.

DAVID
(looking back at Karen)
Sorry, Mrs. Lacey. I really didn't mean to scare you guys. But I didn't know what else to do. My brother is going to kill me!

HOWARD
David! Listen to me. Your brother is dead. He died 8 years ago. You're suffering from paranoid delusion.

David quickly looks down at his feet, scared.

HOWARD (cont'd)
David. Have you taken your medication? Look at me, David.

DAVID
I can't. I'm scared.

HOWARD
Of what, David? Your brother is not out there.

DAVID

Yes he is, Howard. He is standing right outside the window.

Without looking up, David points to the floor-to-ceiling window behind Howard.

Howard turns around. He stands up and goes to the window. He turns on a patio light.

HOWARD

David, look. Your brother is not there.

Slowly, David turns to look up. He immediately looks down again.

DAVID

Fuck. He's right there. I can see him! And I can hear him. He's saying I killed him. Half his face is burned the fuck off.

Karen, in the back of the room, is hyperventilating. She looks in her purse for one of her beta blocker pills, but she can't find the bottle. She's becoming more agitated.

Howard walks over to the French window, and opens it. He takes a step outside, and looks out:

We pan left to right. We see the porch illuminated by the light, and darkness beyond that. Complete silence except for the sound of a distant owl.

Howard turns back to look at David.

David leans back into the sofa, terrified.

DAVID (cont'd)

He's right there. Close the window!
He's about to get in the house!!

David reaches the back of his jeans with his right hand, and quickly swings it back, holding a gun.

Karen stands up from her chair by the table.

Howard immediately becomes stiff, his eyes WIDEN.

The situation just escalated considerably.

HOWARD

David... listen to me carefully. Put the gun down.

DAVID

Please, Howard. Get inside the house. Quick!! He's so close.

HOWARD

OK, OK.

Howard walks back into the house, closing the French window behind him.

DAVID

Fuck. Too late, he's inside. Hi Trevor. I'm so sorry.

David, gun in one hand, from the sofa, gestures to an imaginary person right in front of him.

Karen, really hyperventilating now, is texting Megan frantically:

Pls call 911

Before she can hit send, David points the gun at her.

DAVID (cont'd)

Mrs. Lacey, come over here. It's better if we're all together. Leave the phone. Trevor really doesn't want anyone to know he's here.

Karen walks over to the fireplace area, and hugs Howard.

HOWARD

Where... is Trevor now, David?

DAVID

He's right next to you. He is... speaking like he used to. Only I can understand him, so don't bother trying. He says I... I let him down... Trevor, no. Leave them alone, Mr. Lacey is my friend... he and his wife are good people and they help me.

Howard is slowly getting closer to David, leaving Karen behind.

HOWARD

What... what else is he telling you, David?

DAVID

He wants to harm you. He says he
doesn't trust you... no, Trevor!

HOWARD

David, don't worry, he can't harm
us. Now, give me the gun.

Karen has backed up almost against the fireplace. She is breathing very fast. Her chest rises and lowers rapidly. She is clearly having difficulty breathing.

Howard is now within two feet of David. He is about to lunge at him when David jolts up from the sofa.

DAVID

NO, TREVOR, NO!!!

David fires the gun right as Howard is lunging at him. The LOUD GUNSHOT echoes throughout the log cabin. David and Howard fall to the floor. Karen SHRIEKS in horror.

On the floor, Howard is on top of David struggling to grab the gun from him.

DAVID (cont'd)

DON'T!! NO, TREVOR!!

David starts strangling Howard with his elbow. Karen tries to stop him but he kicks her back and points the gun at her while keeping Howard in a headlock with his left arm.

KAREN

NOOO!! DAVID!!! STOP!

After an excruciatingly slow 30 seconds, David releases Howard from his choke hold. Howard collapses to the floor, eyes wide open, lifeless.

David stands up from the floor. He looks down at Howard's lifeless body. He starts crying.

DAVID

Sorry, Trevor. I'm sorry. I can't believe I killed you again.

(looking at Karen,
viciously)

This is your fault. I told you he was here. I told you.

Karen falls to her knees. She's clutching her chest.

KAREN

No, please, leave me alone.
Please... I... I can't... I can't
breathe.

David stops crying, looks menacingly at Karen.

DAVID

You. YOU did this. You bitch.

He lunges at Karen, but she falls backwards, hand to her chest. David shakes her, violently. Her eyes roll back, and starts drooling. David lets go, and her body collapses to the floor like a sack of potatoes. Some muscle spasm.

David catches his breath, and instantly seems to become very still and calm.

Almost complete silence. Only the sound of the almost-dead crackling fire is heard.

David leans closer to Karen, staring at her face, almost nose to nose. He places his finger under her nose. He takes her pulse at the wrist.

David stands up, satisfied.

DAVID (cont'd)

(his accent suddenly
changes to British)

Fuck me, that wasn't as easy as you told me it'd be.

Behind him, Howard rises from the dead.

HOWARD

Well, sorry for not being able to accurately predict down to the minute how long it would take her to have a heart attack. You sure she's dead?

DAVID

Positive. But you're the doc. Check her pulse just in case.

Howard walks over to Karen's lifeless body and crouches next to her. He takes her pulse. After a beat he drops her wrist carelessly, stands back up, turns around to face David.

HOWARD

We pulled it off. She has no bruising of any kind. A clear heart attack.

He smiles, gets closer to David. They both look down at Karen's dead body.

DAVID

No killing. Only acting. Just like you promised.

HOWARD

Alright, alright, we still have a lot of work to do. You didn't touch anything, right?

DAVID

No, just the prop gun. Which by the way has hundreds of fingerprints from the theater.

Howard smiles.

HOWARD

Be right back.

Howard exits the living room and returns a moment later, carrying his small suitcase. He opens it, rummaging through the clothes until he pulls out an envelope from the very bottom and throws it over to David, who catches it in the air.

HOWARD (cont'd)

There's 10 envelopes in the suitcase, like that one you're holding. Each one has 10k. That's a hundred k. Like we discussed, once her life insurance clears through, you get the rest. Go on, check it.

David looks inside the envelopes thoroughly. He grins, ear to ear. He then cracks his knuckles, one by one.

HOWARD (cont'd)

I really wish you wouldn't do that.

DAVID

We fucking did it. I can't believe it. You know what? I think I'm gonna miss Trevor.

HOWARD

Yeah, imaginary cerebral palsy identical twins can be hard to leave behind.

DAVID

You know what pisses me off? The greatest performance of my life, and ain't nobody gonna see it.

HOWARD

(nods at Karen)

She did. You definitely gave a killer performance.

DAVID

(deadpan)

Ha Ha. That's funny. Man, I've never seen a dead body before. You seem unfazed.

Howard shrugs his shoulders.

HOWARD

Alright, well, we're not quite done yet. You have to go now. We're short on time. Didn't fucking plan on having people over for dinner. I'm gonna get her in bed, send a few texts from her phone and push her time of death by a few hours. I'll call 911 early morning. She had a heart attack in her sleep. Found her dead when I woke up.

DAVID

Won't they know her time of death?

HOWARD

No, no, no, body temperature only gives 'em a 3 to 8 hour window, David.

DAVID

It's curtain call, Howard, relax.

HOWARD

(lost in thought)

I really don't think the police will come talk to you. They have no reason to doubt my story.

DAVID

Don't get your knickers in a twist. We didn't use a last name in the podcast, I used a fake accent. Nobody knows it's me.

HOWARD

Just... take this seriously, please.
We can't afford to make a single
mistake.

David is closing the suitcase with the money.

HOWARD (cont'd)

And don't spend it all at once.
It'll raise suspicions.

DAVID

You have no idea what this money
will mean to my s-
(he stops, before
correcting himself)
family. So what's the first thing
you'll do with your share?

HOWARD

It's not so much about what I will
do, it's about what I will *not* do. I
will not pay her medical bills
anymore. I will not slave away
trying to keep a failing practice
afloat. I will not worry about her
finding out we're bankrupt. And I
will not worry about her selling
this house.

DAVID

You're bankrupt?
(looks at the beautiful
house)
You look pretty rich to me.

HOWARD

Yeah, well, appearances can be
deceiving. It takes a lot of money
to stay rich. You make some bad
investments... your wife's medical
bills pile up... your practice takes
a downturn... and before you know
it, whole fucking thing's
unraveling. I'm so tired of it all.
Can't wait to sell the house in the
city and retire here to write.

(looks around)

I love this place. So... peaceful. I
still can't believe her asshole
father bequeathed it solely to her.

We follow Howard as he leaves the living room, walks into the corridor, then makes a left and walks into the -

INT. LOG CABIN - POOL TABLE ROOM - NIGHT

Howard walks over to a bar in a corner of the room. He crouches and opens a safe. He pulls out something, but we don't see what it is.

INT. LOG CABIN - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Howard walks back into the living room, and walks all the way to the back by the chimney.

DAVID

OK, I think everything's good. We good?

HOWARD

We good. Take the gun, return it to the prop house before they close for the holiday.

A beat between the two men. They look at each other, and both smile. David walks over to Howard, and embraces him. Howard looks slightly uncomfortable.

DAVID

It wasn't just about the money, you know. From the moment I met you I felt a... trust with you. I knew right away I'd do anything to see you happy and set you free. No one needs a Karen in their life.

As David pulls back from the embrace, time slows down.

David has a confused look on his face. He looks down, and back at Howard, perplexed. He raises his right hand up to his face. It's covered in blood. A thin plume of smoke emerges from the gun Howard just shot David with in the stomach in close range. It's a big ass .357 Magnum revolver.

Howard takes a couple of steps back.

DAVID (cont'd)

Howard? What the fuck.

HOWARD

Sorry, David. Not quite curtain call yet.

It seems to finally dawn on David what just happened; his expression changes from confusion to anger and quickly lunges at Howard.

Both men fall to the ground.

DAVID
You fucking piece of SHIT!!

Both men struggle on the floor. Howard has the gun twisted in his hand, as both men fight for it. All four hands are struggling to control the gun. It very slowly starts turning, pointing towards Howard.

DAVID (cont'd)
I will fucking kill you. You think
you can fuck with me?! After what
I've done with you, you psycho?!

Both men are making Karen's body jiggle like jello as they struggle.

The gun has now twisted all the way back and is pointing directly at Howard's face.

DAVID (cont'd)
You. FUCK.

Howard's thumb is blocking the trigger guard, preventing any of David's fingers from pulling the trigger.

Howard starts really huffing and puffing. He hyperventilates as he seems to prepare himself to exert a great deal of force. He digs deep within his reservoir of strength and screams loudly like one does when one is doing tremendous amount of effort.

The situation starts to change and the gun starts to turn towards David. Both hands are now completely covered in blood.

The gun now makes a 180 vertically and is now pointing upwards through David's chin towards the back of his head.

Howard's pinkie finger slips inside the trigger guard and squeezes the trigger.

BANG!!!

The back of David's head explodes and a mixture of hair, skin, skull and brains spits out the back.

Howard takes a few deep breaths. Composes himself, and calmly kicks David's lifeless body off of him.

Howard takes the suitcase with the money and we follow him out of the Living room and into -

INT. LOG CABIN - POOL TABLE ROOM - NIGHT

Howard walks over to the corner, crouches and dumps the money in the safe, closing it.

INT. LOG CABIN - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Howard walks back to the scene of the bloody murder.

He grabs Karen's cellphone, and texts Megan:

Howard's patient here. David.

The one with the dead twin.

What?! What's he doing here.

He's having an episode. Violent. Gun! Call 911!!!

Howard then leaves the phone, stands on the couch, surveying the scene from above. He towers above it all. He takes a few deep breaths and jumps backwards onto the glass coffee table, violently smashing it into a million pieces. He bangs his head as he hits the ground and knocks himself out.

FADE OUT

BLACK SCREEN

A beat.

BANGING, becoming louder...

LOUDER.

LOUDER.

OFFICER #1 (V.O.)
*OPEN UP! MR. LACEY!! IT'S THE
POLICE!*

FADE IN:

Howard awakens in front of the fireplace. His forehead is bleeding profusely. He stands up, looks at his arms. They're completely covered in cuts from the smashed glass. He looks kinda impressed for a second.

He gets up and groggily stumbles to the front door.

INT. LOG CABIN - FOYER - NIGHT

Howard unlocks the door.

HOWARD

Thank God. My wife!!! She's not breathing. She has a heart condition.

OFFICER #1

PUT YOUR HANDS UP!! PUT YOUR HANDS UP!

Howard complies.

HOWARD

Yes officer. Officer, my name is Howard Lacey.

OFFICER #1

(patting Howard down)

Are you armed?

HOWARD

No, sir. But there is a loaded revolver over there.

OFFICER #1

Is this your house?

HOWARD

It is.

They rush to the living room, guns drawn.

INT. LOG CABIN - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The officers cautiously walk into the living room.

Howard follows.

HOWARD

Officers, like I said there is a loaded gun there. I... I had to use it. Oh God. I think I killed him.

OFFICER #2

Stand back.

Officer #1 checks Karen's pulse. Officer #2 goes to check on David.

OFFICER #2 (cont'd)
(into his walkie)
11-41, 1128 Cedar Road. Possible
187.

DISPATCH (V.O.)
(over walkie)
Copy. 11-41 is on its way.

OFFICER #1
Sir, are you feeling dizzy? Lie back
for me.

HOWARD
A little, yeah.

OFFICER #1
An ambulance is on its way. Mr.
Lacey, what happened here?

HOWARD
Officer, this is a long story. David
here is one of my patients. He
showed up in the midst of a paranoid
delusional episode. He tried to
murder my wife. I managed to grab a
gun...

We hear an ambulance arrive, two PARAMEDICS rush into the living room.

One of the paramedics is checking on Karen.

HOWARD
My wife, she suffers from a
condition... her heart. She
collapsed from the fear. Is she...
is she gone?

The paramedics are doing their thing.

PARAMEDIC #1
She has a faint pulse! Barely there.

Howard's eyes widen, panicked, but is able to quickly hide it.

HOWARD
Oh...
God.
Thank.

He rushes over to her body.

HOWARD (cont'd)
I was afraid she was gone.

PARAMEDIC #1
She is critical. She's suffering
from bradycardia.

HOWARD
What's that?

PARAMEDIC #1
Extremely slow heart rate. Beating
fewer than 40 times a minute, so she
can seem dead. Sir, stand back for
me.

The paramedics start to perform CPR on Karen. They place her on a stretcher.

HOWARD
I guess that makes sense. She does
suffer from a weak heart. Oh honey,
hang tight. Please honey... please
God.

Another PARAMEDIC is checking Howard's cuts and bruises.

Officer #2 in the background places a sheet over David's body.

EXT. LOG CABIN - DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

They place Howard on the back of the ambulance with Karen, as they take care of his wounds. They also place a neck brace on him.

The ambulance drives off. As it exits the property, it passes...

EXT. LOG CABIN PROPERTY - ROAD - NIGHT

...George and Megan standing behind a police tape by the gated entrance of the property.

MEGAN
Oh my God. Are they OK?? Are they
OK?!

INT. HOSPITAL - I.C.U. - NIGHT

Paramedics bring Karen and Howard into separate I.C.U. rooms, but connected through a swinging door. DOCTORS and NURSES go back and forth between both rooms. It's a chaotic yet also calm environment, as I.C.U. rooms can be. They lie Howard down on an operating table and start taking care of his wounds.

DOCTOR

Mr. Lacey, are you feeling dizzy?

HOWARD

I'm OK.

DOCTOR

When's your birthday, Mr. Lacey?

HOWARD

Ah, it's June. June 23rd, 1968.

DOCTOR

(while shining a flashlight
into his eyes)

Can you give me the address of your
house?

HOWARD

1128 Cedar Road.

Howard looks over to his right. We get quick glimpses of the other operating room as nurses rush back and forth.

HOWARD (cont'd)

How's my wife?

Just then a nurse comes from the other room and as the door swings we see Karen on an operating table with doctors and nurses working on her.

DOCTOR

There could be damage to the brain
due to lack of oxygen for a
prolonged period of time, it's too
early to tell. But I promise you,
she is receiving the best care right
now and we will do everything in our
means.

HOWARD

(robotic)

That's.

Good.

To.

(MORE)

HOWARD (cont'd)

Hear.

Thank you.

DOCTOR

Mr. Lacey, Nurse Maltagliati over here is going to suture you. You have some pretty deep gashes that will require stitches, but luckily no organ or major vein has been damaged. We're gonna do a CT scan of your brain, OK? I wanna make sure there is no swelling or damage there from the trauma you received. OK, sir?

HOWARD

(turning his southern charm back on)

You're the doc, doc.
And you're the nurse, nurse.

We pull away from the ER as we -

FADE OUT

FADE IN:

EXT. HOSPITAL - MORNING

Ominous clouds shroud the mountains behind the hospital.

INT. HOSPITAL - RECOVERY ROOM - DAY

Howard is awake in bed. He clearly hasn't rested one bit.

He has some bandaging over his head as well as multiple gauzes over his wounds.

The doctor walks into the room. He is looking at some charts in his binder.

DOCTOR

Morning, Mr. Lacey. How're we feeling?

HOWARD

(incorporating himself in bed)

Ouch. I'm still a little dizzy. But I'm OK.

DOCTOR

Dizziness is normal. It'll pass, Mr. Lacey.

HOWARD

Howard, please.

DOCTOR

Howard. Looks like there is no major swelling to the brain. You should be good to go home in the next few hours.

HOWARD

Doc, how's my wife doing?

The doctor leans in closer to Howard.

DOCTOR

Howard, I have good news and bad news. The good news...

Howard braces for the bad news.

DOCTOR (cont'd)

...is, your wife is alive. She has regained consciousness and is doing well.

HOWARD

(hiding his disappointment)
Oh Jesus...thank you... God.

DOCTOR

The bad news, Howard...

Howard braces for the good, if not great, news.

DOCTOR (cont'd)

... is the lack of oxygen-rich blood reaching the brain might have led to brain tissue damage.

HOWARD

Are you telling me she is brain dead?

DOCTOR

Oh no, not at all. Her CT scans confirm no major damage to the brain, but she has difficulty speaking. About 40% of patients show cognitive impairment in the first days after their heart attack and in
(MORE)

DOCTOR (cont'd)
about half of those cases,
impairment is temporary. Only time
will tell where Karen falls.

The Doc leans closer to Howard.

DOCTOR (cont'd)
We mustn't lose hope. She's a
fighter.

The doctor gently gives Howard a couple of light punches on his chest as he says this, in an encouraging ya-got-this-champ sort-of-way.

Howard has a hard time masking his disdain. He finally manages a half smile.

HOWARD
I haven't always been a praying man.
But, let's pray she falls on the
good side. Doc, can I see her?

DOCTOR
Sure.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - I.C.U. - DAY

Karen lies in bed, asleep.

DOCTOR
Her heart is very weakened, and a
third cardiac arrest would
definitely be fatal.

HOWARD
Is that so? Doctor, I'd like to take
her home with me.

DOCTOR
I'd prefer to keep a close watch
over her for the next four or five
days. Out of precaution.

HOWARD
I thought two days was the standard
after a heart attack?

DOCTOR
It usually is, but this was her
second.

HOWARD

You mentioned she's stable, and I know how much hospitals stress her out... and she was so looking forward to spending Thanksgiving at home.

This strikes a chord with the doctor.

DOCTOR

Well, if you can have a private nurse with her at all times that monitors her and helps with her physical recovery, it won't make much difference if she's here or at home, and her home might help her state of mind.

HOWARD

Oh it will, for sure. Trust me.

DOCTOR

Well, like I said. Get a nurse and you can take her home tomorrow. Otherwise, she stays here.

HOWARD

Of course, doctor.

DOCTOR

I'll give you some privacy.

The doctor exits the room, closing the door behind Howard, who is visibly upset.

Once Howard perceives nobody is with him or looking at him, his expression immediately changes to disdain. He mouths the word "fuck".

Howard approaches and sits on the edge of the bed.

Karen slowly wakes up.

HOWARD

Hey honey. How're you feeling?

KAREN

(relieved at the sight of
Howard)

Hahhwwwahd.

(she hugs him)

P-p-p-p-pae.

HOWARD

What's that, hon?

KAREN

(trying to get a sentence
out)

P-p-p-pae paae.

Karen gets frustrated.

HOWARD

Sorry, hon, I don't understand. It's
okay, don't worry. Doctor mentioned
this speech impediment will likely
be temporary.

(beat)

Hon, do you remember... what
happened last night?

KAREN

Paee...

Karen points to her heart, and then with her hand mimics
falling down, and then shakes her head.

HOWARD

You... remember up to when you had
the heart attack... and nothing
after, is that right?

Karen nods her head. Howard seems relieved.

Karen points at his chest, and mimics shooting a gun.

HOWARD (cont'd)

Oh, um. Well, turns out David had a
fake gun. I... must've momentarily
passed out from the shock of
thinking I was shot. I woke up to
see David struggling with you, and
shot him. Oh honey, I'm so sorry.
This is all my fault.

Karen looks compassionately at him, and shakes her head in
disagreement.

HOWARD (cont'd)

Hon, I'm gonna try and get a nurse
from the city up here so I can take
you home, okay? I don't want you in
this hospital

(MORE)

HOWARD (cont'd)
(leans closer and whispers
to make sure no medical
staff hears)
It's a small-town hospital. Not that
great.

He kisses her on the forehead, just as a NURSE walks in.

NURSE
Hello, Mrs. Lacey. And how're we
feeling this morning?

KAREN
P-p-p-pae-pae-p-p-p-g-g-g-gooooddd.

NURSE
And you must be Mr. Lacey. You must
be very proud of her. Your wife's
a -

HOWARD
Fighter, yes, I know. Nobody fights
quite like her.
(to Karen)
Huh, honey? Ain't that right? Two
heart attacks, but you still
breathin'.

KAREN
Pae.

NURSE
I'm going to do a linen change.

HOWARD
Yes, of course nurse. Thank you. For
taking such good care of my wife. My
sweet, sweet, wife. Let me get out
of your way.
(to Karen)
Love you, hon. I'll see you soon.

Howard slowly exits the room.

INT. HOSPITAL - BATHROOM - DAY

CLOSE ON Howard's angry face as he throws a MAJOR tantrum.

HOWARD
Fucking goddammit!!

He's washing his hands, alone in the bathroom.

HOWARD (cont'd)

Everything went so fucking smoothly, for fuck's sake. For someone with a fragile congenital heart problem, she sure won't fucking die. Now I gotta fucking kill her again?

Howard's agitation is manifested in the viciousness with which he's scrubbing his hands.

HOWARD (cont'd)

This ain't fucking fair. I worked so hard planning this whole shit. Finding a fucking idiot, making this whole shit up for months. FOR MONTHS!!

Howard goes to dry his hands, but the paper towel dispenser jams.

HOWARD (cont'd)

(to the motherfucking paper towel dispenser)

Oh, you gonna fuck with me, too? You chose the wrong day and the wrong person to fuck with, buddy.

He violently pulls at the paper dispenser until he yanks the whole goddamn thing out of the wall and starts slamming it against the sink before throwing it into a bathroom stall behind him.

HOWARD (cont'd)

Motherfucker.

Howard takes a few deep breaths, calming himself down. He looks at himself in the mirror, composing himself. He slicks back his hair with his hands.

He walks out of the bathroom.

INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR - DAY

He looks over to his right and a couple of DETECTIVES approach him. DETECTIVE JEANINE PYRE and the lead detective, DETECTIVE CREIGHTON THOMSON, walk over and shake Howard's hand.

DETECTIVE THOMSON

Mr. Lacey, I am so sorry. My name is Creighton Thomson, lead detective. This is Detective Jeanine Pyre and we are with local PD. Are you
(MORE)

DETECTIVE THOMSON (cont'd)
feeling OK? I know you've suffered
considerable trauma, but the sooner
we can get your statement, the more
things you'll remember.

HOWARD
Sure, sure Detective.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - PRIVATE ROOM - DAY

All three are sitting down around a small desk in a tiny room. Howard is drinking coffee out of a paper cup. Detective Thomson is taking his statement while Detective Pyre jots away in her notepad.

HOWARD
...and that's when my patient, David Worsley, showed up on our front door late last night. I've been treating David for a few weeks. He suffers from severe anxiety and depression, and has had bouts of paranoid delusion believing his twin brother, who died 8 years ago, is still alive. He just showed up obsessed that his brother was after him. I... I let him in. Oh God, this is all my fault. I let him in.

Detective Jeanine places a hand on his arm, reassuringly.

HOWARD (cont'd)
I thought I could calm him down. Was worried he'd have an accident if I let him go, or he'd freeze to death outside or confront the police and get shot.

DETECTIVE THOMSON
What happened then, Howard?

HOWARD
He was very agitated. He pulled a gun. Luckily I had grabbed a gun of my own I keep in the house for protection before opening the door. He then lunged at Karen, and knocked me out when I got on the way. We struggled over the gun until... I shot him. Twice.

DETECTIVE THOMSON
Clear self-defense. And David... he
lived in the city?

HOWARD
Yeah. He's... was an actor. For the
uh, Something Royal Company.

DETECTIVE THOMSON
(to Detective Jeanine)
Well, that explains his gun.

HOWARD
(acting surprised)
How so?

DETECTIVE THOMSON
It wasn't real... it was a prop gun,
like a theater gun.

HOWARD
(still acting surprised)
Well I'll be damned.

DETECTIVE THOMSON
One more thing, Mr. Lacey. Do you
know an
(looking at his notes)
Amanda... Worsley? Does that name
sound familiar?

HOWARD
(shifts in his chair)
Hmm, no? I mean, the surname does,
of course. Is she related to David?

DETECTIVE JEANINE
Well, you see, the car David drove
up to your house in? Doesn't belong
to him. Belongs to her.

DETECTIVE THOMSON
She's David's twin sister.

HOWARD
Sister? He didn't have any -
(crosses his arms and leans
back in his chair)
I mean, I thought he only had a twin
brother who died years ago? And he
had cerebral palsy.

DETECTIVE THOMSON

We're looking into the whole thing,
but it seems both those stories he
told you were false.

(beat)

Amanda has quite a rap sheet.

DETECTIVE JEANINE

(reading off a list)

Grand theft auto. Aggravated
assault. Breaking and entering.

DETECTIVE THOMSON

She's been clean for a while.

DETECTIVE JEANINE

We spoke to Amanda earlier today.
She's out in California with friends
for Thanksgiving. She's making
travel arrangements to come retrieve
her brother's body. And the car.

DETECTIVE THOMSON

Look, it's most likely nothing to
worry about. But we thought you
should know. Just stay vigilant.

Anything odd

(he pulls out a business
card from his pocket and
slides it across the table)

HOWARD

(grabbing the card)

I will make sure to reach out.

DETECTIVE THOMSON

Good.

All three stand up and shake hands.

INT. HOSPITAL LOBBY - NIGHT

Howard walks out, where he's greeted by George, who gives him
a hug. It's been a long day.

INT./EXT. GEORGE'S CAR - NIGHT

Bird's eye view of George's car driving the twisting road
from town back to the cabin.

It is now snowing heavily, and the windshield wipers are working overtime. It's hard to see beyond a few feet in front of the car. Howard and George sit silently.

The radio plays on the background.

RADIO (V.O.)

Do keep safe out there, folks. It's expected to snow heavily for the next couple of days. I-93, I-5 and I-91 are closed. Make sure to avoid those. Forecasters are predicting up to three feet of snow in some areas around East Burke. Snowplows won't be able to access these until the storm moves further east. We'll keep you updated here on W.K.E.B.

INT. LOG CABIN - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Howard and George walk into the living room, which has been cleaned up. It looks strangely empty without the glass coffee table in the middle. The sofa is covered by a white sheet.

GEORGE

Megs made sure everything got cleaned up today. The police wanted to take the sofa, as some sort of evidence. Can you believe that? But don't worry, I spoke with Detective Thomson. I still have some pull. They took some samples and whatnot. But more as a formality. The investigation is pretty much closed. It's been cleaned. We, eh, covered it with a sheet because some stains didn't quite come out. We also stocked up your fridge and pantry.

HOWARD

Thank you, George. That was very thoughtful of you guys.

GEORGE

And don't worry about dealing with the insurance, Megs is on it. She still has great friends there. She's doing her damnedest to find a top-notch nurse to help you with Karen. Are you sure you want to stay here, Howard? You know you're more than welcome to stay with us as long as you want.

HOWARD

Oh, no. I don't really want to intrude. Besides, as soon as Karen is discharged, we'll drive back to the city.

GEORGE

Howard, if there's anything you need, you know we're a phone call away.

George walks over to Howard and gives him a hug. Howard rolls his eyes behind George's back.

GEORGE (cont'd)

You get some rest.

HOWARD

Will do.

George leaves the house, and we hear his car drive away.

Howard looks around at the living room. We hear distant echoes from the crime.

Howard's cellphone rings, snapping him out of it. He pulls it out of his pocket, and as he does, the Detective's business card falls onto the floor. He picks it up, and answers the phone.

HOWARD (cont'd)

Bobby, hey. Sorry I haven't called you back.

BOBBY (V.O.)

(over phone)

Don't worry about it, Howard. How's she doing?

HOWARD

Looks like she'll be OK.

BOBBY (V.O.)

(over phone)

Oh, thank God. Grace and I were praying for her non-stop.

HOWARD

Thanks, Bobby.

BOBBY (V.O.)

(over phone)

Listen Howard, I hate bugging you with this right now. It's just...

(MORE)

BOBBY (V.O.) (cont'd)
*I've got the accountants up my ass.
I texted you earlier but I'm sure
you didn't see it, with everything
you're dealing with. There's a 100k
shortfall they can't reconcile in
the books.*

Howard looks stressed. He exits the living room.

INT. LOG CABIN - POOL TABLE ROOM - NIGHT

Howard walks over to the bar in the corner of the room. He crouches, presses his phone against his ear to free his hands, and places the Detective's business card, which he was still carrying, on top of the safe. He then unlocks and opens it:

The money is still all in there.

BOBBY (V.O.)
(over phone)
*I know you're the only other person
in the practice who has access to
the accounts and -*

HOWARD
(interrupting)
Bobby, Bobby, listen to me, don't
worry. I'm sure I made a mistake and
withdrew the money from the business
account or transferred it.

BOBBY (V.O.)
(over phone)
*100k Howard? That's a big mistake.
You know the practice is in no
position to lose funds right now.
Even for just a week. I'm doing
everything I can to keep it afloat
as it is.*

HOWARD
I know, I'm sorry. I haven't been
myself lately, what with Karen sick
and all. Are the accountants there
tomorrow?

BOBBY (V.O.)
(over phone)
No, no. It's the holiday weekend.

HOWARD

(closes the safe)

Right. I'll look into it. But
everything will be fixed on Monday,
okay?

(a beat)

Okay, Bobby?

BOBBY (V.O.)

(over phone)

*Yeah, yeah. Sure, Howard. You guys
stay safe, and hey, happy
Thanksgiving.*

Howard hangs up, stressed when

SLAM

The sound of a door shutting in the living room jolts him. He grabs a revolver that was hidden under a bar stool in front of the bar.

INT. LOG CABIN - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Howard walks down the hallway heading towards the living room. He cocks his gun and raises it.

INT. LOG CABIN - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Howard walks in, pointing his gun, but everything looks normal. Just then, the wind opens the French window and then SLAMS it shut again.

Howard walks over to it, noticing it's not properly closed. He opens it and looks outside into the patio, panning left to right: nothing.

HOWARD

(to himself)

Get a grip on yourself, Howard.

He closes and locks the French window and draws the thick curtains that frame it.

INT. LOG CABIN - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Howard leaves the revolver on the nightstand, collapses on the bed and falls asleep immediately.

INT. LOG CABIN - HALLWAY - NIGHT

The cabin hallway is dead quiet and almost pitch black.

INT. LOG CABIN - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Howard is fast asleep. We hear a nightstand clock ticking.

And then... distant noises, coming from somewhere around the cabin.

Howard WAKES UP, as the NOISES continue: footsteps, what sounds like a muffled, metallic banging.

He props himself up in bed, and grabs the revolver.

INT. LOG CABIN - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Howard walks down the dark hallway, cautiously heading towards the pool table room, from where the noises are coming from.

The door to the room is closed. Howard cocks and raises his gun, slowly opens the door and steps into the -

INT. LOG CABIN - POOL TABLE ROOM - NIGHT

There's an INTRUDER, dressed all in black and wearing a ski mask, crouched and trying to open the safe. Lights are out in the room, but the FIGURE is partially illuminated by the flashlight of a cellphone in their hand.

Howard points the gun at the INTRUDER.

HOWARD

Freeze, asshole. You'll never be able to open that safe. It's solid steel. Put your hands up where I can see 'em. Slowly.

The INTRUDER complies, leaving the cellphone on top of the safe face down, its flashlight illuminating that corner of the room.

HOWARD (cont'd)

Turn around!

The INTRUDER stands up, still with their back towards Howard. And then... starts GRUNTING.

HOWARD (cont'd)
(taken aback)
Who the fuck are you?

INTRUDER
(deep, guttural voice)
I'm Trevooooor.

Howard's eyes widen in disbelief, and momentarily drops his guard. The INTRUDER takes advantage of this, grabs a shot glass from the bar and throws it at Howard, hitting him square in the face. The INTRUDER then lunges at him.

Howard PUNCHES the INTRUDER, who SCREAMS out in pain; it's the voice of a woman. Howard manages to put his right arm around the INTRUDER'S neck, and while keeping them in a choke hold, turns on the light and pulls off the ski mask to reveal: a WOMAN, 30s.

In Howard's confusion, the WOMAN elbows Howard in the groin, and snatches the gun from him, pointing it straight at his head.

INTRUDER (cont'd)
Hey, Dr. Lacey. Look familiar?

Indeed she does: she's the spitting image of David. Meet AMANDA WORSLEY, 30s. Strong, no-nonsense, Pixie haircut, somewhat of a masculine quality. She speaks with a hard-to-pinpoint accent. Slightly Hispanic, slightly British.

HOWARD
(confused)
Are you... David's twin sister?
Amanda?

AMANDA
(sarcastic)
Oh my, David was right. You are smart.

HOWARD
You gotta be shitting me.

AMANDA
Nice to finally meet you too, murderer. I've heard so much about you.

She cocks the gun.

HOWARD
He never told me he had a sister.

AMANDA

Don't think he was too proud of me.

HOWARD

Hold on a minute. When... how...
what the fuck are you doing here?

AMANDA

My brother had his driver's license suspended, so he asked me to drive him up here. Told me the whole fucking story on the way. I didn't trust you...

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. CAR - LOG CABIN DRIVEWAY - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

We're back to the night of the murder. Amanda sits low in the passenger seat, her eyesight just over the dashboard. She's wearing a ski mask, as she witnesses David yelling at Howard to open the front door.

AMANDA (V.O.)

I told my brother to at least take a real fucking gun, and the idiot refused. Kept repeating "no killing, only acting". He followed your instructions to a T.

GUNSHOTS are heard from inside the house. Amanda JUMPS in her car seat. She grabs a gun from the glove compartment, quietly gets out of the car and walks around the house towards the back porch, gun in her hand.

EXT. LOG CABIN - BACK TERRACE - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

AMANDA (V.O.)

After hearing the gunshots, I snuck around the back of the cabin, looked into the living room, saw you, with the cash, disappear.

Amanda is about to enter the house via the French window when Howard re-enters the Living Room. She ducks behind the wall outside on the porch, next to the window. She raises her gun.

AMANDA (V.O.) (cont'd)

I was ready to kill you right then and there, and then... you fucking knocked yourself out. Gotta admit, I did not see that coming.

Amanda hears the smashing glass coffee table behind her, and peeks inside.

INT. LOG CABIN - LIVING ROOM - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

She then enters the house via the French windows, takes off her ski mask and kneels down next to David's body, caressing his face and about to cry.

But she quickly composes herself, looks around for the money and before she can find it, SIRENS alert her of approaching police.

AMANDA (V.O.)

*I had no time to drive off and avoid
being seen, and they'd expect to
find the car David drove in, anyway.*

EXT. LOG CABIN - BACK TERRACE - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

Amanda rushes out the back of the cabin, and notices the garage door is open.

AMANDA (V.O.)

*So I sheltered inside the garage for
the night.*

INT. LOG CABIN - GARAGE - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

Amanda cowers from the cold, shivering. She puts on her ski mask.

AMANDA (V.O.)

*Hiding on the property. Marooned
here. Waiting... biding my time...*

CLOSE ON: Amanda's eyes, squinting in anger.

END FLASHBACK

INT. LOG CABIN - POOL TABLE ROOM - NIGHT

AMANDA

... for you to return.

For the first time, Howard is at a loss for words.

AMANDA (cont'd)

You thought David came up with the
whole Trevor thing on his own?

(MORE)

AMANDA (cont'd)

Trevor was my story! When we were kids I used to tell him we were triplets and had another brother with cerebral palsy who died and would show up in the middle of the night. I'd turn my back towards him and grunt. Scare the shit out of him.

(for a second, she looks sad and slightly lowers her gun)

I... I don't know why I did that.

HOWARD

(slowly walks towards her)

Well, it's not unusual for siblings to -

AMANDA

(raises the gun again)

Don't! Don't you fucking dare do your psychology bullshit on me!

HOWARD

Fine. You know, your brother lunged at me and I had to defend myself.

AMANDA

Bull-fucking-shit. My brother would never have done that. He trusted you! He felt a... connection with you. For once, just speak the truth, man: you were tying loose ends. I can at least respect that.

HOWARD

He was not taking this seriously! He wasn't supposed to tell anyone about this, and he fucking brings his sister along?! He was gonna fuck it all up and expose us!

AMANDA

You mean expose you. Well, he sure paid for his mistakes. Look, mate, whatever happened, I've decided, is between you two. My brother was old enough to know what he was getting into. But I'm his next of kin, and as such I'm entitled to the money owed to him. I'm here to collect. Part of that money, my brother told me, he was gonna give to me. Help me
(MORE)

AMANDA (cont'd)
start over abroad. Was gonna
surprise me.

HOWARD
Ah, and there we have it. Guess
that's why you helped him. "I loved
my brother, but really, it's all
about the money".

AMANDA
Shut the fuck up! Now give. Me. The.
MONEY!

HOWARD
I can't give you the money! That was
an advance against my wife's
insurance kicking in. An advance I
took out of my own business. Since
she didn't die, I have to return the
money before anyone finds out. It's
a shit-show!

AMANDA
(surprised)
Your wife didn't die?

HOWARD
Guess you haven't heard the news?

AMANDA
You're such a bullshitter. I saw her
on the floor dead with my own eyes.

HOWARD
She's alive and well in the
hospital, you retard.

AMANDA
Don't call me a retard!

HOWARD
She's a fighter, my beloved wife.

A beat.

HOWARD (cont'd)
Look, use your head: if you kill me
now, the police will figure out it
was you. Sooner or later. I promise.
You know how much planning it takes
to pull off a perfect murder? You
can't just come in here shooting
willy-nilly. You'll get caught!

(MORE)

HOWARD (cont'd)
(it dawns on him)
Ohhh. Guess that explains your rap sheet.

Amanda looks slightly embarrassed.

HOWARD (cont'd)
Right now, no one suspects me of anything, and no one knows you're here. The police think you're out on the West Coast. Detective what's-his-name told me earlier.

AMANDA
Yeah, he called me. Spoke to him from outside your fucking home. I have a good friend in L.A. that will provide me with a solid alibi for the Thanksgiving weekend. I was just gonna wait out in the area for a couple of days before showing up to retrieve the body.

HOWARD
Well there you go. Let me think a minute...

Howard paces, back and forth, lost in thought. You can sense the wheels turning.

Suddenly, he stops dead in his tracks. An idea seems to have popped into his head.

HOWARD (cont'd)
Wait a second... yeah, that could work. For both of us.

AMANDA
What could work?

HOWARD
We won't be able to drive back to the city for a couple of days while we wait for the storm to pass and the roads to clear. Tomorrow, I'll bring Karen home. To do so, I'll need a nurse. Fucking doctor is insisting on having one to discharge her. You can pretend to be that nurse. I can grab a nurse uniform from the hospital while you wait outside.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - STORAGE ROOM - FLASHFORWARD

We see Howard stealing a nurse's uniform from a storage room at the hospital for Amanda to wear.

INT. LOG CABIN - POOL TABLE ROOM - NIGHT

HOWARD

And then, at night... we can have a do-over. People can survive two heart attacks, but not three. Her heart is extremely weakened. We'll gaslight her into thinking she's actually "seeing" Trevor's ghost lurking in the dark, a.k.a. you. Shit, you almost gave me a heart attack earlier.

AMANDA

(intrigued)

Go on.

WE SEE A QUICK SHOT OF HOWARD'S HANDS EMPTYING KAREN'S BETA BLOCKER PILLS FROM A BOTTLE AND RE-FILLING IT WITH OTHER PILLS.

HOWARD

I'll switch her beta blocker pills for -

AMANDA

What are those?

HOWARD

It's these pills she takes. They cause the heart to beat more slowly and with less force. They lower the blood pressure and help avoid a heart attack. So I'll switch them for NSAIDS -

Amanda looks at him, perplexed.

HOWARD (cont'd)

(clarifying)

A Non Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drug.

Amanda still looks at him perplexed.

HOWARD (cont'd)

Ibuprofen, OK? I'll switch them for ibuprofen.

AMANDA

Ah. Then just say that. Wait, why
switch 'em?

HOWARD

NSA - I mean, ibuprofen elevates
blood pressure and increases risk of
heart attack. They're always avoided
for patients with cardiovascular
diseases.

WE SEE A SHOT OF A NURSE KIT BEING OPENED, WITH SYRINGES AND VIALS, NEXT TO IT A BLOOD PRESSURE MONITOR.

HOWARD (cont'd)

We have a little nurse kit with
sedatives and even local anesthesia
a previous nurse left here. I'll
show you how to use the blood
pressure monitor. It's very simple.

(smiles)

A perfect plan.

Amanda hesitates. Howard senses it. He knows he needs to sweeten the deal.

HOWARD (cont'd)

Then, you get your money, of course.
How about... double what your
brother was going to get, to make up
for your loss?

AMANDA

(points the gun at his head)
Or I can just shoot you in the head
right now. Your plan sounds too
elaborate.

HOWARD

Now, now. Come on, think about it:
there are 10,000 possible
combinations and the only two people
that know the code are me and my
wife. And no, it's not our wedding
date or some shit. So, you can leave
here with nothing, having killed me
and likely getting caught and with
your brother still dead. Or you can
finish what your brother couldn't,
and leave here

(points at the safe)
with all that money, and then some,
to make up for, you know, your loss.

Howard's making sense to Amanda.

HOWARD (cont'd)
That's 100k, plus 700k when her insurance kicks in. That's a whole lot of money to start over abroad. I'll wire you the extra money wherever you tell me to.

AMANDA
(points to the safe)
I thought you had to return that money?

HOWARD
Once she's dead, I can immediately get an advanced loan against her insurance.

AMANDA
You've thought of everything.

HOWARD
I always do.

She walks over to the safe, and grabs her cellphone lying on top of the safe. She points it at Howard.

HOWARD (cont'd)
What are you doing?

She then taps away at the screen.

HOWARD (V.O.)
(over iPhone speakers)
The money. That was an advance against my wife's insurance and inheritance kicking in. Since she didn't die, I have to return the money before anyone finds out.

The video has the audio of the conversation over a static shot of the ceiling of the room.

AMANDA
Did you think about *this*? I've recorded the entire conversation. A little editing to remove myself... and hey look, you make a cameo at the end, too.

HOWARD (V.O.)
(over iPhone speakers)
What are you doing?

She then grabs the Detective's business card that was lying on top of the safe, attaches the audio/video file to a draft email to the detective...

HOWARD

Whoa, whoa, what the fuck are you doing?

...and schedules to send it in 2 days.

AMANDA

Insurance. If you try anything, in 2 days Detective Thomson will receive this video from a disposable e-mail address I have. You try to take me down, I take you down. You keep your word, and I'll cancel this email. Bless my brother, and may he rest in peace, but you're dealing with the smart sibling now, *motherfucker*.

HOWARD

Good, then the plan will work this time. And let's both of us just relax, please. We need each other. Once it's done, I'll drop you off in town and you'll walk out of all this a very, very, rich gal.

Amanda holsters her gun in her waistband. She interlocks her fingers and with her palms facing away from her body, she pushes her hands, cracking her knuckles.

HOWARD (cont'd)

I see you have your brother's same nasty habit. I hate that.

AMANDA

Good.

(beat)

Okay, Howard. Let's do it.

CUT TO:

EXT. LOG CABIN - MORNING

The cabin is surrounded by deep, thick snow. Though it's early morning, the sky is completely covered with threatening clouds, making it eerily dark.

Howard and Amanda come out the front door and go to his car. He scrapes the ice off the windshield, gets in and they drive off.

EXT. HOSPITAL - MORNING

Howard's car pulls into the front entrance.

INT. HOSPITAL LOBBY - MORNING

The nurse brings Karen out, helping her walk.

HOWARD
Here she is. Here she is.

Karen is happy to see Howard. He gives her a kiss on the forehead and grabs her hand.

HOWARD (cont'd)
Ready to go home, honey? My beautiful wife.

KAREN
Y-Y-Y-Yess. Hahhwwahd.

HOWARD
Oh, look at that. Your speech is already so much better.

NURSE
Yes, she's made great progress in just a couple of days. Doctor felt comfortable discharging her. And you have a nurse with you?

HOWARD
Yeah, she's back in the car.

The nurse looks out the front glass doors and sees Amanda in the distance, dressed in full nurse garbs, smoking a cigarette and leaning against the side of the car. Amanda sees Howard pointing at her, so she waves. Howard is not amused by her unprofessional demeanor.

HOWARD (cont'd)
I asked her to wait by the car in case an ambulance pulled up.

NURSE
You know we have an E.R. pull up area?

And with that, the nurse turns around and leaves.

HOWARD
Are you ready, my love? Ready to go home?

KAREN
Y-y-y-yes. H-h-h-hooooome.

HOWARD
Yes, my sweet love. We're going home.

Howard helps Karen walk out of the hospital.

EXT. HOSPITAL - FRONT ENTRANCE - MORNING

Amanda throws the cigarette on the floor and stomps on it. She straightens up as Howard and Karen approach.

HOWARD
And honey, this is Nurse, uh...

AMANDA
(shakes Karen's hand)
Romina. Nice to meet you, Mrs.
Lacey. I've heard a lot about you.

KAREN
(slightly taken aback)
P-p-pae-n-nice meet you p-p-p-p-too.

HOWARD
Nurse Romina here will be staying with us and taking care of you for the next couple of days.

CUT TO:

INT/EXT. CAR - DAY

Howard drives the car from town back to the cabin.

Karen sits in the front passenger seat and Amanda, a.k.a. Nurse Romina, sits in the back directly behind her.

EXT. LOG CABIN - DRIVEWAY - DAY

Howard and Amanda come out of the car.

Karen opens her door, and is struggling to get out.

AMANDA
No, no. Please Mrs. Lacey, allow me.
That's why I'm here. We don't want you exerting yourself too soon.

Amanda helps Karen walk to the front door as Howard opens it.

INT. LOG CABIN - FOYER - DAY

AMANDA
(to Karen)
Are you thirsty? Would you want some tea?

Karen nods her head.

AMANDA (cont'd)
I'll grab it. I see the kitchen is here to the right.

KAREN
T-t-t-t-hank you.

INT. LOG CABIN - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Howard walks Karen into the living room, and helps her sit on the sofa, on top of the white sheet covering it.

CLOSE ON Karen, as she becomes agitated.

HOWARD
I know honey. I know. I'm sorry.
This is the last place I want to be in, too. But Exposure Therapy is the best way to get over residual trauma. This will actually be good for you. Trust me.

Karen starts to cry.

HOWARD (cont'd)
(grabbing Karen's hands)
Oh, Karen. Don't cry. None of this was... part of my plan. But we gotta roll with the punches, right? Let's just hope we can get back to the city soon. And hey, we'll sell this house like you wanted. That's a promise. Sound good?

This seems to reassure Karen.

HOWARD (cont'd)
Your hands are freezing, honey. I'll get a fire going.

Howard dumps logs into the chimney.

KAREN
N-n-n-n-nurse...p-p-pae...

HOWARD
(while starting a fire in
the chimney)
What's that, honey?

Karen, frustrated at her speech impediment, points towards the kitchen, with a questioning look in her face.

KAREN
W-w-w-w-h-o sh-sh-sh-shee?

HOWARD
Oh, Nurse Romina? She's a local nurse. I'm sorry but I couldn't get someone from the city that had helped you in the past up here; the storm, the Thanksgiving weekend, the short notice. But don't worry, Nurse Romina is very experienced with physical therapy. She'll just help out today and tomorrow, and then we'll be back in the city.

Howard blows air into the roaring fire with a blow poke.

Amanda walks into the living room carrying a tray with a cups and a kettle.

AMANDA
Oh, I had never seen one of those.

HOWARD
What, this? It's a blow poke. It's a must for any chimney aficionado. But please, have a seat.

Howard sits on the rocking chair, motioning to the sofa.

As Amanda approaches the sofa, she STOPS IN HER TRACKS.

*WE SEE A QUICK SHOT OF AMANDA, THE NIGHT OF THE MURDER,
LOOKING AT THE SOFA COVERED IN DAVID'S BLOOD AND BRAINS.*

HOWARD (cont'd)
That uh, sorry we cleaned the sofa,
but there were some stains still
there, hence the white sheet.

AMANDA
(uncomfortable, and pissed)
Really? You don't say.

HOWARD
(sternly)
Sit, Nurse Romina.

Amanda sits on the sofa next to Karen, setting the tray on the floor and serving Karen her tea.

Howard rocks back and forth in his rocking chair.

HOWARD (cont'd)
It's clean, really. Thank God for George. He's been a godsend.

AMANDA
It's always good to have people close. George is your friend?

HOWARD
Yes, George is a good friend, and neighbor.
(to Karen)
Isn't that right, honey?
(to Amanda)
So, Nurse Romina, why don't you tell Karen a little about your nursing experience?

Amanda places her hand on Karen's arm, and looks at her, with a warm smile on her face as Karen sips her tea.

AMANDA
Oh, well, I've worked as a nurse for over a decade now. Here in the States, and in my native England. Around Latin America, too. I -

Amanda is interrupted by a knock on the front door. They all look at the entrance. Amanda shoots Howard a look.

HOWARD
Who could that be?

Howard gestures at Amanda with his head towards the entrance.

AMANDA
(standing up)
Hey, uh, is there a bathroom I could use real quick, Mr. Lacey?

HOWARD
Howard. Please. Yes, of course. Let me show you.

INT. LOG CABIN - FOYER - DAY

Howard walks up to the door and looks through the peephole.

HOWARD

(whispering to Amanda)

Fuck! It's Megan, our neighbor. George's wife. She's so goddamn nosy. Just, stay in the guest bedroom. I'll get rid of her quickly.

(with a loud voice, so Karen can hear)

So the bathroom is just down the hall, to the left. Right next to the guest bedroom where you'll be sleeping in.

AMANDA

Thank you, Mr. Lacey.

As Amanda walks down the hall, Howard opens the front door.

MEGAN

Howard, hi. I was just making some apple tart tatin and saw your car drive by from our kitchen window. Just thought I'd come and check-in on you and Karen. How are you?

HOWARD

Megan. Hi. Good, good. We're doing good.

MEGAN

(tiptoeing to try and see past Howard into the living room)

Can I see her?

HOWARD

Well, I thought it'd be good if she gets some re -

KAREN

(O.S)

M-M-M-M-Megss??

HOWARD

Of course. Come in, come in, please.

INT. LOG CABIN - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Megan and Howard walk into the living room. Karen's face lights up at the sight of her.

HOWARD (cont'd)
She was just having some tea.

Megan rushes over to Karen and gives her a big hug.

KAREN
M-M-Meggggssss!

MEGAN
Hi! Hi, sweetie. Hi. Please don't get up, sit down.

KAREN
Pae pae p-p-p-M-M-Meggggssss.

They both sit down on the sofa.

Howard sits back in his rocking chair. He starts rocking back and forth, nervously.

MEGAN
(holds Karen's hands in a warm, loving manner)
How are you feeling, sweetie?

KAREN
P-p-p-p-p-bettaahh.

MEGAN
That's wonderful, honey.

HOWARD
Her speech is getting better by the minute! In spite of the tragedy, it's good news all around! And thank you so much for your help. Cleaning, the pantry, trying to get a nurse.

MEGAN
You're most welcome. The insurance company was scrambling to find someone available over the holiday weekend, but George told me you managed to find someone that could make it out here. I'm glad it worked out. Is she here? Can I meet her?

HOWARD
She's in the bathroom.

MEGAN

Ah. Okay. Well, let me know if there's anything else you need. Luckily I still have a good pull with the insurance company.

HOWARD

Will do.

MEGAN

And how are *you* doing, Howard?

HOWARD

I'm alright, Mags. I guess. Still feeling completely numb.

MEGAN

George and I are so sorry, Howard. We still can't believe it.

HOWARD

(holding back tears)

I... it just does not seem real. What a bad streak we've had.

MEGAN

Oh, Howard. We're so glad we could be of assistance
(to Karen)
and all thanks to this brave lady, letting us know what was going on in the thick of it. We called the cops as soon as you told us to. I'm so glad they got here as fast as they did.

Howard stops rocking in his chair. Uh-oh. His face changes from momentary confusion, to concern as it dawns on him he's forgotten one important detail.

CLOSE ON Karen looking confused, too.

WE SEE A QUICK FLASHBACK from the night of the murder of David telling Karen to leave her phone before she's able to send her text to Megan.

HOWARD

Yes, they sure got here fast. Thank God. Good local P.D. Anyway, I think it'd be good for Karen to get some rest.

MEGAN

Yes, of course. You're right. I don't want to intrude, I imagine you must both be tired. Just wanted to see how you were doing, and if we're all still stuck tomorrow like it looks we will be, wanted to invite you over for dinner. It is Thanksgiving, after all. And I'm making my world famous apple tart tatin.

HOWARD

Oh that's lovely, Mags. Thank you for the invitation. We'll let you know tomorrow, okay? Let's see how she sleeps tonight and how she's feeling in the morning.

MEGAN

Alright-y. Well, if you need anything, we're a phone call away. Seriously. Day or night. We're here for you guys.

KAREN

Pae, p-p-p-p-thaank you.

INT. LOG CABIN - FOYER - DAY

Howard and Megan hug. Howard opens the door, and just as she's leaving:

HOWARD

Oh, Mags: do you remember what you did with Karen's phone when the living room was cleaned? She was looking for it earlier.

MEGAN

Hm, let me think... oh! I think we left it near the dining table. On the bookshelf next to it. Here, I'll show you.

HOWARD

(blocks her)

No, no. I got it. Thank you. Say hi to George for me.

Howard closes the door on Megan's face.

INT. LOG CABIN - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Howard walks back in the living room and goes straight to the bookshelf near the dining table, looking around until he spots Karen's iPhone. With his back towards Karen, he tries to turn it on, but it's out of battery. He walks out of the living room.

INT. SAFE

The safe opens, Howard's face peering directly at us. He chuck's the phone inside, closing it again.

INT. LOG CABIN - HALLWAY - DAY

Howard walks out of the pool table room, and is STARTLED to find Karen standing right outside the living room, looking straight at him.

HOWARD

Oh hon, you're up.

KAREN

Hahhwwwahd

(points at her pockets,
with an inquisitive look)

P-p-p-phone?

HOWARD

Phone? You? Oh, your phone? Hmm. Not sure where it went. They must've put it somewhere after they cleaned.

I'll look for it.

(looks behind Karen)

Ah, there you are, Nurse Romina.

Where were you?

Karen turns around, sees Amanda right behind her in the hallway, staring at her.

AMANDA

I was exploring the room next to the guest bedroom. Saw some exercise devices haphazardly lying on the floor.

HOWARD

That's our makeshift little gym. And since Karen is up and about, maybe a little gentle exercise would be great, like the doctor recommended?

AMANDA

What a great idea. Gently, of course.

On Amanda's smile we

CUT TO:

EXT. LOG CABIN - NIGHT

It is now night time, and it's stopped snowing.

INT. LOG CABIN - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

We see Howard closing the curtains of the large French windows. The fire is almost extinguished.

Amanda is taking an exhausted Karen's blood pressure and heart rate.

AMANDA

Your blood pressure and heart rate are a tad elevated. But nothing to be concerned about.

(pulls out the fake beta blockers from her pocket)

Here. Make sure you take your beta blockers. I always tell my patients these are like Popeye's spinach.

They cause the heart to beat more slowly and with less force. They lower the blood pressure.

Howard looks at Amanda, kinda impressed that she paid attention earlier.

HOWARD

Oh, my Karen is well aware, right love?

Karen takes the pills.

KAREN

P-p-p-ped. Bed.

HOWARD

Yes, honey. It's been a long day. Let's go to bed.

Howard helps Karen and they walk out of the living room.

INT. LOG CABIN - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Howard turns right and heads with Karen to their bedroom, while Amanda makes a left and goes to the guest bedroom, on the opposite end of the hallway.

AMANDA

Good night, Mrs. Lacey. Hope you sleep well.

KAREN

(looking back at Amanda)
N-n-night.

Amanda just stands there in the middle of the hallway. Creepily.

INT. LOG CABIN - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Howard and Karen are getting ready for bed. Howard, acting the part of the ever-loving husband, helps Karen change into her pajamas and get her into bed.

DISSOLVE:

INT. LOG CABIN - GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT

Amanda sits on the bed in her underwear, waiting. For the first time we see that her legs, torso and arms are covered in tattoos.

She gets up, walks to the closet and opens it. Inside are her ski mask and black clothes she was wearing the night before.

DISSOLVE:

INT. LOG CABIN - BEDROOM - NIGHT

It's the middle of the night, and Howard is fast asleep.

Next to him, Karen lies awake in bed, with a nervous look on her face.

A distant noise is heard, barely audible.

Grunting.

Becoming louder

GRUNTING.

KAREN
(shaking Howard)
HAHHWWWAHD.

HOWARD
(wakes up)
What, honey? What is it?

KAREN
Paa pae p-p-p-listeennn.

GRUNTING.

Karen stares wide-eyed in fear.

HOWARD
What? I don't hear anything? You
hear something? Maybe it's just
Nurse Romina.

(lying back down and
turning his back to Karen
as he hugs his pillow)
Go back to sleep.

But Karen can't.

She gets out of bed, and goes to the bathroom. As she does,
we HOLD CLOSE ON Howard's face, expectant.

CUT TO:

INT. LOG CABIN - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Karen is sitting on the toilet, peeing.

She hears a THUD and stops mid-stream. That sound definitely
came from inside the bathroom. She looks at the shower
curtain: there's a SILHOUETTE behind it.

Karen closes her eyes, hard. And opens them again:

The SILHOUETTE is still there.

She flushes the toilet, and slowly gets up.

She backs away towards the door, not wanting to turn her back
to the shower curtain.

Just as she's right in front of the shower, a LOUD GRUNT
JUMP-SCARES Karen. She FREEZES, her chest moving up and down.

A hand emerges from the edge of the shower curtain, and slowly starts pulling the curtain back...

Karen SHRIEKS and runs out, closing the bathroom door behind her.

INT. LOG CABIN - BEDROOM - NIGHT

She jumps into bed.

KAREN
(shaking Howard)
Hahhwwwaaahdddd.

HOWARD
What, honey?

She points with a trembling hand towards the bathroom door, which slowly opens, creaking, and the dark FIGURE emerges.

FIGURE
TREVOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOR.

Karen SCREAMS, turns around and presses her head against the pillow.

HOWARD
Honey, what? What are you seeing?
(turns Karen around)
Hon, open your eyes. There's no one here.

Karen slowly opens her eyes: the FIGURE is right behind Howard, silhouetted against the darkness of the bedroom.

She holds her chest tightly as she hyperventilates and the FIGURE approaches their bed.

HOWARD (cont'd)
Honey, I think you're suffering from trauma.

KAREN
T-T-T-T-T-Treevooor!!!
(closes her eyes, shakes her head.)
Pae paee p-p-p-p-p-n-n-n-not possible. N-n-n-not possible.

Karen starts to slowly calm herself. Breathing in, breathing out... breathing in, breathing out...

She slowly OPENS her eyes: the FIGURE is right in front of her and GRUNTS LOUDLY just as Karen collapses out of bed onto the floor and PASSES OUT.

Howard turns on the nightstand lamp, jumps out of bed, walks over around the bed, leans down and takes her pulse. Behind him, the FIGURE a.k.a. Amanda removes her ski mask.

AMANDA
(whispering)
Is she gone? Howard, is she gone?

HOWARD
(whispering)
SHHHH!! I'm checking, goddammit!
After last time I don't want to fuck
up again.
(beat)
You're kidding me.

AMANDA
(whispering)
What?

HOWARD
(whispering)
She has a pulse. I think she just
passed out. She just refuses to die.

Amanda grabs one of the pillows and kicks Howard out of the way.

AMANDA
Fuck this, get out of the way.

She drops to her knees and starts smothering Karen.

HOWARD
(whispering)
WHAT THE FUCK ARE YOU DOING?!

Howard hits her, they both struggle, but Amanda remains determined.

Howard goes to his nightstand and pulls out the gun, pointing it at Amanda.

HOWARD (cont'd)
Leave, we'll talk in the morning.

Amanda doesn't stop. Howard cocks the gun.

HOWARD (cont'd)
I said leave.

Amanda drops the pillow and leaves the bedroom, angry.

Howard puts the gun away, and gently shakes Karen, who slowly comes to.

HOWARD (cont'd)
Honey... hon. It was just a
nightmare. Just a nightmare.

Karen looks up at Howard. He helps her get back in bed.

Behind him, Amanda appears, now dressed in her pajamas.

AMANDA
(acting concerned)
Hey, what's going on? I heard
screams.

HOWARD
Oh, nothing, Karen had a nightmare.
She's fine. Let's just all go back
to sleep.
(turns to Amanda)
Hey, Nurse Romina, shouldn't we give
her a sedative?
(he motions to his
nightstand)
You know, to calm her down and help
her sleep?

AMANDA
Oh, uh yeah. 30mg of uh, Sedatol
would do it.

HOWARD
(rolls his eyes, "fucking
idiot")
Great, Sedatol. I have some Sedatol
right here.
(turns around and gets a
pill from the nightstand
drawer)
Here, take this. It'll help you
sleep. Right, nurse?

AMANDA
Only like a goddamn baby. Pardon my
French.

Karen grabs the pill and puts it in her mouth. She gulps.

She then turns her back to Howard, and behind his back, just
as he's turning off the nightstand lamp, spits out the pill

from under her tongue and tucks it between the mattress and the bed frame as we

CUT TO:

EXT. LOG CABIN - MORNING

The snow surrounding the cabin is starting to melt.

INT. LOG CABIN - BEDROOM - MORNING

Howard is finishing getting dressed. He looks at Karen, who is fast asleep.

He approaches her and takes her pulse, praying for a miracle. After a few seconds, he looks disappointed.

He leaves the bedroom, closing the door behind him.

Just as the door closes, Karen OPENS HER EYES; she was clearly pretending to be asleep.

She quickly springs into action: JUMPS out of bed, a determined look in her eyes.

She opens a few closets, rummages through suitcases until she finds Howard's laptop bag. She extracts the computer, flips it open, and goes into Howard's emails.

Scrolls.

Scrolls...

Scrolls.....

Nothing catches her eyes. She then searches for: Life Insurance.

She finds an email thread: Karen Lacey Life Insurance.

She scans the first email in the chain:

Please find attached Karen Lacey's life insurance policy.

This doesn't seem to surprise her. But the next email in the thread does:

Dear Mr. Lacey:

To answer your question: since you both were here last week signing the policy, no need for Karen to come in person to re-up it to \$4.5m. Please both sign the attached and resend.

Karen sits on the bed, alarmed. Karen then notices a Word Document on the Desktop called Book2.doc. She double clicks on it, and it opens to the following title page:

FEEL GREAT

A step by step guide on how to combat negativity and depression, overcome grief, and start living a great life!

by Dr. Howard Lacey

Karen scrolls down; there's only an introduction so far. She reads the first sentence:

After my wife's tragic and untimely passing from a heart attack, I really had to apply all the psychological principles I had preached over the years to overcome my own, overwhelming grief. And if I could do it, I assure you, my dear reader, you can too.

Karen SLAMS shut the laptop, pissed.

She changes from her pajamas into jeans and a tank top.

INT. LOG CABIN - HALLWAY - MORNING

Karen's head pops out: no one there.

She exits the bedroom, barefoot, and hurries towards the pool table room.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - MORNING

Howard and Amanda are sitting inside the parked car outside in the driveway.

AMANDA

Your plans aren't working. Why didn't you just let me fucking smother her?

HOWARD

No, no, no. Cutting off the oxygen supply will trigger tiny blood
(MORE)

HOWARD (cont'd)
vessels to rupture around the eyes.
And when a pillow is pushed into a
face, the mouth, skin and nose may
appear pale due to the pressure.
Plus, there'd be signs of struggle
on her: bruising to the hands and
arms, and -

AMANDA
I don't fucking care anymore,
Howard. I'm done with this charade
bullshit!

HOWARD
Patience! We still have all of today
to pull this off! Last night was
meant to be a teaser of coming
events, remember? The accumulation
of stress, the pills... it will make
it all easier today!

AMANDA
NO! We've tried it your way. Twice.
You're not as good at this as you
think you are! And she's starting to
suspect.
(looks at the house)
You sure she's asleep?

HOWARD
Yes, don't worry. I gave her a
strong sedative last night. She'll
be out until at least lunchtime.

CUT TO:

INT. LOG CABIN - POOL TABLE ROOM - MORNING

Karen walks cautiously into the room, closing the door behind
her. She goes straight to the safe.

She kneels down on the floor in front of it, punches in the
code, unlocks it, and looks at its contents:

Her iPhone is sitting on top of the piles of cash.

She starts crying, her body dropping to the floor.

She bites her hand to muffle her agonizing scream, and
then... composes herself, wipes away her tears as her grief
at her discovery changes to ANGER.

CLOSE ON KAREN: CLENCHED JAWS. EYES SQUINT. MOUTHS THE WORD **MOTHERFUCKER**.

She grabs her phone and tries to turn it on, but it has no battery.

She spots the Detective's business card, on top of the safe. She grabs it and leaves the room.

INT. LOG CABIN - HALLWAY - MORNING

Karen walks down the hallway.

KAREN
N-n-n-n-n-n-nurse!! R-R-R-Romina?!

She reaches the living room to her left, and looks inside: no one is there.

She keeps walking down the hallway.

KAREN (cont'd)
R-R-R-R-Romina!! H-h-h-help!

As she passes the kitchen to her right, she STOPS, backtracks a few steps and looks into the kitchen:

through the kitchen window, she sees Howard and Amanda in a heated conversation inside the car.

Karen, determined, walks quickly down the hallway, makes a left, and turns into the -

INT. LOG CABIN - GUEST BEDROOM - MORNING

She looks around Amanda's room: an iPhone charger connected to a socket catches her eyes.

She rushes to it, connecting her iPhone.

KAREN
Paeeee-p-p-p-come onnn.

CUT TO:

EXT. LOG CABIN - DRIVEWAY - MORNING

Howard and Amanda exit the car, and walk towards the cabin.

CUT TO:

INT. LOG CABIN - GUEST BEDROOM - MORNING

As the phone charges, she looks around, sees a half-opened closet. She walks up to it, opens it and finds: a black ski mask.

KAREN
J-J-J-J-Jesuuus.

CUT TO:

INT. LOG CABIN - FOYER - MORNING

Howard and Amanda walk into the cabin.

CUT TO:

INT. LOG CABIN - GUEST BEDROOM - MORNING

Karen goes back to the nightstand and grabs her phone, trying to turn it on, but still not enough juice.

Karen opens the drawer of the nightstand and finds: a wallet, and next to it, her beta blocker pills. The real ones. She shakes her head in disbelief as she pockets them.

She grabs the wallet, opens it and looks at the driver's license: next to the picture of Amanda, it lists the name AMANDA WORSLEY.

Karen looks terrified. Voices outside the room catch her attention.

CUT TO:

INT. LOG CABIN - HALLWAY - MORNING

Howard walks into the kitchen.

HOWARD
I'm gonna prepare breakfast.

AMANDA
I'll be in my room. Let me know when she wakes up.

Amanda walks towards the guest bedroom.

CUT TO:

INT. LOG CABIN - GUEST BEDROOM - MORNING

Karen hears approaching footsteps outside the bedroom. She quickly puts the wallet back in the drawer, and just then hears a notification sound from her phone: it's just turned on. She grabs it, and goes to the door but hears the footsteps approaching. Shit! She's trapped. She looks around, panicked. Only one way out: the window.

CUT TO:

INT. LOG CABIN - HALLWAY - MORNING

Amanda turns the corner and walks into the -

INT. LOG CABIN - GUEST BEDROOM - MORNING

She immediately STOPS, sensing something's off. She looks around, PANNING left to right and just before her eyesight reaches the window, it finishes gently closing.

CUT TO:

EXT. LOG CABIN - OUTSIDE GUEST BEDROOM - MORNING

Karen is hanging from the window ledge. She drops the iPhone and watches as it falls a considerable fall beneath her: about 8 feet.

But she has no choice...

She lets go, falls and -

WHAM!!!

She twists her right ankle as she hits the ground, grimaces in pain, trying not to make a sound...

INT. LOG CABIN - GUEST BEDROOM - MORNING

... but too late. Amanda has heard the impact of the fall. She rushes to the window, opens it and looks down:

Karen grabs the phone off the ground, and limps barefoot through the snow with great difficulty, going around the house towards the front, her trousers getting wet.

AMANDA
HOWARD!!!!

Amanda rushes out the bedroom.

CUT TO:

INT. LOG CABIN - KITCHEN - MORNING

Howard is frying an egg with the range hood on, not hearing shit.

Behind him, Amanda bursts into the kitchen.

AMANDA
HOWARD!

HOWARD
(jumps up, startled)
Jesus, what?

AMANDA
(pointing out the window)
It's Karen, she's running out the front!

HOWARD
What?!

Howard drops the frying pan, he looks out the window and sees Karen limping towards the entrance of the property.

HOWARD (cont'd)
Fuck! Grab the nurse kit. With the syringe!!

They both run out of the kitchen.

EXT. LOG CABIN - DRIVEWAY - MORNING

Karen is limping, breathing heavily, vapor coming out of her mouth from the cold. Her left hand clutching her chest. She has the phone in her trembling right hand, and dials MEGAN.

KAREN
C-C-C-COME ONNNN!!!

She's almost by the front gate of the property, and can see Megan and George's house across the street.

She looks back at the house:

Howard and Amanda come out of the front door, sprinting towards her.

KAREN (cont'd)
Oh f-f-f-fuuuck.

Karen's phone is still dialing. When finally -

MEGAN (V.O.)
(over iPhone)
Hi sweetie! Happy Thanksgiving!

KAREN
M-M-M-M-Megss! Megs! Hahhwwahd!!
M-m-m-m-m-m-muuurd -

Just then she is tackled to the ground from behind by Amanda.
Her phone goes flying and lands on the snow.

Amanda covers Karen's mouth with her hand, muffling her screams.

MEGAN (V.O.)
(over iPhone)
Karen? Are you okay?? Hello?

Howard grabs the phone off the snow.

HOWARD
Megs, heeyyy. Sorry, Karen is just
so excited.

MEGAN (V.O.)
(over iPhone) (concerned)
Oh my God, Howard is she okay?

HOWARD
Yes, yes, she just can't quite get
the words out, she's so excited.

MEGAN (V.O.)
(over iPhone)
*I couldn't make out what she was
saying? Something about m -*

HOWARD
(interrupting)
Meal. Thanksgiving meal. She'd love
to have you and George come over for
Thanksgiving dinner later. She's
been preparing dinner and wanted to
surprise you guys. But the
excitement got the better of her.

From the floor, Amanda shoots him a look that could kill.

MEGAN (V.O.)
(over iPhone)

*Oh my God! That is so sweet of her.
She didn't have to do that. We'd
love to come. You sure we won't
trouble you?*

HOWARD

No, no. No trouble. And otherwise
the provisions will go to waste.

MEGAN (V.O.)

(over iPhone)

*I haven't put the turkey in the oven
yet.*

HOWARD

Fantastic! Then save it for another
day. Swing by around 5pm. Oh and
hey, bring one of your delicious
apple pies.

MEGAN (V.O.)

(over iPhone)

*It's apple tart tatin, actually. Not
quite the same thing. Apple tart
tatin originated in France and it
differ -*

HOWARD

(hangs up)

Yeah, fucking whatever.

AMANDA

What the hell are you doing?!

HOWARD

What?

AMANDA

You're exposing me!

Howard takes the nurse kit from Amanda's hand. He extracts a syringe and fills it with a liquid, and injects it in Karen's arm. She slowly stops struggling and passes out.

HOWARD

What the fuck did you want me to do!
I had to think on my feet. They'd be
suspicious otherwise.

AMANDA

I don't like this. I don't fucking
like this one bit. What do we do
(MORE)

AMANDA (cont'd)
with her? We can't just lock her up
in the bedroom. They'll know
something's up!

HOWARD

Well, it's too late now! Relax, I've
given her a low dose of this
sedative, so she'll be kinda out of
it, but not too much that it raises
suspicions. We'll say she's been
agitated and had to sedate her.
Look, we can play this in our favor
if we're smart about it. We'll now
have witnesses to her worsening
state, don't you see?

AMANDA

I'm tired of this bullshit. After
they leave, we'll kill her. For
good. We'll tie her up so she can't
struggle and I'll smother her. Fuck
it! And if it ruptures some
motherfucking tiny eye vessel, well
that's just a chance you'll have to
take. Hope they don't look too
closely in an autopsy.

HOWARD

You're right. I mean, what autopsy?
After a third heart attack, it's
case closed.

(looks at the road outside
the property)

Look around: the snow is starting to
melt. The roads should clear this
afternoon. After we get rid of her,
I give you the money, I drive you
into town, and early morning you
show up to retrieve your brother's
body and your car. At the exact same
time you're doing that, I'll call an
ambulance so no one can suspect you
of anything. She died in her sleep
and I only found out when I woke up,
which was my original plan. Body
temperature only gives 'em a 3 to 8
hour window, you know.

(beat)

But you have to have dinner with us.
To help with *my* story, and confirm I
had a nurse with me.

AMANDA

What about George and Mags?

HOWARD

Don't worry. I know them well, I can bullshit them. They won't suspect shit. George's best friend for 20 years was a fucking child murderer, for Christ's sake. Just... play along. I'm sure you helped your brother with line readings at some point, right? And if they ever ask about you, I'll just say I fired you and was waiting on a new nurse to show up. By the time that happens? Shit, you'll be long gone and out of the country.

AMANDA

Can you even cook?

HOWARD

(offended)

Like a goddamn Michelin Star chef!
(looks around)
Take her inside before anyone sees her. Get her dressed up and ready while I prepare dinner. Okay? Can you do that?

Amanda drags Karen's unconscious body towards the cabin, swearing under her breath.

Behind them, Howard grins, like the motherfucking Grinch.

HOWARD (cont'd)

(under his breath)

Smart sibling, my ass.

CLOSE ON Howard's mischievous smile as "1812 Overture - Op. 49", by Tchaikovsky plays on the soundtrack and we

DISSOLVE:

MONTAGE:

[NOTE: FROM THE MOMENT THE OVERTURE STARTS, IT WILL PLAY OUT UNINTERRUPTED IN REAL TIME THROUGH THE END OF THE MOVIE]

TRT 16:09

Reference: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2BuSmUL4ory>

Play along as you read! It'll be fun :)]

-- Various shots of Howard preparing a Thanksgiving dinner: turkey, cranberry sauce, mashed potatoes, vegetables. He is drinking wine whilst cooking.

-- Howard meticulously sets the dinner table in the Living Room.

-- CLOSE ON knives being set with the plates.

-- Howard removes the sheet covering the couch. Some blood stains are still visible.

-- Amanda dresses up an unconscious Karen.

-- Amanda puts on her nurse uniform.

-- Howard enters through the French windows, with 2 logs on his left hand, and a huge fucking axe in his right hand. He lies down the axe against the side of the chimney, then proceeds to dumping the logs in and starts a fire.

-- Howard blows air into the fireplace through the blow poke.

-- We then see him sneakily doing something under the dining table, but we don't see what, exactly.

-- Howard stands in front of the dinner table, very proud of his work. It's a very beautiful scene, like out of some Cozy Christmas postcard image.

END MONTAGE

INT. LOG CABIN - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Pull back from the old-school record player.

What we've heard playing as soundtrack during the montage, is now coming out of the speakers as wonderfully scratchy source music.

Howard is sitting down at the table, drinking wine. Next to him is the nurse kit. He looks at his watch:

5:01pm.

And we REVEAL Karen, sitting opposite him, slowly waking up, groggy. She wobbles in her chair.

KAREN
Hahhwwwaahhhd. Pae-p-p-p-p-lease
stopppp.

HOWARD

Oh, good. The sedative is wearing off.

Amanda, in nurse garbs, walks into the living room, gun in her hand.

HOWARD (cont'd)

Help me open her mouth.

Amanda walks over behind Karen, placing her gun on the chair next to her. She then puts one hand on Karen's forehead, pulls back her head, and pries open her mouth with the other hand.

Karen GAGS.

Howard calmly stands up, opens the nurse kit, extracts a syringe and fills it with liquid from a vial.

AMANDA

What's that?

HOWARD

A local anesthetic. Her tongue will swell and her speech impediment will worsen.

Karen's eyes widen in panic.

Howard walks over, and injects her in the tongue as Karen does her best to struggle. She retches.

HOWARD (cont'd)

(satisfied)

Good.

Three loud knocks reverberate throughout the cabin.

Howard and Amanda freeze for a second.

HOWARD (cont'd)

Okay. You ready?

AMANDA

Wait.

Amanda pours herself a comically large glass of wine, to the brim. Looks like half a bottle. She downs it.

AMANDA (cont'd)

Ready.

HOWARD
Showtime.

Howard goes to open the door.

Amanda sits next to Karen, and presses her gun against Karen's leg, underneath the table.

AMANDA
As your sedative keeps wearing off,
don't try anything.

Karen tries to say something but is unable to. A tear falls down her cheek.

CUT TO:

INT. LOG CABIN - FOYER - EVENING

Howard opens the door. On the other side is Megan, holding a dish covered in aluminum foil and next to her, George.

MEGAN
Hi Howard! Happy Thanksgiving!

GEORGE
(shaking his hand)
Happy Thanksgiving.

HOWARD
Thank you, guys! Come in, please.

They both walk into the foyer as Howard closes the door behind them.

MEGAN
And how's Karen?

HOWARD
(lowering his voice)
You know guys, unfortunately she's not feeling great.

MEGAN
Oh no!

HOWARD
Yeah. Maybe the whole excitement, I don't know. But she had some form of paranoia last night. She was very agitated this morning, like you heard on the phone, Mags. The nurse
(MORE)

HOWARD (cont'd)
had to give her a sedative. Her
speech impediment has worsened.

GEORGE
Oh damn!

HOWARD
I've asked the nurse to be next to
her for dinner. I think it'd be
great if you don't act too
surprised, or make her feel too
self-conscious... to try and get her
spirits back up.

MEGAN
Of course. Whatever you
need. GEORGE
Yeah, Howard. You can count
on us.

Howard leads the way and walks into the -

INT. LOG CABIN - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

MEGAN
Oh my! This looks wonderful. Doesn't
this look wonderful, George?

GEORGE
It sure does.

Megan leaves her dish on the table, and gives Karen a hug.
Amanda sits on the gun so Megan doesn't see it.

MEGAN
Hi sweetie!

Karen SEES Mogs coming in-and-out of focus.

KAREN
(gibberish)
PffffMffGGG

MEGAN
And you must be nurse...?

AMANDA
Romina. Pleasure.

MEGAN
Likewise.

HOWARD
Sit down, guys sit down. Please.

They all take their seats:

Amanda is to Karen's right, Megan to her left, George at the end of the table, and Howard opposite Karen and Amanda.

Howard pours Megs and George wine.

Karen tries to speak, but can't.

Underneath the table, Amanda has her gun pressed against Karen's right leg.

MEGAN

Oh sweetie, Howard told us you're feeling a little worse. I'm sure it'll pass. We're just so happy to be here with both of you.

HOWARD

Please y'all, dig in.

Howard, George and Megan serve themselves.

GEORGE

Nurse Romina, aren't you gonna eat?

AMANDA

(serving Karen)

Oh no, I ate earlier. I'm just here helping Karen.

They all start eating.

MEGAN

Romina, what a Thanksgiving miracle that you were able to make it up here. I have great friends at Karen's insurance, but they just couldn't find someone quick enough.

HOWARD

Oh, well nurse Romina is local. Nurse Carson recommended her to me. She worked with her a few years ago.

MEGAN

Oh, is that so? How funny, I don't think I've ever seen you around?

GEORGE

Whereabouts in town do you live?

AMANDA

(uncomfortable)

Oh, I've been living abroad for awhile. Was just back visiting someone that lives close to the uh, hospital.

GEORGE

Ohh, I see.

A visibly upset Karen tries to blurt out a sentence...

KAREN

(gibberish)

P-p-p-p-p-aaee

Underneath the table, the gun is pressed tighter against her thigh.

MEGAN

(concerned)

Are you... sure she's okay?

AMANDA

Oh, yeah. Nothing to worry about. She's fine. Her health has just taken a little tumble on her way to recovery.

Amanda grabs a glass of water with a straw in it, and puts it in Karen's mouth.

AMANDA (cont'd)

Drink some water, Mrs. Lacey. Gotta keep hydrated.

GEORGE

Yes. Hydration is very important, Nurse Romina.

MEGAN

Romina. What a beautiful name... is it Italian? Spanish?

HOWARD

Yeah, Romina. Where exactly is that name from?

AMANDA

It is, Mrs. -

MEGAN

Griffin. But call me Megan. Please.

AMANDA

Megan. My father was British, my mother Argentinian. We moved around quite a bit when I was younger.

Howard picks up the mashed potatoes bowl and starts serving himself.

HOWARD

Well dang it, guess that explains your funny accent.

GEORGE

London is lovely. One of our favorite cities in the world. Me and Megs spent a few days in our honeymoon there. First time we traveled outside the U.S.

(to Howard)

This turkey is delicious, Howard.

HOWARD

It is, right? Normally it comes out dry as fuck, but today, it's just perfect. Let me serve you some more.

(to Amanda)

So, Romina, tell us a little bit more about your childhood.

Amanda shoots him a look.

AMANDA

My childhood, Mr. Lacey?

HOWARD

(giggling)

Such a psychologist question! But, all that moving around must've been hard on you, no? Studies have shown that moving children in-and-out of schools and towns, let alone countries, can have a very detrimental effect on their mental well-being.

AMANDA

Is that so, Mr. Lacey?

HOWARD

Oh yes, very much so. It can make children turn out... troubled later on.

GEORGE
Fascinating.

HOWARD
Romina, you mentioned you had a brother, right?

Amanda's face shows a clear "what the fuck are you doing?" expression.

HOWARD (cont'd)
(to George and Mags)
Nurse Romina had a brother who unfortunately passed away.

MEGAN
Oh that's awful. So sorry to hear that.

HOWARD
Yeah.
(to Amanda)
He was your twin, right?

AMANDA
He was.

Amanda is looking INCREASINGLY PISSED at Howard.

HOWARD
You know I specialize in twins?

AMANDA
I did know that.

Megs and George are looking back and forth between Howard and Amanda like they're following a ping-pong match.

HOWARD
I've always been fascinated by twins and that almost supernatural bond that exists between them. It must've been hard when that bond was severed so... tragically.

Karen looks at Megan, who COMES INTO FOCUS, and stays that way.

AMANDA
It sure was.

HOWARD
Did you guys know that 1 in 200 twins are born with cerebral palsy?

MEGAN
(feeling uncomfortable)
Oh I didn't know that. That's awful.

HOWARD
It is.
(to Amanda)
You can consider yourself lucky. How about your brother? Was he mentally challenged?

AMANDA
No. He was not.

HOWARD
So, since you speak Spanish, you must know then how you say soul mate in Spanish?

AMANDA
(through gritted teeth)
Soul mate? Sure. *Alma gemela*.

HOWARD
Alma gemela. Isn't that funny? Twin Soul.

Underneath the table, Karen moves her fingers, opening and closing her left hand. The sedative continues to wear off. She extracts a few of the real beta blockers she had stashed in her pocket, keeping them in her fist.

GEORGE
It's great that you specialize in twins, Howard. Your job, in general, is very important to society. And it comes with such risks. Look what you had to live through after trying to help someone... mentally unstable.

Howard seems to subtly gesture to George, nodding his head towards Amanda.

Amanda's paranoia reaches its peak. She can't take it anymore and STANDS UP, pushing her chair backwards against the wall.

AMANDA
(points the gun at Howard)
Enough! Enough of this fucking bullshit!! I know what you're doing!
You think I'm an idiot? You're setting me up!

HOWARD

(on the verge of tears)

Please, don't shoot, Amanda. Please!
I can't do this anymore.

Megan and George look at each other, bewildered.

With Amanda distracted by the unfolding scene, Karen pops a few of the real beta blockers.

HOWARD (cont'd)

I think it's time, Amanda. It's time to come clean. You've kidnapped me and my wife for revenge for what happened to your twin brother. It was an accident. Your brother was very sick. I tried to help him, but I failed him. For that I am so sorry.

We slowly PAN underneath the dining table and REVEAL Howard's revolver, taped underneath the table, and his hand grabbing it. That's what he was doing under the table earlier when he was preparing dinner, the sneaky little fuck.

HOWARD (cont'd)

But I can help you, too. Just give me a chance. I promise you I won't fail you like I did David.

AMANDA

You. Manipulative. Psychopath! I should have my fucking head examined for going along with your bullshit.

(to George and Mews)

He wanted me to help him murder his wife! Just like he did with my brother!

George looks at Howard.

HOWARD

She lies! Amanda, why do you lie? And what's your plan here? George and Mews have now seen you. You can't get away with this.

AMANDA

You know what, Howard? You're absolutely right.

Amanda turns the gun and shoots Mews in the head. Blood spurts all over the table.

The shot reverberates throughout the cabin as her lifeless body falls off her chair to the side.

KAREN
N-n-n-n-n-n-oooooo!

GEORGE
MEGS!!

Amanda turns the gun on George, Karen pushes her as she squeezes the trigger.

BANG!!

The deflected shot still hits George, in the gut. He collapses out of his chair onto the floor, clutching his stomach and screaming in agony.

GEORGE (cont'd)
AHHHHHHH!!!

Karen grabs one of the knives and stabs Amanda through the hand. Amanda YELLS OUT IN PAIN, angrily elbows Karen in the face, hard.

Karen collapses to the floor bleeding from the nose, knife still in her hand.

Howard pulls the revolver from under the table and shoots Amanda in the face.

BANG!!!

Her head violently jerks back and to the right.

Blood spatters on the white wall behind her.

Her body spins from the impact, her gun goes flying and lands a few feet away on the floor.

Amanda turns her head and looks straight at Howard, FUMING: her right cheek has exploded from her face, though it hasn't fully detached from her face and hangs by a thin piece of skin, exposing bloody nerves, tendons and all that good stuff.

Howard aims again, but Amanda LUNGES at him over the table, deflecting his SHOT. Howard's chair is tipped backwards and both fall violently to the floor. Howard drops the revolver in the process.

Like two wrestlers, they struggle with each other, go over the sofa and end up fighting *mano a mano* in front of the chimney.

It's an ugly fight: Amanda, on top of Howard, repeatedly slams his head against the floor. Howard presses his thumbs into her eyes, and then bites her ear, spitting out a chunk of it.

Amanda YELLS as she covers her ear with her left hand, blood oozing between her fingers. She stretches her right hand towards the chimney, grabs the blow poke hanging there, and starts whacking Howard with it, until he manages to grab the metal cylinder off her hands and kick her backwards.

Meanwhile, George, on the floor and bleeding out from his gut, looks at his dead wife. He HOWLS in agony. But then, determined, he starts crawling towards the revolver Howard dropped, leaving a trail of blood behind him.

Karen tries to stand up but trips over; her ankle swollen from the fall out the window.

Amanda then spots the axe leaning against the wall on the side of the chimney. She rushes there, grabs it, and swings it down on Howard, who manages to block it holding the blow poke horizontally. Amanda pulls hard on the axe, and the blow poke flies off his hands and is cast aside.

Amanda draws back the axe, ready to swing it down on a defenseless Howard. Time almost seems to stand still.

AMANDA
YOU FUUUUUCK!!!!

She is about to swing the axe down on him when -

BANG BANG BANG

She takes 3 violent shots to the chest and is thrown backwards to the chimney like a rag doll.

Howard looks back to where the shots came from and sees: George, lying on the ground, with the smoking revolver in his hands.

HOWARD
(standing up)
Oh thank God! She was David's twin
sister who came for revenge!! Had us
kidnapped here!

KAREN
L-l-l-l-lirrr!

GEORGE
(hesitant)
What the hell was she talking about?

Karen is increasingly agitated. George looks at her.

KAREN
D-d-d-d-d-n-n-n-n-n-n-tttt b-b-b-b-
b-l-i-v-e-v-e H-a-a-a-a-w-w-w-a-h-h-h-
h-d!!!

HOWARD
(slowly walking towards him)
She was disturbed, just like her
brother. Had a rap sheet longer than
a CVS receipt! Give me the gun,
George. Trust me.

GEORGE
What is she saying?
(to Karen)
Karen, what??!

KAREN
(points at Howard)
Hahhwwwaahd m-m-m-m-murdererrrrr!!

GEORGE
What?!

It finally dawns on George what is actually going on.

GEORGE (cont'd)
No, no, no, no, no. It's not
possible!!

George is heartbroken. He can't even muster the strength to raise the gun and point it up at Howard. He looks over to his right and sees his wife, lying dead on the floor. He looks at Karen, also lying on the floor.

Howard walks up to him, and grabs the gun from his hands.

GEORGE (cont'd)
Woman... woman... riddle...

HOWARD
(leans down)
What's that?

GEORGE
Woman... you're the woman... from
the riddle... you're a psychopath.

HOWARD

We don't like attaching labels to people in psychology, George. They are overly simplistic and wrong. You can't generalize someone's entire identity from a single characteristic. Human beings are more complex than that.

(he stands back up, points the gun down at George's head)

Having said that, first time I heard that riddle? I guessed it right away.

George looks up at him.

GEORGE

No, no, please, Howard, PLEASE!

Howard shoots George in the head, which explodes like a watermelon all over the wood floor.

For a moment, Howard looks genuinely sad.

HOWARD

I'm sorry, George. I've come too far to back away now.

Howard runs back over to Amanda's body. Pulls out her cell phone, and tries to unlock it, but it doesn't work as Amanda's face is covered in blood. He wipes the blood off her face with his shirt and tries again: it unlocks.

Howard goes into Amanda's email app, and cancels the scheduled email to the Detective.

Howard leans back and sighs with relief.

HOWARD (cont'd)

All loose ends tied...
(turns his head to Karen,
on the floor)
except one.

Karen sees Amanda's gun a few feet away. She crawls towards it.

HOWARD (cont'd)

You know hon, I didn't know how to kill you again, and then Amanda just fell on my lap. Wasn't she a godsend? It's perfect, right? David's twin came for revenge, and
(MORE)

HOWARD (cont'd)
killed you. And I had to kill her in
self-defense, just like I did with
her brother.
(points the gun at her)
How goddamn poetic.

KAREN
H-H-H-Hahhwwwaaahhd... w-w-w-why??

HOWARD
Why? I guess this is as good a time
as any to tell you... hon, we're
broke. I'm on the verge of filing
for bankruptcy. I know you'd insist
on selling the house, and I can't
have that. Is it really my fault
you're worth more dead than alive? I
don't think so. I can keep the
practice afloat with that money,
sell my share and then retire to
write.

Karen is close to the gun now. She stretches her hand and her fingers are touching the butt but she can't quite grab it.

HOWARD (cont'd)
A self-help book from a psychiatrist
widower whose wife was murdered
because of a patient he was trying
to help? Now that will sell. It will
be the bestseller my first book
could never be. And let's face it,
it's not like you'd live to be 90
with your heart condition, anyway.

Howard pulls the trigger.

CLICK.

Gun is empty.

HOWARD (cont'd)
FUCK.

Karen, still on the ground, finally manages to grab the gun. She turns around, pointing it at Howard.

Howard's eyes WIDEN IN PANIC. Karen shoots, hitting him in the left shoulder as he grimaces, and RUNS out of the living room as Karen aims, panning with him.

She shoots again, but narrowly misses and hits a bookshelf an inch from his head, wood splinters flying into the air.

INT. LOG CABIN - POOL TABLE ROOM - EVENING

Howard walks over to the bar in the corner of the room. He crouches and pulls out a double barreled shotgun that was hidden under the wood.

He loads the shells into it.

INT. LOG CABIN - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Howard walks into the living room, pointing his double barreled shotgun. He has a maniacal look.

Karen is gone.

Howard follows a trail of blood on the ground towards one of the French windows, which is open, snow blowing into the living room.

Howard walks out onto the back terrace.

EXT. LOG CABIN - BACK TERRACE - EVENING

Howard walks cautiously, pointing his double barreled shotgun, but looks confused: there are no footprints or blood on the snow.

Something moves behind him: it's Karen, still inside the house, who slowly emerges from behind the curtains that frame the French window. She set him up to think she'd ventured outside, but was hiding behind the curtains.

She raises her gun and aims at him as he hears something behind him and starts turning around when -

BANG!!!

He gets shot on the side.

Karen is about to shoot him again, hand trembling, but she clutches her chest, as if she's about to have a heart attack.

She keels over, the gun falling from her hands.

Howard points the shotgun at her. She drops to the ground to her left, falling in front of the chimney, to get out of the way as Howard BLASTS the shotgun, narrowly missing her.

INT. LOG CABIN - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Karen is crawling on the floor, with difficulty breathing.

Howard calmly walks back into the house like the fucking Terminator as he reloads the shotgun.

He towers over her.

Karen, face down on the ground, puts her right hand up her left sleeve.

Howard aims the shotgun down, straight at her head.

HOWARD

'Til death do us part, right honey?

He's about to shoot her like a dog when -

Karen turns around and JUMPS UP at him from the floor, stabbing him in the neck with the knife she used earlier, and had kept this whole time up her sleeve.

Howard collapses to the floor, SHOCKED FACE, knife sticking out of his neck.

It is now Karen who TOWERS over Howard.

He tries to reach for the shotgun but Karen kicks it away.

Howard turns around and, face down, crawls on all fours towards it, crying on the floor. Pathetic, animal-like.

Triumphant part of the end of the music cue, hitting a crescendo.

Karen limps behind him, she kneels down and removes the knife from his neck, blood SPURTING out of the wound. Howard turns around, looking up at her.

HOWARD (cont'd)

P-p-p-p-lease, honey.

KAREN

Pae-pae-p-p-p-p-bye bye,
motherfucker.

And she stabs Howard with the knife again. And again. And again. And again, each stab synced to the climactic fireworks of the music cue. We stay CLOSE ON KAREN'S ANGRY FACE during this moment, as blood flies up from his body all over her.

The music stops. The record player keeps spinning, making a scratching sound.

Karen collapses on the floor from the effort and possible heart attack, hand to her chest. She summons the strength to roll sideways and grab Amanda's phone. She pulls out the detective's business card from her pocket, and dials the number listed.

DETECTIVE THOMSON (V.O.)
(over phone)
Hello?

Karen tries to speak, but can't

KAREN
(mouthing, barely a whisper)
Help. Help. Help. Help.

DETECTIVE THOMSON (V.O.)
(over phone)
Hello? I can't hear you. I have this number saved as Amanda Worsley?
Amanda: is that you?

Karen summons the strength to be heard.

KAREN
(louder)
Hahhwwwaahhdd... murderererr...
home... cabinnn...

DETECTIVE THOMSON (V.O.)
(over phone)
Hahhwwad? Howard? Mr. Lacey? Mrs. Lacey! Is that you? Are you OK? Do you need help? Mrs. Lacey, I'm on my way, and I'm dispatching an ambulance! Hang tight!!

Karen hangs up the phone, but sees a notification: canceled scheduled email saved as draft.

She then goes to the email, opens the audio/video recording and after seeing what it is, scrolls through the photo library, attaches the full audio/video recording to a text message and sends it to Detective Thomson.

Karen drops the phone and rolls on her back, clutching her chest, trying to calm her breathing. She pulls out the beta blockers from her pocket and pops a couple more.

She then joins together her hands. For a second, it's not quite clear what she's doing. Is she praying? Is she meditating?

She then starts pulling her hands apart and we realize...
she's pulling her wedding ring from her ring finger.

She looks at it for a second, and then chuck's it into the
fire in the fireplace.

MONTAGE:

A vintage Thanksgiving song starts playing:

"I've Got Plenty To Be Thankful For", by Dinah Shore.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8XyrJv6dmu4>

-- Shots of the bloody, messy living room.

-- Karen is still lying on the floor when red and blue lights
flood the living room. She slowly turns her head towards
them.

-- As PARAMEDICS rush to her, Karen looks up from the floor
at the chimney:

-- We SLOWLY PUSH towards the decorations on the mantel shelf
above the fireplace. Among them is the same framed wedding
picture of Howard and Karen we opened with, covered in blood.

-- CLOSE ON the framed, bloody wedding picture as we

SMASH CUT TO BLACK

Song continues over credits.

THE END