

OUTCAST

"PILOT"

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6/29/14

FOX INTERNATIONAL CHANNELS

SKYBOUND ENTERTAINMENT

CIRCLE OF CONFUSION

TEASER

INT. AUSTIN FAMILY HOME - NIGHT

JOSHUA AUSTIN stands in his room, eight years-old, hair messed up, clothing mismatched. He's looking at us, TRANSFIXED, head cocked.

Though nearly inaudible, the low roar of a distant ARGUMENT provides sound track. Joshua's mother BETSY and teenage sister MOLLY are in the heat of a SCREAMING MATCH. Joshua ignores, as if he's grown accustomed to it.

He just continues WATCHING...

A ROACH climbing up his bedroom wall. He watches each little leg TWITCH forward carrying it up.

Joshua rubs his ARM. He's cold, but rubs as if feeling his skin, getting to know it, at times PINCHING, pulling gently at a surface that seems ALIEN to him.

The muffled yelling continues. We hear it, but can't make out the words.

He leans in CLOSE, looking at the roach.

Joshua cocks his head to the side as he studies its movement, as if seeing such a thing for the first time, as if he doesn't know WHAT IT IS. Slowly watching... watching... inches from the wall and leaning closer... closer, until...

BAM! BAM!

With the FURY of a judge SLAMMING his gavel, Joshua SLAMS his face against the wall, BASHING it swiftly and with as much FORCE as he can muster twice RAPIDLY. The second time keeping his head PRESSED against the wall as if trying to push THROUGH it.

BLOOD smears on the wall around his head. A gash on his forehead is revealed as he turns his head to look at what remains of the roach, never fully pulling his head away from the wall.

He slides his head across the wall, getting a better look, smearing more blood, still not lifting his head off the wall.

Just below his nose, the roach, half smashed, stuck to the wall, insides bulging outside of its little body, legs on one side, kicking FRANTICALLY... Joshua looks down his nose at it, almost cross eyed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A trickle of blood drips from his nose, merging with the stream coming down his face from the forehead wound.

Blood drips into his mouth and on his TONGUE as he LICKS THE ROACH OFF THE WALL, leaving a smear of roach guts and his own blood behind.

Its legs TWITCH and KICK between his lips before he starts CHEWING it.

After A BEAT, he finally SLIDES his head off the wall, leaving it a bloody mess.

He turns to exit his room, blood trailing down his face, to his shirt, still CHEWING as he goes.

The SCREAMING MATCH outside is louder, now audible, as he opens his bedroom door.

BETSY

(distant)

No, Molly. Absolutely not.

MOLLY

(distant)

His older brother, Aaron -- he's coming, too!

BETSY

(distant)

The same Aaron who was arrested for stealing his daddy's car not six damn months ago?

MOLLY

(distant)

That's not what happened.

Joshua walks down the NARROW hallway of his family's small three bedroom home, FAMILY PORTRAITS on the wall, clothes on the floor, it's not a well kept house.

BETSY

(distant)

He didn't mean to steal it? Molly, I raised you better than to be feeding me this bullshit right now.

MOLLY

(distant)

His dad's loaning him the car for this concert! Please?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MOLLY (CONT'D)

This is the only cool band playing
anywhere near Rome this year!
Nothing ever happens in this shit
town.

As he walks down the hall he comes closer to the fight. We
start to hear the argument more clearly.

BETSY

I'm not letting you drive six
counties over with a bunch of kids
I've never met. You're sixteen
years old.

MOLLY

Yeah! I'm sixteen! Older than you
were when you got pregnant with me!

BETSY

That doesn't make it okay for you
to run wild... If anything it's the
opposite.

He enters the living room, the epicenter of the fight.

BETSY AUSTIN, a young mother, barely 30, fashionable in 1996,
stands in front of MOLLY AUSTIN her 16 year-old daughter,
screaming and carrying on. Joshua passes unnoticed.

BETSY (CONT'D)

Molly Prairie Austin, can't you see
that I'm just trying to protect
you?

MOLLY

Protect me from what? It's a
concert. There's going to be six
of us there... what's gonna happen
happen?

Joshua SWALLOWS the roach as he walks through the room and
enters THE KITCHEN, which is connected to the living room by
a wide entryway.

BETSY

For the last time, the answer is
no.

MOLLY

Do you have any clue what this
means! What this could do to me!
All my friends are going!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Joshua opens the cupboard and pulls out a bag of POTATO CHIPS, opens it, and starts eating.

BLOOD drips into his mouth, being consumed along with the chips. Joshua wipes his mouth and then looks at his hand now stained with blood, noticing it for the first time, studying it.

BETSY

Let's not get overly dramatic, dear. You'll hang out with your friends some other time when you don't have to drive a hundred miles away from home.

MOLLY

I could have lied! Did you think about that? I could have just said I was going to Sarah's and you'd never know! Don't I get any credit for that?

Joshua licks the blood off his finger, then wipes his face again and continues licking. He eventually BITES his finger.

The PAIN startles him.

He jerks his finger from his mouth and looks down at it as it BLEEDS.

BETSY

Great job. I'm proud of you. You're still not going!

MOLLY

I hate you!

Molly DARTS out of the room.

Betsy turns, not really looking at Joshua, but talking in his direction. She speaks with a defeated tone, the fight has taken its toll on this mother of two.

BETSY

Joshua, please put the chips away, you've already had dinner.

Joshua stands, chewing, we're behind him, we hear SLURPING sounds, he's NOT eating chips.

Betsy walks into the kitchen, seeing a trail of blood drops on the floor, she becomes alarmed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

BETSY (CONT'D)
Joshua?! What happened?!

Joshua turns to reveal he's CHEWING THE FLESH FROM HIS FINGER, he's chewed the end of it, continuing where he bit. Skin is torn away, tissue strands stretch into his CLENCHED teeth as he GNAWS away as blood drips down his arm, falling to the kitchen floor beneath his feet.

TEARS stream down his face. He's feeling the pain but not reacting to it.

Joshua looks at his mother with a BLANK STARE, he doesn't understand her reaction.

OFF HER SCREAMS...

END OF TEASER

INT. BACK ROOM - LOCATION UNKNOWN - DAY

Three men play poker in a dark room. Curtains drawn, windows blocked. Sunlight fights to enter the smoke-filled room. They've been at this all night. The three are damp with sweat, sporting five o'clock shadows and surrounded by empty beer bottles. It's been a long night.

ANDERSON, a stocky, silver haired man, sweaty, button down shirt with one too many buttons open. He holds his cards tight, very invested in this hand. He has the most chips out of anyone at the table. He looks to his cards.

The thick mustached man's walkie talkie goes off. This is POLICE CHIEF GILES. He listens, something minor.

WALKIE

Attention all cars, we have a possible 503 in progress at main and park, anyone in the area, please respond.

CHIEF GILES

Boys'll get it.

He turns the walkie volume down. The men continue to look at their cards. Chief Giles glances Anderson's way.

CHIEF GILES (CONT'D)

Where are you at with the new playground equipment?

Anderson smiles.

ANDERSON

Don't try to distract me. It's going well. Thanks for coming to the potluck.

CHIEF GILES

(a pointed smirk)

A little of that makes a little of this okay, right? Isn't that how it works?

ANDERSON

Whatever your motives, there woulda been something missing without the chief's chili.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OGDEN

Yeah... heartburn.

OGDEN is the grizzly-sized but tentatively betting fire marshal. He's used to getting his ass handed to him at these games.

ANDERSON

Point is, we're almost to our fundraising goal. And you two fine public servants are about to put us over the top.

He pushes the rest of his chips to the center of the table. All in.

ANDERSON (CONT'D)

I'll make sure there's a little plaque with your names on the teeter-totter...

(grins)

...to honor this generous contribution.

Anderson glances at his cards again, then up at the ceiling. He's being theatrical.

ANDERSON (CONT'D)

Lord willing.

Chief Giles turns to the Ogden.

CHIEF GILES

Ogden, you get a read on that? Does it mean he's got a terrible hand and needs help or he's got a great hand and is bluffing?

Anderson has a great hand. He smiles serenely at them over the pile of chips on the table -- enough to wipe out both of his opponents. This could be a game ending hand.

Ogden doesn't want to risk it. He slings his cards down.

OGDEN

There's your answer. Fold.

Chief Giles is eyeing up Anderson, trying to get a read.

CHIEF GILES

I ain't so sure. Much as I hate to disappoint the kids, I think I'm gonna make you show me them cards.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

The two men stare at each other.

ANDERSON

All right then, call, raise...
whichever... quit wasting time and
give me my damn money.

Giles continues looking into Anderson's eyes for a sign.

All three men turn, startled, as a door opens and light cuts through the smoke and FLOODS the room. Anderson looks toward the silhouetted female figure standing in the bright doorway.

ANDERSON (CONT'D)

This better be life or death,
Natalie.

NATALIE

Isn't it always? It's Mrs. Austin.
Says it's urgent.

Giles throws his cards in.

CHIEF GILES

I'm out. Past time to call it a
night anyway. Wife's gonna be so
pissed... Shift started an hour
ago.

Anderson is annoyed.

ANDERSON

Aw, guys -- no. Come on.
(re: Natalie)
That can wait.

Both men stand, slow and labored, stretching after a long night at the table.

CHIEF GILES

I'm gonna hit your little boys room
on the way out.

Anderson stands abruptly. Natalie leaves the room.

ANDERSON

Fine. Don't forget to open a
window this time.
(then)
Shit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

The men gather up their things. Anderson walks toward the door and STOPS, he stands in the darkened doorway, buttoning his shirt. Tucking it in, fixing his hair... rubbing his stubbled face.

ANDERSON (CONT'D)
Shit. Shit. Shit.

He turns to open the door, pauses, and takes a deep breath.

INT. FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

THIS IS A CHURCH. He straightens his posture and his hair as he walks toward Betsy Austin, sitting in a pew nearby.

REVEREND ANDERSON
What can I do for you, Betsy?

BETSY
Oh, Reverend... it's Joshua. You have to help him.

REVEREND ANDERSON
What is it?

Betsy looks down, almost scared to say it, nearly in tears.

BETSY
It's just like you've been talking about on Sundays. Like the Conners boy and Mrs. Martindale and Hector at the mill.

Reverend Anderson's expression turns, the unconditional comfort in his eyes sharpening instantly into professional detachment. All business. He sits next to her.

REVEREND ANDERSON
You're sure? There's a lot of things a boy could be--

BETSY
I'm sure.

She grabs his arm, frightened, imploring --

BETSY (CONT'D)
The devil has him.

Anderson pats Betsy's arm, gives her a comforting smile, but there's something underneath it... concern, resolve.

INT. BARNES FAMILY HOME - DAY

KYLE BARNES' bare FOOT dangles over the edge of a mattress on the floor. He lies FACE DOWN, a COUCH PILLOW under his head. A single sheet barely covers him.

This is his childhood bedroom. A water damaged PEARL JAM poster, circa 1990, hangs over a white dresser with rainbow colored drawers. Books stacked no less than TWO FEET HIGH in many different stacks share the floor with TRASH of various kinds. It appears someone set off a HOARDER BOMB set to "READING MATERIAL."

A PATH through the room is marked by TORN PAGES crumpled and then flattened against the floor by months of foot traffic.

Kyle sleeps soundly. Blinds are over the windows but the sun FIGHTS its way through the cracks to tell us, "It's well past noon, Kyle is a lazy fuck."

As we push in on Kyle:

FLASH TO:

EXT. FARMERS MARKET - FLASHBACK - DAY

Another time. A cold autumn day, Kyle, roughly five years ago, holds hands with a BEAUTIFUL WOMAN, smiling, walking through a farmers market. The woman walks next to him, basket on her arm. This is ALLISON. They walk the aisles taking samples, trying things, smiling and laughing together. Allison gets a bit of salsa on her lip while trying a sample. Kyle gently brushes it aside with his thumb as she smiles, embarrassed, vulnerable... THEY KISS.

Kyle SMILES, dreaming of another time until...

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

FADE BACK:

INT. BARNES FAMILY HOME - DAY

SOMEONE is POUNDING at the front door to Kyle's house.

Kyle RAISES his head, eyes WIDE in response to the noise. We see his handsome-beneath-the-surface stubble-covered early '30s face. It's not the clean shaven, happy version we saw in his dream.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

The POUNDING at the door picks up again, growing LOUDER.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Kyle sits up, rubbing his head, trying to WAKE HIMSELF UP. In his tightie whiteys he appears almost CHILDLIKE as he RISES from the bed.

He STUMBLES out of his bedroom snagging a pair of old PAJAMA PANTS, from the door knob as if a daily ritual.

INT. BARNES HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Kyle HOBLES down the hallway, slipping on his pajama pants in another ritual; the morning walk-and-put-on-pants-dance.

As he does this he passes a DARKENED room, door left slightly ajar. It's KYLE'S MOTHER'S ROOM. Shades cover the windows, THICK and RED, just thin enough to cast the room in a DARK AND EERIE LIGHT. Kyle pays the room no attention as he passes, save for his ever-so-slightly QUICKENED PACE.

As he passes there's a slight MURMUR of sound, a creepy tone that flashes as he passes the room, just signifying the significance of the room and adding a creepy element to the whole house.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

The SOMEONE at the door has resumed KNOCKING again, LOUDER and FASTER, a product of extreme frustration.

INT. BARNES LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Kyle walks through the living room, his pace in NO WAY changes to respond to the visitor. It's as if he DOESN'T EVEN HEAR IT. The rest of his house matches his bedroom, it's an EMBARRASSMENT (and we don't even know him).

Kyle passes the front door and the SHADOW of someone BEATING on it as he crosses the living room.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Kyle steps over a few stacks of books, some CHEWED BY RATS. He doesn't even look down as he maneuvers the area.

INT. BARNES KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Kyle steps toward the pantry, not noticing the banging has STOPPED.

He pauses at the PANTRY DOOR, HESITATING.

Kyle opens the PANTRY, revealing it to be as BARE as expected and as GRIMY and NEGLECTED as the rest of the house. He seems almost SCARED to look in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The large, closet-sized pantry has SEVEN cereal boxes RANDOMLY PLACED on the shelves and NOTHING ELSE save for packages of batteries, light bulbs and roach motels... ALL EMPTY. Most of the cereal boxes are EMPTY and lie on their sides, tops open. THREE are upright and closed.

Kyle checks the first one, shaking it. EMPTY.

Kyle reaches for THE SECOND box of cereal.

He looks in the pantry with CONCERN and DISCOMFORT on his face as he peers into this dark pantry, haunted.

KYLE'S POV:

The PANTRY FLOOR where he sat as a child. BROWN STAINS where the OIL from his SKIN rubbed against the wall over time. CRUDE DRAWINGS on the wall, near the baseboards, where A YOUNGER KYLE would draw to pass the time while locked inside. Dried drops of blood, stained on the floor, a decade old at this point, looking like dark spots on the tile in a random and sparse pattern.

Kyle stands, holding his cereal, staring at the spot for another moment, made UNCOMFORTABLE by his memories.

He slides the pantry door shut, as he closes it we see the DISCOLORED AREA and SCREW HOLES where a latch for the PADLOCK used to be.

Kyle pours himself a BOWL OF CEREAL, then opens the refrigerator, empty save for a pitcher of water, a bottle of mustard and a half used uncut roll of bologna.

Kyle sits and eats his bowl of DRY CEREAL. Reaching down, he grabs an old newspaper off the floor, reading it in the darkened, sunlit room as he munches.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

The BEATING on the door resumes, but now it's on the BACK DOOR, toward the rear of the kitchen.

SOMEONE turns out to be MEGAN HOLT, Kyle's adoptive sister. She peers in the back door, seen through the OLD CURTAINS.

She sees Kyle, eating.

MEGAN

Kyle! You asshole! I can see you!
Let me in!

Kyle IGNORES her. He keeps eating.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MEGAN (CONT'D)

You know I'll stay here all goddamn day if I have to!

Kyle ERUPTS with startling RAGE -- SLAMMING the paper down, RATTLING HIS BOWL. BOLTING up from the table, he knocks his chair back and STORMS over to the door.

He JERKS IT OPEN abruptly, face to face with Megan, a pretty 28 year-old, well dressed, modern and smart. She's not the least bit startled. Kyle refuses to talk, just looks at her as he calms down, his breathing slows.

KYLE

Please go.

MEGAN

No way in hell that's going to happen.

Megan calmly, but playfully SLIPS PAST HIM. Kyle offers no resistance, revealing his fury to be largely an act.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Leave my poor brother all alone?
Not a chance.

KYLE

You can't be here.

Megan, ignoring him, TIPTOES around the trash on the floor. She looks around, DISGUSTED, uncomfortable to be there.

She opens the refrigerator and looks in, her expression sours as she sees the balogna.

MEGAN

It's worse than I thought.

She closes it, looking at Kyle.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

How long has it been since you ate a vegetable? Do you even remember solid poop? This isn't healthy, Kyle.

KYLE

Why are you here, Megan?

MEGAN

I'm checking in on you, shit head.
Because I care about you.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MEGAN (CONT'D)

You know people do that, right?
Care about other people?

KYLE

Things really that dull with your
real family?

MEGAN

Shut up. Don't do that.

She motions toward the refrigerator behind her.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

That Baloney is going to kill you.
It's just melted pig scrotums held
together by sodium. You know how
long someone lives on sodium and
pig scrotums?

KYLE

Do I look like I have any interest
in living?

Megan turns away from him.

MEGAN

I'm not even going there with you.

Megan pulls a CHAIR out from the table, looks at it and
decides NOT to sit down.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Why didn't you call me when you ran
out of food? Out of minutes or
something?

Kyle glances around, as if his phone might be in the kitchen.

KYLE

Lost that phone.

Megan leans against THE COUNTER as she talks.

MEGAN

You know how hard this is for me?
Telling the kids at school to work
hard, to make something of
themselves. All I can think about
is you. I don't want them to end
up like... this.

Kyle just shrugs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

KYLE

Gee thanks.

MEGAN

You're thirty-two years old. You're better than this. You used to be somebody. You can't live on your savings forever. Is this you punishing yourself? The world took a great big shit all over you... I think you've been punished enough. Take a fucking shower already... be somebody again.

Kyle is now even more uncomfortable.

KYLE

I appreciate the judgement, I really do... but can you just please go?

Megan REALIZES that she's LEANING ON THE COUNTER. She stands upright, wiping her backside furiously as she talks, looking down at her hands, expecting to see REAL LIVE COOTIES.

MEGAN

Right. We're running late anyway. I've got more errands to run after the grocery.

KYLE

You can stop making me your mission, Megan. I'm doing just fine. You don't owe me anything.

MEGAN

Bullshit you're fine. Look at this place.

(Looking around)

Maybe your little savings account will last forever. You still haven't had the electricity turned on?

KYLE

Don't need it.

MEGAN

(And more stern.

Serious.)

And bullshit I don't owe you anything. You know better.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

Kyle lets that hang for a moment, then ignores it.

KYLE
(defensive)
It's my home.

MEGAN
Please let me get you some food.
Let me get you out of here, at
least for an hour. Maybe you'll
luck out and the place will burn
down while we're gone.

KYLE
Then you'll leave me alone?

Megan NODS. She doesn't want to LIE verbally.

KYLE (CONT'D)
I'll meet you out front in five
minutes.

Megan leaves through the back door.

Kyle leaves the kitchen to go get dressed. As he EXITS, he glances back into the room. Through the doorway, he can see the kitchen table, and chairs, he focuses on them for a moment.

FLASH TO:

INT. BARNES FAMILY HOME - FLASHBACK - DAY

We suddenly see it AS IT WAS WHEN HE WAS A BOY.

The room is DARKENED, all the WINDOWS BLOCKED by shades and curtains pinned at the edges. It's CLEANER but SCARIER, cast in an UNNATURAL LIGHT by the sun filtered through the fabric of the curtains.

A low roar of sound runs throughout this scene, all treble, just a rumble, ever present, setting the tense mood for what Kyle is seeing.

Kyle, age 10 sits at the kitchen table, HEAD DOWN, looking at a plate of food, DEPRESSED, too scared to move.

SARAH BARNES steps into view through the darkened doorway, as if stepping out of the shadows. She's FILTHY, face in shadow, blocking Kyle's view of himself for a moment. She CIRCLES her son, walking around the table, never taking her eyes off him, like some kind of animal studying prey. She twitches, rubbing her skin.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

As she rounds the corner of the table to be standing behind her son, she leans down, looking at him, leaning in close... her BREATH moves young Kyle's HAIR ever so slightly.

He TREMBLES.

Without hesitations Sarah GRABS A FISTFUL OF KYLE'S HAIR lifting him an inch or so out of his chair as she JERKS HIM BACK AWAY FROM THE TABLE.

KYLE

No!

The chair SLAMS to the ground with a DISTORTED THUD, merging with the low TREBLE of this scene, mimicking the crackle of a broken speaker.

SARAH, not strong enough to LIFT Kyle with one arm, allows him to DROP with the chair, but a split second behind the chairs fall -- providing TWO instant RUMBLING impacts.

KYLE SCREAMS IN TERROR AND PAIN, ERUPTING IN TEARS.

KYLE (CONT'D)

Stop! Please!

The screams continue, also merging into a painful audio mix that CRACKLES and BARKS as if the scene is too painful for the audio to handle.

Sarah DRAGS Kyle by the hair, as he screams and KICKS his legs AGAINST THE FLOOR, with so much force that he's arching his back OFF the floor and then SLAMMING it against it as he's drug around the table toward the pantry.

Sarah's arm JERKS UNCONTROLLABLY as Kyle kicks and flops so violently it's almost as if he's having a seizure.

SARAH'S GRIP does NOT break as Kyle is pulled toward the pantry.

He screams as he's SLUNG into the pantry, he curls into a ball, making no attempt to escape. Sarah SLAMS THE PANTRY DOOR SHUT and PADLOCKS THE DOOR.

We hang a BEAT, a split second on the darkened kitchen, chair on the floor, plate of food in disarray on the table. Young Kyle's whimpers are heard from inside the pantry as Sarah slowly LUMBERS out of view, exiting the room.

FADE BACK:

INT. BARNES FAMILY HOME - DAY

To the same kitchen, table in the same place, chair upright, windows UNBLOCKED, light filling the room. But the MEMORY of what we've just seen HAUNTS this location now.

Kyle just stares back into the room for a beat... shaken by the memory.

He turns, walking back to his room to get ready.

INT. AUSTIN FAMILY HOME - DAY

Betsy opens the door for Reverend Anderson. He's holding TWO COFFEES in a carrying tray and a small briefcase.

Betsy is clearly still upset over the Joshua situation.

BETSY
Morning, Reverend.

REVEREND ANDERSON
It is a fine one. Any change?

BETSY
I'm afraid not.

He motions to her with the drink tray. She takes a coffee, cups it in her hands, doesn't drink.

BETSY (CONT'D)
Thank you.

REVEREND ANDERSON
I got donuts, too...
(brushes a crumb off his
shirt)
I'm afraid they didn't survive the
drive over.

She gives him a weak smile, appreciating his attempt to lighten the mood, but... Anderson nods, understanding.

He puts his briefcase down and SITS while placing his drink on a TABLE next to him, discarding the carrier.

BETSY
I'll throw that out.

REVEREND ANDERSON
No, we have a recycling bin at the
church. Part of our whole "Go
Green" campaign.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REVEREND ANDERSON (CONT'D)

(wry)

Saving the planet for our kids.

(then)

Molly at school?

BETSY

She damn sure better be -- er,
sorry Reverend.

Anderson gives her a disarming smile. He's the last man to bust her for swearing.

REVEREND ANDERSON

(down to business)

Is he awake?

BETSY

I brought him food this morning,
don't know if he ate it.

(A slight pause)

He scares me.

REVEREND ANDERSON

The lord would never abandon one of
his children.

Betsy can't help but give Anderson a distressed, skeptical look, but she forces herself to nod at him in affirmation.

Anderson leans down on her level, intimate, kind.

REVEREND ANDERSON (CONT'D)

And neither would I.

(then)

Now... let's see about your boy.

EXT. ROME WEST VIRGINIA - MAIN STREET - DAY

Kyle rides in Megan's car on the not-so-bustling small town street on their way to the grocery store.

MEGAN

The boy runs right into the back of this girl while she's kicking the ball. He's not trying to steal the ball, he's not trying to do anything, he just slams right into her, nearly knocking her over.

An older man crosses the street as Megan slows to a stop at the light. Kyle is not really paying attention to Megan

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Turns out the girl's fine, but the boy falls flat on his face and starts bawling like a baby in front of the other kids. I try to handle things but eventually I need to call the boy's mother. She's immediately asking me what this terrible girl did to her darling son. The boy is already off the hook, he couldn't have possibly done something wrong in his mother's eyes. This is the kind of shit I'm dealing with at that school.

The older man nods at Megan, greeting her, she smiles while continuing to talk to Kyle. The man then notices Kyle sitting next to her, his demeanor sours, then he continues walking.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

It's infuriating.

KYLE

Nice people here in town.

MEGAN

They don't know you. Only what they hear.

KYLE

People still talk about me?

MEGAN

Ignore them.

They continue down the street. We see a small DINER, an ANTIQUE STORE, a BARBER SHOP, an empty space that used to be a book store, a small HARDWARE STORE. It's a typical small town. People mill about in front of the shops. A woman carries a mirror out of the antique store. A man walks into the barber shop. A delivery is being unloaded at the Hardware shop. A ups truck wheels a stack of boxes into the front door on a dolly.

Megan turns into the Piggly Wiggly parking lot at the end of the stretch of main street shops.

She pulls up right in front of a couple girl scouts with a table set up, selling cookies.

INT. PIGGLY WIGGLY - DAY

Kyle and Megan are in the SMALL TOWN GROCERY STORE. The kind where the manager's office is in the small cubicle next to the check out aisles... And there are only two of those.

Kyle pushes a SHOPPING CART down the aisle, not looking at anything, NOT PARTICIPATING in any way... killing time. Megan darts from side to side, grabbing items and dropping them into the cart.

SHOPPERS in the store seem to NOTICE KYLE, either because he's so disheveled and filthy, or because HE'S KNOWN around town... and he's not often seen out.

It's eerie seeing all these random people glancing over at Kyle as they pass. Avoiding him.

Megan notices these things, but stubbornly IGNORES them.

MEGAN

Let me know how those pears are.
They really do need to get more
organic produce here. This
selection is pathetic. It's all
pesticides and genetically modified
cancer fruit.

As they enter the cereal aisle, a woman pulls her daughter close and then exits the aisle turning around when she sees Kyle.

Megan shoots her a dirty look as she takes a box of cereal off the shelf.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Organic shredded wheat. High in
fiber. Poops be solid.

Kyle doesn't respond. Megan looks over at him.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Are you even paying attention?

KYLE

You shouldn't have brought me here.

Megan rolls her eyes. She pauses, considering a response.

MEGAN

I don't know what I ever did to you
to make you hate me so much.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Kyle looks at her, surprised.

KYLE
Megan, I don't hate you.

MEGAN
Then why do you avoid me like the
plague?

Kyle can't answer that, but he's PAINED by the comment. He wants to answer her, but CAN'T.

KYLE
I'm sorry.

Megan sees that he's holding something back and PAUSES, considering digging deeper. She turns and continues shopping. Kyle FOLLOWS her.

LATER

An OLDER WOMAN sees Kyle and STARES as he passes.

They stop by a section with pre-paid cell phones. Megan picks one up.

MEGAN
If I get this, you'll call me next time you need something... And not the one person on earth you're not supposed to call?

Kyle looks at Megan with disappointment.

KYLE
Do your twelve year old students notice your condescending tone or is it just me?

MEGAN
Pretty much just you. I don't want you to get into trouble again. Is that so wrong?

Kyle just looks at the phone, clearly STRUGGLING.

KYLE
I won't call her.

Megan drops the phone into the cart.

Kyle appears ASHAMED to be relying on Megan like this, but he's really ashamed that he just LIED to her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

As Kyle and Megan round the corner of the next aisle they see two OLDER WOMEN, talking, they both LOOK AT KYLE, and stop as they see him.

Kyle NOTICES this. He stops. Megan continues.

MEGAN
Soup preference?

Kyle stares at the two women, recognizing them possibly, he isn't sure. They walk over to him while Megan, a few yards away, loads up on soup.

The two women, FLORENCE and REGINA, move toward Kyle, or rather, Florence APPROACHES, and Regina FOLLOWS, trying to stop Florence.

FLORENCE
No, he's here for a reason.
Reverend Anderson's sermon this
Sunday about that poor boy... and
then Kyle Barnes is here? That
must be a sign, I tell you.

REGINA
But... okay, fine. Fine.

FLORENCE
Kyle Barnes?

Kyle is TAKEN ABACK by the fact that they know his name, a little startled.

KYLE
Yeah?

FLORENCE
We went to church with your mother,
Kyle. Do remember me? Florence
Hall?

All three of them PAUSE A MOMENT at the mention of Kyle's mother. Regina sadly shakes her head in disappointment at the mention.

KYLE
Okay... it's, uh... been a long
time... good to see you.

FLORENCE
And you, dear. Haven't seen you in
church for a long time, you really
should attend a sermon.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

KYLE

Yeah... I'll try.

FLORENCE

We're asking everyone in Rome to pray for the Austin boy. You know his family?

KYLE

I don't.

FLORENCE

Betsy and Paul Austin, they bought the old Hicks farm. You must remember Betsy? She was quite the cheerleader back in your day.

Kyle shakes his head. No. Not his crowd.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)

So sad... such a sad story. Their son Joshua, a bright boy -- he's fallen prey to...

(Quieter, leaning in)

...dark forces.

She pauses, nodding to Kyle in a knowing way, as if he's part of a secret club.

For a moment she fakes being upset.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)

It's like what happened to your poor mother all over again.

REGINA

Such a shame... so terrible. Terrible. And so soon after the Connors family. Not to mention Hector Garza. That's like the fourth--

FLORENCE

Fifth.

REGINA

--since Easter. And that's just in our congregation. It's an epidemic, I tell you.

Kyle is unsettled by the implications of this.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

KYLE
Since Easter?

FLORENCE
(nods)
About then. Last four, five
months. Reverend Anderson has been
visiting little Joshua all week.
Can you keep him in your thoughts
and prayers?

Kyle is clearly uncomfortable, but tries to be accommodating.

KYLE
Sure. I can do that, yeah.

FLORENCE
You always were such a sweet boy.

REGINA
We should be going, Flo.

Florence is a bit flustered, turning to look at Regina.

FLORENCE
What? Oh yes... yes.

Then back to Kyle.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
I hope I'll be seeing you soon at
the service.

KYLE
I'll try.

Florence smiles, as if given a more definitive answer, not
reading the deflecting at all.

FLORENCE
Great... So great. Thank you.

The two women leave, slowly.

Kyle enters the soup aisle, to see Megan, looking at him,
then glancing past him at the retreating old women.

MEGAN
Are they kidding with that bull?
"Dark forces?" Please. Your
mother was sick and some people in
this backwards town are crazy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

Kyle doesn't respond, LOST IN THOUGHT. Megan is CONCERNED.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Kyle?

INT. AUSTIN FAMILY HOME - DAY

Betsy BOLTS FRANTICALLY up the staircase, loud swift thuds as she stomps up every step. She reaches the top and BREAKS INTO A SPRINT down the hall as we hear it --

REVEREND ANDERSON IS SCREAMING.

IN A FLASH as Betsy runs down the hall, we see MOLLY, sitting on her bed, holding her ears, crying, rocking back and forth, TERRIFIED of what's happening in her house.

A LOUD CRASHING SOUND comes from the end of the hallway. Betsy's pace QUICKENS.

She THROWS OPEN the door to Joshua's room to see him throwing a BOOK at Reverend Anderson -- who shields his face with one hand, HOLDING A CROSS in the other hand. She's opened the door to a war zone.

REVEREND ANDERSON

That's it! Come on! Come out and face me, coward!

Joshua's room is DARK, QUILTS hang over the windows, only the faintest beams of sunlight cut through. There's a lamp on, otherwise the room would be PITCH BLACK. Light shines through the curtains from the day outside, casting the room in a dark and eerie shade.

REVEREND ANDERSON (CONT'D)

In the name of Jesus, I command you to release this child!

Joshua doesn't respond to Anderson in any physical way. He sits slumped in the dark corner, a LOW GROWL emanates from him, like a wild animal ready to attack. The boy twitches and CONTORTS uncontrollably, almost as if having a seizure at times, but he jerks into different poses and FREEZES, as if trying to push his body into painful positions, feeling out its movement, testing it's limits... it's an unsettling sight to see the boy moving this way.

Anderson steps forward, placing the cross against Joshua's FOREHEAD. As he does so, Joshua RECOILS, GROWLS and swats at Anderson, uncomfortable with the contact, but Anderson keeps it pressed against him...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Pushing harder against Joshua, pinning him to the wall, using all his strength to hold the boy in place as he growls and THRASHES about like an animal.

Betsy is terrified, she's not seen things get this bad.

BETSY

Joshua!

Reverend Anderson holds the cross against Joshua's forehead, straining, pushing harder.

REVEREND ANDERSON

It's not your son! Go downstairs!

(turning to Joshua)

Look into my eyes and see the power

I hold over you! Power given to me
by --!

Joshua smiles at Anderson, but he DOESN'T look at him. He can't FOCUS his eyes. They look at the floor, then move to the wall next to him, he's FACING Anderson, smiling, but he can't move his eyes properly to look at him.

JOSHUA

(soft strained whisper)

No. Power.

Anderson removes the cross and presents a vial of holy water. He removes the lid and splashes it down on Joshua... Joshua WRITHES IN PAIN as the water hits him.

As he SCREAMS Joshua starts to LEVITATE OVER THE BED. He's hovering about *six inches* over it.

Betsy sees this and screams in fear.

REVEREND ANDERSON

You don't belong here. In the name
of Jesus I cast you out!

Joshua KICKS Reverend Anderson away from him, causing him to drop his vial of holy water. Joshua drops down onto the bed beneath him, no longer levitating.

Betsy finally enters the room, rushing to Joshua.

BETSY

My baby...

Anderson steps over and BLOCKS HER PATH as he retrieves a vial of holy water from the floor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

REVEREND ANDERSON
I'm trying to help your boy. You
need to leave.

BETSY
But you're hurting him!

Anderson SHAKES THE BOTTLE in Joshua's direction, sending
drops of water FLINGING toward him.

REVEREND ANDERSON
That's why you don't need to see
this.
(to Joshua)
Oil of the spirit and the holy
water of the cleansing of god...

The water hits Joshua, who recoils in pain, SCREAMING.

BETSY
Stop it!

She SHOVES Anderson aside, kneeling on the bed next to
Joshua, EMBRACING HIM. Anderson IMMEDIATELY MOVES to stop
her.

REVEREND ANDERSON
Betsy, get out!

Joshua looks at Betsy, she holds him in her arms, they're
face to face, but again, Joshua's eyes can't look at her,
it's as if he's blind.

BETSY
Joshua, please, honey...

Anderson moves toward her --

REVEREND ANDERSON
Get THE FUCK OUT!

Suddenly Joshua's eyes finally roll into place, locking on
Betsy. As this happens he LUNGES forward, SLAMMING HIS HEAD
INTO BETSY'S with the same ferocity as when he smashed the
roach on the wall. Blood starts to SPEW out of her as its
broken on impact, causing blood to SHOOT across the room.
Anderson GRABS HIM, prying him off his mother.

Betsy FALLS TO THE GROUND, holding her bloody face,
SCREAMING.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Anderson STRUGGLES to hold Joshua by the arms -- he screams at Anderson, face to face. It's a steady, constant scream at the top of Joshua's lungs.

REVEREND ANDERSON (CONT'D)

Heavenly father, please grant me
the strength to overcome this evil
I now face, allow me to drive this
demon out so that his body can be
filled with the holy ghost and set
back upon a path to your glory!

Anderson holds onto the boy, refusing to let go, as Betsy writhes in pain on the floor next to him.

INT. MEGAN'S CAR - DAY

Megan DRIVES, Kyle is sitting in the passenger seat. Kyle is leaning against the window, looking out. His body language shows his need to keep his distance.

They drive through a rural area, a tree lined road showcasing the beauty of West Virginia. Kyle turns to Megan.

KYLE

Thanks for this.

Megan is surprised.

MEGAN

The hell? Is that gratitude?

Kyle just ignores her.

KYLE

This kid those women were talking
about. You hear anything?

MEGAN

Oh, come on... you're not really
buying into that are you? That's
why we don't attend service
regularly anymore. Someone gets
sick for more than a few days and
good old Reverend Anderson starts
blaming it on demons. Sometimes I
swear he has the whole damn town
under his spell.

Kyle looks out the window, unresponsive. A little embarrassed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Don't go down that road again. I remember when you first moved in, before Mom and Dad adopted you... you thought demons were hiding in every shadow. Anderson really filled your head with some bullshit.

Megan glances over to see that Kyle is looking out the window as if he stopped paying attention as soon as she started talking. She rolls her eyes.

KYLE

I'm just worried about the boy.

Megan glances over, seeing Kyle is genuinely concerned.

MEGAN

Yeah well... not much you can do there.

Kyle sort of shrugs in response.

The two of them are SILENT as they drive on.

Kyle looks out the window as Megan MISSES A TURN. He turns to her.

KYLE

Hey -- are you lost?

MEGAN

If you're going to back seat drive, climb in the back fucking seat.

KYLE

Where are you taking me?

MEGAN

Come on. You haven't even seen the new house. It's been two years.

KYLE

Damn it, Megan. No. I know you don't want me around your daughter... and your husband hates me. Please.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MEGAN

A nice dinner will be good for you.
You can shower with actual hot
water, I'll give you some of Mark's
old clothes. Holly loves you.

Kyle looks out the window, ANNOYED at first, but then,
knowing there's not much he can do to avoid this dinner...
CONCERN.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

You don't hate us enough to jump
from a moving car. I'll take that
as a win.

Kyle looks out the window, considering it.

INT. MEGAN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

MARK, Megan's husband, is coming home from work. He's a tall
man, a local police officer, wearing the uniform, gun belt,
the whole bit.

He's happy to be home, looking cheery as he enters. Until he
sees Kyle, sitting on the couch.

MARK

Kyle?

KYLE

Megan brought me over against my
will, honest.

Kyle is sitting on a plush sofa in the living room. This
house is the POLAR OPPOSITE of Kyle's. He's RECENTLY
SHOWERED, wearing different clothes, Marks. They're just
slightly too big for him.

Mark glances at Kyle as he walks past, moving through the
room quickly.

MARK

She in the Kitchen?

KYLE

Yeah. Mark, look... I'm the only
person who wants me here less than
you do. You know how she is. If I
get up and leave, Megan's just
going to bring me back.

MARK

Don't worry about it, Kyle.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mark and Kyle share a look before he exits into the kitchen.

INT. MEGAN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Megan is PATTYING HAMBURGERS in the kitchen. Her daughter, 7 year old HOLLY, is using wooden forks to toss a salad, which is making a bit of a mess on the counter. She looks to Mark as he enters.

HOLLY

Uncle Kyle is here.

Mark leans down and scoops Holly up in his arms, holding her close to his face.

MARK

I know, doodlebug. I saw him with my own eyes. Can you go to your room? I need to talk to Mom.

Mark puts Holly down and walks toward Megan. Holly stays and watches Mark, wanting to be a part of the conversation.

Megan seems annoyed, with Mark, not Holly.

MEGAN

Now, Holly.

Holly is disappointed as she turns and goes through the door into the living room.

Mark watches her go, then looks at Megan.

MARK

Why, Megan? You know how I feel about this.

Megan is FULLY AWARE that Mark HATES Kyle. She's trying to avoid an argument.

MEGAN

It's just one goddamned dinner. Okay?

He points to a glass jar on the windowsill nearly overflowing with loose change. A piece of paper taped to it says "Mom's bad word jar/Holly's college fund."

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Oh, like you never kicked in a door and yelled, "On the floor, motherfuckers!"

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He gives her a look. No, he hasn't.

MARK

Do you really think he's stable?
You can't tell me you feel safe
around him. You think it's a good
idea to have him around our
daughter?

MEGAN

He's in there. She's in here.

MARK

Oh? He eating dinner in there
alone? That's going to be awkward.

Megan is starting to get angry. Mark can see it.

MARK (CONT'D)

I know what he did for you when you
were kids. We'll never be able to
thank him enough for that... but he
took a turn as he got older. Okay?
You can't ignore that. How can you
bring him here after what he did?

MEGAN

He made a mistake and he did a
horrible, unforgiveable thing...
And damn it, he's paid for that.
It's ruined his life and I'm going
to be here for him. I owe him at
least that. You think he's going
to attack Holly over the dinner
table? It's just dinner, just one
night. He's not going to hurt
anybody. Please, Mark. Please
let me do something nice for him.
He's got nothing.

Mark looks at her, considering.

INT. MEGAN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Holly stands in the living room, she's STOPPED ABRUPTLY, back
to the kitchen door, looking at Kyle sitting on the couch.

Kyle sees her, he's just as uncomfortable with this encounter
as Holly is. They stare at each other across the room, Kyle
seems almost childlike, innocent, A DEER IN HEADLIGHTS.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KYLE
(reluctant)
Hi.

They stare at each other. Kyle is transfixed on her. He SMILES ever so slightly, thinking of another time.

Holly stares at him, scared, frozen.

Kyle looks kind, gentle, trying to reassure the girl.

KYLE (CONT'D)
You know who I am, right? I'm your
mom's brother.

Holly just nods.

Kyle doesn't seem reassured by this, he's more unsettled that she KNOWS who he is and is STILL scared.

HOLLY
You hurt your little girl and now
you're not her daddy anymore.

Kyle is APPALLED BY THIS, the color drains from his face, he FIGHTS BACK TEARS.

KYLE
That's not...

HE LOSES THE FIGHT. Kyle is OVERCOME with emotion. Tears roll down his cheeks as he stands. He walks toward the front door, exiting the house, not in anger, IN DEFEAT, he's got to get away, he can't face those words, he's got to go back to hiding.

Emotionless, curious, Holly watches him leave.

INT. MEGAN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN

Holly enters the kitchen.

Mark and Megan are embracing, arms wrapped around each other, faces close.

MEGAN
I know you're just trying to
protect us... but you're off duty.
Take the night off okay.

Mark kisses Megan on the lips, then smiles, keeping his face close to hers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARK

Okay, fine... but just tonight.
Let's see how it goes.

The two of them turn to look at Holly.

MEGAN

What is it, honey?

HOLLY

Uncle Kyle left.

Megan concerned, DARTS past Holly, leaving the kitchen in a hurry.

EXT. MEGAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Megan exits her front door, walking briskly into the WARM SUMMER NIGHT. She's looking around her yard for Kyle.

MEGAN

Kyle?

She stops, looking down the yard at the country road beyond, seeing NOTHING in the moonlit night around her.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

(louder)

Kyle?

Mark walks out of the house. He steps out into the yard, standing next to Megan.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Why would he leave?

Mark smiles at her.

MARK

The important part is he's gone.

Megan punches him in the arm.

MEGAN

Asshole.

Mark puts his arm around her, hugging her affectionately.

MARK

I'm sure he's fine. Want me to
have one of the patrolmen pick him
up, drive him home?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Megan smiles kindly at Mark.

MEGAN

Let him walk. All he ever wants is
to be alone.

Megan looks out into the darkness, concerned.

INT. BARNES FAMILY HOME - DAY

Kyle Barnes wakes up in his hoarders den of a room. Light pouring in shows that it's once again, mid day and he's once again, pathetic.

The sound of a car driving off in the distance get's Kyle's attention. This is what woke him up.

He stumbles to the front door, opening it.

EXT. BARNES FAMILY HOME - PORCH - DAY

Kyle OPENS the front door, peeking out, noticing the piles of groceries, left by Megan on his porch. On the top of one of the bags is a hand written note that reads "**Fucking weirdo. - M**"

He walks onto the porch and begins sifting through the grocery bags until he finds... THE PREPAY PHONE.

Kyle carries the package, RIPPING IT OPEN as he walks down the porch steps. He discards the packaging on the ground.

EXT. BARNES FAMILY HOME - FRONT YARD - DAY

Kyle sits in his front yard, on a TIRE that's been cut and converted into a PLANTER. Nothing has grown in it in quite some time, it's basically a bowl of dry dirt. On the road in front of his house, a car drives by, Kyle watches as it passes, small town, out in the country, he might recognize the car. He doesn't.

He holds his brand new prepay cell phone in his hand.

Kyle just STARES at it, building up enough courage to make a call. He's almost DISGUSTED with himself as he starts dialing.

Phone to his ear. It RINGS until SOMEONE ANSWERS.

ALLISON

(from phone)

Hello?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Kyle just sits silently, frozen. Hearing this voice is AGONY. With every fiber of his being he wants to talk, but something is stopping him -- he can't.

He can hear the woman BREATHING lightly on the line. Not heavy, just normal breath. She's not SAYING ANYTHING, she's just sitting on the phone with him, NOT HANGING UP.

Kyle opens his mouth like he's about to say something, but STOPS. We can see him changing his mind, deciding to say SOMETHING ELSE, but keeping himself from saying that too.

Finally, he just stops, listens.

ALLISON (CONT'D)
 (from phone)
 Kyle? Is that you?

Kyle abruptly HANGS UP THE PHONE.

INT. ALLISON'S HOME - DAY

ALLISON stands at her kitchen window. She is the woman from the flashes of Kyle's Perfect Autumn Day. Through the window, in the back yard, we see a small girl, AMBER, about six years old, swinging.

Allison holds the phone, she's just hung up. She looks out at her daughter with concern.

She walks through the kitchen to her back door. She opens it, yelling to her daughter.

ALLISON
 Amber, honey -- come inside!

In the distance, Amber kicks her feet in the dirt to slow her swinging to a stop.

AMBER
 Aw, mom!

Allison looks around the yard, concerned, checking the area out.

Amber PASSES her, entering the house. Allison takes one final look before turning to enter, closing the door behind her.

EXT. BARNES FAMILY HOME - FRONT YARD - DAY

Kyle SITS in the yard, looking down at his phone. He hasn't MOVED since he hung up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He touches the phone, thumb HOVERING over the buttons. He's looking down at it, considering whether or not he's going to call Allison back. He's very taxed by this decision. We can see him overcome with guilt from calling in the first place.

Kyle suddenly SMASHES the phone down on the metal rim of the planter, cracking the case. He smashes down, again and again and again VIOLENTLY until the phone is so smashed he's basically slamming his HAND against the planter.

He stands up, THROWING the smashed phone into the field next to his house.

Kyle stands, angry, in the large yard of his rural home... completely alone. For a moment it seems he's the only thing in this world.

And then he starts walking, toward the NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE, across the field between their houses.

EXT. NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE - YARD - CONTINUOUS

Kyle walks toward his neighbor's house. In the distance behind him, we see his home.

He steps to the front door and KNOCKS.

MAURICE, Kyle's elderly neighbor, answers the door. Kyle smiles at him, the two have a friendly relationship.

KYLE

Offer still good to borrow your
car?

EXT. AUSTIN FAMILY HOUSE - YARD - DAY

Kyle exits Maurice's car and stands, looking around before walking toward the house. There are already THREE CARS parked here, not one of them less than eight years old. There are at least three dogs, roaming freely on the property. It's a rural lower-middle class home, the yard equal parts dirt and grass due to the animal traffic.

Kyle glances over at the dogs, they offer no threat as he approaches.

Kyle is nervous, CLEARLY UNCOMFORTABLE as he heads up the steps toward the front door.

He pauses to catch a breath and adjust his clothes to make himself presentable, THEN KNOCKS.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Betsy Austin answers. She's been CRYING, having a hard day. Her eyes are slightly blackened and her nose is bandaged up, the wound from her son's EARLIER ATTACK.

She looks at Kyle, perplexed.

BETSY

Yes?

Kyle is not used to human interaction. He's FLUSTERED, struggling to get the words out.

KYLE

I heard about your son and... I came to... um... Reverend Anderson...

Betsy looks at him suspiciously.

KYLE (CONT'D)

Is he here?

Betsy is put off by his demeanor.

BETSY

Hold on.

She closes the door on him.

Kyle stands, waiting a moment. Looking around, regretting that he came here, feeling stupid. PACING on the porch. He's about to leave until:

The door opens. Reverend ANDERSON appears from inside.

REVEREND ANDERSON

Kyle Barnes? This is a surprise.

Reverend Anderson looks at Kyle WARMLY, happy to see him.

Kyle seems EMBARRASSED.

KYLE

I know Reverend. It's uh... been a long time.

REVEREND ANDERSON

I didn't know you were in town.

KYLE

Back about five months.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANDERSON

Well. You've been keeping a low profile.

Reverend Anderson cuts right through it, REACHES OUT and SHAKES his hand.

REVEREND ANDERSON

I wish we were seeing each other under different circumstances, but I'm glad you're here.

Kyle just nods uncomfortably as he enters the house.

INT. AUSTIN FAMILY HOME - DAY

Kyle steps in, Reverend Anderson closes the door behind him.

Joshua's mother, Betsy is sitting on the couch, looking distraught.

Kyle nods to her submissively as he passes with Reverend Anderson.

Reverend Anderson turns to her, speaking to her with a tone of respectful concern.

REVEREND ANDERSON

Kyle is an old friend. He... may be able to help.

Betsy stands, walking to Kyle. She grabs Kyle's hand, PLEADING with him.

BETSY

Thank you for coming. Please, do whatever you can for my son.

Kyle is very uncomfortable. He can barely do more than NOD in response.

KYLE

I... okay.

REVEREND ANDERSON

This way.

Reverend Anderson leads Kyle to the stairs.

INT. AUSTIN FAMILY HOME - STAIRCASE - DAY

Kyle follows Reverend Anderson up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KYLE

I didn't come here to see the boy,
not to help, at least. I only came
because... I don't really know.

Anderson flashes a knowing look.

REVEREND ANDERSON

Sure you do.

KYLE

What you think I did... I assure
you, I didn't.

REVEREND ANDERSON

Okay. Then why come here?

KYLE

I remember being Joshua's age. I
don't know what I can do... but I
know I don't want to see another
family destroyed.

This hits deeply Anderson, he can relate. He nods in
support. He leads them up to the second floor of the house.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE JOSHUA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

They walk down the hall together. As they near the door to
Joshua's bedroom...

REVEREND ANDERSON

The doctors think he should be in
therapy, but we know what this is--

KYLE

We don't know anything.

Reverend Anderson stops and turns to look at Kyle.

REVEREND ANDERSON

Whatever you think happened to your
mother, it was you who stopped it.

KYLE

My mother was sick, I don't know
much else about it. I was just a
kid.

Anderson just looks at Kyle intently. Sympathetic... but not
buying a word of it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REVEREND ANDERSON

Uh-huh.

Kyle is silent, doesn't want to argue, but we can see he doesn't agree.

Reverend Anderson is DEADLY SERIOUS.

REVEREND ANDERSON (CONT'D)

These things are everywhere, all around us. You've been gone a long time. You have no idea how bad it's gotten.

(off Kyle's look)

You may not believe it but that doesn't make it any less true.

KYLE

Maybe let's stick to what we know before we start blaming boogey men again? My mother was sick, this boy is sick.

Anderson looks at Kyle as if to say "Oh, really. You'll see" as he reaches for the door knob and TURNS it.

INT. JOSHUA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Reverend Anderson leads the way into the room. Kyle FOLLOWS, reluctantly.

Kyle stands behind Anderson, looking around at the child's bed, the shelf of toys, all SEEMINGLY NORMAL. The room is very quiet and dark, LIKE A TOMB. Light comes into the room from the hallway.

Joshua sits in bed, upright on his knees, like a statue. Joshua is never still, he twitches and stretches, moving his arms and neck around, locking them in place, pushing his body to the limits of its movement, as if testing it out, seeing how far back he can bend and elbow, how far he can turn his head, he's getting used to this new vessel he inhabits. It's an unsettling sight to see this child moving in fits and starts as he sits on the bed.

A LOW GROWL, fills the room with ambient noise. Kyle is unnerved by what he's seeing.

REVEREND ANDERSON

He's exhibiting very animalistic behavior, which is common.

Kyle steps out from behind Anderson.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Joshua suddenly jerks his head toward Kyle, it's cocked to the side, not upright, still stretching that neck as he locks eyes with him.

Without turning away from Kyle, focusing on him intensely, Joshua stands upright on the bed, he does so in some kind of strange ballet of sliding his feet under him and twisting upright, like some kind of odd Cirque Du Soleil routine.

Once standing, Joshua walks to the end of the bed STEPPING OFF onto the floor, and strides slowly in a STRAIGHT LINE to Kyle. His feet twist inward and out and he steps on the sides of them, as if his ankles were broken and he doesn't notice.

Anderson watches this NEW BEHAVIOR and is taken aback, but he can't help but watch, see where this goes.

Joshua reaches Kyle and stops, looking up at him. Kyle can't help but be unnerved by this odd behavior in this EERIE DARKENED room. He looks down at the small eight year old boy in front of him.

In a gravelly, growling whisper, Joshua speaks.

JOSHUA

I know you.

Kyle is silent for a beat, looking down, eyes locked with Joshua. Joshua looks almost PROUD of himself as he tilts and moves his head like a bird, never breaking the stare down with Kyle.

KYLE

You think so?

Joshua nods to Kyle, and smiles and big sinister grin. He's HAPPY TO SEE HIM.

Kyle was buying into this. He decides to fight that feeling. We can see this struggle in his body language.

KYLE (CONT'D)

When's the last time you were in school, Joshua? Pretty cool, skipping school like this, right?

Joshua appears to CHANGE. His TWO HALVES are not merged, they are melding and mixing but NOT SOLID YET. The HUMAN side of him is coming to the forefront here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

This manifests itself visually as Joshua's head moves upright, he begins to appear nervous to talk to a stranger, suddenly a little introverted... but his body remains in an odd position... he's not completely regained control of himself.

JOSHUA

I like school... miss my friends.

Kyle speaks to him like he's talking to a kid who threw a baseball through his window.

KYLE

I'm sure they miss you, too. Just stop all this and things can get back to normal. You're scaring your mother and you're wasting this man's time. Stop pretending.

Joshua looks toward THE DOOR where Reverend Anderson stands, he hasn't fully entered the room yet, he's holding the door. Light from the hallway pours into the room.

Joshua winces in pain as he looks over, changing subtly, back to the way he was before.

Reverend Anderson notices this and steps in, CLOSING THE DOOR behind him. He moves to the side of the room, there's a small BOWL with a roll of SAGE sitting in it, the end burnt, he's used this before. He begins to light it.

REVEREND ANDERSON

He hasn't been speaking like this.
This is new.

Kyle is not convinced. He ignores Anderson, turning back to Joshua, whose head has resumed its bird-like movement.

JOSHUA

All grown up. Would barely fit in that pantry now.

Kyle realizes that Joshua is talking about his mother. Anderson too. There's a tension building in the room. Neither man knows what could happen next.

Anderson steps toward Joshua and Kyle, holding the Sage, smoke filling the air near him.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)

(whisper)

We all know what we know.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

As Joshua speaks, Kyle leans down to hear.

ANDERSON

Keep your distance. This sage
should calm him... give it a minute
to fill the room.

Kyle ignores Anderson. Joshua takes the final steps up to Kyle, getting closer and closer to him until he's standing inches away, looking up at him. As this happens, Kyle appears frozen, in a trance, mesmerized by Joshua... the room itself seems affected by these two interacting. Smaller items in the room, TOYS the PILLOWS on Joshua's bed, BOOKS previously thrown by Joshua are beginning to HOVER an inch at first, and then as Joshua draws nearer to Kyle even higher, to almost a foot off the surfaces they were on.

Anderson watches this in amazement.

JOSHUA

So long we have tried to find you,
Outcast. Too long have you hidden
your light from us. Dull, making
us search through the darkness.

Anderson steps forward, holding the sage in front of him directing the smoke forward.

ANDERSON

Let's try this again. Heed my
warning in the name of the father,
the son and the holy ghost --

Joshua SNAPS his head toward Anderson, instantly focusing on him, interrupting him with a low, commanding GROWL of a word that pushes the sage smoke back away from his face with force.

JOSHUA

Quiet.

He then turns to Kyle, still frozen, and LEAPS up at him. Jumping from the floor up to Kyle's chest. Like a monkey he wraps his leg around Kyle's torso, under his arms, and GRABS the sides of his head with his hand. As the two make IMPACT the items floating in the room SLAM down onto the surfaces they were over.

The weight of Joshua has Kyle off balance, he falls down on his back, hitting the back of his head on a bed post on the way down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Joshua, on top of Kyle, leans forward and begins drawing breath from Kyle's mouth into his, Kyle seems unable to resist him.

A faint, unsettling WHEEZING sound comes from Joshua as he inhales Kyle's breath.

FLASH TO:

INT. BARNES FAMILY HOME - FLASHBACK - DAY

Kyle as a child, his mother, leans over him, hand to his jaw, holding his mouth open, drawing his breath from him the same way Joshua draws his breath now.

A single TEAR rolls down young Kyle's face, he is POWERLESS. A quick flash, just long enough to see the tear moving down his cheek before we:

FLASH TO:

INT. JOSHUA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Adult Kyle has the same tear forming, beginning to stream down his cheek.

Anderson bends down, wrapping his arms around Joshua from behind. It takes ALL his might to separate the two of them. He eventually falls BACKWARDS against the wall, pulling Joshua on top of him, but dropping the burning sage in the process.

Kyle writhes on the floor, unable to stand, weakened by the encounter.

Joshua breaks free of Anderson's grip, jumping away from him and climbing on top of his bed.

ANDERSON

What were you doing to him? Reveal yourself! I command you in the name of Jesus!

Joshua crawls onto his knees and GROWLS up at Anderson, twisting his head back to look at Anderson as he crawls on the bed like a cat. He's reverted to his animal behavior from before Kyle arrived.

Anderson stands, and stomps out the sage, putting out the fire, all while looking cautiously toward Joshua.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Anderson turns to notice that Kyle has dropped down on one knee as he's tried to stand up, he's exhausted, GASPING having trouble catching his breath.

Anderson kneels to help Kyle up.

KYLE
(struggling)
Thank you.

Anderson stands next to Kyle, then looks at Joshua, who has crawled back into a dark shadowed against the wall, on the bed.

Anderson has a look of bewilderment on his face, he's at a complete loss.

He glances over at Kyle, looking for some kind of answers or explanation as to what just happened.

Kyle looks terrified and confused. He shakes his head at Anderson. Not the response he was after.

REVEREND ANDERSON
I need a cigarette.

Kyle watches Anderson start to leave, opening the door. Then he turns to follow, unnerved, almost scared.

He turns to look at Joshua, watching him as he cautiously exits the room. Joshua has reverted to the animal we saw before, the connection between him and Kyle now broken.

EXT. AUSTIN FAMILY HOME - YARD - DUSK

Reverend Anderson watches the dogs chasing themselves around the yard, he leans against his 2001 HONDA ACCORD, reaches into his pocket for his cigarettes. Kyle stands next to him, both are a little rattled from what's just happened, this is a foxhole conversation.

Anderson pauses for a minute, and then offers him a cigarette.

KYLE
No thanks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REVEREND ANDERSON

Good for you. I figure if the good lord decides to take me early, it'll either be because of the cigarettes or because he likes me so damn much. I'd rather not know which.

Kyle smiles at him. Anderson is very deftly breaking the tension.

KYLE

I know it's been a while, but I think it'll probably be the cigarettes.

Anderson NODS.

REVEREND ANDERSON

Fair enough. But I'd wager I've changed a great deal since the last time we were together.

A silent beat while Anderson lights up, he takes a long drag off his cigarette and then looks over to Kyle.

REVEREND ANDERSON (CONT'D)

You okay?

KYLE

(not really)

He ever try to do that to you?

Anderson just shakes his head.

KYLE (CONT'D)

What he was saying... any of that make sense to you?

(troubled)

About him... knowing me?

REVEREND ANDERSON

Demons are often tricksters trying to fool you into being more scared of them than you need be. With the power of God on our side, we've got nothing to fear.

Kyle scoffs at the mention of God.

KYLE

"Power of god?"

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Anderson looks at him, disappointed in him.

REVEREND ANDERSON

We're created to believe. A child will spend ten minutes explaining to you what the hell their illegible scribbles are and then believe you when you tell them how good a drawing it is. God made us to believe... it's a weakness.

KYLE

So... all this. Your belief. That means you're weak?

REVEREND ANDERSON

(smiles)

My weaknesses are legion. But on this? You and I don't have to believe. We've seen. After all you've been through, if you doubt His power... they've already won this war.

Kyle scoffs even HARDER at "war."

REVEREND ANDERSON (CONT'D)

You think your mother and Joshua are the only ones? There's a house like this one, like yours, in every town in every county in every state in every country of this whole wide world.

Kyle smiles dismissively at Anderson's heavy drama. Anderson shrugs.

REVEREND ANDERSON (CONT'D)

I know, I know... So dramatic. I didn't used to lay it on so thick.

KYLE

I remember. My mother didn't like you.

(off his look)

Before. When I was in Sunday school. She didn't think you scared us enough.

REVEREND ANDERSON

Wasn't my style back then. I saw the church as a way to do good works... but not always His work.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

REVEREND ANDERSON (CONT'D)

(wry smile)

I felt man made his own heaven and hell on Earth. Pretty radical thinking around here. My flock was ready to show me the door. Bring in someone with a touch more fire and brimstone.

He stops. Takes a drag of the cigarette, the tip flaring red.

REVEREND ANDERSON (CONT'D)

What happened with you changed everything. The Devil wasn't just a fairy story anymore, a mythological construct...

(pointed)

A "boogey man" to keep you kids from stealing and smoking and playing with yourselves. He was real. And he was here.

KYLE

Your flock must of loved you after that.

Anderson gives a short bark of a laugh, drops his cigarette and roughly grinds it out.

REVEREND ANDERSON

They finally got the preacher they were paying for, that's for damn sure.

Kyle looks up at the Austin house... the windows to Joshua's room shrouded. A dark tomb he knows too well.

INT. SHADY LAWN NURSING HOME - NIGHT

Kyle walks in, there's a woman at a HELP DESK. Kyle passes her, clearly knowing where to go. The woman doesn't even look up at Kyle.

WOMAN

Visiting hours are almost over.

The foyer is empty, silent. Kyle's footsteps echo through the room lit with old greenish fluorescent light.

KYLE

I won't be long.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Kyle turns a corner and walks down the hall toward the area where the rooms are.

Old forgotten relatives SLUMP in chairs in the hallway... some sleeping, heads slumped over. Others just BLANKLY stare out into the distance. A few SHUFFLE ABOUT slowly, without purpose, just killing time. It's both sad and extremely creepy and unsettling at the same time.

Kyle eventually comes to the outside of his mother's room and STOPS.

INT. SARAH'S ROOM - DAY

Kyle stands in the doorway, NOT ENTERING. He looks in at his mother, Sarah, from the flashback, older now, cleaner, hair back, off her face, not looking scary, just looking feeble, weak and old.

Sarah is sitting in bed, almost upright, with pillows behind her, eyes open, staring at the wall. She's CATATONIC... she's been that way for a long time.

Kyle WATCHES her from the door.

Sarah continues to stare at the wall, NO RESPONSE.

Kyle looks down at the floor, as if checking it for obstacles to see if he can BLAME THEM for him not being able to ENTER.

He hesitates, STANDING FROZEN in the doorway.

A NURSE walks by behind him, glancing over as she passes.

NURSE

Visiting hours are ending, honey.

Kyle looks down the hall, watching the nurse as she walks away.

KYLE

Yeah, I -- was just leaving.

Kyle turns back into the room, seeing his mother, STILL FROZEN, catatonic, before turning to walk away, leaving her alone in the room once more.

EXT. SMALL TOWN ROAD - NIGHT

A lone car drives down the street in front of a small church on the corner. Sign out front reads "LIGHT OF GOD BAPTIST CHURCH" it's an old church, clearly been there a long time.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Solid wood siding, old shutters on the windows, nice, sturdy, but clearly been around a while. It's on the small size, barely over a thousand square feet in total. There's a small parking lot next to it, enough for twelve cars or so.

As the car exits the frame, a SECOND car follows, Reverend Anderson's. We FOLLOW it as it turns the corner by the church and pulls into the gravel driveway of a small house, located directly behind the church. It's far more run down than the church, desperately in need of a paint job.

As the car pulls in, we see a tall man standing on the porch with a hammer. This is Caleb, a thin man in his 50s, he's dressed like a handy man in overalls and a white t-shirt, tool belt around his waist.

Anderson exits the car.

ANDERSON

Caleb? What can I do for you?

As Anderson approaches, Caleb walks back toward Anderson's front door.

CALEB

For me? Nothing. I was fixing your screen. Came off the hinges again, I'd noticed.

As Anderson steps on his porch, Caleb opens the rickety old screen door, showing it's smooth motion on the hinges, but the door clearly needs to be replaced.

CALEB (CONT'D)

This'll do you for a while. But we should get you a new one when we paint.

ANDERSON

Paint? I think we can hold off for another year. Money'd be better spent elsewhere.

CALEB

We could raise the money. Folks would give a little extra if they knew it was for you.

ANDERSON

Money better spent on Ethel's treatments or a ramp for Gary's porch.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANDERSON (CONT'D)

There's a lot of good to be done...
Much more important than a pretty
house.

Caleb shrugs his shoulders and motions for Anderson to follow.

CALEB

Let me show you.

Caleb leads Anderson around his house toward the back of it.

As they walk, Anderson sees three boys, ages 14 to 12, two standing with their bikes, one on a skateboard, across the street, watching them.

He looks at them with disappointment.

ANDERSON

Not again.

CALEB

'fraid so.

The two men round the corner to the back of the house to see a LARGE frowny face cartoon demon head, with big horns spray painted on the wall. Clearly a quick child's drawing spray painted on the house, still dripping. We notice it's painted on an area with fresh paint, as if the area has been painted over before, recently.

ANDERSON

Damn.

CALEB

Might be good to put up a fence.

Anderson glances over at the boys.

ANDERSON

They'd just climb it. You know
what... let's leave it.

CALEB

You sure?

Anderson starts to walk back toward the front of his house. Caleb follows.

ANDERSON

Yeah. Let them have their fun.
Let's turn the other cheek.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

As the two men walk back toward the front, we see one of the boys across the street raise his hands to either side of his head, index fingers raised into devil horns. He laughs, the others laugh with him.

INT. BARNES FAMILY HOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Kyle sits in a chair, pulled away from his table. He sits staring into the OPEN PANTRY in front of him. He's still stunned after his encounter with Joshua. He sits TRANSFIXED on his FORMER PRISON.

Kyle stares into the dark closet as we

FLASH TO:

INT. BARNES KITCHEN - FLASHBACK - DAY

The kitchen is suddenly DARKER, all windows blocked. We only see a brief glimpse of it before Kyle's mother SARAH BARNES, age 32, DRAGS him, age 10 into view.

Sarah is wearing a DIRTY NIGHT GOWN, something she's been wearing for WEEKS. Her hair is thick, black and stringy, oily, HIDING HER FACE, her hands and arms are dirty. This is a person not taking care of herself.

She PULLS Kyle by the HAIR, as he SCREAMS and CRIES, toward the pantry.

KYLE

No -- please, stop! Mom! Please!

Sarah stops, still holding onto Kyle's hair, and PUNCHES Kyle in the face TWICE, RAPIDLY.

SARAH

Quiet!

Kyle whimpers in pain, holding his bloody face, as she THROWS him into the pantry, as she pulls back to leave the pantry, Kyle LUNGES at her.

He grabs her arm, like a kid not wanting his mom to leave him on the first day of school. He tugs as HARD AS HE CAN as Sarah tries to JERK HER ARM AWAY.

As they struggle, Kyle's face rubs against Sarah's arm, smearing his blood on her. She WINCES in pain, but this COULD just be from the struggle.

The sound distortion, present in all flashback scenes, would be very intense here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Kyle's tears DRIP from his eyes, one falls onto Sarah's arm -- it's too much, she KICKS him off her and HOWLS in pain as she SLAMS the pantry door shut and LOCKS the padlock on the door.

Sarah TWITCHES oddly, A NERVOUS TICK, similar to Joshua, but more controlled, as she turns away from the pantry.

Kyle scoots to the FAR WALL of the pantry, away from the door. His back against the BACK WALL, he tucks his knees up to his chest, hugging them for security, rocking back and forth.

He sits in TERROR listening to his mother GROWL and THRASH about. He wipes the tears from his eyes and then LOOKS down at his hands, wet with tears.

FADE BACK:

INT. BARNES KITCHEN - NIGHT

Kyle is still staring into the darkness of the pantry, unsettled by his memories of what happened there. He looks away, emotional, no longer able to force himself to look at the blackness within.

Kyle stands and leaves the kitchen, it's time for bed.

INT. REVEREND ANDERSON'S CAR - DAY

Reverend Anderson in the driver's seat as Kyle climbs in.

KYLE

Thanks for the ride. My neighbor's
a good guy, but I don't want to
borrow his car two days in a row.

Anderson moves to clear the clutter off the front seat:
stacks of pamphlets for faith-based support groups: 12-step
programs, meals on wheels, Christian summer camp, etc.

REVEREND ANDERSON

Sorry for the mess.

Kyle picks up a bag filled with stuffed animals -- Beanie
Babies, teddy bears, Elmos...

REVEREND ANDERSON (CONT'D)

For the kids at the hospital, just
toss 'em in the back.

Kyle does. Anderson puts the car in gear. As he drives --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REVEREND ANDERSON (CONT'D)
 Folks think being a preacher is a Sunday job. But most of my week's doing home visits. Shut-ins, the cancer ward, Ronald McDonald House. Spend more time in this ol' beater than at the pulpit.

Kyle nods, slightly amused and maybe a little impressed.

REVEREND ANDERSON (CONT'D)
 Click it or ticket.

What? Oh... Kyle fastens his seatbelt.

He notices an old photograph tucked into the sun visor. Faded, dog-eared. A younger Anderson with a boy, maybe eight-years-old. At Little League or something. Smiling.

KYLE
 Is that your son?

Anderson's eyes flick to the picture.

REVEREND ANDERSON
 Yeah. Matthew.

He flips up the sun visor, hiding the photo.

REVEREND ANDERSON (CONT'D)
 (deflecting)
 I could always use some help handing out Beanie Babies if you got the time.

KYLE
 I'm... not good around people.

REVEREND ANDERSON
 Really? That's not the boy I remember.

Kyle is SILENT, the moment hangs.

REVEREND ANDERSON (CONT'D)
 Kyle?

KYLE
 You know.

Reverend Anderson looks to Kyle, urging him, as if to say "I don't know."

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Kyle is frustrated.

KYLE (CONT'D)

...what happens to people who are around me.

REVEREND ANDERSON

(putting the pieces together)

You holed up in that house... five months in town without showing your face. That's because of what happened to your mother? You think you caused it?

Kyle just looks out the window.

REVEREND ANDERSON (CONT'D)

You weren't around Joshua and it still happened to him. What if you're punishing yourself for no reason?

KYLE

And what if I'm right?

REVEREND ANDERSON

I know yesterday scared the shit out of you. Me too. But something about having you there made it...

KYLE

Worse?

REVEREND ANDERSON

(concedes)

More intense. But that may be a good thing.

KYLE

I wouldn't be so sure.

REVEREND ANDERSON

Then why are you coming with me?

KYLE

To find answers.

REVEREND ANDERSON

Is that why you came back to Rome? I heard you had a family, that things were good for you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Kyle is FROZEN, at a loss for words.

After A BEAT. He smiles, FORCED, trying to hide his emotions.

KYLE

Maybe I just missed the house.

Reverend Anderson is disappointed, he knows Kyle is hiding something but doesn't press the issue.

INT. AUSTIN FAMILY HOME - DAY

Joshua sits in his room, motionless like a statue, not normal. He's staring into space, appearing almost catatonic, like Sarah Barnes. Until --

His head JERKS to the side, quickly, abruptly, looking at Kyle and Reverend Anderson as they enter.

REVEREND ANDERSON

I read scripture to him before, it had no effect. Holy water irritated him... severely, but had no long term affect. Will you pray with me?

Kyle walks toward the window, ignoring Reverend Anderson, who watches him CURIOUSLY.

KYLE

He doesn't like light. My mother didn't either.

Joshua watches Kyle slowly as he walks to the window.

JOSHUA

You are very brave to return.

Kyle goes to one of the QUILTS on the windows, GRABBING a corner and then RIPPING it from the window.

The room FLOODS with light.

Joshua SCREECHES in terror, FALLING off the bed to the side opposite the window abruptly, then crawling erratically into a dark corner next to the bed.

Reverend Anderson looks at Kyle, startled, as Kyle drops the quilt to the ground.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KYLE

That day with my mother... I think
it helped.

Reverend Anderson steps over to where Joshua is, he's looking
at him.

REVEREND ANDERSON

Why don't you like light, Joshua?

Joshua just GROWLS in response.

Reverend Anderson turns to Kyle.

REVEREND ANDERSON (CONT'D)

Think back on that day. What else
did you do?

Kyle looks ASHAMED of himself.

KYLE

I hit her.

Reverend Anderson looks at him, sad, forgivingly. Kyle was a
child when this incident happened.

KYLE (CONT'D)

She attacked me. I'd had enough,
she'd done it many times before.
This time I fought back. It seemed
to... hurt her.

Reverend Anderson steps forward, toward Joshua.

REVEREND ANDERSON

Help me get him into the light.

Kyle is RELUCTANT.

REVEREND ANDERSON (CONT'D)

Don't think about your mother,
think about this boy!

Kyle looks hesitant, but he STEPS FORWARD, They grab Joshua
by the legs and begin pulling. Joshua twists and contorts
his body rapidly and abruptly as he fights against Anderson
and Kyle's grip.

JOSHUA

Don't touch me! Don't--

Reverend Anderson struggles to hold onto him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

REVEREND ANDERSON

You're leaning on my last nerve,
boy! You are unwelcome here! You
do not have the right to be here!
In God's name I will cast you out
no matter how long it takes!

Joshua starts to STRUGGLE, trying to KICK FREE of the two men, but it doesn't work, they're STRONGER than him. He TWISTS and CONTORTS to escape, grunting and straining.

As Joshua fights, the strain causes him to revert again, the demon side of him subsides, he's a child who doesn't understand what's happening.

JOSHUA

(scared)

Leave me alone!

Kyle's hand makes CONTACT with the BARE SKIN on Joshua's leg. This TOUCH alone seems to cause Joshua discomfort... almost like a slight burn.

In reaction to the pain, Joshua, the demon again, KICKS Kyle, the contact has changed him, made him STRONGER.

The kick sends Kyle onto his ass, sliding across the floor a few feet -- as if he were kicked by a much larger adult.

Reverend Anderson takes much less force from the kick, but is still knocked away.

He looks at Joshua with concern as Joshua slowly stands up, calmly, with ease. Less twitching or straining his muscles, he's more in control of this body now.

As Joshua rises into standing position the various items in the room begin to levitate as they did before.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)

You give us power.

Kyle stands, recovering from the kick as Joshua walks up to him.

Joshua places his hand on Kyle's jaw as he did before.

He leans in, close to Kyle's face and begins to INHALE with the same wheezy, raspy, screech coming from his mouth.

Kyle looks at him in defiance. An anger comes over his face as he's confronted with the very thing he blames his wasted life on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

For a moment he's able to push him away.

Joshua is ENRAGED by this resistance. He SLAMS HIS FOREHEAD into Kyle's nose, smashing it. Kyle doesn't even notice the blood pouring from his nose into his mouth.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)
 Much stronger than Allison.

The mention of his wife sets Kyle off. Without hesitation --
He PUNCHES Joshua.

Kyle stands to see Joshua in front of him, reeling from the punch.

Anderson is horrified to see Kyle punch this eight year old as hard as he can.

REVEREND ANDERSON
 Kyle!

Kyle looks quickly to Anderson as he rushes toward Joshua.

KYLE
 No. I think this is right. Get
 the other blanket! Quick!

Anderson doesn't know what else to do, he steps over to the window and YANKS the other blanket down, causing light to pour into the room, but it is focused in a large area of the floor where the light from the two windows lands.

Kyle SHOVES Joshua into that area.

Joshua falls onto his back, screaming in pain.

Before he can get up, Kyle sits on Joshua's chest to keep him from crawling away from the light.

Joshua writhes in pain as he begins to levitate again,
 LIFTING KYLE OFF THE FLOOR WITH HIM.

JOSHUA
 No! No!

Joshua begins to reach up and grab Kyle, attempted to pull his face down toward him again. Kyle strains to push him away until finally -- HE PUNCHES HIM AGAIN.

The blow disrupts Joshua's powers, it sends him dropping back down to the carpet, and as he does so, KYLE PUNCHES HIM AGAIN.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Joshua's kicking and screaming INTENSIFIES the longer he's held in the light.

Kyle continues to PUNCH Joshua.

As this scene intensifies, the sound distortion and crackling from the flashbacks will find its way into this scene.

Anderson steps forward.

REVEREND ANDERSON

Kyle! You have to stop this!

Reverend Anderson takes a FOOT TO THE FACE from Joshua. He falls back, holding his nose, looking alarmed, scared for a moment as it begins to BLEED.

Joshua moves more and more, Kyle can barely to hold him down. Blood pours down Kyle's face.

KYLE

What do you want from me?!

Reverend Anderson is startled by the rage and anguish exhibited in Kyle..

Joshua tries to break free, SCREAMING and THRASHING about while Kyle holds him in place in the light.

KYLE (CONT'D)

Why won't you leave me alone?!

Kyle brings his arm up, over Joshua's chest. As he does so, Joshua LURCHES forward BITING Kyle's hand, clamping his teeth down, sinking DEEPLY into Kyle's flesh.

Kyle SCREAMS in pain.

Joshua has CLAMPED DOWN on Kyle's fingers, he's not letting go, he's GNASHING his teeth against him.

KYLE (CONT'D)

Let go! Damn it!

Kyle PRIES at Joshua but can't break his hold, he pushes against his head.

Joshua continues to bite down, DRAWING BLOOD -- which INSTANTLY sickens him. It's a spontaneous reaction. SMOKE rolls out of Joshua's mouth as if it's on fire. The blood is affecting him in strange ways.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

Kyle sees this, noticing his affect. He immediately GRABS Joshua's jaw, SQUEEZING to hold his mouth open.

He closes his injured hand into a FIST, holding it over Joshua's mouth... he clenches his finger, drawing more blood from the wound, tighter and tighter UNTIL

A few drops of blood drop down into Joshua's mouth.

Joshua continues to HOWL in pain as he spits Kyle's blood out.

JOSHUA

No!

Kyle leans down, placing both hands on Joshua's face, smearing it with blood from his hand. Joshua's face is already scraped up from the hits he's taken, and it's starting to swell up as well.

Kyle sits on Joshua's chest, pressing his hands against his face, straining to keep the boy held down.

Joshua looks up at Kyle, clearly in the most intense PAIN of his life, sweating, straining to speak, he growls up to KYLE in a quick forced whisper, as if delivering his last words before dying.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)

(whisper)

The great merge can't be stopped,
Outcast.

As the last word softly escapes from Joshua's lips, a flood of THICK BLACK WAXY FLUID, instantly ERUPTS from his mouth. Kyle has to jerk his head from the side to avoid it as it IGNORES THE LAWS OF GRAVITY and FLOWS UP. It's thicker than liquid, it moves like WAX melting up in streams crossing and intersecting as it travels upward like a rapidly growing tree.

It pours from his mouth and nose, drops come from his eyes and ears, all splashing and pooling on the ceiling as if gravity had been REVERSED.

Reverend Anderson backs into the wall at the sight of this.

Kyle looks UP at the ceiling, staring at the growing puddle clinging to it as the last streams escape from Joshua and fall up toward the ceiling.

Before the final streams and drops join with the puddle forming on the roof, FINGERS start to emerge from the puddle.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

Long and slender, pointed at the end, not resembling human fingers. They continue to fall from the puddle until we see the hands they are attached to, and then the arms, and we start to realize the BLACK WAXY OOZE is forming into a CREATURE that is COMING RIGHT FOR KYLE.

The puddle contracts as the ooze begins to form the creature, asymmetrical, and unlike anything we've seen before... a liquid form, not solid, a head, teeth, arms, all suggested in the form but never solidified or defined in any definitive way for more than a split second. It's more threatening and terrifying than anything this side of the work of H.R. Giger.

It reaches for Kyle as it falls toward him, sounding some sort of screech, seemingly of pain more than anger.

As it falls to Kyle, at the moment where it's about to GRAB him and TEAR HIM TO SHREDS... IT FADES FROM EXISTENCE, as if made of water evaporating in extreme heat.

It's just GONE.

Kyle is frozen, still on the floor next to Joshua, looking up where this... shape was before it disappeared. He's breathing hard, panting almost with the frequency of a dog, he's TERRIFIED.

Anderson is backed against the wall, also frozen in TERROR by what he's seen.

Joshua, lies motionless in front of Kyle on the now BLOOD stained floor.

He's not fighting them anymore, they just watch in HORROR as he CONVULSES BRIEFLY, moving as if his whole body ACHES. This snaps Anderson and Kyle out of their terror induced paralysis. They both move forward to tend to the boy.

Joshua sits up and begins to COUGH AND CRY, he's WEAK, his arms are SHAKING as he tries to get up until he stumbles, falling a little.

Kyle IMMEDIATELY places his arm behind his neck to support him.

Joshua's nose bleeds as he starts to cry.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)

Mom?!

Kyle and Reverend Anderson just STARE at each other with a look of "did this just happen?" Both are a bit shell-shocked, as if they just survived a battle together.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

Kyle holds Joshua, NOW A DIFFERENT PERSON, crying for his mother, weak and frail, SCARED. His behavior now matches the child we SEE.

Reverend Anderson sits next to him, on his knees. Both men are stunned, breathing hard, reflecting on the ordeal.

BETSY bursts into the room, seeing Kyle, standing over Joshua, bloody and beaten, blood on his face, dripping from his mouth. SHE KNOWS KYLE HAS BEATEN HIM.

Kyle looks SHOCKED to see Betsy, he's STUNNED.

Joshua looks to his mother, pleading through a BLOODY, TEAR-SOAKED face.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)

Mommy?

Betsy looks on in HORROR at what Kyle has done.

EXT. AUSTIN FAMILY HOME - NIGHT

We see the house from afar, the full yard, the area Kyle and Anderson had their talk, the cars they drove, the rolling hills lit in moonlight seen beyond the house, wide open starry night sky above the house like a dark blanket hung from a window.

Two POLICE CARS are in front of the house, their lights flash casting the yard and house in an erratic night club pattern of red and blue.

WE SLOWLY ZOOM IN TOWARD THE PORCH OF THE HOUSE.

On the porch we see Kyle, in the distance, sitting on the steps, hands cuffed behind his back.

Mark, in uniform stands next to him as if he's keeping guard.

Molly, Betsy and Joshua stand on the porch.

CHIEF GILES stands in the yard, to the side of the porch, talking to Reverend Anderson.

We focus only on KYLE as we slowly ZOOM INTO HIM, moving across the yard.

He's dejected, emotionless, almost in a trance, just sitting on the porch, not moving, not arguing, not fighting back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

As we zoom in close to him, we see Chief Giles start to walk toward him. He kneels down behind Kyle just as we zoom in so close to Kyle's face that it fills the frame.

He's deeply affected by what he's seen, what he's learned, what he's done.

Giles speaks, the first sound we've heard in this scene.

CHIEF GILES
You're free to go.

Kyle looks up, confused... snapping out of it.

KYLE
What?

Mark steps forward, looking at Giles argumentatively.

MARK
Chief, you can't be serious.

CHIEF GILES
Nothing happened here, Officer Holt. The Mother is saying it was all a big misunderstanding.

MARK
What? Just because you're friends with--

Chief Giles shoots Mark a look, instantly shutting him up.

Giles looks past Mark onto the porch at Betsy.

CHIEF GILES
Ma'am, I just want to ask one last time, would you like to press charges?

Betsy looks down at Joshua, bloody from his beating, but fine, standing on the porch, at peace, normal. Then she looks back to Giles, smiling... relieved, at peace in a way we haven't seen her before.

BETSY
No sir. These two saved my boy, I should never have called.

Giles then turns to look at Mark.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CHIEF GILES

Doesn't matter what we think happened. You can bring him into town, file all the paperwork you want... but we don't have anyone willing to testify. Nothing we can do here.

Mark is frustrated, but he understands. As Giles walks back to his car, Mark turns back to Kyle, still sitting on the porch.

MARK

(disgusted)

After everything Megan's done for you.

Mark turns to follow Giles, both officers are leaving.

Kyle watches in shame as the two men walk away, then STANDS, as Reverend Anderson walks over to him.

REVEREND ANDERSON

Let me take you home.

Kyle nods, he and Anderson begin walking away from the room as Betsy steps forward on the porch.

BETSY

Thank you.

Kyle turns to see Betsy, standing with Joshua, NORMAL, CALM, her arm around her son. Bandage still on her nose, her son covered in BRUISES AND SCRAPES, not unscathed, but they're both safe now.

Kyle SMILES at them in acknowledgement.

INT. REVEREND ANDERSON'S CAR - NIGHT

The two men sit silently as the car cuts through the WARM COUNTRY NIGHT, dark, moonlit fields roll by on either side of the car.

Reverend Anderson takes a deep drag on a cigarette. He blows the smoke out the window, glances over at Kyle as he drives.

REVEREND ANDERSON

Did you get the answers you were looking for?

KYLE

Some.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REVEREND ANDERSON

It's not always going to be that
easy, you know.

KYLE

That was easy?

Kyle looks at Anderson, sees the slight smile play at the
edges of Anderson's mouth. He's fucking with him.

REVEREND ANDERSON

I've seen a lot. Thought I'd seen
the worst suffering a man could
imagine. But that was....

He takes another drag off the cigarette, sucking it down to
the filter.

REVEREND ANDERSON (CONT'D)

I've never seen anything like that
before. That what it was like with
your mother, in the end?

KYLE

Different with her...

(pauses)

Wasn't like that with my wife
either.

Reverend Anderson looks over at him, new information.

KYLE (CONT'D)

I always thought it was something I
did to them... now I know it was
something else... but it's still
because of me.

Kyle thinks for a silent beat.

KYLE (CONT'D)

Seems like they've been coming
after me my whole life.

Kyle looks out into the darkness, the trees form black shapes
with moonlight cutting through as the car drives by.

EXT. BARNES FAMILY HOME - NIGHT

Kyle walks toward his home as Reverend Anderson backs his car
out of his driveway, leaving him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Kyle turns, WAVES to Anderson as he drives down the road. He watches as the car disappears from view down the darkened country road.

Kyle STANDS in the moonlit yard, silent.

He looks down at his open hands, down in front of him, thinking about what it is they did today.

He clinches them into a fist.

Kyle starts to grow upset.

FLASH TO:

INT. ALLISON'S HOME - FLASHBACK - DAY

Kyle returns home from work, the sun shines brightly through the windows. He's happy but his mood immediately changes as he hears SCREAMS from upstairs.

KYLE
(worried)
Allison?!

Kyle runs upstairs to find Allison kneeling over Amber, three years-old, CHOKING her.

Allison turns, not rage on her face, CURIOSITY.

She turns back to Amber, applying more force as Kyle TACKLES her, knocking her off Amber.

Kyle screams as he looks down at Allison, who scratches at him, FIGHTING BACK, clawing, trying to get back to Amber, who has blacked out, but looks DEAD.

Kyle SLINGS Allison against the wall and crawls quickly to Amber.

He looks down at her, she's still a little blue, lips discolored, from the lack of oxygen. He cradles her in his arms. She begins to move. He looks relieved.

But he's panicked, he doesn't know what's happening. We see him overcome with FEAR as he turns to see ALLISON, POSSESSED, coming at him.

She moves toward him ferociously attacking him. He turns to look at her as we:

FADE BACK:

EXT. BARNES FAMILY HOME - NIGHT

Kyle is wincing slightly, then opens his eyes, unclenches his fists.

He GLANCES around him, the trees, the fields, the neighbors house in the distance, dark, absent any activity this late at night. HE IS ALONE.

The night is SILENT, save for crickets in the distance.

Kyle looks at his family home, the source of so much PAIN AND SORROW in his past. It seems SMALL, unworthy of the prison he's allowed it to become.

He looks out at the land around him as he begins to walk toward his house.

KYLE
(under breath)
Come and get me.

Kyle enters his house, closing the door behind him.

END OF EPISODE