

QUIET COUNTRY

Written by

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1

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT

1

One uninterrupted shot.

A DEVILISH COYOTE BOBBLEHEAD sits on top of a shelf.

CAMERA booms up, looking outside a large window—a dark parking lot. A single streetlight illuminates a desolate road. Beyond that

COMPLETE DARKNESS.

CAMERA does a slow pan left to the front doors. A cool breeze murmurs outside as the store's fluorescent lighting and muzak lure us back toward the

FRONT COUNTER

Half stocked racks and shelves of last-minute grabs. Unopened packages. In the background, we hear the sound of an ACOUSTIC GUITAR being tuned, its low E string GETTING HIGHER...

Hokey paintings and merchandise depict a coyote with no skin on its head, and hunched bird legs instead of normal ones.

AND HIGHER...

AN OPEN DOOR BEHIND THE COUNTER. CAMERA MOVES OVER THE COUNTER AND INTO THE

MANAGER'S OFFICE

The office is empty other than a single computer on a desk running the live CCTV feed for the entire store. *It switches between channels in intervals.*

AND HIGHER...

Our eyes are drawn to the monitor, the only source of light in the room. We creep toward it.

CCTV FEED 2 appears on the monitor showing THREE MEN sitting on camping chairs in a circle in the main aisle.

THE GUITAR STRING SNAPS

CUT IN:

2

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE (BACK AISLE) - NIGHT

2

A large man wearing a COWBOY HAT is hunched over an acoustic guitar—now with a broken string to contend with. He leans over and sets the guitar against a shelf.

UNCLE LAWRENCE

Well I'll be damned. Looks like I'm sparing you boys the song n' dance tonight-

The man lights up a cigarette he rolled himself. The two co-workers listen in.

UNCLE LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

But don't think y'all are free to go yet, oh no. Cause it ain't safe out there. See, you ever walk alone at night, and stop cold...with a feeling in your gut? You think you heard somethin' rustling in the grass, or maybe it was just the wind. But you can't shake that feeling...you know you're bein' watched. Like there's a pair of luminous eyes peepin' right atcha. My friends, I'm here to tell you that's the Tall Grass Devil.

The door chimes like a squealing pig.

FRONT ENTRANCE

A TRUCKER wearing a wireless headset enters the store. He heads to the front counter. Uncle Lawrence puts his cigarette out and acknowledges the Trucker.

TRUCKER

Look at this. 'Least some place still carries the stuff.

The Trucker is pointing at a brand of malt liquor that is difficult to find in the 21st century.

UNCLE LAWRENCE

Weren't easy finding it either. But we don't stop at easy here. How's about a discount for our first customer?

Lawrence nudges a coworker to help the Trucker check out. The employee awkwardly shuffles to the front counter.

COWORKER

Um, would you like any T.G.'s Devil-Hot Jerky or-

TRUCKER

Just the liquor, son.

The worker hands the trucker his change. The Trucker grabs his booze and makes a quick exit through the front door. The door chimes as he leaves. Uncle Lawrence looks back at his crew.

UNCLE LAWRENCE

Where was I? Right, it ain't wise to make a deal with the devil. No sir.

3 **EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - CONTINUOUS**

3

The store's fluorescent lights illuminate the front porch as the Trucker exits. When he turns the corner, he's met with sweeping darkness.

Unbeknownst to the Trucker, the DIM GLOW OF A CIGARETTE lights up behind him. The details of the store are barely visible as the Trucker walks to his rig.

UNCLE LAWRENCE (V.O.)

See, there isn't a deal to be made with this critter. It wants you to witness something. To turn around and have your hair go white. To get struck with a memory you can't shake.

The wind kicks up, carrying a shrieking sound from the distance. This catches the Trucker's attention.

The Trucker looks around. He can only make out the undulating sea of tall grass that surrounds the store for miles on end.

UNCLE LAWRENCE

You'll see those eyes at every corner. In your dreams. At the bottom of your cereal bowl. And you'll ask yourself...

Suddenly, something in the grass catches the Trucker's eye. He sees the silhouette of an ANCIENT PAWNEE WARRIOR. He is startled by the sight, frozen for a moment.

The Trucker breaks from his trance and hurries into his rig, shutting the door behind him.

4 **INT. TRUCKER'S RIG - CONTINUOUS**

4

The Trucker hastily turns on the ignition. The interior is cluttered with wires and radio equipment.

Fast food wrappers litter the seats. The Trucker looks out the cabin's windows again, not seeing whatever was lurking before. He drives off.

UNCLE LAWRENCE

"Why me?" The Tall Grass Devil
ain't choosey, friend. You're just
a sucker who took the wrong turn.

5 **EXT. ROAD - MONTAGE**

5

The Trucker continues to gain distance from the store.

On a desolate road only illuminated by the truck's headlights, a sign reading "Exit 14" passes.

The Trucker accelerates, trying to escape this strange purgatory he's lost himself in. His facial expression tenses with each passing mile.

In the rear-view mirror, we see something change in the Trucker's eyes.

We now see the truck pass "Exit 21" on the side of the road.

Panning down, the Trucker grips the steering wheel tightly. His knuckles are whitening.

Suddenly, the Trucker snaps out of his fugue to witness something completely SHOCKING ON THE ROAD.

In an instant, he jerks the steering wheel to the side. The trucker veers off the road in a violent CRASH.

The truck is swept into darkness within seconds.

6 **INT. CONVENIENCE STORE (COUNTER) - CONTINUOUS**

6

UNCLE LAWRENCE (V.O.)

Boys, we're here to make that wrong
turn right. With tee-wenty four
hour service, we have the rare
opportunity to let folks face their
fears, and get right back on the
road all safe and sound...Fed,
clothed, and charmed of course.

7 **EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - CONTINUOUS**

7

A neon sign on the large store window reads:

OPEN 24 HOURS

CUT TO:

8 **INT. BUS (MOVING) - AFTERNOON - OPENING CREDITS** 8

A guitar introduces a theme for the plains.

Camera looks out the window of a bus rolling down a country road. The Nebraskan landscape passes by. The bus comes to a stop.

An ELDERLY MAN is waiting on the roadside. He's looking toward the sky, spaced out. The loud hydraulic sounds from the bus grab his attention, and he steps onboard. A FIRETRUCK SPEEDS past the bus.

Moving again, the bus continues past tall grass as far as the eye can see. An occasional home in the distance...and the World's (second) Largest Covered Wagon.

Another car whips past, going the opposite way. The bus slows down as it drives past a crash site on the road. Outside the window, a

DEADLY ROLLOVER INCIDENT is being investigated by police. The truck is severely wrecked on its side in the tall grass. The TRUCKER'S body is being recovered by the officers. A young woman's face is seen in the reflection of the bus' window as she watches the scene go by. The bus continues on.

CUT TO:

9 **EXT. BUS/COLLEGE CAMPUS - EVENING** 9

The bus comes to a hissing stop. A BICYCLE on the bus' front rack stops inches from the CAMERA.

TITLE CARD: QUIET COUNTRY

The sound of the bus idling, followed by the driver's door creaking open. A pair of hands unstrap the bike: they're the Bus Driver's. A voice from offscreen interjects.

KIRA (O.S.)
Hey, thanks. I got it.

The Bus Driver stops, heads back to the door, gets in. A new pair of hands retrieves the bike.

This is **KIRA**, a lithe 22-year-old woman hailing from the East Coast.

She is preternaturally composed, with dark shoulder length hair and a black denim jacket on. Her phone buzzes in her pocket.

Kira quickly lifts the bike from the rack and plops it down on the road. She clears the street and heads to the sidewalk.

Kira glances at the caller I.D. on her phone: MOM. Kira adjusts her things. The bus leaves for its next stop.

IN THE BACKGROUND, a local community college. The architecture is drab, with a color palette of earth tones.

Kira looks at her buzzing phone again, and lets the call ring out. Kira heads up the long walkway to her college.

10

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - EVENING

10

The classroom is dingy: water damaged ceiling tiles, spots of paint peeling from the walls, a broken office chair in the corner. For some reason.

Kira stares at her computer with an uneasy look on her face. A list of unread texts to "Dad." She sits in her chair and reads the rest of their exchange:

Dad: Did you take the recycling out?

Kira: oh no sorry !

A hand taps Kira's shoulder like it's knocking on a door.

LUKE

Kira.

Kira closes her laptop from prying eyes. It's her friend, LUKE: a college age guy wearing thick corduroy pants, a baseball t-shirt, and a beanie. He's plain, but a nice dude.

KIRA

Oh hey, Luke.

LUKE

Was thinking of going to Marlowe's before shit hits the fan this week. Stacy's going.

KIRA

What time?

LUKE

Around nine, if you're up for it. I'd offer you a ride, but they're still butchering my car in the shop.

Luke crosses his arms with a wistful expression on his face.

KIRA

No. Sure. Maybe. I'll have to think about it.

(sighs)

Still got that ethics paper. Probably time I took the bull by the horns.

Kira gives Luke a noncommittal wince.

KIRA (CONT'D)

Maybe later this week?

Luke nods, then goes back to his seat.

CUT TO:

11 **INT. KIRA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

11

Kira opens a cabinet and looks over the junk she's thrown in it. She inspects the size of a variety of CONTAINERS. Kira lifts a cardboard box labeled "Old Stuff" out of a LARGE GREEN CONTAINER. She empties everything else out. An old SWISS ARMY KNIFE drops on the floor. She picks it up.

BATHROOM

Kira carries the LARGE GREEN BIN and places it on the side of her bathtub. She turns the worn-out 'H' knob and waits for the water to get scalding hot.

Kira's mind drifts as the sound of running water gets louder.

The green bin is partially filled. Kira drops some Epsom salt and soap into the water, stirring it as it becomes cloudy.

STUDIO ROOM

The room is dark, though there's enough light from the alley to see clothes strewn around the floor, unpacked boxes here and there. Meals left forgotten from sleepless nights.

A '90s sitcom plays on a television in the background. It's her calm.

A FRAMED PHOTOGRAPH of young Kira with her FATHER at the finish line of a bicycle marathon.

CAMERA stays on the photo, Kira being no taller than her dad's bike. Kira drags the bin toward her window. She leans it against the floor's molding.

Kira takes a cigarette and lighter from her countertop, and pulls a chair next to the window before sitting, then slowly puts her feet in the green bin.

KITCHEN

Kira's microwave reads the time: 1:10 a.m. She opens the door, places some food inside, and turns it on. Again, Kira spaces out as the microwave hum gets louder.

STUDIO ROOM

Kira bites her fingernails anxiously as she works on her 'ethics in anthropology' paper.

Kira spends way too much time staring at

THE MAN

In the photographs.

Kira's face lights up in the reflection of the picture frame.

BATHROOM

Kira checks out her baggy eyes and sallow complexion in the mirror. She has a note written to herself: LAWRENCE AT 9:00 [# scribbled out]! Kira sighs.

CUT TO:

12

INT. HIGHWAY DINER - MORNING

12

The sounds of clanging silverware and rushed orders set the ambience of the diner. Wood paneling, a linoleum floor, grease stains up the walls, seats that need to be reupholstered, old calendars, and ads for extinct cigarette brands.

Kira sits at a booth, waiting. She takes a sip from a coffee mug and notices lipstick on the rim. Kira nonchalantly rotates the mug 180° with her index finger so the lipstick faces away from her. She looks out the window and sees a 1986 Chrysler LeBaron pull into the parking lot.

A large, middle-aged man wearing a plaid suit jacket and the same COWBOY HAT from the opening of the film is parking it. It's UNCLE LAWRENCE. He exits the car.

Kira watches as Lawrence enters the diner, and is recognized by the waitstaff. Even from a distance, he's a larger-than-life figure with the bombast of a used car salesman.

Uncle Lawrence makes his way over to Kira's booth after a waitress points him in the right direction.

UNCLE LAWRENCE

Well, well. Pleased to make your acquaintance, young Kira.

Lawrence sits himself down into the booth with the weight of a planet.

KIRA

Uncle Lawrence...how are you?

UNCLE LAWRENCE

Hell, you're asking me? How about yourself, young lady, after all that back home with, uh...

Kira's shoulders tense up, she clenches her jaw.

Uncle Lawrence nods and clears his throat. He pulls out some rolling paper and an ENGRAVED TIN with loose tobacco inside.

UNCLE LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

Your momma told me you'd be heading out my way—and frankly—I didn't believe her. "Nebraska?!" I said. Tallest damned thing round here I can muster's a...telephone pole? Things ain't at all like you're used to back east with your...verticality. Not a lot of action in these parts.

KIRA

That's honestly why I wanted to come out here. With the peace and quiet...It's kind of a bizarro world.

UNCLE LAWRENCE

Well, you can call me Mr. Bizarro, then!

KIRA

(laughs)

Not in a bad way. I think it's a necessary change of pace. Give the tall buildings a break for now.

Uncle Lawrence leans back, having rolled a couple of cigarettes. He lights one up and holds it in one hand that's stretched over the booth.

WAITRESS

(Exasperated O.S.)

Lawrence, you know you can't smoke
in here.

Not missing a beat, Lawrence maintains eye contact,
extinguishing his cigarette in Kira's coffee cup. Kira is
taken aback.

UNCLE LAWRENCE

I can't sit here and watch you
drink out of that filthy thing.

(yelling at waitress)

Dottie, bring a fresh, CLEAN cup,
will 'ya? Hell, a chalice even.

Beat, as Dottie does as instructed.

UNCLE LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

Look, clearly you're not in Oz
anymore. But if you're looking for
something slow, I've got a job with
your name on it—stamped in gold.

KIRA

My mom mentioned something. It's an
ice cream shop, right?

Uncle Lawrence widens his eyes and laughs.

UNCLE LAWRENCE

Ice cream? Shit. Last time I was
peddling ice cream they were still
puttin' lead in the gasoline! And
the cars ran better on it too...

Lawrence pauses, looks away from Kira, slaps his hand on the
table, and looks back at her.

UNCLE LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

Young lady, I run no ice cream
shop. What I have is a beacon. A
cabinet of curios. A shrine to the
great unknown, and then some. Tell
me where you can find grape
flavored rolling paper and hard
evidence of the Tall Grass Devil
all in one location?

KIRA

Tall Grass...what, do you have a
dispensary or something?

UNCLE LAWRENCE
 No! I'm talking about the Tall
 Grass Devil.

Uncle Lawrence unrolls his tie. The image on it is three vertically stacked coyote skulls with large glowing eyes.

UNCLE LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
 It's what you see out the corner of
 your eye 'round these parts. It's
 what's rustling in the grass. It's
 what stole the pie off yer window
 sill.

KIRA
 So it's a Chupacabra type thing?
 Like some Bigfoot nonsense?

UNCLE LAWRENCE
 Now, don't you say that too loud!
 I've got a souvenir shop dedicated
 to the critter. But it's also a
 convenience store...and come to
 think of it, we sell ice cream too.

Uncle Lawrence tucks his tie back in.

UNCLE LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
 I have a position opening up, but
 it's the uh, graveyard shift, as
 it's commonly understood.
 (beat)
 See, I got a kid working nights at
 the moment, fresh out of high
 school. Now I don't know if he's a
 little doe-eyed boy scout or the
 goddamned scourge of the ages once
 he's got the shop to himself.

Lawrence reaches for another of his hand-rolled cigarettes,
 and brings it to his mouth.

WAITRESS
 (O.S.)
 Don't you do it, Lawrence.

CUT TO: DOTTIE GIVING LAWRENCE THE EVIL EYE

Uncle Lawrence winks at the waitress and shifts his focus
 back to Kira, placing the cigarette down.

UNCLE LAWRENCE

Things ain't like they used to be, huh? Well, the fact of the matter is, I wouldn't mind having someone I can trust running the place at night. Someone in the family.

Kira clears her throat.

KIRA

I don't know, with school work and all...Like I said, I'm here for the quiet.

Uncle Lawrence rolls his eyes.

UNCLE LAWRENCE

Oh, *school work*. Why come all this way just to do *school work*? 'Sides, you'll have all the down time you need. It's quiet country.

KIRA

Shouldn't you be asking me some questions, or I dunno—speak with a previous employer before just throwing a job at me?

UNCLE LAWRENCE

This isn't a spur of the moment decision, Kira. I've been considering this for some time.

Kira raises her eyebrows.

UNCLE LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

Look, in my eyes it's simple.

(beat)

If you're anything like your mother when she was young, you're smart, scrappy, a real go-getter. I can already see you have the charm that'll keep the regulars a-comin'.

Kira blushes, cocking an eyebrow. A smile.

UNCLE LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

You don't wait for things to happen. You make 'em happen. Our little house on the prairie could use someone like you. I could use you.

KIRA
Lawrence, I-

Uncle Lawrence places a note with an address on the table between them.

UNCLE LAWRENCE
You don't have to answer right now.
Let's just enjoy breakfast. But, do
me a favor. Sit with it for a bit.
Okay?

Kira grabs the note—and the last of Lawrence's cigarettes from the table.

13 **EXT. HIGHWAY DINER - LATER** 13

Smoking one of Uncle Lawrence's cigarettes, Kira watches him drive away.

CUT TO:

14 **INT. MARLOWE'S BAR - NIGHT** 14

Kira and Luke sit in a funky leather booth as their friend, STACY grabs a round of drinks. The pair have already shared libations.

KIRA
Oh yeah, I finally met my Uncle
Lawrence. He's a bit of a local
celebrity...evidently.

LUKE
How do you mean?

KIRA
He's like this walking, talking
mascot for a brand of cigarettes
that doesn't exist or something.

LUKE
So your uncle is basically Joe
Camel? That's sick.

KIRA
(laughs)
No he'd be, like, the wrong guy Joe
Camel picks a fight with in a bar.
He's the mascot with a switchblade
in his coat pocket.

LUKE
Right, and if you send in enough
coupons, you can get your own
branded switchblade?

Kira leans toward Luke.

KIRA
You know, I carry a little Texas
Toothpick for...situations.

LUKE
Wrong state, but go off.

Kira reveals her Swiss Army Knife, but keeps it closed. Luke
nonchalantly pulls a grey toothpick from the knife.

LUKE (CONT'D)
And there it is.

KIRA
(laughs)
Didn't even know that was in there!

LUKE
I'll be sure to step behind you if
we get in a bar fight then. You
seem to know what you're doing with
this thing.

They both laugh. Kira puts the knife away.

KIRA
Anyway, your illegal coupon idea
aside...Totally, that's my uncle.
It always feels like he's trying to
sell you on something, you know?

LUKE
A huckster.

KIRA
I guess. He even offered me the
night shift at this hokey-themed
store he's running.

LUKE
Wait, where at?

KIRA
I dunno. He slid me this like it
was contraband.

Luke reads the address and looks confused.

LUKE

On Hesperia Road? Name rings a bell, maybe my folks took me there when I was a kid?

Luke looks the address up on his phone.

LUKE (CONT'D)

Yeah, that's way out there. May as well be in *Kansas*. But hey, if your uncle is running the joint, at least he'll take care of you...pay-wise and all.

KIRA

Sure. Or I could just get a barista gig like a normal person.

LUKE

Or get all your homework done working the night shift in a ghost town of five thousand people. You aren't sleeping anyway.

KIRA

Does it show?

LUKE

I mean, I'd just think about it at least, if I were you.

Stacy walks over to the pair with putrid green Appletinis in her hands. Kira looks to Stacy.

KIRA

Wait, didn't those make you throw up last time, Stacy?

STACY

YEEAHHHHH!!!!!!!!!!

Kira may be mentally preoccupied, but she tries to show a little excitement for the few friends she has.

CUT TO:

15

INT. KIRA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

15

Clock reads: 2:53 a.m.

An empty mini-liquor bottle. Kira's favorite sitcom keeping her company in the background.

Kira is still awake, lying in bed, irregular breathing.

MOM VOICEMAIL (V.O.)

Kira. Sometimes I think I hear footsteps upstairs, or someone running the coffee maker.

Inaudible Makes my heart jump, and I sit up in bed. I'll think, "maybe it was just my daughter."

(beat)

But I catch up with myself and remember that I'm this tiny little person alone in this big doll house now. And then there's the quiet again. That's what I have to look forward to when I hang up. *sighs*

CUT TO: LATER

Kira can't sleep. She's turned away from the street light bleeding through her window.

An uncomfortably long beat as Kira thinks about her past.

Finally, Kira drifts off, and the sound of the sitcom fades.

Kira's eyes OPEN when she hears an ODD NOISE from outside her window. Like the isolated sound of fabric brushing. Then from the corner of Kira's eye she sees

A BODY FALLING

from DIRECTLY OUTSIDE HER WINDOW. Kira grips her blankets, white-knuckled.

Kira gets up from her bed and walks slowly toward the window, her body shaking by the time she reaches it.

A long beat as she leans over to stare at the pavement below. A light in the alley illuminates the night.

No body. Nothing. Only clotheslines and trash cans like every other alley in the world. Kira blinks her eyes in disbelief. *It felt so real!* Kira turns and absently paws at something on her dresser before collapsing to the floor.

The TV becomes louder, playing the sitcom's theme song as she falls asleep, sitting up.

Leaving school, Kira retrieves her bike and walks it to the bus stop. Kira waits alone.

She has a cigarette, more to keep herself company than anything. Kira stares meditatively at the smoke trailing into the evening sky.

Kira shakes her head—a *moment of realization*—then grabs the cigarette from her lips and snuffs it out on the ground.

Finally, Kira spots a bus in the distance. She quickly crosses the street.

Kira fastens her bike to the front of the bus, then hops on. From outside, the camera shows her pay the driver, and moments later, the bus leaves.

17

I/E. BUS (DRIVING) - MONTAGE

17

Kira sits alone wearing headphones near the front of the bus. There are only two other passengers, seated in the middle and the back—as if they're all allergic to human contact by this hour.

The bus travels from well-lit roads to long stretches of darkness as it heads away from civilization. Intermittent streetlights are the only source of light.

The passenger from the middle gets his baggage and departs.

Ten minutes later, the bus stops to let off the second passenger. Kira watches the man walk down a long path with a warmly-lit farm in the distance.

A tower light reflects on Kira's tired face as the bus moves farther and farther away from anything recognizable. Her leg shakes mechanically, like a wind-up toy.

Kira pulls one headphone off and looks down at her phone: NO RECEPTION.

18

EXT. - FIELD - END MONTAGE

18

The bus comes to its final stop, slowing to a halt. Kira stands to exit...

BUS DRIVER

And you're sure you know where
you're going, miss?

KIRA

I do, thank you.

BUS DRIVER

Alright. Bus service goes from 6 a.m. to 11 p.m. every day. You have a blessed night. Get to wherever you're going safe, now.

KIRA

Appreciate it. You too.

Kira yanks her bike off the front, hops on, and peddles away.

The driver keeps the bus' headlights on the road, illuminating it for Kira until he can no longer see her. The bus driver then turns the wheel fully, barely making a U-turn, and drives off. These roads aren't well suited for vehicles so large.

Kira peddles past a marker for the Fremont Army Airfield.

Kira is completely alone—other than her bike, a desolate road, and moonlit crops all around her. There are no lights, and the cicadas are loud at this hour.

The light on Kira's bike illuminates the way ahead. She approaches a road sign emerging from the darkness.

LANDMARK AHEAD

Kira stops. A GUST OF WIND gently pulls her down the road. She lets it tug on her, as if she needed the encouragement.

Kira passes the sign, and immediately feels the gravity of entering A NEW SPACE. She continues down the road.

Just then, Kira notices some UNIDENTIFIABLE ROADKILL, and grimaces, but carries on.

19

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - DUSK

19

The sky has a dark blue hue, a cloudless dusk on the plains.

CAMERA PANS DOWN

To the majesty that is T.G. DRY GOODS.

Fronted by a gravel parking lot, T.G. Dry Goods is a wood-paneled outpost amongst the sweeping darkness. A beacon in the night to weary travelers. A towering neon sign reads: "T.G. Dry Goods: Grub, Supplies, Curios—See the Tall Grass Devil Up Close!"

Kira passes two 1990s soda machines and an ice merchandiser illuminated by a florescent light.

On the rickety front porch is a HOMELESS MAN, COYOTE MAN, sitting in conversation with himself.

Kira approaches the store, and looks around. Coyote Man gives Kira a look that doesn't require another.

COYOTE MAN

Look at ye. Backpacker, hitchhiker, nomad, traveler, LOST? Hope ye ain't lost, cause there's rules here. *Listen for 'em.* You'll have a purpose.

Kira looks a little dumbfounded.

COYOTE MAN (CONT'D)

Here, here, need a purpose? Lemme give ye one. Got a smoke?

Kira is almost relieved Coyote Man says something coherent, and reaches into her coat pocket for a cigarette. The sound of wind chimes reverberates in the breeze with Kira's action.

COYOTE MAN (CONT'D)

Very much obliged.

KIRA

If you really need to know, I'm supposed to start working the night shift here.

COYOTE MAN

Been hearin' bits 'n whispers, I know who ye are.

Coyote Man pantomimes a concierge, and points his hand to the door, tongue clearly in cheek.

COYOTE MAN (CONT'D)

You...may enter.

Kira is still weirded out.

KIRA

...Uh, thank you.

Kira enters.

The store's interior is fully-stocked with several aisles of canned goods, toiletries, and recreational gear (eg. lamps, sleeping bags, etc.).

Beyond the basic necessities is a strange collection of souvenirs in a corner: T-shirts with a cartoon-styled creature leaning against a sign, pointing at it a la Bugs Bunny. There are shot glasses, postcards, floaty pens, fridge magnets, and a woven basket full of CDs with the same imagery: The Tall Grass Devil.

Kira's interest leads her to the souvenir area as she inspects things closer.

A FAUX SCIENTIFIC ILLUSTRATION of the coyote-like creature prowling in the grass.

Kira hears the faint sound of a cowboy ballad, and she turns around to see a SMALL CLEANING ROBOT with a dinky speaker and cowboy hat jury rigged on top of it.

“WELL IT’S THE BUMP IN THE ROAD,
AND THE CRY IN THE NIGHT,
IT’S THE EYES THAT YOU SEE WHEN THE
MOON’S ALL BRIGHT,
IT’S THE NOISE THAT THE LEAVES MAKE
WHEN THEY SETTLE,
IT’S THE PEOPLE CREEPIN’, ROOSTER
EATIN’ TALL GRASS DEVIL”

The robot scoots away, cleaning nothing in particular.

Distracted by the odd scene unfolding before her, Kira is startled by a big guy with curly hair, wearing torn and baggy blue jeans with a hole in one pocket. One of the COWORKERS from the intro, his name tag reads: CODY.

CODY

Hey.

Cody's voice is low, but has a nasal quality that makes him sound like a dork. One can never truly tell when he's joking. He sports a shirt reading "Built Different."

KIRA

Whoah-a, hey there.

CODY

What's up? Um, can I interest you
in an ice cream for the road?

(Cody motions to an old
ice cream freezer)

Or a pack of T.G.'s Devil-Hot
Jerky, per chance?

KIRA

Yeah, well, that sounds nice
actually. But, I'm here to work-

CODY

Oh, Kira!

Kira looks surprised for a second, but then glad to see she's recognized, and that the whole job isn't a sham.

KIRA

Uncle Lawrence mentioned I might just randomly show up for work?

Cody drops his air of instructed professionalism and eases up a bit.

CODY

He said you were the type, then started going on about some other crap...I don't know, I tune him out sometimes.

KIRA

...Okay?

CODY

Yeah...but I see Coyote Man let you in without much of a fuss. I'll take that as a good sign, sometimes he'll scare people off and that.

KIRA

Coyote Man?

CODY

The guy outside. He's always asking me riddles and shit, but he's cool once he really susses you out. Just don't take him up on any coin tosses, you'll lose every time.

Kira forces a laugh, unsure how to process the information she is being given.

KIRA

I'll definitely keep that in mind!
(Awkward pause)

CODY

Don't worry about the place though, Lawrence talked very fondly of you.

KIRA

Well that's good to hear...So, you're the only night shift employee?

CODY

(laughs, extends arm)
For another six hours maybe, then I'm gone. I gotta get out of here to be honest. I'm usually bored as dick.

KIRA

You have a beautiful way with words, Cody.

CODY

It's probably just Yote rubbing off on me.

Kira looks confused again.

CODY (CONT'D)

Oh yeah, that's what I call Coyote Man.

Cody puts his hands on his hips and shakes his head.

CODY (CONT'D)

You have a lot to learn around here, Kira.

KIRA

So, what else do I need to know?

The store's landline rings. Cody picks it up at the counter.

CODY

T.G.'s Good Shack, how may I help you?

Kira looks around.

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

(Mumbling)

Right, sorry sir. I get it, *Dry Goods*...I forget.

More of the store's details make themselves apparent: a taxidermy Greater Prairie Chicken, a poster for a Winchester Model 1873, and a photo of Annie Oakley's dog with an apple on his head all line the walls.

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

Uh-huh, copy that.

(beat)

Yes, 6 a.m. Okay, sir.

Cody hangs up the phone, walks back to Kira at the counter.

CODY (CONT'D)

That was Lawrence. He's glad you made it here safe.

Kira glances at one of the store's security cameras, staring right back at her.

CODY (CONT'D)

He'll be here at 6 a.m. to show you anything I missed, and to finish the whole hiring thing.

KIRA

Oh cool, sounds good.

CODY

So...do you have a favorite candy or something?

KIRA

Candy? Um, Baby Ruth, maybe? Anything with nuts.

Cody looks genuinely perplexed.

CODY

Huh. I've never seen a woman eat a Baby Ruth before.

(beat)

Well for me, it's simple: peach rings. I'll just leave 'em sitting on my tongue. Sometimes I forget they're there and they kinda slip down my throat and then I choke...What a fucked up world.

Kira looks unsure how to respond.

KIRA

No...for sure, I like peach rings, too.

CODY

Now we're talking. Major perk of the job. I'll write a note for someone to leave you some extra.

KIRA

Oh, thanks.

CODY

Yeah, don't mention it.

CODY (CONT'D)
 Alright, the store.

CUT TO:

21 **INT. CONVENIENCE STORE (AISLES) - MONTAGE**

21

Cody walks down the main aisle slowly, reading the names of items as he goes. He points at some, then writes a note down on his CLIPBOARD. He takes something off the shelf toward the end of the aisle.

MAGAZINE AISLE: Some nudie mags, gun magazines, *Popular Mechanics*, *Car and Driver*, etc.

Kira and Cody refill the magazines on the racks.

Kira looks in disgust at a newly-stocked softcore skin mag with a 1970s theme. The cover reads: Groovy adventures, wild rides-Look Inside! Cody glances over Kira's shoulder, nodding in approval. *For Cody, print is not dead.*

A customer walks in. The door chimes like a squealing pig.

CODY
 T.G.'s General Goods, can I offer
 you an ice cream for the road, or a
 bag of T.G.'s Devil-Hot jerky-

The pig squeals again.

COUNTER

A young blonde woman, HANNAH, smiles at Kira and Cody. Cody turns around to greet her.

CODY (CONT'D)
 Oh, Hannah! Wasn't expecting you
 back so soon...after last week's
 events.

Kira stands behind him, watching intently. Hannah laughs.

HANNAH
 It's okay, Cody.

Hannah looks to Kira.

HANNAH (CONT'D)
 He coughed up a peach ring on my
 shirt when I asked him what sort of
 liquor he recommended.
 (MORE)

HANNAH (CONT'D)
 Actually, I don't want to think
 about it too hard...

CODY
 Hah. Yeah...Hey, Kira can you grab
 Hannah's order for me?

KIRA
 We have orders? Wait, where...?

Kira searches behind the counter aimlessly. Cody leans toward Hannah as an aside:

CODY
 I'm teaching her the ropes. *Slow learner.*

Kira finds the bag and hands it over to Hannah as she pays.

HANNAH
 Thank you. Hey, and I'll see you
 next week, Cody.

Cody hesitates.

CODY
 ...Ah-yep.

COUNTER

Kira and Cody put price labels onto items and print receipts.

STORAGE ROOM

Kira and Cody walk around the cluttered storage room like a dance, pointing and looking at various items. Cody slides a package toward Kira.

MAIN AISLES

A cart pushes through the aisles. They place products into their correct spots on the shelves, replacing expired items as they go.

STORAGE ROOM

TRASH BAGS are thrown near the back door to be taken out.

FREEZER UNIT

Kira and Cody are working in the freezer unit. It looks like she's getting her footing.

22 **EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE (BACK) - END MONTAGE** 22

Kira and Cody take the trash outside. There isn't much out back, a ROOF over the trash bins, an external AC-UNIT for the store, and a security camera. As they toss the trash, they hear the hydraulics of a truck in the parking lot.

END MONTAGE

23 **INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT** 23

The door chime squeals. DELIVERY MAN JOHN wheels a dolly of goods inside. He peeks his head around the stack of boxes and makes a friendly gesture.

KIRA

It's a little late for a delivery,
isn't it?

DELIVERY MAN JOHN

We're on a late night circuit now,
it's a niche our parent company's
gunning for. No one else seems all
that keen to take it...

KIRA

Oh, that's good to know. I'm Kira.

DELIVERY MAN JOHN

Nice to meet you, Kira. John.

KIRA

Any way I can help?

DELIVERY MAN JOHN

By staying out of my way.

With a dismissive look on his face, John points at Cody like a professional wrestler, fingerless gloves and all.

DELIVERY MAN JOHN (CONT'D)

Lord knows that one's tried to help
before.

Cody reacts like he has no idea what John's talking about.

DELIVERY MAN JOHN (CONT'D)

That was cruel, miss. I didn't mean
that. I'm sorry. Still adjusting to
the new sleep schedule.

John continues with his dolly and boxes, heading for the back. Kira watches him go.

DELIVERY MAN JOHN (CONT'D)

If you can call it a schedule...

John wheels his dolly of packages to the back of the store.

24

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE (MANAGER'S OFFICE) - NIGHT

24

Kira walks into the manger's office. To her left, a traditional time sheet check-in, and cabinets of supplies. There is a cork board on the wall with employee information. On the board is a poorly drawn PORTRAIT of Duke Nukem signed by Cody himself.

To her immediate right, Kira notices the EMPLOYEE LOCKERS. Above the lockers, a RICKETY AIR VENT. Cody regains her attention.

CODY

Now this is home base. Mission control. It's a real hoot and a holler.

KIRA

(laughs)
Why is that?

Cody takes a seat. He swivels in the chair, gets into position.

CODY

I'm kidding, this thing *pisses me off* sometimes.

(beat)

But, here. You can click through all the feeds, or have them all viewable at once, but the quality's gonna be dog shit if you do that.

Kira pays close attention. Cody uses a mouse to maneuver the interface. She looks at the wide-screen monitor, which displays several segmented camera feeds as follows:

FRONT PORCH - FEED 1, MAIN AISLE - FEED 2, FREEZER AISLES - FEED 3, BACK OF STORE - FEED 4.

CODY (CONT'D)

We take security very seriously around here. But you won't have to deal with this stuff unless there's an incident, of course.

KIRA

Incident? I thought things were pretty quiet around here. Why even have all of this security, then?

CODY

My, my, my, you are a smart one. Who knows why the grass is green and dirt is brown? All I know is the feeds are always running, and you can count on it.

Kira listens to the instructions, but gets distracted by an unplugged MICROWAVE on top of the lockers.

KIRA

Alright...can I use the microwave when I'm on break?

CODY

Absolutely not! Last time I used that thing, it shorted out the whole store. Lawrence was pissed.

Cody shakes his head and points back at the CCTV screen.

CODY (CONT'D)

Kira, please. There are more important matters at hand. I haven't even told you the WiFi password yet.

25

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE (COUNTER) - NIGHT

25

Kira stands guard at the counter, pricing items. Cody is in the manger's office burning hairs off his arm with a lighter. John walks his dolly toward the exit. Kira looks up.

KIRA

All good?

DELIVERY MAN JOHN

That's it. See you next week.

KIRA

Thanks for coming.

When Kira's back is turned, Cody places something into a cabinet under the surveillance monitor. He locks it and puts the key in his pocket.

Cody checks one more time to see if Kira saw him. She didn't. He walks out of the manager's office.

CODY

Well, the main thing is, this place is yours now. You'll be able to do whatever you like.

KIRA

That's one way of looking at it.

Kira and Cody put some products onto the shelves behind the register. After a beat, Cody stops what he's doing.

CODY

Hey, can you check on what John left us? Make sure it's all there.

KIRA

Oh, sure.

26 **INT. CONVENIENCE STORE (FREEZER UNIT) - LATER** 26

Kira is checking the items John recently delivered.

The freezer unit is loud, but Kira hears something. She makes out the store's signature 'pig squeal' and then the faint sound of wheels screeching in the parking lot.

27 **INT. CONVENIENCE STORE (AISLES) - LATER** 27

Kira comes out of the back room, suspicious that something is different. She looks around, and notices a NOTE on the counter. She walks up to read it:

Had to go early. My bad. Need to take care of sick sister in Iowa. No time to waste. It's been real. You're nice, Kira. Hope to be back soon.

28 **INT. CONVENIENCE STORE (COUNTER) - CONTINUOUS** 28

Kira is alone in T.G. Dry Goods now. Worse, the darkness feels like an impenetrable mass just outside the front doors. Kira freezes for a moment, not sure what to do next.

She adjusts something trivial on the counter. BEAT. Kira turns the robot speaker off, and connects her own music.

MUSIC CUE: SOME INDIE SONG

29 **EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - CONTINUOUS** 29

The song plays faintly in the distance.

EXTREME WIDE - STORE, WITH SIGN ON TOP OF POLE THAT DISPLAYS:

T.G. DRY GOODS

OPEN 24 HRS

HOLD ON THIS FOR A BEAT. A HUM FROM THE SIGN RISES...

SNAP CUT TO:

30 **EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - MORNING**

30

The store in daylight with tall grass all around it. To the left of the store, unnoticeable until now

A LONE COTTONWOOD TREE

Resting in plain view, pleasant company.

Kira comes out and smokes a cigarette. She looks to see if Coyote Man is there. He's still in his spot. Is he awake? Alive? A moment later, Lawrence's car pulls into the gravel lot playing BOMBASTIC 80s MUSIC.

But he's not alone. In the passenger seat is a young man, perhaps 20, who remains inside the car.

Uncle Lawrence kills the engine and exits the vehicle. He walks inside the store and greets Kira at the counter.

CAMERA stays across the street, and slow zooms toward the store's windows, peering in, watching Lawrence and Kira.

Kira gesticulating wildly, presumably about Cody's abrupt departure.

CUT IN:

31 **INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - CONTINUOUS**

31

UNCLE LAWRENCE

Well, good riddance is what I say.
Shame on him, leaving you to fend
for yourself on your first night.
I'll be having a word with Cody
about this. But on a brighter note,
look at you! Jumping in feet first.
That shows real *promise*. And I
mean, isn't this place a real
beauty?

Lawrence theatrically steps away from Kira, looking off.

UNCLE LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

Perhaps this isn't what you pictured work would look like when you were a youngin'. It's just... the isolation and solitude can in itself be a problem. Especially for a young and social butterfly like yourself. You sure you're up for the challenge, Kira?

KIRA

It's no time of year for social butterflies. I think this is what I'm looking for.

Uncle Lawrence smiles, and reaches into his coat pocket to pull out a NAME TAG for Kira.

UNCLE LAWRENCE

Well then, try this on for size.

Kira takes the name tag, and thanks Lawrence as she pins it to her jacket. *He had it made already?*

Uncle Lawrence looks away from Kira and gestures to the car outside. The mysterious figure exits the vehicle and the door chimes as he enters the store.

A timid young man, the other COWORKER from the intro, steps through the door wearing ill-fitting clothes. His haircut looks home-done. A small rash can be seen on his neck, which he tries to conceal with a chore coat buttoned all the way up. Most would call him a boy.

The boy walks over to Lawrence and Kira with paperwork in hand, and drops it on the counter.

UNCLE LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

When things are through, your cousin Ian here could give you a ride to the bus stop. He's a mighty smooth driver.

Uncle Lawrence looks over at Ian and raises his voice.

UNCLE LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

That is, until he sneezes and nearly runs us off the damn road!

Ian doesn't reciprocate Lawrence's energy. Kira looks over at Ian warmly.

KIRA

It's not a long ride, I'll be fine.

COUSIN IAN
You biked here alone?

Lawrence puts his big hand on Ian's shoulder.

UNCLE LAWRENCE
Alright let's move it along, now.
We got work to do!

Ian sullenly exits as quick as he came. Lawrence turns to Kira as an aside.

UNCLE LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
He's a sickly boy, you see, doesn't get out much. Between you an' me, I got him on the day shift, but I'm afraid he scares most of the customers away.

KIRA
It's a good thing I'm here, then.

Lawrence shuffles the papers on the counter and puts them in order.

UNCLE LAWRENCE
Call it fate. Let this cornucopia reward us both, young Kira. Replete with newfound family and fortune!
(clears throat)
Well, let's get while the gettin's good.

Uncle Lawrence takes the papers and presents them to Kira with a LEWD FLOATY PEN he grabs from the counter.

Kira signs the documents.

CUT TO:

32

INT. KIRA'S APARTMENT - LATE MORNING

32

Kira returns home and props her bike upright by the door. She tosses her name tag on the dresser, then dives into bed.

Kira falls asleep within seconds.

Close-up shot of name tag on the dresser.

CUT TO: HOURS LATER

MESSY TRUCKER

Lost my way pretty bad, ma'am.
Y'all got a shirt I can swap out?

The Messy Trucker buys an XXL Tall Grass Devil shirt. Kira rings him up, and hands him a receipt. The Trucker heads to the bathroom to change.

CUT TO: LATER

The Trucker opens the bathroom door and heads toward the counter.

MESSY TRUCKER (CONT'D)

Back on the road. Guess me and the chili disagree in more ways n' one, huh? S'pose it coulda been worse if we were seein' things eye to eye, though, hoo-wee! Alright, see ya honey, thanks again.

Kira considers the Trucker's puzzling relationship with chili as he exits the store.

37 **INT. CONVENIENCE STORE (COUNTER/MANAGER'S OFFICE) - MONTAGE** 37

Kira getting schoolwork done in between tasks at work.

38 **INT. CONVENIENCE STORE (COUNTER) - MONTAGE** 38

HANNAH enters the store. She looks different from when Kira met her last. Her hair looks unwashed and her foot is nervously bouncing. Kira gives Hannah her booze order.

HANNAH

Hey, is Cody here?

KIRA

Oh, he went back home...*To Iowa I wanna say?*

HANNAH

Oh, okay. Tell him I say hi if you can. I wanted to ask him something.

Hannah is grappling with a thought, but keeps it to herself.

Hannah pays. She pauses for a moment as if to say something else to Kira, but leaves instead.

39 **EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT/MORNING - MONTAGE** 39

Hannah's car pulls out of the lot.

HARD CUT TO:

40 **EXT. KIRA'S BACKYARD - EAST COAST - NIGHT** 40

Harsh rain pouring down on us. *Looks like we are shooting through space at light speed. Ominous use of sound.*

CUT TO:

41 **INT. KIRA'S APARTMENT - MONTAGE** 41

Sleeping during the day, Kira is jolted awake by her BLARING phone. She groggily reaches over to answer. It's her MOM. Kira turns off her phone and goes back to bed.

42 **EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE (BACK) - MONTAGE** 42

Kira taking out the trash, noir lighting. Streaked shadows being cast from a harsh flood light. She stops for a moment when she hears RATS squeaking near the trash bins.

Kira moves closer. The sounds are coming from the bins, but she can't see the rats. She tries to shoo them away. No luck.

43 **INT. CONVENIENCE STORE (COUNTER) - MONTAGE** 43

Kira putting money from the cash register into the SAFE in the manager's office.

44 **INT. CONVENIENCE STORE (BATHROOM) - NIGHT** 44

Kira refills the toilet paper and cleans the bathrooms.

45 **EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - MONTAGE - MORNING** 45

Uncle Lawrence and Cousin Ian relieve Kira in the morning. Lawrence has his arms out. He grabs the store's keys from Kira.

UNCLE LAWRENCE

Kira! Why don't you have your
cousin here give you a ride?

UNCLE LAWRENCE

How's that *schoolwork* of yours
comin' along? Crossing your i's and
dotting all your t's? Wait—

END MONTAGE.

50

EXT. COLLEGE STAIRWELL - EVENING

50

As if showing an A/B of what is going on in their personal lives, Kira checks her phone: a missed call from MOM, she puts it away. Luke gawks at his phone, swiping through photos of the car he's been working on. He tries to show Kira.

Luke's project, a heavily-modded car from the early 2000s, is spoiler-clad. Hundreds of dollars spent on detailing with maybe 90 hp under the hood.

LUKE

Lookin' good, huh?

KIRA

It looks like a deathtrap, Luke.

LUKE

Alright, whatever. How's work then?

KIRA

It's been pretty alright. The weird people. A little alone time. I've actually been getting stuff done, too.

Kira and Luke walk up a long flight of stairs.

LUKE

You couldn't pay me enough for hours like that. But what about your uncle, is he cool at least?

KIRA

(making air quotes)

The "huckster" seems like a pretty decent guy. Who knew?

They reach the landing of the stairwell. Kira removes a pack of cigarettes from her bag. When she looks up, she notices a girl with a familiar face. It's HANNAH. Suddenly, Hannah covers her head with a hood, as if she knew she was being watched, and rushes off.

KIRA (CONT'D)
 Hey, have you seen that girl on
 campus before?
 (beat)
 Luke?

LUKE
 Huh? Who? Dunno, why?

KIRA
 I think she came through the store
 the other night. Seemed a little
 off. I don't know, maybe I should
 say hi. See you later?

LUKE
 Usually people avoid customers from
 their workplace, but okay.

Luke stops at a door across the hall.

LUKE (CONT'D)
 Class is in five, y'know.

KIRA
 Yeah, yeah, I know.

Kira throws her just-lit cigarette in the TRASH CAN ASHTRAY,
 then flies down the stairwell as quick as she can.

At the bottom of the stairs, Kira spots Hannah in the
 distance, turning a corner. She follows. Kira gets to the
 corner, but no one is there.

Kira notices a DROP OF BLOOD on the ground. And then ANOTHER.
 They become more frequent, and Kira follows the path, leading
 her between two big buildings, then inside the second one.
 She continues to follow the trail of blood until she finds
 herself outside the NURSE'S OFFICE.

Kira looks up to see Hannah being treated for a bloody nose.

51 INT. NURSE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

51

Hannah is at the nurse's counter, getting some gauze to
 remedy her crisis. She looks noticeably worse than the last
 time Kira saw her, with a ratty haircut she clearly styled
 herself. Worse, her complexion is pale and she looks unsteady
 on her feet. The bloody nose seems to be the least of her
 problems.

NEWS REPORTER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

It's a combination that poses dangers to workers both short and long-term.

55

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE (AISLES) - NIGHT

55

Kira replaces OLD EXPIRED GOODS with newly-priced ones on the shelves. The store's TELEVISION plays the nightly news. A car pulls into the parking lot. Kira looks up and sees a family, young kids and a mother and father exit the car.

ON TV: A picture of MESSY TRUCKER comes up.

Kira is distracted by what's playing out in the parking lot. Coyote Man confronts the father. Seconds later, the family piles back into the car and drives away. She considers asking him what that was about, but the TV regains her attention.

NEWS REPORTER

Tonight: William Hutcheson, 52, was a veteran in the trucking world, having driven for over 30 years. But his quota-driven and isolated lifestyle fostered an addiction to stimulants, colloquially known as 'trucker pills.' One week ago today, Hutcheson decided his last trip would end in Bear, Delaware, where he was born. However, he never completed that journey. Likely combating drowsiness in the final hours of his trip, Hutcheson veered off a bridge, leaving a devastating scene for local authorities to contend with.

ON TV: A memorial photo of Messy Trucker stays on the right side of the frame. B-Roll of fellow truckers paying their respects on the side of a road. One haggard looking man, wearing a "LOL: Lots of Lizards" t-shirt waxes nostalgic.

NOSTALGIC TRUCKER

Hutch! He was a joshier, oh lord he was. Whenever I heard that voice on the comm, I knew I was in for a laugh. And that's what he did for us, he was medicine. Hutch...I know you're up there, brother. We'll keep on truckin' down here in the meantime.

Kira glances at the television just in time to see a picture of Messy Trucker. She recognizes him and drops what she's doing.

KIRA
(sotto)
William Hutcheson.

NEWS REPORTER
It would appear Hutcheson's death is part of an emerging trend. This is the second deadly accident involving a semi in the last month-

ON TV: The aftermath of the OPENING SCENE'S CRASH. A mangled truck chassis is melded with a highway divider.

56

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE (BACK/TALL GRASS) - NIGHT

56

Kira takes out the trash.

She smells something putrid in the air, but she doesn't sense it coming from the bins in front of her. She throws the other trash bag inside.

Taking a step back, Kira scans the area.

Suddenly, A MISCHIEF OF RATS scurry from underneath the trash bins.

They scamper past Kira into a small wooden opening beneath the store. At the same time, she notices a different sound coming from nearby.

FAINT BUZZING. FLIES SWARMING.

Kira investigates the rear of the trash bins. The sound and smell are both coming from the TALL GRASS out back. Walking into the dark field, Kira fears the worst as she tries to make something out in the shadows:

A MUTILATED ANIMAL

Unrecognizable and reminiscent of what she saw on the way to work. Its limbs are contorted. Bones draped in flesh jut out from the remains.

Kira winces and shakes her head. She looks around herself with suspicion. The wind kicks up. *What did this?*

57

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE (MANAGER'S OFFICE) - NIGHT

57

Kira is on the phone with Luke.

ON SCREEN - CCTV FOOTAGE: *Switching between feeds.*

When Kira tries to interact with the monitor, the screen goes BLACK momentarily before displaying a USERNAME AND PASSWORD INTERFACE. The last account to be logged in: CODY.

Kira stares at the blinking text line for the password and tries her luck: *Built_Different*

She presses Enter. NOPE.

Kira hesitates, and gives it another shot. The login screen cycles for a moment...success? NO LUCK.

KIRA

Yeah, I dunno, Luke. It's a little spooky here sometimes.

LUKE (V.O.)

(showman-y)

Maybe it's that *Tall Grass Devil* your uncle's obsessed with.

KIRA

I'm serious—all this nasty roadkill now...I mean, *bleh*.

Kira tries typing another password, still unsuccessful. She scans the room again, and looks down at the table she's sitting at:

A LOCKED DRAWER. Kira inspects the label on the drawer: *Finance*. There *could* be a password in there.

She tugs on the drawer's handle to no avail.

KIRA (CONT'D)

Hey, can I call you back?

LUKE (V.O.)

Nah, that's it for me, still got some work to do. Kost is getting ready to dish out midterms already. ALREADY!

KIRA

Get ahold of yourself, man!
laughs Alright, see ya later.

Kira hangs up her phone, then looks for an employee's contact number. Kira finds the phone number she's looking for. She types it in, and we see the paper reading:

CODY PHONE - (308) 299-4748

Ringin...NO ANSWER.

VOICEMAIL - YOUNG CODY
Hi! Sorry we couldn't get to the
phone-

Kira gives up. She stands up and leaves the manager's office.

58 **INT. CONVENIENCE STORE (COUNTER) - CONTINUOUS** 58

Kira goes to pick up some boxes on the counter. She stops what she's doing when she hears A DISTANT CRY FROM BEYOND THE STORE. And then an unnerving chorus of shrieks comes from outside, distorted by the wind. It sounds unlike any creature Kira has heard before.

59 **EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT** 59

The shrieks stop. Kira steps outside and looks at Coyote Man.

KIRA
You hear that, Yote?

COYOTE MAN
Heard it? *Oh I felt it.* Like a cold
knife runnin' down my spine. It's
out there.

KIRA
Nervous laugh What? You want to
enlighten me?

Coyote Man looks stern, and makes eye contact with Kira.

COYOTE MAN
In the silence out here, for all my
days, I've studied the sounds that
manage to cut through it. *Ain't got
a choice.* Say a rifle sounds off in
the distance, I know what caliber;
a herd stampedes, I know how many
animals; a cry echoes from this
here field, you'd best believe I
know what in the Sam Hell it is.

KIRA
That's very impressive and all,
but-

COYOTE MAN
You'd be wise to keep inside.

Kira takes Yote a little more seriously. Her face changes.

KIRA
I found something dead behind the
store. What should I look out for?

COYOTE MAN
Hah! Ye got some fearsome
apparition in your mind's eye?

Kira gazes at the field across the road for a moment.

KIRA
...We're selling t-shirts of it.

Coyote Man shakes his head, scowling.

COYOTE MAN
*You's sellin' t-shirts of it. Now
git. Keep doing what you're doin'
in there, and I'll keep a-lookin'
out here. Don't ye mind it any
longer.*

Coyote Man lets out a toothless cackle and sits up.

COYOTE MAN (CONT'D)
Cause you ain't lookin' the right
direction anyhow, girlie.

60 **EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT**

60

John pulls into the parking lot. His truck's headlights stun Coyote Man as he parks against the side of the store. John cuts the engine.

61 **INT. CONVENIENCE STORE (MANAGER'S OFFICE) - LATER**

61

Kira watches Coyote Man pacing outside on CCTV FEED 1.

Kira goes onto her personal computer. She searches for an EXTERMINATOR on the internet. She lands on a cheap looking job site crowded with greasy ads and pop-ups. She scans through pages of listings.

Kira messages a local exterminator: GREG - 24 HOUR SERVICE.

62 **INT. CONVENIENCE STORE (COUNTER/MANAGER'S OFFICE) - LATER** 62

Kira reads her study book at the counter.

John slips past her, wheeling an empty dolly out the store.

From outside, John begins pulling out of the lot in his delivery truck. Turning around, his headlights illuminate the field across the road.

CAMERA stays on Kira, with the front doors in the background. John's delivery truck turns to leave the lot, now blocking the camera's view of the field across the road.

Revealed by the truck passing, a FIGURE stands across the road who wasn't there a moment ago. Out of focus, but barely clothed. Tribal-looking. HE'S AN ANCIENT PAWNEE WARRIOR.

The Pawnee Warrior stares in Kira's direction through the doors. Stalking. He seems ready to charge at any moment.

A PHONE RINGS from inside the manger's office. *As if triggered by the phone*, the Warrior SPRINTS directly at the store.

Kira gets up to answer the phone. She blocks the view of the front doors for an instant, and suddenly, the Warrior is GONE.

Kira, unaware, rushes to the manager's office to catch the phone. At the last moment she answers:

KIRA
Hello? T.G. Dry Goods.

Kira settles. A BEAT.

WOMAN(V.O.)
Who is this?

KIRA
I think you called me. Might be a wrong number-

Kira goes to hang up the phone.

WOMAN (V.O.)
No. Did you know him?

KIRA
Sorry, who?

REBECCA (V.O.)

Cody. I'm Rebecca Walstead, his sister.

Kira can't help but glance at an employee I.D. PHOTO of Cody on the office cork board.

KIRA

Oh hi, I'm Kira. Yeah, I worked with your brother. Is...he coming back any time soon? Kind of left on strange terms.

REBECCA (V.O.)

What? No. We haven't seen him in days. Or well, uh...He's dead.
(holding back tears)
They actually found his body today.

KIRA

What?

Rebecca begins crying. Kira's face shows consternation.

KIRA (CONT'D)

Wait, I thought he was going to go take care of you.
(beat)
What...what happened?

REBECCA (V.O.)

Christ sake, it doesn't make sense. He burned himself. They don't know—the whole...on paper, they're calling it self-immolation. Someone saw smoke, thinking it was just a burn pit, but the location was odd. They found...what was left of him at least. When we were little, he burned his hand on the stove and Cody hated fire ever since. I know he wouldn't kill himself. Not that way.

(beat)

God, this just doesn't feel real.

Kira leans back in her seat, looking back on lived experience.

CUT TO: FLASHBACK

63 **INT. KIRA'S BEDROOM - EAST COAST - NIGHT** 63

Camera focuses on gushing rain outside Kira's bedroom window. It's dark outside.

SUDDENLY A BODY FALLS outside Kira's window, just like she thought she saw in her apartment. It's a quick flash.

CUT TO: PRESENT

64 **INT. CONVENIENCE STORE (MANAGER'S OFFICE) - NIGHT** 64

Kira hesitates on the phone for a moment grasping for words. What she says next is more of a breathy whimper.

KIRA

I'm so sorry, but I'm afraid I have nothing for you.

Kira rushes to hang up the phone and has an emotional beat to herself. She resists the urge to cry, clenching her fist and running her thumb along her knuckles.

65 **EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - MORNING** 65

Kira hands the keys to Cousin Ian.

KIRA

Hey, where's Lawrence?

COUSIN IAN

Lincoln. What's he need to know?

KIRA

Just that Cody killed himself. He should probably know that, Ian.

Ian silently processes what he's just heard. He furrows his brow and looks away from Kira, like an upset child.

Kira's facial expression is heavy as she leaves the store.

66 **EXT. KIRA'S BACKYARD - EAST COAST - NIGHT** 66

HARSH RAIN - Kira's old home. A flash illuminates A BODY on wet pavement. Blood is washed away as quick as it streams out of the writhing mass.

The person reaches toward nothing in particular with an outstretched arm; a hand grasping at something imaginary.

A DARK WINDOW OMINOUSLY OVERLOOKS the struggling man.

The man attempts to flip himself over as we...

CUT TO:

67

INT. KIRA'S APARTMENT - DAY

67

The abrupt and jarring sound of tape stretching.

Kira uses a long piece of BLACK TAPE to shutter herself from the harsh sunlight seeping through her window. Kira folds her CURTAIN in half to make it as DARK as possible. Hopefully this will help her sleep. Her sitcom plays in the background.

UNCLE LAWRENCE (V.O)

You have reached Lawrence Talbott, proprietor of T.G. Dry Goods, illustrious entrepreneur, and all around swell guy. If I ain't picking up, you'd ought to know why. I'm on vacation, dammit! If the matter is particularly pressing or business oriented, call another few times, but I ain't making any promises. My business for the time being is none of yours...Hah! Catch 'ya later.

NO LIGHT seeps through the window now. Kira sits in bed.

After listening to Lawrence's voicemail, Kira goes to put her phone down, frustrated with his absence.

THE PHONE RINGS. Is it Lawrence? No. It's her MOM. After a moment of hesitation, Kira answers.

MOM (V.O.)

Hello? Oh, so I do have a daughter.

KIRA

Mom-

MOM (V.O.)

I'm sure you haven't been listening to my voicemails, but I *cannot* stand this anymore. Am I just dead weight for you to leave behind?

KIRA

Mom, will you let me spe-

MOM (V.O.)

*You said enough when you left,
Kira. It's all just so complicated
for you, right?*

KIRA

You have to hear me. I'm actually
making something for myself here,
working with Lawrence. I'm in
school, I'm making friends-

MOM

*With Lawrence? God, Kira...am I?
sighs So you have the crazy genes
then. You're going to walk yourself
down the same stupid path, you're
going to make the same decisions.
It's just hardwired into you.*

KIRA

I'm not crazy, Mom.

MOM

Right, you're just selfish then. I
don't get to have a daughter, I get
some brat who fucks off whenever
she feels like it?

KIRA

**breaking* Why are you talking to
me like this?*

MOM

I'm drowning here, Kira. Alone.
This house is a vacuum. And if
you're "making something for
yourself" maybe you can send
something for the medical bills.
See if you remember the address.

Kira's mom hangs up the phone. Kira is left alone with
confrontational silence, overwhelmed with emotion.

68

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - EVENING

68

Kira, looking more disheveled than usual, is disengaged with
what is happening in class. Luke is sitting near her, but she
doesn't open herself up for any socializing. The lecture ends
and Kira quickly leaves.

69 **EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - NIGHT**

69

Kira and Luke are walking from class to leave campus.

 LUKE
Hey. You looked a little
preoccupied in class.

 KIRA
Oh, I...*sigh* Yeah. One of my
coworkers, Cody-

 LUKE
Yeah, the peach rings guy?

 KIRA
He's dead.

 LUKE
Oh.

Kira and Luke reach his car and lean against it.

 KIRA
And things haven't felt right at
the store either. I've been seeing
apparitions out the corner of my
eye and-

 LUKE
Kira, I'm going to be blunt here.
It looks like you have more on your
mind than a dude who choked on some
peach rings. Maybe you should let
it out the *chaise lounge* here?

Luke points to his car. Kira half-laughs at the reference.

 KIRA
Why do you even know what that is?

Kira leaves her bike. Luke unlocks his car and they get in.

70 **INT. LUKE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS**

70

Luke's car is fully customized. But still a deathtrap.

 KIRA
The reason I came out here is my
dad. He worked in manufacturing and
suffered a back injury on the job
that kept him unemployed.
(MORE)

KIRA (CONT'D)

He was an optimist, and began to treat every meal with his family like a special occasion, a celebration of life...libations and all.

Kira fidgets with her hands in her lap.

KIRA (CONT'D)

His injury didn't heal well. And of course when every day came with a drink or five, the occasion wasn't so special anymore. He'd make grand plans to travel...to see family in Nebraska, to give me an education he couldn't afford. But his plans never panned out.

Kira speaks in an uneasy voice, like somebody in conversation with an upset stomach.

KIRA (CONT'D)

Now, *one weekend*, the mood gets tense. There's a storm passing through, and my dad gets into a big argument with my mom about a second mortgage on the house. They go their separate ways, and I stick my head in the sand. I hid, all cooped up in my room, just messing around on my phone before passing out with earbuds in.

(beat)

But my dad, he got drunker. At some point, he went on his balcony, just above my room to...think probably? He must've slipped, and went over the railing. His body fell right outside my window, and we didn't find out until morning, when the rain stopped.

CUT TO:

71

EXT. KIRA'S BACKYARD - EAST COAST - NIGHT

71

CAMERA HIGH ANGLE ON KIRA'S DAD - The sound of faint rain, almost like static.

Continuing from the last vision - with only his upper body strength, Kira's father flips himself over.

His legs are completely stiff, and he develops a disturbed facial expression. As if an invisible force is pulling his lip with a fish hook, Kira's father confronts a bitter truth.

CUT TO:

72

INT. LUKE'S CAR - PRESENT

72

KIRA

Apparently he was still conscious a few hours after the fall, likely paralyzed...Waiting for his angry wife to check on him? For his scared daughter to ask if everything was going to work out? Those were the terms he got to go out on. Drunk, a dreamer. Sober, a failure.

LUKE

Jeez, Kira I'm...really sorry. I didn't realize you'd lost your dad.

KIRA

...That's the thing. There's still a bunch of tubes jammed into him in a hospital back home.

Luke leans back in his seat taking this revelation in. Kira can only look down.

KIRA (CONT'D)

I wish I'd maybe stayed up a little later...done this or that. But I didn't like being around him when he was loaded. He'd reach this point where he had a different look in his eyes. Like he was someone else. Nothing mattered to him. He'd stop giving a shit. Sometimes I think if I stayed, I would have turned into him.

Kira looks a little disgusted. Her emotional tone shifts.

KIRA (CONT'D)

So that's the last image I have of him, with that look on his face, splayed out on the same pavement I hopscotched as a kid.

Kira looks to Luke, who seems uneasy with what he's hearing.

KIRA (CONT'D)

I thought that was the worst moment of my life, you know, like I had this remote viewer telling me what to feel when I saw that: "*Why aren't you crying, why aren't you bawling your eyes out and getting sick to your stomach?*" But my body didn't follow. I was so completely over it. That little detached voice told me "*But if only you stayed up with him that night.*" He would have just fallen the night after, then. I can't even remember the last time I said I loved him.

Luke does his best to console Kira, but when he looks for the right words he finds nothing.

CUT TO:

73 **INT. CONVENIENCE STORE (AISLES) - NIGHT** 73

Kira restocks the shelves.

John delivers a shipment to the store. Kira watches as he doesn't say a word to her the whole time. He leaves with an empty dolly. Standing on the porch outside, John stares at something in the distance. Kira follows his gaze but sees nothing. He leaves.

74 **INT. CONVENIENCE STORE (MANAGER'S OFFICE) - NIGHT** 74

Kira sits in the manger's office reading a book. After some time, something under the desk catches her eye: Lawrence's ENGRAVED TOBACCO TIN. She picks it up.

75 **INT. CONVENIENCE STORE (FRONT DOORS) - NIGHT** 75

A VAN pulling into the parking lot catches Kira's attention. She stops reading her schoolwork.

The front doors chime, and a man steps into frame.

Introduce:

GREG THE EXTERMINATOR

Evening, ma'am. I understand you contacted me online?

Greg is a stout man in green coveralls. He sports a mustache a la Chips, and wears a trucker hat reading: True Believer. Something about his bumbling manner gives the impression that he's a greenhorn in the extermination business.

KIRA

Oh, hi. Yeah, that's right. My name is Kira. The night shift person.

GREG THE EXTERMINATOR

Well met. I'm Greg. So this is the location, T.G. Dry Goods? Your troubles are rooted in this area?

KIRA

Yes, that's correct. I've been seeing these really...*gnarly* carcasses, kind of like roadkill, around the store's perimeter. Like, really close...And thanks to whatever's doing this, we have rats now, too.

(beat)

But there's something else. I know this could come off a little silly, or strange-

Greg crosses his arms and leans toward Kira all serious-like.

GREG THE EXTERMINATOR

I can handle strange, miss.

KIRA

Yes, um. I've been hearing these weird noises coming from the field outside. Always at night, cause that's when I work here, obviously. But I caught a glimpse of something staring at me from down the road. Like some kind of big dog.

(beat)

This may sound weird, but I wonder. Can you see if there's anything resembling our...mascot here?

Greg scans the room—kitschy Tall Grass Devil merchandise and all.

GREG THE EXTERMINATOR

Getting a little high off your own supply?

KIRA

Look, I'm not asking for a full on expedition here—ideally I'd like this to be done by six this morning—but it looks like you have a little more in that tool belt than your job description covered...

Kira glances at a security camera, its red light watchfully glowing.

GREG THE EXTERMINATOR

Ma'am, I don't make promises that I can't keep, but let me tell you this: I've cultivated a unique set of skills over the years that will enable me to address a unique set of challenges. I'm not saying yes to your request, but I'm also not saying no.

(beat)

That aside, I'm here for pest control, first and foremost. So how about we start with what we know for certain. The other night you said there was an odd cry that came from the field out there, and then you found a mangled animal behind the store shortly thereafter?

KIRA

Yes.

Greg takes notes.

GREG THE EXTERMINATOR

So, we've got a noise, and just after that, what you think is hard evidence of whatever made that noise. Including a rat problem...?

KIRA

Out back, by the trash, yeah.

GREG THE EXTERMINATOR

Great, the rats I can handle...but this creature you're describing... Let me start getting my gear together.

Kira and Greg walk toward the front doors.

GREG THE EXTERMINATOR (CONT'D)

I'm still going to need all the information you can give me about this creature. I understand it's dangerous. What does it eat? Does it have an odor? Are you sure it's only nocturnal? Have you noticed any strange scat on the property?

Kira is overwhelmed. They stop at the front doors.

KIRA

Well, we have a guy here who can probably tell you more than I know. He frankly got me a little freaked out about the whole thing to begin with. Uh, you might have seen him outside?

GREG THE EXTERMINATOR

Who, the homeless guy?

KIRA

Coyote Man. He knows this place inside and out.

GREG THE EXTERMINATOR

Alright, he was really giving me the stink eye on the way in, but sure, I'll pick his brain once I get situated.

76

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - CONTINUOUS

76

They exit the store. The door chimes. Greg makes a face at Camera 1. He's not impressed with the old CCTV system.

KIRA

So, how long have you been doing this for?

GREG THE EXTERMINATOR

Well, I've, uh, been at it...say six months.

Kira raises her eyebrows.

GREG THE EXTERMINATOR (CONT'D)

Now I know that may seem like next to nothing, but in my line of work that's a lifetime, let me tell you.

KIRA

So you've done a lot of jobs?

GREG THE EXTERMINATOR

If you're asking about my capabilities as an exterminator, I can handle myself just fine. With rats, say, there's a tangible problem and solution. But otherwise ...what's important is I'm a firm believer. I can say that much.

They reach Greg's utility van. The vehicle has a decal on its side, reading: Bardo Frond Landscaping.

KIRA

Wait, now you do landscaping?

Greg begins unloading his gear from the back of the van.

GREG THE EXTERMINATOR

Old logo, disregard. I was originally in forestry. Not in this state, mind you. I heard stuff, saw stuff—kind of changed my perspective on what's out there. Folks get all worked up about the greys in the sky, but there's still unfinished business here on the ground.

KIRA

And the landscaping part...?

Greg pulls a bionic ear listening kit from a foam-padded case, and fiddles with its settings.

GREG THE EXTERMINATOR

I just like plants. I lay down the rules, and they listen. I made a pivot toward extermination, and the same rules apply. Thought I'd balance my contribution to this green earth here. I've found I need that balance in my life. During the day: control. Complete dominion of my environs. But at night?

Greg pulls some TRAIL CAMERAS and a DART RIFLE from a separate container.

GREG THE EXTERMINATOR (CONT'D)

Let the chips fall where they may.

Greg shuts his van's double doors, and starts walking back to the store with Kira.

KIRA
You're a renaissance man.

The pair reach the front porch.

KIRA (CONT'D)
Here's Coyote Man.

Kira waves to Coyote Man for his attention.

KIRA (CONT'D)
This is Greg. We've hired him to investigate our little *creature problem*.

GREG THE EXTERMINATOR
Hello again, sir. I'm, uh, going to need all the information you can give me about this...Tall Grass Devil you folks are dealing with.

Coyote Man lets out a near-silent, bone-dry laugh. His facial expression contorts into something ugly and spiteful.

COYOTE MAN
You got your priorities tied up and turned around, boy. Go ahead and look. See what ye find. Oh, and keep that piece of yours at hand. It'll do ye plenty good.

Coyote Man laughs again, this time at Greg's upset expression, like that of a pouting child.

COYOTE MAN (CONT'D)
No matter *where* ye look, no matter what sort of cross-eyed balderdash ye write in that notepad, ye won't get your answer. You're turnin' stones when ye oughta be turnin' tail and runnin' back to momma.

Coyote Man turns to address Kira, disappointed.

COYOTE MAN (CONT'D)
What are ye doing bringin' this poor gump 'round here?

The wind picks up, an even sough.

GREG THE EXTERMINATOR
You've been very helpful, sir.

Greg walks from the store's entrance toward the plains in a huff. He turns back toward Coyote Man and Kira, ten or so paces away from them.

GREG THE EXTERMINATOR (CONT'D)
Make no mistake, I know what I'm
doing, old man.

Coyote Man shakes his head. Kira walks briskly towards Greg.

GREG THE EXTERMINATOR (CONT'D)
You're getting results. Tonight.

CUT TO:

77 **INT. CONVENIENCE STORE (MANAGER'S OFFICE) - NIGHT** 77

Kira peers at one of the CCTV FEEDS, showing Greg setting his equipment up.

78 **I/E. CONVENIENCE STORE - MONTAGE** 78

GREG OBSERVING SURROUNDINGS, SETTING UP TRAIL CAMS, POINTING BIONIC EAR AT DIFFERENT LOCATIONS, PICKING SCAT OFF THE GROUND, WRITING IN HIS NOTEPAD, APPLYING CHILI POWDER AND WOLF URINE TO THE PERIMETER, THEN FIDDLING WITH RAT TRAPS.

79 **INT. CONVENIENCE STORE (COUNTER) - NIGHT** 79

Kira looks out the store's front window to see Greg.

The wind has grown stronger, rippling his coveralls. Beat.

80 **INT. CONVENIENCE STORE (MANAGER'S OFFICE) - NIGHT** 80

Kira goes back to her computer and settles down with a study guide for an exam. The air vent behind her begins to RATTLE SUBTLY.

Looking back to the CCTV monitor, Kira sees Greg hunched over the AC unit behind the store, fiddling with rat traps.

Kira studies, sipping herbal tea.

The RICKETY AIR VENT in the manger's office begins to HOWL AND MOAN from the strong winds outside. Kira looks at it for a moment, then goes back to her work.

GREG THE EXTERMINATOR (CONT'D)

I haven't seen it in the flesh,
now, but...everything seems to be
adding up here.

There is earnest sorrow in Greg's voice as he delivers the news. Kira, on the other hand, is relieved.

KIRA

I, uh...thank you, Greg. So you
didn't find anything else out of
the ordinary?

GREG THE EXTERMINATOR

Afraid not, ma'am. *clears throat*
If you take a step outside, don't
be alarmed by some new odors. I
marked the perimeter with chili
powder and wolf urine. It'll keep
the beast away from the store.

KIRA

You...happened to have that on you?

Greg looks at Kira deadpan, as if what she asked is a given.

GREG THE EXTERMINATOR

Yeah?

KIRA

Well, I'm sure Coyote Man will
appreciate the fragrance.

Greg turns his back to Kira.

GREG THE EXTERMINATOR

Should have used him as bait...
(beat)
But your rats ought to be gone too.
It isn't pretty work. This place is
one health inspection away from
getting shut down, you know.

Greg, looking exhausted, unfastens his TOOL BELT and sets it on the COUNTER.

GREG THE EXTERMINATOR (CONT'D)

Anyway, we can discuss payment once
I get the rest of my gear from the
field. It's...been a long night.

Kira gives a forced enthusiastic nod. Greg walks out of the store, back into the crepuscular wastes.

Kira looks at the tool belt and notices another TRAIL CAMERA with a red light, indicating its storage is full. Against her better judgement, she plays the footage on the small screen, and is surprised to see Greg in-frame.

CUT TO:

83

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT - FOOTAGE

83

Greg glances at a pylon on the dim horizon and mutters to himself:

GREG THE EXTERMINATOR

God, when you're out here, what you know is so close—it's the dog... barking from nowhere in particular, it's the hum of a power line, or the sound of a car passing through. But when you really need it, that familiarity, that comfort—it's *just so far away*. Like a dream where you're a little kid again, lost in the grocery store. You keep turning corners, but your mom isn't there.

Even though the audio on the trail cam is poor, a discordant sound begins to resonate. In the footage, the wind produces something inharmonious; two dissonant tones scrape against each other.

84

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE (MANAGER'S OFFICE) - EARLY MORNING

84

The footage makes Kira uneasy—she feels it in her bones. It ends.

GREG THE EXTERMINATOR

Alright ma'am, I'm all packed up—

Kira, wide-eyed, sets the trail cam back on the counter. She looks up at Greg, who is ready to leave. Greg looks past Kira at his trail cam. His eyes put two and two together.

KIRA

God damn you're quiet.

GREG THE EXTERMINATOR

Serves me well on the job.

Greg's calm response makes Kira relax a bit. She writes him a check from the store's 'company checkbook.'

GREG THE EXTERMINATOR (CONT'D)

I, um, appreciate you letting me search the premises. I do. I've been a little all over the place, employment-wise. But you've let me take one step closer to...unity. And that's very gracious of you, ma'am.

Kira hands Greg the check.

GREG THE EXTERMINATOR (CONT'D)

But uh, remember: wolf piss and chili powder. Be mindful of that. Hopefully the smell will be the most of your worries now. You have my contact information if you run into any other problems.

KIRA

Right.

GREG THE EXTERMINATOR

One last thing, ma'am.

Greg retrieves a can of pepper spray from his tool belt, and hands it to Kira.

GREG THE EXTERMINATOR (CONT'D)

I know neither of us have seen this mean bastard of a coyote, but if you run across him, this'll come in handy. Though if anything, it should help keep your mind off, you know, *out there*.

KIRA

Thanks, Greg.

Greg takes his things and leaves. The door chimes as he exits.

Kira walks out of the manager's office and sits at the counter. Outside, Greg gets into his van and drives off.

Kira rests her arms on the counter. She checks the time: her shift will be over in 30 MINUTES. A LOUD SNAP followed by the sound of SCREECHING WHEELS yanks Kira from her repose.

(MUFFLED)

IT'S THE BUMP IN THE ROAD, AND THE
CRY IN THE NIGHT,
IT'S THE EYES THAT YOU SEE WHEN THE
MOON'S ALL BRIGHT,

(MORE)

KIRA (CONT'D)
 IT'S THE NOISE THAT THE LEAVES MAKE
 WHEN THEY SETTLE,
 IT'S THE PEOPLE CREEPIN', ROOSTER
 EATIN' TALL GRASS DEVIL

Kira leaves the counter and walks over in the direction of the noise. She finds the CLEANING ROBOT stuck in a cycle of HERKY-JERK movements toward the back of the store.

Kira leans down to pick it up. A RAT TRAP that Greg left behind has jammed it. She carefully takes it back to the manager's office.

KIRA (CONT'D)
 I got you.

85

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE (MANAGER'S OFFICE) - MOMENTS LATER

85

At the desk, Kira hurriedly removes the rat trap from the cleaning robot, trying not to snap herself in the process. The robot is still making a rattling noise, so Kira uses her SWISS ARMY KNIFE to perform an impromptu surgery. Kira tugs on some nasty HAIR clogging part of the robot.

Tangled in the hair, however, is a BLACK KEY. Kira thinks of a use for the key. *It's right in front of her.*

Kira opens the previously locked FINANCE DRAWER. Inside of the drawer are some scattered documents and a STRANGE DRAWING. The drawing depicts a SHADOWY MAN standing amongst the tall grass. He's wearing Native American clothing completely out of this era, and parts of him have wispy pencil marks flowing in the wind. It looks like the man is holding a weapon as well. It's a crudely rendered drawing.

Who drew this? Kira looks at the bottom of the page to see a password. In Cody's handwriting: Login - CodyPlayboy1176

With Cody's password at hand, Kira logs into the CCTV archive. Once in, she scrolls through the night's footage.

Kira rewinds to a previous point in the night when she saw Greg fixing the external AC unit. The footage plays for a few moments, but suddenly goes STATIC when Kira thought she saw Greg getting killed. After the static stops, we see Greg at the door to meet Kira.

Kira rewinds to be sure the static isn't a glitch. It's not.

15 MINUTES LATER

Exhausted and at the end of her shift, Kira stops combing through the footage. She stares over at Lawrence's ENGRAVED TOBACCO TIN on the desk, then back at the screen again.

For once, Kira clicks on a daytime file. It's from TWO DAYS AGO. Kira looks at the company calendar in the office to confirm this. She watches.

CCTV FOOTAGE: Lawrence and Ian are inside the store. Lawrence goes into the manger's office and steps out a moment later with something in hand. It's business as usual for him. He looks suspicious, intently discussing something with Ian.

KIRA
(sotto)
Thought you were on a business
trip, big guy.

The sound of a CAR APPROACHING cues Kira to stop snooping. Kira puts the TOBACCO TIN in her pocket and gets up.

86 **EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - MORNING**

86

Ian arrives in Lawrence's car, just as Kira gets on her bike and rides away. Ian exits the car and watches Kira disappear down the road.

Suddenly, Ian catches a whiff of something. He coughs uncontrollably. THEN HACKS UP SOMETHING GROSS.

Blinded for a moment by his watering eyes, he feels with his hands to find his way to the store's front entrance.

CUT TO:

87 **INT. COLLEGE ATRIUM - DAY**

87

Kira sits at a table inside the college library with the DRAWING and coffee at her side. Luke opens the door, spots Kira, and jogs over.

LUKE
Hey. You wanted to talk? I swear
it's always right before class with
you.

Luke sits across from Kira.

KIRA
I know, I'll try and make it fast.
You remember all that about how my
coworker, uh, Cody died?

LUKE

Yeah?

KIRA

I didn't mention it last time, but Cody was hiding something. Before he took off, he left a note about going home to Iowa so he could take care of his ailing sister—but *that very sister* called to tell me he never even made it back home. He *killed himself*. Like, horribly.

Luke shakes his head, looking at the table.

LUKE

Man, where are you going with this? Guy lived a double life or something?

KIRA

It's silly, but I found this locked away at the store. What am I looking at here?

Luke picks up the drawing of the Pawnee Warrior. The image is amateurish, but ominous.

KIRA (CONT'D)

That's Cody's password there at the bottom. I mean, what reason did he have to do all of this?

LUKE

Uh, he was crazy maybe?

Luke leans back and sighs.

LUKE (CONT'D)

It's a shame, you know. An artist's work is never truly appreciated until they're gone.

KIRA

Don't be a dick, just humor me, okay? What I'm trying to say is, I think something's going on. Something to do with the store. A trucker died, who was a customer. Cody's sister swears he wasn't suicidal. And now...

Kira sighs, avoiding eye contact with Luke.

KIRA (CONT'D)

I got into the store's CCTV archive because of this weird thing I *thought* I saw. I hired this exterminator, and I was watching him on the monitor for a second. Suddenly, it looks like there's a guy hunched over his body, straight up *killing him*.

Luke processes what Kira is saying. A shadow of doubt crosses his face.

KIRA (CONT'D)

Um, he was fine. Left the store in one piece. But later, I went back over the footage and saw static when I got to the same spot.

Luke is silent for a long moment.

LUKE

Kira, I gotta ask, are you getting enough sleep? I mean, I think I've been a good friend, but this is starting to sound a little—too much. And, please don't take this the wrong way, but you've been dealing with a lot, between your dad, living in a new place, school, AND the graveyard shift? I don't know many people who could handle all that. So, I get it.

KIRA

You call that being a good friend? Did you even listen to a word I said? I watched trail cam footage from the guy's tool belt, too, and he was freaking out in the fields, muttering about being lost and alone or some shit. *There's something going on with the store. I'm sure of it.*

LUKE

...And you don't have that footage either?

KIRA

What happened to Mr. Understanding?

LUKE

Look, I won't pretend to understand what you're going through, but isn't it possible that you're projecting some missed emotions on a store that sells haunted big gulps or whatever? I'm sorry, but it sounds like a crazy guy killed himself. More news at 11.

KIRA

Wow.

Somber, Luke checks the time.

LUKE

We need to go to class.

Luke gets up and leaves the table. Though Kira shakes her head, it's clear a part of her is wondering if Luke might be right. Could she be losing it? She slowly gets up.

88 **INT. CONVENIENCE STORE (MANAGER'S OFFICE) - NIGHT** 88

Still reeling from her conversation with Luke, Kira logs into the CCTV archive with Cody's password.

Her breath catches when she discovers all of the archived footage has been DELETED. As shocked as she is, a small part of her feels like this is proof that she isn't going crazy. Something is definitely going on.

The store phone rings and Kira reluctantly gets up to answer.

89 **INT. CONVENIENCE STORE (COUNTER) - NIGHT** 89

KIRA

T.G. Dry Goods.

GREG THE EXTERMINATOR (V.O.)

Um, good evening ma'am. I truly do apologize if I'm overstepping my professional boundaries, but I have some information you may find pertinent to your woes there at the store.

KIRA

Wait, who is this?

GREG THE EXTERMINATOR
It's Greg, ma'am, apologies once again.

KIRA
Oh god, Greg. Wait, what do you mean?

GREG THE EXTERMINATOR
I felt a presence beyond the store in the field. And as I was leaving I felt something pulling at me to return. Knew I was on a deadline so I made myself scarce for your sake, but that feeling kept nagging me. You seem like a nice person. I couldn't say *nothing*.

Kira listens intently, her back slightly hunched.

GREG THE EXTERMINATOR (CONT'D)
This isn't something I've made a habit of, but I looked into the property your business resides on...I was perturbed, ma'am. If you don't mind me asking, there is a hardware store I visit weekly, and I'll be there tomorrow to resupply. I have information you need to see and hear in person.

KIRA
When should I be there?

CUT TO:

90	INT. KIRA'S APARTMENT - LATE AFTERNOON	90
	Kira's front door is wedged open as she takes her bike out of her apartment.	
91	EXT. KIRA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS	91
	Kira carries her bike down the stairs. The town surrounding her apartment is dead this time of day.	
92	EXT. STREETS - EVENING	92
	Kira bikes through the streets.	

93

EXT. PARKING LOT - LATE EVENING

93

As Kira approaches the hardware store, she spots GREG'S UNMISTAKABLE VAN alone in the parking lot.

From a distance, the van's windows are fogged up. Kira peddles to the van and dismounts her bicycle.

KIRA

Greg?

Kira peers into the driver's side window—too fogged up to see anything.

She knocks first but when there's no answer, Kira opens the van's door. She jumps back when she sees GREG LIFELESS IN THE FRONT SEAT.

Greg's hand lies motionless on a pesticide tank's release valve. His facial expression is ghastly, his skin, pallid. Dry vomit has run down his chin to his coveralls.

Just then, she notices gas seeping from the vehicle.

Violently coughing, Kira's eyes water and her nose starts to run. She is bent over with her hands on her knees as the fumes empty from the van.

Kira looks over at the vehicle again and spots an envelope on the passenger seat. She grabs it, then collapses on a nearby curb. When she opens the envelope, an OLD PHOTO of a sod house on the plains falls out. It's dated: 1873.

Eyes still streaming with tears, she tries to focus. The photo depicts a BEARDED OLD MAN sitting next to a family. To their left is a COTTONWOOD TREE. The OLD MAN in the photo looks familiar to Kira.

She reaches into the folder again to find a second photo, this one showing a service station from the 1930s in the SAME LOCATION with the very same COTTONWOOD TREE. It has to be the property T.G. Dry Goods is sitting on.

Looking closely, Kira sees the same BEARDED OLD MAN sitting at the service station's entrance. IT'S COYOTE MAN.

Kira can't believe what she is looking at. Behind her, red lights begin to flash as muffled sirens get louder.

94

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE (PORCH) - NIGHT

94

Kira walks her bike up to Coyote Man, who's sitting on the porch in his usual spot.

COYOTE MAN

Look what the cat dragged in. Or
coughed up, by the look of ye.

Kira locks her bike to a post on the store's porch and
approaches Coyote Man.

COYOTE MAN (CONT'D)

And where's yer big brave hunter?
Left a mighty foul stench behind,
he did.

KIRA

He's dead.

COYOTE MAN

Expected as much.

Kira hesitates for a second. She reaches for the photos.

KIRA

Apparently, he had this to show me.

Kira shows Coyote Man the old photo of himself by the tree.

COYOTE MAN

Ain't that a flattering angle?

KIRA

Best way to get the wrong answer is
to ask in the first place. But I
don't have that choice. This real?

COYOTE MAN

Now you's startin' to learn. It is,
sure.

Kira is visibly flustered.

KIRA

*Do you want to let me in on any of
this, maybe?*

Kira lights up a cigarette, and presents the pack to Yote.

COYOTE MAN

If you're offering.

Kira sits beside Coyote Man so he can spindle his tale.

KIRA

It's strange here...I feel it on a
level that I know I don't fully
understand yet.

(MORE)

KIRA (CONT'D)

Greg said as much, too. But I'm still here. There's more to this place than a coyote monster on a fridge magnet.

COYOTE MAN

So ye've come to your senses.

Coyote Man scrapes an old match on the porch, lighting it and then his cigarette.

KIRA

I'm not so sure I have, Yote. I'm speaking to a man from the 1800s.

Coyote Man looks up at Kira, grinning. He turns and stares into the distance, pondering the landscape.

COYOTE MAN

Now you're just butterin' me up. I'm older 'n that.

Coyote Man takes an inhumanly long drag from his cigarette.

COYOTE MAN (CONT'D)

You'll learn soon enough that history is a series of stories, girlie. Simple tales used to explain it all away. To reason with the unexplainable...to misdirect. Reducin' this place to one fearsome critter is a dangerous folly. This land we share is strange, yes. But it's reactive.

KIRA

I feel like I'm on borrowed time here. What is this place?

COYOTE MAN

Don't get ahead of yourself. People been 'splainin this place away with different threads for ages: all dead ends the further you follow 'em. The stories I've heard...bulldust. I'm the witness.

(beat)

It was a killing, plain as day.

CUT TO:

95 **EXT. FIELD - DAY - THEN**

95

The plains are quiet. A fire is on the horizon.

COYOTE MAN (V.O)
Silence was broken, as if it were
my first memory. A fratricide.

In silhouette from the sun, the unmistakable COTTONWOOD TREE.
Desperate pleas can be heard ringing out into the heavens,
accompanied by the sound of a body dragging.

The sound of bludgeoning from the opposite side of the tree.
A wailing arm comes from its side, going limp.

COYOTE MAN (CONT'D)
One brother, the stronger one,
struck his kin. Picked a branch
right from the cottonwood.
(beat)
He was overcome by some hungry sort
of greed, driven strange by the
whispers in the wind.

CAMERA moves around the tree to reveal the PAWNEE WARRIOR
with a remorseless expression on his face—MURDERING his own
BROTHER. It's gruesome. The sounds are vivid.

The WIND picks up after the murder.

The Pawnee Warrior wipes blood from the BRANCH, as if he
intends to keep it. He stands amongst the tall grass. The
wind oscillates in waves. The fire grows closer. A coyote
HOWL alerts the Pawnee Warrior. He looks out at the grass,
ready for whatever awaits him.

CUT TO: PRESENT

96 **EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE (PORCH)**

96

Kira looks toward the cottonwood tree with a new sense of
understanding in her eyes.

COYOTE MAN
He looked eyes with me, 'n turned
away. That moment, I knew I was
indentured to this land.

KIRA
He thought he would get away with
it...

COYOTE MAN

That's the nature of this place.
The wind carries the last breaths
of the forgotten, the exploited,
the wronged. You'll witness crimes
preserved in time, exactly as they
happened. *Ye just have to listen...*

Coyote Man momentarily drifts off, entranced by the landscape's eternal harmony. Coyote Man's mouth is slightly agape, his eyes, glossed over.

The wind surrounds them, not frightening, but ethereal. As if Coyote Man is showing Kira the proof behind his words, she looks across the road to see the PAWNEE WARRIOR waiting in silence. This is the first time Kira has actually SEEN the Pawnee Warrior. The Warrior looks as if he wants to charge them, but something is preventing him.

With enough time, Kira becomes anxious and gently shakes Coyote Man's arm.

KIRA

Yote, you alright?

Coyote Man becomes lucid again, and looks forward. The Warrior is GONE.

COYOTE MAN

I'm tired, Kira. Truth is a burden
too heavy for one man. It's so
easily lost. This place, it's been
waitin' for ye. I'm afraid the
burden is yours now.

Kira laughs in disbelief.

KIRA

Wait, how do you mean?

COYOTE MAN

You feel it, don't ye? This place
judges all those lucky or unlucky
enough to come through it. Had ye
read a mile away—like a neon sign.
It knows you got some kind of good
to make on.

KIRA

...Otherwise I'd be dead already.

COYOTE MAN

The others who have come here, they either weren't on a path like yours or they didn't play by the rules of the man in the grass. See, he's been ordained by an evil old as time to force ye into the same trade he made all them years ago.

Kira understands this feeling, but needs to hear it in words.

KIRA

The same trade...

COYOTE MAN

To keep your life, ye have to trade a soul. Your own kin, at that.

KIRA

An eye for an eye. There can't be another way?

Coyote Man gives Kira a knowing look, one that's seen centuries of cruelty.

COYOTE MAN

Your folk shaped the rules. I just pass 'em on. If ye try and run from the trade, ye'll end up dead one way or another. Like all the others.

KIRA

Wait, how much does Lawrence know about any of this?

COYOTE MAN

Ain't heard a lick about that *Tall Grass Devil* 'til he showed up.

Kira holds her head. With a sigh:

KIRA

I just wanted to get away from everything coming out here...

COYOTE MAN

I seen your folk raze these lands, partition 'em, poison 'em. I seen your kin soak these fields red, gunnin' buffalo from their metal arteries. For what? They went and tamed thunder with a greater cacophony.

(MORE)

COYOTE MAN (CONT'D)

There ain't a place in this here country ye can run to solve yer problems. The rules apply to you too, girlie.

Kira looks up again, considering Coyote Man's words.

COYOTE MAN (CONT'D)

A witness continues the cycle, or so I've seen. But I see a kindred spirit in you. It's time ye start callin' the shots.

Kira doesn't know what to say. Coyote Man begins to shiver.

KIRA

Can I get you something, Yote?

COYOTE MAN

I can manage just fine. I'll be around. Thank ye for listenin'.

Kira looks out in to the vast darkness, then goes inside.

97

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE (COUNTER) - NIGHT

97

Kira checks around the room for a microwave to heat up some noodles for Yote. She glances at the top of the lockers, and gets on her tippy-toes to grab the microwave Cody once forbade her from using.

After plugging it in, Kira opens the microwave door and drops the noodle container inside.

...And with the push of a button,

THE ENTIRE STORE BLACKS OUT - for a moment, complete silence.

98

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE (FRONT DOORS) - CONTINUOUS

98

Kira uses the store's flashlight to look around.

Flustered and empty-handed, Kira comes outside again to see that Coyote Man has VANISHED.

KIRA

Yote?

Kira peers around. A beat. She pulls a cigarette out as the wind rises and falls in violent gusts. She can't light it. Kira decides not to smoke. She goes back inside.

103 **EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE (PARKING LOT) - NIGHT** 103

Kira lets her cigarette burn out to the very end before tossing it on the ground and going back inside the store.

104 **INT. CONVENIENCE STORE (MANAGER'S OFFICE) - NIGHT** 104

Kira watches the monitors while listening to music. She reaches for the mouse and unlocks the desktop. She clicks out of the live feed to another window: Flight Bookings for the East Coast.

105 **EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT** 105

Kira takes the trash out. One of the trash bags falls over tearing a hole that spills the bag's contents out. She looks down, feeling despondent.

106 **INT. CONVENIENCE STORE (FREEZER UNIT) - PARKING LOT - NIGHT** 106

Kira is absent-mindedly restocking the freezer aisle, and looks up at the clock on the wall. A REALIZATION. Where is Deliveryman John?

In the cold drinks door reflection, a flashing glimpse of the PAWNEE WARRIOR is watching her from behind an aisle. Kira remains unaware.

107 **INT. CONVENIENCE STORE (FRONT COUNTER) - LATER** 107

Kira gets up and looks at a calendar behind her. John is scheduled to come in. Not wanting to confront what comes next, Kira hesitantly makes her way over to the store's landline and starts dialing.

Concerned, Kira waits as the phone rings:

KIRA

Hi, yes. T.G. Dry Goods. Hesperia Road. I believe we're supposed to be getting a delivery tonight?

FEMALE OPERATOR

Let me see. Your business has been assigned a new driver. You should expect to see Hank on the next scheduled delivery. He's an experienced driver, I can assure you.

KIRA
Where is John then?

FEMALE OPERATOR
John is no longer employed with us.

KIRA
Oh. What happened?

FEMALE OPERATOR
He's deceased, ma'am. A notice as
been sent to your company email,
along with the other businesses on
John's former route.

Kira closes her eyes, taking the news in. Yet another
fatality.

FEMALE OPERATOR (CONT'D)
We had received several reports
concerning a shift in his job
performance—

THE FRONT DOOR CHIMES

Out of the corner of Kira's eye she sees a FIGURE RUSH TO THE
BATHROOM. The door SLAMS SHUT. Kira momentarily holds the
phone away from her ear...and brings it back:

FEMALE OPERATOR (CONT'D)
—If John exhibited any disturbing
behavior while on-site, we'd like
to extend our sincerest apologies
and emphasize that his actions do
not reflect the quality we strive
for at Western Delivery Solutions.

KIRA
Cancel any further deliveries you
have for our store. Hank won't be
safe here—

A LOUD CRASH comes from the bathroom.

Kira hangs up. She waits for the customer to exit the
restroom. Kira checks the clock: 11:30 p.m. Silence.

108

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE (AISLES) - LATER

108

A strange sound is carried through the store's vents. It
sounds like weeping.

Kira approaches the bathroom door, gingerly.

KIRA
Hey, you okay in there?

Nothing. Kira motions for the door's handle but hesitates.

109 **INT. CONVENIENCE STORE (MANAGER'S OFFICE) - NIGHT** 109

Using her Swiss Army Knife, Kira fiddles with the broken microwave in the backroom to pass time. Kira looks up at the monitors. She clicks on CCTV FEED 3, showing the bathrooms.

Kira monitors FEED 3 closely. No activity. After some time, she gets up to check in on the main room.

110 **INT. CONVENIENCE STORE (AISLES/BATHROOM) - LATER** 110

Kira goes to check the bathroom again, this time gently tugging the handle. It's UNLOCKED. She pushes the door open.

Inside, a NATIVE AMERICAN WOMAN in anachronistic clothing is hunched over the sink. Kira looks at her tortured posture, then focuses on the MIRROR.

It's hard to see at first, but after a moment of clarity, Kira sees a weeping eye, half-shut by blisters, on a face that's DISFIGURED BY SMALLPOX.

The WEEPING WOMAN slowly turns toward Kira and shrieks in agony:

WEEPING WOMAN
KEEP AWAY FROM ME! GET OUT!

The WOMAN bolts past Kira out the door. Kira is winded, trying to process what just happened.

111 **EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE (TALL GRASS) - NIGHT** 111

Kira heads outside to see the woman vanish into the tall grass across the road.

Kira gets to the edge of the tall grass. She stands there for a moment before glancing up at a

CROW FLYING ABOVE HER

She watches it before her eyes fall back onto the tall grass.

The wind kicks up more aggressively. It draws her further into the field.

Kira feels a presence trying to reach out to her in the tall grass. It seems benevolent at first. She doesn't feel threatened.

An orange hue begins to emerge in the distance, a distant scream. Suddenly-

A PATCH OF DIRT EXPLODES NEXT TO KIRA

A GUNSHOT rings out. Kira stands paralyzed for what feels like an eternity before throwing herself onto the wet soil as more shots are fired. She lands hard on her shoulder and gets the wind knocked out of her.

The hail continues as she scrambles to avoid the gunshots.

The ground beneath her begins to shake. Suddenly, the sound of BUFFALO stampeding surrounds Kira.

A BUFFALO comes out from a break in the tall grass and almost slams right into her. A LOCOMOTIVE ENGINE WHINES. MORE GUNSHOTS ARE HEARD. THE BUFFALO COLLAPSES. Kira's eyes close.

Kira's face contorts and a tear streaks down her cheek as she holds the Swiss Army Knife to her chest. She looks up. *Quiet.*

With the first deluge of rain, the ESCAPED CONVICT appears before Kira. He is huddled by a small pond counting his loot.

AN UNASSUMING SHOPKEEPER wearing a white apron approaches the convict with caution. They are both wearing period appropriate clothing from the 1930s. The shopkeeper motions to the convict, who upon noticing the worker, lunges at him with his TRENCH KNIFE. *Red* blooms from under the white apron.

With a GASP, Kira looks down at her knife for protection. Hearing her, the CONVICT turns around and CHARGES KIRA. In a snap, Kira gets up to sprint away from him. As she does this, she TRIPS to the ground, fainting from exhaustion. *Thud.*

CUT TO:

112

INT. KIRA'S HOME - EAST COAST - FLASHBACK

112

A young Kira sits with her FATHER in their kitchen at home. Kira's father is showing her how to cut peaches with a SWISS ARMY KNIFE. Kira is having a hard time with it.

DAD

It's just like this.

Kira's father cuts through the peach with the knife turned toward his thumb. Kira tries to do the same. She cuts the peach successfully. Then blood streams from her thumb.

DAD (CONT'D)

Don't worry about that, sweetheart.
I'll get a Band-aid. But look: you
did it. Take a bite...and try not
to look at your thumb.

Kira's dad gets up and leaves through a doorframe into a dark room. Kira takes a bite out of the peach with the knife at her side. Calm. Peaceful.

CUT TO:

113 **EXT. COTTONWOOD TREE - MORNING** 113

The silence of morning. Kira finds herself under the shade of the COTTONWOOD TREE. She sees the tree's branches swaying calmly above her. The distant sound of a car alerts her.

Kira lifts her head up and looks in the car's direction.

114 **EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - CONTINUOUS** 114

Cousin Ian pulls into the lot and parks the 'company car.' He gets out, peering into the front window for Kira.

115 **EXT. COTTONWOOD TREE - CONTINUOUS** 115

Looking down at herself, Kira can see she's badly bruised. Her clothes are wet and muddy. Kira rushes to the back door.

116 **INT. CONVENIENCE STORE (COUNTER) - MOMENTS LATER** 116

Cousin Ian walks into the store. THE DOOR CHIMES. To Ian's surprise, the store has water damage and the roof is leaking. Some products are ruined and part of the ceiling has fallen.

THE DOORBELL CHIMES AGAIN

Uncle Lawrence walks in moments later, looking around the store. *Where's Kira?*

UNCLE LAWRENCE

Look at this place...

A moment later, an exhausted Kira comes out of the back storage room. Her and Lawrence make eye contact.

UNCLE LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
 Goodness. Kira, what happened here,
 darling? As soon as I heard. I...
 (beat, turns to Ian)
 Go and...assess the damage, son.

CUT TO:

117

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE (MANAGER'S OFFICE) - MORNING

117

Kira patches her wounds while sitting in the office chair. Lawrence is closer to the door, blocking her way out. He too looks sweaty and uncharacteristically disheveled. There is awkward tension in the air.

UNCLE LAWRENCE
 Glad to be back in good company
 after wadin' with them sharks in
Lincoln. Whew.

Lawrence takes his hat off and fans himself with it. His speech pattern is slower. Something about him has changed.

KIRA
 (begrudgingly)
 Was starting to think you were
 avoiding me.

Kira glares at Lawrence. He puts his hat on and steps closer. Back to his imposing self.

UNCLE LAWRENCE
 Alright, Judy Moody, I got the
 message. I've already got it worked
 out for you to attend your daddy's
 service. We can cover here and-

KIRA
 How can you keep a straight face
 and pretend like that, Lawrence?
 You know I can't leave.

Kira takes out the picture Cody drew of the Pawnee Warrior.

KIRA (CONT'D)
 Because of this man. You've seen
 him, too.

Lawrence grabs the drawing from Kira's hand. He squints.

UNCLE LAWRENCE
 What, Iron Eyes Cody here's got you
 picking trash off the lot?

Lawrence looks up from the drawing at Kira, grinning.

UNCLE LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
Cute sketch, but I wouldn't quit
your day job.

Kira gets up and yanks the drawing from Lawrence.

KIRA
Your *employee*, Cody, drew this
before fleeing the store and
killing himself.

UNCLE LAWRENCE
Cody? Good grief—*ex-employee*—but
it's the first I'm hearing of this.

Kira pulls Lawrence's engraved TOBACCO TIN out of her pocket.

KIRA
Left this here after Ian said you
were gone. I sat here and watched
footage of you two chatting it up
at the store. Seems like something
he would have told you.

Kira lifts her chin to mask her bluff. Lawrence adjusts his
pants and takes his TIN.

UNCLE LAWRENCE
Must be seein' ghosts 'cause there
is no such footage.

KIRA
If you want to get to the crux of
it. I'm certainly not seeing the
Tall Grass Devil.

UNCLE LAWRENCE
Best watch your tone, 'cause this
store is the piggybank doling out
your rent, sweetheart.

KIRA
I spoke with Coyote Man. He showed
me what's going on here, the nature
of this place. What you've done
with the store is disgraceful.

Lawrence puts his hands on his hips and laughs from the side
of his mouth.

UNCLE LAWRENCE

When an old dog howls at the moon,
do you pull up a chair and listen?

KIRA

This place is killing people and
you're luring them to it with a
neon fish hook.

Kira is standing toward the back of the room now. There is a
DARK MASS behind her. Lawrence looks past Kira with an
intense expression on his face. His voice lowers.

UNCLE LAWRENCE

You think I knew what the Sam Fuck
I was getting into here? I thought
this place was the windfall I
finally *deserved*. And I'm making
the best I can of it.

KIRA

This has to stop. We have to warn
others about the truth here.

UNCLE LAWRENCE

Oh, you make it sound so easy,
talking about the truth like it's a
responsibility. The things I've
seen here...That barbed wire fence
outside, or even some little patch
of asphalt can't just be what they
are anymore. They're the sites of
betrayals, executions, massacres...

Lawrence paces uneasily, looking at the floor. He looks up at
Kira. Behind her, the PAWNEE WARRIOR stands silently.

UNCLE LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

Your ol' pal the Tall Grass Devil,
now there's a mug you can pin all
this ugliness on. That feelin' in
your gut you can't put into words.

KIRA

You know this is wrong.

UNCLE LAWRENCE

That oh-so-noble truth you're after
is a falsehood, Kira. The further
you follow it, the less sense it
makes. It doesn't hold a candle to
the power of the image.

(MORE)

UNCLE LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

And if your Uncle Lawrence didn't slap a fresh coat of paint on this place, somebody else would anyhow. You oughta be grateful it's me. 'Cause what we're doing here makes sense. And we're making it *make* sense for others, too. A simple solution for all those woes that ail you. I'm sure you can relate.

Kira half-laughs at Lawrence's delusional ramblings.

KIRA

Are you listening to yourself? People are dying over fuckin' bobbleheads here.

UNCLE LAWRENCE

I can't leave either, Kira. So where does that put us?

KIRA LOOKS DOWN AT HER SWISS ARMY KNIFE ON THE TABLE - She grabs for it as a HIGH ELECTRONIC NOTE SCREECHES. Kira thrusts the knife in UNCLE LAWRENCE'S DIRECTION AS SHE-

SNAPS OUT OF IT - It's just another vision. *Did Lawrence have it too?* The pair have a stand off from opposite ends of the room. Lawrence has an ugly expression on his face.

UNCLE LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

I think it's best you leave then.

Lawrence gets quiet again. In his mind, he has made an important decision. From the corner of his eye, he sees Ian walking toward the front doors. He's done his job.

UNCLE LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

Don't you come back until instructed. I want you taking some time off whilst I figure what to do with this place and the damage.

The Pawnee Warrior is no longer behind Kira. Her eyes show a death sentence. Lawrence coldly drives the point home.

UNCLE LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

I have footage of you bringing that man in the van here to die. Don't know if he was some kind of fed, or what, but you're complicit here... And you'd have to get real creative offin' yourself in a jail cell, so let's not entertain the notion. Just give me time.

KIRA

You know this is the last time
you're ever going to see me, then.

Lawrence steps away from the door to let Kira out.

UNCLE LAWRENCE

Don't act a fool, now.

Kira exits. Lawrence hears the front door CHIME.

CUT TO:

118 **INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - DAY** 118

Kira, picking at her fingernails, soon drifts off into sleep.

119 **I/E. KIRA'S APARTMENT - EVENING** 119

Kira in and out of consciousness, trying to lose the thoughts swirling in her head. The Spirit Space is taking a toll on her psyche. SHE'S BEEN DRINKING ALONE AGAIN.

Kira has been ignoring her phone since she entered her drunken fugue. Weeks have passed. A sudden *weather service alert on her phone* brings her out of her trance.

Kira motions to turn off the phone, but sees there are several messages from LUKE and a voicemail. She listens:

LUKE (V.O.)

Hey, are you at work? I thought I'd
come visit you...at work. I'm
really no good at surprises...or
apologies...

Kira jolts up in bed. She gets her things and runs out the door in full panic. CAMERA moves toward the sliver of light in the window, where a bright flash transitions to a view of the street below. Kira is seen sprinting toward the bus stop.

120 **EXT. STREET / BUS (MOVING) - SUNSET** 120

Kira narrowly catches the bus. The same ride now feels like an eternity as she looks out the window.

LUKE (V.O.)

I'm...sorry for running out on you
like that at the library. I shut
you out when I should have been
listening.

(MORE)

LUKE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 You're my friend, and I care about
 you. It...was just a lot to take
 in. But I should have tried harder.
 So...I'm trying now.

The voicemail ends. Kira calls Luke back, holding her phone tight. Cell reception is DEAD. Kira gets a BUSY SIGNAL.

Through the bus' front window, Kira spots a BROKEN DOWN CAR on the road, and stands up. IT'S LUKE'S CAR.

121 **EXT. BUS (ROAD) - EVENING**

121

Luke is stranded on the side of the road, leaning against his broken down car.

KIRA
 Hey, can you hold up a few minutes
 for my friend?

BUS DRIVER
 I'm in no hurry this hour.

Kira jumps out of the bus and across the street. Luke looks up, surprised. The bus idles behind them.

Luke, who'd been listening to a baseball game on the radio, turns it off. His eyes sweep over her disheveled appearance.

LUKE
 Hey, wow. Are you late for work or
 something? I was gonna try and meet
 you there, but I have no reception-

KIRA
 Luke! Oh, thank god for that
 shitbox car. What are you doing
 here?

Kira hugs Luke.

LUKE
 Hey, let's not bring the car into
 this...

They break their hug.

LUKE (CONT'D)
 Were you getting my messages? I was
 worried, you weren't showing up to
 class. I've been a shit friend. All
 that stuff you laid on me was
 pretty intense.

(MORE)

LUKE (CONT'D)

But I shouldn't have turned my back on you. All I can say is that I'm here now. There's no growth in avoidance.

KIRA

There's no growth in avoidance...

She smiles.

KIRA (CONT'D)

Did you rehearse that?

Luke rubs the back of his neck and glances away.

LUKE

Uh, yeah...was it obvious? I got this stupid therapy app and everything...

Kira laughs.

KIRA

You're good, man. It means a lot.

Quiet. Luke sees there is something else on Kira's mind.

KIRA (CONT'D)

My dad died a week ago.

(beat)

I have to get back home for the service, but...I don't know if I-

A DISTANT COYOTE HOWL

Kira backs up. She looks to see a TRAIL OF SMOKE coming from the direction of the STORE. Luke follows her eyes.

LUKE

What's that?

KIRA

I'm not sure...Lawrence basically fired me a few days ago.

LUKE

Why the hell would he do that?

KIRA

I wish I was wrong about the store, but it's worse than you can imagine. I tried getting him to come clean about it.

Luke scans the landscape, squinting.

LUKE

Worse, huh?

KIRA

It's genuinely evil there. But I need to see if there's another way out of this.

LUKE

I'll come with you then.

KIRA

Luke, if you go there you'll have a choice between having to kill a family member or going nuts until you kill *yourself*. Please, take your car breaking down as a sign.

LUKE

I need to see this for myself. Whatever you've seen. I've got to help some way or another.

KIRA

The best thing you can do for me, right now, is turn around. You just have to trust me. I'm already marked.

Luke shakes his head, getting closer to a stoic Kira.

LUKE

I don't like what you're implying here, Kira.

KIRA

I know. Look, I don't want to die, but it's all I can think about now...Get back to town. I need to know you're safe. And Luke, if I don't come back, just drop it. I know how this sounds: T.G. Dry Goods just looks like some harmless old store and everything around us is *real life*, and we probably have our final tomorrow, and there's no way *any of this* shit is real...but I promise you, this place is cursed. Please, please, don't come looking for me, and don't get anybody else involved or else you'll have blood on your hands.

The bus honks.

LUKE

I can't just let you-

Kira almost attacks Luke, pushing him toward the bus.

KIRA

Please trust me. Just please, okay?
This is the hand I've been dealt.

LUKE

The things you'll do to avoid
buying a round at Marlowe's...
Alright, you're in control here.

Luke stares at Kira for a beat before boarding the bus. Kira unlatches her bike. The bus turns around to leave.

Kira, alone with her bicycle, knows there is no turning back.

CUT TO:

122 **EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT**

122

Kira hops off her bike before gaining visibility of the store. She rests it in the tall grass. Out of sight. She heads on foot toward the store, and finds a bit of grass to hide in so she can stake out the scene from the other side of the road.

KIRA'S POV as she spots a BARREL ON FIRE behind the store.
Someone's burning something.

The T.G. Dry Goods sign is OFF, along with the rest of the lights in the store.

A flashlight SHINES through one of the store's windows. Kira waits, calculating her next move.

A light from inside the store turns on from the manager's office. Kira watches. After a moment, the door opens. She leans in.

123 **E/I. CONVENIENCE STORE - CONTINUOUS**

123

COUSIN IAN comes out of the office. Ian's face is concealed by a wrapped scarf and protective goggles—his visage entirely unrecognizable to Kira. He exits the office and collects things from the counter in a repurposed pizza delivery bag: money, documents, etc.

Kira strains to see, but Cousin Ian leaves her field of view. She moves closer for a better look.

124 **E/I. CONVENIENCE STORE - CONTINUOUS**

124

Kira, crouching in the tall grass watches as Ian grabs a Tall Grass Devil bobblehead from an aisle and stashes it in the box. A *keepsake*?

He proceeds to extract something from the delivery bag that looks like a MOSQUITO COIL.

He then takes a spindle of yarn out, along with several party snap boxes full of repurposed gun powder, and some lighter fluid.

From the top, Ian lights the mosquito coil—as the coil burns, it will eventually reach its end on the floor where

A PILE OF GUNPOWDER from the party snappers lies amongst a matrix of yarn.

Ian spreads the yarn out around the store—from the aisles, to the freezer section, to a door leading outside. Ian douses the yarn with lighter fluid.

Kira continues watching, the cicadas chirping loudly around her, a constant white noise. Suddenly the noise comes to a HALT. It's jarring. Kira's breath becomes audible. She turns around slowly to see

SOMEONE IS STANDING RIGHT BEHIND HER

IT'S HANNAH. A paint stroke of dried blood runs from her nose down to her torso. Her arms are ivory white. The expression on her face is mournful, another victim of the Spirit Space who Kira couldn't save.

Locking eyes, Kira blinks. Hannah's gone. The cicadas return.

125 **INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - CONTINUOUS**

125

Leaves rustle in the wind. RACK FOCUS to inside the store, Cousin Ian puts the remaining items into the delivery bag.

126 **EXT. ROAD - CONTINUOUS**

126

Uncle Lawrence is lying low in his car, a short distance from the store, in a REST AREA surrounded by tall grass.

Lawrence pops a sedative pill. He lights up one of his hand-rolled cigarettes in the car with the window barely cracked.

Uncle Lawrence anxiously plays with the dials on his radio. He waits for Ian's return. Lawrence looks annoyed and punches a number into a battered SATELLITE PHONE.

Kira's silhouette DASHES across the road, unnoticed. She vanishes behind the store. No CCTV cameras to contend with.

127

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE (COUNTER) - CONTINUOUS

127

The landline in the store rings. Cousin Ian hastily picks it up, his back exposed to Kira.

COUSIN IAN

I'm...I'm just finishing up...had
to think it through-

Out of focus, Kira enters the store behind Ian.

She has to think quick, and grabs something from her coat pocket, just as a masked Ian turns and spots her. He panics, taking a step toward her.

Kira lets out a stream of PEPPER SPRAY at his covered face. Ian begins flailing.

Kira still doesn't realize who the masked intruder is. She motions for her SWISS ARMY KNIFE.

CUT TO:

128

EXT. ROAD - CONTINUOUS

128

Lawrence interrupted on the phone, shocked.

UNCLE LAWRENCE

Oh, what in the *fuck*-

Lawrence slams his fist on the car's steering wheel, laden with a vintage WHEEL LOCK. He unlocks it. Lawrence then turns his car 180° and drives to the store.

129

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - CONTINUOUS

129

Ian frantically tears off his scarf and goggles. His watering eyes bulge as he reaches out, gasping for air. Kira realizes who she's sprayed, putting her knife away.

At the same moment, Uncle Lawrence bursts through the front doors with his steering wheel lock in hand—for melee.

Lawrence stops at the scene unfolding before him.

UNCLE LAWRENCE

Wha-How *dumb* are you comin' round here when I told you not to?

Ian drops to one knee, wheezing, and choking on his own spit. Uncle Lawrence's voice turns to panic as he tries to aid his nephew. His SATELLITE PHONE falls to the floor.

UNCLE LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

The boy! What happened to him?

Kira rushes to the manager's office and tries to find something to help. Ian's scarf stays stuck to his face as he desperately struggles to pull it off. *Something is very wrong.* Lawrence's voice cracks as he raises it:

UNCLE LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

What did *YOU DO?*

Kira has the pepper spray can in her hand.

KIRA

I didn't know who he was, I sprayed him!

UNCLE LAWRENCE

Capsicum? God, the boy's deathly allergic to that poison.

Kira motions toward Lawrence, now hunched over his dying Nephew.

KIRA

Here, I can—

Reflexively, Uncle Lawrence LURCHES at Kira, steering wheel lock in-hand. Lawrence swings at Kira, underhanded, and knocks her VIOLENTLY UNCONSCIOUS.

CUT TO BLACK.

130

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT

130

Ian stops struggling. He's not breathing. A long beat here.

Cut to close-up of Kira on the ground, in and out of consciousness, seeing glimpses of Lawrence dragging Cousin Ian out of the store, and making sure the contraption is still lit. Lawrence takes the pizza delivery bag and looks down at Kira, whose forehead is bleeding profusely.

UNCLE LAWRENCE
You'll have to do.

CUT TO BLACK.

131 **INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - DAWN** 131

The light coming through the windows is different. Kira wakes up to fire surrounding her.

This sequence is dreamy, the situation is unreal to Kira. Sound is drowned out, and faint whirling envelopes her senses. Like the sound of blood flowing through a vessel, or being in the womb. Kira spots Lawrence's SATELLITE PHONE on the floor and grabs it. Kira ESCAPES THE BLAZING STORE.

132 **EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE (COTTONWOOD TREE) - CONTINUOUS** 132

Kira collapses in the tall grass, near the COTTONWOOD TREE.

More time has passed. Kira wakes up under the cottonwood tree's protective canopy. The sound of the blaze takes the backstage, as the wind sings a haunted melody to her.

With IAN DEAD, Kira has, unintentionally, paid her debt to the Spirit Space. She's free, just as Uncle Lawrence believes he is, having supposedly killed her.

Kira pulls the satellite phone out of her pocket and calls her MOM. Her voice is faint.

KIRA
Mom.

MOM (V.O.)
Kira...It's so early.

KIRA
I just wanted to hear your voice.

MOM
You don't sound right.

KIRA
That's not important. You have a daughter, and I have a mom.
(MORE)

KIRA (CONT'D)

But I think we're both struggling
with new definitions now.

(beat)

I'm coming home for the service.

A long beat. Kira's mom can almost be heard like she's right
offscreen, breathing.

MOM

Kira, I don't know what you want me
to say.

Kira looks confused.

MOM (CONT'D)

The service was days ago. Though I
expect you knew that and just
wanted to hurt me.

Kira's face shows utter loss and defeat. She doesn't know
what to say. In a soft voice:

KIRA

I think I just killed cousin Ian.

Kira begins to cry silently, hiding it from her mom.

MOM

What? I'm not doing this right now,
Kira. I'm going back to bed.

KIRA

I love you-

Kira's mom hangs up before she can end the call herself. With
a blank expression on her face, Kira tosses the phone into
the grass. She sets her head back against the tree, exhausted
from the blood loss. A beat.

Kira opens her eyes to an OLD WOUNDED COYOTE silently
observing her. She isn't afraid of him. She drifts off again.

Sometime later, the coyote is gone. Kira musters the strength
to get back on her feet. She uses her remaining energy to
walk toward the front of the store.

133

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE (PORCH) - CONTINUOUS

133

With burnt matted hair, dry blood smeared on her forehead,
and singed ragged clothing, Kira approaches the RUINED
CONVENIENCE STORE. She looks around before taking a seat
where Yote once sat on the PORCH.

Now a charred ruin of a different world. Kira looks out at the sweeping majesty of the tall grass, its mysteries finally unraveled.

Kira finds comfort in this, and what will be forever now.

MUSIC CUE: 'IS THAT ALL THERE IS?' BY PEGGY LEE.

CAMERA PANS FROM KIRA TO THE TALL GRASS ACROSS THE ROAD WHERE THE PAWNEE WARRIOR STANDS, UNABLE TO REACH HER AGAIN.

CUT TO:

134 **EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY**

134

One uninterrupted shot.

Autumnal suburbia - pretty and clean. A driveway with a cop car parked in it. CAMERA snakes past caution tape blocking the front door of a gaudily decorated 'raised ranch' house with Corinthian columns and lion statues in front of it.

135 **INT. UNCLE LAWRENCE'S PALACE - CONTINUOUS**

135

Enter through the doorframe where, to the right, sits a coat rack with vintage shadow plaid Western Wear.

Shot of an ornately decorated living room; a painting of Greater Prairie Chickens over a fireplace. A chalkware buffalo statue on the mantle. CAMERA skirts the living room to reach a STAIRCASE.

CAMERA follows the staircase to its top—a bottle of booze and an unidentifiable pill bottle sit atop the bannister. Move past the staircase, down a hallway to a doorway. Through the doorway is a room that has been torn apart: bedsheets strewn about, curtain railings are cattywampus, some shattered glass on the floor. On the bedside wall, John Gast's 'American Progress' hangs covered in blood. There are hints of brain matter on the wall. On the bed, A SHOTGUN.

Pan across room, focus on open French doors to a BALCONY, one half-torn curtain flowing as the breeze blows. A blood track leads toward the balcony. It stops at the ledge. CAMERA moves through the French doors to reach the balcony's view of the backyard.

Slowly PAN DOWN to a BODY splayed out on the house's courtyard near a pool. Upon closer inspection, it's

UNCLE LAWRENCE.

Lawrence is wearing his plaid suit and Tall Grass Devil tie, his cowboy hat to the side of his head. Lawrence's skin is purple from the cold and initial stages of decomposition. Lawrence's engraved TOBACCO TIN has rolled out of his coat pocket, its contents spilled for the world to see.

CAMERA lifts back up to the MAIN BEDROOM. CAMERA SLOW PANS LEFT to a NIGHT STAND in a dimly lit corner. Closing in on the nightstand, the TALL GRASS DEVIL BOBBLEHEAD sits on Lawrence's dresser. Streaked with blood. Partially scorched.

THE END.