

"SILENT ROOM"

Version 1A

A micro short film by Kevin B. Ploth

Black and white. Silent. Runtime: 2 minutes & .50 seconds.

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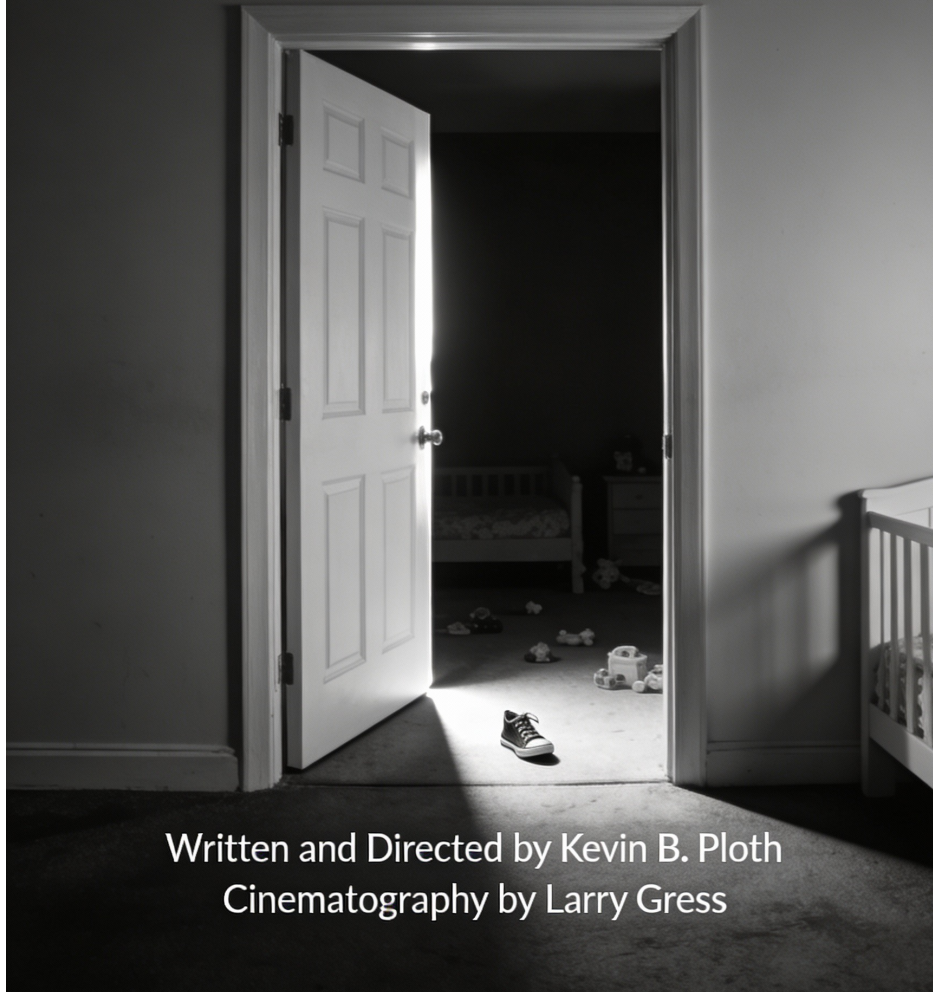
"For the Children Gone! For the children here! For the Children yet to come!" KBP

We hear gunshots, sirens, screams, a news segment then open on a newspaper article another school shooting in anywhere America.

Based on data through early 2026, school shootings (K-12) have continued to occur at high rates, with Texas frequently leading the nation in the number of incidents. The following statistics are derived from sources like the K-12 School Shooting Database

While earlier decades saw fewer incidents, data from 1966 to 2022 shows 721 fatalities in K-12 school shooting incidents alone.

SILENT ROOM



Written and Directed by Kevin B. Ploth
Cinematography by Larry Gress

The majority of victims in K-12 incidents are children and teenagers. A study of over 3,000 victims from 1970–2022 found that 2,033 were children (ages 5-17).

Attacks like Sandy Hook (2012) and Uvalde (2022) resulted in the deaths of children as young as 5–10 years old.

Major Incidents and Death Tolls

- **2007: Virginia Tech (33 dead, including shooter).**
- **2012: Sandy Hook Elementary School (27 dead, including shooter).**
- **2022: Robb Elementary School, Uvalde (22 dead, including shooter).**
- **2018: Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School (17 dead).**
- **2018: Santa Fe High School (10 dead).**
- **2015: Umpqua Community College (10 dead).**

Shooter Profile:

Roughly 45% of K-12 shooters between 1966–2022 were current or former students.

- **Weapon Usage: Handguns are the most common weapon used, but rifles, while less common (7%), were the deadliest, resulting in a higher fatality-to-wounded ratio.**
- **Location: High schools are the site of the majority of active shooter incidents (55%).**

The core of **Silent Room** concept—focusing on the **empty, frozen-in-time child’s bedroom** left behind after a school shooting—lends itself powerfully to a **dramatic, dark, black-and-white** micro short film. By removing the mother (and any child figures), the piece becomes purely about **absence** and lingering loss: the room itself as a silent witness, a tomb of interrupted childhood. This aligns closely with real-world memorials, such as the untouched bedrooms documented in projects like the CBS News series (and Netflix short documentary ***All the Empty Rooms***), where families preserve rooms exactly as they were, capturing the eerie stillness of a life cut short.

FADE IN:

INT. MODERN SUBURBAN HOME - CHILD’S BEDROOM - DAY

The room is frozen in time: a rumpled bed with superhero sheets, scattered action figures on the floor mid-play, a half-finished drawing of a family on the desk—stick figures with smiles. A backpack slumps by the door, unzipped, spilling crayons. Sunlight filters through half-drawn curtains, casting long shadows. No sound, but the stillness screams absence.

The MOTHER (40s, hollow-eyed, disheveled) enters slowly, her hand trembling on the doorknob. She pauses, eyes scanning the room as if expecting movement. She touches the bed gently, smoothing a wrinkle that isn’t there, then pulls back as if burned.

Cut to close-up: Her fingers trace a toy gun among the figures—a plastic replica, innocent in play, now ominous.

The FATHER (40s, stoic but shattered, graying temples) appears in the doorway behind her. He watches, fists clenched at his sides. He steps in, picks up the drawing, his face crumpling. A tear traces down his cheek.

Quick cuts:

- Mother's hand clutching a small shirt from the floor, pressing it to her face, shoulders shaking in silent sobs.

- Father's gaze on a wall calendar, marked with a school event—circled in red crayon, the date long past.

- Intercut with ethereal overlays: Ghostly glimpses of the SON (9, playful, wide-eyed) laughing silently, building with blocks, waving goodbye from the door. His presence flickers like old film, vanishing into shadows.

The parents meet in the center of the room. She leans into him; he wraps an arm around her. They stand amid the relics, eyes closed, holding each other as the camera pulls back slowly.

Sudden flash: A newspaper clipping on the desk—headline blurred but words like “SCHOOL SHOOTING” and “TRAGIC LOSS” visible. No gore, just implication.

Back to parents: Their embrace tightens, faces etched with raw grief. The room's preserved chaos a monument to what was stolen—their only child, forever nine.

The door creaks shut on its own, sealing the silence.

FADE TO BLACK.

TITLE CARD: "In memory of the silenced."

Credits and Sponsorship

END.

Version 1B

ROOM

A micro short film by Kevin B. Ploth

Black and white. Silent. Runtime: 2 minutes.

FADE IN:

***INT. MODERN SUBURBAN HOME - CHILD'S BEDROOM -
DAY***

The room is a raw wound, frozen in the final pulse of a child's life: a bed with superhero sheets, twisted as if torn by a scream, action figures scattered in a chaotic tableau of abandoned play, their tiny swords raised in futile defiance. A half-finished drawing on the desk—stick figures of a family, their crayon smiles melting under a cruel draft from a cracked window—quivers as if alive with grief. Sunlight stabs through tattered curtains, casting fractured shadows that claw at the walls like ghosts of despair. The silence is suffocating, a vacuum where a boy's laughter once danced.

The MOTHER (40s, eyes hollowed by torment, face a map of shattered hope) stumbles in, her hand gripping the doorknob as if it's her last anchor to sanity. Her shadow stretches, a jagged specter consuming the room's fading light. She reaches for the bed, fingers trembling, tracing the ghost of her son's warmth in the rumpled sheets. Her gaze catches a toy gun among the figures—a plastic mockery of innocence, its barrel aimed at a fallen hero, now a searing symbol of her unraveling world. She chokes on a silent sob, her body folding inward.

Cut to close-up: Her fingers hover over the toy gun, shaking, as if it might burn her soul to ash.

The FATHER (40s, a broken monument, eyes raw and red, gray stubble like frost on a grave) looms in the doorway, his frame rigid with the weight of unsaid screams. He steps in, drawn to the drawing on the desk—its innocent lines a knife twisting in his chest. He lifts it, hands unsteady, and a tear falls, splintering the paper's edge like a cracked heart. His face collapses, a silent howl trapped behind clenched teeth.

Quick cuts, drenched in visceral metaphor:

- Mother clutches a small shirt from the floor, its fabric a fading pulse of her son's existence. She buries her face in it, her body wracked with silent, convulsive sobs, the shirt's folds mirroring the wreckage of her spirit, each thread a frayed lifeline.

- Father's eyes lock on a wall calendar, a red crayon circle bleeding around a school event—a date now etched in their bones as the day their world was ripped apart. The

pages flutter in a ghostly breeze, time itself recoiling from the wound.

- Ethereal overlays: The SON (9, luminous with fleeting life, eyes like stars snuffed out) flickers into the frame, a fragile mirage. He stacks blocks into a teetering tower, each piece a heartbeat stolen too soon. He waves goodbye from the door, his smile dissolving into a burst of light, devoured by the room's ravenous shadows.

The parents collide in the room's center, a fragile altar of their son's relics. She collapses against him, her body a wilting rose crushed by grief; he holds her, his arms a crumbling fortress, his own tears carving rivers down his face. The camera pulls back, the room a mausoleum of their only child's final moments—every toy, every scribble a scream frozen in time, a constellation of loss burning in eternal night.

Sudden flash: A newspaper clipping on the desk, buried under crayons, its headline clawing through the blur—“SCHOOL SHOOTING,” “ONLY SON LOST.” The words pulse like a heartbeat, no blood needed to convey the massacre of their hope.

Back to the parents: Their embrace is desperate, a lifeline against the abyss. Their faces, raw with anguish, are mirrors of a shared apocalypse. Their shadows fuse into a single, distorted form—a monument to a love that will never heal. The room's chaos is a sacred ruin, each object a shard of their son, forever nine, forever gone.

The door groans shut, slow and merciless, as if the room itself is sealing their grief in an eternal tomb, locking them in a vigil that will never end.

FADE TO BLACK.

TITLE CARD: “In memory of the silenced.”

END.

1C Camera/Imagery

Below is the revised script for SILENT ROOM with integrated visual descriptions for storyboarding, designed to enhance the visual metaphors and emotional intensity while maintaining the silent, black-and-white aesthetic. Each scene includes specific visual cues to guide the storyboard artist in capturing the mood, composition, and symbolic imagery.

SILENT ROOM

A micro short film by Kevin B. Ploth

Black and white. Silent. Runtime: 2 minutes.

FADE IN:

SCENE 1: INT. MODERN SUBURBAN HOME - CHILD’S BEDROOM - DAY

Visual Description for Storyboard:

- **Wide shot: A child’s bedroom frozen in time, bathed in stark black-and-white contrast. The bed is center**

frame, superhero sheets twisted chaotically, as if the child was yanked from sleep. Action figures litter the floor in a frozen battle, their tiny swords glinting faintly. A desk holds a half-finished crayon drawing, the paper curling at the edges like wilting petals. Sunlight slices through tattered curtains, casting jagged shadows that resemble claw marks across the walls. The room feels like a crypt, the air heavy with absence. Frame the shot slightly off-kilter to amplify unease.

- **Detail shot:** Zoom on the drawing—stick figures of a family (two parents, one child), their smiles smeared as if the crayon bled. A faint breeze from a cracked window makes the paper tremble.
- **Lighting:** Harsh sunlight from the window creates deep shadows, emphasizing the void where life once was.

The MOTHER (40s, eyes hollowed by torment, face a map of shattered hope) stumbles in, her hand gripping the doorknob as if it's her last anchor to sanity. Her shadow stretches, a jagged specter consuming the room's fading light.

Visual Description for Storyboard:

- **Medium shot:** Mother in the doorway, her silhouette sharp against the dim room. Her face is gaunt, eyes sunken like dark pools, hair falling in messy strands. Her hand clutches the doorknob tightly, knuckles white, the doorframe slightly tilted to mirror her instability.

- **Close-up:** Her trembling hand on the doorknob, fingers twitching as if resisting entry. Her shadow stretches across the floor, long and distorted, merging with the room's shadows like a spreading stain.
- **Lighting:** Soft backlight outlines her, but her face is half in shadow, emphasizing her inner fracture.

She reaches for the bed, fingers trembling, tracing the ghost of her son's warmth in the rumpled sheets. Her gaze catches a toy gun among the figures—a plastic mockery of innocence, its barrel aimed at a fallen hero, now a searing symbol of her unraveling world. She chokes on a silent sob, her body folding inward.

Visual Description for Storyboard:

- **Close-up:** Mother's hand hovers over the bed, fingers brushing the sheets, which are textured with bold black-and-white patterns. The camera lingers on the creases, evoking the child's last movements.
- **Medium shot:** She spots the toy gun among the action figures. Frame it tightly, the gun looming large in the foreground, its plastic sheen catching light ominously. A fallen action figure lies beside it, its face upturned as if pleading.
- **Close-up:** Mother's face as she sees the gun—eyes widen, lips tremble, a silent gasp. Her hand recoils as if scalded, fingers curling into a fist. Her shadow on the wall behind twists into a jagged, claw-like shape.

- **Lighting:** A single beam of light highlights the toy gun, casting its shadow large and menacing across the figures, symbolizing the intrusion of violence.

SCENE 2: FATHER ENTERS

The FATHER (40s, a broken monument, eyes raw and red, gray stubble like frost on a grave) looms in the doorway, his frame rigid with the weight of unsaid screams. He steps in, drawn to the drawing on the desk—its innocent lines a knife twisting in his chest.

Visual Description for Storyboard:

- **Wide shot:** Father in the doorway, framed like a statue, his broad shoulders filling the frame but slumping slightly, betraying his collapse. The room's chaos surrounds him, a stark contrast to his rigid form.
- **Medium shot:** He steps toward the desk, his shadow falling over the drawing, darkening the crayon smiles. The camera tilts up to his face—eyes bloodshot, jaw clenched, a tear glistening like a shard of glass.
- **Close-up:** His hand lifts the drawing, fingers trembling, the paper quivering as if it feels his pain. The stick figures are slightly smudged, as if the child's hand lingered too long.
- **Lighting:** Dim, with a single shaft of light cutting across his face, splitting it into light and shadow to mirror his inner turmoil.

He lifts it, hands unsteady, and a tear falls, splintering the paper's edge like a cracked heart. His face collapses, a silent howl trapped behind clenched teeth.

Visual Description for Storyboard:

- **Close-up:** Tear falls in slow motion, hitting the drawing, the droplet spreading like a dark bloom over the crayon lines. The paper warps slightly under the weight.
- **Medium shot:** Father's face contorts—eyes squeeze shut, mouth twists in a silent scream. His hand grips the drawing tighter, crumpling one corner. The background blurs, isolating his grief.
- **Lighting:** Harsh light from above casts deep shadows under his eyes, making them look like caverns.

SCENE 3: QUICK CUTS WITH METAPHORS

Quick cuts, drenched in visceral metaphor:

- Mother clutches a small shirt from the floor, its fabric a fading pulse of her son's existence. She buries her face in it, her body wracked with silent, convulsive sobs, the shirt's folds mirroring the wreckage of her spirit, each thread a frayed lifeline.

Visual Description for Storyboard:

- **Close-up:** Mother's hands grasp the shirt, small and worn, the fabric bunched tightly in her fists. Her knuckles are white, veins visible, emphasizing her desperation.

- **Medium shot:** She presses the shirt to her face, her body curling inward as if trying to disappear. The shirt's folds ripple like waves of grief, its texture stark in black-and-white.
- **Detail shot:** A close-up of the shirt's collar, slightly frayed, with a faint stain—perhaps juice or paint—hinting at the child's messy vitality.
- **Lighting:** Soft, diffused light wraps around her, but the shirt is brightly lit, a glowing relic of loss.

- Father's eyes lock on a wall calendar, a red crayon circle bleeding around a school event—a date now etched in their bones as the day their world was ripped apart. The pages flutter in a ghostly breeze, time itself recoiling from the wound.

Visual Description for Storyboard:

- **Close-up:** The calendar, pinned to the wall, the red crayon circle around a date (e.g., “Field Trip”) smudged and bleeding, as if the ink is crying. The camera lingers on the date, ominous and heavy.
- **Medium shot:** Father stares at it, his face half in shadow, eyes wide with horror. The pages flutter faintly, caught in a draft, each movement like a heartbeat fading.
- **Detail shot:** A slow zoom on the red circle, the crayon lines jagged, almost pulsating, as if the date itself is alive with pain.

- **Lighting:** A single spotlight on the calendar, casting a halo around the date, while the rest of the frame darkens, isolating the moment of tragedy.

- Ethereal overlays: The SON (9, luminous with fleeting life, eyes like stars snuffed out) flickers into the frame, a fragile mirage. He stacks blocks into a teetering tower, each piece a heartbeat stolen too soon. He waves goodbye from the door, his smile dissolving into a burst of light, devoured by the room's ravenous shadows.

Visual Description for Storyboard:

- **Wide shot:** The son appears as a ghostly overlay, semi-transparent, standing in the room's center. He stacks blocks, his movements fluid but flickering like an old film reel. The tower wobbles, on the verge of collapse.
- **Close-up:** His face, bright and joyful, eyes sparkling with life. He smiles directly at the camera, a moment of piercing connection, then fades slightly, his edges blurring.
- **Medium shot:** He waves from the doorway, his silhouette glowing faintly, then dissolving into a burst of light that scatters like ash. The room's shadows surge forward, swallowing the space where he stood.
- **Lighting:** The son is lit with a soft, otherworldly glow, contrasting the room's harsh shadows. His dissolution is marked by a flare of light, then total darkness.

SCENE 4: PARENTS' EMBRACE

The parents collide in the room's center, a fragile altar of their son's relics. She collapses against him, her body a wilting rose crushed by grief; he holds her, his arms a crumbling fortress, his own tears carving rivers down his face.

Visual Description for Storyboard:

- **Wide shot:** The parents meet in the room's center, surrounded by the chaos of toys and drawings. The composition frames them tightly, the room's clutter forming a claustrophobic halo around them.
- **Medium shot:** Mother collapses into Father's chest, her body slumping, hair falling over her face like a veil. His arms encircle her, but his posture is strained, as if he's holding up the weight of the world.
- **Close-up:** Their faces pressed close, tears streaming, their expressions raw and unguarded. Their eyes are shut, as if they can't bear to see the room anymore.
- **Lighting:** A soft, diffused light bathes them, creating a cocoon-like effect, but the edges of the frame are dark, pressing inward, symbolizing their entrapment in grief.

The camera pulls back, the room a mausoleum of their only child's final moments—every toy, every scribble a scream frozen in time, a constellation of loss burning in eternal night.

Visual Description for Storyboard:

- **Slow pull-back:** The camera retreats, revealing the full scope of the room's preserved chaos—action figures,

scattered crayons, the crumpled bed. The parents are small in the frame, dwarfed by the weight of the relics around them.

- **Detail shot:** A slow pan across the room's objects—a toppled block tower, a single sneaker by the bed, a crayon stub—each item glowing faintly, as if imbued with the child's spirit.
- **Lighting:** The room is dimly lit, with pools of shadow swallowing the edges, creating a sense of an endless void beyond the frame.

SCENE 5: NEWSPAPER CLIPPING

Sudden flash: A newspaper clipping on the desk, buried under crayons, its headline clawing through the blur—“SCHOOL SHOOTING,” “ONLY SON LOST.” The words pulse like a heartbeat, no blood needed to convey the massacre of their hope.

Visual Description for Storyboard:

- **Close-up:** The newspaper clipping, half-hidden under crayons, the headline partially visible but unmistakable. The words “SCHOOL SHOOTING” and “ONLY SON” are bold, the text slightly distorted as if warped by grief.
- **Detail shot:** The camera zooms in on key words, the letters pulsing faintly, almost alive, as if the tragedy is still unfolding.
- **Lighting:** A harsh spotlight isolates the clipping, making it glow against the dark desk, while the

surrounding crayons fade into shadow, their colors muted in black-and-white.

SCENE 6: FINAL EMBRACE AND CLOSURE

Back to the parents: Their embrace is desperate, a lifeline against the abyss. Their faces, raw with anguish, are mirrors of a shared apocalypse. Their shadows fuse into a single, distorted form—a monument to a love that will never heal.

Visual Description for Storyboard:

- **Medium shot:** The parents cling to each other, their bodies trembling, faces pressed close. Their shadows merge on the wall behind, forming a single, twisted shape—like a broken heart or a fallen tree.
- **Close-up:** Their hands interlocked, fingers digging into each other's skin, a desperate grasp for connection. Tears streak their faces, catching the light like fragments of a shattered mirror.
- **Lighting:** A single beam of light from above creates a halo around them, but the edges of the frame darken, as if the world is closing in.

The room's chaos is a sacred ruin, each object a shard of their son, forever nine, forever gone. The door groans shut, slow and merciless, as if the room itself is sealing their grief in an eternal tomb.

Visual Description for Storyboard:

- **Wide shot:** The camera pulls back further, the parents now tiny in the frame, swallowed by the room's relics.

The door begins to close, its movement slow and deliberate, creaking silently in the black-and-white silence.

- **Detail shot:** The door's edge as it shuts, the light from the hallway narrowing to a sliver, then vanishing entirely, plunging the room into near-darkness.
- **Lighting:** The light fades as the door closes, leaving only a faint glow around the parents, as if they're the last embers of a dying fire.

FADE TO BLACK.

TITLE CARD: "In memory of the silenced."

Visual Description for Storyboard:

- **Text shot:** The title card in stark white text on a black background, the letters slightly blurred at the edges, as if dissolving into grief. The font is simple but heavy, evoking a gravestone's weight.
- **Lighting:** Pure black background, with the text glowing faintly, fading slowly into darkness.

END.

Storyboarding Notes:

- **Color Palette:** Strict black-and-white, with high contrast to amplify emotional weight. Use deep shadows and stark highlights to create a sense of fragmentation and loss.

- **Camera Movement:** Slow, deliberate pans and zooms to mirror the parents' hesitant grief, with occasional quick cuts to jolt the viewer, reflecting the suddenness of the tragedy.
- **Composition:** Frame shots to emphasize isolation—parents often small in the frame, dwarfed by the room's relics. Use off-kilter angles to evoke unease and distortion.
- **Symbolism:** Emphasize the toy gun, calendar, and drawing as recurring motifs, each carrying the weight of the tragedy. The son's ghostly overlays should feel fleeting, like memories slipping away.
- **Pacing:** Slow and lingering for most shots, with quick cuts during the metaphor sequence to heighten emotional intensity. The final door-closing shot should feel agonizingly slow, sealing the parents' fate.

This script with visual descriptions provides a clear roadmap for storyboarding, emphasizing the emotional depth and visual metaphors to create a haunting, silent tribute to loss.

