

NEW LEASE

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ACT 1

INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX HALLWAY NIGHT

In a sterile and silent apartment complex hallway, the overhead fluorescent lights hum and flicker. A quiet tension hangs.

A sudden CRASH breaks the silence from off screen followed by a SCREAM.

HAILEY, late twenties artistic, turns the hallway corner. She is bloodied and clearly injured. She limps down the hallway pulling pressure from her right leg. At the end of the hallway she runs straight towards the emergency exit but there is a chain and padlock around the handle. She pushes the door open as slight as it can and presses her mouth to the opening. She cries out into the nighttime street.

EXT. SCARY APARTMENT STREET NIGHT

From the same block, down the street, we hear a very faint muffled cry for help.

HAILEY (O.S.)  
Somebody help me! Please!

INT. SCARY APARTMENT COMPLEX HALLWAY CONTINUOUS

Breathing heavily, Hailey lets out another cry.

HAILEY  
Somebody! Anybody! Help!

She desperately rattles the door bar covered in chains. She stops. She hears something behind her.

A beat.

We hear a very faint whistling. Too faint to make out a tune but it's getting closer. Trembling, Hailey turns to face the source of the noise. As her eyes lock onto the subject, the overhead fluorescents shut off. It sounds like the power to the building went out. Everything goes quiet including the whistling.

Another beat.

Suddenly the WHISTLING CONTINUES but it's directly down the hallway.

Hailey lets out a DEEP DESPERATE BREATH and starts shuffling back down the hallway towards the whistling. We only catch glimpses of this action from the streetlight outside so we're largely only hearing the action. We hear Hailey's CONTINUED BELABORED BREATHING as she runs to the first apartment door. She twists the handle. It's locked. She BANGS helplessly and shouts.

HAILEY (CONT'D)  
Help me! Please! Please Let me in!

There is no response. The whistling is getting louder. We hear her shuffling towards another door. She turns the handle and the doors swings open but crashes on the locked door chain. Hailey screams into the dark apartment!

HAILEY (CONT'D)  
LET ME IN! Goddammit!

The WHISTLING is getting OUTRAGEOUSLY LOUD. She sprints to the next door and throws her entire body weight into it.

INT. SCARY APARTMENT LIVING ROOM NIGHT

This apartment is a little more lit from the big living room window that faces the same street. There is no furniture or any trace of life or any sound. Just complete silence.

A beat.

Hailey CRASHES through the apartment door and SMACKS onto the floor. She lets out a YELP. Hailey immediately gets up slams the door shut and goes to add the chain lock. Suddenly, a hand holding a plumbing wrench swings down through the slightly open doorway and CRACKS against Hailey's wrist. The sound is brutal. Hailey SCREAMS IN PAIN.

HAILEY  
AaaaaaA! Fuck!

She scuttles away from the door and into another room.

INT. SCARY APARTMENT BEDROOM NIGHT

Hailey runs into the bedroom and shuts the door quietly while trying to cradle her newly crushed hand. She looks to the window as an escape but they are covered in exterior steel bars. She looks to the closet with slatted doors and hurries inside sliding the doors behind her.

## INT. SCARY APARTMENT CLOSET NIGHT

Hailey leans against the far side of the closet and slides to the ground. She breathes in deep and lets out a SHAKING WHIMPER trying not to make a sound. As she momentarily rest, the drywall she's leaning against starts to give. She falls back as the drywall crumbles. The sound is loud. She lays motionless hoping it'll diminish her already given away hiding place.

A beat.

Hailey slowly sits up and looks into the new compartment. Its a crawlspace. However lining every surface of this space is what looks like some kind of fungus. A mixture of deep black mold and hazardous mushroom clusters. It is mucus-y and thick like crawling through the lungs of a lifelong smoker. At this entrance there are a few unpacked moving boxes. Assorted *Kitchen* and *Bedroom* written along their sides. Hailey notices that one of the boxes is slightly opened and sitting on top is the handle of a pistol. She pulls it out of the box and unclips the safety. She then pulls out her phone and turns on the flashlight shining it into the crawlspace. The fungus infestation is everywhere. As the light shines, the wet and dewy clusters retract like a sea anemone in a touch pool at an aquarium. Hailey GASPS.

HAILEY

Oh---

She stifles her sound once more. She hears something. The door the to room CREAKS on its hinges. She is petrified.

A beat

WHISTLING RESUMES. It's in the room. Hailey throws herself down the crawlspace supporting her entire body with the hand holding the pistol. With he crushed hand she attempts to hold the flashlight. Every new step we hear the squishy wetness of the fungus underneath her. After a couple of steps she slips forward slamming her chin into the muck. As she pulls herself up we see the muck clinging to her face, she SCREAMS.

HAILEY (CONT'D)

AAAAAA!

She keeps crawling. She's getting further. SLAM! The same plumbing wrench cracks down on her ankle. She screams.

HAILEY (CONT'D)

FUCK!

A gloved hand grabs her other ankle and effortlessly starts pulling her out.

As she slides through the fungal trough, she twists her body around to face her predator. Letting go of her phone she uses both hands to grab the grip of the pistol. She aims it directly in their direction. She pulls the trigger.

EXT. FRONT OF THE SCARY APARTMENT COMPLEX NIGHT

SMASH CUT to a full framed view of the exterior of the apartment complex. We hear nothing but nighttime ambience. From one of the windows we see bright flashes of light. The visual discharge of the pistol. FLASH! FLASH! FLASH! FLASH! FLASH! FLASH! We hear no gunfire.

A beat.

It's quiet. Just the sound of the city street. A DOG BARKS somewhere far off in the distance. Wind rustles. Nothing else. We sit on this shot longer than necessary. Why are we still here?

The longest beat of your goddamn life.

Suddenly, from the front door, we see a HOODED FIGURE open the door and step out, shutting and locking it behind them. They are about six feet tall wearing dark jeans and a winter jacket. As they begin to walk, we see that something is dripping from under their jacket and onto the concrete. They are walking as if nothing is the matter but a thick liquid is leaving a drip trail behind them as they turn the corner down the sidewalk and out of frame.

EXT. BUS STOP MORNING

ERIC, a late twenties creative, speed walks down the city sidewalk towards the bus stop as he stuffs a notebook into his backpack. He is also gripping a cheap cup of coffee for dear life as he does this. He looks disheveled and messy. He approaches the bus stop and notices the small crowd waiting for the bus. One of which is a HOT DAD who he immediately notices. He finds a place to stand right next to this man. He sets down his cup of coffee on the benches armrest and pulls out his phone pretending to be busy, scrolling from app to app. He notices Hot Dad noticing him. There is some tension. They lock eyes briefly and both smile. Eric lets out a soft GIGGLE.

A beat.

The bus pulls in and the group starts moving onto the bus. Eric and Hot Dad are the last to board. They are both *allowing* the other one to go ahead of them.

ERIC  
Please, I insist.

Hot Dad goes ahead. Eric suddenly notices he's not holding his coffee cup. He turns and reaches for it on the benches armrest. As he turns around, the bus doors SLAM in his face spilling the remaining coffee from his cup and the bus drives off.

INT. COLLEGE CAMPUS HALLWAY DAY

ERIC, jogs down the hallway, sweaty and coffee stained. He is even more disheveled and obviously running late. He is staring directly at his phone as he zips down the hallway. We see his text as he writes it. The recipient's name is Kara. "*I may be a little late tonight. Please don't hate me.*" As he types this a hallway door swings open and a COLLEGE EMPLOYEE steps out carrying a stack of files. Eric SLAMS into them and knocks the stack of files on the ground.

ERIC  
I am so sorry!

Eric falls to the ground and starts picking up the files as quickly and as orderly as possible.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
Are you okay?

COLLEGE EMPLOYEE  
I'm fine.

Eric reaches a stack of files up to the College employee. They grab it.

ERIC  
They say don't text and drive how  
about a don't text and walk.  
(nervous laugh)

Eric looks up hoping for some forgiveness. They are not amused. He finishes collecting the papers and continues down the hallway. He approaches a large door and takes a second to compose himself. He breathes in deep and lets it out slow. He reaches for the door handle but remembers something. He pulls out his phone and turns it off. A couple more breaths and he says quietly to himself.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
Okay.

Eric opens the door and walks in.

INT. COLLEGE LECTURE HALL DAY

Eric walks into the lecture hall as quietly as possible. The PROFESSOR is in the middle of a lecture

PROFESSOR  
 ...discovered in 1859, it primarily  
 lives in humid rich ecosystems  
 within tropical forest regions  
 specifically.

As Eric walks away from the door to find his seat, the door begins to close and lets out a tremendous SQUEAK. The entire class turns to look directly at him. He freezes. The professor stops talking and waits for the door to close. It is comically long. Eric waits. Everyone is staring. Suddenly it's over.

A beat.

Eric breaks the silence.

ERIC  
 Sorry.

The professor lets out a SIGH and CONTINUES SPEAKING. Eric hurries to his seat. He sits down near the back with only a few people around him. He pulls out a tattered notebook from his backpack and opens his desk. Pulling a pen from his pocket he quickly puts it in his mouth and starts pulling on the plastic arm with his teeth from anxiety. It SNAPS off. One person turns and gives him a dirty look.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
 (whispering) What? Geez.

Trying to focus on the lecture, Eric starts clicking his pen wildly. Another STUDENT hushes him.

STUDENT  
 Shhhh.

Eric puts down his pen and folds his hands under his armpits. His eyes glance at the student sitting in front of him. She is scrolling on her phone through a series of instagram stories. He leans forward a little bit. They are all of the same picture with the same text. *If you have any information about Hailey Sampson please contact @haileysampfund.*

PROFESSOR  
 ...and that is going to be it for  
 today.

Concerted shuffling and leaving commences.

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)

Don't forget to get good rest.  
Tomorrows final will not be easy.

The student in front of Eric puts her phone away and gets up to leave. Eric shoves his notebook back in his bag and leaves.

INT. HIP BAR NIGHT

A very hip bar is fairly busy. Think fifteen dollar truffle fries and twenty dollar lavender-smoked cocktails. Eric rushes behind the bar area and into the back room. Standing by the doorway is AJ, a Jeff Probst type but without that dad-like charm, who is waiting for Eric to come out.

AJ

You're late again.

ERIC (O.S.)

I know. So sorry.

Eric walks out from the back room and faces AJ. He runs the back of his hand across AJ's shoulder seductively.

ERIC (CONT'D)

You are beaming today! Did you do something with your hair?

AJ swats at Eric's hand.

AJ

You're not as cute as you think you are.

Eric mimics being stabbed in the heart as he walks away.

ERIC

Ouch! That stings.

Eric grabs a towel from under the bar and shoves it into his back pocket. He walks up behind KARA, a gorgeous late twenties femme with punk sensibilities, who is obviously slammed making drinks.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Sorry I'm late.

KARA

(slightly annoyed) It's okay. Here.

She sets two martini glasses on the well in front of him.



KARA (CONT'D)

I need two manhattans and a dry martini filthy, all well.

ERIC

You got it.

Eric and Kara are now both making drinks.

KARA

And I've already got tables. I'll cover the high tops and the counter but I need you to stay on well all shift.

ERIC

I can do that.

Eric pulls out a tattered WHITE ENVELOPE that reads "RENT MONEY" and plucks three twenty dollar bills from the fold. He slides them into Kara's pocket.

KARA

Absolutely not. You were only thirty minutes late.

ERIC

Yeah thirty minutes of being super stressed and unsupported deserves a pay bump, no?

Kara SCOFFS and give him a dirty but sweet look.

KARA

Fine. Thank you.

Eric blows her a fake kiss and they continue making drinks. Eric looks around and locks eyes with SAM, a handsome mid-thirties daddy type with camping sensibilities, who is sitting at a small table across the room. They smile at each other. Kara breaks his focus.

KARA (CONT'D)

You better start being careful.

ERIC

What?

KARA

AJ. He's already looking for a reason to fire you. Don't give him one.

ERIC  
He loves me. I'm one of his  
favorites.

KARA  
That is not true at all.

Sam walks up to the well Eric is working from. Eric is  
delighted and flirtatious.

ERIC  
Hey.

SAM  
Hey.

ERIC  
What can I get you?

SAM  
I'll have a---

INT. ERIC'S BEDROOM NIGHT

SMASH CUT to Sam and Eric voraciously fucking. Sam is riding  
on top of Eric and they are lost in passion.

LATER

Eric and Sam are cuddling next to each other in bed, post  
sex. There's a bit of tension but it's very slight. Sam  
breaks the silence.

SAM  
Happy birthday to me.

ERIC  
Is today your birthday?

SAM  
No, it's tomorrow but what a nice  
early present.

Eric sits up and turns to Sam.

ERIC  
Tomorrow is my birthday too.

SAM  
No shit. Huh.

Sam sits up next to Eric.

SAM (CONT'D)

Well happy birthday to us.

Sam gives him a big kiss on the cheek and falls back into bed. Eric remains sitting up vaguely dumbfounded.

ERIC

Huh.

Eric falls back into bed as well.

INT. ERIC'S BEDROOM MORNING

Eric bolts up from bed and lets in a huge panicked breath. A small piece of paper falls from his bare chest. The bedroom is a mess with clothes everywhere and some trash sitting on his desk and table.

ERIC

Fuck! What time is it?

Eric grabs his phone off of his side table but it's dead. He quickly plugs it in. He picks up the small piece of paper and reads it aloud.

ERIC (CONT'D)

(reading) Had a wonderful time.  
Would love to see you again so  
here's my number. P. S. Happy  
birthday. Sam Barten.

Eric folds the paper up in his hands and lets out a CONTENTED SIGH.

Another beat.

Eric is immediately back to panic mode. He puts the note on his charging phone and hops out of bed. We see his bare ass as he slips some underwear on. He peeks out of his door.

INT. ERIC'S APARTMENT MORNING

His apartment is incredibly small. It feels like more of a studio but there is a definitive bedroom. A small couch is cluttered by the 'living room' table and a tv stand. Eric's head pops in from the doorway and he looks towards the stove. It reads 8:30.

ERIC

I can make it.

INT. ERIC'S BEDROOM CONTINUOUS

Eric rushes to his bedside and pulls a bottle of mouthwash from underneath his side table. He pours it directly into his mouth and starts swishing. He walks into his bathroom and we hear him GETTING READY. From the open bedroom door we can see his front door clearly. Suddenly there is a KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK coming from the front door. We hear Eric spit out his mouthwash and rinse the sink.

ERIC (O.S.)

Hello?

A piece of paper slides under the door and rests directly in sight. Eric walks out of the bathroom and grabs a wrinkled shirt from the floor. Walking through the bedroom and towards the front door he sloppily slips it on. Eric opens the front door.

INT. ERIC'S APARTMENT COMPLEX HALLWAY MORNING

Eric leans out of the door into an empty and motionless hallway. He looks both ways. Not a soul or a sound to be found. Leaving his door open, he steps out into the hallway, full donald-ducking with just a t shirt and some undies. He calls down the hall.

ERIC

Hello?

Down the seemingly endless, sterile hallway, a florescent light flickers. Eric stares into the nothingness. No sounds just tension.

A beat.

INT. ERIC'S APARTMENT CONTINUOUS

Eric walks back into his apartment and picks up the piece of paper sitting on the floor. He turns it around. It's an eviction notice. He is crushed. He defeatedly lets out a whimper.

ERIC

No.

INT. COLLEGE CAMPUS HALLWAY DAY

Eric is hurriedly walking to class. He is looking down at the eviction notice with one hand and is dialing a phone number with the other. He reads out loud from the notice.

ERIC  
(reading) If you have any questions  
please call five five five six two  
six three two three two.

He places the phone to his ear. We hear an automated  
response.

AUTOMATED VOICE (V.O.)  
We're sorry, the number you are  
looking for is currently out of  
service.

Eric frustratedly hangs up and tries again. He is not looking  
where he is going and the College Employee from the day  
before emerges with another stack of files. Eric keeps  
walking not looking where he's going. They are going to  
collide. At the last moment Eric looks up and swerves out of  
the way and keeps moving.

ERIC  
Good morning!

COLLEGE EMPLOYEE  
Jesus christ! Watch where you're  
going!

ERIC  
You got it!

Eric keeps walking until he reaches the lecture hall doors.  
He pulls out his phone and turns it off. He takes a couple of  
deep breaths and then whispers to himself.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
Okay.

He reaches out and grabs the lecture hall door handle.  
Suddenly it swings open and sea of students start piling out.  
Eric doesn't understand. It clicks. He missed the final. He  
makes his way into the lecture hall.

INT. COLLEGE LECTURE HALL DAY

Eric pushes passed student after student and makes his way  
down the steps to the head of the classroom. The Professor is  
still chatting with a student so Eric waits until he's  
finished.

ERIC  
Professor?

PROFESSOR

Yes?

ERIC

I am so sorry. I just got here and was hoping I can just take it now? I am having one of the worst days of my life.

PROFESSOR

No can do. I've been reminding you about this for months. You can re-register next semester.

ERIC

What if I told you it was my birthday.

PROFESSOR

Well, I would say happy birthday and good luck next semester.

Eric is crushed. Solemnly, he leaves.

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS QUAD DAY

Eric is lying on his back in an empty patch of grass staring at the sky. It is a gorgeous blue with only a couple clouds hovering. It's a moment of bliss. Some tranquility in the chaos of his day. Eric turns his head to the right and sees a small patch of mushrooms growing near him. He turns his whole body and reaches for the cluster. He softly *boops* every single mushroom head in the bunch. His bliss is halted by his phone BUZZING. He sees that it's a phone call from Kara. He answers.

ERIC

Hello?

KARA (V.O.)

Hey, you should get here right now if you can. AJ just said he was about to---

INT. HIP BAR AFTERNOON

SMASH CUT to Eric standing behind the bar near the office door behind the bar looking into it. He is distraught.

ERIC

---Fire me!? For what?

AJ steps out from the open office door and starts walking behind the bar. Eric follows him.

AJ

You're always late, you're always a mess and I need somebody more reliable.

ERIC

I am consistently the most requested bartender by regulars. People love me.

AJ

The only consistent thing about you and that you consistently let me down.

AJ pulls out an envelope and hands it to Eric.

AJ (CONT'D)

Here is your final check and your tips from last night. I'm sure you'll find something else.

Eric grabs the envelope with force from AJ's hand. He turns and walks away without saying a word. Kara turns the corner and follows Eric out of the bar.

INT. DIVE BAR AFTERNOON

Eric and Kara are sitting at the bar. It's dingy, it's sticky, it's smelly and it's dark. They are the only two people there besides the bartender. They casually sip their bourbon neats. Neither person is speaking. They sip silently.

A beat.

KARA

Would now be a bad time to say 'happy birthday'?

Eric starts laughing hysterically. His laughter turns into quiet sobbing. Kara is nervous.

ERIC

I just...I don't know what happened. What is happening. What am I supposed to do now?

KARA

You don't have to do anything right now. Take some time.

ERIC

I don't have time. I'm totally broke with no job and this class was my last class to graduate and I can't take out another loan.

Kara waves to the bartender for another round.

A beat.

ERIC (CONT'D)

And where am I supposed to live? I have nothing saved.

Kara, without hesitation, responds.

KARA

Stay with me.

Eric looks at her.

KARA (CONT'D)

Not like with me with me. I mean at my new place. I moved in last week but honestly haven't even spent the night once. Ryan and I are getting serious, I think.

ERIC

I couldn't

KARA

And since rent is so cheap I could still just cover it and you can live there until you find a job and save for your own place.

ERIC

Kara, that's so generous but I really can't.

KARA

You can and you will.

Eric smiles.

EXT. CITY STREET DAY

Eric struggles carrying two backpacks, a bag of laundry, a lamp and a pillow as he walks down the street. We still hear Kara's voice from the conversation at the dive bar as he travels.



KARA (V.O.)  
It's a pretty nice place. Fairly  
spacious.

INT. SUBWAY PLATFORM DAY

Eric is standing on the platform with all of his stuff as a train roars through the station.

KARA (V.O.)  
The neighbors keep to themselves. I  
haven't heard or seen a single one.

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN DAY

Eric is sitting alone on a four person bench. On his right he's placed his backpacks on the seat but the other two seats to his left are empty. Eric is still holding his lamp. A STRANGER sits down in the empty seat to his left.

KARA (V.O.)  
The downside is the whole place  
feels a little sterile...

The stranger to Eric's left lets out a huge sneeze into his elbow facing down in Eric's direction. Eric winces. He looks down and sees a huge glob of mucus and phlegm sitting on the base of his lamp. It jiggles as the train rocks back and forth. Eric SIGHS.

KARA (V.O.)  
...but there are worse things an  
apartment could be.

EXT. SCARY APARTMENT STREET DAY

Eric still struggles with his things. He stops for a moment puts down the bag he's carrying. He pulls out his phone and then looks around as if looking for a house number.

KARA (V.O.)  
I'm sorry your day has been so  
shitty.

EXT. FRONT OF THE SCARY APARTMENT COMPLEX DAY

Eric walks into frame directly in front of the apartment complex. We've been here before. This is not a good place. There are a couple small assortments of flowers near the front door sitting on the ground.

Eric drops his bag again and pulls out his phone. He looks at the number on the building and puts his phone away and walks towards the door.

KARA (V.O.)  
I hope this helps.

INT. SCARY APARTMENT LIVING ROOM DAY

Eric opens the door and walks in dropping all of his bags and placing his lamp on the countertop. This is the same apartment from the opening scene except its semi furnished with some screen printed posters and a mirror or two. The air looks stale. Eric looks around and takes a deep breath. He whispers to himself.

ERIC  
Okay.

**END OF ACT 1**

ACT 2A

INT. SCARY APARTMENT LIVING ROOM DAY

Eric is on the phone with Kara but we're only hearing his side of the conversation. He is making some breakfast in the open kitchen and we can see his laptop open with some papers strewn about on the living room table.

ERIC

You know nothing yet, but it's a numbers game.

Eric pauses for a response.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Exactly and I figure there'll be some turn around when...

He flips two eggs in a frying pan.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Exactly.

The toaster pops out toast. Eric opens the cupboard and gabs a plate. He sets it on the counter.

ERIC (CONT'D)

You know, I've been meaning to ask, how has that been going?

Eric slides the two eggs onto his plate and grabs the slices of toast.

LATER

Eric is leaning forward looking at his laptop on the living room table. His dirty breakfast dish sits beside it next to several half finished job applications and his phone. He opens an email. We see the word *Unfortunately*.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Dammit.

Eric grabs his phone and leans back into the couch. He starts doodling around on it for comfort. He glances to his left and acknowledges the remaining stack of boxes and bags from his move. They are obtrusive and clunky. He stares at them blankly.

A beat.

Eric puts his phone in his pocket and gets up from the couch, grabbing two of the garbage bags from the pile and walks into the bedroom.

INT. SCARY APARTMENT BEDROOM DAY

Eric walks in and slides open the slatted closet doors. He puts one bag on the ground by his side and tosses the second bag against the wall in the corner of the closet. As the bag lands against the wall we hear a deep CRACK. It's startling. Eric grabs the bag in the closet and pulls it away from the wall. We see a small long vertical crack in the drywall.

ERIC

Are you kidding me.

Eric kneels down to inspect it. He feels the bag and see if there's anything hard or sturdy that would've have cause the accidental damage. He finds nothing. He crawls into the closet for a closer look.

INT. SCARY APARTMENT CLOSET DAY CONTINUOUS

Eric approaches the crack and runs his finger along it. It doesn't feel deep. As he does this he notices a huge patch of the closet wall that looks a different shade of white than the rest. It's clearly out of place. As he continues feeling, something pricks his finger. He pulls it away and shudders.

ERIC

Ouch!

He looks down at his finger and a small droplet of blood pools at the tip and rolls down to his wrist. Eric licks it up and sucks on his finger tip to keep the blood from falling. He pulls out his phone and shines the flashlight into the crack. He sees inside the crack are a line of jagged and haphazardly hammered nails. Half are still protruding and there appear to be way more than necessary. Eric places his phone down and pushes against the oddly colored wall. It's flimsy and cracks in several places immediately. A large piece crumbles to the floor.

A beat.

Eric looks behind the wall and sees big pieces of lumber poorly placed covering the same passageway we saw earlier. From the small openings where the length of the boards meet, a black charcoal like smudging covers its entirety. A single drop of wet black tar-like excrement drips slowly from the same divide. It rolls heavily and glacially down. Eric picks up his phone and shines it onto this substance.

Its vibrating. It looks magnetic. Eric slowly reaches towards it with his other hand. Closer and closer. He's about to touch it. The substance looks like it's reaching back at him slightly. SUDDENLY Eric's Phone begins BUZZING! Eric jumps and pulls away his hand. He drops his phone on the ground. The tar like goo retreats into the recesses of the hidden compartment. Eric picks up his phone and we see the name *Handsome Sam* is calling him. Eric quickly picks up the big drywall chunk and slaps it back against the wall where it sat. He tries to fit it back into place as best he can. Eric leaves the closet and closes the slatted doors. We are still staring at the drywall when we hear him answer the phone.

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

Hello?

INT. SCARY APARTMENT BEDROOM NIGHT

Eric and Sam are cuddling in bed obviously post sex. Sam is holding Eric in the crook of his arm while Eric rest his head on Sam's chest.

SAM

I wish you had called earlier. You could have stayed with me.

ERIC

Don't you think that would've felt too fast?

SAM

Too fast for what?

ERIC

For, like, being together.

Sam kisses Eric on the top of his head.

SAM

We're just fucking.

They both laugh.

SAM (CONT'D)

You're cute. I could see something happening between us but why rush it. If it happens, great. If not, right now is wonderful.

ERIC

It is.

SAM

Besides, it feels like you still have a *few things* to work out on your own. Im sure I'll still be around by the time you've cleaned up.

Eric pokes him in the side and they giggle and squirm for a moment. Sam leans forward and kisses Eric. They smile. Eric turns over and turns off his lamp. They go to sleep.

INT. SCARY APARTMENT BEDROOM MORNING

Eric opens his eyes and rolls over to see Sam still sleeping. He's happy he hasn't left yet. Eric takes in this moment of tranquility. He rolls back onto his back and stares up at the ceiling. Things feel calm for the first time in a long time. Eric takes a deep breath in and whispers to himself.

ERIC

(happily) okay.

SUDDENLY a huge BANG on the front door. Eric sits up from bed, confused and scared. Sam also wakes up.

SAM

Is everything okay?

ERIC

I don't know.

Another BANG and another BANG. Eric jumps from bed and puts his pants on as he hurries to the door. The pounding becomes erratic and rapid. BANG BANG BANG BANG BANG BANG. Eric runs the final steps to the door and throws it open. There is nobody there.

INT. SCARY APARTMENT HALLWAY CONTINUOUS

Eric leans his head out of the doorway and looks down the hallway both ways. No sign of anybody. Not a squeak or a shuffle. Eric fully steps out into the middle of the hallway confused. We hear Sam from inside the apartment.

SAM (O.S.)

Who is it?

ERIC

Nobody. I guess.

Eric walks back into the apartment and shuts the door.

INT. SCARY APARTMENT LIVING ROOM DAY

Eric and Sam are sitting on the couch in the living room. On the table are assorted dirty dishes and coffee cups. Eric is on his laptop and Sam is on his phone. Sam grabs his cup and takes a drink.

SAM

It was probably just a prank. My friends and I used to ding dong ditch all the time as kids.

Distracted by his computer, Eric doesn't respond.

SAM (CONT'D)

Maybe it's some true crime podcaster trying to get an interview.

Eric is still distracted.

SAM (CONT'D)

Have you heard what's going on with Hailey Sampson?

ERIC

A couple things but I haven't been following it much.

SAM

Oh. I thought you knew.

Eric looks up from his computer.

ERIC

Knew what?

A beat.

SAM

She lived here. This was the last place anybody saw her.

ERIC

Jesus christ!

SAM

You really didn't know?

ERIC

That I'm currently living in a murder apartment?!

SAM

I don't know which unit was hers  
but this complex, yeah.

ERIC

And you still chose to stay the  
night? In the murder house? For me?

Sam smiles. Eric scoots over towards Sam

ERIC (CONT'D)

So either you're the murderer  
hiding in plain sight at the scene  
of the crime...

SAM

My god!

ERIC

...or you must really like me.  
Which is it?

SAM

Or, third option, and hear me out,  
I'm really bored and you're good at  
sex.

Sam kisses Eric on the mouth.

ERIC

Sounds like a diversion.

Eric pretends to get a phone call.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Excuse me I have to take this.  
What's that? This is *My Favorite  
Murder* calling for an exclusive  
interview with the killer himself.

Eric covers his phone and hands it towards Sam.

ERIC (CONT'D)

It's for you.

Sam grabs the phone and plays along.

SAM

Hello? What's that you say? Eric  
isn't cute enough to get away with  
a tasteless bit like this?

ERIC

You can hang up now.



Eric reaches for his phone back. Sam dodges.

SAM

...and maybe he should have a little more reverence for a very real and currently missing person?

ERIC

Nope. Too real. I don't like this game anymore.

Sam looks at the phone.

SAM

Damn! They hung up on me.

He hands the phone back to Eric. Some tension hangs in the air.

A beat.

Eric reacts to something on his computer.

ERIC

I got a job interview!

SAM

Thats great! When?

Eric sets his computer on the table and stands.

ERIC

As soon as I can get down there. It's for some swanky downtown restaurant. God, this would be perfect.

Sam stands up too.

SAM

Okay I'll grab my stuff.

ERIC

Oh, you don't have to go. Please. Stay here.

SAM

Are you sure?

ERIC

Positive. Please stay.

Eric runs into the bedroom and starts getting his clothes on.

ERIC (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
I'll be an hour. Two at most.

SAM  
Alright.

ERIC (O.S.)  
And you won't leave, right?

SAM  
I won't leave.

ERIC (O.S.)  
Promise?

SAM  
I promise I won't leave!

Eric shuffles out of the bedroom in a button up shirt and slacks. He is brushing his hair as he enters. He walks up to Sam and kisses him on the mouth. He sets the brush down on the table and grabs his backpack near the door.

SAM (CONT'D)  
But if those murder pod folks come back, I will be giving them an exclusive.

Eric opens the door.

ERIC  
Be careful. Don't go getting yourself incriminated.

Sam laughs. Eric walks out the door.

INT. FANCY RESTAURANT DAY

Eric is sitting at a white linen table clothed table by himself. He has a manila folder sitting in front of him and his backpack is resting on the leg of the expensive chair he's seated in. Around him are dozens of identical tables and several modern chandeliers. The kitchen is visible from the dining room so you know this restaurant is chic. He is nervous. As he looks around the pristine facility, his eyes land down on his wrinkled button up shirt.

ERIC  
Ugh.

Eric tries pulling the fabric to get rid of at least some of the wrinkles. As he's doing this he notices a small stain on the thigh of his slacks.

He licks his thumb and starts rubbing his pants. The stain becomes less visible but only because it's wet. Now there's a wet stain that's even bigger. Suddenly the MANAGER approaches the table. She looks like a lawyer. Steamed skirt, perfect top. She is carrying a small folder. She commands the space.

MANAGER

Eric?

Eric pops his head up from looking down at his slacks.

ERIC

Yes!

Eric stands up from the table but doesn't push the heavy chair back so he struggles standing up. He giggles nervously.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Oops.

Eric reaches his hand for hers and they shake. They both have a seat. The Manager places her folder on the table.

MANAGER

You won't be needing that.

She points to Eric's folder.

MANAGER (CONT'D)

I have your information here.

While Eric puts his folder away, the Manager opens hers and starts to browse. Without looking up she begins.

MANAGER (CONT'D)

So tell me a little bit about you.

Eric finishes with his backpack and pops back up.

ERIC

Well, I have over ten years of bartending experience from dive bars to fine dining.

Eric begins hearing faint WHISTLING. He ignores it and continues.

ERIC (CONT'D)

I excel in high pressure environments but my biggest asset is that I'm personable.

The Manager clicks her pen and starts taking notes. Eric is fueled by this.

ERIC (CONT'D)

I understand that when a customer walks in, they are not only looking for an exceptional meal and exceptional service. They are looking for an experience. They are looking for connection.

The Manager smiles and continues taking notes.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Having a bartender who is effortless when it comes to spirit and culinary knowledge allows them to focus on the most important facet of dining. The experience.

The Manager puts down her pen.

MANAGER

That is...exactly the answer I was hoping to hear.

Eric eases up.

A beat.

MANAGER (CONT'D)

It says here you were recently let go. Would mind telling me a little bit about that?

Eric tenses.

ERIC

Sure! So they recently decided to cut back on...

The WHISTLING is back but it's LOUDER. Eric has a hard time focusing.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Front of, uh, house staff.

Eric turns and looks around to try and see where this sound is coming from.

MANAGER

Is everything alright?

ERIC

Do you hear that?

MANAGER

Hear what?

Eric is confused but tries to keep it together.

ERIC

I'm sorry. It must've been, like,  
an echo or something.

The manager does not care.

ERIC (CONT'D)

So, they were cutting down on front  
of house staff to save on labor and  
the cuts came down to seniority.

MANAGER

Your resume says you were there 6  
years.

ERIC

We had a very low turnover rate.

The manager nods her head and takes a couple more notes.  
Suddenly and sharply the WHISTLING returns unbearably loud.  
It's directly in his ear. Eric JUMPS up from the table and  
SCREAMS.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Aaaaa!

The Manager JUMPS.

MANAGER

What!?

The WHISTLING continues. It is so LOUD!

ERIC

(shouting) Do you not hear that?  
That whistling? What is that?

MANAGER

I don't hear any whistling!

ERIC

Where is that coming from?

MANAGER

Are you okay?

Eric is covering his ears and disoriented. He trips on the  
heavy chair and falls to the ground. He's screaming.

ERIC

Aaaaaa!

The Manager falls to the ground trying to help. She calls to the kitchen.

MANAGER

Somebody call an ambulance!

Suddenly the whistling is gone. Eric can hear again. He looks around. The Manager calls again.

MANAGER (CONT'D)

Call nine one one!

Eric, now able to hear, calls to the kitchen himself.

ERIC

No! Please don't call an ambulance.  
I'm fine!

MANAGER

Are you sure? Do you feel faint?  
Are you having shortness of breath?

Eric sits up and looks around.

ERIC

I'm okay.

He stands up. The manager helps him holding his arm as he rises. There's now a palpable tension between them.

A beat.

ERIC (CONT'D)

I'm really sorry about that. I'm  
not sure what happened.

MANAGER

Not a problem. As long as you're  
alright.

ERIC

Should we continue?

The Manager looks down at her notes.

MANAGER

No, I think I've got everything I  
need.

The Manager begins ushering Eric out of the room. He grabs his backpack and exits.

## EXT. FANCY RESTAURANT DAY

Eric steps out of the front door. The manager shuts and locks the door behind him. We see her retreat into the restaurant. Eric is stiff. He reaches for his right ear and wiggles his finger into it. Maybe something is lodged inside?

ERIC

Hello?

He can hear perfectly. He walks to the window and presses his ear to the glass. He hears nothing. He looks around at the gorgeous surroundings. This area is upscale. Very rich and very pretty. He looks back at the restaurant. He's not getting this job. Eric becomes visibly frustrated.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Fuc---

## INT. SUBWAY TRAIN DAY

SMASH CUT, before the word is finished, to Eric sitting on a semi packed subway train. He is looking down at his phone with headphones attached. His backpack sits in his lap. We see him sending a TEXT to KARA that reads *"just had the worst interview of my life. Wanna get together soon?"* He slides through his text messages and we see he has sent 7 or 8 messages before this one, none of them responded to. Eric puts his phone to sleep and sets it back down on his lap. He looks up and around the train and glances at his fellow travelers. Person to person he glances until he see the HOODED FIGURE standing at the far end of the train. Cloaked in a crowd of strangers. Eric can't see their face but he knows he is being watched. Eric quickly averts his gaze and looks down at the ground. Don't look over there don't look over there.

A beat.

He glances back and the hooded figure has not broken their stance. Eric looks back down at his feet. He pulls out his phone hoping to distract himself with some app or texting somebody. There is no service underground. He puts the phone back into his pocket. Without looking again, Eric stands up and walks the opposite direction and finds an open seat on the other end of the train. When he sits down he looks back where the hooded figure was and they are no longer there. A bit of relief.

Another beat.

Eric looks around the train. The hooded figure is sitting in the seat he was just sitting in. Terror comes over him. He looks down again trying to stifle his breathe.

ERIC  
(to himself) Breathe. You're okay.  
Just breathe.

His right foot is BOBBING up and down. He glances up again. The hooded figure is now about 10 feet in front of him standing in the middle of the train. The train hits a soft and sudden brake. They SCREECH. Everyone, including Eric, sways forward but the hooded figure is not affected by it. Eric gets up and turns to open the train door to move train cars. He slides it open and is about to step through. SUDDENLY he is grabbed on the shoulder. He lets out a scream.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
Get off of me!

He turns around ready to swing. It's a random TRAIN RIDER holding his phone in their hand.

TRAIN RIDER  
(confused) You forgot your phone.

Eric is out of breathe. He looks passed the Train Rider and around the car. There is no sign of the hooded figure. He looks back down at the seat he was just in. Nothing is there. He continues to breathe heavily and grabs his phone from the Train Rider's hand.

TRAIN RIDER (CONT'D)  
Are you okay?

Eric turns and exits the train car.

INT. SCARY APARTMENT LIVING ROOM AFTERNOON

Eric opens the front door and walks inside immediately dropping his backpack and leaving it where it lands and walks to the bedroom. Sam is in the kitchen wiping something down. The apartment looks immaculate. No trash, no boxes, no dust. It's showroom ready. Sam calls to Eric in the bedroom.

SAM  
That good, huh?

ERIC (O.S.)  
Ugh!

Sam continues cleaning. We hear Eric in the other room shuffling around aggressively.



A tossed backpack and maybe some clothes changing. Then the sound stops. We only hear the cleaning now.

A beat.

Eric walks out of the bedroom with just a t shirt and undies on holding sweatpants in his hand. He is looking around the apartment, wide-eyed. Sam doesn't notice.

SAM

(raised voice) You may want to tell your friend that she has a bit of a mold issue.

Sam turns to see Eric and lowers his voice.

SAM (CONT'D)

Who knows how long this apartment has had it but long term, it could be deadly.

ERIC

You did all of this?

Eric gestures vaguely to the entire apartment.

SAM

I figured, whether good or bad, you could use a refreshing place to land.

Eric walks towards the kitchen. He drops his pants as he passes the couch.

SAM (CONT'D)

I take it the interview didn't go as planned.

Eric walks up to Sam and gives him a huge hug. Sam hugs back. They enjoy a silent embrace.

A beat

ERIC

What happened to *we're just fucking?*

SAM

*Just fucking* doesn't mean kindness avoidant.

They kiss.

SAM (CONT'D)

Go sit down. I'm almost finished.

Eric retreats to the couch and pulls out his phone. Sam grabs a chair and slides it to the middle of the kitchen. He grabs his spray bottle and towel and stands up on the chair. He looks around the top of the cupboards. Most of them are riddled with dust, crumbs and some mouse poop. Except for the corner where the cupboard meets the wall. A mound of PULSATING black sludge is growing out of the wall. From Sam's POV we can see bubble like fungi slowly RELEASING AIRBORNE PARTICLES.

SAM (CONT'D)

You should call your friend and have her talk to the landlord as soon as possible.

ERIC

Is it bad?

SAM

It's definitely worse than I thought.

ERIC

Just leave it, then. I'm gonna see if she can just come over.

SAM

We shouldn't let this sit here.

Eric gets up from the couch and walks to the kitchen. He pulls out his phone and calls Kara. He presses the phone to his ear. Sam starts reaching for the fungus.

ERIC

Don't touch it!

SAM

I'm not going to touch it.

ERIC

It looked like you were going to touch it.

SAM

Babe, I wasn't going to touch it.

ERIC

Babe?

A beat.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
Okay, mister no labels.

Sam steps off of the chair.

SAM  
Sorry. It just slipped out.

ERIC  
Getting me mixed up with your  
other...

Eric gestures AIR QUOTES with his free hand.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
*...friends?*

SAM  
Will you look at it?

Eric hangs up the phone and redials. He steps up onto the chair. A momentary glimpse and he immediately steps down.

ERIC  
Nope.

Sam steps back up on the chair and continues inspecting it.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
Please leave it alone?

SAM  
It looks like it's moving.

Eric leaves a message into the phone.

ERIC  
Hey Kara, I hope you're okay. So  
there's a bit of a mold emergency  
at the apartment---

Eric yells at Sam who is still prodding.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
Stop!

Sam doesn't react.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
Maybe you could call your landlord  
or just come straight over? I don't  
know. But it's not good. Please  
call me back. Or text me.  
(MORE)

ERIC (CONT'D)

There's already a couple of really bad areas in your place. Okay. Bye.

Eric hangs up the phone.

SAM

A *couple*?

ERIC

I saw a little bit of this in the closet a few days ago.

SAM

You saw this and did nothing about it.

ERIC

Not *that* one exactly but something like it.

SAM

Jesus.

ERIC

It's not my apartment so I didn't want to cause a fuss.

SAM

So instead we've just been breathing this in for the last two weeks?

ERIC

I didn't know there was anything to *breathe* in.

SAM

We need to get rid of this today. Does she have any bleach?

Eric opens the sink cupboard and pulls out bleach spray. He gives it to Sam. Sam pulls his shirt up over his mouth and nose and aims the spray bottle at the infection. SPRAY. The mound constricts and a couple spots start to deteriorate.

SAM (CONT'D)

I think it's working.

He sprays a couple more times. More of the outer layer starts to disintegrate.

SAM (CONT'D)

It's definitely working. The bleach is eating right through it.

Confident, Sam lets his shirt down and sprays another time. SUDDENLY the bubble fungi bursts launching black chalk like chunks and tar-like residue directly at Sam's face. We see him inhale a huge puff of airborne spores. Sam falls back off of the chair. Eric tries to catch him but the both fall to the ground.

SAM (CONT'D)

AaaaaAaA!

Sam is spitting out pieces of fungus and scrambling to wipe his face off. He stands up and places his face directly under the sink and turns on the water.

ERIC

Are you okay?

Eric stands up. Sam is swishing water in his mouth and spitting out black. He is voraciously scrubbing his face under the water.

SAM

Grab me a towel.

Eric runs to the bathroom and back into the kitchen with a hand towel. Sam starts to wipe his face off. He pulls the towel down from his face. Eric gasps.

ERIC

Holy shit!

SAM

What?

We see Sam's face puffy cheeks and deep red eyes. He looks bad.

ERIC

Go look in the mirror.

They both rush to the bathroom.

INT. SCARY APARTMENT BATHROOM CONTINUOUS

Sam sees himself in the mirror and doesn't react. Eric comes in behind him.

ERIC

(Unconvincingly) It's not that bad.

Sam is still stoic. Nonreactive. Like he just turned off. Eric starts digging around in the medicine cabinet.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
Some ibuprofen should stop the swelling.

He pulls out a small pill bottle and shakes out two capsules.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
Here, take these.

Sam is still frozen. He tries to shove them in Sam's mouth. He's not budging.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
I'll just leave them here then.

Eric sets them on the sink and leaves the bathroom.

INT. SCARY APARTMENT LIVING ROOM DAY

Eric walks through to the kitchen and pulls out his phone. He calls to Sam.

ERIC  
I'm just gonna take a picture of it so Kara can show the landlord.

Eric steps up on the chair.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
He needs to know what we're dealing with.

As he steps up he sees nothing on top of the cupboard. A small crack in the drywall underneath the paint with a small hole is visible. But all signs of the fungal mold is gone.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
It's gone.

SAM  
What's gone?

Eric jumps. Sam is now sitting on the living room couch casually. He made no sound entering the room. Eric nearly falls off the chair.

ERIC  
Are you okay?

Eric runs to the couch next to Sam. Sam's facial abrasions and any signs of puffyness are gone. Sam is nonchalant and way too casual. It's eerie.

SAM  
Fine. I better be going.

ERIC  
You don't have to go.

Robotically, Sam grabs his coat and a small bag.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
Well, please text me when you get home.

No response.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
Let me know if it swells up again.

No response. Sam opens the door and leaves. Eric sits on the couch confused and unsure of what to do.

A beat.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
What is happening?

Another beat.

Suddenly another BANG BANG BANG on the front door. Eric is shaken!

ERIC (CONT'D)  
Sam?!

He hops up and runs to the door.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
If this is a joke, it's not...

Eric swings the door open. Nobody is there.

INT. SCARY APARTMENT HALLWAY CONTINUOUS

Eric pokes his head out into the same quiet hallway.

ERIC  
...funny.

Nobody is there. Confused he goes inside and SLAMS the door.

## INT. SCARY APARTMENT BEDROOM NIGHT

Eric is sitting in the dark. He is only illuminated by his phone screen light and the ambient reflected street light. He's been staring at his phone for a while. We see a series of texts to *Handsome Sam*. A series of 'check in' texts. How are you, How's it going, Did you get home safe, are you mad at me; All of which are unread and un-responded to. Eric locks his phone and we see his silhouette stand up and grab a jacket.

## INT. GAY BAR NIGHT

Eric is sitting on a bench in the back of a loud and crowded bar. It is packed with men between the ages of 25 and 60. He has a drink in one hand and his phone in the other. He keeps looking down at it. JACK, corporate bro type, walks up to Eric and breaks the ice.

JACK  
You get stood up?

Eric has trouble hearing him.

ERIC  
(shouting) What?

JACK  
(also shouting) I said 'did you get stood up?'

They are both trying to shout over the volume of the bar.

ERIC  
Oh! No. Not really.

JACK  
You keep checking your phone like you're waiting for somebody.

ERIC  
My boyfriend...

Eric pauses and corrects himself.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
The guy I'm fucking. He just hasn't texted me back.

JACK  
I'm sure he's fine.

A beat.



JACK (CONT'D)  
Do you mind if I sit---

INT. GAY BAR BATHROOM NIGHT

SMASH CUT to Eric and Jack furiously making out in a bathroom stall. They slam between the walls with fiery intensity.

INT. DIFFERENT GAY BAR NIGHT

Another SMASH CUT to Eric sitting at the bar rail of a different gay bar. This one is much quieter and way less condensed. He sips on his drink and keeps checking his phone. No texts. He downs his current drink and orders another.

INT. SAMS HOUSE NIGHT

We see the entry way to Sam's house. It is a gorgeous home but several items are strewn across the floor. It looks like there was some kind of struggle. One of the items on the floor is a framed PICTURE of sam and who appears to be his mom. Down the hallway, we see a light is on. We start to hear groaning. It's Sam

SAM (O.S.)  
Ughhhh. Hmmmmmm

The sound is vaguely sexual but something is off. It feels guttural in a painful way. Suddenly we hear him GURGLING. This continues until we hear BRUTAL CRACK.

SAM (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
(Whimpers)

The sound of something dripping onto the floor begins and we no longer hear Sam. No breathing, no whimpering, no Sam.

EXT. CITY STREET NIGHT

Eric sways down a deserted city street. He is obviously inebriated but still somehow keeping it together.

EXT. SCARY APARTMENT STREET NIGHT

Eric walks from the sidewalk to the front door of the apartment complex. There are now dozens of flower bouquets sitting near the complex entrance. Several candles quietly burn.

## INT. SCARY APARTMENT HALLWAY NIGHT

Eric walks up to his door and pulls out a set of keys. The hallway is over-lit and super harsh. As he fumbles to enter the key in the lock, we hear SOFT WHISTLING coming from somewhere down the hallway. Eric doesn't notice. He continues to fumble until he drops his keys.

A beat.

Sloppily, he bends down to pick them up. They've landed in a small dirt pile. He sees that it's the outline of a dirty shoe print and that they lead into the apartment. Adrenaline sobriety pulls Eric back to reality. He stands up, puts the key in the lock and quietly turns the deadbolt. He opens the door.

## INT. SCARY APARTMENT LIVING ROOM DAY

As the front door opens we see various dirt footprints scattered throughout the apartment. Nothing seems disheveled or in disarray since last we saw the place. Just new footprints. Eric enters slowly. He looks around trying to stifle his rapid breathing. He takes one step in, then another. QUICKLY he runs to the kitchen and pulls a huge chopping knife from the butcher block.

ERIC

Who the fuck is here?!

There is no response. He sees footprints leading into the bedroom. He glacially makes his way.

ERIC (CONT'D)

I have a knife!

He enters the bedroom.

## INT. SCARY APARTMENT BEDROOM CONTINUOUS

Eric walks in, knife brandished.

ERIC

If you show yourself you won't get hurt.

He sees the footsteps lead to the closet.

ERIC (CONT'D)

I know you're in there! If you come out we don't have to do this!

Eric waits for a response. There isn't one.

A beat.

Eric Throws open the slatted doors and lunges in with his knife.

INT. SCARY APARTMENT CLOSET CONTINUOUS

He stabs into the back wall and cuts through several pieces of hanging clothing. STAB STAB STAB STAB.

Another beat.

There is no reaction or sound of anguish. Nobody was standing in the closet. Eric breathes heavily. He looks down and notices that the broken drywall is now completely patched up and repainted. It looks like shit.

INT. SCARY APARTMENT HALLWAY CONTINUOUS

Eric steps out into the hallway and follows a trail of footprints down the hallway with his eyes. He locks the door behind him. Still holding the knife, he shoves it into his pants pocket and hides the handle under his shirt. He begins following the steps. He turns the corner at the end of the hallway.

INT. SCARY APARTMENT HALLWAY 2 NIGHT

Eric rounds the corner into almost the exact same hallway. This one is longer but looks eerily similar. Stale, sterile and unsafe. There is only the sound of humming fluorescent lights above him. His footsteps are soft and covert. Timidly, he continues down the hallway following the muddy steps. He rounds the corner at the end of the hallway.

INT. SCARY APARTMENT HALLWAY 3 NIGHT

Eric rounds another corner. The same visual hallway. He looks back from where he came? "Am I going in circles?" His anxiety and second guessing is enhanced by his inebriation. He notices that the footsteps end halfway down the hallway. He approaches them. He is now standing directly above the last shoe-print. He looks down the hallway. No sign. They have not entered any apartment, they've just stopped. He looks up at the ceiling. Maybe theres a clue. Nothing. He circles the shoe-print. "Maybe he was walking backwards?" As he steps around the print, his footsteps makes a CREAKING SOUND. Eric stops.

A beat.

Eric pulls his step back and tries it again. CREAK. There's something under there. Eric steps back and looks for some sort of crease or handle. There isn't anything visible. He falls the floor and starts running his hands across the ground. Nothing. He's getting flustered. He stands up and steps back onto the creaking floor again. He puts all of his weight down on the one foot until a LOUD CLICK is heard. Eric's eyes widen. As he lets the pressure off of his step a huge rectangular piece of the floor opens up. Like an attic door but on the floor. Eric grabs the lip and pulls it up releasing a huge cloud of black spore-like dust. He immediately lets the door go and pulls back shielding his face with his shirt. He continues covering his nose and mouth for the rest of the sequence. He pulls open the door a second time. More dust flies out. He notices a set of stairs leading down into some unknown basement. He takes a step and enters. The doors falls behind him.

INT. SCARY APARTMENT BASEMENT NIGHT

Eric walks down the stairs slowly feeling each step trying not to fall. He is illuminated only by a crack in the door above him. When he reaches the bottom. It's pitch black and he can't see a thing. We hear Eric shuffling as he pulls out his phone.

A beat.

He TURNS ON his flashlight and we instantly see the narrow passage he has stepped into. Eric reacts.

ERIC

(GASPS)

The corridor is covered in wet tar-like fungus. It's all quietly undulating back and forth slightly. As if the walls were breathing. Eric steps forward mouth tightly covered. There are bundles of ghastly looking fungal clusters growing from every inch of the passageway. We begin to hear a FAINT WHISTLING coming from somewhere down the hallway.

ERIC (CONT'D)

(whispering) Hello?

The whistling continues unaffected by the whisper. Eric continues forward into the muck.

## INT. UNDERGROUND LAIR NIGHT

Eric quietly steps out of the end of the corridor. It leads into a huge open space the size of a small church. At the far end, a fire burns illuminating, slightly, the entirety of this room. We hear a WHISTLING coming from the back corner. Eric focuses his eyes and see the shape of a HOODED FIGURE with they're back to him. They're standing at what looks like a workbench or some kind of table/shelf combo. They have not noticed Eric come in. Eric immediately turns off his phone light, puts his phone in his pocket and pulls out his knife as quietly as possible. Eric looks up at the ceiling as his eyes begin to adjust. He sees huge fungal/mushroom clusters lining everything inch of the walls and ceiling. He begins to notice that most of the major groupings resemble human shapes. He is horrified. The knife trembles in his hand. As looks around the ceiling, he steps on something that vibrates his shoe. It shakes him. He pulls his shoe back. Immediately he notices a rippling affect through the room. All of the fungus and goo on the walls rumble as if its reacting to the stimulus. It rolls through the square corners of the room and descend upon the figure in the corner. As it reaches them, the whistling stops. We vaguely see a snake-like vine slither from under the desk and into the back of the hooded figure. Suddenly the hooded figure looks up from the table and flies into the air. It locks it's gaze on Eric. Eric is petrified. The hooded figure is being held up by some kind of tentacle.

A beat.

SUDDENLY, with LIGHTNING SPEED, the figure descends upon Eric. As it reaches him we...

## INT. SCARY APARTMENT BEDROOM MORNING

SMASH CUT to Eric throwing himself awake in his bed.

ERIC

(screams)

He touches himself to know he's alive. Was it a dream? As he feels himself he touches an opened wound on his left arm, a fairly deep cut. Not deep enough to warrant stitches but it's not great.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Shit!

He notices that there is blood soaked into the bed where he was sleeping. He turns and puts his feet on the floor next to his bed to stand up. He looks down and sees his clothes, including his shoes, which are covered in mud.

Sitting on top is the bloodstained knife he was carrying the night before. He runs to the bathroom.

INT. SCARY APARTMENT BATHROOM CONTINUOUS

Eric enters and immediately turns on the shower. He looks at himself in the mirror. He is A MESS. Bruises all over his body and it looks like he hasn't slept in days. He turns and steps into the shower. He is trying not to panic. As the water falls over him he starts to take DEEP BREATHS to soothe the stress. He stands and lets the water fall around him. A sudden moment of tranquility. It seems to be helping.

A beat.

Breaking his peace a sudden and familiar BANG BANG BANG echoes through the apartment from the front door.

ERIC

No!

Eric jumps out of the shower, grabbing his towel and running out of the bathroom.

INT. SCARY APARTMENT LIVING ROOM CONTINUOUS

Eric is running to the front door, half naked and dripping all through the house with every step. He yells with deep guttural intensity.

ERIC

Who the fuck is it!

He swings the door open. It's Kara. She is standing wide-eyed and terrified. Eric doesn't register that it's her yet.

A beat.

Suddenly Eric breaks down weeping and falls onto Kara, hugging her. She is shaken.

KARA

I lost my key.

Eric moves, let's her go and kara steps into the apartment.

**END OF ACT 2A**

ACT 2B

INT. SCARY APARTMENT LIVING ROOM LATER

Eric is sitting on the couch still in his towel. His cut is now bandaged and he is staring at a cup of tea in front of him. Kara stands in the kitchen staring at Eric worriedly. She is holding her own cup of tea. The bloody knife sits on the counter in front of Kara. There are still muddy footprints all around the house. The air is tense. Nobody knows how to begin.

A beat

KARA

I...

Kara begins but doesn't know what to say. Does she think he's self harming?

ERIC

I wouldn't do that.

KARA

I know.

Another beat.

ERIC

I'm sorry about your bed.

She's frustrated but doesn't know how to express it.

KARA

It's fine.

Kara takes a sip of her tea.

KARA (CONT'D)

Do you remember anything?

ERIC

Yes, but I don't know what was a dream and what wasn't.

KARA

Were you drugged or something? What about that guy at the bar?

ERIC

If it was a roofie I would've been  
on the floor three hours before I  
got home.

Another beat.

KARA

What was your dream?

Eric looks at her with the *are-you-sure* eyes. She stress  
giggles.

KARA (CONT'D)

What? Tell me.

Things are suddenly less tense.

ERIC

I found this secret basement down  
the hallway and this man was down  
there. The walls were breathing and  
it was just covered in mushrooms.

KARA

Okay.

ERIC

And...

Eric trails off.

ERIC (CONT'D)

He---

INT. UNDERGROUND LAIR NIGHT

A FLASH of Eric being attacked. A startling and upsetting  
voice SCREAMS in Eric's face. We see this persons dead sunken  
eyes as he CRIES.

HOODED FIGURE

You don't belong here!

INT. SCARY APARTMENT LIVING ROOM DAY

Eric and Kara are still in their same positions.

ERIC

It sounds made up.



KARA  
Yeah, it does.

A beat.

ERIC  
How are you?

Kara takes a deep breathe.

KARA  
I'm fine. Ryan and I broke up which is, whatever. She wasn't good for me anyways.

ERIC  
I'm sorry.

KARA  
It's okay. Sorry I was dodging your calls. The break up got drawn out way longer than it should've and I really wasn't in a place to be there for anyone.

ERIC  
I get that.

Another beat.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
Why did you let me move into the murder house without telling me?

KARA  
You don't know that she's dead. She's just missing.

ERIC  
Missing all her limbs, maybe.

KARA  
Shut up.

A beat.

KARA (CONT'D)  
What other option did you have?

Another beat.

Kara downs the rest of her tea and puts her cup in the sink. She slides the bloody knife into the sink also and runs some water over it.

KARA (CONT'D)  
Alright, go get dressed.

She starts getting things together.

ERIC  
For what?

KARA  
You owe me a new mattress.

Eric gets up to walk into the bedroom to change.

ERIC  
You know I can't afford that right now.

KARA  
I know. I'll buy it and you'll pay me back later.

Kara smiles at Eric. Eric walks into the bedroom.

INT. MATTRESS STORE AFTERNOON.

Kara and Eric are at the mattress store shopping around. They walk between rows of identical mattress displays. The fluorescent light is harsh. Eric lays down on one of the fancy mattress' and closes his eyes. He dozes off for a moment until he hears Kara's voice hanging over him.

KARA (V.O.)  
Do you think I should get it?

Eric opens his eyes and rolls over to see the price tag. It says \$5,000.00. He scoffs.

ERIC  
For five grand this thing better be able to make me cum...

A family walks by.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
...pletely rested. What a great price!

He gets up and they continue looking around.

LATER

Kara is off talking to a an employee while Eric wanders. As he makes his way around the store somebody catches his eye.

It's Sam. He's with some other guy. Eric ducks down behind one of the mattresses.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
Fuck fuck fuck...

The same family walks by.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
...tional.

Eric starts rubbing his hand along the side of the mattress covering his swear.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
So functional. Fun, fun,  
functional!

The parents look upset. They leave. Eric peers over the edge of the bed. He gazes at Sam. How could he already be buying a mattress with somebody else? He stewes. He's ready to cry.

STORE EMPLOYEE (O.S.)  
You don't belong here.

The store employee is LOUD. Eric jumps. He is so caught off guard and stands up looking confused.

STORE EMPLOYEE (CONT'D)  
You look like the kind of guy who  
sleeps on something nice and *firm*.

Is this a gay joke? Eric looks over towards Sam. It's the same man but now obviously looks nothing like Sam. Eric is seeing things.

STORE EMPLOYEE (CONT'D)  
And these babies are much too soft.

Store employee pats the closest mattress.

STORE EMPLOYEE (CONT'D)  
Let me show ya.

Eric follows the store employee. He is out of it.

INT. KARA'S CAR AFTERNOON

Kara and Eric are driving back with a full mattress tangled in the backset seat. An ANNOYING SONG plays on the radio but neither of them cares enough to turn it off or change it.

EXT. SCARY APARTMENT STREET DAY

Kara and Eric carry the blood-soaked mattress to the dumpster next to the building. With one big swing they lob it in and walk back towards the entrance of the apartment.

INT. SCARY APARTMENT HALLWAY DAY

Eric and Kara are carrying the new mattress into the apartment. They are struggling. Eric is in the front and Kara is in the back.

KARA  
Just turn it.

ERIC  
Turn it where? It's stuck on the  
frame.

KARA  
Bend it forward and through.

ERIC  
It's. Stuck.

Kara sets her side down and walks to the front end of the mattress. She pushes hard.

KARA  
No...

Another push

KARA (CONT'D)  
...it's...

Another push

KARA (CONT'D)  
...not!

The mattress gives way.

INT. SCARY APARTMENT LIVING ROOM DAY

We see Eric and Kara in the bedroom through the open door finishing setting up the bed. The front door is still open. She walks into the living room to close it. Standing in the doorway is her LANDLORD. He looks rough. Sunken eyes, scaly skin, hard breather. We notice that it's the same person from the basement and the HOODED FIGURE we've already seen.

LANDLORD  
I said no subletting.

Kara jumps.

KARA  
Jesus christ! You can't just show  
up like this.

LANDLORD  
I'm not in your apartment.

KARA  
And I'm not subletting.

Landlord pushes the door open a little wider REVEALING Eric  
who has just walked into the living room.

LANDLORD  
Then who is he?

The Landlord points at Eric.

KARA  
A friend who's staying with me for  
a couple days.

Eric is petrified. He knows this man.

LANDLORD  
He's been here longer than a couple  
of days.

KARA  
He got here two nights ago. Right?

Eric is stiff. Unresponsive. The landlord is locked on him.

KARA (CONT'D)  
Right?

Eric responds.

ERIC  
Right.

The Landlord doesn't buy it. He closes his eyes and breathes  
deep. He makes a DEEP RUMBLING NOISE. Is he growling?

LANDLORD  
He has to leave by tomorrow.

The Landlord scratches his neck.

KARA

Fix the mold and then we can talk  
about the lease.

She starts shutting the door. The Landlord BLOCKS it from closing with his boot.

LANDLORD

You're new here so I am going to  
give you a little slack. Next time  
I won't be so forgiving.

KARA

Move your foot.

Kara puts visible pressure on the door. It squeezes his boot. The landlord is unfazed. He smiles. With one quick pull, he dislodges his shoe and the door SLAMS shut.

KARA (CONT'D)

Come on!

We hear a quiet whistling from under the front door as it fades in the distance of the hallway.

KARA (CONT'D)

Sorry about that. My landlord is a  
piece of shit.

Eric is wide-eyed. He gestures to the door.

KARA (CONT'D)

What?

He gestures twice the same way.

KARA (CONT'D)

What is it?

ERIC

That's him. The guy from last  
night. He's been following me  
around all week. Slamming on the  
door.

Eric starts breathing heavy.

ERIC (CONT'D)

He...He followed me onto the train.  
That whistle. That's the guy.  
That's him.

Kara walks over to Eric. He is hysterical. She sits him down on the couch.

KARA  
Hey, easy. It's okay.

Eric continues breathing heavily.

ERIC  
What if I showed you?

KARA  
Showed me what?

ERIC  
The place from last night. What if  
I proved to you I wasn't dreaming?

Kara is concerned.

A beat.

Kara takes a deep breath and just as she is about to respond...

INT. SCARY APARTMENT HALLWAY DAY

We see the same sterile hallway. No sound. Does anybody even live here? Eric pokes his head around the corner. Above him, scooby doo style, Kara does the same. They turn the corner and walk the length of the hallway.

INT. SCARY APARTMENT HALLWAY 2 CONTINUOUS

They round another corner into the same looking hallway. Eric stops for a second and Kara bumps into him.

ERIC  
(whispering) Hold on.

He turns and looks down the hallway they just came from and then turns to face where they were going.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
Okay, this way.

They continue down the hallway and round another corner.

INT. SCARY APARTMENT HALLWAY 3 CONTINUOUS

As they round this corner Eric slows down.

ERIC  
I think this is it.

Kara is still skeptical. She stops at the corner as Eric continues forward to find this hidden door.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
It should be...right...

Eric puts heavy pressure on a random spot of the floor and releases it.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
...here!

Nothing happens. Kara looks sad.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
Wait, no it's actually right...

He puts pressure on a different spot on the floor.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
...here.

Again, nothing happens.

KARA  
Eric.

ERIC  
Hold on, I'll find it.

Kara looks around and notices something in the corner of the hallway floor. It distracts her. While Eric continues searching, she walks towards the wall and kneels down. It's a cluster of mushrooms growing out of floor corner. They softly sway back and forth as if moved by a breeze. But the air is stale. There is no wind. She reaches out to touch them and they appear to be reaching back. Just as she's about to make contact we hear Eric in the background.

ERIC (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
It's right here!

A sudden CLICK cracks down the hallway. We see the mushroom pull back into the wall like a hat flying out of a car window on the freeway. Kara stands up and looks towards Eric.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
Look!

Eric pulls his shirt over his nose and mouth and with his free hand pulls open the door on the floor. A plume of black spores fly out. Kara covers her mouth with her shirt too.



ERIC (CONT'D)

See!

KARA

Close it!

Eric drops the door and puts pressure back down on top of it. It clicks locked and disappears into the floor like nothing was there. Eric stands with a grinning face and full arms wide.

KARA (CONT'D)

We should go. Now.

Eric doesn't register.

KARA (CONT'D)

Let's go!

Eric hears this and makes his way to her.

ERIC

Sorry, this is just first time I've felt even remotely sane in a while.

INT. SCARY APARTMENT LIVING ROOM DAY

Kara deadbolts and chains the door as she shuts it behind them. Eric sits down on the couch.

KARA

He for sure killed that girl.

ERIC

Without a doubt.

A beat.

KARA

So what do we do now?

ERIC

I guess we should call the cops.

Kara scoff.

KARA

For what? So they can show up five hours after we need them only to *accidentally* kill us and one of our neighbors dogs?

ERIC  
Then what else?

A beat.

INT. SCARY APARTMENT LIVING ROOM LATER

An unenthused COP is standing in their apartment holding a notepad. Eric and Kara are sitting on the couch. The cop is talking exclusively to Kara.

COP  
So, your landlord is hiding Hailey Sampson in an secret underground basement filled with black mold and mushrooms?

ERIC  
And he's actively trying to kill me.

Eric points to his arm.

COP  
Apart from the injury on this gentleman's arm, do you have any other proof of a crime?

KARA  
He was stalking my friend on the train.

COP  
How do you know it was him?

ERIC  
He has this whistle.

COP  
A lot of people whistle. It's a national past-time.

A beat.

KARA  
So there's nothing you can do?

The Cop shuts his notebook.

COP

There's nothing to do. Unless you have any further proof I can't arrest your landlord for being creepy.

The cop heads for the door. Kara follows.

KARA

Well thanks a lot.

COP

(sarcastically) Oh you're very welcome.

Eric whispers to himself.

ERIC

Asshole.

COP

What was that?

ERIC

I said thanks again.

The cop opens the door and steps into the hallway. He turns to Kara who is showing him the door.

COP

This is the last known location of the biggest missing persons case we've had this year. We've scrubbed every inch of the building and checked and double checked this guys records. He's clean. He's an asshole but he's clean. There's nothing here.

The cop hands Kara his personal card and begins to walk away.

COP (CONT'D)

Call me if you find anything else.

INT. SCARY APARTMENT HALLWAY ENTRANCE CONTINUOUS

Kara shuts the door and we follow the cop. He walks down the hallway towards the front door of the complex. Something catches his eye on the wall near the door. He sees the complex's mailboxes. Out of one of the slats, a tar-like liquid is dripping. But its not falling. Kind of like eating too many skittles and dripping your spit without it breaking. He walks towards it.

He grabs his flashlight from his belt and shines it on the object. It shines and radiates with vibrant energy. We've seen this before. The mailbox it's coming from is ajar but still closed. He reaches for it and swings it open. He shines the light into the mailbox. We see the same fungal mound from the apartment with Sam. It looks like it's breathing. The cop gets a little closer shining the light harder on the object.

COP

What the fuck is that?

He moves his face closer. Suddenly POP. The fungus bursts releasing a whole cloud of black fungal spores around the cops head. We see him inhale a huge deep breath of the stuff as he STUMBLES backwards away from the mailbox. He drops his flashlight and begins GRABBING at his throat. He begins SPITTING up chunks of black residue. Huge globs of it. He's having trouble breathing. He begins PANICKING. Patches of his facial skin begin bubbling up and oozing rapidly. It's terrifying. Suddenly he stops. Standing perfectly upright he is stoic and unresponsive. A complete tonal shift. His face is back to normal. We stay with him for a moment. Nothing is happening as he stares blankly at the wall.

A beat.

COP (CONT'D)

(Stoically) I better be getting back.

The cop leaves the complex and his flashlight behind. We see his flashlight roll behind a couple of packages on the floor. From the doors we see his cop car drive off.

INT. SCARY APARTMENT LIVING ROOM DAY

Eric and Kara are in their same spots respectively.

ERIC

That sick fuck. He's probably been watching me and Sam have sex.

Eric looks at Kara. Was he not supposed to have sex in her bed?

ERIC (CONT'D)

I mean, we tossed it anyways.

KARA

I don't care.

ERIC

What if he followed Sam and hate-crimes him? That fucking homophobe.

KARA

Call him and see if he's seen anything.

ERIC

He hasn't responded to any of my calls or texts.

A beat.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Let's go check on him.

KARA

Or we can wait for him to respond.

ERIC

No. If he's hurt, we can be there to help and if he's ghosting me, let him ghost me to my fucking face.

EXT. SAMS HOUSE EVENING

Kara and Eric pull up in Kara's car to the front of Sam's house. It is a gorgeous brownstone with a dark oak door. Vines are growing down the street facing facade. Nothing seems askew. A light is visible from the window.

INT. KARA'S CAR CONTINUOUS

Kara and Eric are just staring at the house.

KARA

Holy shit!

ERIC

Right?

KARA

He's rich?

ERIC

Daddies, am I right?

They giggle. Things are still tense.

A beat.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
Okay let's go.

EXT. SAMS HOUSE CONTINUOUS

Kara and Eric are at the top of the porch steps in front of the front door. Eric presses his ear to it. He shakes out his hands. Obviously nervous.

ERIC  
I'm okay. This is fine.

Kara reaches passed him and KNOCKS HARD.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
Kara?!

KARA  
Stop wasting time! What if he's hurt?

ERIC  
What if he's with somebody else.

KARA  
Better to know sooner than later.

Kara knocks again. We hear no movement from the house. Kara reaches for the door handle and twists. The door opens, it's unlocked.

ERIC  
I am not breaking into his house.

KARA  
We're not breaking in anything.  
Nothing's broken. The door was unlocked.

INT. SAMS HOUSE CONTINUOUS

Kara steps over the threshold. She looks down and sees all the items on the floor including broken glass.

KARA  
(Whispering) Okay, some stuff looks broken.

Eric steps in behind her.

ERIC  
Sam? Are you home?

They continue walking through the front entry way.

ERIC (CONT'D)

The front door was open. We're not breaking in because we're making ourselves apparent. Are you okay?

Kara notices a low hanging dust from the ceiling. They are spores.

KARA

Look.

She POINTS up. They both see spores hovering, almost like a fog hugging the entire ceiling. A thick line of pulsating black hugs the crown molding of the hallway. The further back it goes, the thicker it gets. Some fungal spores and mushroom clusters are also growing out of this thick vine near the end of the hallway. A light is coming from a room down the hall.

ERIC

Sam!

Eric pulls up his shirt to cover his mouth and nose and RUNS down the hallway.

KARA

Eric wait!

Eric doesn't listen. He makes it to the end of the hallway and turns the corner. He let's out a heartbreaking SCREAM.

ERIC

(screaming) No! No!

He falls to his knees. Eric begins sobbing. Kara covers her mouth and nose with her shirt and runs after him.

INT. SAMS KITCHEN CONTINUOUS

We see Eric slumped on the floor weeping as Kara enters the doorway. She screams.

KARA

Oh my god!

We then see Sam's corpse upside down clinging to the corner of the room. As if hanging from it with his head tilted back and mouth agape, a pillar of fungus is growing through the top of his head like a spear. We see this pillar extended though his open mouth and down through his jaw. Clusters of illustrious and beautifully rich mushrooms are growing from rotted pieces of his flesh.

The black tar-like liquid is dripping from his hollow eye sockets. It's so terrifyingly awful.

**END OF ACT 2B**



ACT 3

INT. KARA'S CAR NIGHT

Kara and Sam are driving down what looks like a wooded road. They are away from the city. Nobody is talking. They both look ravished. Eric's eyes have nothing behind them. Kara looks emotionally overwhelmed. They just keep driving. The ANNOYING SONG is playing on the radio. Eric reaches for the console and turns it off. They keep driving.

A beat.

ERIC  
Can you pull over, please?

KARA  
Yeah, sure.

Kara pulls over the car.

Eric steps out of the car and walks off into a nearby wooded area. Kara is still in the car clutching the steering wheel. We hear Eric let out a GUTTURAL SCREAM. A heartbreakingly awful whaling.

ERIC (O.S.)  
Why! Whyyyyyyy! Fuck! Fuck! FUCK!

We see Kara on the verge of tears. Hearing this she clenches her eyes closed and tears roll down her cheeks.

ERIC (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
No no no no no no no! (sobbing)

Kara lets in a hard and trembling breath.

EXT. STORE PARKING LOT NIGHT

Kara and Eric are sitting on the trunk of Kara's car. They are both scarfing down fast food. We see some to-go bags and sodas around them. Nobody is really speaking.

A beat.

ERIC  
We can't go back.

KARA  
I know.

Another beat.

KARA (CONT'D)  
But we have to?

ERIC  
Why?

KARA  
My whole life is in that apartment.

ERIC  
Your whole life will be lost if you go back to that apartment.

KARA  
Then what are we supposed to do?

ERIC  
Run! Leave forever and never come back.

A beat.

KARA  
I have to go back.

ERIC  
You don't have to do shit.

KARA  
You don't have to come!

ERIC  
Bullshit! Whatever that fucking thing is will kill you. Sam is dead, I'm sure that missing girl is dead and you have, what, some kind of death wish? What's so important in that apartment that you're willing to lose your life over?

KARA  
I can go alone.

Eric scoffs.

ERIC  
If you die then that's it. I have nothing. Nobody. I have no real friends except you and I have no family. Maybe that's unfair to say to make this all about me but I don't care. You can't die.

(MORE)

ERIC (CONT'D)

Call me selfish but I don't care.  
I'll be fucking selfish, I can't  
lose you.

A beat.

ERIC (CONT'D)

If you go alone, you'll already be  
dead because I'll kill you myself.

He's being playful. Kara laughs. The tension eases.

Another beat.

ERIC (CONT'D)

The only way I'm going is if we arm  
ourselves.

KARA

With what?

INT. STORE AISLE NIGHT

We see Eric grabbing a huge bottle of bleach. Kara walks up holding a couple bottle of hydrogen peroxide and a couple of super soakers.

INT. STORE AISLE 2 NIGHT

We see Eric and Kara both grab several bottles of liquor.

INT. STORE AISLE 3 NIGHT

We see Eric and Kara grabbing some cleaning rags and face masks. A RANDOM SHOPPER is giving them wild looks. Kara sticks her tongue out at him.

INT. CHECK OUT COUNTER NIGHT

A CASHIER is scanning their items. Eric and Kara look TERRIBLE under these bright florescence. The Cashier can't help but stare. Eric and Kara are expressionless. The Cashier finishes scanning the items.

CASHIER

Are you a super saver rewards  
member?

ERIC

No.

CASHIER  
Would you like to join?

ERIC  
No.

CASHIER  
It's free.

Kara jumps in.

KARA  
He said no thank you.

The Cashier is upset by the burst.

KARA (CONT'D)  
Sorry. It's been a day.

The Cashier doesn't respond. It feels tense.

KARA (CONT'D)  
I like your shirt.

The Cashier looks at Kara and give her the *cmom* eyes.

EXT. KARA'S CAR NIGHT

We see Kara and Eric open her trunk and start filling the guns with bleach. There are some loose empty plastic water bottles rolling around the trunk space. They start pouring hydrogen peroxide in them and ripping the labels off.

EXT. CITY STREET NIGHT

As Kara and Eric drive back to the complex, they see a small crime scene taped off on the side of the road. It looks like a cop car hit a streetlight. Amidst the police officers and the commotion they look through as they pass and see that inside the crashed cop car, is the COP from earlier. He is dead, still sitting in the front seat of the crashed cruiser. From his open mouth another spear like fungal column vertically piercing from the top of his head through the bottom of his jaw. Another cop covers the car with a white sheet. Eric and Kara keep driving.

EXT. SCARY APARTMENT STREET NIGHT

We see a Mourner leaving a bouquet of flowers at the front entrance of the apartment.

There are a lot more flowers and more candles illuminating the exterior of the building. As the mourner walks away, we see Kara's car pull up.

INT. SCARY APARTMENT HALLWAY ENTRANCE NIGHT

Eric and Kara open the door to the complex and step inside. They are both holding super soaker squirt guns. Kara is carrying a backpack. They are both wearing painting masks. As they walk in, the fluorescent lights shut off. Their hum disintegrates. Kara and Eric look at each other.

A beat.

Eric notices a light coming from the ground behind some packages. He leans down and picks up a flashlight.

ERIC  
Must've been the cops.

He shines it down the hallway. We see some spores hovering above them.

KARA  
Are you ready.

ERIC  
Sure.

KARA  
One...

Something is off.

KARA (CONT'D)  
...two...

Suddenly Eric hears some faint WHISTLING

ERIC  
Kara wait!

KARA (CONT'D)  
...Three!

Kara takes off running down the hallway towards her apartment door. Eric runs behind her shining the light. The whistling grows exponentially louder. Kara gets to the door and is fumbling with the key. Eric arrives.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
Hurry!

KARA  
I'm trying!

Eric shines his flashlight down the hallway. We see the Landlord fly around the corner floating through the air. He is being held up by a pulsating vine-like tail as if the Landlord was a sock puppet. His eyes are hollow.

ERIC  
He's coming!

Kara inserts the right key and twists.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
Kara!

Kara throws open the door and the two of them fall into the apartment.

INT. SCARY APARTMENT LIVING ROOM CONTINUOUS

As Eric and Kara fall in, they hear a terrifying screech from the hallway. Kara jumps to her feet turns and slams the door shut. She immediately deadbolts and throws on the chain lock.

A beat.

The apartment and hallway outside are silent. Eric hops up to turn on a light. He flips the switch and nothing happens.

KARA  
I'll start getting my things.

Kara runs into the bedroom.

KARA (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Are you taking anything?

ERIC  
No. I don't want to remember any of this.

Eric is pacing near the front door in the living room. We hear Kara in the bedroom shuffling things around. Suddenly HARD FOOTSTEPS are heard out in the hallway. Accompanied by a familiar whistling. Eric tenses up.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
(Whispering loudly) Kara!

No response. He tries louder.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
Kara!

KARA (O.S.)

What?

She pokes her head out of the bedroom. She hears it too. Quickly she goes back to packing. The footsteps and whistling grows louder and louder until it stops directly in front of their door.

A beat.

Eric sees the deadbolt to the front door jiggling. He's frozen.

A beat.

Suddenly it throws itself unlocked and Eric lunges for the door. As he slams into it, the door meets him halfway being thrown open. Eric screams.

ERIC

Kara!

He forces all of his body weight into the door to try and close it. We see the Landlords arms throwing themselves violently around through the cracked door trying to gain access. Above the arms, a black pulsating tentacle snakes in. Kara runs in from the bedroom and throws her body weight at the door. It slams.

LANDLORD (O.S.)

(Roars)

We hear the landlords arms CRACK from the thrust. They thrust again.

KARA

Fuck...

CRACK! Another arm snap.

KARA (CONT'D)

...you!

One final thrust, The Landlord pulls his arms back through but the tentacle remains. As they slam the door closed, the tentacle is severed and flops to the floor.

ERIC

Jesus, fuck!

The tentacle flops and flops around on the ground. Kara pulls up her super soaker and sprays it with bleach. It Squirms and dissolves into nothing. A puff of smoke is all that's left.

A beat.

They are both breathing heavy. They hear the Landlord from the hallway.

LANDLORD (O.S.)  
Now...that...*will* be coming...out  
of your deposit.

Eric and Kara look at each other like 'seriously?' Suddenly the bolt flips and the door flies open again landing on the door chain. We see the landlord trying to squeeze his head through. He is SLAMMING the door over and over on the chain. Eric and Kara run into the bedroom and slam the door.

INT. SCARY APARTMENT BEDROOM CONTINUOUS

They immediately start pulling the bed to blockade the door. We can hear the door SLAMMING from the other room. BANG BANG BANG CRACK! Suddenly they hear WOOD SPLINTERING. They quickly start stacking more stuff in front of the door. BOOM! The front door is open.

A beat.

They hear the footsteps of the landlord quietly and sternly making his way across the living room floor.

KARA  
How the fuck are we supposed to get  
out of here?

Eric goes to the bedroom window and slides it open. There are bars covering the opening. Eric tries to push them hoping that maybe they're old or loose. He pulls a chair to the window, steps up and tries kicking through with his foot. It won't budge.

KARA (CONT'D)  
We're trapped!

They hear a sudden and forceful KNOCK on the bedroom door. Eric grabs Kara's hand and pulls her into the closet.

INT. SCARY APARTMENT CLOSET CONTINUOUS

Eric pulls Kara into the closet and closes the slatted doors. They hear another thuddy KNOCK on the bedroom door.

KARA  
We're fucked. We're dead and we're  
fucked.



Eric kicks in the drywall by his feet. It crumbles like a bathbomb. It reveals the same shitty plywood haphazardly nailed from before. Eric kneels down and starts pulling the boards from their placement. The nails are rusted and come out fairly easily.

KARA (CONT'D)

What the fuck is this?

ERIC

Something I found when I first moved in.

Kara kneels down with him. As they pull board by board they start to see spores floating from the cracks. They continue. Another KNOCK is heard. As the last board is pulled Eric shines his flashlight, they see a complete infestation of fungus, black mold and tar like slime. It retracts reacting to the light.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Hold this.

Eric gives Kara the flashlight. She shines it. Eric pulls out his super-soaker and begins spraying the entire compartment down. It reacts violently! We see huge patches begin dissolving as Eric relentlessly prays. Suddenly we hear from outside of the bedroom door a tremendous roar.

LANDLORD

(roars)

A beat.

The Landlord BURSTS through the bedroom door only dislodging the bed slightly. They keep spraying revealing a passageway.

ERIC

You first.

Eric takes back the flashlight and Kara crawls into the passageway. She starts clearing the path with her super soaker. Eric enters behind her. We still hear the Landlord trying to break through the bedroom door.

INT. CRAWLSPACE CONTINUOUS

Eric is shining the light from behind as Kara clears the path. They are making their way.

ERIC

Just keep going.

We only hear the sounds of the spray and dissolving and the crawling. All sound from the bedroom has ceased. Eric and Kara don't really notice. They keep moving.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Wait.

KARA

What?

ERIC

Do you hear that?

KARA

I don't hear anything.

A beat.

KARA (CONT'D)

Where'd he go?

Another beat.

Suddenly Eric is launched out of the crawlspace from which they came. The Landlord has his hands around both of Eric's ankles and he is being pulled back through, insanely fast.

KARA (CONT'D)

Eric!

INT. SCARY APARTMENT LIVING ROOM CONTINUOUS

We see the Landlord being puppeted by that huge grotesque tentacle and the landlord flies through the air swinging Eric like a rag doll through the bedroom door and out into the hallway.

INT. SCARY APARTMENT HALLWAY CONTINUOUS

Eric slams against the opposing hallway wall as he flies out of the apartment. The Landlord flies down the hallway and around the corner slamming Eric into another wall.

INT. SCARY APARTMENT HALLWAY 3 CONTINUOUS

As they round another corner, we see the secret floor door is open and the tentacle is pulling back into it like an anchor line motor reeling itself in. As the tentacle disappears into the blackness, we see the landlord fly into the opening and subsequently, Eric is pulled through.

He reaches away as he is pulled into the darkness. The door slams shut behind them. Suddenly there is complete silence.

A beat.

The fluorescent lights all turn back. We hear its hum.

INT. CRAWLSPACE NIGHT

Kara is continuing forward through the crawl space. She is breathing through tears as she continues bleaching her path. The crawlspace turns right. As she turns she sees some light. Hope. She starts spraying faster and making her way out.

INT. MUSH ROOM NIGHT

The room is gorgeous. Mushrooms of all varieties are growing around the walls. They look like flower bouquets in sepia tone. They sway in harmony slightly creating ease and peace. Everything is lit by hanging candles. Both from the ceiling in metal chandeliers but alongside the mushrooms on the walls. Kara falls out of the compartment and into this room. She stands and wanders the walls with her eyes in awe.

KARA

Wow!

As she gazes she begins noticing that many of these clusters resemble human shapes. As she keeps looking she sees they are CORPSES stuck to the walls. Some are old bones and some are in the process of decaying. As she wanders she keeps looking up. She suddenly steps on a human bone. SNAP! Kara jumps. She looks down and sees that the bone she cracked has splintered long ways. It resembles a dagger. She sees that along most of the base of the wall, there are piles of bones littered. Kara looks for an exit of some kind. As she scans she notices a spot on the wall near the floor that is curiously un-mushroomed. Rather, un-corpsed. As she passes it, she spies a corridor that leads out of the room. She kneels down and opens up her backpack. She pulls out a labeled and an unlabeled water bottle. One is filled with bleach and the other hydrogen peroxide. She pours one into the other and throws it into the air. An EXPLOSION of chemicals showers the nearby walls and we see instant decay of the mushroom coated brick. Several corpses begin falling. Suddenly, she hears the landlord ROARING from another room.

LANDLORD (O.S.)

(Roars in pain)

She zips up her bag and hesitantly makes her way down the corridor and out of the room.

INT. UNDERGROUND LAIR NIGHT

Eric opens his eyes. He is bloodied and battered. Completely wrecked. He tries to get up but can't. His mask is gone. As he looks at his hands, they are being held down by the tar-like sludge. Eric begins to PANIC. He wiggles and tries to wrestle out but it doesn't work. He looks around the room for something to help. Anything. Suddenly he sees the Landlord scurrying along the walls in the darkness. He is still being piloted by the slime vine. He slowly lowers from the wall and comes into focus. He looks disgusting. His skin is turning a dull green and he no longer has eyes.

LANDLORD

Did you think I wouldn't find out?

He comes closer.

LANDLORD (CONT'D)

I control everything here.

He comes right up to Eric's face, nose to nose and brushes Eric's cheek with the back of his hand.

LANDLORD (CONT'D)

You thought a pathetic faggot like you could fool me?

ERIC

Fuck you!

The Landlord pulls back.

LANDLORD

You would like that, wouldn't you?

ERIC

Why are you doing this?!

A beat.

LANDLORD

I'm doing this for the same reason you are.

The Landlord leans in and comes nose to nose with Eric again.

LANDLORD (CONT'D)

I need...

The Landlord pinches Eric's mouth to force it open.

LANDLORD (CONT'D)

A place to live.

The Landlord opens his mouth and a spear of black-tar slowly creeps out. Eric is squirming and panicking. It starts to enter his mouth. Eric screams. Suddenly we hear the sound of PIERCING FLESH. The Tar tongue stops moving.

A beat.

We see Hailey has stabbed a broken bone through the Landlord's neck. He gargles and pulls back away from Eric. Hailey looks rough. One of her arms has obvious gangreen and she has a couple small clusters of mushrooms growing out of the rotting flesh. Her whole face is sunken and she looks near death.

HAILEY

Goddammit I hate landlords.

The Landlord falls onto the floor. He is shaking and seizing on the floor. Kara runs in from the back of the room.

KARA

Eric!

She runs to their side and sprays Eric's trapped wrists with the bottle. They instantly release. Eric struggles to stand. The Landlord continues squirming behind them. As Eric stands, Kara opens her backpack and pulls out two more water bottles, one with a label and one without.

KARA (CONT'D)

(to Eric and Hailey) Go!

Eric and Hailey make their way out of the room supporting each other but ultimately struggling from each of their individual injuries. Kara puts her backpack back on as she holds the open water bottles in her hands.

KARA (CONT'D)

(to Landlord) And by the way...

The Landlord stops seizing and looks towards Kara.

KARA (CONT'D)

...I'm moving out.

She pours the hydrogen peroxide into the bottle with bleach. Quickly capping it, she shakes the bottle and throws it directly at the Landlord's face. She runs out of the room.

Behind her we see an explosion followed by sounds of searing, bubbling, melting and decay. The Landlord lets out a horrendous sound.

LANDLORD  
(ROARS in agony)

INT. SCARY APARTMENT HALLWAY 3 NIGHT

The hallway looks and feels exactly the same as we've always seen it. Sterile, silent and over-lit. A soft POUND is heard. ANOTHER and ANOTHER.

A beat.

Suddenly the floor door opens revealing Kara, Eric and Hailey. As the three of them exit we can see illumination from flames behind them. Kara is the last to step out.

KARA  
Start evacuating people now!

HAILEY  
There's nobody else. You're the only person living here.

KARA  
What?

As she lowers the door, a tentacle shoots out and wraps itself around Kara's leg. With her other foot she slams down her weight on the door severing the vine extremity. It flops around the floor like a dying fish. She sprays it with her super soaker. It disintegrates.

KARA (CONT'D)  
What do you mean?

INT. OTHER APARTMENT 1

Kara kicks down the door and launches into the living room. The floor-plan is identical to her apartment. It is empty. No furniture or signs of life.

KARA  
Hello!

INT. OTHER APARTMENT 2

Kara kicks down another door. She enters. Exact same layout and no furniture.

KARA  
Anybody here!?

INT. OTHER APARTMENT 3

Kara kicks open the door but falls through. This apartment was unlocked. Its the same set up. She calls to Hailey.

KARA  
But, I don't understand!

ERIC (O.S.)  
Kara, come on!

EXT. SCARY APARTMENT STREET DAY

We see Eric and Hailey hop out of the front door still using each other for support. Kara runs out behind them.

KARA  
It's just an empty complex?

HAILEY  
It's a cover. Cheap rents gets the victims in.

They walk towards Kara's car. Eric collapses alongside the cars side.

HAILEY (CONT'D)  
No neighbors means no witnesses.

The hear a DEEP ROAR coming from the hallways. We begin to see the hallway flickering from fire. It's growing out of the basement. A couple of bystanders are walking by and take notice of the fire and secondly, the terrible condition of the group. One pulls out their phone, assumedly calling 911.

KARA  
Eric!

Eric opens his eyes and sits up. Kara walks to the trunk of the car and pops it open. We see an assortment of liquor bottle and rags.

KARA (CONT'D)  
Let's make some cocktails!

Eric stands up and limps to the trunk with Kara. Hailey leans down in Eric's spot and begins an attempt to pull some of the fungus from her dying arm. She pulls one.

HAILEY

Aaaaaa Fuck!

It's extremely painful. Eric and Kara walk towards the entrance with freshly made Molotov cocktails in hand. Kara pulls out a lighter and lights both rags. The both throw them. One flies through one of the front windows and the other shatters on the front facing wall spewing a wall of fire. A ROAR grows louder. Suddenly a sea of tar-tentacles burst through the front doors and come directly for the group. Eric and Kara grab their super soakers and start spraying. The arms cant reach them. They keep falling apart as they reach through the wall of bleach. Suddenly the tentacles retract back into the building with extreme force. They fly down the hallway and out of sight. The ground around them begins to shake. It stops.

A beat.

We see the slow and heavy release of a spore cloud coming through every opening in the building. The windows, the doors, the roof. The building fire continues to grow and engulf the building simultaneously. The group stares and watches as the building goes up in flames. The spores mix and pop in the tips of the fire. It's gorgeous.

A beat.

SUDDENLY another roar intensifies rapidly and we see the landlords hollow empty shell-of-a-body skin-suit fly through the front, propelled by the spore tentacle. It careens directly for Eric's face, covered in flames and spewing toxic gas. Hailey pulls out a plumbing wrench from her back pocket and CRACKS it down directly onto the landlord's head just as it's about to get to Eric. The head immediately smashes into the concrete and splatters in a black mildewy pile of slime and decay. The base of the tentacle wiggles as they watch it burn off in the wall of flames at the front of the building. Like a dying fish it wiggles violently until it stops. Dead.

HAILEY (CONT'D)

You can have your wrench back.

Hailey tosses the plumbing wrench on the mess of what's left of the landlords head. We hear the sound of SIRENS approaching. Several firetrucks and a flurry of cop cars descend on the scene. As the firefighters begin putting out the flames, the cops start ushering the small crowd that's formed away from the building. One FIREFIGHTER walks passed the group and turns to looks at them. He notices Hailey.

FIREFIGHTER

Hailey?



Hailey gives him a soft wave of her not decaying hand. The Firefighter turns to the crowd and yells.

FIREFIGHTER (CONT'D)  
We've got Hailey Sampson!

Some murmurs and some cheers are heard. He reaches down and helps her up and leads her to an ambulance. As she leaves Eric speaks up.

ERIC  
Thank you. You know, for the whole...

Eric imitates getting stabbed in the throat.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
...thing.

She smiles and give a thumbs up. She looks like she's about to collapse. As the chaos continues around them and the fire starts getting put out, Kara opens her backpack and pulls out a small framed photo. It's a young girl and her dad.

ERIC (CONT'D)  
Is that you?

KARA  
Yeah.

She smiles and her eyes begin welling with tears. Eric puts his arm around her for comfort.

ERIC  
You know, there is this new thing called a phone where you can store *millions* of pictures just like this one. And you don't even have to risk your life for it.

Kara shoves Eric and laughs.

KARA  
Asshole.

Clean up and emergency chaos continue around them.

A beat.

Eric laughs to himself.

KARA (CONT'D)  
What?

ERIC

You know that joke about somebody liking mushrooms or something or, like, *this guy's a mushroom* and the punchline is 'well he sure was a fun guy.'

Kara doesn't respond.

ERIC (CONT'D)

I felt like making that joke for a brief second.

A beat.

KARA

Oh! Like fungi but *fun guy*? Like he's a fun guy.

ERIC

Yeah.

KARA

(giggles) Well I'm glad you didn't.

They both laugh and smile at each other. They hold each other as the flames subside.

**END OF ACT 3**

EPILOGUE

EXT. CITY PARK CAFE DAY

OVERLAY TEXT : "One Year Later"

We see Kara sitting at a patio table with a ceramic cup of coffee on a saucer. She looks great! She's looking around as if waiting for somebody.

ERIC (O.S.)

Hey!

Kara turns and sees Eric. He is also looking very good! Kara stands up and they give each other a warm and wonderful embrace. They release and Eric holds both of her hands.

ERIC (CONT'D)

It's so good to see you.

They both sit.

ERIC (CONT'D)

Your coffee looks delicious!

KARA

It is! Want a sip?

ERIC

Yes please

Eric reaches for her cup and takes a sip. They continue talking but we fade out.

EXT. CITY PARK DAY

Eric and Kara are walking through a gorgeous wooded park. It is the fall so they are both layered in coats and scarves. The leaves are beginning to fall. We come in mid conversation.

ERIC

We've been together about four months now.

KARA

That's great!

ERIC

Thank you. It's still fresh but I really like him.

A beat.

KARA  
Does he know about everything that  
happened?

ERIC  
Not yet. But I plan on telling him  
eventually. Some other time, I  
guess.

EXT. CITY PARK BENCH DAY

Eric and Kara are sitting facing each other on a park bench.  
They both have tears in their eyes.

KARA  
I'm happy you're doing so well!

She laughs from the tears.

KARA (CONT'D)  
I miss you.

ERIC  
I miss you too.

They embrace.

KARA  
I'll come visit!

ERIC  
You'd love Erik!

She giggles again.

KARA  
You gays and your same names!

Eric laughs.

ERIC  
Like Kara and Clara was so  
different.

KARA  
Completely! They sound nothing  
alike.

They laugh.

A beat.

KARA (CONT'D)

Okay...well I better get going.  
I'll plan that trip. I swear.

ERIC

I'm looking forward to it.

They hug again. Kara stands up and walks away. Eric sits back down on the bench and takes in the scenery. Another moment of tranquility and stillness.

A beat.

He looks down and notices a small patch of mushrooms blossoming from a sidewalk crack. He stands up from the bench and looms over it. Looking down at it, his face doesn't change. Is he gonna stomp on them?

Another beat.

Eric reaches down and BOOPS each mushroom head softly. We see the mushrooms softly sway in the wind as Eric walks down the park path.

**END.**

