

GRIP

written by

Thom Bierdz

True story based on an award-winning memoir.

Best to see extensive PITCH DECK *first*:  
NEWS HEADLINES, BOOK AWARDS, SCRIPT RATINGS, PHOTOS, ART  
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FADE IN:

**EXT. SMALL HOUSE - WINTER - DAY**

SUPER: KENOSHA, WISCONSIN 1974

SNOW, THUNDER, LIGHTNING. The front door opens. With DENIM SUITCASES, Al BIERDZ (33, handsome, sideburns) backs out, hugging four confused kids, aged 13 to 4, in the doorway.

THOM (V.O.)

Dad, a psychotherapist, explained he had to be free from Mom's "suffocating energy."

**INT. LIVING ROOM - SMALL HOUSE - WINTER - DAY**

Emotional PHYLLIS BIERDZ (32, pretty, petite, Italian) in WAITRESS UNIFORM fights tears as she pulls her kids inside.

HOPE (13, cute) brushes the snow off her 3 younger brothers.

THOM (V.O.)

I felt my sister change then, from fun to ultra serious, having to help take care of us three younger brothers.

BILLY (10, blond, cute, BASEBALL UNIFORM) grabs his BAT, hits a BALL, which knocks down the wall CRUCIFIX. Hope rehangs it.

THOM (V.O.)

My brother Billy transferred missing Dad into baseball. And lusty females.

NAKED LADY CARDS fall from Billy's pocket. He repockets them.

THOM (V.O.)

Meanwhile little Troy transferred mom's hurt and missing dad into hyper fits.

Hyper Troy (4) karate-chops the COUCH, SCREAMS. Sitting on it, THOM (12, prominent eyes, skinny, effeminate) covers his ears, stares longingly at the TV.

THOM (V.O.)

With Dad gone, I craved male role models to replace him.

ON TV: "BIG VALLEY" LEE MAJORS in COWBOY HAT, SUEDE COAT.

THOM (V.O.)

Cowboys were the second most beautiful thing in the world!... Mom was the first.

Thom glances to his pretty mom, trying to calm obnoxious Troy.

**BASEMENT BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Sitting up in bed, sensitive Thom is spooked seeing paranormal OUTLINED FIGURES WALTZ in his dark bedroom (not a dream)!

THOM

Mom!!! Help!! Mom!! Mommmm!

THOM (V.O.)

Mom called me her supersensitive boy. I felt and saw things my brothers didn't. One night I was in a reality where lighted outlines of Colonial figures waltzed. It wasn't a dream, I was awake.... Did my history class prompt some weird time travel??... Was it a past life??

Phyllis in pajamas rushes in the room. Terrified Thom points to the transparent paranormal dancers. She hugs him tightly.

PHYLLIS

Thom?? I don't see anything.

She turns on the light, foreshadowing a halo on her head. The outlined waltzing figures evaporate. A OUIJA BOARD is on the stack of BOARD GAMES between Thom and sleeping Billy's bed.

THOM

There were Colonial people dancing!!

PHYLLIS

If you saw Colonial people dancing... that is psycho. Tell Mom you're not planning on being psycho when you grow up.

THOM

No, I decided to be a macho TV star.

She GIGGLES, lovingly holds her skinny, effeminate "mama's boy" who has zero chance to ever be macho or a TV star. THEY DO NOT SEE THE PLANCHETTE EERILY MOVE ACROSS THE OUIJA BOARD!

**EXT. HOLLYWOOD - DAY - SUMMER**

SUPER: 13 YEARS LATER 1987

A SUN RAY shines on the HOLLYWOOD SIGN then follows CAR TRAFFIC all the way down Fairfax Avenue. The sun ray brightens as it approaches iconic CBS STUDIOS.

**EXT. CBS - DAY**

FANS by "THE YOUNG AND THE RESTLESS" doors SCREAM as intense soap hunk Thom (now 25, macho) nears in COWBOY HAT and SUEDE COAT (like Lee Majors wore). Iconic "Y&R/Nadia's Theme" PLAYS.

THOM (V.O.)

My brothers kidded that for my nerdy ass to become a star on a soap opera that played around the world it was a miracle. But it was due to years of lifting weights and acting classes. Oh there are miracles in my life story. Seven impossible events that can't be explained. But me being on a soap opera is not one of them.

Following Thom are mom Phyllis (47), smoking a CIGARETTE, sister Hope (26, pretty), brothers Billy (23, stud, light hair, BASEBALL SHIRT) and Troy (17, muscular, TANK TOP). Hope huddles the family, whispers.

HOPE

Remember don't tell anyone Thom's homo. Actors have to sign a "moral clause."

Fans push MAGAZINE COVERS and HEADSHOTS for Thom to autograph. Handsome brothers Billy and Troy watch with envy. Reporter DANA (30, gorgeous blonde) clicks on her TAPE RECORDER.

DANA

Thom, who did you bring to the studio?

THOM

My family's visiting from Wisconsin.  
(to his family)  
Dana works for soap opera magazines.

PHYLLIS

"Dana" sounds familiar... oh you're the one who doesn't like Thom's acting?

DANA  
He's... inconsistent.

PHYLLIS  
Well, all those cameras are intimidating.

DANA  
I hope mine isn't. Can we get photos?

THOM  
Sure, this is my mom, Phyllis.

Shy Thom poses with Phyllis who is self-conscious, LAUGHS.

PHYLLIS  
I'm only a waitress. No more pictures.

Shy Thom poses next to shy Hope who holds a CAMERA.

THOM  
And this is my sister, Hope.

HOPE  
No, you don't want photos of me.

Cocky Billy poses, blocking Thom.

BILLY  
Take all the pics you want. I'm going to be more famous than Thom. I promise you.

THOM  
That's Billy. And this is Troy.

Troy KICKS THE AIR, SHOWING OFF KARATE MOVES, nearly kicking Billy. Everyone backs away. A JACKKNIFE falls out of Troy's pocket. Phyllis grabs it, hides it in her purse, remembers:

FLASHBACK:

**INT. CLASSROOM - SCHOOL - DAY - 1982**

Troy (12) holds a PAPER as he and Phyllis (42) listen to a worried FEMALE TEACHER.

FEMALE TEACHER  
Troy, read your essay to your mom, okay?

TROY

"What is my goal in life? My goal is to assassinate President Reagan to gain manhood and publicity."

PHYLLIS

Troy has a horrible sense of humor.

TROY

No, it'd be cool to stab people and get famous for it. Or to stab famous people.

RETURN TO SCENE:

Phyllis worries as black-belt Troy air-kicks and air-chops.

DANA

Troy can be another Jean-Claude Van Damme.

TROY

Sounds good. I get Thom's spare bedroom.

THOM

My spare room?!

BILLY

No, I should get Thom's spare room, right, Dana? Then you and I could date.

DANA

Too cute! But I'm waiting for Thom to ask me out. But I'm just a normal girl.

BILLY

You're not his type!

Thom freezes, blushes, worried Billy will out him as gay.

BILLY (CONT'D)

He likes paranormal. Thom, do I get your spare room?

THOM

No. I use it for séances.

DANA

A soap actor with a séance room?? Do you try to contact James Dean? John Wayne?

THOM

Dana, I only channel the dead actors who were so bad no one hired them. So now you can't blame me for my bad acting.

He CHUCKLES. She LAUGHS. With his arm around Troy, Thom opens the door, enters. His wowed family follows inside.

**INT. SOUNDSTAGE - CBS - DAY**

Nervous Thom shoots a scene. His family watches. Billy inches closer to the LIGHTS. Troy looks around, slightly paranoid.

TROY'S POV: Sporadic schizophrenic views of the soap scene and actors. Distorted faces, warped sounds. Then back to normal.

**MONTAGE - HOLLYWOOD**

-HOLLYWOOD WALK OF FAME: Hope takes photos of her brothers standing in STAR FOOTPRINTS. Billy and Troy shove each other.

-SOUVENIR SHOP: Phyllis buys them all HOLLYWOOD T-SHIRTS.

-MUSEUM: His siblings are bored but Thom's body finally relaxes ogling PICASSO PAINTINGS. He wipes tears at VAN GOGH's, turns to see his mother staring adoringly at him.

END OF MONTAGE

**INT. HOLLYWOOD DINER - NIGHT**

As the family leaves, Thom pays and sees his brothers marvel at 1980's POSTERS of Travolta, Eastwood, Redford, Stallone.

BILLY

Thom, you gonna be a movie star next?

THOM

Maybe next year when my soap contract ends. But only if you guys are gonna be.

TROY

Movie stars?? I wish.

THOM

Well, since no spirits have come to my séance room... you guys can have it.

TROY

You mean it?

Thom smiles warmly. Exuberant Troy hugs him tightly.

BILLY

We're gonna be movie stars!!

Billy raises his arms in victory. Following suit, Troy and Thom raise their arms and bump fists with Billy.

BILLY (CONT'D)

The three famous Bierdz brothers!

Hope snaps their "victory" photo.

PHYLLIS

(worried)

No. Troy's place is in Kenosha.

THOM

Why? He doesn't have a job in Kenosha.

TROY

Mom, you're always saying I need to focus on something positive.

Troy fakes a smile. She studies his eyes, skeptical.

**EXT. HOLLYWOOD ALLEY - NIGHT**

The family walks to Thom's PICK-UP TRUCK. A HOODLUM grabs the PURSES of Hope and Phyllis. Shocked Thom freezes. Billy fights but is thrown to the ground, a GUN pointed at him.

TROY'S SCHIZO POV: The hoodlum is a DANGEROUS GIANT DEMON.

Troy KICKS the gun away, beats him bloody, SCREAMS in victory. Billy grabs the purses and the family runs into Thom's truck.

**INT./EXT. THOM'S TRUCK / ALLEY - NIGHT**

Tender Thom, acting macho, drives his family away. He and his mother Phyllis grip hands tightly. Thom prays, looks up.

THOM

Thank you, angels, if you saved us.

TROY  
I saved you! It was so cool! See? My  
 brothers need me in Hollywood, Mom!

Troy smells his bloody hands. Phyllis is conflicted.

**EXT. THOM'S HOUSE - DAY**

A small white house squeezed between other small houses.

THOM (V.O.)  
 So my brothers moved in. CBS hired Troy.  
 As a security guard.

**INT. MAIN ROOM - THOM'S HOUSE - DAY**

A FEW PAINTINGS on gold walls. Arched blue ceiling, wood floor.  
 A DRAWER BOOKCASE holds REINCARNATION BOOKS. In WEIRD ARTSY  
 PAJAMAS, Thom paints a house on a CANVAS. Lifting DUMBBELLS are  
 Billy in JEANS and Troy in a CBS SECURITY UNIFORM. Troy drops  
 the dumbbell on the CENTER TABLE, surrounded by artsy chairs.

TROY  
 Does this uniform come with a gun?

Troy flexes, then KARATE KICKS NEAR THOM'S FACE, THEN LUNGES  
 HIS CLENCHED FIST TOWARD THOM'S CHEST, but stops.

TROY (CONT'D)  
 Not that I need a gun. In six seconds I  
 can rip out your heart and show it to  
 you before you die.

Thom continues to paint as Troy karate chops threateningly.

THOM  
 (laughs)  
 One second...two seconds...three.

BILLY  
 He's a black belt, Thom.

Thom grabs reincarnation books off the bookshelf, shows Troy.

THOM  
 If you rip out my heart in six seconds,  
 my soul will just go on to my next life.  
 Energy doesn't die. That's about the only  
 thing religion and science agrees on.

Thom shoves the books at Troy then lifts dumbbells. Troy throws the books then lifts dumbbells harder, faster.

**MONTAGE - CBS**

-Paranoid Troy (as security guard with gun) enters CBS.

-Thom and Billy high-five Troy as Billy gets a CBS tour.

-Thom, Billy and flirting Dana eat at CBS COMMISSARY.

-Billy and Dana watch Thom film a scene. Behind them, Troy points a gun - but doesn't shoot.

-Troy, Thom, Billy and Dana leave CBS. Billy kisses Dana.

END OF MONTAGE

**EXT. THOM'S HOUSE - HOLLYWOOD - DAY**

Troy pees on the front door. Thom, in LEATHER COP UNIFORM (Thom's quirk is wearing various overly macho/butch uniforms), comes home with GROCERIES, speaking into a 1988 CELL PHONE.

THOM  
(into phone)  
Love you, too, Mom, let's talk tomorrow.

He hangs up the phone, throws a CEREAL BOX at Troy.

THOM (CONT'D)  
Mom still hopes Dad comes back to her.  
He won't. What the hell are you doing?

TROY  
Billy is in the bathroom.

THOM  
Then pee in the yard. You don't pee on my front door! The wood is gonna smell. Are you on drugs? Billy found a pipe?

TROY  
The voice says to kill Thom the fag.

THOM  
What voice? What??

TROY  
Demons talk to me all the time.

THOM  
Then ask the demons to get you an  
apartment. I had enough of your shit.

Holding the door open, Billy smiles, grabs a grocery bag.

BILLY  
So I don't have to share a room now.

Billy runs inside as furious Troy karate kicks the door.

**EXT. THOM'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Thom and Billy watch Troy carry suitcases to their smiling mom by her NOVA car.

THOM (V.O.)  
When I kicked Troy out, I offered to  
help him get an apartment by me, but Mom  
insisted she take him back to Kenosha.

**INT./EXT. NOVA CAR - PHYLLIS' HOUSE - NIGHT**

SUPER: KENOSHA 1988

Phyllis parks her old Nova in her driveway. Hope is passenger. Suddenly Troy jumps on the hood. They SCREAM. Troy yanks them out of the car and steals it, driving crazily. In the driveway, Hope paces as Phyllis wipes TEARS.

PHYLLIS  
Is he crazy??... Is he on drugs?

HOPE  
Let's check his room for cocaine.

**INT. AMPHITHEATRE - NIGHT**

SUPER: MEANWHILE IN HOLLYWOOD

In the wings, jealous Billy watches shy Thom on stage waving to 7,000 FANS applauding and SCREAMING. (Use STOCK-FOOTAGE.)

GIRL IN AUDIENCE  
Thom! Do you have a girlfriend?!

THOM

Uh... uh... No.

Closeted Thom relaxes when GIRLS SCREAM and APPLAUD.

**MONTAGE - VARIOUS**

SUPER: BACK IN KENOSHA

-PARK. Troy drives the car into a VENDING MACHINE, breaking the machine so he can steal money. COPS arrest him.

-Phyllis cries in COURT as Troy is sentenced.

-Cops uncuff Troy and he enters MILWAUKEE DETENTION CENTER.

END OF MONTAGE

**EXT. PHYLLIS'S HOUSE - DAY**

SUPER: A YEAR LATER JULY 14, 1989 KENOSHA, WISCONSIN

Long-haired Troy walks cockily to the small home.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - PHYLLIS'S HOUSE - DAY - SAME**

Phyllis, in waitress uniform, adjusts the TV. Hope dances in, sets down POPCORN. Suddenly Troy enters, mad, SMOKING a cigarette, flicking his ashes on the carpet. Phyllis turns pale, forces a smile. Hope doesn't bother.

HOPE

Aren't you supposed to be at the detention center?!

PHYLLIS

Troy, don't flick ashes on the carpet.

Phyllis hugs him. His eyes go to the TV screen: paused video of "Hollywood Squares." Celebrity square reads "THOM BIERDZ." In the square are Thom (27) and Billy (25), both smiling.

PHYLLIS (CONT'D)

The stars got to bring a sibling in their square.

TROY

Would be me if Thom didn't kick me out.

HOPE

I'm going home.

PHYLLIS

Oh stay and watch it with us, Hope.

HOPE

No, I'll go start supper for Sam.

Hope hugs Phyllis. Phyllis won't let go. Watching them, Troy rubs out his cigarette on his bicep, BURNING FLESH.

HOPE

(whispers)

Do you want me to call the police?

PHYLLIS

No... I love you, Hope. So much.

HOPE

Call me later so I know you're okay.

Hope ends the long, tight hug, wags her finger at Troy.

HOPE

Troy, you better behave this time!

Hope leaves. Phyllis hugs Troy, unaware his hand slowly reaches for the BASEBALL BAT by the door.

DEMONIC VOICE IN TROY'S HEAD

*Kill your mom first. Kill the bitch.*

TROY

Do I kill you first, Mom?

She sits and closes her eyes. He turns off the TV.

PHYLLIS

Honey, are you taking the new meds?

Troy swings the bat around her. She opens her eyes, frowns.

TROY

Or do I kill Hope, Thom and Billy first?  
So you suffer, seeing them all cut up?

Suddenly he kicks in the TV screen.

PHYLLIS  
Damnit! That's enough!

TROY  
This is Thom's housekey, right?!

Troy grabs her KEYS off a TABLE and leaves.

PHYLLIS  
Give me the keys! Troy! Get back here!

**EXT. THOM'S HOUSE - HOLLYWOOD - DAY**

The small white house.

**INT. MAIN ROOM - THOM'S HOUSE - DAY**

Thom, in WEIRD ARTSY PAJAMAS, paints a FOREST CABIN WITH ANGELS, LITTLE DOGS AND SQUIRRELS as Billy kisses a BABE. The phone RINGS. Thom answers it.

THOM  
Hello?

**INT. KITCHEN - PHYLLIS'S HOUSE - DAY - SAME**

Phyllis is on the phone. Behind her, Troy sneaks in, silent.

PHYLLIS  
Troy stole my car again. But don't worry, from Kenosha to Los Angeles, that's thirty hours, and cops'll be looking for him. You'll be safe -- but promise me if anything ever happens to me...

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

THOM  
If anything ever happens to you, us four kids will always be here for each other. How many times do I have to tell you that? But nothing is going to happen to you.

**INT. KITCHEN - PHYLLIS'S HOUSE - DAY**

Troy hangs up Phyllis's phone, scaring her.

TROY  
Satan wants a sacrifice.

Troy grabs a KNIFE, waves it at her. She fights fear, pretends not to be afraid. HE KNIFES A STUFFED ANIMAL TO SHREDS.

**EXT/INT. PHYLLIS'S CAR - HIGHWAY - NIGHT - HOURS LATER**

Troy, pumped with adrenalin, SPEEDS ALONG A HIGHWAY. His BLOODY FINGERS rummage through Phyllis's purse. He keeps the WALLET, throws the purse out the window.

OUTSIDE: On PHOTOS of their family, shredded by traffic.

**EXT/INT. KITCHEN - PHYLLIS'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Hope approaches, sees the open door.

HOPE

Mom?!... You didn't call me back?!

Uneasy, she enters.

HOPE (CONT'D)

Why is your door open?!

She sees her dead mother on the floor, SCREAMS.

**EXT. PHONE BOOTH - LONELY TRUCKSTOP - NIGHT**

SUPER: ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

CLOSE-UP: A FINGER presses 9-1-1 on a PHONE.

911 OPERATOR (O.S.)

9-1-1.

Hyper Troy speaks into the PAYPHONE.

TROY

(into phone)

This is Thom Bierdz, the soap star.  
I killed my mother a few hours ago.

**INT. MAIN ROOM - THOM'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

SUPER: HOLLYWOOD

Thom continues to paint as Billy kisses the babe, who exits. The phone RINGS. Thom answers.

**INT. KITCHEN - HOPE'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

SUPER: KENOSHA

In her modest kitchen, Hope WEEPS. Her husband, SAM (30, rugged), holds her, and speaks into the phone.

SAM

Thom, sit down. Troy... killed your mom.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

THOM

What??

HOPE

Troy has your house key so you better get to a hotel. We are.

THOM

Troy killed Mom? Why would Troy kill Mom?

IN HOLLYWOOD: Overhearing, devastated Billy SLUGS the door.

HOPE (O.S.)

He said he would all the time.

THOM

He told me he'd kill me, too -- but he didn't mean it... No, no, no, it must have been an accident.

Billy leans his back against the door, then collapses, hands hiding his SOBS. Thom goes to him, hugs him.

THOM (V.O.)

I wasn't upset. That sounds cold but I studied spiritual and reincarnation books. I knew there was life after death. I knew Mom existed... Somewhere. So hearing my sister and brother cry, I set on a mission to stop their grief by proving to them that Mom was okay, in the afterlife. My new mission, my new priority, was to find Mom -- and show them she was okay.

**EXT. HOTEL - NIGHT**

SUPER: SUNSET BOULEVARD HOLLYWOOD

Thom's pick-up truck parks. Thom, in a black cowboy hat and coat, and furious Billy grab LUGGAGE, enter the hotel.

**INT. HOTEL BATHROOM - NIGHT**

In a hot BATH, tense Thom lights a CANDLE and eats an ORANGE.

THOM

Mom? Can you blow the candle out?

He watches the candle flame. Nothing happens to it.

**INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT**

Billy sleeps. Thom tosses, stares at the ceiling, tosses.

**EXT. LAX AIRPORT - LOS ANGELES - DAY**

LAX AIRPORT LANDMARKS. Packed highway. Hurried crowds cross. Lugging suitcases are furious Billy and perplexed Thom.

BILLY

Troy called 911 trying to frame you from Missouri. He's going to kill dad in Texas.

THOM

No, it was an accident.

BILLY

It was no accident. If Troy's not dead by now I'll kill him with my own hands.

Anxious Thom puts MONEY in a JAR waved by a ROSICRUCIAN (55, handsome, peaceful, in ROBE) chanting at the airport doors.

ROSICRUCIAN

Do not kill like an animal because that affects your karma on the causal level.

THOM

Causal level? Is that like a Heaven?

ROSICRUCIAN

There are seven planes. On Earth is the emotional physical plane and above that is the mental plane and above that is the astral plane and...

THOM

What plane would...? our mom was killed...

BILLY

That's not his business.

Billy pulls Thom into the airport building.

**EXT/INT. MAGAZINE SHOP - LAX AIRPORT - DAY - MINUTES LATER**

Billy pulls his luggage. Tired and oversensitive Thom flinches at the bright light, holds his ears from the noise.

THOM

Just a minute. I need a magazine.

Thom enters the shop, startled to see THE NATIONAL ENQUIRER, THE GLOBE and STAR showing his family tragedy. Overwhelmed, he skirts away. A BOOK catches his attention: "The Light Beyond" by Raymond A. Moody Jr. MD.. Reaching for that same book is EVA (40, pretty, dark complected, rich). Billy steps in.

BILLY

Thom! The plane is loading... Stop picking up pretty women.

Eva blushes, LAUGHS. Billy grins flirtatiously.

EVA

I think I'm too old for you fellas.

BILLY

I appreciate maturity. Hi. I'm Billy.

EVA

Eva. Pleased to meet you, Billy.

BILLY

I'm going on auditions. Gonna be famous. Call me sometime. We'll "do lunch."

Billy hands her a BUSINESS CARD, eyes her seductively.

EVA

I'm sure going to call you, cutie.

**INT. AIRPLANE - DAY**

Billy sits next to intense Thom, holding the new book.

ON A PAGE: "Is death an end -- or a beginning?"

**EXT. CEMETERY - KENOSHA - DAY**

A COFFIN is being lowered into the ground. COPS stand guard around Thom (COWBOY HAT, LEATHER COAT), Billy, Hope and her husband, Sam. SOUND OF BULLETS. Hope SCREAMS. Thom freezes.

FUNERAL COP

Was just a car backfiring! We're okay!

AL BIERDZ (51, handsome, much gray hair) approaches.

HOPE

Dad, I didn't recognize you.

Al hugs everyone.

SAM

Hi Al. How the heck is Texas?

AL

The fire ants seem to like it.

SAM

How is the psychotherapy business?

AL

It's okay, Sam. How is your frozen yogurt store doing?

HOPE

Thom, look! Is that your ex-boyfriend?

They look to see GARY (38, COWBOY HAT, beard, open collar, hairy chest, LEATHER JACKET) approaching. He hugs Thom.

GARY

I'm so sorry. It's been all over the newspapers and TV.

THOM

Yeah, it's crazy. Makes no sense.

GARY

Your mom was so much fun. I'll never forget her dancing into the Wreck Room.

FLASHBACK:

**INT. WRECK ROOM BAR - NIGHT - 1981**SUPER: 7 YEARS BEFORE MILWAUKEE

Petite Phyllis (42) forces a smile and dances past GAY MEN IN LEATHER AND FETISH UNIFORMS to find shy Thom (19, mustache, cowboy hat) at the bar. They hug. Bartender Gary waves.

GARY

It's a pleasure to meet you, Phyllis.  
What can I get you to drink?

PHYLLIS

Gin and tonic, please. I can't stay long. Last time I left Troy with Hope, he's twelve, he locked himself in the basement.

Gary makes her a DRINK, then lights her cigarette.

PHYLLIS (CONT'D)

Thank you, Gary. Well, I must say, I've never been in a place like this before.

GARY

No woman ever has. You're the first.

THOM

Mom's like that. If there's some place she wants to be or something she wants, she'll find a way, no matter what.

GARY

That sounds just like you! Planning to move to Hollywood all my yourself!

THOM

Soon as I can afford a car. Mom, write a number. Gary will guess it.

Thom gives Phyllis a PEN and BEVNAP. Gary closes his eyes.

Phyllis writes: "4"

She folds it. Gary holds her hands, lovingly, concentrates.

GARY

Let me concentrate... You wrote "four."

PHYLLIS

My four wonderful kids... So, you peeked to see how my fingers moved?

GARY

No, I hear a voice in my head.

THOM

Gary's half Native-American.

GARY

All my life, all I do is ask... and usually I hear a voice answer me back.

BACK TO PRESENT:

CEMETERY. Thom leads Gary from the coffin to ANGEL STATUES.

THOM

Gary, can you grip Mom's energy?

GARY

(concentrating)

Um... Not this minute. And that's good because when most spirits cross over they love the afterlife so much. Last thing they want is to visit our deranged Earth again.

THOM

But people see ghosts all the time.

GARY

"Ghosts" haunt because they are disturbed. We don't want your mom to be stuck down here when she can fly with angels, right?

THOM

Maybe Mom's spirit is by Troy??

**EXT. PARKING LOT - TEXAS - DAY**

SUPER: MEXICAN BORDER

Using a SCREWDRIVER, Troy switches LICENSE PLATES with another CAR. A SHERIFF VEHICLE pulls up. Troy runs away. The SHERIFF and OFFICER CHASE HIM, RESIST HIS KARATE KICKS, HANDCUFF HIM.

SHERIFF

What's your name?

TROY

Presley.

SHERIFF

Okay, Elvis, let's get to the station.

Troy smirks.

**INT. COURTROOM - DAY**

SUPER: LANDMARK SENTENCING MONTHS LATER KENOSHA

Thom, Hope, Billy and their dad, Al, are seated. Cocky Troy and his ATTORNEY stand at the defense table, watching the JUDGE.

JUDGE

Do you understand the charges?

TROY

Murder.

Thom watches with sympathetic tears for Troy.

JUDGE (O.S.)

You can plead non-responsibility.

TROY

I did it. I'll take the max term.

JUDGE (O.S.)

Do you like being in jail?

TROY

I feel bad being in jail, but not bad about what I did. She was a bitch.

JUDGE

Have you cried about the situation?

Troy shakes his head no and smirks to his family. Now hating Troy, Thom's watery eyes turn to steel and his jaw tightens.

LATER:

Seated, Hope, Thom, Billy and Al fight emotions watching unremorseful Troy being sentenced.

JUDGE (O.S.)

If you're willing to kill your mother, it seems as easy to kill a sibling or father or stranger. I will be the first judge under Wisconsin law to sentence someone, you, Troy Bierdz, to Life Meaning Life.

Thom and Hope nod. Billy grins. Al wipes tears. Troy smirks.

**INT. PLANE - DAY**

Tired Thom sits next to Billy who has FINANCIAL PAPERS.

BILLY

No profit selling Mom's house because she owed so much. But her little life insurance tripled because she was murdered. Enough for each of us to live a year, without working.

THOM

I need it now that I'm off the soap. My movie auditions suck... Hey how did she afford life insurance waiting on tables?

Billy cruises a pretty FLIGHT ATTENDANT, who smiles at him.

**INT. SPARE BEDROOM - THOM'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Billy playfully makes love to the flight attendant. The phone RINGS. The ANSWERING MACHINE picks up.

EVA (O.S.)

It's Eva from the airport, inviting you...

**EXT. EVA'S MANSION - LOS ANGELES - NIGHT**

Outside her modern mansion, Eva speaks into the phone.

EVA

...to a fun showcase I am sponsoring. Guess who sings in it? I do... Call me.

**INT. BILLY'S BEDROOM - THOM'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Billy shuts off his answering machine, orgasms with the flight attendant, then he sits up, lights a JOINT.

YOUNG STEWARDESS

So cool you're working at a talent

agency. Can you make me a star?

BILLY

I work in the mailroom, I can get you stamps.

Billy takes his joint as she rises and dresses.

**EXT. CEMETERY - DAY**

Spring. In a cemetery, Sam and pregnant Hope fight WIND and RAIN to kneel and lay FLOWERS at Phyllis's TOMBSTONE.

SAM

She's in Heaven.

HOPE

I've never seen evidence of a "Heaven."

SAM

I have... being married to you.

She rolls her eyes. He CHUCKLES.

**INT. CELL - PRISON - NIGHT**

Cocky Troy paces in his cell, looks over his shoulder, paranoid that someone is behind him. He hears DEMONS LAUGHING and physically fights invisible demons not there.

**INT. MAIN ROOM - THOM'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

On the gold walls: Thom's paintings of HOUSES SECLUDED IN NATURE. Billy kisses a SEXY TEEN (19). On a chair, Thom in LEATHER (fake) BASEBALL SHIRT, reads "The Light Within."

THOM

This lady died, then she floated out of her body and saw a shoe on the roof. When she was revived, she took stairs to the roof -- and the shoe was really there!

BILLY

Flying spirits? That is fantasy crap, bro. Doesn't happen in real life.

**INT. CELL - PRISON - NIGHT**

Terrified Troy scurries across his cold cell floor.

TROY'S SCHIZO POV: FLYING DEMONS rip at his flesh.

**EXT. CEMETERY - DAY**

SUPER: 1990

Hope, Sam, and baby TWIN DAUGHTERS (now 1 years-old) visit Phyllis's tombstone in snow. Then in summer.

SUPER: 1991

They visit in another snowy winter (twins are 2 years-old).

**INT. CELL - PRISON - NIGHT**

In a corner, tormented Troy holds his ears from DEMON SOUNDS. Troy SCREAMS, reaching his fingers out the bars for help.

TROY

Phone my mom to bail me out!... Mom!!

TROY'S SCIZO POV: Through his flesh he sees racing RED BUGS.

SUPER: 1993

Troy lies on the floor, lifeless, ignoring FOOD that slides to him. Drool drips down his neck. His eyes are dead.

**MONTAGE - THOM'S HOUSE**

-20 edits of Thom (in different hair lengths, colors and facial hair) emotionally pleading to Phyllis's PHOTO by CANDLELIGHT.

THOM (V.O.)

For five years since Mom died, I begged to see, to grip, her spirit, so I could prove to my family she was okay, to stop their hurting. But Mom didn't come.

END OF MONTAGE.

**EXT. SCARY SÉANCE HOUSE - NIGHT**

Thom pulls Billy to a creepy house with GARGOYLE STATUES.

THOM

Mom, if you come through, mention the green frosting you put on my birthday cakes so I know it's really you.

Billy circles a finger by Thom's head, making the crazy sign.

**INT. SCARY SÉANCE HOUSE - NIGHT**

Emotional Thom pulls Billy to a SÉANCE table lit by a candle. A CHARLATAN and FREAKY PEOPLE join them. In the corners: MUMMIES, SCREAMING SKULLS, a STUFFED VULTURE. Billy leaves, upset. Thom and the others hold hands, close their eyes.

LATER:

A TRUMPET flies and FEATHERS fall on the table. Billy sneaks in, turns on the lights, revealing DARK STRINGS control these, not spirits. He grabs MONEY from the CHARLATAN, pulls Thom out.

**EXT. JAMES VAN PRAAGH HOUSE - LOS ANGELES - DAY**

RAIN, THUNDER, LIGHTNING as LEATHER-CLAD Thom goes to a house.

THOM (V.O.)

I went to many, many psychics, and they were bullshit, until James Van Praagh.

**INT. JAMES VAN PRAAGH HOUSE - LOS ANGELES - MINUTES LATER**

Psychic JAMES VAN PRAAGH closes his eyes as tense Thom fidgets.

JAMES

I'm getting that your mom loves you very much. "My four" -- does that make sense?

THOM

Yes! She called us kids "her four. Not Dad's four." Yeah he is our dad and we see him once in a while, but she was possessive after the divorce, bitter.

JAMES

She wants me to say green cake icing?

The exact confirmation Thom asked for! His mother's spirit is there! Thom's body relaxes in the chair. He wipes tears of joy.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Her energy just left. I want to say she went to the Midwest? Michigan? Wisconsin?

THOM

My sister is in Wisconsin!

THOM (V.O.)

When he said green frosting, just what I asked Mom to say, that proved Mom was out there somewhere! An even bigger miracle was about to come.

**EXT. THOM'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

THUNDER. Thom carries in a LARGE BLANK CANVAS. He begins a PAINTING of his mother. CANDLES flicker. He dials the phone.

THOM

(into phone)

Hey, it's just me.

**INT. KITCHEN - HOPE'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Hope's shoulder holds the phone as she BANDAGES Julia (5).

HOPE

Julia fell off her bike but she's a big big girl and not even crying.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

THOM

Oh no. Julia, you'll be okay. Hope, have you thought about Mom lately?

HOPE

Don't make me cry. I think about her all the time. Why?

THOM

No reason, hold on, I have another call.

Thom presses a phone button, speaks into the phone.

THOM (CONT'D)

Hello?

**INT. GARY'S BARN - DAY**

Petting CHICKENS, Gary CRIES and speaks into a WALL PHONE.

SUPER: 11:29AM JANUARY 3, 1994 DOOR COUNTY, WISCONSIN

GARY

It's your Mom calling.

## INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

THOM

Gary?? Why did you say that??

GARY

Your Mom is with me. I'm getting a message from her soul, but it could also be a part of Troy's soul?

IN WISCONSIN: Gary curls over in pain, VOMITS.

GARY (CONT'D)

I've never felt this bad, Thom, like I'm hollowed out. They're making me feel their pain and they say, "You have to save him!"

THOM

Who?

GARY

Troy's soul... is dying.

THOM

Troy's soul?... In prison?

GARY (O.S.)

Yes. She needs you to go to see him.

THOM

No way. I don't owe Troy anything.

GARY (O.S.)

These five years have ruined him.

THOM

He screwed up his life, didn't he?

IN HOLLYWOOD: Behind Thom, from a doorway, Billy eavesdrops.

GARY

This energy screams you have to go.

THOM

Me? Why me? No way.

GARY

"You're the only one" she says. She begs you to keep a promise you made to her?

THOM

I beg her every night to ask me a favor.  
She's living on somewhere, Gary -- you  
just proved that!!

GARY

But she's miserable. Says his soul is dying.

THOM

No way... Do souls... die??

GARY (O.S.)

I never thought they did. Until now.

THOM

Every night I beg to hear her, asking if  
there's anything I can do for her.

GARY

She just told ya!

THOM

Well, I'm not going to do... that.

GARY

Troy's soul rotted. If you don't help him,  
his soul will dissolve. He won't exist in  
an afterlife... The message is complete.

Gary hangs up. Thom stares at his mother's painting, lit by  
LIGHTNING, remembers his sister is on hold, presses a button.

THOM

That was Gary, with a message from Mom.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

HOPE

From Mom? What?!

THOM

Mom says that Troy is in trouble --

HOPE

Mom's dead. And if Mom were an angel,  
she'd have stopped Julia from falling off  
her bike today. She wouldn't go to a gay  
bartender. I have to go.

**INT. KITCHEN - THOM'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Perplexed Thom adds SPICES as Billy COOKS. LIGHTNING, THUNDER.

BILLY

Gary's lying to get you back... If you go see Troy, I'm moving out.

THOM

What are you talking about?

BILLY

You got two brothers. I'm the good one, he's the bad one. Pick one. If Mom were around, which she's not, she'd agree.

THOM

Stop being a drama queen. I can't afford to go anyway. I can't even afford rent.

**EXT. RODEO DRIVE GALLERY - BEVERLY HILLS - DAY**

SHOPPERS with DESIGNER BAGS. In a WEIRD SUIT, Thom, holding two NATURE HOUSE PAINTINGS walks toward RODEO DRIVE GALLERY.

**INT. RODEO DRIVE GALLERY - DAY - MINUTES LATER**

On walls: PAINTINGS of SURREAL ALIENS and a CLOWN ORGY.

Owner LLOYD (50, beard, handsome) looks at Thom's paintings.

LLOYD

You have excellent composition -- but not enough soul in your art.

THOM

Clown orgies have soul?!

LLOYD

All the ones I've been to! Look, your works are lovely but they don't wow me. I'm sorry. Wilhemina! Wow or no wow?

Designer WILHEMINA comes over, points at Thom's painting.

WILEMENA

Love the squirrels and dogs in this one. But no wow. I don't "have to" buy these.

THOM

I have to paint these. I hate the city.

LLOYD

Who doesn't hate the city? Come back when you have art no one else has done, that only you can do. Capiche?

THOM

I'll sell cheap. I need rent money.

Lloyd points to the door. Angered Thom leaves with his art.

**EXT. RODEO DRIVE GALLERY - BEVERLY HILLS - DAY**

In a violent temper tantrum, Thom bangs one canvas against a PARKING METER. But it doesn't rip. He trembles, grips his paintings, stares at RICH SHOPPERS walking toward him. Though awkward, shy Thom makes eye-contact, forces a smile.

THOM

Maybe you know me from "The Young And The Restless"? I played Phillip. I paint now. Would these look good in your home?

People scurry away. Thom's humiliated but kneels, begging.

THOM (CONT'D)

No gallery commission, so only \$400 each? Which is nothing to you.

WIDER: SECURITY GUARDS walk purposefully towards Thom, angry Lloyd behind them. A curious CROWD gathers.

LLOYD

That man doesn't have a permit to sell his paintings on Rodeo Drive!

Thom runs away.

**MONTAGE - GALLERIES**

-Uptight Thom, in different ARTSY FETISH UNIFORMS, and his art are rejected by many galleries.

END OF MONTAGE

**INT. BEDROOM - THOM'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Overwhelmed Thom can't sleep, tosses.

THOM'S POV: LUCID DREAM: surreal parading SYMBOLIC IMAGES  
(distorted clowns, rich people, karate Troy, shrinking mom).

**EXT. DELI - HOLLYWOOD - DAY - ESTABLISHING**

Heavy traffic. CUSTOMERS enter and exit a deli.

**INT. DELI - HOLLYWOOD - DAY**

Flustered Thom in WAITER UNIFORM serves FOOD to a BUSINESSMAN.

BUSINESSMAN

Bring me mustard and more coffee.

Thom nods, trips, passes a CUSTOMER at the next table.

CUSTOMER

Waiter!! Where are my French fries?

THOM

Oh, shoot. Just a minute.

TWO GIRLS summon Thom to their table.

GIRL #1

Didn't you just die on our soap opera?

THOM

I did. Let me get you menus.

Next to a seated RICH OLD MAN, a WOMAN IN DARK GLASSES grabs Thom, pulls him to sit.

WOMAN IN DARK GLASSES

There are easier ways to make money.

THOM

Excuse me?

WOMAN IN DARK GLASSES

I have the privilege of running an escort  
business. Men with ladies or with men, you  
only do what you want to do. Crazy money.

THOM

Sex?

WOMAN IN DARK GLASSES

Have you seen "American Gigolo?"

THOM

I can't have sex... for money.

WOMAN IN DARK GLASSES

My friend offers you \$900.

Stunned Thom looks confused at the rich old man.

THOM

For sex? \$900?! Wow! I need \$900... but no... I can't have sex for money.

Thom leaves, she pulls him back.

WOMAN IN DARK GLASSES

\$60 for the underwear you're wearing.

Thom stares at them in disbelief. He walks away to the BATHROOM door. It's locked. He goes into the WALK-IN COOLER.

**INT. DELI WALK-IN COOLER - DAY**

Thom removes his underwear. An OLD WAITRESS walks in, SCREAMS.

**INT. DELI - HOLLYWOOD - DAY**

Blushing Thom brings the rich old man and woman in dark glasses a TO-GO BOX. She opens it, sees his UNDERWEAR. She slides him MONEY. He pockets it, looks around, gets upset.

THOM

Bikers didn't leave a tip??

Angry Thom chases 6 MOTORCYCLE GUYS IN LEATHER out the door.

**EXT. DELI PARKING LOT - DAY**

Furious Thom chases the bikers.

THOM

Was there something wrong with my service?!

MOTORCYCLE GUY 1  
It was all right. Why?!

THOM  
No tip? You guys need to tip me.

MOTORCYCLE GUY 1 punches Thom to the ground. Thom's head hits the cement so hard he BLACKS OUT.

Thom's POV: BLACKNESS... then... eventually... a FAINT LIGHT ... then... eventually... a MOVING TUNNEL.

The old waitress perform CPR on coughing Thom, reviving him.

**INT. SPARE ROOM/BILLY'S ROOM - THOM'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

On the couch, Billy changes the HEAD-BANDAGE of Thom. TV plays.

THOM  
If I saw more of the weird tunnel thing, maybe Mom would be there?

BILLY  
Mom's been under six feet of dirt for five years. You don't want to see her.

Billy sighs. The phone RINGS. Thom picks it up.

THOM  
Hello?... Oh hi Gary... What channel?

Thom switches the TV channel to NEWS on JEFFREY DAHMER.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - GARY'S BARN/HOUSE - DOOR COUNTY - NIGHT**

Gary watches TV as he talks on the PHONE.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

THOM  
I saw that man at your bar. He's hot.

GARY  
Jeffrey Dahmer. Turns out he's a serial killer! Remember when I told you a spirit voice said to me, "There's a serial killer in your presence?"

THOM

You said you were alone with one customer.

GARY

It was Jeffrey! I should've told the cops!

The TV shows a WISCONSIN PRISON.

THOM

Hey that's the prison Troy is at!  
Those are guards with guns on towers?  
Guards will be pointing guns at me?

Billy turns off the TV.

BILLY

Why will guards be pointing guns at you?

THOM

Gary, I have to go. I'll call you back.

Billy hangs up the phone and starts PACKING A SUITCASE.

BILLY

You're going to see Troy?!

THOM

I don't want see that asshole. I have to  
go. Mom said I have to.

Furious Billy exits with suitcase.

**INT./EXT. CELL - PRISON - DAY**

PRISON OFFICERS push CHAINED JEFFREY DAHMER past Troy's cell.

IN THE CELL: Troy looks dead lying on the floor, eyes open.

**EXT. EVA'S MANSION - NIGHT**

A modern mansion with beautifully-lit foliage.

**INT. BEDROOM - EVA'S MANSION - NIGHT**

Eva sleeps, clings to Billy. He removes her hands, then he  
scoots far away on the bed so he can breathe.

**INT. THOM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Overwhelmed Thom can't sleep, tosses, paints a face on the wall. Phone RINGS. Thom answers.

THOM (CONT'D)

Hello?

**INT. BEDROOM - EVA'S MANOR - NIGHT**

Billy whispers into the phone.

BILLY

Eva is way too clingy.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

They both whisper from their locations.

THOM

Hope said you eloped?! Why?!

BILLY

Eva's pregnant. Let's meet for lunch tomorrow. I don't know what to do.

THOM

Can't. I fly out tomorrow. Troy.

BILLY

Don't you have a callback for "Cheers"?

THOM

I'm not funny. I didn't get the part.

BILLY

Because you don't give acting your time anymore, you're too busy with fake séances. Troy got life in prison. If he kills you, he gets no more time.

THOM

Prisons have that glass divider thing.

BILLY

He chopped through thick security glass at three mental hospitals, moron.

THOM

He did not... What mental hospitals?

BILLY

I don't remember the names. Ask Hope.

Horrified Thom doesn't know what to believe.

**EXT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT**

Anxious Thom boards, wearing a fetish CAMOUFLAGE ARMY OUTFIT.

**INT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT**

Seated Thom reads "The Celestine Prophecy" by James Redfield.

**EXT. MKE AIRPORT - MILWAUKEE - DAY**

The airplane lands in a snowstorm.

**EXT. RENT-A-CAR LOT - DAY**

Thom, shivering, heads to the Rent-A-Car lot.

**EXT. HIGHWAY - WISCONSIN - DAY**

Thom maneuvers the RENT-A-CAR through a blizzard.

**EXT. PRISON - DAY**

ARMED GUARDS on lookout towers observe Thom parking.

**INT. PRISON VESTIBULE - SAME**

Electric BUZZER and ceiling CAMERA allow shy Thom entrance. A TALL GUARD and SHORT GUARD work behind bulletproof glass. The tall guard passes Thom a FORM. Dazed Thom fills it out.

TALL GUARD

I.D. please.

The guard approves Thom's ID and hands him a key.

TALL GUARD (CONT'D)

Go ahead and put your jacket, and everything in your pockets, in locker sixty-four. Except five dollars.

Thom puts his jacket and pocket contents, except for a FIVE-

DOLLAR BILL, in the locker. Dizzy, He walks through a metal detector, hands the guard the money. The guard hands it back.

TALL GUARD (CONT'D)

It's for the vending machines.

THOM

Vending machines?

The guard stamps Thom's shaking hand, then points him down a BLACK-LIT SECURITY PASSAGE.

THOM (CONT'D)

The sign says inmates can't have money.

TALL GUARD

They can't. You get whatever the inmate wants from the vending machines for him.

THOM

And what? Hand him potato chips one by one through a hole in the glass?

TALL GUARD

What glass?

THOM

The glass divider thing.

TALL GUARD

There are no glass dividers.

THOM

Oh, we're separated by bars.

TALL GUARD

There are no dividers.

FLASHBACK:

**INT. MAIN ROOM - THOM'S HOUSE**

TROY KICKS THEN CUPS HIS FIST AND JABS IT NEAR THOM'S CHEST.

TROY

In six seconds I can rip out your heart  
and show it to you before you die!

FLASH-FORWARD TO:

**INT. PRISON VESTIBULE - PRISON - DAY - SAME**

A door electronically opens and the guard returns to admittance. Thom sees 20 sets of TABLES AND CHAIRS -- with no dividing glass. Terrified, he steps in slowly.

**INT. VISITING ROOM - PRISON - DAY - SAME**

Trembling Thom sees a guard, NANCY (60) standing with a NOTEPAD by a CIRCULAR DESK.

NANCY

"Two E" is the table you're assigned to.

THOM

My brother, ah... he's a... murderer.

NANCY

Would you like me to see if Mike is available to supervise your visit?

THOM

Who's Mike?

NANCY

The counselor for the psych unit.

THOM

Yes, please. Get Mike here. Please??

Thom wobbles, sits at 2E. Behind a GLASS DOOR, Troy, now an unrecognizable skeletal zombie inmate, is being searched.

THOM (V.O.)

I couldn't leave. Mom made me come.

Skinny Troy has long, wildly matted hair. Nancy walks to her desk, buzzes the door open. Troy stumbles to stunned Thom.

THOM

Troy?

Skinny, lifeless Troy SPEAKS GIBBERISH, looks around. A scraggly beard unevenly covers his pasty face. His soulless mouth reveals brown and yellow teeth.

TROY'S SCHIZO POV: A GIGANTIC INSECT comes and goes.

THOM

They say you never been in this visit room before?... Mom asked me to come.

TROY

Mom's here?

LONG AWKWARD SILENCE. Overworked MIKE PROTH (50, long hair, bifocals) approaches with a FILE. He shakes Thom's hand.

THOM

Mike? Hi, I'm Thom, Troy's brother.

Mike organizes papers, sits.

MIKE

Troy, your brother Thom is here.

Troy doesn't know where to sit. Mike indicates the chair. Troy sits.

MIKE (CONT'D)

(to Troy)

Do you know who Thom is?

Troy MUTTERS NONSENSE. Thom looks at him with sympathy.

THOM

So you're Troy's counselor?

MIKE

For the unit. Nice to meet you, Troy.

THOM

You don't even know Troy?

MIKE

I only have time for problem inmates. Troy has been quiet in his cell for years.

THOM

Troy, what do you do in your cell?

TROY'S DYING-SOUL POV: The room is dark, muted, incoherent.

MIKE

The notes say he lies on the floor most of the time, sometimes for twenty-three hours a day.

THOM  
 (emotional)  
 Twenty-three hours a day on the floor?  
 ... Excuse me... I need a drink.

MIKE  
 Vending machines are over there.

THOM  
 I don't suppose I'll find a margarita?

MIKE  
 If you are so lucky, bring me one.

THOM  
 Troy, can I get you a margarita?  
 (laughs, silence)  
 Troy, can I get you a soda to drink?  
 From the machine? Hot chocolate?

Troy has no idea what that means. Thom gets a HOT COCOA from a VENDING MACHINE. His hands shake passing the cocoa to Troy, scalding Troy's arm - but Troy does not feel the pain.

THOM (CONT'D)  
 I'm sorry!... Hot chocolate for you.

Troy looks to Mike for approval. Mike nods.

THOM (CONT'D)  
 Has he ever had hot chocolate?

Mike shrugs. Troy pours the scalding drink down his throat, but doesn't flinch at the pain.

MIKE  
 Troy, do you need some water?

THOM  
 Aren't there pills that can help him?

MIKE  
 The unit doctor is in charge of pills.

THOM  
 What medication is Troy on?

MIKE  
 The files say... none.

THOM

He looks... dead. He needs something.

MIKE

Our rules state an inmate or a family member must request medication. No family member has been in contact with us.

Thom looks shocked, gets goosebumps.

THOM

Oh!! I'm family. Maybe I'm here... to request medicine for him?? Can I?

MIKE

Would you like to talk to the psych unit doctor today?

THOM

God yes. Please! As soon as possible.

MIKE

Fine, I'll call her for you.

Mike leaves. Troy sits frozen. Thom gets CRAYONS AND PAPER.

THOM

Troy, we can draw. Here's crayons.

Troy is catatonic. DR. GREEN (45, a pretty blonde who never smiles) walks up to them, reading PAPERS.

DR. GREEN

I understand you would like Troy to be put on medication.

THOM

Is there some place we can talk?

DR. GREEN

I don't think Troy would understand us, but we can go to the desk.

Dazed Thom and Dr. Green walk to the guard desk.

DR. GREEN (CONT'D)

This says Troy spent much time at psychiatric facilities before --

THOM

He did?? Are you sure??

DR. GREEN

It says four extended visits, ended because he was... uncooperative.

THOM

He broke through security windows?

DR. GREEN

Exactly. He was on chlorpromazine, which may cut back psychotic symptoms such as disassociation and hallucinations, maybe, but paranoia usually sticks around.

THOM

Sounds good. How fast does that work?

DR. GREEN

There could be a noticeable change in twenty-four hours in some cases.

THOM

Really? That'd be amazing.

DR. GREEN

Sometimes, but don't expect a miracle.

THOM

It's a miracle I'm here, Dr. Green.

She exits. Thom sits with soulless psychotic babbling Troy. Awkward silence. Haunting 1969 BALLAD "He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother" PLAYS. The powerful male VOCALS speak for aching Thom.

HE AIN'T HEAVY LYRICS

"The road is long, with a many a winding turn, that leads us to who knows where... but I'm strong, strong enough to carry him. He ain't heavy, he's my brother..."

**EXT. PHONE BOOTH OUTSIDE PRISON - DAY**

Ice frosts the glass. Emotional Thom stutters into the phone.

THOM

Hope, guess who's in Wisconsin!... Well I'm telling you now... yes... okay, give me two hours to drive to you.

Thom hangs up the phone, slips on the ice, angrily YELLS.

**EXT. HO CHUNK CASINO, WISCONSIN DELLS - DAY**

Snow falls as Thom's rental car speeds along the highway past the Native-American-owned CASINO.

**EXT. HOPE'S HOUSE - KENOSHA, WISCONSIN - NIGHT**

Hope and Sam SHOVEL, wearing PARKAS with the words "Hope's Frozen Yogurt." Their twin girls (now 5), JENNIFER and Julia scurry as Thom's car skids into the driveway, almost hitting their SNOWMAN. Thom (camouflage outfit) exits the car, trips.

HOPE

What are you wearing, you weirdo?

Thom hugs Hope and Sam then kneels to hug the twin girls.

THOM

How come there are two of you?

Jennifer and Julia GIGGLE. Hope pulls Thom up.

HOPE

Thom, your pants are gonna freeze!

THOM

Maybe I'm not Thom. Maybe I'm Thom's twin?

HOPE

Soap operas have those crazy twists but not real life.

THOM

Ummmmm. Funny you say that...

**INT. DINING ROOM - HOPE'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

The twins, LAUGHING, put HOPE'S YOGURT STICKERS on Thom's face, then Sam carries the girls out.

THOM

Goodnight Julia! Goodnight Jennifer!

Thom (stickers on) shuffles CARDS, deals some to Hope.

THOM (CONT'D)

I, uh, saw Troy today.

HOPE

Billy called and said you were going to. You don't make any sense.

THOM

You don't always make sense. Who opens a frozen yogurt store in Wisconsin? Where it's freezing.

HOPE

Everybody makes mistakes.

THOM

That's what I'm talking about. Troy.

HOPE

Troy's dead as far as I am concerned.

THOM

He is dead, almost. He's so out of it, like a schizo babbling homeless guy.

Sam hands Thom a BEER, pulls off Thom's stickers.

SAM

You're not going back to see him again??

Blushing, Thom takes a gulp of beer, COUGHS, CHOKES.

THOM

Mom asked me to... save Troy's soul.

HOPE

Get. A. Grip.

THOM

She spoke through Gary.

SAM

Gary needs a psychiatrist. So do you. Troy needs an exorcist.

THOM

I asked the doctor to put Troy on pills.

SAM

Why didn't they already medicate him??

THOM

Right? That's what I thought, but they said he or a family member needs to request medication for him.

SAM

Maybe they saw a worthless loser who killed his mom and thought no one visits him, why should tax payers pay to keep him alive sixty years?

THOM

Maybe. If the pills help, I'll ask him what happened the night he killed Mom.

HOPE

We know what happened. He beat her head with a baseball bat. Her brain was all over the floor! I stepped in it!

Hope fights tears. Thom aches, moves to hug her. She leaves.

**INT. HOPE'S BEDROOM - SAME**

Sam enters, tries to hold SOBBING Hope still.

HOPE

The last time I hugged Mom she wouldn't let go. She knew it would be our last hug.

SAM

We don't know what she was thinking.

HOPE

She never hugged that long, it was weird. How could I leave her alone with him??

She collapses on the bed. He lays next to her.

**EXT/INT. HALLWAY - HOPE'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

BEGIN NIGHTMARE SEQUENCE

TROY BREAKS IN THE BACKDOOR WITH A BASEBALL BAT. He walks to Hope's bedroom door, opens it, and stands watching Hope, who wakes up, SCREAMING.

HOPE

Troy, no!!!.. No!!

END OF NIGHTMARE

Hope wakes to see Troy is not there. Thom is (in RED PAJAMAS).

THOM

It's not Troy! It's Thom.

SAM

Thom, what the hell do you want?

THOM

I thought I heard Hope crying.

SAM

You did. This Troy thing after five years,  
I mean, come on, dude, go to sleep, okay?

HOPE

I forgot to get you pillows but they're  
in the basement closet.

**EXT/INT. BASEMENT CLOSET - HOPE'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Thom goes downstairs, opens a closet door, reaches in to get PILLOWS and sees a LARGE FILE BOX marked "Mom." Confused, he sits on the floor, looks through the box, sees:

OLD PHOTOS OF HAPPY PHYLLIS AND HER FOUR KIDS.

"Troy's File" includes "Animal-Killing Diaries," "Satanic Poems" and 400 pages of "Court Records."

THOM

Troy kept diaries? "Thy shall not kill.  
Roaches. Tore legs and heads off.  
Turtles, Torture, poked with sticks,  
stepped on, crushed rabbits and dogs."

**INT. KITCHEN - HOPE'S HOUSE - KENOSHA - MORNING**

Sam feeds the twins cereal. Thom hides his face behind the CEREAL BOX then reappears making a silly face. The girls GIGGLE. Hope enters the kitchen.

HOPE

Uncle Thom is weird, huh?

Thom shoves his head into the empty cereal box. The girls LAUGH. Hope grabs her KEYS, then kisses Sam.

SAM

Mommy is going to the yogurt store.

THOM

You won't have nightmares if you see how high the prison fences are.

HOPE

Thom! Shhhh!

THOM

Oops. Hope, will you show me where to put my pillows back in the closet?

He glares at her, then winks. She follows.

HOPE

Oh, you bet I will. Excuse us, kids.

Thom leads Hope out.

**EXT/INT. BASEMENT CLOSET - MORNING - MINUTES LATER**

Thom goes to the closet, pulls out the "Mom" box.

THOM

Troy had 400 pages of court records??

HOPE

Mom told us not to tell you. She said you needed to focus on Hollywood.

Hope pushes past him to open a DRYER and folds LAUNDRY.

THOM

He kicked in school doors? Beat up Mom's dates? Tried to strangle a nurse?

HOPE

Did you see Troy's plans for me?

She finds and shows Thom several TORTURE HOPE DRAWINGS.

HOPE (CONT'D)

This one he kills Dad with knives.

THOM

Jesus...

HOPE

"Helter Skelter" style for Billy.

She shows him a SATANIC DRAWING.

**EXT. PRISON - DAY**

Thom's rent-a-car is in the parking lot.

**INT. VISITING ROOM - PRISON - DAY**

Thom and Troy, NOW LUCID AND FUNCTIONAL, color with crayons at a table. Other VISITORS and INMATES sit at nearby tables.

THOM

You don't remember yesterday?

TROY

Were you here?

THOM

Yeah. I asked the doc to give you pills.

TROY

You're lying to me. How is Hollywood?

THOM

Complicated. You want some coffee?

TROY

No, we have to sit. We can't move.

THOM

Oh?... why not?

TROY'S SCHIZO POV: OTHER VISITORS AND INMATES GLARE at him.

TROY

Some people in here might be robots.

THOM

Oh... Um, no, they're not robots.

Paranoid Troy studies Thom and discreetly imitates his crossed legs, like a sweet young boy emulating his older brother.

LATER:

They listen to loud vending machines HUM. Troy looks perplexed.

TROY

Why am I visiting you in jail?

THOM

(stunned, gentle)

Let's think about that. Hm... Look at our clothes, then the clothes of the other people in the room.

TROY

There's a person at each table wearing my green outfit... I'm the one in jail? I thought I was a CBS security guard and you got in jail because you're a fag.

THOM

Not quite. Think back to July 14, 1989. Mom's last night.

TROY

Her last night?

THOM

In the kitchen. What happened. You and Mom?... Don't you know why you're in jail?... When I kicked you out, you went back to live with Mom, then stole a car, crashed a vending machine, got put in mental facilities and a detention center, then escaped. Then you... "hurt" Mom.

TROY

That's a dream I keep having.

THOM

It's not a dream. You called 9-1-1 and said you were me, Thom Bierdz, and that I... "hurt"... Mom.

TROY

(grinning)

I wouldn't have done that. Can I get ice cream?

THOM

No, it's too cold. You didn't wear a T-shirt, like the other inmates in the room. See their T-shirts? Ice cream is too cold.

Troy looks confused, hurt.

TROY

My name is like Ted Bundy. It's written in the clouds. Like your magazine covers.

THOM

Is that so?... I gotta go. Make sure you see Doctor Green. My credit card is gonna try to get you a TV and a radio.

Troy looks hurt, abandoned.

**EXT. CASINO, WISCONSIN DELLS - NIGHT**

Icy entrance. Gary, in his COWBOY HAT, FLANNEL SHIRT, walks in.

**INT. BINGO HALL - CASINO - NIGHT - MINUTES LATER**

Gary, shirt open showing chest hair, is seated with tense Thom at a table DOBBING their blank BINGO CARDS amid 1,000 PLAYERS.

GARY

Been five years since I've seen you!

THOM

You look so sexy. I'm still waiting for my chest hair to grow in.

GARY

You're so handsome you don't need chest hair. How is your sweet sister doing?

THOM

Still crying about Mom. Will you talk to her? Maybe Mom will come through for her?

BINGO CALLER (O.S.)

B - 14.

GARY

I can try. Are you staying with Hope?

THOM

No, it's two hours to Kenosha. I got a room at this casino so I can play slot machines, because, well, I need to pay my bills.

GARY

(laughs)

Yup, that's what slot machines are for. You know my ranch is a just one hour away. Why don't you just stay with me? We can ride horses and take the boat out.

BINGO CALLER (O.S.)

N - 52.

THOM

Nah, Troy is only ten minutes from here.

GARY

How is he doing?

THOM

I think he's lying that he has no memory, then brags he's like Ted Bundy. Pisses me off. Maybe I won't see him anymore.

BINGO CALLER (O.S.)

G - 59.

Thom's eyes bulge, he gulps, nervously scans the 1000 players.

THOM

I'm going to win the black-out.

GARY

No, I'm going to win.

THOM

Gary, I know I am going to win this. It's so weird. I just know. I can't explain it.

GARY

Sorry, I am going to win.

Confused Gary watches Thom nervously practice how to announce his win as he dobs the called numbers on his card.

DISSOLVE INTO:

Trembling Thom looks at his Bingo card's last blank space.

BINGO CALLER (O.S.)

O - 71.

Rehearsed Thom dobs and stiffly stands, perspiring.

THOM

Bingo!... Bingo here!

GARY

Thom! You really did know??... Did you hear a voice?... Or see it happening??

THOM

No... I just "knew". But why?? To fight the anxiety to stand and speak??

**INT. SLOT MACHINE AREA - CASINO - NIGHT - LATER**

Thom and Gary drink and play SLOT MACHINES, not winning.

GARY

You just lost \$800. Let's go.

THOM

Wait. Why can't I magically "know" which machines will hit jackpots?

Gary literally pulls Thom away from slots and into elevator.

**INT. HALL - HOTEL - NIGHT - MINUTES LATER**

Elevator opens. Thom runs out, KNOCKS on all room doors, races down hall as Gary LAUGHS and chases him.

**INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT**

Thom LAUGHS, enters. Gary enters, CHUCKLES.

GARY

I got something for you.

THOM

Hot. I got something for you, too.

Thom strips as Gary searches his pockets, pulls out a C.D.. Gary sees naked Thom posing - and LAUGHS. Awkward silence.

THOM

I miss you. We never broke up. I only moved to Hollywood.

GARY

I want you bad... but sex will lower the vibration of our psychic connection.

Gary hands hurt Thom the C.D..

THOM

I should whack off to Shirley MacLaine?!

GARY

No, but it'll get you off spiritually. It's her true story, "Out On A Limb".

Gary hugs Thom, then leaves.

**INT. BATHROOM/HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT**

With a PEN, Thom draws fake hair on his chest, looks in the mirror, likes it. He lowers into a steaming hot bath, lights a CANDLE, watches "Out On A Limb" playing in the other room.

ON THE SCREEN: Shirley SCREAMS as the jeep drives by itself. At the wheel with eyes-closed is John Heard.

THOM

Blow out my candle if there's an extra-terrestrial around.

Excited Thom watches the candle. Nothing happens.

ON THE SCREEN: Shirley MacLaine has an out-of-body experience as she sits with John Heard in a hot tub.

THOM

Blow out the candle if you're a spirit.

The bathroom phone RINGS. Thom answers it, listens to Gary.

GARY (O.S.)

Your mom says you have to keep seeing Troy. She "can see Troy, but Troy can't see her. His vibration is too low."

THOM

Is that why I can't see her?

GARY (O.S.)

She says "you feel her. And you do see her -- on canvas." Does that make sense?

THOM

Totally! I'm painting her portrait!

GARY (O.S.)

She says "watch out for Billy."

THOM

What? Watch out for Billy??

**EXT. VISITING ROOM - PRISON - DAY**

Several cars in the parking lot.

**INT. VISITING ROOM - PRISON - DAY**

Relaxed Thom in camouflage draws with crayons at a table. Troy enters and proudly shows he remembered to wear a T-SHIRT.

TROY

I think I made you come back.

THOM

You did?

TROY'S SCHIZO POV: HE IS TWICE THE SIZE OF THOM.

TROY

I'm trying to decide if I control you.

THOM

Hmmm. You think you control me?

TROY

I said I am not sure.

THOM

You smell better. Take a hot bath?

TROY'S SCHIZO POV: NOW HE IS HALF THE SIZE OF THOM.

TROY

There aren't any bathtubs in here.

THOM

I need my steaming hot bath every day.

Over their shoulders, ICICLES cover the window -- but melt.  
Troy touches Thom's knee, looks around, paranoid.

THOM (CONT'D)

They're not robots. It's safer in here  
than outside with crowds, anxiety, bills.

The microwave BEEPS. Thom walks to it, removes a hot PIZZA  
SLICE, brings it, with napkins and salt packets, to Troy, who  
pours on FOUR packets of salt. Troy eats, puckering in disgust.

THOM (CONT'D)

You're burning your mouth. You can take  
off some of the salt.

Troy doesn't understand. Concerned Thom wipes off some salt.

THOM (CONT'D)

Try it now... Better, right?

Troy eats, nods. Thom grins, helps Troy color with CRAYONS.

THOM

I'm not nervous here. I saw a psychiatrist  
for social anxiety -- he put me on pills.  
None worked, so I stopped. I went to a  
hypnotist - didn't help. Had an MRI. A  
machine examined my brain. My brain is  
normal, but I prefer to be here, with you,  
then I do outside, at any stupid audition.

TROY

People can be robots.

THOM

I never sleep. Maybe an hour, three times  
a night. My energy just revs too high like  
a car with a stuck idle... I don't have  
health insurance so I went to the free  
clinic for sleeping pills. I told them  
Billy was acting paranoid and about you...  
they wouldn't give me sleeping pills but  
told me if I'm related I could say I have a  
psychiatric disability and I'd get a check  
each week the rest of my life... but I'd  
have to take lithium the rest of my life.

TROY

They said you were crazy?

THOM

Their policies are crazy! It's a money racket! I just needed Ambien. I bought ten Ambien pills illegally in an alley. Shh.

Thom relaxes, reads a CHILDREN'S BOOK to Troy.

A GUARD snaps a POLAROID of beaming Thom and Troy.

"He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother" PLAYS.

HE AIN'T HEAVY LYRICS

"...for I know, he would not encumber me.  
He ain't heavy, he's my brother..."

**INT. COUNTER RESTAURANT - NIGHT**

SUPER: MUKWONAGO, WISCONSIN

Shy Thom takes the empty seat at the counter, lifts a MENU. He sees Hope waving outside the snowy window, so for fun he moves his mouth silently as if he is talking about the menu to the sexy LUMBERJACK next to him, who's actually looking the other way to his LUMBERJACK WIFE.

Hope enters, GIGGLING as Thom keeps up the act, unaware the angry lumberjack and wife are watching him make a fool of himself. Hilarious bit. The couple leaves. Hope sits.

HOPE

You're so weird. Remember Troy's essay?

She hands him an OLD PAPER.

THOM

"What is my goal in life? My goal is to assassinate President Reagan to gain manhood and publicity." Wow. I never wanted to kill anyone. But I wanted "manhood and publicity." Why I lifted weights, why I went to Hollywood.

HOPE

Is that why Billy wants a rich wife? He thinks it looks good to others and makes

him feel like a big man? I never wanted the attention you three brothers do.

THOM

Why is that? Because you're a girl?

HOPE

Because "girls are made of sugar and spice and everything nice."

THOM

That old "Mother Goose" poem. And boys are made of... what was it?

HOPE

I don't know. Dirt and something?

Thom shows Hope the Polaroid of he and Troy. She sighs.

HOPE (CONT'D)

Don't you dare tell Troy I have two little girls.

THOM

I won't.

Waiter JAY (35, handsome, beard) clears dishes and interrupts.

JAY

That "Mother Goose" poem will show up. When you put a question out into the universe, somehow it magically answers.

THOM

That's like this book I'm reading. "The Celestine Prophecy." People know they are on the right path when they keep getting coincidences and... synchronicity.

JAY

I love that book! Exactly. Like this morning I found my old "Young And Restless" fan club card in my closet... and shazam I see you here. I'm a fan. I'm Jay.

THOM

Hi Jay. I'm Thom, this is my sister, Hope.

JAY

It's no coincidence I see you and the soap opera card the same day. I won't be surprised if the next customer sits down with a "Mother Goose" book.

Hope notices their mutual attraction.

HOPE

Jay, why don't you give Thom your number in case he has any questions about what the cellophane profit sees?"

THOM

Not cellophane profit. "Celestine Prophecy."

They LAUGH as Jay WRITES HIS NUMBER.

**INT. HOTEL ROOM - MORNING**

Thom tosses in bed, unable to sleep, next to sleeping Jay.

The phone RINGS. Thom answers it.

THOM

Hello?

**INT. KITCHEN - THOM'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

SUPER: HOLLYWOOD DURING NORTHRIDGE EARTHQUAKE 1994

EARTHQUAKE. Billy speaks into the phone, behind him are BREAKING DISHES.

BILLY

Earthquake! Your dishes are breaking.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

THOM

Why are you at my place?

BILLY

Ten minutes ago we had a 6.7 magnitude quake! Northridge!

(screaming as house shakes)

I need you here, moron. Which brother are you gonna choose? Me or Troy?!

THOM

You'll be okay. Billy??... Did you hang up?

Jay wakes, smiles.

JAY

I can't wait to meet Billy. I love your sister.

Reticent, Thom dresses. Jay stares at him in awe.

JAY (CONT'D)

I'm not afraid of earthquakes. I could move to L. A.. Just saying.

Thom looks away, overwhelmed and guarded.

**INT. VISITING ROOM - PRISON - DAY**

Troy has gotten a crew cut. He sits, cold, shivering, next to calm Thom, in his paint clothes. Thom puts his arm around Troy.

GUARD (O.S.)

(over speaker)

No touching visitors and inmates.

Thom withdraws his arm, picks up a crayon, draws.

THOM

Billy needs me in L. A. and I have to work. Unless you can loan me some cash?

TROY

A million dollars, okay?

THOM

Perfect. Thanks. Now I can stop waiting tables at the deli and catering events.

TROY

You just gonna be a waiter bartender?

THOM

Unless there's a job for me here?

TROY

I make thirty-five cents an hour handing out towels in the prison showers.

THOM

Halleluiah that job has my name all over it. Can you put in a good word for me?

They LAUGH.

TROY

You might start to hear voices and see things here.

THOM

I already started. Dad says it's called lucid-dreaming.

THOM'S POV: The second he closes his eyes, a MYRIAD OF DREAMLIKE IMAGES PARADE very fast.

THOM (CONT'D)

I see the most bizarre pictures, and cartoons, and colors... and faces.

TROY

I see demons.

THOM

I don't. The brain files away the day in symbols, as it closes off to sleep, which I can see, because my brain is still awake ... We played poker earlier, right? Your full house beat my pair of queens, right? So I can watch my brain file that info.

TROY

In a dream?

THOM

Lucid dream. Meaning I am awake and conscious... I watch my brain file.

TROY

You see a pair of queens, not demons?

SUPER the images as Thom describes them:

THOM (O.S.)

Symbols, so I would not see the actual two playing cards with queens on them, I'd maybe see Queen Elizabeth, and another

queen, enter a full house, like a hoarder full house. Symbols... You don't see any images just before you sleep?

TROY

No. I just go to sleep. Fast.

THOM

Nothing ever keeps you up? Nothing?

Troy shakes his head no - which stabs Thom in the heart.

THOM (CONT'D)

I thought something would. I'm gonna go, unless there's something else you want to talk about?... Like Mom?

TROY'S SCHIZO POV: DEAD PHYLLIS IS THERE ON THE FLOOR!!

Troy can't believe Thom doesn't see her or react.

TROY

I got nothing to say.

Troy creeps his hand up behind Thom's neck, secretly.

THOM

I have to be going. I hope the cafeteria has pizza for you soon.

TROY

I think on Saturday.

THOM

How's your TV? Figure out the remote?

TROY

I have to turn the TV knob!

THOM

I bought you one with a remote.

TROY

We can't have remotes in prison! We turn them into weapons!

Troy's fingers size up Thom's neck. Thom notices, scared.

THOM  
What are you doing?

TROY  
Necks are easy to break.

SUDDEN DARKNESS as the electricity FLICKERS then goes out. LOUD vending machines are silenced.

THOM  
Oh shit.

TROY  
What happened?

THOM  
The fuckin lights went out??

TROY  
Satan did it!

THOM  
Satan doesn't exist for me. The Seth books, "channeled" by Jane Roberts, say our consciences decide our realities.

VOICE IN TROY'S HEAD  
*Kill him. Strangle him now.*

Troy fingers Thom's neck. Thom allows it, though afraid. The electricity FLICKERS, comes back on. Thom rises, upset.

THOM  
I'm gonna get a book for us.

Thom escapes to the guard desk. Dr. Green approaches.

THOM (CONT'D)  
Hey, why'd the electricity go out?

DR. GREEN  
Apparently a very rare power outage. Thom, I can see to it that Troy has three 20 minute calls a week to you.

THOM

That would be great. Maybe over the phone he could get in touch with being sorry for what he did.

DR. GREEN

I've never known a male who committed matricide to show any sign of remorse.

THOM

What??... Never??

DR. GREEN

It doesn't happen.

Thom gets a BOOK off the bookshelf, returns to Troy, sits down.

THOM

Doctor Green's pretty, huh?

TROY

She's a spy. How long do I have to see her?

THOM

I think an hour.

TROY

Listen to me! How long am I in here?

THOM

(startled, gentle)

Nobody talked to you about this?

TROY

Maybe I can get my security job back at CBS. Mom has my uniform at her house.

THOM

(gentle)

Mom's dead, Troy. You killed her. The house is sold... And I doubt CBS wants you back.

TROY

It's my house. Mom promised.

THOM

You don't get a house if you kill somebody.

TROY

Do you think I can fit my bed in with  
the living room stuff?

THOM

Mom's house was sold.

TROY

Mom knew I had to kill.

THOM

You didn't have to kill. Good-bye. You  
know you can play cards with inmates.

Heartbroken Thom leaves without hugging Troy good-bye.

**EXT. PHONE BOOTH - PRISON - DAY - MINUTES LATER**

Thom speaks into a phone, pulls his own hair, loses his  
temper, KICKS THE PHONEBOOTH.

THOM

(into the phone)

Troy sleeps just fine! I haven't slept  
more than an hour straight since he  
killed her!

**INT. MAIN ROOM - THOM'S HOUSE - DAY**

SUPER: HOLLYWOOD

Billy speaks into the phone.

BILLY

You're done with that dipshit?

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

THOM

For now. Pick me up at the airport?

BILLY

Yes, fool, I'll pick you up.

**INT. AIRPLANE - DAY**

Shy Thom shows a PSYCHIC BOOK to the PASSENGER next to him.

THOM

Excuse me, this is going to sound weird, but I'm trying to be psychic. Since I know nothing about you, can I just ramble off some words, and you tell me if they relate to you at all?

PASSENGER

Totally inappropriate. But go ahead.

THOM

Butter Street, papa in Idaho, red shorts, cousin Sara, Idaho, pottery class, niacin, ivy, pink house? Words stream nonstop in my head, from my subconscious? Or from yours?

PASSENGER

Only one pertains to me. I did pottery.

The passenger gestures to the FLIGHT ATTENDANT.

PASSENGER (CONT'D)

Miss? Could I change my seat?

**EXT. LAX AIRPORT - DAY**

SUPER: LAX AIRPORT, LOS ANGELES

Palm trees, Los Angeles landmarks.

CLOSER: Thom, with luggage, talks to the handsome airport Rosicrucian. Thom puts money in his jar.

THOM

You kill someone. You're not sorry. Where do you go after you die?

Billy's car pulls up, BEEPS. Thom waves to Billy.

ROSICRUCIAN

If I spend my human life beastly like an animal, no spirituality or kindness, this affects my karma on the causal level, and this kills my entire layered energy body.

THOM

So your vibration, as a killer, would be so low that it couldn't exist in a heaven that is a high vibration?

ROSICRUCIAN

Correct. Energy bodies without love can not rise to loving spheres.

Billy BEEPS his horn relentlessly.

THOM

And jerks who beep their horn like that?

ROSICRUCIAN

They go straight to Hell.

They LAUGH. Billy runs to hug Thom.

BILLY

Your catering boss called, you have to bartend some award show tonight.

THOM

Oh well, I need the cash. Wish me luck.

BILLY

Wish me luck. I'm moving back in with Eva.

**INT. MAIN ROOM - THOM'S HOUSE - DUSK**

In a TUX, Thom ties on his BOW-TIE, plays his PHONE MESSAGE.

JAY (V.O.)

It's only me, Jay, thinking about you.  
Thinking about us. Call me, studman.

Thom's eyes water, he frowns, shakes his head.

**INT. HOLLYWOOD THEATER - NIGHT**

SUPER: RALEIGH STUDIOS, HOLLYWOOD

In his tux and bow-tie, Thom walks to a TABLE OF GLASSES AND LIQUOR. He sets up his bar and nods to a BALD CATERER.

THOM

Who are we serving drinks to tonight?

BALD CATERER  
Some daytime awards.

The iconic "Young And Restless / Nadia's Theme" PLAYS.

THOM  
Daytime?? Oh no. No. Nooooo.

"Failure" Thom trembles as he sees SOAP STARS entering. He hides from Dana who nears and clicks on her TAPE RECORDER.

DANA  
Hi Thom! Are you back on the show?

THOM  
No Dana, can you shut off the recorder?

She shuts it off.

BALD CATERER  
Thom, start pouring.

Thom pours many CHAMPAGNE FLUTES. Dana now understands.

DANA  
Your working here is off the record.

She SCREAMS and APPLAUDS as SOAP STARS enter, who look at her, and notice hiding Thom. Thom humbly waves, then pours tequila for Dana - and himself. They chug the alcohol.

DANA (CONT'D)  
You'll need good sex later.

He blushes, tries to avoid her hands on his shoulders.

DANA (CONT'D)  
Did Billy tell you I'm fun in bed?

THOM  
He did. But off the record. I'm gay.

DANA  
I didn't know you were gay.

THOM  
I'm not out to the public.

DANA  
It's a sin... I'll pray for you.

THOM  
How can loving someone be a sin?

DANA  
You'll get AIDS then you'll go to Hell.

THOM  
As if my night could get any worse.

MONTAGE: THOM AND DANA

Drunk Dana follows drunk Thom after his shift to his truck.

DANA  
Use me as an experiment. You have to try having sex with a girl once.

THOM  
I'm only into macho men.

DANA  
There's nothing in girls that turns you on?

THOM  
I watch porn. The vagina is kind of hot.

She kisses him. He politely resists, drives away.

Gorgeous Dana drunkenly drives, follows Thom home.

Dana pushes herself in Thom's house door. He LAUGHS nervously.

In his bedroom, Thom tries to eat Dana's vagina.

THOM  
I'm sorry. I can't get hard.

Angry, she storms out.

END OF MONTAGE.

**INT./EXT. PICK-UP TRUCK/EVA'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Tense sobering Thom, in tux, parks his truck, meditates a minute. Suddenly he hears a PARANORMAL MALE VOICE!!

PARANORMAL MALE VOICE  
*It's usually on the ceiling.*

THOM  
 It's usually on the ceiling??

Baffled, he looks at the truck ceiling, sees nothing.

**INT. FOYER/KITCHEN - EVA'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Thom enters. Billy is polishing the TABLE. Something BEEPS.

THOM  
 I had to come and tell you Dana, she was drunk, we both were, we tried to have sex.

BILLY  
 Dude! You're a homo!

They CHUCKLE and hear a BEEP.

THOM  
 I couldn't get hard. What's beeping?

BILLY  
 It's driving me nuts! I have no idea!

BEEEEEEEEEP. Thom looks around. Then up at the ceiling.

THOM  
 Looks like there was a fire detector up there and you painted around it?

BILLY  
 Is that what's beeping?

THOM  
 I don't know. In the car I heard a voice say "It's usually on the ceiling."

Exhilarated Thom follows Billy into the kitchen.

BILLY  
 You heard a voice? A psycho voice?

Billy opens the pantry, finds the buried BEEPING fire detector.

THOM  
 Psychic, not psycho.

Billy's hands shake as he removes the battery.

BILLY

You're hearing voices like Troy?!

THOM

I heard a psychic voice. Not psycho.

BILLY

What if tomorrow a voice tells you to break in here and kill us in our sleep??

THOM

Oh my god. I wouldn't do something just because a voice said to do it. I'm not some zombie in a trance.

BILLY

Stop the shitty spirit mumbo jumbo and go learn your lines. Your "Melrose Place" audition tomorrow. You got my note? I was at your place, had to get away from Eva.

THOM

No, I was... distracted with Dana.

BILLY

Go home, homo. It's a repeat guest star.

**MONTAGE - STUDIOS**

-WAITING ROOM: Thom memorizes a "Melrose Place" SCRIPT.

-OFFICE: Thom auditions. A CASTING DIRECTOR gives THUMBS UP.

-OFFICE: Thom nervously auditions on CAMERA.

-OFFICE: Thom auditions with ACTOR for the WRITER and DIRECTOR.

-SET: A CLAPPERBOARD reading "Melrose Place" SLAPS as Thom shoots a scene with ACTORS.

-Thom gives a tour to very pregnant Eva and Billy. They see jovial dana, who joins them.

END OF MONTAGE

**INT. STUDIO CAFE**

SUPER: SANTA CLARITA STUDIOS, VALENCIA, CA 1995

Intense Thom, Billy and VERY pregnant Eva eat.

EVA

The "Melrose Place" pool looks so small in person! Invite us to Universal when you shoot "Murder, She Wrote"?

THOM

If you're not too busy with the baby.

BILLY

Didn't you give up acting to pursue ghost hunting?

THOM

The whole thing with Troy.

BILLY

Shhhh. No one here needs to know!

THOM

Mom, Gary and me -- we brought Troy back to life. Like a miracle! I feel ... successful, so my auditions are good.

A STUDIO PAGE approaches, congratulates Thom.

STUDIO PAGE

Thom Bierdz, your agent called. You booked the "Matlock."

Thom's arms point up in victory. He SHOUTS in joy. Billy high-fives him. Eva SCREAMS. The men eat. Eva keeps SCREAMING.

THOM

It's just a guest star, Eva, not like I'm a regular.

Eva SCREAMS, pointing to her belly, going into labor.

**EXT. HOSPITAL - LOS ANGELES - DAY**

SUPER: CEDARS-SINAI MEDICAL CENTER, LOS ANGELES 1995

PEOPLE rush to and fro in front of a large hospital.

**INT. DELIVERY ROOM - HOSPITAL - LOS ANGELES - DAY**

Eva SCREAMS giving birth to baby LISSA, assisted by a DOCTOR and NURSE. Billy and Thom nervously watch.

LATER:

Eva holds baby Lissa. Thom snaps a photo.

**INT. PHOTO STORE - DAY**

Thom, in paint clothes, pays for an ENVELOPE of PHOTOS.

**INT. MAIN ROOM - THOM'S HOUSE - DAY**

Thom's SCARY PICASSO-LOOKING ART hangs on peeling gold walls. Thom plays his ANSWERING MACHINE near his Ouija board.

JAY

It's Jay. I felt a big connection. You said you did, too. What did I do wrong?

THOM

(to himself)

Jay, you didn't do anything wrong.

Thom opens the photo envelope, compares the PHOTO OF EVA AND NEWBORN to a PHOTO OF PHYLLIS AND BABY labeled "TROY."

Thom dumps his BOOKCASE DRAWER of PHOTOS on the table, finds PHOTOS OF HAPPY PHYLLIS AND TROY through his childhood.

Thom SLAMS HIS FIST, breaking the table. More PHOTOS OF HAPPY PHYLLIS AND KIDS slide to his feet. Losing his temper, he grabs a BAR BELL and beats photos of Troy on the table over and over until the table is in pieces and Thom has no strength to move.

He lays on his back, eyes open, spilling TEARS, SCREAMS. He does not see THE OUIJA BOARD PLANCHETTE MOVE BY ITSELF!

**INT. CAFETERIA - PRISON - DAY**

In a food line, paranoid Troy avoids eye-contact.

**INT. DINING ROOM - EVA'S HOUSE - DAY**

SUPER: 4 YEARS LATER. 1999

Eva serves lunch to Thom and Billy, kissing daughter Lissa, 4.

BILLY

I'm not jealous anymore of your fame,  
Thom. Funny what a child does. You  
realize family is all that matters.

**INT./EXT. MAIN ROOM - THOM'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD - DAY**

The once-peaceful room is table-less and crowded with Thom's  
EMOTIVE FIGURATIVE PAINTINGS, hanging loose and crooked.  
Painting faces on the walls, Thom dials the phone, speaks.

THOM

I fly to Troy once a year, it's all  
I can afford, then he used to phone  
me every week, but he hasn't called  
in months. Something's wrong.

**INT. DR GREEN'S OFFICE - PRISON - DAY**

At her desk, humorless Dr. Green pulls out Troy's horrific  
MURDER SCENE PHOTOS and speaks into the phone.

DR. GREEN

Matricide perpetrators don't know how  
to cope with their feelings. Avoidance  
and violence are their typical defenses.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

DR. GREEN (CONT'D)

Your efforts to help him are commendable.

THOM

No, I need to talk. To him. He's the  
only one who understands me. He gets me.

Thom hangs up, paranoid of PEOPLE talking on the sidewalk.  
With paintbrush, he paints their outlines on his window.

**INT. CELL - PRISON - DAY**

Paranoid Troy gathers up courage to speak to the GUARD.

TROY

No more letters?... From my brother?

GUARD

Only fifty letters allowed in a cell.

Troy is too paranoid to speak.

GUARD (CONT'D)

Do you want a pencil to write him back?

Troy is paranoid... pained... but eventually nods.

**EXT. BEVERLY HILLS STREET - DAY**

SUPER: BEVERLY HILLS

Shy Thom knocks on a mansion door. A MEXICAN MAID answers.

THOM

Hi! You've seen me on "The Young And The Restless" and "Melrose Place" and "Matlock" and "Murder, She Wrote" but I'm more of a painter. Here's a DVD of my acting and art.

MEXICAN MAID

You come paint house?

THOM

No. No, I sell my paintings... Can you give your rich bosses this DVD?

She doesn't understand but takes the DVD. Thom sighs.

**MONTAGE - BEVERLY HILLS**

-Thom gives DVDs to more uninterested Bev Hills MAIDS.

END OF MONTAGE

**INT. BATHROOM - THOM'S HOUSE - DAY**

Shirtless Thom SCREAMS as he scrapes himself in the torso with an ELECTRIC KNIFE - again and again and again!

**INT. MAIN ROOM - THOM'S HOUSE - DAY**

Walls crowded with haunting art and the progressing realistic portrait of his mother, Thom excitedly opens an ENVELOPE FROM TROY. Thom's torso bruised from tattooing it with fake hair.

THOM

Troy! What's going on? "My friend Thom, Do you miss the free life with me?"

TROY'S LETTERS (with misspelled words) are so poetic that Thom wipes tears and paints the WORDS ON CANVASES:

TROY (V.O.)

"You are my big brother and I am lucky you protect me from Hell... Do you get angry at me behind my back?... I think I'm better than you... Don't you think brothers should be tortured together?... Do you hear the voices?"

**INT. BEDROOM - EVA'S MANSION - NIGHT**

Eva pets Lissa (4), then poses sexily in her NEGLIGEE and CAPE in front of Billy reading a BOOK in a chair.

EVA

Eva Bierdz proves the mature woman looks tantalizing in her brand new Victoria's Secret negligee complete with silk cape.

BILLY

Cape? Nice touch.

She dances sexily but he ignores her.

EVA

We committed to sex on Thursdays.

BILLY

We watched "Friends" like you wanted.

She storms out of the room.

**INT. EVA'S SHOWER - NIGHT**

Billy showers, SCREAMS, shocked to see naked Eva sneak in.

BILLY

I'm not in the mood tonight. Look how much hair I am losing.

He shows her a HANDFUL OF HAIR.

EVA

It's Thursday!! Husband?!

He gets out, grabs a TOWEL. She grabs his balls and squeezes. He HOWLS in pain.

BILLY

Wife! Leave me alone! Damnit!

EVA

It's Thursday! Husband!

BILLY

Stop squeezing my nuts! This is abuse!  
I'll call the cops, I swear I will!!

He struggles to exit and grabs a phone.

BILLY (CONT'D)

I'm calling the cops!

OPERATOR (O.S.)

(on phone)

9-1-1.

BILLY

(into phone)

I'm reporting spousal abuse. My wife is squeezing my scrotum. Send the police immediately to 287 Gray Circle, Beverly Hills... Yes, I'm serious --

They struggle, trip to the floor, hear the baby CRY.

BILLY (CONT'D)

I'm moving out. I'm taking Lissa.

EVA

You are not taking Lissa!

He rises, runs. She SCREAMS, chases him.

**INT. MAIN ROOM, KITCHEN - THOM'S HOUSE - DAY**

Thom, shirtless showing torso tattoos, paints more on his mom's portrait. Suddenly Billy carries in SUITCASES, hands Thom MAIL.

BILLY

Dad sent a postcard from Texas.

Billy inspects Thom's crazy figure-painted windows.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Why the hell is Troy writing you?

THOM  
You're moving back in here??

BILLY  
Can I? I had to call the cops last night.

THOM  
What did she do?

BILLY  
Tried to pull my balls off because I  
wouldn't screw her. What's on your chest?

THOM  
From far away, it looks like real hair?

Billy backs up, shrugs. Billy panics seeing a painted OUIJA BOARD on the ceiling.

BILLY  
What the fuck is that?

THOM  
What does it look like, Einstein??

Billy notices HELLISH FIGURES painted on the floor.

BILLY  
These are new.

THOM  
I can't ever fucking sleep so I paint!

Fearful, Billy steps where he can see the kitchen -- all the cupboards have been painted with TROY'S INFANTILE PHRASES.

THOM (CONT'D)  
It's like Troy's an infant now. Innocent.

Billy crumbles Troy's letter. Thom takes it from him.

THOM (CONT'D)  
Don't do that! Troy's so different now.  
His letters rip out my heart.

BILLY  
He will rip out your heart in six seconds.

Thom opens and proudly reads aloud TROY'S LETTERS.

THOM

"Have I left you with enough feelings?  
So many voices tell me what to do. How  
do I no which one to listen to? I have  
schizophrenia It means I'm afraid of  
people. I'm worried about suicide."

BILLY

Good. So kill yourself, Troy.

Worried Thom dials the phone.

BILLY (CONT'D)

I hope you're calling a shrink!

THOM

In a way. I'm calling Dad, a  
psychotherapist. Maybe he can help?

BILLY

Thanks! I'll take help from anywhere --

THOM

(into the phone)

Hey Dad. Troy is suicidal.

ON BILLY: Ignored, hurt.

**INT. TOYOTA DEALERSHIP - DAY - MINUTES LATER**

SUPER: AUSTIN, TEXAS

Al hands CONTRACTS to a CAR BUYER and talks into the phone.

AL

(whispering into phone)

If Troy is suicidal, they adjust meds.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

THOM

Pills might not be enough. Will you see  
Troy with me? You studied mental heath.

AL

(whispering)

I sell Toyotas now and my presence may  
upset Troy more than help him.

THOM

Your dad presence will help him...  
A lot. He needs his dad... We all do.

IN TEXAS: Al hands KEYS to the car buyers.

AL

(whispering into phone)  
You do?? You never said that before.  
This is going to sound cruel... but I'm  
glad your mother is no longer with us.

THOM

You're glad... Mom's... dead??

AL

(whispers)  
She made you choose sides. You were  
"her four." If she was alive, you'd  
still feel obligated to hate me, to  
keep a distance.

IN HOLLYWOOD: Thom furrows his brow, absorbs that hard truth.

**INT. MKE AIRPORT - MILWAUKEE - NIGHT**

SUPER: MILWAUKEE AIRPORT

Winter. At the airport gate, Hope hugs paranoid Thom, in COWBOY OUTFIT, and then Al who is drunk.

HOPE

Dad, you smell like scotch. You're  
not gonna see Troy, are you?

AL

Thom says Troy needs me.

HOPE

You can't tell Troy about my girls.

As they walk, Al grabs both their hands.

AL

Thom needed me to come and says Troy  
needs me. I only wish Billy was here.

HOPE

Billy's got romance problems. Speaking of romance, Thom's got a romance.

THOM

Jay? No, haven't seen him in years.

HOPE

Why not? You need someone. I like Gary.

THOM

Need? Billy needed crazy Eva??

AL

Eve's a jealous monster. Suffocating just like your mother was.

Thom stops, upset. Soon he notices other TRAVELERS looking at him. He avoids their eyes, paranoid. Worried Hope hugs him.

THOM

People smile at me and I look panicked at them, angry. Looks like I hate them. I hurt their feelings.

HOPE

You're not sleeping yet? You're all crazy. Dad, you're crazy drunk.

AL

Leonardo Da Vinci only slept two, three hours a night. So did Nikola Tesla, Salvador Dali, Sir Isaac Newton, Thomas Edison. They chose a hypnagogic state between wakefulness and sleep, which boosts creativity and problem-solving.

Al holds up Thom's arm as if he won a race. Thom hugs Al.

**INT. BOOKSTORE - MALL - MORNING**

SUPER: BEVERLY CENTER, LOS ANGELES

Billy, balding in areas, is humiliated by his new job stocking BOOKS. Eva enters in much make-up and tight dress.

BILLY

Why won't you let me see Lissa?

EVA

What happened to your hair?

BILLY

You did this. From stress.

EVA

You can move back in tonight.

BILLY

No, I am filing for divorce.

A CUSTOMER approaches. Eva doesn't care.

EVA

We are not getting divorced.

BILLY

I can't make you happy.

Billy looks at the customer, who just backs up a bit.

EVA

We can still have separate rooms for  
awhile, for three weeks.

BILLY

Three years.

EVA

No.

BILLY

I want a divorce.

EVA

Then you'll never see Lissa again.

BILLY

Of course I will. Dads can visit.

EVA

Not dads that molest their daughters.

Billy looks at the customer.

BILLY

I never molested Lissa!

EVA

I know that, but will the jury?

LATER:

Billy watches Eva shop at adjacent STORES.

Billy's so upset his hands shake stocking books.

Billy dials the phone, speaks into it.

BILLY

Thom, I don't know what to do. Give  
me a call. I need a friend, bro.

He hangs up seeing a COUPLE with a CHILD (4) browse books.  
Billy plays with the child, wipes a tear.

**INT. GUN STORE - NIGHT**

SUPER: BURBANK, CA

Billy, with red eyes and shaking hands, buys a GUN.

**INT. ADMITTANCE - PRISON - MORNING**

Calm Thom and worried Al put their belongings in a locker.

THOM

Doctor Green suggests me first.

AL

You go in and I'll join you in a bit.

Al watches relaxed Thom pass through security. When Thom is out  
of view, overwhelmed Al WEEPS against the lockers.

**INT. VISITING ROOM - PRISON - DAY**

Calm Thom and Troy sit, crayons and paper on the table. Thom  
wolfs down a CHOCOLATE BAR. Troy savors each small bite of his.

TROY

It's alive on my tongue. It makes my  
mouth alive.

THOM

Okay. My turn. Rhymes. Chocolate rhymes.  
Tell me what color it is.

TROY  
Scarlet.

THOM  
Yeah, baby! Scarlet.

TROY  
It tastes free...

THOM  
Talk to me.

TROY  
Like an airplane.

THOM  
Chocolate is an airplane! So right!

First Troy, then Thom, relaxed, make AIRPLANE SOUNDS, then raise their arms like wings.

THOM (CONT'D)  
Flying with you, this is my ideal life. With just my bro. Now, if I could only get that job handing out towels in the prison shower.

TROY  
Mom said I couldn't be gay.

THOM  
What? Mom said what?

TROY  
Mom said she couldn't have two gay sons.

Before Thom can ask questions, a ROACH climbs onto the chocolate wrapper on the table. Thom watches Troy ominously inch his hand toward the bug, remembering:

FLASHBACK:

**EXT. BASEMENT CLOSET - HOPE'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Thom reads Troy's animal-killing diaries.

THOM (V.O.)  
"Roaches. Tore legs and heads off."

FLASH-FORWARD TO:

**INT. VISITING ROOM - PRISON - DAY**

Instead of killing the roach, Troy slowly lowers the wrapper onto the floor and lets the bug scurry away. Thom exhales, smiles, wipes a tear of pride for Troy. Al approaches.

TROY

Dad?

THOM

Yeah, Troy, I told you Dad was coming.

TROY

I thought it was one of the voices.

AL

Hello, Troy.

Al awkwardly attempts to hug a still-seated Troy. Troy tenses. Al sits, facing Thom - and Troy who is now angry.

TROY

I'm going to Hell, but so are you for being late on child-support! And all fags like Thom go to Hell.

Troy stands abruptly. Al feels chest pain, grabs his chest.

AL

There is no Hell nor a Heaven. This is all there is. Troy, sit down.

THOM

If he wants to stand, he can stand. You had plenty of years to tell him what to do. You only used four if you lost count.

AL

I didn't lose count!

TROY'S SCHIZO POV: TAUNTING DEMONS FLY IN AND OUT.

TROY

Mom went to Hell because she said goddamn it! Billy's going to Hell because he screwed all the neighbor girls! And Hope... I don't know why, but she's going to Hell!

AL (distorted sound)  
Can you have a seat, Troy?

THOM (distorted sound)  
Don't boss him around in his own home.

AL (distorted sound)  
I'm not bossing anybody.

TROY  
Thom, if you want to kill yourself,  
I'll do it, too, so we can be together.

Nancy walks over, coaxes Troy into his chair.

NANCY (distorted sound)  
Nobody's killing themselves.

THOM (distorted sound)  
Nancy, will you tell Doctor Green I  
need to talk to her about adjusting  
Troy's medication?

NANCY  
I certainly will.

She leaves. Al stands.

TROY'S SCHIZO POV: HIS DEAD MOTHER ON THE FLOOR as -

AL  
I'll go get Troy a candy bar.

THOM  
No! All that sugar will make him more  
jittery. Do you want popcorn, Troy?

Troy is confused why they do not see dead Phyllis.

TROY  
I told you I don't want popcorn!

AL  
I'll get you another Kit Kat. How  
often do I get to see you?

THOM  
It's 10:30. We're here until 2. Troy  
can have sugar at 11 and 1:30.

AL  
You're being a bit ridiculous.

TROY  
I want a Kit Kat!

THOM  
Tell Dad you want a sandwich.

AL  
How about salami?

TROY  
I want a Kit Kat.

AL  
Let me get you one.

THOM  
No! He can't have a Kit Kat!!

Defeated, Al walks to the vending machines.

TROY  
They'll rip my heart apart in Hell  
because of the paper route -- they  
chainsaw your brain in Hell.

THOM  
What paper route?

TROY  
Route 71. It hasn't been delivered since  
I stopped the route so I'm going to Hell.

Troy imagines they are in Hell again:

**INT. HELL - NIGHT**

DEMONS with CHAINSAWS taunt Troy in FLAMING HELL.

THOM  
The "Kenosha Tribune"?

TROY  
I never told them I quit. You have to  
move back to Kenosha and do my route.

THOM  
I... don't think so.

TROY  
You have to.

THOM  
I... don't want to be a paperboy.

TROY  
You have to save me from chainsaws!

Troy is terrified. Al returns with a sandwich, hands it to Troy. Troy drops it, GROANS. Al sits.

THOM  
Tell you what, I'll go to the paper and find out who's doing the route.

TROY  
Nobody's doing it! I told you!

Troy takes a crayon and scribbles on paper.

ON THE PAPER: "I quit Route 71. Hasn't been done in 12 years!"

TROY (CONT'D)  
Here's my two-week notice. Bring it to the newspaper. Or I stay in Hell! Are you going to let them chainsaw me?

THOM  
No, no, I won't.

**INT./EXT. RENT-A-CAR - KENOSHA STREETS - DAY**

Al drives as cowboy Thom studies Troy's note.

AL  
Did he really have a paper route?

THOM  
I assume so -- but I was in Hollywood. And you left when he was four.

AL  
Stop punishing me. Mothers always got custody back then!... Your mother and I separated before Troy was born.

THOM

You said she tricked you to come back?

AL

Triked me into sex, got pregnant with Troy,  
made me come back and I hated her.

THOM

Troy. In her belly. Felt your hate??

AL

I hope not... Troy might be trying to  
manipulate a news story for sympathy to  
be retried. I see a tavern which delights  
me because I'm overdue for a scotch.

THOM

Just drive to the "Kenosha Tribune."

AL

Don't be ridiculous -- unless you are  
hoping a news story will help your career?!  
-- but Hope lives here and a story would  
humiliate her!

THOM

I won't let them do a story! Drive me to  
the paper, I know what it's like to be  
damned to Hell! Growing up gay and  
Catholic in the 1960's and 1970's!

**EXT. KENOSHA TRIBUNE BUILDING - DAY**

Thom jumps out of Al's car, stumbles, accidentally breaks  
the passenger side mirror.

THOM'S POV: His crazy distorted cracked mirror reflection.

THOM

Damn it. I'll pay to have it fixed.

**INT. KENOSHA TRIBUNE BUILDING - DAY**

Shy cowboy Thom approaches the BUSY WOMAN behind the counter.

BUSY WOMAN

I'm sorry, we're closed for the day.

THOM

Who is your paperboy on Route 71?

BUSY WOMAN

Are you a subscriber?

THOM

Not at this time.

BUSY WOMAN

I can't release our carriers' names.

Thom's hand shakes, showing her Troy's note. She reads it.

THOM

My brother is a paranoid schizophrenic. And thinks he still has his old paper route. I just need the name of the new carrier. Or write on "Kenosha Tribune" stationery you have his two-week notice?

BUSY WOMAN

I'll see if Mr. Brandt has left.

Thom protectively takes back the note. The busy woman walks into an office, then returns.

BUSY WOMAN (CONT'D)

He's leaving. Come back after the weekend.

Thom urgently barges into Mr. Brandt's office DOOR.

**INT. MR. BRANDT'S OFFICE - MINUTES LATER**

Thom stares down MR. BRANDT (70, old suit) smoking a CIGAR.

MR. BRANDT

(sarcastic)

Our readers wouldn't possibly be interested in a famous hometown TV actor barging in news offices at the request of his Hell-fearing incarcerated schizophrenic brother, the first person in Wisconsin history sentenced to Life Meaning Life -- for killing his mother. Why would I think readers would want an in-depth interview, on your family and TV updates?... Giving you editing approval??

THOM

I can't. It would hurt my sister.

MR. BRANDT

Only a very foolish actor would refuse publicity.

THOM

I want publicity but my family doesn't. So no story. Just do something nice. Please. If you needed me to write a few words to save your brother from Hell, I would.

Thom kneels, begs, CRIES. Mr. Brandt lifts his PEN and writes.

**EXT. KENOSHA TRIBUNE - DAY - HOUR LATER**

Thom runs out, ecstatic, waving a NOTE.

**INT. VISITING ROOM - PRISON - DAY**

Nancy buzzes open the door. Troy hurries in. At the table, cowboy Thom grins, hands Troy the note. Al sits, watching them.

THOM

Read it, bro.

TROY

(reads aloud)

"Dear Troy. Please be assured that your route has been reassigned and that we appreciate your service as a carrier."

THOM

You're not going to Hell.

Troy absorbs the info and CRIES in relief.

THOM (CONT'D)

Not that I believe in Hell.

AL

You've never been married.

**EXT/INT. EVA'S MANSION - NIGHT**

SUPER: 2 YEARS LATER 2001

Trembling Billy stalks Eva, peeking in her candlelit windows.

LOUD SOPRANO OPERA PLAYS. He paces, listens, eventually points the gun at Eva's indoor shadowed figure.

Eva's face turns, revealing she is the wonderful opera singer.

Eva's body turns, revealing she is rocking Lissa in her arms.

ON BILLY: trapped, confused, unimaginable pain.

He points the gun at his own head... pulls the trigger!

**INT. FUNERAL - LOS ANGELES - DAY**

SUPER: SEPTEMBER 10 2001 FOREST LAWN, LOS ANGELES

In the pews: devastated Hope, Sam, Al, Thom and Eva, rocking Lissa. Drunk Thom flashes Eva an AMSWERING MACHINE TAPE.

THOM

(whispering to Eva)

You screaming on his phone machine you'll  
kill Billy if he leaves you.

Thom, drunk, stumbles to the podium, pulls out a photo.

THE "VICTORY" PHOTO: Thom, Billy and Troy enthusiastically bumping fists at the Hollywood diner, all full of dreams.

THOM

Both my brothers are killers... Killing doesn't get you anything... why am I not a killer? Because I was a little gay boy and sentenced to Hell by Saint Marks and by some of you -- when I was nine years-old I withdrew from your straight world... I just had to live in my own separate world. So very early I developed a self-reliance and detachment, to keep me safe. I closed myself off to what you people think of me. To survive. So none of you can ever hurt me so much that I'd kill you or kill me. I just disappear into my peaceful isolated world. But my straight brothers... I don't know, they didn't know how to just quietly walk away and not care... Billy thought Hollywood was the answer... How many of us are wondering, would Billy and Troy have killed if Dad stayed and never left us?

Al nods guiltily. Reporter Dana sits in a pew taking notes.

**EXT. THOM'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Thom leads. Al, Hope and Sam stop, seeing THOM'S HOUSE AND ROOF PAINTED BLACK WITH WHITE OUTLINES OF COLONIAL DANCERS!

AL

Thom, we need to talk about meds.

THOM

I'm not crazy! I just can't sleep!

AL

Billy said you hear voices from fire detectors. You think your dead mom and you saved Troy's soul. Get a grip, Thom.

THOM

You're pissed because at the funeral I said you divorcing Mom killed Billy.

AL

No one believed you.

**INT. MAIN ROOM - THOM'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Thom enters. Al, Hope and Sam follow, terrified to see the Ouija ceiling and Hellish floor!

HOPE

Thom, you can't live alone anymore.

THOM

I should marry Jay or Gary and leave them like Dad left Mom?? She never ever got over that! Or marry like Billy and Eva and it ends in a death!?

Upset, Hope exits to a bedroom. Sam follows.

LATER:

Hope enters, in PAJAMAS and face mask, shakes her head at the Billy and Mom portrait that Thom paints. Al gulps scotch.

THOM

Hope, I only have twin beds but you can push the twin mattresses together.

HOPE

No way! I get my own bed for once! Yay!

THOM

Will you be warm enough?

HOPE

I think we cheeseheads can handle Los Angeles in September.

There's a knock on the door. Thom answers. It's the woman in dark glasses. Thom hands her something, then shuts the door.

HOPE (CONT'D)

Who was that?

THOM

I sell my worn underwear for \$60...

HOPE

I don't want to know!! I don't know why you do anything you do!! I don't know why you do this to yourself!!

THOM

Do what?

She frowns at his portraits of Phyllis and Billy.

HOPE

Put yourself in pain. Seeing them. Dead.

THOM

They're not dead. They're alive.

She exits, upset. Al, in PAJAMAS, enters with a pillow.

AL

I think I need an underwear dealer.

THOM

(laughing)

Dad, want my bed? I can sleep on the couch.

AL

No, couch is fine. What's on your chest?

THOM

I tattooed hair. I wanted chest hair.

AL

So did I.

THOM

Well, I got it.

AL

You do get what you want, kiddo. I never told you, but as a teenager my dream was Hollywood. Instead I married your mother. I'm glad somebody gets what they want.

Al exits, leaving Thom stunned.

### **SPARE ROOM**

Black and white walls of Thom's emotional fauvist faces. Hope walks in to see Sam putting on LEATHER HARNESS and HAT.

SAM

Look what I found. Thom is kinky.

He hands her a WHIP. She closes the door, cries.

### **MAIN ROOM**

Intense Thom lights candles, concentrates.

THOM (CONT'D)

Mom? Spirits?... Billy?? How can we convince Hope you are still alive?

### **BEDROOM - LATER**

Lying in bed on his back with his eyes closed, Thom (has a psychic vision) and YELLS in terror and flings his eyes open.

### **MAIN ROOM - MINUTES LATER**

Hope eats YOGURT, frowns at the paintings of Billy and Phyllis. Dizzy Thom wobbles in, holding his head.

THOM

Armageddon. But not Armageddon!

HOPE

Not another Troy nightmare?

He paces, very animated. She eats. Al saunters in, yawns.

THOM

No. For the first time in a year I was awake with eyes closed and only saw black. Nothing at all.

HOPE

So? I see nothing when I close my eyes.

AL

I see nothing. Just black.

THOM

These past years, I always see things, weird images, symbols, the brain filing the day's events. But I saw only black. Which shocked me. Then suddenly, poof, a cracking sound and then it's like I am flying through space and I feel a hurt.

AL

A hurt?

THOM

A hurt like a thousand miles away at the end of some long dark tunnel. All of a sudden little light smears fly past me trying to get to the hurting. Fast blurs of light. Racing to the hurt.

SUPER: BLURRED LIGHTS in a DARK TUNNEL as Thom describes.

HOPE (O.S.)

Light smears? Like fireflies?

THOM (V.O.)

No. Big, like our size. I felt their love, concern, for the pain that they were racing to. Then dozens of these big loving lights were blurring past me -- on both sides of me racing to the huge pain somewhere. Then there were hundreds then thousands! And I felt their huge love and urgency! But I also felt the huge hurt... Then I saw something so horrible that I made myself forget it.

AL

What?

THOM

I don't remember. I only remember telling myself I have to forget it. And I did.

AL

I want you to start taking Temazepam. It will help your sleep. And Clozaril, a neuroleptic for hallucinations.

THOM

Hallucinations? No! Dad, I'm not insane.

**LIVING ROOM - MORNING**

Hope enters, sees Thom and Al sitting, with watching TV NEWS.

HOPE

Good morning.

THOM

You and Sam are sleepyheads.

HOPE

I smell fresh coffee.

The TV shows a PLANE CRASHING INTO THE WORLD TRADE CENTER. They are stunned and look at each other.

HOPE (CONT'D)

Oh my god! No!! Oh no, those poor people.

AL

People are burning...

THOM

They're jumping out of windows!

AL

The World Trade Center!? Exploding.

They watch in horror, in silence... until Thom stands, paces.

THOM

I felt this all last night. That horrific pain. It must have been of these poor people. And I felt the love of thousands of flying spirits as they were somehow surprised and called to duty and flew so fast to help these poor people in pain.

AL

You said you saw something so horrible  
you made yourself forget it?

THOM

The crash? Or fire? I don't know.

AL

It doesn't make any sense you experienced  
what is happening now, last night.

THOM

But I did! These dying people are being  
met by thousands of loving beings. Of  
light. I saw them! I was with them!

HOPE

Those people are dying!

Euphoric Thom points to the TV.

THOM

They're not dying. They're being helped  
by angels. I saw, felt that last night.

THOM'S POV: ANGELIC BEINGS fly to help the falling 9-11 VICTIMS  
and carry up their SPIRITS.

HOPE

(wiping tears)

Those poor people.

They watch the TV showing 9-11 victims.

LATER:

Thom passionately paints 9-11 VICTIMS BEING HELPED BY ANGELS  
and speaks into the phone.

THOM

Since Mom died, my mission was to  
give my family proof of the afterlife.

**INT. GARY'S BARN - DAY - SAME**

SUPER: DOOR COUNTY, WISCONSIN

Gary, phone in hand, fills a TROUGH OF WATER, but the horse won't drink.

GARY  
 (into phone)  
 And you did give them proof!

INTERCUT PHONE COVERSATION

THOM  
 But Dad, Hope and Sam don't believe it.

GARY  
 You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink.

**INT. MAIN ROOM - THOM'S HOUSE - DAY**

Thom paints 9-11 VICTIMS BEING HELPED BY ANGELS.

With his eyes closed, Thom psychically paints realism.

**EXT. GALLERY - DAY**

SUPER: RODEO DRIVE, BEVERLY HILLS

A CROWD enjoys the 9-11 ANGEL PAINTING outside a "Thom Bierdz Art" exhibit. Near it are Hope, Al, Gary, Eva and the airport Rosicrucian and gallery owner Lloyd, his arm around nervous Thom wearing a WHITE SUIT.

LLOYD  
 A Thom Bierdz premonition painting.

ROSICRUCIAN  
 Celestial beings influence our lives frequently -- but we are unaware.

EVA  
 I pray all day, every day.

Eva smiles broadly. Hope, Al and Thom look at her accusingly or with pity. Bothered, she goes inside.

**INT. RODEO DRIVE GALLERY - DAY - MINUTES LATER**

Shy Thom, Hope, Al, Gary enter. SERVERS offer HORS D'OEUVRES. Upbeat MUSIC. Partying CROWD. Thom is surprised to see Dana.

DANA

Love the angel paintings. The gay stuff, not so much.

THOM

Well, thanks for coming, Dana.

DANA

Don't be mad I reported you were gay. You said it at Billy's funeral.

THOM

I don't care anymore.

DANA

Billy would have loved being here.

THOM

Yeah. He should have been here.

Thom gulps, looks away, raises his drink to his underwear dealer in the crowd. Lloyd points to Thom's BLUE X paintings.

LLOYD

The BLUE X paintings are selling out!

ON MANY OF THE BLUE X EXPRESSIONISM PAINTINGS. Marked SOLD. Two MOVIE STARS nod and point to two Bierdz paintings.

LLOYD (CONT'D)

And I don't even know what to say about these newest paintings. I've never seen anything like them.

ON A PAINTING OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY BEING KILLED AND HIM LIFTED OUT OF HIS BODY BY ANGELS.

ON A PAINTING OF MARTIN LUTHER KING DYING AND LIFTED OUT OF HIS BODY BY ANGELS.

ON A PAINTING OF MARILYN MONROE DYING AND LIFTED OUT OF HER BODY BY ANGELS.

ON A PAINTING OF PRINCESS DIANA DYING AND LIFTED OUT OF HER BODY BY ANGELS.

ON A PAINTING OF BILLY KILLING HIMSELF AND BEING LIFTED OUT OF HIS BODY BY HIS ANGEL MOTHER, PHYLLIS.

Eva covers her face, CRIES. Thom pulls off a SHEET to reveal a PAINTING OF TROY KILLING PHYLLIS WHO IS LIFTED OUT OF HER BODY BY ANGELS. People applaud. Hope and Al whisper in a corner.

HOPE

Thom's such a momma's boy -- so Italian -- stuck in denial, stuck in the past.

AL

As your Polish father, trained in psychotherapy, your need for privacy is totally understandable... As was Billy's need to forget... As was Thom's need to find out where his mother went.

HOPE

Where she went? Thom can't know where Mom went. You mean as a psychotherapist you can understand why Thom is pretending to.

AL

Thom's 9-11 premonition. He must have somehow tapped into a higher realm.

HOPE

What?? I thought you were on my side!

Hope walks outside. CRITICS point to Thom's fauvist face art.

CRITIC 1

An innate flair for composition with a compulsion for seriality.

CRITIC 2

Spinning form and content, questioning scale. The artist is genius.

A NEWS CAMERA CREW rolls up to elated Thom.

NEWS REPORTER

Tell us why you paint what you paint.

Thom looks at the crowd -- and panics.

THOM

Hi. I don't know what you want me to say. Everybody's here, family, friends, reporters, Rosicrucian, underwear dealer.

Lloyd runs over, speaks to camera, turns PAGES of an ART BOOK.

LLOYD

Before Warhol did pop, he did realism. This! This realistic work was by Picasso before he did cubism. Dali painted this realism before he went surreal. Bierdz first came to me with realism - before he found his unique style. I am not impressed with realism, in time computers can do realism, but only Warhol could do this. Only Dali could do this. Only Picasso could do this. Only Bierdz can do this. Invest in Bierdz, a new master!

Lloyd pulls grateful Thom away.

LLOYD (CONT'D)

Get away from the camera. I'm not about to let you ruin a million dollar night.

THOM

You couldn't have sold a million??

LLOYD

With prints, and press alerting my other collectors who aren't here tonight, you just became a millionaire.

Exhilarated Thom throws up his arms in victory.

**INT./EXT. PICK-UP TRUCK - BUSY STREETS - NIGHT**

SUPER: SANTA MONICA BLVD, BEVERLY HILLS

Tense Thom drives, Gary passenger, Al and Hope in backseat.

HOPE

(confused)

Everyone loved your art.

THOM

I can't see! Take the wheel!

They LAUGH - until he almost hits CARS. Hope SCREAMS. Gary grips the steering wheel.

THOM (CONT'D)

I can't see anything! Just black!

GARY

Take your foot slowly off the gas!...  
and I'll get us to the shoulder!

The truck manages to park. Thom stumbles out.

THOM

What is happening??

AL

Mental stress... can cause temporary  
vision loss.

Al guides Thom to the side of the highway, where they sit  
watching TRAFFIC until his eyesight slowly comes back.

**INT. MAIN ROOM - THOM'S HOUSE - DAY**

Phyllis's portrait is finished. Thom progresses on Billy's.  
On the table: many ART MAGAZINES with headlines: "BIERDZ IS  
NEXT DALI," "NEW A-LIST ARTIST," "9-11 ANGEL PAINTER."

**EXT. LAX AIRPORT - LOS ANGELES - DAY**

SUPER: LAX AIRPORT, LOS ANGELES

Thom, in cowboy hat, parks his truck, exits and grabs his  
LUGGAGE and CHRISTMAS-WRAPPED PAINTING.

**EXT. RURAL HIGHWAY - DAY**

SUPER: KENOSHA, WISCONSIN

Snow. Thom's car passes BARNS in CHRISTMAS LIGHTS.

**INT. LIVING ROOM - HOPE'S HOUSE - KENOSHA - DAY**

Hope dances, puts PHOTO ORNAMENTS OF HER TWINS' FACES (aged 12)  
on a HOLIDAY TREE. Thom, in cowboy hat, carries in a BOX.

HOPE

You were just on the news again!

THOM

Oh cool. Where are my adorable nieces?

HOPE

They're with Sam this holdiaiy.

THOM

What?? You guys split up??

HOPE

Not everyone blabs every emotion.

THOM

I don't blab everything. This box is for you. Merry Christmas.

She unwraps to see the finished painting of Phyllis.

HOPE

Oh! This!! It's so... heavy. I mean it's real nice of you, but, I don't think so.

THOM

I worked on it so long. I'm going to give you Billy's, too. It's almost done.

HOPE

No. No. Please. No. This is your style. Not mine. Too heavy. I'm sorry.

She rewraps the picture. He's devastated, sits, looks down, sees a LARGE BOX with DOLL ORNAMENTS and a FILE.

THOM

Are those the ornaments we made as kids?

HOPE

I'll hang the ones my girls made, too.

THOM

What's this?

He opens the file and reads a POLICY PAPER.

HOPE

That fell in the box, from the closet.

THOM

"Phyllis Bierdz... life insurance triples in the event of murder"... One month before Mom died, she changed her life insurance to triple if she was murdered??

HOPE

That's strange. Hey, open my bedroom door.

Thom walks to it, opens it. A CHIHUAHUA PUPPY and CHIHUAHUA-PUG PUPPY crawl out. Grinning Thom sits in awe, pets them.

HOPE

Now you won't be alone. Got them from my hairdresser. Want me to set you up?

THOM

Is he gay?

HOPE

He cuts hair. So.

THOM

Not all guys who cut hair are gay. You ready to drive to see Troy?

HOPE

You know I'm not going in that jail.

THOM

Whatever.

HOPE

It's two hours driving to Troy, right?

THOM

Yeah.

HOPE

And two hours on the way home. You're not driving and going blind. I am driving.

He continues to play with the dogs as she puts on her parka.

**INT/EXT. HOPE'S CAR - YOGURT STORE - HIGHWAY - DAY**

Snow. Hope drives past HOPE'S YOGURT STORE. Thom is shocked to see the OUT OF BUSINESS sign.

THOM

Wow, big changes in your life.

HOPE

Who buys frozen yogurt where it's freezing?

THOM

What are you going to do now?

HOPE

Working as a computer programmer now - for as long as this computer fad lasts.

THOM

Hey, can you teach me computer? I got an idea about promoting art.

HOPE

Your art is all over the news.

THOM

No, not mine. There are millions of artists better than me, that no one sees.

Concerned, she studies Thom as "He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother" PLAYS, this time the lyrics from her perspective.

**EXT. PRISON - DAY**

Hope parks the car, looks around. Thom gets out, shivers.

HOPE

He won't escape this one.

THOM

I told you he can't! Just come in and say hi. I put you on his visitor list.

HOPE

Get a grip! I'm going to the casino.

THOM

What did Mom make us vow? One thing?

HOPE

We kids would always be there for each other. When you were on soap opera sets I sat with Troy every time he was put in a mental hospital and every time he was allowed visitors at detention centers!

THOM

Just come in. When you see he's not a danger, your nightmares will stop.

Hope shakes her head. Thom hugs her, goes. When he's out of view, she hits the steering wheel a few times in frustration.

**INT. VISITING ROOM - PRISON - DAY**

A deck of UNO CARDS are between relaxed Thom and Troy.

**EXT/INT. PRISON - DAY**

Hope cries in her car, breathes deep, wipes her tears. She walks to the prison. They BUZZ her to enter.

HOPE

I'd like to see... Troy Bierdz.

**INT. VISITING ROOM - PRISON - DAY**

Troy and blissful Thom play UNO as they HUM a song.

TROY

I was hoping Billy and I could be brothers again.

THOM

It's too late.

TROY

I almost killed myself once. How did he-

THOM

He shot himself.

A shadow falls across the table. It's Hope! Awkward.

HOPE

Troy, well, it's been twelve years.

TROY

I thought you were in Hell.

HOPE

I was... for awhile... Thom told me you guys play cards?

THOM

Why don't you finish my hand? I need to stretch my legs, and Troy's too good at cards for me anyway.

HOPE

I don't know... would that be okay with you, Troy?

Troy nods. Hope sits, afraid. Thom fights tears, walks away.

HOPE (CONT'D)

It's been such a long time since... I played Uno. I may need help.

TROY

We just try to get rid of our cards one at a time.

Troy and Hope pretend to concentrate on their cards, but sneak glances at each other, looking away when their eyes meet. Troy wins the hand. Thom returns, still fighting tears of joy.

HOPE

You were right. Troy is good.

THOM

Why don't I get us a book or something?

HOPE

Wait! Hey!! I'll go with you.

Euphoric Thom leads baffled Hope to the bookcase.

THOM

What do you think of him?

HOPE

I was hoping he was more schizophrenic or something. It would be easier to forgive him but he seems almost normal.

THOM

His pills cut delusions.

(looks at Troy)

We should get a book. He knows we're talking about him.

Thom pulls out a "Mental Illness" BOOK. Hope looks at Thom like he's crazy. She puts the book back and pulls out another - it happens to be a "Mother Goose" BOOK.

HOPE

Oh look! Mother Goose!

THOM

Jay said it would show up.

HOPE

Will Troy like nursery rhymes?

Thom nods, beams. They walk back to the table and sit. Hope takes the book and holds it in front of herself like a shield.

THOM

Let's take turns reading Mother Goose.

HOPE

I haven't read these since my girls started school.

Thom is flabberghasted by what she has just revealed.

TROY

You have kids?

HOPE

Yes, twin girls. Twelve years-old.

TROY

Thom never told me that.

THOM

I must have forgot.

HOPE

Here's a rhyme about little girls. "What are little girls made of?"

TROY

Sugar and spice.

HOPE

"Sugar and spice and everything nice. That's what little girls are made of. What are little boys made of?"

TROY

Snails and something else.

HOPE

"Snips and snails and puppy dog tails.  
That's what little boys are made of."

THOM

Sorry about that.

HOPE

Who wants to read next?

TROY

(emotional)

And I'm sorry about that.

HOPE

About what?

TROY

About Mom.

TEARS OF REMORSE ESCAPE TROY'S EYES. Hope's eyes swell, redden.  
Thom inhales deep, holds back a cry.

TROY (CONT'D)

Mom and I were in the kitchen...

FLASHBACK:

**INT. KITCHEN - PHYLLIS' HOUSE - NIGHT**

SUPER: JULY 14, 1989

BLURRY DISTORTED SLOW-MO on vague movements... Troy waves a  
knife at Phyllis.

TROY

Satan wants a sacrifice.

She is afraid but pretends not to be. Troy knifes a STUFFED  
ANIMAL to shreds -- then karate kicks near Phyllis.

PHYLLIS

If you didn't get permission to leave the  
center, the cops will be here any minute.

DEMONIC VOICE IN TROY'S HEAD

*Kill Thom in Hollywood first. Get on the  
news, then kill the others.*

TROY

Thom needs to die first.

PHYLLIS

The cops will get you before you drive to Thom.

TROY

Not if I kill you!!

He grabs her neck and squeezes.

PHYLLIS

Especially if you kill me!

TROY

You have such a small neck.

PHYLLIS

Troy! I can't breathe!!

TROY

I'm tired of you being a bitch!

He throws her across the room. She lands in the open doorway. She looks out, sees freedom. But oddly she does not run away. Instead, she locks them inside together. He grips the baseball bat, swings it. She cowers, closes her eyes, waiting.

FLASH-FORWARD TO:

TROY

She knew I had to kill. And she locked us inside.

Bewildered Thom looks down, speechless for a minute.

THOM

She sacrificed herself??

HOPE

Murder. She changed her life insurance to pay out triple if she was murdered.

Hope stands, drowning in heavy emotions, turns to Troy.

HOPE (CONT'D)

Mom knew to keep us safe, you'd need to be locked up where you couldn't escape.

THOM

The only way a nineteen year-old gets in max -- is with murder. The day she died, she called, made me promise if anything happened to her, we kids would always be there for each other.

TROY

Mom loved me so much.

HOPE

She did.

THOM

She still does.

Troy CRIES.

THOM (CONT'D)

Ask Mom to come to you, Troy. She sent me to you, through Gary.

Hope shakes her head, disapproving.

TROY

No! Mom will beat me up, for killing her!

TROY'S SCHIZO POV: PHYLLIS BEATS HIM WITH HER FISTS.

THOM

No, no, she won't beat you up.

**INT. DR GREEN'S OFFICE - DAY**

Hope watches Thom hold back tears at Dr. Green's desk.

THOM

You said that boys who kill their moms never get to remorse. You never knew one. Well, you know one now. Write it down. You know one now!

Dr. Green's hardness cracks and she finally smiles.

**INT./EXT. HOPE'S CAR - HIGHWAY - COUNTER RESTAURANT - DAY**

SUPER: MUKWONAGO, WISCONSIN 2001

As Hope drives in the snow, she sees Thom holding back tears.

THOM

She knows one now. She knows one now.

HOPE

You can cry for once, you know. I'm not gonna tell anyone.

He breaks, WEEPS against the snowy window. She CRIES.

HOPE (CONT'D)

Always trying to appear so manly. Your fake chest hair, your cowboy hat and uniforms and leather and whip! You would never whip anyone!

He shakes his head, LAUGHS. Then she LAUGHS.

HOPE (CONT'D)

You've never even been in a fight. Neighbor girls used to beat you up. You try so hard that people don't see the little sissy boy, playing with my Barbies...

The car skids. He nods, SOBS speaking incomprehensible words. She cries, regaining control of the car.

HOPE (CONT'D)

Mister self-sufficient. Keeping everybody away. Don't keep me away. I need a brother, you know. I had three. I need at least one. She parks the car outside the Counter Restaurant.

THOM

You feel like eating?

HOPE

I feel like getting you a husband.

IN THE WINDOWS: handsome Jay waits tables.

**INT. COUNTER RESTAURANT - DAY**

Hope pushes shy Thom in. Jay serves a table then walks slowly to Thom. Thom smiles. Jay looks confused, and in love.

HOPE

Thom needs someone and I like you. He he can't be alone anymore.

Thom's humiliated, smiles. Jay thinks, nods, shrugs.

**MONTAGE - VARIOUS**

-Thom and Jay dine at a ROMANTIC CANDLE-LIT RESTAURANT.

-Thom and Jay slow dance at JAY'S APARTMENT.

-Thom and Jay, with suitcases, enter MKE AIRPORT.

-Thom and Jay, in leather outfits, watch TV at THOM'S HOUSE.

-Jay supports Thom at another GALLERY SHOW.

-Thom and Jay paint over Thom's crazy-painted house exterior, roof and interior. They move out of THOM'S HOUSE.

END OF MONTAGE

**EXT. CABIN - DAY**

SUPER: LAKE ARROWHEAD, CA 2002

Jay, in BASEBALL OUTFIT, plays with the small dogs and SQUIRRELS by a FOREST CABIN (Thom's painting became real!). Thom in BASEBALL OUTFIT sleeps in a HAMMOCK. The phone RINGS.

JAY

Phone! Want me to get it? If it's  
Troy's prison, I'm going to hang up.

THOM

No, I'll get it.

**INT. CABIN - DAY**

Thom enters (under a LADDER), listens to the phone machine.

AUTOMATED FEMALE VOICE (V.O.)

This call is from an inmate in Wisconsin...

Thom picks up the phone, big framed Phyllis portrait behind him.

THOM

Hi Troy. How are you doing?

**INT. PHONE AREA - PRISON - DAY**

Seated, Troy speaks into the prison phone.

TROY  
I asked Mom to come to me.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

THOM  
Okay.

TROY  
I didn't kill Mom.

THOM  
You didn't kill Mom?

TROY  
Mom is here. I see Mom.

THOM  
You do? You see her?

IN PRISON: PHYLLIS'S GLORIOUS SPIRIT is indeed with Troy!

TROY  
She says I didn't kill her. I see her.  
She says I didn't kill her... She says  
I only killed myself.

THOM  
You did! But we got you back.

TROY  
Mom is back. I see her. She says no  
one can kill anyone.

Phyllis's LIGHT SPIRIT infuses LIGHT into his being.

TROY (CONT'D)  
She says they only kill themselves.

ON TROY: eyes closed, healing, feeling freed.

**INT. CABIN - LAKE ARROWHEAD - DAY - MINUTES LATER**

Balancing on the ladder, Thom grips, hoists up the heavy framed Phyllis portrait 15 feet high, hammers a nail in the wall. He leans dangerously to hang the back wire - then he trips down the ladder. Laughing at his bruises, he rises, hangs the heavy framed Billy portrait directly below. Phone RINGS.

**EXT. BARN - DAY**

SUPER: DOOR COUNTY, WISCONSIN

Brushing his horse, Gary talks on the phone:

GARY  
I felt I should check in.

INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION

THOM  
Gary! Troy said Mom was with him!

GARY  
That's wonderful!

THOM  
She told him no person can kill another because life continues after death. She says people that think they kill someone else, really only kill themselves.

GARY  
Thom... she's coming through. She thanks you for keeping your promise.

THOM  
Thanks, Gary! But why can't she tell that to me? Directly to me? Me??

GARY  
She's laughing. Says you are so stubborn. You don't need to see her, Thom. Because you already know she lives on. But because you're so stubborn, she's coming for you.

**INT. CABIN - LAKE ARROWHEAD, CA - SAME**

Holding the phone, Thom hears CREAKING, looks up to see Phyllis's portrait shifting on the loose nail. Before he can move away, her portrait crashes down on Billy's portrait and ricochets on Thom's head - knocking him unconscious - DEAD!

**MONTAGE - AFTERLIFE**

-Blackness.

-Faint light.

-Moving tunnel.

THOM (V.O.)

This happened before... am I dead??

-Up the tunnel, Thom's near-invisible SPIRIT BODY flies twisting past ANGELIC LIGHTS and GALAXIES to a HEAVENLY REALM.

-LIGHTED FIGURES appear - most pronounced is deceased Billy. Billy materializes with a serious face, speaking.

THOM

I can't hear you, Billy. I don't hear any words.

But Thom can feel and see a SURROUNDING BUZZING VIBRATION. Thom tries to hug Billy's spirit - but it evaporates away.

THOM (CONT'D)

I love you just as much. I'm sorry I didn't help you more.

Thom tries to grip Billy who has gone. Slowly, Phyllis's radiant spirit appears. Thom WEEPS, tries to hug her but she floats back, smiling.

THOM (CONT'D)

Oh Mom I love you! Say something! I waited so long for you to say something to me!! Talk to me!! Talk to me!!

Smiling, she shakes her head no, then points to her heart, then points to his heart, and again, then hugs him, illuminating his very being. Now euphoric, he understands, speaks, emotional, enlightened.

THOM (CONT'D)

I get it! You're saying there's nothing to say. There's... only love.

She nods. He tries to hug her but she vanishes. He desperately tries to grip the dissipating light.

**INT. HOSPITAL - DAY**

SUPER: MOUNTAINS COMMUNITY HOSPITAL, LAKE ARROWHEAD

The CEILING LIGHT blinds Thom as he awakes in a hospital bed.

Jay (in baggy coat) holds his hand. On the other side of the bed, Hope squeezes his other hand, relieved Thom is conscious.

HOPE

Didn't I tell you those paintings were too "heavy"??

THOM

I saw them! I was with Mom and Billy!

She doesn't believe him. But she loves him deeply.

THOM (V.O.)

Hope didn't believe me. My sister only believed what she could see. Maybe it went back to when Dad left us, and Hope saw she had to help ground us three brothers... I always saw things she didn't see - like me a skinny gay Wisconsin nerd could be a Hollywood star.

Jay opens his coat to show their small dogs - who excitedly jump on Thom, licking him. Thom LAUGHS, gripping their soft fur, surrounded and overwhelmed with love, finally at peace. An impossible mission accomplished - the emotional and inspiring ending the audience wants. MUSIC swells.

Overlay VARIOUS FLASHBACKS as Thom mentions them:

THOM (V.O.)

I saw Colonial dancers waltzing around my bed. A past life? I don't know. Time travel? I don't know... I saw the potential of psychics contacting Mom. And James Von Praagh did. And Gary channeled Mom's spirit begging me to save Troy's soul. And we did. I heard a voice say the fire detector is usually on the ceiling... I snapped into some other dimension, seeing and feeling angels rushing to help 9/11 victims. The night before it happened... I died and saw Billy and Mom. Hope didn't see that.

**INT. NEWS OFFICE - DAY**

SUPER: 2009

Working their DESKTOP COMPUTERS, Dana and REPORTERS also watch five WALL-HUNG TV SCREENS playing different soap operas.

ON A TV SCREEN: The iconic "Y&R/Nadia's Theme" PLAYS as a MAN hides in shadows.

DANA

Who the heck is this mystery visitor  
they keep teasing us with?

ON A TV SCREEN: The man moves into the light. It is Thom!

Shocked Reporters and Dana start typing, dialing their phones.

**INT. CABIN - LAKE ARROWHEAD, CA - DAY**

Jay hands the phone to Thom, working on the desk COMPUTER.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

DANA

Thom! After being dead twenty years, your  
character Phillip Chancellor... is alive??

THOM

I came back only if they made him gay.

DANA

You are the first out gay actor playing a  
gay character on a soap. Crazy times. How  
long will you be on it?

THOM

Awhile if they give me a romance.

DANA

They won't do that. They can't. Fans in  
the Bible Belt and countries that kill  
gays won't allow it. I won't allow it.

THOM

I'm working on other stuff anyway.

DANA

Movie roles?

Thom's computer: WORLD ART AWARDS, AMERICAN ART AWARDS.

THOM

No, I founded World Art Awards and American Art Awards. Each year, we decide the twenty best galleries and give them great press. But they have to agree to vote on online art from around the world.

DANA

You force galleries to look at artwork??

Thom's computer shows ART IMAGES from around the world.

THOM

Yep. Someone has to! There are so many talented artists in the world and it's so hard to get galleries to see your work.

MONTAGE / FLASHBACKS (as inspiring movie ballad REPLAYS):

- Thom's art being rejected by many galleries.
- Lloyd rejecting Thom's art.
- Thom kneeling on Rodeo Drive begging to sell paintings.
- Thom knocking on Beverly Hills doors with CDs of his art.
- Insomnia Thom painting... temper-tantrum Thom painting...
- Thom painting faces on his windows! Walls! Floor! Roof!
- Crying Thom painting Troy's poetic words on kitchen cupboards.
- Thom's eventual gallery success / Lloyd / crowd / tragic and triumphant paintings retelling the Bierdz family's journey.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END

See extensive PITCH DECK with NEWS HEADLINES, 10 BOOK AWARDS, SCRIPT RAVES, PHOTOS: <https://www.thombierdz.com/intro/>