AUTOPSY

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WGAw

FADE IN ON:

EXT. DOUGLAS HOME - TEXAS - AFTERNOON

An old, split-level home in the Gothic revival style. All the lights are OFF. It's hard to see anything through the windows.

The shrill CRY of locusts disturbs the muggy Texas air.

PUSH IN for a closer look when suddenly, from inside --

A FLASH of LIGHT

Accompanied by the chilling WHINE of a camera flashbulb. It illuminates the interior for a split second, revealing SILHOUETTES walking around, searching.

More flashes paint a strobe-like picture of activity inside. As we inch closer to the open front door, with each flash --

INTERCUT: CRIME SCENE PHOTOGRAPHS

Each photo POPS on screen just long enough to shock --

-- Claw marks on the inside of a door. A hand drawn circle on the door highlights FINGERNAILS and FLESH embedded in the wood grain.

-- Bloody handprints on a cracked window.

-- A middle aged wife, CAROL, splayed out on a bed, mouth agape. Her expression isn't far from Munch's "The Scream."

-- A wall covered in crimson blood stains.

-- A middle aged husband, PAUL, face down on the wood floor. Stab wounds riddle his torso. A GUN lies on the floor near his clenched fist, just out of reach.

-- A blood trail down a hallway, leading us to --

-- A third BODY, dead on the ground.

-- A CLOSE UP reveals the face of a Hispanic man, ALVAREZ. An arrow denotes the BULLET WOUND in his temple.

We push in on the dead man's face. The picture slowly gives way to reality --

INT. DOUGLAS HOME - HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

SHERIFF BURKE (50's) a wiry bundle of nerves, chews tobacco as he watches a FORENSIC TECH photograph Alvarez's corpse.

Around him, a few other OFFICERS scour the scene. Aside from the carnage, this house is pure Midwest Americana.

A REPORTER, microphone in hand, CAMERAMAN behind him, sneaks past the cluster of Officers --

REPORTER
Sheriff Burke!

Burke signals for the Officers to get rid of them. The reporter and his cameraman are quickly "escorted" out, just as another news van pulls up outside.

A mustached LIEUTENANT WADE, 40s, turns to Burke --

LIEUTENANT WADE
(re: the reporters)
Gonna have to tell 'em something.

SHERIFF BURKE
They can wait.

LIEUTENANT WADE
Between us...?

Burke looks around the scene, scrutinizing every detail. Looking down at Alvarez, laying out his theory for Wade --

SHERIFF BURKE
Alvarez here was working on the Douglas's renovation. Had access to the house. Breaks in, wrong time. Doesn't count on Paul and Carol fighting back. They do.
(then)
Go upstairs and do a final sweep.

Wade hurries up the stairs and out of sight. Suddenly, a CRACKLE as a VOICE patches through over Burke's RADIO:

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
Boss, you need to come down here.

INT. DOUGLAS HOME - BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

FOLLOW Burke down a dark stairwell, into an unfinished basement. From below, the WHINE of a camera flash --

A small cluster of OFFICERS and FORENSIC TECHS point their flashlights down a deep HOLE in the dirt floor. A few men turn toward Burke, disturbed. The crowd parts. Burke looks down into the pit, and now we see --

THE BODY OF A YOUNG WOMAN

Beneath the blood and grime, porcelain skin, long red hair, eyes WIDE OPEN, dead -- her body half exhumed.

A FORENSIC PHOTOGRAPHER steps down into the pit and takes more photos.

SHERIFF BURKE
(to the room)
We got an ID on her?

Nobody responds. Burke stares into the young woman's eyes. The WHITES of her eyes are a cloudy, sickly GRAY.

Lt. Wade comes rushing down the stairs. He freezes at the sight of the body.

LIEUTENANT WADE
Who's she?

SHERIFF BURKE
For now, she's a Jane Doe.
(then, off Wade)
You got something?

LIEUTENANT WADE
Nothing was stolen. Not a scratch on the outside of the house either. Doesn't look like someone broke in...

He hesitates. Off Burke's puzzled look --

LIEUTENANT WADE (CONT'D)
Looks like they were trying to break out.

As this revelation lands on Burke --

The forensic photographer snaps a CLOSE-UP of Jane Doe. The camera flash BLOOMS, bleaching the screen WHITE as we --

CUT TO:

The LIGHT of a dim fluorescent bulb hanging overhead. Moving down, reveal we're --

INT. MORGUE - STAIRWELL - AFTERNOON

We PUSH FORWARD slowly, down a dark, creaky stairwell, descending deeper and deeper into the bowels of --

INT. MORGUE - HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

A windowless morgue. Lights FLICKER a jaundiced glow over scuffed linoleum. Stale air DRONES through ancient vents.

The lonely corridor is lined with DOORS. The closest one slightly ajar. We move toward it, pushing into --

INT. MORGUE - STORAGE ROOM - AFTERNOON

A dusty storage room packed with discarded morgue furniture and equipment. In the center of the room, a dim LIGHT BULB hangs from a flimsy string. It sways back and forth, ever so slightly.

INT. MORGUE - HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

Further down the hall, we pass a rusty ELEVATOR door on the way to --

INT. MORGUE - OFFICE - AFTERNOON

An office in disarray. In the corner, a desk drowning in stacks of paperwork. On a mantel nearby, several framed PHOTOGRAPHS, including --

-- A ruggedly handsome MAN, 30s, dressed in full military whites, at his WEDDING. His WIFE stands beside him, beautiful in her white gown.

-- The same couple, years later, standing in front of a BUILDING, next to a SIGN which reads: “TILDEN MORGUE AND CREMATORIUM.” We see the wife is now PREGNANT.

-- The man and woman hold a cherubic BABY BOY in their arms. Their expressions happy, their lives idyllic.

-- The baby boy is now a TEENAGER. He’s with his parents. His mother fawns over a Siamese KITTEN in her hands.

-- The same boy at 18 years old. Beaming with youthful confidence. He’s holding an ACCEPTANCE LETTER to the PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAM at UT HOUSTON. His whole life in front of him.

-- The boy's all grown up now, standing in front of the morgue with ONLY his father. They're both more solemn than in any of the other photos.

We glide past these photos and MOVE back into the hallway --

INT. MORGUE - HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

-- as it bends. A CONVEX MIRROR in the corner of the ceiling reflects what the bend conceals from view. Around the corner --

An ADJACENT HALLWAY, several more DOORS on either side of it. Moving into the nearest one --

INT. MORGUE - KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

A drab, outdated, kitchen. The blue tint of the linoleum casts a pall over the room.

For a brief moment, we hear SCRATCHING from behind the walls. Like an animal scurrying through the vents.

A faucet leaks into a grimy sink. Off of the slow DRIP DRIP --

INT. MORGUE - CREMATORIUM - DAY

A steel CREMATION OVEN inside this concrete-walled room, a drawer jutting out from the center. A long EXHAUST CHIMNEY extends vertically up from the oven to the ceiling.

The constant HISS of a pilot light echoes softly. As we PUSH FORWARD, a new sound joins in... Music? Softly, but then --

INT. MORGUE - HALLWAY - DAY

Louder, as we PUSH down the hall. It's <u>classic rock</u>. The rush of RUNNING WATER joins the cacophony.

Then, the crisp SNAP of latex --

INT. MORGUE - AUTOPSY ROOM - DAY

-- as GLOVES are snapped on. STAY TIGHT on the HANDS. These hands are our guide -- what they touch, we see:

Burnt skin. Crooked fingers fused together. Calloused feet. Curled lips. Milky, cataractal eyes.

All belong to an old, black man. His name is OTIS HOWARD, and mercifully, he's dead.

And that faint rock song we heard before? It's Creedence -- "BORN ON THE BAYOU." Only now it's blasting.

We catch glimpses of the two men conducting the autopsy --

TOMMY TILDEN, 50s. A hard man with a low country charm you only earn from decades of rolling with the punches. The kind of charm you use to keep people from getting too close.

Next to him --

AUSTIN TILDEN, 25, Tommy's son. His boyish good looks can't hide a sensitivity and emotional wisdom beyond his years.

We recognize them as the father and son from the photographs.

Tommy's in his element here, his passion evident in every move he makes. But for Austin this is a job. He's trying hard to love it, and only half-succeeding.

A SERIES OF SHOTS as they perform the various stages of an autopsy on Otis:

TOOLS -- both surgical and kitchen-grade -- are plucked from a stainless-steel bin.

A SCALPEL slices from the top of the chest down to the navel in a "Y" cut.

Skin is pulled back and stretched to reveal THE HEART, nestled between --

TWO LUNGS, both charred BLACK. Meantime:

A DIGITAL MINI-DV CAMERA

Captures the autopsy from a nearby tripod. The shot static, unblinking. After a moment, we CUT back to a regular POV.

Other ORGANS -- each one REMOVED and WEIGHED on a pull-scale.

Tommy and Austin mark the weights and observations on a large DRY ERASE BOARD on the wall. A jumble of numbers.

Samples are sliced off of each organ and dropped into formalin-filled mason jars. The jars then placed into a --

Cluttered, industrial sized REFRIGERATOR. The shelves packed with -- fingers, jaws, brain tissue, all similarly suspended in formalin.

The skin on Otis's head is pulled down over his face, revealing his bare skull.

A BONE SAW cuts Otis's skull open, exposing his brain. Austin slices a tissue sample, examines it under a MICROSCOPE.

Vertebrae CRACK as Tommy twists Otis's head. He notes a small FRACTURE at the back of the dead man's skull.

The remainder of the organs are tied up in red plastic bags and placed back into the open chest cavity.

Used tools are tossed into a wash basin. Gloves snap off, hands are wiped clean.

The autopsy is FINISHED. We FLOAT ABOVE, revealing --

THE AUTOPSY ROOM

In all its glory.

Otis's body is splayed out on an L-SHAPED OPERATING TABLE.

The back wall is lined with COLD STORAGE DRAWERS for other bodies.

A large BUG ZAPPER is mounted on the adjacent wall, blue fluorescent tube lights run its length.

As Austin finishes scrubbing his hands:

TOMMY
Cause of death?

A BEAT as Austin mulls this over.

AUSTIN
Suffocation.

Tommy looks down at the body. We see <u>how</u> he analyzes bodies, focusing on --

-- Otis's arms, legs, and chest. Covered in third degree burns.

-- Otis's fingers, fused together from the fire.

TOMMY
You're telling me the smoke killed Mr. Howard?

AUSTIN
I'm not. He is.

Tommy smiles. He loves arguing about this stuff. And he especially loves seeing his son rise to the challenge.

Austin points out several different sections of the body --

-- Otis's throat, lungs, the inside of his nasal cavity. All blackened and charred from smoke inhalation.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
Damaged nasal passage, damaged throat, damaged lungs --

TOMMY
Damaged is one thing. But incompatible with life?

AUSTIN
(thrown)
You're telling me that's not the C.O.D.?

TOMMY
I'm saying look before you leap.
(then)
Where'd the police find his body?

AUSTIN
In his kitchen.

TOMMY
House is on fire. Front door's thirty feet away. And he's not trying to get out?

Austin looks back down at Otis and reconsiders.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
His lungs are damaged. But not nearly enough. He stopped breathing before that fire really got going.

Austin knows he's missing something, but is stumped. Tommy twists Mr. Howard's head and points out the FRACTURE he found at the base of his skull.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
See? Right underneath the occipital --

AUSTIN
-- depressed skull fracture.
(of course)
That explains the coning in his brain.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
(putting it together)
An intracranial hematoma. That’s what did it. Not the smoke.

TOMMY
Bingo.
(then)
Every body has a secret. Some just keep their secrets better than others.

Austin shakes his head. Frustrated.

AUSTIN
Or some people are just better at finding them.

TOMMY
You did good. You’ll get there.

Austin looks away uncomfortably. Then down at Otis’s body --

AUSTIN
Nobody’s even claimed him yet. He died because he was alone.

TOMMY
He died because he fell and hit his head.
(then)
No sense in focusing on things you can’t change, son.

Austin’s cell phone BUZZES. He takes it out of his pocket, reads a TEXT, smiles. Tommy notices.

TOMMY (CONT’D)
You going out tonight?

AUSTIN
Emma wants to see a movie down at the El Dorado.

TOMMY
That shithole’s still open?

AUSTIN
It’s the only theater in town, Dad. When was the last time you even saw a movie?

Tommy smiles, trying to remember --

TOMMY
She has Alzheimer's, he builds her the house --

AUSTIN
The Notebook?

TOMMY
(with a nod)
Your mother made me go see it with her for her birthday. Fell asleep five minutes in.

Austin and Tommy both laugh.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Took a while to crawl out of the doghouse from that one.

Tommy's laughter fades, replaced by a sadness in his eyes. Austin's about to say something, but Tommy abruptly tosses Austin a PLASTIC TARP.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
You alright finishing this up solo? I could use a smoke.

Austin nods, Tommy leaves. Austin looks down at Otis. Lifeless, milky white eyes stare back at him. As Austin throws the TARP over Otis's body --

INT. MORGUE - HALLWAY - DAY

Tommy walks from one end of the morgue to the other, turning down the two long hallways until he reaches the --

STAIRWELL. Steep and two-level. The one we descended earlier.

Tommy climbs the stairs. His steps reverberate in this echo chamber. He reaches a pair of STORM DOORS at the top and pushes them open.

EXT. MORGUE - DUSK

Tommy steps outside. Behind him we SEE the building from the photos. An old sign reads: "TILDEN MORGUE AND CREMATORIUM."

Tommy looks out at the woods all around him. A thick haze drifts through the trees, soaking up the last rays of sunlight.

Beneath the shadow of a LARGE OAK TREE, Tommy lights a cigarette and takes a long drag.

BLACK

Somewhere, the steady THRUM of a freezer fan resonates. A metallic CLANK -- and WHOOSH -- we're SLIDING OUT, staring up at the ceiling of:

INT. MORGUE - AUTOPSY ROOM - DUSK

One sliding drawer pulled out from the bank of steel crypts lining the back of the room. Waiting for a resident.

ON AUSTIN as he hoists Otis Howard onto the sliding tray and pushes him back into the cold crypt. It CLANGS shut, joining the wall of square metal doors arranged in a 4x4 grid.

Austin writes onto a small LABEL CARD -- "***Howard, Otis. COD: Intercerebral hemorrhage.***" As he writes, he hears a SCRATCHING behind the wall. Ignores it.

Austin picks up the label card and moves toward Mr. Howard's drawer. Moving across the grid, we notice the names of some of the other bodies, other completed autopsies --

-- ***Daniels, Irene. COD: Scleroderma.***

-- ***Tannis, Louis. COD: Strychnine Poisoning.***

Austin slides the label card into Howard's drawer, just as --

MOVEMENT across the room distracts him. Coming from the same place as the scratching.

From an open VENT in the wall, something emerging --

A Siamese cat, STANLEY, leaps down in front of Austin.

AUSTIN
Stanley.

Austin notices Stanley's holding something in his mouth. Austin crouches down, sees it's --

A baby possum. Dead and mangled. Stanley drops the animal at Austin's feet. A gift. Austin's disgusted.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
Go on. Get outta here.

Austin pulls a small RED BALL of YARN from the cabinet, tosses it into the hall. Stanley runs out after it.

Once Stanley's gone, Austin drops the dead possum in a biohazard trash bin, then scrubs his hands in the sink.

Austin hears FOOTSTEPS out in the hall. He calls out:

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
Stanley got another one.

No response. Then the sound of a door slowly CREAKING open. Austin looks out to the hall -- nothing there. The hell?

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
Dad?

INT. MORGUE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Austin steps out. At the end of the hall, he looks at the --

CONVEX MIRROR

No sign of anyone in its reflection. Austin walks down the hall toward the elevator. Listening. Just his footsteps.

He rounds the bend, looks down the adjacent hall to see --

Nothing.

He peeks in the kitchen. Nothing.

Austin walks into the office. Flips on the lights -- empty.

UNSEEN BY AUSTIN, directly behind him -- A SHADOW moving quickly. He turns. Nothing.

He slowly backs out of the office as, from behind --

TWO HANDS

grab his shoulders, hard. Austin, startled, spins --

AUSTIN
Jesus Christ --

Coming face to face with EMMA, Austin's girlfriend. Twenty-three, tan, hipster bangs, a cursive "E" tattooed on her forearm -- and a great laugh, currently at Austin's expense.

EMMA
Wait, hold that pose. I gotta Instagram that.

AUSTIN
How'd you get down here?

EMMA
Key was in the elevator.

Emma looks around, taking in everything around her --

EMMA (CONT'D)
Gotta say, not what I was expecting.

-- especially a yellowed PICTURE, framed on the wall. The Tilden morgue, circa 1919.

EMMA (CONT'D)
You said it was *old*, but... wow.

Austin's annoyed and slightly nervous that Emma's down here.

AUSTIN
I said I'd meet you out front.

EMMA
I got tired of waiting.

INT. MORGUE - AUTOPSY ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Austin snakes around the Operating Table in the center of the room. He hangs up his lab coat, grabs his jacket. Emma's right behind him, taking in the room.

AUSTIN
My dad doesn't like people down here. We talked about this --

EMMA
You've seen me at my job, why can't I see you at yours?

AUSTIN
You work at a book store.

Austin heads for the door, but Emma doesn't want to go. She hones in on the COLD STORAGE DRAWERS.

EMMA
Can I see one?

AUSTIN
No, you can't see one.

EMMA
Why not?

AUSTIN
You just can't. My Dad would kill me.

TOMMY (O.S.)
No I wouldn't.

Austin and Emma look up to see Tommy standing in the entryway.

AUSTIN
(to Tommy)
Are you serious?

TOMMY
(to Emma)
Are you?

EMMA
Hell yeah.

TOMMY
If you think you can handle it --

EMMA
I'm tougher than I look.

TOMMY
I'll take your word for it.
(then, re: drawers)
Go ahead. Pick one.

Austin's uncomfortable. Tommy shoots him a wink: *it's OK*.

Emma scans the drawers, ultimately pointing to one on the end.

Austin pulls out a tray, revealing IRENE DANIELS, 80s, her mouth and eyes SEWN SHUT.

EMMA
Not that one, the one next to it.

AUSTIN
A body's a body.

EMMA
Yeah, but I picked <u>that</u> one.

Austin hesitates for a beat, then slides Irene back and opens the next drawer -- "**Tannis, Louis. COD: Strychnine Poisoning.**" -- a middle-aged MAN with a WHITE VEIL covering his face.

A breathless moment as Emma takes in the body in front of her. Tied around Louis's ankle is a SMALL BELL.

EMMA (CONT'D)
What's that for?

TOMMY
To make sure he's dead.

Emma's confused. Tommy obliges her with brio, as if he were telling a campfire tale --

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Used to be a time when it was hard to tell a comatose person from a dead one, so coroners tied bells to every body in the morgue. If they heard a *ting*... Well, they'd know someone down there wasn't quite ready to move on.

EMMA
So why do you have one?

TOMMY
I'm a bit of a traditionalist.

Emma looks up at Louis's veiled face.

EMMA
Why'd you cover his face?

TOMMY
Wasn't much of a face left to cover. Point blank shotgun blasts tend to do that.

EMMA
Who shot him?

TOMMY
We thought he did it to himself. Until we found strychnine in his system.

Tommy gestures to Louis's STITCHED UP STOMACH --

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Judging by the progress it'd made in his blood stream, he'd been dead over twenty-four hours by the time somebody blew his face off.

EMMA
Why would someone do that?

TOMMY
You sound like your boyfriend.
(then)
Leave the why to cops and shrinks.
We're just here to find cause of
death. No more, no less.

Transfixed by the veil, Emma reaches for it. Austin grabs her wrist, startling her.

AUSTIN
You don't want to see that --

TOMMY
It's alright.

Austin looks at Tommy -- what the hell is he thinking?

Emma's hand inches closer to Louis's face. She's really going for it. Steeling herself, she starts to lift the veil. And as we're about to see Louis's mangled face --

TING. TING.

The sound of the bell makes Emma jump back.

ON TOMMY. Hand JINGLING the bell on Louis' foot. He cracks a smile. Austin laughs. Emma shakes her head, embarrassed, but eventually laughing it off with them.

INT. MORGUE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Austin and Emma head down the hall, away from the autopsy room, toward the elevator.

AUSTIN
You should have seen your face.

EMMA
I can't wait to see yours when
you're not having sex tonight.

Austin takes Emma's hand, tender, affectionate.

AUSTIN
Not even if I ply you with popcorn
and sour patch kids?

Austin kisses her hand chivalrously.

EMMA
(after a beat)
You're lucky you're cute.

Just as they approach the elevator -- the old doors rumble and burst open, releasing --

SHERIFF BURKE like a bat out of hell. He nearly mows down Emma with the GURNEY he's pushing.

SHERIFF BURKE
(to Austin)
Where's your Dad?

Burke can't hide his nervous energy. Austin clocks the flecks of blood on his uniform, the sweat on his brow, the BODY BAG on the gurney.

AUSTIN
Sheriff? What happened?

Burke's hesitant to answer, shooting a furtive look at Emma.

TOMMY (O.S.)
Bring it back here, Sheldon.

Austin steps aside as Burke wheels the gurney toward Tommy, who's standing at the end of the hall.

AUSTIN
Dad, if you need me to stay --

Tommy waves Austin off.

TOMMY
Don't worry about it. You two go see that movie.

Burke and Tommy round the corner and head to the autopsy room. Austin watches, torn --

As Emma presses the elevator button, chomping at the bit to get out of there. The elevator doors open and she steps in. Austin steps in after her. The old doors judder CLOSED.

INT. MORGUE - ELEVATOR - NIGHT

A dim bulb barely lights the old elevator as it slowly ascends, CREAKING and RATTLING the whole time. Emma looks over at Austin -- he's clearly conflicted.

EMMA
You're allowed to see a movie.
Don't look so guilty.

Austin doesn't respond. This isn't the first time Emma's had to deal with this. Then:

AUSTIN
You see the look on Burke's face?

EMMA
Austin.

AUSTIN
He wouldn't be here this late if it wasn't important --

EMMA
Austin.

The elevator lurches upwards, arriving at the GROUND FLOOR. The doors OPEN, leading to a small foyer, and the outdoors beyond. Emma steps out. Austin doesn't. She stares him down.

AUSTIN
(after a beat)
I can't ditch him.

EMMA
So you're ditching me. Again.

Austin's silence says it all.

EMMA (CONT'D)
What's he going to do when you go back to school?
(beat, off Austin)
You haven't told him yet, have you?

Austin avoids eye contact. The elevator doors begin to close, and Emma puts out a hand, pressing them back open.

EMMA (CONT'D)
You are still planning on going back, right?

AUSTIN
He... needs me.

Emma pauses, chooses her next words carefully.

EMMA
It's been two years. Your Dad can take care of himself. He's fine.

AUSTIN
(snapping)
And how would you know?

Emma backs off, knows not to push further. The doors try and close again -- this time Austin stops them.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
This won't take long. Come back in a few hours, we'll catch the midnight show, grab a drink at Thornton's.

Emma stares at Austin stone-faced. Austin smiles sheepishly, grasping at straws --

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
Two drinks?
(then, off Emma's stare)
C'mon. Eleven o'clock. I promise.
(breaking through)
Smile means yes. I know it's in there...

Emma can't help but smile. Still, she plays coy.

EMMA
Maybe.

Austin smiles back at her. As the rusty elevator doors rumble again, and CLICK closed, severing their line of sight, we MATCH TO --

A BODY BAG

slowly being UNZIPPED. Darkness parting, glimpses of snow-white skin beneath, finally revealing --

THE BODY OF JANE DOE.

Beautiful. Pristine. Dead.

PULL OUT TO:

INT. MORGUE - AUTOPSY ROOM - NIGHT

Sheriff Burke finishes unzipping the bag, revealing the fully nude corpse to Tommy.

SHERIFF BURKE
Found her in the basement of the Douglas place.

SHERIFF BURKE (CONT'D)
No ID, no prints in the system. Nobody has a clue who she is.

TOMMY
Don’t suppose you know how she wound up there.

A feral HISSING sound draws their attention to --

STANLEY

Perched on a nearby cabinet, teeth bared, hair raised, as he looks down at Jane Doe. Tommy sweeps Stanley off the cabinet, shoos him out of the room. Annoyed --

TOMMY (CONT’D)
Damn thing gets meaner by the day.

Burke shows Tommy a dossier of CRIME SCENE PHOTOS:

-- Paul and Carol Douglas, dead.

-- Miguel Alvarez, dead.

-- The body of Jane Doe half-buried in the pit beneath the Douglas house.

As Tommy flips through the pictures --

SHERIFF BURKE
El Norte there was part of the construction crew. My best guess? He killed our Jane Doe. Needed a place to dump the body. Figured he was already digging a hole in the Douglas’s basement. Paul and Carol catch him in the act. Everybody ends up dead.

Burke hears a very faint SCRATCHING behind the walls. Ignores it.

Tommy hands the dossier back to Burke.

TOMMY
Why didn’t you bring the other bodies here?

SHERIFF BURKE
You saw the photos.
(then)
Autopsies would be... unproductive.

AUSTIN (O.S.)
Still, would've been nice to inspect the burial site.

Burke and Tommy turn to see Austin standing in the doorway. Austin and Tommy share a look.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
(to Burke)
Should have called us before you moved the body.

Burke shoots a look to Tommy -- is Austin really questioning his authority? Tommy shrugs. Austin's right.

SHERIFF BURKE
I got news vans camped out front of the station. I got four people dead and I got no goddamn clue how any of it connects. So why don't you spare me the lecture on protocol --

TOMMY
Nobody's trying to piss in your grits here, Shel --

Burke gestures down to Jane Doe.

SHERIFF BURKE
I can sell a four-five-nine. I can give 'em a story about a disgruntled Mexican and a B and E gone haywire.
(then)
What I can't sell is <u>her</u>. I need to know how she died. Who she is. What she ate for breakfast --

The sound of the SCRATCHING persists, louder now.

SHERIFF BURKE (CONT'D)
What do you got, rats down here?

TOMMY
Possums. Exterminator's come three times, can't get rid of them.
(re: Jane Doe)
So what's the timeline?

SHERIFF BURKE
Tonight.

Tommy and Austin look at each other, conferring. Tommy nods to Burke. They're in. Burke, relieved, shakes Tommy's hand --

Then EXITS, already on his walkie-talkie as he heads down the hall. Tommy and Austin watch him go.

TOMMY
You didn't have to come back.

AUSTIN
And let you have all the fun? Not a chance.

Tommy smiles. Grateful.

Tommy and Austin turn and stare down at the body of Jane Doe lying on the slab. Time to get started.

CUT TO:

INT. MORGUE - AUTOPSY ROOM - LATER

Classic rock from the radio plays over --

A series of QUICK SHOTS. We watch as Tommy and Austin take Jane Doe through the early stages of the autopsy --

First to a SCALE, where the body's weighed. Then to a WASH BASIN, where it's cleaned. And finally, to the slatted OPERATING TABLE in the center of the room.

Austin switches on the MINI-DV CAMERA, adjusts it to frame the work space. Moving into the CAMERA'S POV:

TOMMY
(to mini-dv camera)
This is the autopsy of an unidentified female, henceforth known as Jane Doe. Cause of death unknown.
(beat)
Performing the autopsy will be myself, Tommy Tilden, attending coroner. I will be assisted by Austin Tilden, certified medical technician.

SNAP BACK to normal POV, Tommy still talking to the camera.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
This autopsy will be conducted in four stages. We will begin with the external evaluation, followed by an evaluation of the heart and lungs, then the digestive organs, and finally, the brain.

ON THE RADIO, a weather report comes on. Faint enough that it blends into the background.

WEATHERMAN (V.O.)
(thru radio)
Storm front coming up from the gulf... Rain's expected to last through to tomorrow morning...

Austin snaps CLOSE-UPS of Jane Doe's distinguishing features with an old-school POLAROID CAMERA.

AUSTIN
Subject appears to be in her mid to late 20's. Caucasian.

Austin takes shots of her TORSO, her ARMS, her LEGS.

Austin tacks each photo up on a CORK BOARD nearby, creating a pictorial road map of the autopsy as he and Tommy progress.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
Skin appears normal, no outward signs of bleeding or bruising. No scarring. No distinctive external markings.

Austin moves toward Jane Doe's face, snaps a photo --

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
Hair, red. Eyes --

Austin peels back an eyelid. Jane's GRAY EYE <u>stares right at him</u>. He lifts the other eyelid --

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
Gray?

Tommy looks into Jane's eyes, intrigued.

TOMMY
Don't see clouding like that unless a body's been dead for days.
(then)
But there's no lividity.

Austin bends Jane Doe's limbs, presses on her torso.

AUSTIN
No rigor mortis either. When do you figure she died?

Tommy runs his bare hands over Jane's pristine skin.

TOMMY
She’s colder than the ambient temperature --

AUSTIN
Conditions at the scene?

TOMMY
Could be confounding factors.

Tommy examines Jane’s WRISTS. As he turns them, the sound of CRACKING beneath the skin. Fragments of bone GRATING against each other.

TOMMY (CONT’D)
Her wrists are fractured.

Austin presses on Jane’s ankles. Ripples of broken bones shifting beneath her skin. More GRATING, CRACKING --

AUSTIN
Ankles, too.
(then)
How do you break your wrists and ankles without any outward signs --

TOMMY
I see it all the time. Simple fractures --

AUSTIN
Simple? Her joints are shattered.

Austin walks over to the large DRY ERASE BOARD, next to the cork board. Imprinted on it, an ANATOMY CHART.

Austin marks up the chart, denoting the fractures on Jane Doe’s wrists and ankles.

Tommy grabs a small PEN LIGHT from a tray. He bends down, shines the light up Jane Doe’s nasal passage.

TOMMY
Nasal cavity presents no signs of inflammation, no fluid, no foreign substances.

Tommy shines the light into Jane Doe’s left ear, then right --

TOMMY (CONT’D)
Ear canals are clear.

Austin pries open Jane Doe’s JAW as Tommy uses the pen light to peer down her throat.

His eyes narrow. Seeing something.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Can't say I was expecting that.

Tommy moves aside to give Austin a clear look, shining the light inside JANE DOE'S MOUTH --

Her tongue is gone. A ragged stump of flesh is what's left.

Austin tries to remain clinical.

AUSTIN
(to mini-DV camera)
Tongue has been -- severed.

TOMMY
Lacerations are crude, non-surgical.

AUSTIN
Could have bitten it off...

Tommy re-examines the rough stump at the back of her mouth.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
...OD'd on something, tensed up --

TOMMY
But these aren't bite marks. See the striations?
(beat)
Looks like it was ripped out.

Tommy marks the anatomy chart. His eyes dart from Jane Doe's tongue to her wrists, her ankles, her face. A theory beginning to take shape --

TOMMY (CONT'D)
I've seen something like this before. About fifteen years back.
(then)
Human trafficking. Around Dallas. Two girls. Hands and feet bound tight to keep them from running. Cut out their tongues for making too much noise.

Austin snaps a still picture.

AUSTIN
You think this was some sort of prostitution thing? A sex crime?

TOMMY
Can't rule it out.

Austin's about to snap another picture, when --

Jane Doe's NOSE TWITCHES.

Austin lowers the camera, not sure if he imagined it. Just when he's ready to dismiss it --

It twitches again. He leans in closer --

A drop of blood trickles out of her nose.

Tommy notices it too. Before either of them can say a word --

A FLY

Crawls out of the right nostril, engorged with BLOOD. It scurries about Jane Doe's upper lip, then buzzes away. Austin swats it away as it flits about the room --

Tommy reaches for a PERIODONTAL PROBE and continues examining the inside of Jane Doe's mouth.

He notices a GAP where a rear tooth should be.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
She's missing a molar on her left side. Take some impressions.

At the other end of the room -- ZZZZZ -- the bug flies into the zapper, dead.

Austin takes an old, steel MOUTH GUARD from the tray. As he fills it with molding clay --

Tommy's probe picks out a thin, flaxen STRAND from deep in Jane's throat. Looks like a hair, but thicker.

Tommy holds it up to the light. *What is this thing?*

CUT TO:

THE STRAND, MAGNIFIED

beneath a microscope lens. It looks like a twisted bundle of tiny cords.

AUSTIN (O.S.)
Looks like some kind of fabric.

Austin pulls away from the microscope. Thinking.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
Maybe she was gagged?

TOMMY
Bag it. We'll send it out with toxicology.

Austin places the fiber in a plastic bag, labels it, then puts it in a tray with other samples waiting to be sent out.

Tommy moves over Jane's PUBIC REGION, examining her thighs and buttocks.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
No external seminal fluid present.
(then)
Grab me a swab?

Austin prepares a SWAB, and brings it over.

Tommy puts the white swab between Jane's legs. It comes back tainted RED. He examines Jane with his fingers.

From OUTSIDE, muffled by the walls, a rumble of THUNDER.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
She's torn up inside. There're ridges. Grooves in the tissue.

AUSTIN
Abrasions?

TOMMY
(nodding)
Cuts. Deliberate.

Austin looks over Jane Doe's body, as Tommy's theory percolates in his mind.

AUSTIN
Severed tongue, shattered joints, vaginal trauma, the theory tracks --

TOMMY
Still don't have a concrete C.O.D. We got a ways to go.

Austin looks up at a CLOCK hanging on the wall -- 9:45 PM. He sighs. This is going to take longer than he thought.

INT. MORGUE - AUTOPSY ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Tommy speaks directly into the mini-DV camera --

TOMMY
We'll now proceed with the internal examination, starting with the heart and lungs.

He turns to look at Jane and grabs a RUBBER BRICK from beneath the operating table.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Help me with the block.

Austin lifts the body. Tommy slides the block under her. The object pushes Jane's chest up and out, causing her neck and arms to fall back.

Above them, from outside, Tommy and Austin can hear HEAVY RAIN hitting the morgue. A Texas downpour on the way.

Austin hands Tommy a large blade. Sharp, glinting.

As Tommy prepares to use the blade, Austin looks up at Jane Doe. At her EYES, gray and unblinking.

The overhead lights FLICKER for an instant --

And the radio fritzes out. STATIC filling the air.

Austin spins the dial, trying to find a station. Nothing coming in at first --

Until he finds a signal in the noise: the first few bars of a 1950's "aw shucks" TUNE:

Open up your heart... and let the sun... shine... in...

Tommy PLUNGES the blade deep into Jane Doe's right shoulder. He drags it diagonally to her STERNUM then slices between the breasts, all the way down to the PUBIC BONE.

On the radio, the song continues:

Mama told us something... that all of us should know... it's all about the devil and we learned to hate him so...

As he cuts, Tommy looks up at Austin, *what the hell is this music*? Austin gets the cue. He scans the airwaves, landing on another classic rock station.

Tommy completes the Y-cut --

As deep red fluid GUSHES out of the incision and drains off through the slats in the table.

AUSTIN
Never seen one bleed like that.

TOMMY
Caused by a build up of pressure.
Rare, but not unheard of.

Austin takes a sample of Jane's blood in a TEST TUBE. Places it in the fridge, nestled between two BIOHAZARD BAGS.

Tommy PEELS back Jane Doe's SKIN, pulling it aside to get to the muscle beneath -- but he's immediately struck by --

DARKENED MARKS

Scattered inside the skin near her exposed RIB CAGE. Like lesions or the bruising on a banana peel. Dark brown, almost black. Spread out hive-like, without any pattern.

AUSTIN
What is that?

Tommy looks at the marks, tries to make sense of them. Austin slices off a small sample of skin.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
Melanoma, maybe?

TOMMY
On the <u>inside</u>? I wouldn't bet the farm. But let's see what the lab comes back with.

Austin bottles the sample, labels it, starts to walk toward the refrigerator. But something stops him cold.

The refrigerator is <u>bleeding</u>.

Blood seeps from the edge of the door, dripping down to the floor, where a small amount has pooled.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Can you hand me the rib cutter?

But Austin's locked in on the fridge. He reaches out for the door handle, almost afraid to open it --

TOMMY (CONT'D)
(annoyed)
Today?

Austin steels himself, opens the fridge to find --

The biohazard bags around Jane Doe's blood sample. One of them is LEAKING.

Austin exhales. But his relief quickly fades, knowing he has to clean up the mess.

Tommy turns and sees the bloody floor --

TOMMY (CONT'D)
What'd you do?

Austin grabs the leaky bag out of the refrigerator, turns around, shows it to Tommy as he drops it into the sink. He then starts to clean up the blood with a cloth.

Tommy grabs the RIB CUTTER from a nearby tray, takes it back over to the operating table.

A beat. Tommy readies the Rib Cutter over Jane Doe's sternum.

We HEAR as he uses the Rib Cutter to SNAP through the sternum. CLIPPING all around the rib cage.

All around, the walls begin to ECHO softly with the sound of driving rain rattling the pipes.

Tommy lifts Jane's CHEST PLATE up and off. The first thing they see --

LUNGS. They're BLACKENED as if by smoke inhalation.

AUSTIN
(taken aback)
What the --

Tommy's surprised too, but tries to remain clinical.

TOMMY
Lungs severely blackened. Damage covers approximately ninety five percent of the surface area.

Tommy removes one of the lungs from the body. As he uses his scalpel to cut a cross section --

AUSTIN
Wouldn't have taken her for a smoker.

Tommy examines the cross section of lung up close.

TOMMY
Tissue's almost entirely necrotic. She could have smoked ten packs a day for thirty years, it wouldn't explain this.

AUSTIN
But it killed her... However it happened...
(then, off Tommy)
Right?

TOMMY
It's possible. This kind of lung damage, though, I'd expect the body to be covered in third degree burns.

Tommy tries to make sense of this disconnect.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
It's like finding a bullet in the brain with no gunshot wound.

The sound of SCRATCHING trickles in from down the hall.

Tommy detaches the various ARTERIES connecting the vital organs. He removes --

The HEART. INFLAMED SCARS line the surface tissue.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Her heart's marked up. Almost looks like it's been cut.

AUSTIN
Not just her heart.

Austin gestures to the ORGANS still inside the body. Her liver. Kidneys. Spleen. Thick raised lines mar the tissue.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
What do you think that is? Genetic defect?

Tommy squints, taking a closer look.

TOMMY
If it was genetic, there'd be some sort of pattern. These are random. Look more like scar tissue.

AUSTIN
Scar tissue?
(then)
From what?

Tommy steps back, looks at Jane's body. Gears shifting --

As a dull THUD echoes off the walls outside the autopsy room. Austin glances around -- *what the hell was that?*

But Tommy's deep in thought, beginning to form a theory --

TOMMY
Imagine all this internal trauma we're seeing was reflected externally. Shattered wrists and ankles, fire-burned lungs, scarred organs. What would she look like?

AUSTIN
She'd be mangled. Disfigured. Beyond recognition.
(beat)
But she's not. She's perfect.

TOMMY
Which tells us...

A beat as Austin thinks --

AUSTIN
That someone did this very carefully...?
(beat)
How the hell do you even *do* this?

The lights FLICKER. A moment longer than before. Austin looks up, noticing -- but Tommy's on a roll.

TOMMY
You want to kill someone, you shoot them. Or drown 'em or poison 'em, a million easy ways.

Tommy looks over the scarred organs. The mutilation is staggering --

TOMMY (CONT'D)
But you don't go to these lengths unless you want to make them *suffer*...

SCRATCHING from down the hall -- louder, violent, more feverish. Something clawing its way out from behind the wall.

Tommy and Austin turn as the sound crescendoes -- and suddenly STOPS. They turn back -- and, after a beat --

CRAAAASSSSSSH!

A CLATTERING sound reverberates. Tommy and Austin look out toward the hallway --

AUSTIN
I'll go.

Austin peels off his gloves.

INT. MORGUE - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Austin moves down the hallway. It's empty except for dense patches of shadow that swallow up the meager light.

SCRAAAATCH. Like nails on metal. Austin follows the noise further down the hall.

INT. MORGUE - AUTOPSY ROOM - THAT MOMENT

Tommy considers Jane Doe's SEVERED KIDNEY, his gloved fingers brushing over the inflamed scars. He walks around Jane's body, taking in the rest of her organs. All scarred in the same way.

TOMMY
(to Jane)
What happened to you?

INT. MORGUE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Austin looks into the crematorium. Nothing there. He checks the kitchen. Empty.

As Austin rounds the bend at the end of the hall, out of the corner of his eye he sees something in the CONVEX MIRROR.

A SILHOUETTE. Standing still.

Austin freezes. Breath catching in his throat.

AUSTIN
Hello?

No response. The SILHOUETTE doesn't move --

Still staring in the mirror, Austin takes a step forward, peering around the bend, to find --

An EMPTY hallway. It was just a shadow. A long beat, and --

SCRAATTCHH. From just ahead. Coming from --

INT. MORGUE - STORAGE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Austin feels his way to the middle of the storage room and tugs the string on a HANGING LIGHT BULB. The light flicks on, casting a faint glow over the piles of dusty junk scattered throughout the room.

Scratttchhh... Scratttchhh...

Austin searches for the source of the noise as cool air WHISTLES through a large vent at the far end of the room.

A thin piece of BLUE TAPE is attached to the outside of the grate. It flutters in the air stream.

INT. MORGUE - AUTOPSY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tommy pulls back Jane's skin -- he notices more of the bruise-like markings on the back of Jane's CHEST CAVITY, previously hidden by her heart.

Tommy reaches to inspect the blotchy skin when suddenly --

He winces, quickly draws his hands back. His right hand is CUT, through the glove. Blood pools.

Tommy looks back at the culprit: A JAGGED EDGE of RIB jutting out from Jane's torso.

Tommy moves over to the sink, tears off his gloves, plunges his hands into the stream of water.

INT. MORGUE - STORAGE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Austin listens for the scratching. But it's stopped. About ready to give up when --

The air starts to SPUTTER. Something's blocking the ventilation system. Overhead, the hanging light bulb DIMS.

Austin's eyes fix on the vent. It sputters again and then --

HRUMPH. The piece of blue tape goes limp. The air is OFF. Austin stares up at the vent. Too high to reach.

INT. MORGUE - AUTOPSY ROOM - THAT MOMENT

Tommy finishes scrubbing off his hand. As he watches the BLOODY WATER spiral down the drain --

HRUMPH. Tommy shuts off the water and looks up at the VENT.

INT. MORGUE - STORAGE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Austin drags a rickety chair toward the silent vent. Climbs up, the wood CREAKING beneath his weight.

Peering between the slats. The meager light barely intrudes, but he can see a general SHAPE inside. Blocking the air.

Austin uses his fingers to unscrew the vent cover. Overhead, the light bulb DIMS a bit more as the chair WOBBLES --

Austin gets the two bottom screws off the grate, is about to start unscrewing the ones at the top when --

MOVEMENT and a GLINT of LIGHT from inside the vent distracts him. He peers in closer. Then, within the darkness --

EYES.

Austin recoils, startled. The rickety chair teeters on it's uneven legs. As Austin reaches out for balance --

His flailing hand KNOCKS the hanging light bulb, sending it FLYING, shadows going wild -- as Austin CRASHES to the ground and the bulb CRACKS against the wall, SHATTERING --

The room goes dark.

A beat. Austin, on the floor. In pain, but OK. Grunting, he rolls over to see --

Something in the light of the doorway:

FEET.

Ghost pale.

Austin, on his knees, skitters backwards, spooked --

As a LIGHT turns on.

It's TOMMY. The "bare feet" were just his white sneakers. Standing next to a second hanging bulb, a fresh bandage on his hand.

He looks down at Austin, confused.

TOMMY
The hell happened in here?

Austin gets to his feet, brushing himself off. He picks up the chair and climbs up again.

AUSTIN
Something's in the vent.

Tommy hands Austin his pen light, which Austin shines into the vent. Now able to see --

RED YARN. Chewed. Torn. Austin pulls at it, drawing the yarn into his hands. But as he goes --

The yarn becomes sticky. Wet. And redder. BLOOD. Austin's eyes move down the length -- where the red yarn turns into something else entirely --

An open gash inside jet-black fur. A gnarled paw. A severed tail. Light from outside the vent glints off of GLASSY FELINE EYES. Austin realizes he's looking at --

STANLEY. What's left of him. Blood pools around the gash across his mid-section, as if he was attacked.

Austin can't bear to look at the eviscerated animal. He climbs off the chair, turning back to Tommy.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
Go back. I -- I've got this --

But Tommy brushes by him.

Tommy peers in, sees Stanley splayed out. Only now do we realize -- the cat is still alive, barely. Its breaths are shallow, a painful death rattle.

As he reaches deep into the duct, Tommy looks back at Austin. Tommy feels around for a moment, then, suddenly, something SNAPS. Stanley's death rattle ceases instantaneously.

CLOSE ON Tommy's eyes. As they visibly sadden, we cut to --

INT. MORGUE - HALLWAY - LATER

The CONVEX MIRROR. The warped REFLECTION of Tommy and Austin walking down the hall. As they turn the bend --

We SEE Tommy clasping a BLACK PLASTIC BAG, Stanley's remains contained inside.

Tommy trudges toward the crematorium. Austin a step behind.

INT. MORGUE - CREMATORIUM - CONTINUOUS

A cast-iron OVEN DOOR opens up to a soot stained chamber.

Tommy gently places the black bag inside, considers it for a moment. Then, he slams the heavy door shut.

Tommy's finger lingers over a button. When he presses it --

Gas HISSES and pipes SHAKE as the beastly old oven awakens.

INSIDE, low, yellow flames POP ON.

WHOOSH. A flash of fire reduces the black bag to ashes in a matter of seconds.

After the flames die down, the oven door opens. Through the haze of heat, Tommy's sad eyes take in all that's left of Stanley: a small, ashen pile.

TOMMY
Can you give me a minute?

Austin gets it. He turns and exits the crematorium --

INT. MORGUE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

As Austin steps into the hall, his gaze is drawn back to the convex mirror --

But the hallway beyond is empty. Of course. Why wouldn't it be? A long beat -- then he turns and continues walking to the autopsy room.

INT. MORGUE - AUTOPSY ROOM - NIGHT

The room is empty. Austin's not there yet.

Bloody latex gloves and scraps of paper towel near the sink. Tools strewn about a tray. Jane Doe on the slab. The tiniest stream of blood drips from her body.

The quiet scene is disturbed by an incessant BUZZ. A fly lands on Jane Doe's face. We MOVE IN for a closer look --

The creature crawls onto Jane Doe's glassy eye, then buzzes away. In the BACKGROUND, we notice the mini-dv camera.

Suddenly, we SHIFT INTO the mini-dv POV --

Everything feels more voyeuristic. The video feed GLITCHES for a split second. In the corner of the frame --

Austin enters. He washes his hands. Remnants of Tommy's blood at the bottom of the sink.

We SHIFT OUT OF the mini-dv POV.

Austin grabs a fresh pair of gloves when --

CREEEAAAAKKK

The sound of a HINGE moving.

Austin turns to face the wall of drawers behind him, sees --

A MORGUE DRAWER slowly OPENING.

Austin stares at the drawer, at the abyss of blackness behind it. He moves toward it. His footsteps slow, tentative.

The drawer swings open wider.

Austin reaches for the door. Just as his fingers are about to grab the handle --

TOMMY (O.S.)
What are you doing?

Austin spins around to find Tommy standing in the doorway. He catches his breath, startled.

AUSTIN
The drawer... must not have closed it all the way before.

Austin turns back to the open drawer, slams it shut. Making damned sure it's closed this time.

Tommy heads toward the sink. He and Austin washing their hands, side by side, silent. Then:

TOMMY
Stanley was a pain in the ass.
(off Austin's smile)
But he was your mother's. One of the few things of hers I had left.

Tommy's words hang in the air. Austin searches for the right response.

AUSTIN
I miss her too --

TOMMY
Let's keep going.

Tommy moves back to Jane Doe on the slab. Nothing else Austin can do at this point except join in.

Tommy addresses the mini-DV camera.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
This is stage three of the autopsy of Jane Doe. We'll begin examination of the stomach and gastrointestinal system.

Tommy walks to the other side of the exam table, making precise cuts around Jane Doe's STOMACH.

AUSTIN
Dad.
(then)
You can talk to me.

TOMMY
Not keeping anything from you.

AUSTIN
You put up this... *act* for people, but --

TOMMY
(firm)
I'm fine.

The tense moment hangs in the air. Overhead, the lights flicker as the weather report fades back in on the radio.

WEATHERMAN (V.O.)
Gusts now being reported at up to sixty miles per hour, with rain expected to top three inches within the hour...

Austin treads delicately --

AUSTIN
What if we just... finished this one up in the morning?

TOMMY
Burke needs a C.O.D. tonight. We're not even close.
(then, pointedly)
When I start something, I finish it.

Austin wants to fire back -- but holds his tongue.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
You want to leave, leave.

Austin absorbs this. His father's closed off, impenetrable.

A beat -- and then Austin snaps on his own gloves. He's here to work.

Tommy, acknowledging, gets to work. He reaches into Jane Doe's stomach, feeling around --

And his eyes brighten. He lifts something up from inside the stomach. It's --

A SMALL ROUND PELLET

No bigger than a golf ball.

Tommy holds it up to the light, examining it closer. It's ridged. Tommy notices a tiny CRACK. He picks at it, surprised to find --

The pellet begins to UNRAVEL.

AUSTIN
The hell...?

As Tommy continues to unravel it, we realize it's --

A frayed section of FABRIC. The more Tommy pulls it apart, the bigger it gets. When he finally unfurls it completely --

Something CLATTERS to the ground. Lands right at Austin's feet. He looks down, picks it up. <u>It's a HUMAN TOOTH</u>.

Tommy and Austin share a look, unnerved by this discovery.

MOMENTS LATER --

The TOOTH lies in a small petri dish.

Tommy and Austin examine the fully unraveled piece of fabric, flattened out on a counter. About eight inches wide and half as tall.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
Looks like some kind of shroud.
(then)
Can you read that?

There's some sort of WRITING on the fabric, though it's incredibly faded. It looks <u>ancient.</u>

Austin gets an idea. He heads to the fridge.

TOMMY
What are you doing?

Austin grabs a sample out of the fridge -- the strand of fabric they pulled from Jane Doe's mouth earlier.

Austin compares the fabric from the bag with the "shroud". It's a MATCH.

But he's not done yet.

He grabs the TOOTH out of the Petri Dish. He opens up Jane's mouth --

The tooth fits perfectly into where Jane was missing one.

AUSTIN
(re: the shroud)
Someone forced her to swallow it. Forced her so hard she lost a tooth.

TOMMY
And the writing?

AUSTIN
Could be a religious thing. Ritualistic, even.

TOMMY
(nodding)
Every ritual has its own method. So what M.O. have we seen so far?

Tommy and Austin gaze down at Jane Doe's body, taking stock of everything they've discovered so far. We see different sections of the body as Austin talks about them --

AUSTIN (V.O.)
They bound her.

-- We SEE Jane Doe's WRISTS and ANKLES. Dangling. Broken. Shattered.

AUSTIN (V.O.)
Ripped out her tongue.

-- Close on Jane Doe's OPEN MOUTH. Without a TONGUE.

AUSTIN (V.O.)
Forced her to swallow the cloth.

-- We see the STRAND in Jane's mouth. Then the SHROUD. And her broken tooth.

AUSTIN (V.O.)
Then the fire.

-- On Jane Doe's BLACKENED LUNGS.

AUSTIN (V.O.)
The cuts... The internal mutilation...
(putting it together)
Stabs...

-- The scarring on her HEART, KIDNEYS, other ORGANS.

BACK ON AUSTIN

Piecing it together. Energized.

AUSTIN
She was a human sacrifice.

TOMMY
Let's not get carried away.

The WEATHERMAN chimes back in from the radio --

WEATHERMAN (V.O.)
...flash flood warning now in full effect for all of Hardin County, along with tornado sightings in Chandler and Noonday...

Austin's not about to let this drop.

AUSTIN
Whoever did this didn't just want her dead. They wanted her dead in a specific way.

TOMMY
Tell me how that gives us our C.O.D.

AUSTIN
If we find out <u>why</u> she was tortured --

TOMMY
You want psychology, stick with the living. Down here, if you can't see it, can't touch it? It doesn't matter.

From outside, we can hear the STORM growing more intense -- THUNDER rumbles faintly from above.

AUSTIN
These bodies are not just C.O.D's. They had lives.

Tommy's eyes drift back down to Jane's body.

WEATHERMAN (V.O.)
... trust me when I tell you, this is not a storm you wanna get caught in, folks...

AUSTIN
This happened to her for a *reason*.

ON JANE'S GRAY EYES.

The radio STATICS OUT, but just for a moment. The voice returns. But now it's louder, its tone somehow... different. As if it's talking directly to them --

WEATHERMAN (V.O.)
...one thing's for sure. You're not going anywhere.

Austin turns to Tommy. *Did you hear that?*

ON THE RADIO

A SONG begins to play. We recognize it.

Mother told me something... that all of us should know...

AUSTIN
Dad... I think maybe we should get out of here.

Tommy doesn't respond. He's staring down at Jane's open chest cavity. He sees something. Something he didn't see before.

It's all about the devil... and I've learned to hate him so...

Tommy pulls back a FLAP of Jane Doe's skin.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
Dad --

TOMMY
Help me with this.

Resigned, Austin grabs a pair of FORCEPS, helps Tommy lift back a larger section of Jane Doe's skin.

They say he causes trouble... When you let him in the room...

They pull hard, drawing the flaps of skin all the way back, until they're spread flat on the table --

Both Tommy and Austin's faces suddenly go ashen.

TOMMY
My God.

AUSTIN
Holy shit.

We RISE UP for a Birds-eye view of Jane Doe's body.

Her skin is <u>covered</u> with the discolored marks Tommy and Austin have been seeing all night.

But from this angle, the marks look clearer.

They're not just bruises.

They form abstract, unnatural SHAPES.

<u>Symbols</u>.

He will never ever leave you... If your heart is filled with gloom...

PUSH IN ON JANE'S EYES. Then --

CREEEAAAAAAKKKK

The familiar sound of a DRAWER creaking open. Austin turns to SEE --

A DRAWER UNLATCHED, ever so slightly.

So let the sun... shine... in... face it with a grin...

The lights FLICKER. Then, as Tommy and Austin stare at the terrifying pattern etched into Jane Doe's skin --

Smilers never lose... and frowners never win...

The overhead lights in the morgue SHATTER. Deafeningly loud and shocking. Glass explodes in a violent burst, then --

DARKNESS. The lights in the morgue SHUT OFF completely. A moment of horrible, deafening silence.

AUSTIN
Dad!
(beat)
Dad!

Austin fumbles in his pocket, takes out his CELL PHONE. He flips it open, there's enough light from the small glow of the phone for him to see --

TOMMY. Staring at the wall. His face expressionless, frozen.

Slowly, Austin moves his phone, shining the small light onto the wall where Tommy's staring.

Austin's face drops.

ALL OF THE MORGUE DRAWERS ARE WIDE OPEN.

The TRAYS jut out, as if EJECTED.

There are no BODIES on them. They're EMPTY.

Austin, trembling, turns to Tommy.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
We gotta get out of here.

But Tommy has checked out. Staring at the drawers, trying to make sense of it all.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
Dad!

He GRABS his father's arm, which SNAPS Tommy awake.

TOMMY
Let's go.

Austin grabs a FLASHLIGHT from a nearby cabinet. Turns it on.

His hand trembles. The weak yellow beam of light shakes wildly, illuminating everything and nothing at the same time.

Tommy and Austin grope their way toward the door --

Every sound impossibly loud in the darkness -- their footsteps, their breathing -- the open drawers CLACKING on their hinges --

They find the door and stumble into:

INT. MORGUE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The hallway is pitch black, but for the weak beam of light.

The only sounds are the wind and rain assaulting the morgue from above.

Tommy and Austin move forward, slowly. Following the flashlight's beam.

Austin points the flashlight left. Then, as he points it to the right --

A heavy GRUMBLING noise. The walls start to shake. Austin and Tommy look at each other, frightened, unable to process --

As the noise builds to a steady, mechanical GRRRRR --

Lights BLINK ON throughout the morgue.

TOMMY
(relieved)
The generator.

But the lights struggle to stay on. Like flickering candles.

Tommy and Austin walk toward the bend in the hallway. Heading for the elevator.

Austin puts out his hand, stopping his father. Looking up at the convex mirror --

TOMMY (CONT'D)
What?

AUSTIN
Just -- wait --

Staring at it -- but nothing's there. Safe. Pressing on, heading to the elevator --

Where Tommy hits the call button. Nothing happens.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
There's not enough power.

Tommy slaps the button again -- and again -- rising panic --

Austin seizes Tommy's hand. Stops him. Thinks he's heard something.

Silence. Then --

A crashing BOOOOM from up above.

So heavy it shakes dust and debris loose from the ceiling.

Austin freezes.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
What the --

Tommy looks around. No movement.

A beat. Total silence. A plan:

TOMMY
(whisper)
The stairs.

Tommy rushes toward the stairwell, Austin a step back. Glancing behind him as he goes.

INT. MORGUE - STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Tommy rushes up the stairs, straight for the exit, Austin trailing. At the top of the spiral staircase, Tommy fumbles with the lock for the STORM DOORS --

As Austin peers over the railing, into the half-darkness below, shadows just barely coalescing --

Tommy pushes the doors up, but they WON'T OPEN.

TOMMY
Help me!

Austin breaks away from the railing and rushes to help Tommy push on the doors --

Which CRACK open. But only an inch, GRINDING to a halt.

Through the narrow crack, RAIN pours in, splashing on Tommy and Austin. Looking out into the night to see --

The massive FALLEN OAK TREE, barricaded against the door. Blocking their exit. The cause of the BOOM they heard in the hallway. Rain pools on the floor --

Tommy backs off and the doors fall shut. Austin pounds his fist against the door in frustration.

No clue what to do. They're literally stuck -- and then:

Austin rips his cell phone from his pocket and dials 911. The call takes a second, the cell dialing, waiting --

And connecting. Austin brightens --

But it cuts off. No signal. No bars. Austin searches frantically for reception. Finally getting one bar, hitting REDIAL. It RINGS! Then --

Dies. Not the signal -- the power. It's shot.

AUSTIN
Fuck!

Austin tries turning it back on. But it's no use.

TOMMY
The office.
(off Austin)
The landline.

Austin peers over the railing, into the half-darkness of the stairwell below. Then back at Tommy.

Neither of them wants to go first.

INT. MORGUE - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Tommy and Austin emerge from the stairwell. The office is down the hall, before the bend.

They move toward it, quickly but aware.

Austin's footsteps echo.

Then Tommy's footsteps, a few paces behind. Then --

A THIRD set of footsteps.

Bare feet SLAPPING against the floor. Coming from somewhere up ahead.

Tommy and Austin freeze.

The footsteps stop.

Confused and scared, Austin looks at Tommy.

They eye the office door. As Austin takes a step toward it --

The FOOTSTEPS.

Louder, heavier.

Tommy and Austin BURST INTO A RUN, heading for the door --

The footsteps getting faster, closer. Right around the bend.

Tommy throws open the door to the office --

INT. MORGUE - OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Both of them running inside as Tommy SLAMS the door shut behind Austin and double locks it.

AUSTIN
(breathing hard)
What the hell was that?

Tommy doesn't answer. He goes to his desk and picks up the LAND LINE PHONE. There's a dial tone. He punches buttons --

RINGING. It's working.

TOMMY
Thank god.

Then:

OPERATOR (V.O.)
Hardin Coun -- eriff -- epartment --

STATIC breaking up the operator's words. A bad connection.

TOMMY
(frantic; into phone)
This is Tommy Tilden. We need help.
It's an emergency --

OPERATOR (V.O.)
(through static)
I'm sorry -- trouble hearing --

TOMMY
(loud, emphatic)
Put Burke on the phone!

A brief SILENCE on the other end of the line. Then --

TING.

The sound of a bell.

That bell.

Coming from down the hall.

Tommy and Austin look at the door.

A voice draws Tommy's attention back to the phone.

SHERIFF BURKE (V.O.)
(through static)
This is Burke.

TOMMY
Sheldon, it's Tommy. You need to
get over here. NOW.

Burke's fragmented voice fights through static:

SHERIFF BURKE (V.O.)
Tommy? -- you? -- can't hear --

TOMMY
Sheldon? ... Sheldon! ... We're trapped down here, goddammit!

SHERIFF BURKE (V.O.)
(faint, fading)
Tommy...

TING.

Just steps away.

Tommy tenses, glances back at the door. He speaks quietly, but forcefully, into the phone:

TOMMY
Sheldon. Please.

But it's just static on the other end.

Tommy clicks the phone off. He tries to click it back on, but the line is DEAD.

All connection to the outside world severed.

Tommy and Austin share a look, taking this in.

TING.

Right outside the door.

Austin slowly kneels down to the floor, looking through the small space under the door, where he sees --

A PAIR OF FEET

Decayed, bloodless, dead. A small BELL tied around one ankle.

Tommy blanches.

A BANG at the door. It RATTLES on its hinges.

Tommy and Austin jump back -- as another BANG -- harder, more insistent -- shakes the wall. Tommy backing up now --

AUSTIN
Dad!

Austin's at a filing cabinet, pushing hard. Tommy coming to help, the two of them straining, the cabinet's weight GOUGING a furrow in the floor as they shove it against the door --

The door handle starts to RATTLE violently. Then the whole door starts to SHAKE. The cabinet, too --

Tommy and Austin push back against the filing cabinet with everything they've got, straining -- losing the battle --

And then, suddenly, the pounding stops.

Stillness. No 'ting.' No banging.

But neither Tommy nor Austin trusts the silence. Austin's breath comes in short, quick bursts.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
What -- the fuck -- is going on?

Tommy tries to calm his son. To calm himself, too:

TOMMY
Look at me. Austin, look at me.
(beat)
Burke knows we're down here. He'll come. He'll get us out.

But Austin's not listening. He's lost in his own thoughts. After a moment --

AUSTIN
It's her.

TOMMY
Her?

Austin wavers. He almost doesn't want to say --

AUSTIN
Jane Doe.

TOMMY
What are you talking about?

AUSTIN
Everything was fine until Burke wheeled her through the door.

TOMMY
Son --

AUSTIN
Until we cut into her.

TOMMY
You're talking about a dead body --

AUSTIN
No. Her injuries. The shroud.
Those... marks inside of her.
She is not just a dead body.

TOMMY
Then what the hell is she?

Beat.

AUSTIN
Something else.

A long moment as this registers. Their silence broken as --

Austin notices the bandage on Tommy's hand. SOAKED through with blood.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
Your hand.

Tommy sees the blood. Drops on the floor, on the filing cabinet, on the walls. It's everywhere.

His looks across the room, toward a small BATHROOM. Holding his hand as he steps INSIDE, hitting the lights --

Which don't work. He flicks the switch -- nothing. But just enough light spills in from the office to see the room.

Tommy rinses his hand in the sink. The blood spirals down the drain.

Behind Tommy, a toilet and a shower.

In the office, Austin leans against the file cabinet. Spent.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
We could have left.

Tommy doesn't respond. He grabs a first aid kit from the cabinet beneath the sink, pops it open.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
I *wanted* to leave.

Still, Tommy's silent. Austin leans forward, watching his father wrap his hand in fresh gauze.

THE SHOWER CURTAIN BEHIND TOMMY

suddenly moves, ever so slightly. Fluttering in a nonexistent breeze. Austin, narrowing his eyes --

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
Dad...

When Austin sees, behind the curtain, a SHADOW. Something standing in the shower, right behind Tommy.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
Dad!

Tommy turns to Austin, his back toward the shower now --

As the curtain is suddenly RIPPED off the rod, out at Tommy --

Austin LUNGES FORWARD --

As the bathroom door SLAMS CLOSED in his face.

From behind the door, Tommy SCREAMS.

Austin RATTLES the door knob -- it's locked. He POUNDS on the door, trying to get into --

THE BATHROOM

In complete DARKNESS. Quick FLASHES --

Tommy, THROWN headlong into the mirror. Assaulted by an unseen force.

Glass SHATTERS. Walls RUMBLE.

Something SLASHES OUT, drawing blood -- Tommy gasps --

IN THE OFFICE

Austin hears all of it. He RAMS the bathroom door with his shoulder. Trying to break it down.

IN THE BATHROOM

Tommy's thrown to the floor. His head bounces hard off the tile. Blood trickles down his forehead.

Through the darkness he sees a glimpse of --

GRAY EYES

Tommy tries to get up, but A WITHERED HAND grabs him around the neck and forces him back down. Tommy SCREAMS out in pain.

OUTSIDE THE BATHROOM

Austin CHARGES the door. The wood buckles.

He rams it again. Harder. His shoulder CRACKS, and he sinks in pain. Gritting his teeth, Austin rears back and with one final blow, BUSTS INTO:

THE BATHROOM

It's in shambles. The mirror shattered on the wall. Streaks of BLOOD smeared all over the sink.

Austin scans the room. Nothing. Then sees --

Tommy. A broken, trembling heap on the floor. Austin rushes to him.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
What happened??

Tommy doesn't respond. He's in shock.

From behind them -- the sound of feet SLAPPING against linoleum, of something GRINDING, the office door OPENING --

Austin spins to find:

The filing cabinet's been pushed aside. The door to the office is WIDE OPEN. The hallway beyond, empty.

Whatever was in there snuck right past them.

Austin turns back to Tommy. He crouches down next to his father, notices --

PATCHES OF BLOOD. Seeping through the back of Tommy's shirt.

Austin slowly peels the shirt up, exposing --

CLAW MARKS sliced into Tommy's back. A deep GASH along his rib cage.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
Oh, god --

He quickly grabs the first aid kit and starts disinfecting the wound. Dressing it with the last of the gauze. Tommy, wincing in pain.

TOMMY
They were... gray.

AUSTIN
What?

TOMMY
Its eyes.
(then)
It had her eyes.

Austin processes this. A thought forming in his head as he helps Tommy to his feet.

Austin starts to walk Tommy to the door.

AUSTIN
C'mon.

Tommy grabs his arm --

TOMMY
What are you doing?

AUSTIN
She's doing this to us. I don't know how, but there's no other explanation.

TOMMY
Wait a second --

AUSTIN
Jesus Christ, you nearly got killed in there. You said it yourself, that thing had her eyes. If I hadn't gotten inside...
(beat)
If we wait, we're dead.

It lands on Tommy: they're out of options.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
We have to get rid of her.

TOMMY
...How?

Austin considers this for a moment. Nothing coming --

But then he's got it.

Austin nods to the open door, looking down the hall -- drawing Tommy's gaze to the convex mirror outside. In it's reflection, a familiar room just around the corner:

The crematorium.

AUSTIN
We're going to burn her.

Tommy absorbs this, accepting it.

They both look toward the office door and hallway beyond. Bracing themselves for what they have to do.

INT. MORGUE - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Tommy and Austin step out of the office. Keeping an eye on the hall. Scanning rapidly. But first:

There's something on the ground in front of them.

Austin bends down to pick it up. It's --

A WHITE VEIL. The one that once covered the face of Louis, the shotgun victim.

The lights in the hallway flicker.

Austin drops the veil; it flutters to the ground.

He and Tommy look ahead, toward the convex mirror.

The path is clear. All the way to the autopsy room.

Tommy and Austin make their way down the hall.

The sound of MOVEMENT from one of the rooms. Something SKITTERING fast, rapid motion -- but then it's gone.

Tommy spots the FIRE ALARM on a nearby wall, an EMERGENCY AXE behind protective glass. He rears back with his elbow --

And SMASHES the glass. He pulls the fire alarm and --

Nothing. No alarm. Silence.

Tommy grabs the FIRE AXE. Grips it tightly. Making their way down the hall --

Passing open doors as they go. Stepping to the far side of the hall each time, as far away from the doors as they can.

But each room is empty. Just the sounds of their breaths and footsteps. They round the corner --

And head toward the autopsy room at the end of the hall.

INT. MORGUE - AUTOPSY ROOM - NIGHT

Tommy and Austin re-enter the dimly lit room, the door closing behind them.

It’s just as they left it. The DRAWERS still open. In the center of the room --

JANE DOE. Splayed out. Gray eyes staring at the ceiling. A beat as they stare at this dead, immobile thing, and then:

Austin makes a beeline for the operating table. Grabs hold of one end of it, bends down to UNLOCK the WHEELS on the bottom.

AUSTIN
Help me move her.

Tommy grabs the other end of the table and together --

They start to WHEEL Jane Doe out of the room. Austin pulls on the door --

It’s locked.

Austin twists the handle. But it won’t budge.

AUSTIN (CONT’D)
No... No...

Austin looks back at Jane Doe. Then at Tommy. The FIRE AXE in his hand.

Austin grabs the axe away from Tommy, raises it over his head, BURIES IT into the door to the autopsy room.

Then again. And again. Splinters flying.

The axe carves out a small VERTICAL SLIT in the door frame.

Just enough to see a sliver of the hallway.

As Austin lifts the axe again --

A SHAPE fills the small vertical space, UP CLOSE. Through the crack, we can barely make out --

A sliver of AN OLD WOMAN’S FACE, inches away. Pale, gaunt.

Her mouth SEWN SHUT, stitched up. IRENE DANIELS. The old woman Austin pulled out of the drawer earlier.

Only, her eyes are GRAY now. Like Jane Doe’s.

Austin jumps back. Tommy sees her too.

AUSTIN (CONT’D)
That’s --

TOMMY
I know.

Impossible, but there she is. Right behind the door. Austin looks at Jane Doe, on the wheeled table.

AUSTIN
She's trying to stop us.

He scans the room -- and a nearby COUNTER. His gaze falling on jars of chemicals. Lined up in rows.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
Fuck it.

Austin switches gears, grabbing a plastic jar of ACETONE. There's a warning label: "HIGHLY FLAMMABLE."

Austin DOUSES Jane Doe's body with acetone.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
Hand me your matches.

But Tommy's still the father. He lights the match himself --

Which he uses to light the entire matchbook. Fire leaps into the air, dancing around his hand. Tommy, still a bit unsure --

Austin nods: *do it.*

And Tommy tosses the flaming matchbook onto Jane Doe's acetone-soaked FLESH.

<u>She bursts into FLAMES</u>

Which CASCADE so high they lick the ceiling. The operating table looks like a Roman candle. Tommy and Austin watch with anticipation.

A noise behind them. They glance back at --

Irene's face, visible through the crack in the doorway. Expressionless at first. But then --

Her lips curl into a horrifying smile. RIPPING OUT the STITCHING holding her cheeks together. POP - POP - POP -

Austin looks back. The flames are practically leaping off of her body -- spreading around the room --

Onto a pair of lab coats hung along the wall --

Catching the corner of the cork board where the photos of the autopsy are stuck. The images BURNING, CURLING --

Tommy throws the board to the ground, trying to stamp out the fire but he's unsuccessful. As the flames head toward the row of flammable chemicals, Tommy screams out at Austin --

TOMMY
Behind you --

Austin turns to see the lab fire extinguisher. Grabbing it off the wall, hitting the trigger --

Nothing comes out. He pulls again -- not working. The flames are getting closer -- the place is going to blow --

TOMMY (CONT'D)
The tab! Pull the tab!

Austin doesn't get it, but Tommy grabs the extinguisher, YANKS the pull-tab that gets it started, then SPRAYS --

Dousing the flames in fire-retardant foam. The flames inching up to those jars of chemicals --

Just as Tommy DROWNS the flames in a wash of foam.

They look back to Jane Doe --

As the flames dancing about her body slowly die down until they extinguish completely on their own --

Her body is unharmed.

Skin unsinged, untainted, untouched.

AUSTIN
No...

Tommy stares down at Jane Doe with disbelief, realizing what they're up against.

Screaming out with frustration, Austin grabs a SCALPEL and rears back to stab Jane Doe's body. But Tommy steps in his path, grabs his hand.

TOMMY
Austin...

But Austin puts up a struggle. His anger overriding sense --

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Stop, son.

A beat -- and Austin drops the scalpel. It lands with a CLANG onto the linoleum floor.

Silence. The low lights overhead TWITCH.

They stare down at Jane Doe's body. Indestructible. A look of hopelessness crosses both Tommy and Austin's faces. Until --

A distant RUMBLE from down the hall. Tommy listens closer, realizes --

It's the sound of gears GRINDING. His face brightens.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
The elevator.

Austin listens, hears the familiar --

SCREECH of the elevator. Descending.

AUSTIN
It's working!

Austin's eyes dart to the DOOR of the autopsy room --

Irene's face is GONE. The door's still stuck, but Tommy PRIES the blade of the axe between the door and the frame, pressing until the door SNAPS OPEN.

INT. MORGUE - HALLWAY

Tommy steps out into the hall, axe in hand. Austin follows. Their steps cautious, their guard up.

The THRASH of the storm can be heard overhead.

A CHIME --

They both look up into the convex mirror, in which they can see --

The tiny reflection of elevator doors OPENING.

They make a run for it --

Just as they round the corner, they see the doors start CLOSING. They get within arm's reach of the elevator when --

CLICK. The doors SHUT.

AUSTIN
Fuck!

Austin slams the elevator CALL BUTTON over and over. Tommy listens to the elevator's gears grinding. He looks up.

TOMMY
Gotta wait. Once it hits the top, it'll come back down.

AUSTIN
(petrified)
C'mon, c'mon --

Austin pounds the call button.

Then, from down the hall **--**

TING.

Austin turns. His face goes white. Tommy follows Austin's eyes to --

A FIGURE. A silhouette. At the end of the hall.

Too far and too dark to distinguish, but one thing's certain:

It's staring right back at them.

The elevator hits the top. Tommy slowly reaches over and clicks the call button repeatedly.

Down the corridor, only certain lights are working, creating alternating BANDS of darkness and light between them and the figure. For a moment, it looks like it's gone --

And then it's there, just past the light. Closer. As if the lights themselves are cooperating, keeping the figure constantly obscured in darkness as it moves.

Thunder CRASHES as the elevator starts to descend.

Austin stares down the hall at the shadowy figure. Its movements are unnatural, jerky. Like an old videotape skipping frames.

As the figure approaches --

TING.

-- the next band of light goes dark. The figure suddenly ten feet closer.

Austin recoils. Tommy's fingers tighten around the axe.

TOMMY
Get behind me.

Metal scrapes against metal as the elevator nears.

Tommy stares at the figure. Still in shadow, but he knows it's --

LOUIS TANNIS

The only body with a BELL tied around its ankle.

Austin SLAMS the call button.

AUSTIN
C'mon!

Louis keeps moving forward, disappearing into shadow --

TING.

-- then reappearing. Twenty feet closer.

The elevator's almost all the way down.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
C'mon goddammit! C'mon!

TING.

Another band of light goes out. Thirty feet closer.

The elevator locks into place on the basement floor. DING. The doors OPEN wide. Inside, darkness. The light is busted.

In the hall, Louis is close enough for Tommy and Austin to glimpse --

His GRAY EYES. Staring out from the shadows, which obscure the rest of his face -- or what's left of it.

Tommy YANKS Austin into the pitch-black elevator.

He frantically presses the UP button.

The elevator doors start to CLOSE and --

Lock in place. A foot of space still between them. The low lights from the hallway barely illuminated through the opening.

TOMMY
Austin!

AUSTIN
I'm trying!

Austin, mashing the button. Silence, and then --

TING.

Louis is mere feet away. Can't see him, but they can HEAR his breath WHISTLING through his MANGLED FACE.

Tommy's fingers tighten around the handle of the axe.

Austin's ripping at the elevator control panel, trying to get it moving -- but nothing's working --

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
Come on -- come on --

TING! Impossibly close, right there --

Tommy steps forward, ready to strike, as --

A dark SHADOW LEAPS into the space between the open doors -- about to pounce on them --

Tommy SWINGS the axe --

CRUNCH. It lands in a chest, solid and firm, a lethal blow.

The body staggers backwards in the darkness, taking the embedded axe with it --

And hits the linoleum floor with a THUD.

The tinging stops.

The lights in the elevator TURN ON.

A moment.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
Did you --

TOMMY
I think so.

Austin leans against the wall. Tommy breathes heavily.

A long beat as they recover.

A RIVULET OF BLOOD

trails between the open doors, into the elevator, snaking toward Tommy's feet. Leading back toward --

A growing pool of blood just out in the hallway. Austin's eyes follow the path, toward the body --

And the feet. But there is no bell on the ankle. And the feet aren't bare --

They're in sneakers.

Austin's eyes go wide.

AUSTIN
No... no...

Austin PULLS at the elevator doors, forcing them open -- rushing out of the door --

And falling to the ground at the side of the body. Tommy steps out, sees THE BODY in front of Austin --

TOMMY
My God.

It's Emma.

The axe lodged in her heart.

Austin pulls the axe free; blood GUSHES from the wound. He cradles Emma in his arms --

AUSTIN
Emma... Emma...

She's coughing up her own blood -- fading fast --

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
Hang on, baby... please...

Emma looks up at Austin, confused and in pain --

As her eyes go WIDE... and soften. Life leaves her.

Austin breaks down --

Tommy, standing above it all, shell-shocked. Can't believe what he's done. Can't accept it.

TOMMY
I... I didn't know it was --

Austin glares up at his father with rage, pain --

AUSTIN
Didn't you see her?!

TOMMY
I -- it wasn't... The bell -- you saw it too --

A long beat. Austin cradles Emma to his chest. He breaks down.

Behind them, the elevator doors start to CLOSE. Tommy snaps out of his shock, forcing them back open with his arms.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Austin --

Austin's unresponsive.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
(gently)
We have to go.

Tommy has to pry him away from Emma. Austin doesn't have the strength to struggle.

Tommy grabs the bloody axe and pulls Austin, still watching Emma's lifeless body as Tommy drags him into --

INT. MORGUE - ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

The elevator shakes as Tommy and Austin get in. Tommy hits the UP button --

And this time it works. The doors close. Gears grind. The elevator car SHUDDERS --

As it starts to ascend.

It gets about three feet off the ground, then --

It stops.

Tommy hits the up button. Nothing happens.

He hits it again. Nothing.

TOMMY
No... Please, no...

Tommy hits the button over and over again. So hard it draws blood from his knuckles.

And still, the elevator does not move.

Austin slinks down against the steel doors of the elevator, buries his head in his hands.

A look of fear and resignation washes over Tommy.

CUT TO:

INT. MORGUE - ELEVATOR - LATER

Tommy and Austin sit, backs against opposite walls. Three feet away from each other, but worlds apart. Each lost in his own grief. Bloodied axe at Tommy's feet.

Austin looks at his watch -- 11:17 PM. His eyes are dry, red, drained of emotion. Completely numb.

AUSTIN
I told her to come back for me.

It's the only thought in his mind, and he can't shake it.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
I told her to come back.

Every breath Tommy takes makes him wince. He lifts his shirt, inspecting the gash on his rib cage. The meager gauze, soaked through with blood.

TOMMY
You didn't do this.

Tommy looks at the axe by his feet. His shoulders slump under the weight of all his guilt.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
I'm so sorry. I... I thought...

But Austin's anger is gone.

AUSTIN
You didn't know. You couldn't have.

Tommy takes this in.

TOMMY
That's what everyone told me. About your mom.

AUSTIN
Dad...

Tommy wipes his bloody hands off onto his pants. Trying to get them clean. Then:

TOMMY
Know why I used to call your mom "Ray?"

Austin looks up now. A side of Tommy he's rarely seen.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Ray of sunshine. She thought it was corny as shit. But it stuck.

Tommy's armor is off. He's vulnerable.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
If I had *known*... I would have helped her. You know that, right?

Austin doesn't answer, his face unreadable.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
It's just she was always so... bright... so happy...
(then)
To think she was carrying around all that pain... every day... and I couldn't even see it. I can't tell you if she was hiding it, because I never looked.
(beat)
All my mistakes... you've had to pay for them.

A long moment -- Austin doesn't know what to say. Tommy, letting it all wash over him. Defeated:

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Why doesn't she just kill us already?

Austin has no answer -- and then, suddenly, a light bulb goes off for him:

AUSTIN
Why *doesn't* she?
(then)
All of this... for what?

TOMMY
Who the hell knows?

AUSTIN
Exactly.

Off Tommy's quizzical look --

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
Something terrible happened to her, right? Maybe she was tortured, maybe she was sacrificed. We don't really know. We never figured it out.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
(then)
She stopped us.

TOMMY
What're you getting at?

AUSTIN
Maybe that's the key.

Tommy's not buying it. But Austin's onto something:

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
Think about it. This all started when she got here. And the deeper we went, the worse it got. The tongue, that shroud, those... Those symbols, those marks inside her skin -- each time we find something... it's like she gets angrier.
(beat)
Like there's something she doesn't want us to know.

Off Tommy's uneasy look, Austin's not wrong --

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. MORGUE - AUTOPSY ROOM - THAT MOMENT

CLOSE on JANE DOE.

Her dead eyes staring up at the ceiling.

We float past her, out of the autopsy room, into the --

INT. MORGUE - CREMATORIUM - CONTINUOUS

We PUSH IN slowly toward the large OVEN DOOR in the center of the room.

Passing the CONTROL PANEL alongside the oven --

Gas HISSES. Pipes SHAKE.

INSIDE the oven, low, yellow flames POP ON.

BACK TO:

INT. MORGUE - ELEVATOR - THAT MOMENT

Tommy's still skeptical.

TOMMY
You're looking for answers to impossible questions.

AUSTIN
Every body has a secret. You taught me that. She's no exception.

An impasse.

TOMMY
We can't go back in there.

AUSTIN
We can't stay here.

TOMMY
After everything that's happened... How could you go back into that room?

AUSTIN
You have a better plan?

Tommy doesn't. But he's not ready to give in.

INT. MORGUE - CREMATORIUM - THAT MOMENT

The flames in the oven have changed color from yellow to WHITE.

SMOKE begins to billow out from the oven.

It thickens and rushes toward us, filling the frame --

INT. MORGUE - ELEVATOR - THAT MOMENT

Tommy's running out of arguments.

AUSTIN
This is our best shot. We figure out how she died, maybe we figure out why she's doing this to us. And we use it against her. Use it to get out of here.

A moment between Tommy and Austin. A ferocity of love and respect in Austin's eyes.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
This is what we do, right?

A beat -- and Tommy reluctantly nods.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
Let's finish what we started.

A moment. Then --

Tommy slowly gets up. Extends his hand to Austin, helping him up.

They brace themselves. Standing to face the elevator doors. Each grabbing a side --

And PULLING HARD. The old metal doors slowly wrench apart.

INT. MORGUE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

The elevator is two feet off the ground. Tommy and Austin step down and out.

Emma's blood-soaked body lies directly in front of them. Tommy takes off his jacket, covers her body with it.

Tommy and Austin shift their eyes down toward the autopsy room.

Thin wisps of SMOKE curl around the bend, creeping through the air like gray snakes. Off Austin, confused --

The sound of a distant RUMBLE around the bend. Tommy recognizes the sound. Instantly worried.

TOMMY
It's coming from the crematorium.

Tommy starts down the hall, but Austin stops him.

AUSTIN
I'll go first.

Austin extends his hand. Tommy hands him the axe.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
Stay close to me.

Tommy nods. Austin, axe in hand, steps in front of Tommy.

Their footsteps RING off of the cold floor.

Austin looks toward the CONVEX MIRROR. A thick wall of smoke obscures the entire adjacent hallway.

Austin keeps walking. The smoke swallows him whole. Tommy follows Austin into the thick haze. It's like stepping into a cloud. They cover their mouths and noses.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
You there?

TOMMY
Right behind you.

Indeed, Austin's just in front of Tommy, but the smoke is so thick he keeps fading in and out, only feet away.

Ash burns Tommy's lungs, stings his eyes. He can barely see -- and then Austin disappears completely.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Austin?

Just a COUGH in return. Tommy follows the sound.

AUSTIN, in his own smoky bubble, pushes forward. Axe raised and ready.

Another RUMBLE from the crematorium.

Something MOVES in front of Austin. A SHADOW in the smoke.

Austin SWINGS the axe. Again --

But his wild strikes cut through nothing. He GRUNTS with the effort. From behind:

TOMMY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
You alright?

AUSTIN
Something's here.

Then: a familiar noise. Bare skin SLAPPING linoleum.

Austin freezes as the sound QUICKENS. FOOTSTEPS, coming from who knows where.

Vague SHAPES flit in and out of the smoke. Getting closer with each pass, like dive-bombers coming in and taking off --

A SILHOUETTE suddenly appears <u>inches in front of Austin's face</u>.

He SWINGS at the shape, but misses -- CLANK --

The axe hits the wall. He tries to pull it back, but it's stuck there, embedded. As he struggles with it --

Tommy feels something BRUSH past him. Looking around, trying to find his son --

TOMMY
Austin?

ON AUSTIN

Still struggling with the axe --

The vague FIGURE coming toward him through the smoke.

He pulls at the axe, manic, until finally it comes loose.

Austin draws back, about to strike, but as he does, something behind him PULLS the axe in the other direction.

Austin STUMBLES backwards, the axe jerking loose, hitting the ground with a CLANG. Austin quickly recovers, regains his footing, looks around frantically --

ON TOMMY

Lost in the smoke. He sees a FIGURE up ahead. It looks like Austin.

Tommy runs toward him. The smoke THINS the closer he gets.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Austin!

Tommy puts his hand on Austin's shoulder. His fingers feel burnt, flaky skin as "Austin" turns --

It's Irene Daniels.

The stitches from her lips hanging loosely over rotted teeth. She smiles as FLIES BURST FROM BETWEEN HER LIPS --

Enveloping Tommy, who YELLS, covering his face --

ON AUSTIN

He hears the scream. He feels his way through the smoke, searching for Tommy.

AUSTIN
Dad!

Searching. Searching. But he can't find him.

Something THROWS Austin to the side. His neck snaps back as his face smashes into the wall --

Nose CRACKING as blood instantly pours down his face.

ON TOMMY

Running. The flies vanishing. But through the haze, something SLASHES his cheek. He jerks away from it --

As another SLASH takes a slice out of his arm --

Tommy swinging back wildly, blindly. Another SLASH, parallel gashes opening up along his chest --

And two more on each leg. He DROPS to the floor -- losing blood, losing strength --

TOMMY
Austin...

ON AUSTIN

Who's also on the floor -- dealing with his own trouble --

Trying to get up as he's THROWN again --

Landing on his elbow. CRACK. Austin yelps with pain. He scrambles on his hands and knees, trying to get away --

But he's PUMMELED, each blow knocking him back like bullets to the chest. As he hits the floor again, battered, he sees --

The AXE laying a few feet away from him.

He reaches for it. Almost has it. But something CRUSHES him. Stepping down on his back. Pinning him to the floor.

There's a heavy WHEEZING right at Austin's ears.

Otis Howard's burnt, disfigured FACE. The cracked, burned lips making contact with Austin's cheek --

As his mottled pink-and-black hands come for Austin's neck, the fingernails sharp and long, almost like claws --

With all the energy he has left, Austin REACHES out for the axe. His fingertips barely make contact --

As Otis's hands TIGHTEN around his neck --

Austin swings in a quick 180 and STRIKES.

The blade lands in the cradle between Otis's neck and shoulder. Otis falls to the ground, obscured once again by the smoke.

Austin stumbles to his feet. He hears another SCREAM echo out in the smoke. It's Tommy. Austin runs toward the sound.

ON TOMMY

Another SHADOWY FIGURE moving toward him through the smoke.

Tommy girds himself. The figure moves closer. We see its GRAY EYES staring at him through the haze.

Tommy takes a step back. Then another. His feet CRUNCHING on the broken glass from the fire alarm.

He bends down and grabs a long shard, wielding it like a knife. Thrusting it out in front of him --

His eyes glued on the encroaching figure, timing it so the strike will land --

But he doesn't see:

Another shadow. Directly behind him. Tommy backs right into it. Spins --

And LUNGES with the shard, right where its neck would be --

A HAND grabs his wrist, catching him hard and firm --

The smoke clearing away, showing this new attacker:

It's Austin.

AUSTIN
(coughing)
Dad!

Tommy drops the glass. Through the smoke we can barely make out --

The autopsy room. They're mere steps away. They made it. Doubling their speed, rushing the last ten feet --

INT. MORGUE - AUTOPSY ROOM - NIGHT

Tommy and Austin fall into the autopsy room, slam the door closed, just as --

POUNDING rattles the door from the outside.

Austin grabs a steel gurney. He and Tommy wedge it between the door and the wall. Barricading themselves inside.

TOMMY
We don't have much time.

They look toward the center of the room --

Jane Doe. On the operating table. Just as they left her, splayed open, the autopsy not quite finished.

AUSTIN
You ready?

Tommy's answer is to take up his position on the far side of the table.

Austin takes up his position at his father's side. Just how they've always done it. Then --

QUICK SHOTS:

Tommy grabs a sharp BLADE --

He makes an INCISION starting behind Jane Doe's left ear, over the crown of her head, all the way to her other ear.

Tommy PULLS a FLAP of Jane Doe's SCALP over her face, exposing the top of her SKULL.

Austin uses a STRYKER SAW to CUT into her skull.

FLIES come buzzing out as Austin cracks open the skull. Tommy and Austin bat them away. They stare down at --

Jane Doe's BRAIN.

More POUNDING at the door to the autopsy room. The wood starts to CRACK.

Tommy and Austin are running out of time.

They look at the brain. On the surface --

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
It looks... normal.

TOMMY
All her other organs are scarred.
There's got to be <u>something</u>.

Tommy cuts off a small PIECE of Jane Doe's brain.

Austin grabs the MICROSCOPE.

He slides the piece of brain matter under the microscope. Puts his eye against the viewfinder, studying the tissue more closely.

Austin's face drops.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
What is it?

But Austin can't hear him. He's stunned by what he's seeing.

AUSTIN
That's... impossible.

Austin lifts his eye off the viewfinder.

Tommy moves Austin aside, looks through into the microscope himself. And now we SEE --

BRAIN CELLS. Under the scrutiny of the microscope.

But something's off:

They're moving.

<u>Alive</u>.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
How could she...

Tommy backs away from the microscope. Gears shifting.

It suddenly comes into focus for him.

TOMMY
That's why we can't find a cause of death.
(then)
She's still alive.

The pounding at the door intensifies. The wood SPLINTERING.

Austin stares down at Jane Doe's body. In disbelief.

Tommy surveys all the damage in Jane Doe's body. Then at the dry erase board, marked up with everything they've observed.

Her open mouth. Without a tongue. Missing a tooth.

Her wrists and ankles. Dangling. Broken. Shattered.

Her blackened lungs. Her scarred organs.

Her insides. Desecrated with insidious markings.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Someone hurt her. Over and over.
But never killed her...

AUSTIN
We cut into her... We lit her on
fire... How could she...

TOMMY
Whatever happened to her... she's
still alive. In some way.
Everything they did -- everything
we've done...
(beat)
She can feel it.

FWOOOMP.

The door to the room starts to separate from the frame.

But Tommy is locked in on Jane Doe.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
She's still suffering.

He takes a step closer to the once-beautiful but tortured body on the table.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
That's why she hasn't killed us
yet.
(fully dawning on him)
She wants us to suffer. Like her.

Austin looks at Tommy.

But Tommy keeps looking at Jane.

Into her eyes.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
This won't stop. She'll never be
free until...

AUSTIN
Until what?

Tommy stares into the grays of Jane Doe's eyes.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
Dad, until <u>what</u>?

CRACK.

The door to the room inches open. It won't hold much longer.

Austin rushes to the door, wedges the steel gurney deeper against the door frame, locks its wheels. Reinforcing the barricade.

Tommy does not move. He speaks directly to Jane Doe. Compassion in his voice.

TOMMY
(whispering)
Tell me what to do. I won't fight you. Just don't hurt him.

AUSTIN
What the hell are you doing? Help me --

Tommy ignores Austin. He leans closer, into Jane Doe's face.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
Goddamn it, get away from her. Whatever you're doing --

CLOSE ON Tommy's eyes --

CLOSE ON Jane Doe's eyes --

Locked into each other.

The lights flicker.

A loud thunder clap shakes the walls of the morgue.

Then, silence. Stillness.

Tommy and Austin look at each other for a moment.

A long beat. Perfect quiet. Then --

The color drains from Tommy's face. He clutches his stomach, nauseous. He starts to TREMBLE. His knees wobble. He's sweating.

Austin runs to his side --

As Tommy DOUBLES OVER, stumbling into the wall.

He looks up at Austin, pained. His eyes roll back in his head. Before Austin can do anything --

Tommy's WRISTS CRACK.

His hands splay outwards. Yanked out of their sockets.

The bones in his hands SNAP. Crushed.

Tommy stares down at his hands, in shock --

Just as:

Jane Doe's wrists STRAIGHTEN.

Austin goes to his father's side, no idea what to do as:

Tommy's ANKLES BREAK. He falls to his knees. Screams out in agony --

As Jane Doe's ankles CRACK back into place. Healed.

Austin realizes what's happening.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
God, no --

Austin tries to help Tommy, but everywhere he tries to touch brings a new scream of pain --

Because it's too late.

Tommy clutches his STOMACH. In anguish. Convulsing as if he's being STABBED repeatedly.

Austin's eyes dart back to Jane Doe's body --

The SCARRING on her organs begins to HEAL. From the stomach all the way up to her heart.

As her scarring dissipates, Tommy's pain only gets worse. Tears fill his eyes. He grasps onto Austin, hanging on for his life.

As Tommy INHALES, gasping for breath --

TOMMY
Kill...

The BLACKNESS on Jane Doe's LUNGS leeches away.

Tommy CHOKES. Screams out in pain.

His insides are literally on fire.

Through shallow breaths, Tommy speaks to Austin -- his lips pressed against Austin's ear -- but it's barely a sound --

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Me...

As a wisp of BLACK SMOKE billows up through Tommy's throat, out of his mouth. His lungs, charred.

Austin holds his father close. Trying to comfort him.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Do... it... before... I...

The pain is too great --

AUSTIN
Dad, please! Hang on... just hang on...

Tommy slumps in Austin's arms -- Austin can't hold him, and Tommy crashes to the floor.

Close on Tommy's eyes, going WIDE.

Close on Jane Doe's eyes --

As the GRAY fades away, leaving a gentle blue.

FWOOOMP! The door to the room BURSTS open. Austin spins as smoke spills in --

And Austin is THROWN to the ground from behind, SLAMMING his head against the floor. A gash opens on his forehead --

Austin looks up. Tommy kneels above him --

His eyes are GRAY.

Before Austin can react, Tommy thrusts his forearm against Austin's throat. Choking the life out of him.

Killing his son.

Austin tries to PUSH Tommy off of him, but he can't. Tommy's inhumanly strong.

Austin gasps for breath. Choking --

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
Dad --

But Tommy only presses harder against Austin's throat.

Austin's losing oxygen. He's choking. He flails, tries to slap Tommy's arms away. But he can't --

His strength starts to dissipate. His limbs grow heavy. His face turns blue.

Austin's vision BLURS. Behind Tommy, he can barely make out --

Obscure FIGURES, blurred and hidden in the smoke that has filtered in from the hall. Bare legs. Bare feet. Bare toes.

One with a bell tied around it.

All coming toward him. As his father chokes him to death, they surround him in the smoke, their silhouettes blocking out the light. Bringing only darkness --

Austin's eyes fill with tears as he stops fighting. His arms going limp by his sides. Accepting death.

Tommy only presses harder, finishing him off --

And then Tommy's eyes go WIDE. He cranes his head back and lets go of Austin.

Austin GASPS, choking. Sitting up -- as we see --

Austin's hand gripping the bloody handle of a SCALPEL buried in Tommy's chest.

Austin has STABBED Tommy in the heart.

Tommy tips to one side -- and falls hard to the ground.

The minute Tommy's body hits the floor, in rapid order:

The silhouettes all around him are swallowed back into the smoke --

As a morgue drawer SLAMS shut -- and then another -- and another --

The SMOKE in the autopsy room and the hallway is SUCKED UP into the vents.

The sounds of the STORM cease.

The LIGHTS in the morgue turn back on to full power.

JANE DOE, eyes blue, on the slab. Lifeless, but <u>completely healed, pristine once again</u>. At peace.

<u>It's over.</u>

Austin looks down at Tommy, dead on the floor. Blood pooling all around him.

A moment of numb, exhausted shock --

And then Austin lets it wash over him. Cradling his father to his chest. At first just breathing hard --

And then the breath becomes a sob, and then another --

And he breaks down. Wailing with grief over what's happened.

AUSTIN (CONT'D)
I'm sorry... I'm so sorry...

As Austin cries over his father's body, rocking back and forth.

We begin to PULL BACK, leaving them alone, perhaps for the last time...

When --

A SOUND from down the hall. Faint, barely audible.

A VOICE.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Tommy! Austin! You in there?

Austin lifts up his head. He knows this voice.

AUSTIN
(barely audible)
Burke?

SHERIFF BURKE (O.S.)
Anyone there?

AUSTIN
(regaining his voice)
Burke!

SHERIFF BURKE (O.S.)
Austin?

Austin lays Tommy's body down. He struggles to his feet, covered in blood.

He can't walk, can barely limp as he exits the autopsy room.

INT. MORGUE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The hallway is fully lit now. Nothing hiding in the shadows.

Austin walks down the hall. Hand against the wall, a trail of blood smearing the concrete.

SHERIFF BURKE (O.S.)
Austin, you down there?

Austin follows the sound of Burke's voice. It's coming from the top of the stairs. But before he can get there --

He sees Emma's body on the ground by the elevator. He stops. The toll this evening has taken written all over his face.

Finally, he continues down the hall...

INT. MORGUE - STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Austin begins to climb the stairs --

Burke's voice clearer now as he shouts down to Austin from the other side of the storm doors.

SHERIFF BURKE (O.S.)
Storm knocked a tree down. It's blocking your doors. We're moving it right now, alright? Hang in there. You with me?

Austin walks up the stairs slowly.

AUSTIN
I'm here.

BEEP. BEEP. The sound of a CRANE moving the tree up above.

We hear the tree LIFT from atop the storm doors as Austin nears the top of the stairs.

SHERIFF BURKE (O.S.)
Almost there, buddy. You're going to be alright.

Austin arrives at the top of the stairs.

SHERIFF BURKE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Just open up the door now.

He PUSHES against the storm doors. They start to budge a tiny bit.

SHERIFF BURKE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Should open on up now --

Austin pushes against the doors again. But they won't open up any more.

AUSTIN
I can't -- it won't --

SHERIFF BURKE (O.S.)
Try again, son.

AUSTIN
I'm trying, it's stuck.

SHERIFF BURKE (O.S.)
Just open up --

AUSTIN
I can't!

SHERIFF BURKE (O.S.)
Open up.

From the other side of the doors, Austin hears... laughter?

AUSTIN
Burke? What's --

Louder laughter, morphing into a familiar tune...

SHERIFF BURKE (O.S.)
(singing softly)
Open up... your heart...

As Austin backs up in horror --

That's not Burke.

SHERIFF BURKE (CONT'D)
...and let the... sun... shine...
in...

Austin backs away from the storm doors.

His feet at the edge of the top step -- Burke's laughter ECHOING, becoming high-pitched, impossibly inhuman.

Austin turns around to get the hell out -- to find:

TOMMY, six inches behind him. Eyes gray, expression flat --

As he lunges with the scalpel that used to be in his chest --

Blood SPURTS from Austin's neck. Austin GURGLES, grabbing onto the thing that used to be his father --

And CRASHES atop him -- the two men TUMBLING down the stairs, their bodies twisting, slamming as they plummet down the spiral staircase --

Hitting the bottom with a:

CRACK.

The sound of a neck SNAPPING.

CUT TO:

WHITE.

A LONG SILENCE.

And then --

The chilling WHINE of a CAMERA FLASH as we fade back up. Along with each subsequent whine, we see --

Flashes of CRIME SCENE PHOTOGRAPHS.

-- BLOOD smeared on walls and hallway floors.

-- A BATHROOM, torn to shreds.

-- A DOOR splintered with AXE MARKS.

-- Tommy, dead. Blood soaking through his clothes. His eyes back to normal, no longer gray.

-- Austin, dead. His neck twisted almost 180 degrees. A scalpel lodged into his carotid.

-- A wider shot of both Tommy and Austin, dead, next to each other, at the bottom of the stairs.

A final FLASH takes us to --

INT. MORGUE - STAIRWELL - DAY

Sheriff Burke stands at the bottom of the stairwell, watching as Tommy and Austin’s bodies are zipped into translucent, plastic BODY BAGS and lifted onto gurneys.

INT. MORGUE - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Burke walks down the lit corridor, dodging a few OFFICERS and FORENSIC TECHS. He observes as they snap photos of the damage in the hallway --

Blood smears on the ground. Doors battered in. Jagged indentations in the wall.

Burke shakes his head, continues moving toward the autopsy room.

INT. MORGUE - AUTOPSY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Burke stands near the entrance and surveys the room.

A CLUSTER OF OFFICERS hover around the operating table; OTHERS search the room for evidence.

Lieutenant Wade lifts the CHARRED CORK BOARD off the floor, stares at the POLAROIDS tacked to it, all of them curled and melted. Indecipherable.

A few OFFICERS pull bodies from the drawers along the far wall. The bodies are loaded onto gurneys and wheeled out of the room, one by one.

Burke steps aside as the bodies are wheeled past him:

Irene Daniels, stitches intact. Louis Tannis, veil in place. Otis Howard, untouched. All exactly as they'd started out.

Lieutenant Wade breaks free from the other officers, approaches Burke.

LIEUTENANT WADE
Just got off the phone with Tyler county. They're clearing out some space for us.

He nods toward the BODIES that are being wheeled out.

LIEUTENANT WADE (CONT'D)
No signs of forced entry.

A voice calls out to Burke from the other end of the room.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Sheriff --

Burke looks over as OFFICER COOPER, late 30s, approaches, MINI-DV camera in hand.

OFFICER COOPER
I've reviewed the whole thing, sir. Beginning to end.

SHERIFF BURKE
And?

Cooper hesitates.

OFFICER COOPER
See for yourself.

Cooper flips the camera's LCD screen out and pushes PLAY --

ON THE SCREEN

A TIME CODE runs over BLUE.

Burke and Wade watch tentatively.

The time code runs for ten seconds or more. Nothing comes on. Just blue.

Burke's impatient. FAST-FORWARDS. The time code skips ahead - to five minutes. To twenty. Nothing but blue screen.

OFFICER COOPER (CONT'D)
Tape can hold two and a half hours worth. Far as I can tell, the camera was on the entire time...
(then)
But nothing recorded.

Fed up, Burke turns to the autopsy table. The cluster of Officers disperses, and Burke gets a clear view of --

Jane Doe. On the slab.

No incisions. No blood. No different than when he left her.

Burke is stumped. Wade walks up next to him.

SHERIFF BURKE
...The hell happened down here?

The question lingers as Forensic Techs wrap Jane Doe in a translucent body bag. Burke and Wade watching.

LIEUTENANT WADE
What do you want to do with her?

The Techs hoist her wrapped body onto a gurney.

SHERIFF BURKE
(after a beat)
Get her out of here.

LIEUTENANT WADE
Already got a car waiting. There's that funeral home over on Ruxton --

SHERIFF BURKE
I want her out of my county. Get her down to the UT Med center in Houston. Ward Lamon'll deal with her.

Jane Doe is wheeled out of the autopsy room.

EXT. MORGUE - DAY

A beautiful day. The sun is SHINING.

The large OAK TREE looms over the storm doors, INTACT.

It never fell.

No indication there was ever ANY storm.

POLICE TAPE cordons off the morgue on all sides. Several PEOPLE mill about the perimeter trying to get a peek at what's going on.

Burke and Wade look on from a distance as Cooper and other Officers load BODIES into the back of a police van. Jane Doe is loaded into a separate police vehicle.

A NEWS VAN pulls up outside the perimeter. We recognize the Reporter and Cameraman from the Douglas house as they barrel out of the van.

LIEUTENANT WADE
Two one-eight-sevens in two days. Both of them families.
(then, re: news van)
They're not going to leave without an explanation.

SHERIFF BURKE
Then they're gonna be here a while.
(off Wade's look)
Unless you've got one for them.

LIEUTENANT WADE
(hesitates, then)
Austin's prints were all over that scalpel. Tommy's blood's all over Austin. Looks an awful lot like --

SHERIFF BURKE
(stern)
I've known this family twenty years. However it *looks*, that ain't it.

But before Wade can say anything else --

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
Sheriff Burke!

Burke looks up. His face falls. Just when things couldn't get worse...

We follow a WOMAN'S LEGS from behind, running toward the scene. As she crosses the police tape and approaches Burke, we REVEAL --

EMMA. Very much alive.

And extremely alarmed by the scene.

EMMA
What happened?? Where's Austin?

Burke doesn't know how to tell her. He glances at the police van. She follows his look --

As the last two bodies -- Tommy and Austin -- are loaded in.

She SHRIEKS. A soul-piercing cry.

Emma buries her head in Burke's chest, sobbing. Burke tries to console her as best he can.

The police van pulls out, followed by the vehicle carrying Jane Doe. The two vehicles head in separate directions.

We slowly RISE above the morgue, above the neighborhood, everything shrinking as we pull further and further away.

As Emma's CRIES ring out, we CUT TO --

INT. POLICE VEHICLE - BACK ROAD - LATER

Loaded into THE BACK SEAT:

JANE DOE'S BODY

in a translucent body bag. Shifting with every bump in the road.

IN THE FRONT SEAT

Officer Cooper drives, cell phone to his ear, mid-conversation.

OFFICER COOPER
(into phone)
... what are you... no, baby, listen, they were not guilt flowers... I sent them because I love you...

ON THE RADIO, a Christian station lightly playing.

OFFICER COOPER (CONT'D)
(into phone)
...I love you and when I get back from Houston I'm gonna show you just how much... hell yes, that's a promise...

Static breaks up the Evangelist's sermon. The static clears. A song comes on.

We recognize it.

She said he causes trouble... when you let him in the room...

As the song plays, we slowly MOVE toward the back of the van.

Pushing toward --

Jane Doe.

He will never ever leave you... if your heart is filled with gloom...

We see her face. Her eyes. Gray again.

Then, slowly move down --

So let the sun... shine... in...

Past her chest, her stomach.

Face it with a grin...

To her thighs. Her knees.

Smilers never lose... and frowners never win...

Inching toward her feet.

So let the sun... shine... in...

Down to her toes.

Face it with a grin...

Her feet fill the frame.

A TAG tied around one of her toes, labeled:

DOE, JANE. CAUSE OF DEATH: UNKNOWN.

We HOLD there. A very long beat.

And as the song crescendos --

Open up your heart and let the sun... shine... in...

Her TOE TWITCHES.

BLACK.