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Trepidation: A Film Project on Cultural Trauma

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Courtney DuChene
Trepidation: A Film Project on Cultural Trauma
Media and Communication Studies
Mentor: Alice Leppert and Anthony Nadler

During the summer I focused on creating the first half of a rough cut for a feature-length docudrama film that examines American cultural trauma and the election of Donald Trump. This film would combine primary sources, such as statistics, interviews, and protest footage, and a fictional narrative to illustrate how both media broadcasting and reproduction of traumatic events, such as police shootings and the 2008 recession, have contributed to a general sense of anxiety throughout the country.

The fictional portions of the film would begin in 2012 when Jonah, the primary character casts his first vote for Barack Obama. It would follow Jonah as he navigates his early college years and grapples with the economic stagnation that affects his family daily. This portion of the film would jump forward after Jonah witnesses a police shooting of an unarmed black man at a routine traffic stop.

The film jumps forward to 2016 on the eve of Donald Trump's election in order to suggest a direct link between racial and economic tensions in the United States and his rise. It would follow Jonah through the first 24 hours after the election as he attempts to navigate the anxious climate around him and comes to terms with his own feelings about Trump.

1

INT. JONAH'S FAMILY HOME-EARLY EVENING

1

The bathroom. Multi colored dolphin tiling. An 80's feel. The bright blues and peaches are dated, however, fading.

JONAH (18) rubs shaving cream on the sides of his face. He pulls the razor down his cheeks, leaving his goatee neat, but untouched.

Once he's finished he looks at his phone. The last text, sent to the contact T <3 is pulled up. It reads: "excited for you to meet them tomorrow."

He tucks the phone into his pocket and sighs. He steadies his hands on the edge of the sink.

JONAH

Mom, Dad, I know this is an important day for you it's important

(An after thought)
and scary for me too.

(Another deep breath)
There's someone I'd like you to meet.

He glances at himself in the mirror and sighs. Something still doesn't feel right.

2

INT. JONAH'S FAMILY HOME-MOMENTS LATER

2

JONAH wanders through the living room. Streamers dangle from the ceiling, a con-grad-elations sign is taped to the wall.

He picks up a football and tosses it, casually, into the air as he wanders towards the kitchen.

He opens the refrigerator. Party food is prepared and labeled inside tupperware containers. A sticky note reads: "Don't touch, love Mom."

He turns to the cabinets and finds only a can of black beans and an empty box of cereal. He sighs and shuts the door.

3

INT. JONAH'S FAMILY HOME-EVENING

3

A teenage boy's feet pace across the floor weaving through the dirty clothes and back packs littered throughout. The steps are careful, meticulously planned. There is a delicacy to them even though the walker is trying to trying to step forcefully. His feet POUND softly against the floors.

The walker, KAYIN, is fifteen years old. He is a skinny kid and his lean frame accentuates the femininity of his movements.

He watches himself as he walks, conscious, critical of the way he carries his body. He holds his hands behind his back, tucks them into his pockets, and crosses them over his chest as he tries to decide which combination of strut and hand placement makes his awkward frame look tough.

JONAH (O.S.)

Kayin! We're going to dinner.

KAYIN straightens his body quickly, hoping that whatever he was doing seemed natural. By his face, one would think he'd been caught masterbating.

KAYIN

Give me a sec.

He looks in the mirror one last time. He crosses his arms, settling for the pose.

4 INT. JONAH'S FAMILY HOME--MOMENTS LATER 4

The kitchen. JONAH counts the bills in his wallet. He opens the freezer and pulls out a frozen candy bar. He takes a bite of it before putting it back in the fridge.

5 EXT. PARK--AFTERNOON 5

JONAH and KAYIN sit on top of a picnic table. A bag of fast food in between them.

KAYIN unwraps the single burger as JONAH sucks on a packet of ketchup.

KAYIN

Are you sure you don't want any?

JONAH ribs his brother's side.

JONAH

Mom would have a stroke if I didn't fatten you up first.

(and)

Besides, I'm eating at Tee's later.

KAYIN

Are we finally going to meet her this weekend?

KAYIN hesitantly takes a bite of the burger, still very conscious of his movements.

JONAH

We'll see.

KAYIN

You know Mom's getting pretty impatient.

JONAH smirks.

KAYIN

She is. The other day she tried to find her using the phone book. You have to let us meet her.

JONAH

I'm just waiting. Playing it cool.

KAYIN

Two years. That's not cool, it's freezing.

JONAH

I don't know. I'm starting college soon. There's a lot of girls there.

KAYIN

But you have a girl already and she's going to the same school.

JONAH

I just don't want to jump the shark yet.

(and)

You hear all these stories about people meeting their wives in college. That could happen.

KAYIN

You hear a lot of stories about people meeting their wives in high school too.

JONAH

But those stories... they never work out.

KAYIN goes back to his food, still self conscious about how he eats. He sets down the burger, half finished.

JONAH

Come on, eat.

KAYIN

I'm not hungry

(and)

Can I ask you something?

(A beat, JONAH watches him,
listening.)

Do you think I walk funny?

JONAH

(Without looking up)

No. Why're you asking?

KAYIN

When I came into the garage the other day, Dad said that he's starting to think I'm not trying to walk like that. I didn't know what he meant.

JONAH

You don't walk funny. Dad's just...

KAYIN

Just what?

JONAH

I don't know. Old.

(Both boys smirk)

Don't worry about what he says.

Just walk.

KAYIN

Some kids at school said it too.

JONAH

Kids are stupid. Don't listen to them.

(and)

Did Dad say anything else?

KAYIN

That I should pay more attention to you. He said you know how to move through the world like a man.

KAYIN nods without really understanding. The boys resume eating. JONAH's phone vibrates, breaking the silence. He glances at the text quickly.

KAYIN

That Tee?

JONAH nods. He shelters the text as he replies.

JONAH

Yeah.

(He types: "I'm on my way")
I should go. You okay to get home?

KAYIN nods.

KAYIN

I'll be fine.

JONAH walks away. He glance back at his brother, skinny and alone on the bench, and types: "I'm not sure if it's a good idea for you to come tomorrow."

6

INT. FAYE'S APARTMENT-MOMENTS LATER

6

TERRON crouches down on the floor to open the cupboard. A bag of onions tumbles out from the under the sink cupboard as he opens the door.

FAYE

(As she scoops up the bag)
Sorry! My Mom always kept her onions under the sink, so I keep mine under there too even though I know they don't get enough air and the dampness makes them sprout.
(and)

I really hate making you do this dear, on your first day and all, but I swear I musta called the old building manager, his name was Frank, nearly 20 times for goodness sake and he never did anything except up and quit on us. You won't do that dear?

TERRON

Not for four years at least. I'm trying to get myself through a dance program.

TERRON places a bucket under the piping and uses a wrench to unscrew the p-trap.

FAYE

That's such a good thing for a young man to learn. I was always trying to get my husband to take dance lessons with me but of course he was always too busy lying around that crumby bar. I think I can get my nephew to learn though, he's

FAYE
coming to stay with me. How did you
get started with that?

TERRON
My aunt freaked out when I got
detention in fifth grade for
shoving some kid who bit me. She
told me I better get used to
getting picked on 'cause her sons
had her all fed up with that macho
bullshit. She put me in dance to
soften me up.

FAYE
It's good someone was looking out
for you. I'm sort of doing that for
my nephew. He's been nothing but
trouble for my sister. Skipping
school, running away.
(She shakes her head.)
He's had no discipline.

TERRON
Sounds like he needs a lot of help.

Water flows from the open pipes into the bucket as TERRON
removes the j-shaped PVC bar from the center.

FAYE
Oh, he does, but it's so lonely
here. After my husband left I went
out and bought myself a cat and
swore off men like him forever.
'Course the cat got lost a few days
ago...

TERRON pulls out a grayish blob of hair and molding food
particles. He holds it up for FAYE to see.

TERRON
(Teasing)
You sure he didn't crawl in the
sink?

FAYE covers her face with her hands, horrified.

FAYE
Oh dear, that's so disgusting. It
must be from when I cut my hair...
(She reaches for her purse.)
Here, please take a tip.

TERRON pockets the ten dollar bill she hands him and starts gathering his tools.

TERRON
Thank you ma'am.

7 I/E. APARTMENT BUILDING- CONTINUOUS

7

The conversation from the previous scene carries over.

JONAH walks up the gravel driveway towards an apartment building. As he walks, he checks out his gait in the window, conscious of his brother's words.

FAYE (V.O.)
I can't believe I made you come here and get that out. A practical stranger digging through my waste. I feel like a woman who left out all her dirty laundry... I don't know what I would've done without you though. You'll see when you get married. Women shed their hair everywhere!

He reaches for his phone to double check that the address matches the one he's been staring at all night.

TERRON (V.O.)
I don't think I'll ever have to worry about that.

FAYE (V.O.)
You don't think you'll get married?
A nice young man like you?

He goes inside the building and starts scanning names printed alongside the intercom system.

TERRON (V.O.)
I guess I just don't really see it in the cards for me.
(and)
See you later ma'am.

8 INT. APARTMENT-NIGHT

8

TERRON closes the door to FAYE's apartment and starts down the hall.

JONAH stands in the doorway, pushing one of the intercom buttons repeatedly.

He pushes the front door open as he walks by.

TERRON
You looking for somebody?

Both boys break out into huge grins.

9

INT. TERRON'S APARTMENT-MOMENTS LATER

9

JONAH stands amongst the unpacked boxes in the apartments kitchenette.

JONAH
How was your first day at work?

JONAH starts snooping through cupboards and boxes as he waits. WATER RUNS from the bathroom sink.

TERRON (O.S.)
Pretty good. The lady I met was bat
shit though.

He opens the door to the trash bin and finds the flowers and card resting on top. He takes the card out and reads it.

JONAH
Yeah, what'd she say?

He smiles at the graduation card and pockets it.

TERRON (O.S.)
She just kept telling me about her
ex husband and her nephew. It's
like, lady, I'm here to clean
your drain.

He strides into the kitchen.

TERRON
You ready to make dinner?

10

INT. TERRON'S APARTMENT-MOMENTS LATER

10

A frying pan sitting over the hot gas stove. JONAH gently moves frozen spinach and mushrooms around in the oil. He steps to the side as TERRON dumps a can of spaghetti sauce into the pan.

They work silently. Each man so familiar with the other's rhythms that they don't need to talk.

11 INT. TERRON'S APARTMENT-MOMENTS LATER

11

Their forks CLINK and SCRAP against the bowls as they eat together on the floor of the unpacked living room.

JONAH

Not a bad place you've got here.

TERRON stands up with the towel.

TERRON

It beats living above my Uncle Mick's garage and working in his shop doesn't it? It'll look better when I get the furniture set up and the TV going. I'm gonna paint too.

JONAH

What color?

TERRON

Something dark. Grayish blue maybe.

JONAH

(Closing his eyes)
Like a thunder cloud.

TERRON

(Testing)
Thunder cloud blue. I like it. You should name paint chips.

JONAH

(Stretching himself onto the floor)
I'll have to stay over sometime just to see the color.

TERRON

(Lying beside him.)
There'll always be room here if you want it.

JONAH

(Flirtatiously)
Yeah?

TERRON

Yeah. Got a futon.

JONAH laughs and pushes TERRON playfully.

12 INT. TERRON'S APARTMENT-MOMENTS LATER

12

HOT WATER RUNS over JONAH's hands as they scrub a plastic bowl. Cups, silverware, and a pan float in the flooding suds.

He passes the bowl to TERRON, who dries it and places it carefully onto the rack beside the sink. They work in comfortable silence, standing so close together that their hips are touching. A familiar rhythm forms between them as JONAH rinses a dish and TERRON dries it.

JONAH glances at TERRON's stern expression. Murky water spills over the edge of the sink as he gently splashes TERRON with the suds.

TERRON smirks and continues working. JONAH hands him a cup.

TERRON
Hey, you forgot to rinse this.

JONAH
Yeah?

TERRON
Look.

TERRON splashes him, playfully, as he looks down the barrel of the cup.

JONAH
(Laughing)
You got me.

They turn back to resume working. After they pass a few dishes, JONAH douses him with the suds. The two men playfully fling bubbles at each other. Their fight ends with a kiss and an embrace.

13 INT. APARTMENT-MOMENTS LATER

13

TERRON clutches JONAH's hands as they stand in the building's entryway.

TERRON
Don't leave.

JONAH
(Laughing, incredulous)
I have to, my Dad'll be worried if I'm late.

TERRON

If you tell him you're with a boy,
he'll never worry like that again.

JONAH

Terror I can't do that.
(He looks down)
He's never met a gay person. I'll
see you next week.

TERRON watches as JONAH turns away from him and walks down the gravel driveway.

14 EXT. APARTMENT-NIGHT 14

JONAH pulls out his phone as he walks down the driveway. Two texts from his father: "Thanks for talking to your brother today." and "You're such a good role model for him."

He shoves the phone in his pocket and continues walking. He passes a car and pauses only to study his gait in the reflection.

15 EXT. PARKING LOT-AFTERNOON 15

Subtitle: November 6th 2012.

A college campus. Green punctuated by brick, glass, and steel. JONAH is parked at the edge of the athletic complex. He rolls his windows up before striding out of the car. He locks the doors with the remote as he walks away.

16 INT. ATHLETIC FACILITY-AFTERNOON 16

JONAH sits on a bench in the lobby. He watches the door to the dance studio as girls in leotards and workout clothes stream out of it.

BRIELLE

Jonah!

As BRIELLE, approaches him JONAH searches for an escape.

Nearby, TERRON-- 18, black, and dressed in dance clothes--packs his duffle bag. Once finished, he looks up and searches the sea of girls.

His eyes land on JONAH who is still talking to BRIELLE. Her hands twirl flirtatiously.

The corners of his mouth pull into a small, disappointed frown. He turns to his duffle bag and starts packing, hurriedly.

He pretends not to watch as JONAH approaches.

JONAH

Hey, sorry about that. She's in my poetry class. Had a question about an assignment. You ready?

TERRON looks up and, without meaning to, he smiles. He doesn't know if he believes JONAH, but God he wants to.

17

EXT. APARTMENT-AFTERNOON

17

JONAH is parked behind the building. The boys are LAUGHING RAUCOUSLY. When one man stops all he has to do is look at the other's gleaming white grin to trigger the memory and start back up.

They look at each other, both BREATHING HEAVILY as the laughter settles into comfortable silence.

JONAH

I'm sorry about this weekend. My Dad dragged me into Philly to look at some new headlights for the car.

TERRON

Hey, we got time now. No sense in wasting it by apologizing.

(Beat.)

Just promise me you'll make it to the dance show this week.

JONAH

I'll be there.

(and)

Did you end up going to that church thing?

TERRON

I did.

JONAH

How was it?

TERRON shifts so he's looking out at the wind swing the last of the green trees and grass outside.

TERRON

Hey, put down the window. This fall's not gonna last long.

JONAH obliges. TERRON leans against the car wall so that the breeze touches his forehead. He meditates for a moment before answering.

TERRON

Church was good. Real peaceful, you know? After the service these people from a youth center in the city had us organizing condoms and shit to promote safe sex.

JONAH watches him, grinning at the irony.

JONAH

They let you do that in church?

TERRON

It's cool. The preacher gave a little talk on abstinence first.

JONAH

Sounds like a good time.

TERRON

It was.

(He looks down at his hands.)

I got tested while I was there.

JONAH

Really?

(After a beat)

You w..w..worried about something?

TERRON

Don't sound so freaked out.

JONAH

I'm n..n..not.

TERRON

You are.

The gentle force of his words causes JONAH to look up.

TERRON

(Soft, affectionate)

You do that little stutter thing when something's got you bothered.

JONAH looks away, shy, but smiling. Surprised TERRON bothered to remember.

JONAH

So what, you worried?

TERRON

No, I didn't even mean for it to happen. I was just volunteering and someone asked me if I wanted to go up HIV testing.

(Smirking at the memory)

I thought he just wanted me to help some nurses.

TERRON watches as JONAH looks out the window at the ugly metal garage by the building's side.

JONAH

How was it?

TERRON

Really damn good.

JONAH

(Teasing)

Yeah? You liked getting pricked?

They LAUGH for a moment, but it's tense. Not as free as before. The silence cuts easily between them.

TERRON

There's just this difference between knowing and *knowing*, you feel? It's like I knew I had clean blood for the first time.

(A beat.)

I think you should do it too.

JONAH

Terron I can't...

TERRON

(Talking fast)

There's places where it's free. They don't tell anyone...

JONAH

But I don't need it. Why risk someone finding out if I don't need it?

TERRON

It's just nice to have some assurance. I think about this a lot.

JONAH
Do you think I'm messing with
around other guys?

TERRON turns his head towards the window.

TERRON
It's not about that.

JONAH
Girls then?

The silence is answer enough for JONAH.

JONAH
Terron, I wouldn't do that to you.

He reaches out to touch TERRON's shoulder, but he's shrugged off.

TERRON
It's just about the assurance.

They sit, tension thick between them. TERRON's phone VIBRATES in the cup holder.

TERRON
That's a tenant. I have to go.

TERRON looks at JONAH, hoping he'll stop him.

JONAH
Just go. I have to vote.

TERRON sighs and gathers his bag. He turns to JONAH before he leaves the car.

He grabs his phone and SLAMS the car door.

JONAH leans his head against the side, conflicted about whether he should stop him.

18 EXT. POLLING PLACE-AFTERNOON

18

JONAH stands in line outside of the Montgomery County Warehouse. He trudges forward refusing eye contact.

He takes out his phone and sends TERRON a text. "Are we still on for the viewing tonight?"

19 EXT. JONAH'S FAMILY HOME-LATE AFTERNOON 19

The car is parked in the driveway. JONAH stands beside it scrubbing it furiously.

KAYIN walks up the driveway on his way home from school.

JONAH looks up as he passes. He notices that his brother has a fresh bruise on his face.

20 INT. FAYE'S APARTMENT-CONTINUOUS 20

The kitchen. TERRON leans down by the cupboard. FAYE lingers in the doorway.

FAYE
Your phone is ringing.

TERRON
Who's calling?

FAYE
(Perplexed)
J heart symbol, heart symbol.

TERRON
(A little sheepish.)
Just ignore it.

FAYE silence the vibrating and watches him work.

FAYE
Can I ask you a personal question?

TERRON
Shoot.

FAYE
Is this J heart symbol, heart symbol someone special?

TERRON
I guess you could call it that.
I've known them 'bout as long as
I've known anybody.

He moves to excuse himself from the kitchen, but FAYE blocks the door. She looks down at his phone.

TERRON
That's two questions ma'am. I
believe you only asked for one.

FAYE

Sorry if I'm overstepping.

He shuts the door behind him as he pulls out his phone. Another text pops up from JONAH. It reads: "hey, just calling to say that, if you're not mad, I'd still like to see you tonight."

TERRON smiles, in spite of himself.

21 INT. JONAH'S FAMILY HOME-NIGHT 21

PRE ELECTION COVERAGE PLAYS IN THE BACKGROUND.

The kitchen. JONAH pulls a bag of frozen peas out of the fridge for KAYIN.

THE DOORBELL RINGS.

JONAH

I'll get it.

He sets down the peas and walks towards the door. When he opens it, he sees TERRON waiting outside.

TERRON

You gonna forgive me for all that bullshit?

He steps outside and shuts the door. Just in case.

22 EXT. JONAH'S FAMILY HOME-EVENING 22

The backyard. TERRON sits alone on the step holding a boxy, 90's era radio. He tweaks the antenna and twists the dial to no avail.

JONAH comes out the back door carrying two cans of coke and a bowl of chips. He sits down beside TERRON.

TERRON takes the can and sets it down beside him. He focuses on the radio.

TERRON

Man, I don't even know if this thing works. You really don't want me to meet your Dad so bad that you'll miss the election?

JONAH

(He takes the radio and tweaks the dial in a knowing pattern.)

JONAH
It works I promise. I learned to
tune the channels as a kid.

STATIC CRACKLES. TERRON leans back, a bit startled.

AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL
(From the radio)
Right 1-7-5, Wisconsin 40-49...

TERRON
They reading the results in Morse
Code or something?

JONAH
It's the air traffic controls.

Beat. They listen as the SCREECHING, SOUND OF A FLIGHT fills
the radio. Numbers are shouted over the SPEED OF AIR like an
ingredient list for the air travel recipe.

JONAH
That sound used to glue me to the
radio. It would cut in sometimes
when my parents were dancin' and
their feet would move so fast it
was as if they were taking off with
it. I learned how to tune the radio
to the air lines channel just so I
could hear the planes flying away.

TERRON
You ever been on a plane before?

JONAH shakes his head, regretfully. He closes his eyes,
surpassing a force that is more powerful than tears.

JONAH
Never had a reason too. When I was
a kid though, I kept a list of all
the places I wanted to go just from
hearing about them on the radio. I
still have it.

Neither move as JONAH takes the notebook out of his pocket.
TERRON's fingers linger as JONAH offers him the pocket sized
notebook.

TERRON looks at the list. JONAH's eyes can't let go of him.

TERRON
You've got the entire world on this
list.

JONAH

(Smiling)

I was ambitious. You ever been on a plane?

TERRON

Once, when my Dad died. My Mom griped the whole way to the airport 'bout the cost and how my grandparents wanted him buried in Nowhere, Ohio 'stead of where his family's at, but when we got on the plane she just looked out the window and watched Philly slip out from under her.

JONAH

How'd it feel?

TERRON

It felt like the space between heartbeats. For a moment, our lives were suspended up there with the plane.

Beat. TERRON listens through the STATIC, waiting for another flight to move.

In the soft evening light, JONAH notices for the first time the gentle curves in TERRON's expressions. He is a man who feels with his face.

TERRON

Every time I heard a plane after that I'd go runnin' out onto the fire escape and try n grab its wings. I swear if my arms'd been a little longer they'd have carried me off. I wanted to fly so badly.

JONAH

Where'd you want to go?

TERRON

Just anywhere. I didn't even want to be in the plane. Just somewhere up with the clouds.

The smile spread across his lips is enticing. JONAH leans into kiss him.

TERRON puts his arm on the nape of JONAH's neck to hold the moment to him.

23 INT. JONAH'S FAMILY HOME-NIGHT 23

KAYIN wanders into the kitchen and picks up the bag of peas. He holds it to his eye as he walks towards the door.

As he walks, he passes by the window and sees JONAH and TERRON kissing outside.

He watches for a beat, half from curiosity, half from shock.

24 EXT. JONAH'S FAMILY HOME-LATER 24

KAYIN walks outside, carrying a bag of trash. JONAH and TERRON are glued to the radio announcement of Obama's victory.

JONAH
He did it again!

KAYIN looks at his brother and turns away, suddenly understanding him differently.

KAYIN
(Distant)
Yeah.

JONAH's smile fades slightly at his brother's distant expression.

JONAH
My buddy and I are gonna head out
for a bit okay?

KAYIN
Yeah, okay.

JONAH
I might crash there. Don't tell
Dad, okay.

KAYIN nods.

KAYIN
I got you.

25 EXT. TERRON'S APARTMENT-NIGHT 25

Leaves crinkle under their feet as they walk. TERRON picks up a handful.

TERRON
Hey, the first dead leaves.

He hands them to JONAH.

JONAH
 Look at that.
 (He looks up at the sky)
 It's fall.

JONAH reaches for TERRON's hand. TERRON smiles softly at the victory.

TERRON
 You still driving home tonight?

JONAH
 I was thinking about maybe taking
 up your offer to crash on that
 futon. That be okay?

TERRON's soft smile stretches into a grin.

As they leave, they pass A STUDENT, sitting with his knees pressed against him and crying over Romney's loss.

JONAH can't help but stare at him. He breaks out of TERRON's hold and goes to the student.

JONAH
 Everything okay?

The student stares at him. The SOUND CUTS as he yells get away from me you faggots.

JONAH steps back, shocked by the word and that it's being applied to him. TERRON reaches out to lead him away, but he shrugs off the hold and stares at the STUDENT.

26 EXT. TERRON'S APARTMENT-NIGHT 26

The lights in most of the windows are off. The building stands red against the blue night.

JONAH's car is parked behind the building.

27 INT. TERRON'S APARTMENT-NIGHT 27

JONAH throws the door open to the apartment. He throws his coat on the floor and slams his body on the couch. He tucks his knees into a shield around him.

TERRON picks up the coat and places it neatly on a hook. He takes JONAH's keys out of the pocket and sets them in a bowl, where they will be easy to find in the morning.

TERRON
You want some pizza?

JONAH doesn't respond. He just sits on the couch trying to hold himself together.

TERRON moves into the kitchen. He pulls two microwavable pizzas out of the fridge and starts to warm them up.

When they're finished, he brings them out and sets one in front of JONAH, who doesn't move from his fetal position.

28

INT. TERRON'S APARTMENT-LATER

28

The pizza TERRON set in front of JONAH is gone. The boys sit on the floor, playing gin.

TERRON deals out ten cards to each of them.

TERRON
On your turn, you can choose to draw from the stock pile-- face down-- or the discard pile-- face up. Then you have to add a card to the discard pile. Make sense.

JONAH nods and the boys start playing.

JONAH
I didn't know you played cards.

TERRON
They boys on the street taught me. We'd sit out on someones porch and play gin and Texas Hold Em, and bullshit. I learned how to cuss out there wishing they'd come out one day and play strip poker. After awhile I got real good. If you're winning no one cares if you're skinny and like to dance.

TERRON knocks and throws his final card, face down, onto the table.

JONAH hands his over and TERRON starts reshuffling and dealing.

29

INT. TERRON'S APARTMENT-LATER

29

JONAH lies beside TERRON in the pushed together twin beds. He is wide awake staring out the window.

He looks over his shoulder at TERRON's back. He slowly creeps out of bed to the window sill.

TERRON stirs. He rolls over and sees JONAH sitting in the window sill.

TERRON

J..jonah?

TERRON slips out of bed and patters over. He puts a hand on his shoulder.

TERRON

What're you doing up?

JONAH

Can't sleep. Got a cigarette?

TERRON digs through the night stand.

TERRON

I'm out. You wanna come back to bed?

JONAH doesn't move from the window sill.

JONAH

In a bit.

TERRON watches him for a beat.

TERRON

You wanna talk about what's bothering you?

JONAH looks away. TERRON rubs slow circles on his back.

JONAH

What's the worst thing you've ever done?

TERRON leans back on the window sill.

TERRON

Like legally? Morally? Religiously?

JONAH

Whatever you feel the worst about.

TERRON takes a beat to think.

TERRON

Talking back to my aunt June as a kid. I could be real shitty to her. Uncle Mick washed my mouth out with soap once I was being so nasty.

JONAH

I called my Dad a "goddamn faggot."
(Off TERRON's wide eyed reaction)

I was just a kid repeating something he heard. When my Dad heard me, his eyes looked so goddamn broken. He old me to never say that word again and never to let anybody call me that.

(Softer, to himself)

I worked so hard to be the type of guy nobody would ever think of saying that too.

TERRON puts a hand on JONAH's back and rubs it in slow circles.

TERRON

If you need to go I understand.

JONAH turns, he looks dead at TERRON for the first time in this whole exchange.

JONAH

I want to be here.

He looks away again and both boys stare out into the nights.

30

INT. TERRON'S APARTMENT-EARLY MORNING

30

JONAH and TERRON lie beside each other in bed. JONAH slips out and gets dressed.

He glances at TERRON. He sneaks over and kisses his forehead before sneaking out and shutting the door.

31 INT. JONAH'S FAMILY HOME-EVENING 31

The lights are off. The bathroom is lit only by the light seeping in from the hall. JONAH leans close to the mirror, staring at his reflection.

He studies his face carefully, looking for any signs of difference.

32 EXT. JONAH'S FAMILY HOME-MOMENTS LATER 32

JONAH walks up the driveway towards the house. He sees his brother, headphones on, sitting outside.

JONAH

Kay?

He walks over and pulls the headphones off his brother's ears.

JONAH

What're you still doing up?

KAYIN

I couldn't sleep.

THE MUSIC continues to play through the ear phones. It's slow, trudging, and oddly dark.

JONAH

It's no wonder with this in your ears.

KAYIN grabs the headphones away from his brother. He cradles them to his chest protectively.

KAYIN

It's just a violin part. Listening to it helps me learn the rhythms.

JONAH

It sounds like a slow march to Hell.

KAYIN

They're Spirituals.
(He passes the headphones to JONAH)
Listen.

JONAH cups one of the ear pieces to his ear. A moment of confused recognition passes over his face.

KAYIN
 (Speaking in rhythm)
 Deep river/My home is over Jordan

JONAH removes the headphones from his ear.

KAYIN
 I keep rushing.

JONAH
 Is that all you listen to all day?

KAYIN
 For now. After Sunday I'll start
 hitting shuffle again.

JONAH
 You're really about this music
 thing huh?

KAYIN
 It's a way to get away from
 everything. In the middle of the
 day if things are tough I can just
 punch out, pull up my ear phones or
 duck into a practice room and play.
 It almost makes me like school
 sometimes.

KAYIN shifts away from his brother, suddenly uncomfortable
 with the topic. His face is obscured by shadows.

KAYIN
 I thought you were staying at your
 (Choosing his words carefully)
 Friend's.

JONAH
 I thought I was too, but... I don't
 know. I couldn't sleep.

KAYIN
 Guess that makes two of us.

KAYIN looks away from his brother. The light from the moon
 falls on his face so that it perfectly highlights his
 bruises.

JONAH stares at his brother, searching for a way to help
 him.

JONAH

Anybody ever teach you how to make
a good fist?

KAYIN shakes his head no.

JONAH lifts his limp hand and starts molding the fingers.

JONAH

Lay all four fingers out, together
like this. Then roll them in so
each finger touches its base. Curl
your hand and dig your fingertips
into your palm. Lie your thumb
across the center of your pointer
and middle finger just like that,
alright?

(KAYIN nods)

Don't ever put your thumb in the
center. You'll bust it up.

KAYIN nods again. He takes his hand from JONAH and studies
it, as if looking at a work of art.

JONAH

Now, I'm not saying you hit those
kids. In fact, I'd really like it
if you didn't hit them. Just stand
your ground. Cross your arms. A man
can fix any conflict with tough
eyes.

KAYIN nods again.

JONAH

But if you have to hit somebody,
lead with the knuckles of your
middle and pointer finger. Those
two're the strongest. They got you
covered.

KAYIN practices folding his fist after his brother's model a
few times.

JONAH

There you go. By tomorrow you'll be
chasing down those bullies
yourself.

KAYIN stares at his fist, unsure of the truth of that
statement.

33 INT. JONAH'S FAMILY HOME-MORNING

33

The bathroom. KAYIN's hand is poised over the vanity drawer as he tries to decide which brush in his mothers make up drawer, which shade of her eye shadow and layer of foundation will cover the bruises on his face.

He dips two fingers in the liquid foundation. Gently, he rubs the make up over the shiner on his eye. Once his finishes, he stands back in the mirror.

It's not perfect. His mother's skin tone doesn't quite match russet brown skin. The make up drawer doesn't have anything for his split lip.

KAYIN tosses the make up back in the drawer and slams it shut. He pushes his hood back over his head.

34 EXT. JONAH'S FAMILY HOME-EARLY MORNING

34

KAYIN tucks his legs further into his chest as JONAH strides outside. It's almost as if he believes the backpack sitting on his lap can swallow him.

JONAH stares at the botched makeup on his face.

KAYIN

What?

JONAH

Nothing. Are you ready for school?

KAYIN

I don't feel too hot.

JONAH

What's wrong?

KAYIN shrugs in response. He looks down into the backpack, avoiding eye contact with JONAH.

JONAH reaches out and presses the back of his hand to KAYIN's forehead. He doesn't feel warm.

KAYIN

It's not that... I umm... have a headache.

JONAH slowly withdraws his hand.

He studies KAYIN's face. He can see that it's still bruised from the other day, even though KAYIN tries to hide it with his backpack.

JONAH's phone vibrates-- a text from TERRON: "You coming to campus today?"

JONAH puts it in his pocket without response. He looks at KAYIN.

JONAH
You have your permit?

KAYIN nods, perplexed.

JONAH
Let's take a drive then. See if you
feel better afterwards.

KAYIN looks up, surprised. Afraid to be excited.

35 INT. JONAH'S CAR--MOMENT'S LATER

35

The boys sit in the car in almost the same positions as before. Like KAYIN, JONAH's legs are similarly folded to make room for the backpack and violin on the passenger seat floor.

KAYIN stares at the imposing wheel in front of him. He's overwhelmed by the levers and the gauges.

JONAH
What's the first thing you do when
you get into a car?

KAYIN immediately reaches to turn the keys. JONAH reaches out a hand to stop him.

JONAH
What's the other first thing?

KAYIN's eyes dart around the car, unsure which of the baffling gauges, levers, or pedals he needs to attend to before starting the car. After a beat, he realizes he forgot to buckle his seatbelt. He stretches it over his body.

JONAH
You've got the seat and the mirrors
where you'd like them?

KAYIN takes a second to make adjustments. He nods at JONAH when he's ready.

JONAH reaches over and taps a lever on the side of the wheel.

JONAH

This is for your wipers and this
 (He taps another lever)
 is for the blinkers. You've gotta
 remember to signal even when no
 one's around so you stay in the
 habit. You've got your wallet with
 you?

KAYIN takes his wallet out from his back pocket and flashes the ID at JONAH.

JONAH

You're gonna want to tuck that in
 the visor above your seat. That way
 they can always see your hands if
 you're pulled over.

KAYIN tucks his wallet in the visor. He looks to JONAH, waiting for the next instruction.

JONAH

Ready?

KAYIN nods.

JONAH

Then start driving.

KAYIN turns the key and the ENGINE ROARS TO LIFE.

JONAH glances at the unread text from TERRON on his notification screen. He silences his phone and tucks it in his pocket as they pull out of the driveway.

36

EXT. RIDGE-DAY

36

The car is parked off a gravel road in the grass beside a cove of trees. The boys wander along a rocky path.

JONAH

When I felt your head at the school
 it was cold as ice. You wanna tell
 me what's going on?

KAYIN

I've got cold sweats.

JONAH

Cold sweats huh? You wanna tell me
 why you're dry as a bone right now?
 (and)
 Are you worried about those boys at
 school?

KAYIN

No.

(He shows his brother his
fist)

I've got them now.

JONAH

What is it then? A girl?

KAYIN turns his head away. The involuntary grin that spreads across his face answers the question.

KAYIN

I just didn't want her to think I'm
some kind of pussy.

(and)

How'd you go about getting with
Tee? Every guy at my school talks
about getting his dick wet and I
can't even get a girl to kiss me.

JONAH uses his thumb to smear the makeup off KAYIN's face.

KAYIN

(Insistent)

How'd you do it?

JONAH

Slow down kid, it's not like that
between me and Tee.

KAYIN

You mean you've never...

JONAH

No.

(Butching up)

I mean, I've got my dick sucked,
but I'm just not sure I like what
having sex, real sex, says about
me, you know? I'm not sure if I can
be that kind of person.

KAYIN looks at his brother, maybe understand, maybe not, but recognizing something in him all the same.

37

EXT. RIDGE-DAY

37

KAYIN trails behind JONAH as they hike up towards the top of
a ridge.

JONAH

C'mon.

KAYIN

Are you sure we've gotta go up here?

JONAH

I want to show you something.

KAYIN eyes the used needles and the broken glass suspiciously as they continue hiking. When they reach the top, however, he can't take his eyes off of the sights and SOUNDS of the HIGHWAY only 20 yards below them.

JONAH

Sit down.

KAYIN sits down beside him. They stare down at the passing cars.

Out of nowhere, JONAH SCREAMS loudly.

KAYIN looks at him, bewildered. He laughs, a little shaken.

JONAH

Try it.

KAYIN

I can't.

JONAH

Sure you can.

JONAH SCREAMS again.

KAYIN looks out at the road. He waits a beat and SCREAMS.

His yell comes from a place deep inside him. It scratches his voice in a sustained, choking burst.

Tears well out of him as he screams. His voice fades until the tears are the only thing left. They fall hard and fast.

JONAH puts his hand on his brother's shoulder. The SOUND of his brother's cries reverberates off the horizon.

KAYIN

I sound pretty messed up don't I?

JONAH

It's better out there than in here
(He gestures, a fist over his stomach)

Inside, it's eating you up, but out there...

(He shrugs)

It's just part of the wind.

He wipes his brother's eye.

JONAH

You can't be crying when it happens though.

KAYIN stares at him, unsure if that's crazy or beautiful.

38

EXT. JONAH'S FAMILY HOME-AFTERNOON

38

JONAH and KAYIN pull into the driveway. JONAH holds out his fist for a bump.

JONAH

Pretty good for your first time.

KAYIN

How'd you learn to drive?

JONAH

Dad taught me. He told me I had to pay attention so I could teach my son someday.

He looks out the window, his eyes suddenly sad. He turns back with a phony grin plastered on his face.

JONAH

I think he was just trying to make sure I could teach you so he could take it easy.

39

INT. JONAH'S FAMILY HOME-LATER

39

In the background the ANSWERING MACHINE PLAYS FIRST UNHEARD MESSAGE:

PRINCIPAL (O.C.)

Mr. and Mrs. Washington, I'm calling to inform you that your student, Kayin Martin Washington was reported absent in one or more of his classes today...

JONAH and KAYIN stand by the sink, washing and drying dishes.

JONAH
You been cutting school a lot?

KAYIN shrugs.

KAYIN
Couple of times.

He focuses on scrubbing a dish.

JONAH
Jesus Kay, why?
(Beat.)
Have you been using what I taught
you?
(Beat.)
You know Mom and Dad've worked so
hard...

KAYIN slams the dish down.

KAYIN
Would you go if everyone was
kicking the shit outta you and
calling you a faggot?

JONAH tenses.

40 INT. JONAH'S FAMILY HOME/DANCE STUDIO-LATER

40

INTERCUTTING BETWEEN JONAH AND TERRON.

The basement. The room is packed with the remnants of a playroom. Train tracks run across the floor, alphabet posters and sloppy paintings are tacked to the wall. In the center of the room hangs a punching bag.

JONAH stands with his back turned to the bag. He bounces a little, warming up.

KAYIN watches him sullenly from a metal folding chair backed into the corner of the room. He looks down, avoiding JONAH's show.

JONAH
You want help or not?

KAYIN looks up reluctantly.

CUT TO: TERRON peaking out into the hallway as people stream inside. He searches the faces for JONAH.

CUT TO: JONAH sets his feet in a boxer's stance.

JONAH

Stand with your feet about shoulder width apart. Left foot slightly forward.

KAYIN

Even if I'm left handed?

JONAH adjusts his stance.

JONAH

Right foot forward then.

CUT TO: TERRON, standing in the dressing room after the performance. He is surrounded by girls with flowers. He quickly zips up his bag, tears peak at the edges of his eyes.

CUT TO: JONAH squaring up to face the bag and he takes a hit. He bounces back. Mocking a defensive position, he circles the bag. He mimics ducking and dodging hits with swift, capable ability.

JONAH

Keep light on your toes. Play it defensive. You don't want to make to many hits. Be strategic.

He makes a right handed punch at the bag and bounces back, reassuming the defensive. He keeps circling. Eye's always quick for another's motion.

JONAH

It's not about winning right now.
It's just about dodging the hits.

He makes a quick powerful shot towards the shoulder of the bag.

CUT TO: TERRON, alone in the studio. He dances, emotional and beautiful in his element.

CUT TO: The bag as it falls. JONAH poses over it, arm flexed in victory of his chest. Recalling the famous photo of Muhammad Ali standing over Sonny Linston.

41 INT. TERRON'S APARTMENT-NIGHT

41

TERRON stands in front of the mirror, combing his hairs to go out. He balances his cellphone between his shoulder and his ear.

TERRON

Hey man, I don't think I'm gonna be able to make it out tonight. A couple of girls from the show want to meet for drinks.

(A beat, sadder)

Yeah, I sure am lucky.

As he hangs up the phone, he sees a picture of him and JONAH. He quickly redials.

TERRON

Hey man, I think I'm gonna roll down anyway. Yeah, see you in a bit.

42 INT. APARTMENT-MOMENTS LATER

42

TERRON bumps into FAYE as he strides out the entryway. Her mail spills onto the floor.

FAYE

Sorry! Sorry!

TERRON leans down to help her pick up the mail. They finish gathering the mail. FAYE sees TERRON, dressed to go out for the first time.

FAYE

You look dressed up. You going out somewhere.

TERRON

Meeting a couple friends.

FAYE

Are you seeing J heart symbol, heart symbol?

TERRON

No.

(and)

I think that's over.

FAYE looks at him. A little disappointed.

FAYE

I'm sorry to hear that.

(She touches TERRON's arm)

He seemed nice when I met him.

TERRON

You saw him?

FAYE

Last night. He was coming out of the building. I was sitting out here smoking because I couldn't sleep. He told me you two met in high school and to tell you that he was really sorry.

(and)

Well, I should get back upstairs. My nephews just getting moved in. I'll see you?

TERRON

(Distant)

Yeah, I'll see you later

He remains on his knees for a moment, staring forward at nothing in particular and wondering what that means.

43 INT. JONAH'S FAMILY HOME-NIGHT

43

JONAH sits at the kitchen table. VIOLIN music streams down from upstairs.

He flips through TERRON's snap story. As he stares at the pictures of TERRON with girls, he feels a pang of jealousy.

He shuts the phone and flings it across the table. He stands up and starts pacing the kitchen.

As he walks, he notices the music school flyers still sticking out of KAYIN's back pack. He reaches down and picks them up. He takes them back to the table and sits down.

44 INT. BAR-NIGHT

44

JONAH walks in through the people and smoke.

He spies TERRON, leaning over a pool table. His arm drawn back and poised to shoot.

He strikes and the ball flies, towards a pocket.

JONAH smiles when TERRON catches his eye.

TERRON nods, calm and cool. His eyes are trimmed in red, as if he's been crying, but he tries not to let it show.

He turns his back to JONAH and continues playing.

45 INT. SCHOOL LOUNGE-NIGHT

45

JONAH and TERRON stand around the school pool table. JONAH takes a shot. It flies, helter-skelter. TERRON grabs the cue ball and sets it back in front of him.

TERRON
I'll let you have a reshot.

TERRON stands behind JONAH. He positions JONAH's arms.

TERRON
(Whispering in JONAH's ear.)
When you shoot don't swing up with
your arm. Keep it straight, steady.

He helps JONAH guide the shot through. A stripped ball rolls into a pocket.

JONAH
Why didn't we stay and play at the
bar?

TERRON
The guys there, they wouldn't like
that.

JONAH
You know them?

TERRON
I played cards with 'em growing up.
They're not the type of people
who'd react well to two men holding
each other.

JONAH
I thought you didn't care about
things like that.

TERRON
Everybody gets closety sometimes.

JONAH watches as TERRON stretches out to shoot. He considers his words.

46 INT. TERRON'S APARTMENT-NIGHT

46

Post coital. TERRON lies stretched out on the bed in his gym shorts. He scratches his balls.

JONAH stands by the dresser, pulling on a borrowed t-shirt.

TERRON looks at his eyes in the darkness.

TERRON

That knocked me out.
(and)
You gonna sleep tonight?

JONAH

It depends.

TERRON

On what?

JONAH

The moon cycles or some shit.
(Getting into the bed)
K and I used to push the beds
together like this.

TERRON

Yeah?

JONAH

Yeah, until we got the bunks. K
cried so hard the night they made
him sleep by himself up there. He
screamed and screamed. I told him
the top bunk was a plane, and when
he feel asleep it would carry him
to all the places we heard about on
the pilot's radio. He still cried
the next few nights after that, but
I'd tell him stories about all the
places he was traveling. Ever since
then I've had trouble falling
asleep. My mind moves to fast,
trying to make up stories still.

TERRON

What do you think about?

JONAH

A lot of times I think about
flying. In my head, I imagine
myself holding the wheel, soaring
above the clouds like I finally
found heaven. Then I land in
Mumbai, or Maui, any of the places
I imagined and I can't get off the
plane. I know I want to get off,
but I'm gripped with fear.

(and)

That's some crazy shit isn't it? I
was too afraid to get out and touch
the world.

TERRON lean over and kisses his head. JONAH looks at him lovingly.

JONAH
Thank you.

TERRON
For what?

JONAH
For being here. For this.

TERRON
You don't have to thank me.
(He stretches out again)
I liked it too.

JONAH
Yeah but I've never... I'd never...

TERRON
Hey, me neither. Everything's
unchartered right now.

JONAH
Yeah?

TERRON
Yeah. But I'm glad I got off that
plane with you.

JONAH rolls on his side so he can see TERRON. He smiles at the silhouette.

JONAH
Meet my brother.

TERRON looks at him, taken a back.

JONAH
Meet my brother. He's got a violin
recital this weekend.

TERRON's face breaks out into a grin.

TERRON
Okay.

47 INT. TERRON'S APARTMENT-MORNING

47

TERRON stands across the counter from JONAH as he scoops eggs into his mouth.

TERRON

So what do I need to know about Kayin?

JONAH

He's a good kid. Been playing piano since he was four. My Dad found his drawing music notes and stanzas with his color crayons. He saved so much to put him through piano lessons. Thought he had the next Mozart.

TERRON

Did he?

JONAH shrugs.

JONAH

He's decent. Better at violin though. More Vivaldi than Mozart.

TERRON

Sounds sophisticated.

JONAH

He is. When we were six, I wanted a race car. Kayin was saving to buy his first violin.

48 INT. AUDITORIUM-AFTERNOON

48

KAYIN looks out into the crowd. A soft smile can't help but touch his face. He raises his violin and begins.

His eyes move quickly across the music, his arms fluidly.

KAYIN

Deep River/My home is over
Jordan/Deep River, Lord/I want to
cross over into campground./Deep
River./my home is over
Jordan./River, Lord,/I want to
cross over into campground./Oh,
don't you want to go,/To the Gospel
feast;/That Promised Land,/Where
all is peace?/Oh, deep River,
Lord,/I want to cross over into
campground.

JONAH is entranced by how well his brother plays and sings. He leans forward in his seat completely riveted.

TERRON watches JONAH. The sun shines behind and down on him creating almost a halo around him.

49 INT. JONAH'S CAR-AFTERNOON 49

JONAH and TERRON watch from a distance as KAYIN talks to a girl.

TERRON
He's got a girl. Ain't that cute.

JONAH smiles as KAYIN walks back to them, turning back to wave at the girl every now and then as he goes.

JONAH
You want to go for a drive? After we drop him off?

TERRON
Sure.
(Looking at the sky)
There's not many days like this left.

50 INT. JONAH'S CAR-NIGHT 50

JONAH and TERRON are parked in a gravel lot. JONAH sits back down in his seat.

JONAH
I felt like I was flying.

TERRON LAUGHES and GRINS at him

TERRON
That's what happens when you let other people drive sometimes.

JONAH smiles and adjusts the dial on the radio. Both boys sit back and just listen for a moment.

JONAH watches lovingly as TERRON drums on the steering wheel.

JONAH
You're off beat.

TERRON
I am not.

JONAH takes his hand.

JONAH

You are. You always drum off beat
when we listen to music in the car.

TERRON, a little embarrassed, stops drumming.

TERRON

(Smiling softly)
Shut up.

TERRON

You ready to head back?

JONAH

I figured we could go to your
place.

TERRON looks out the car window.

TERRON

I don't know. It's getting pretty
dark. The headlights are starting
to flicker. I'd rather just go back
to the house and take the bus.

JONAH

We'll be fine.
(He squeezes TERRON'S hand.)
I promise.

TERRON looks at him uncertain, but puts the car in gear.

51 INT. PUBLIC RESTROOM-NIGHT

51

Blood runs off JONAH'S hands into the sink as he wrings soap
through his fingers.

COP (V.O.)

Do you know why I stopped you
tonight?

TERRON (V.O.)

(Calmly.)
I know the lights have been getting
dim, but it's fine. We're just
trying to get home. We're not doing
anything wrong.

COP (V.O.)

You tryna be smart with me?

TERRON (V.O.)
 (A bit sarcastic.)
 No sir. Just trying to cooperate.

COP (V.O.)
 I'm gonna need you to step out of
 the car.

TERRON (V.O.)
 W..w..why? I just told you we're
 not...

COP (V.O.)
 I said get outta the car.

TERRON
 (Exasperated)
 Okay, give me a sec.

THE SOUND OF A SEATBELT CLICKING. Followed by the sound of
 THREE GUNSHOTS.

JONAH looks in the mirror, eyes still wide and scared.

52 INT. JONAH'S FAMILY HOME-NIGHT 52

The kitchen. It's almost 2 AM. The kitchen is lit by a
 single bulb.

JONAH sits at the table across from KAYIN. He won't look at
 his brother. He stares at the wall, the clock-- anything
 else.

53 INT. JONAH'S FAMILY HOME-EVENING 53

A few weeks later. KAYIN walks into the living room. The
 answering machine beeps. A message from his mother.

DELILAH
 I just don't know what to do for
 him anymore. He's just... gone all
 the time. I wish... I wish we could
 send him somewhere.

KAYIN looks down at his plate. He knows what he has to do.

54 EXT. BUS BENCH-DAY 54

KAYIN sits on the bench. His violin case by his side.

55 INT. JONAH'S FAMILY HOME-EARLY EVENING 55

JONAH sits across the table from KAYIN. KAYIN pushes a stack of bills towards them.

JONAH looks at the pile with a mixed sense of relief and dread.

56 INT. JONAH'S FAMILY HOME-AFTERNOON 56

JONAH zips up a duffle bag. He looks around at his bedroom one last time.

He walks through the empty house, pausing momentarily to say good-bye to each room.

57 INT. APARTMENT-AFTERNOON 57

JONAH stands in the doorway of the apartment, duffle bag draped over his shoulder. The posters, the bookshelf, everything but the futon has been taken by TERRON's aunt and uncle.

JONAH walks in and sits down on the couch.

58 INT. APARTMENT-EARLY EVENING 58

Subtitle: November 8th 2016.

JONAH, now 23, keys into the apartment. It's bright from the sunlight outside, but growing dimmer by the minute. He reaches for a light switch, but no lights come on.

He sets down a plastic bag of groceries and goes to a closet. He fishes a lightbulb off the top shelf. It slips through his fingers and falls from the top shelf.

A fragment of glass cuts his thumb as he gathers the piece. JONAH's eyes widen at the bubble of blood that materializes.

59 INT. APARTMENT-MOMENTS LATER 59

JAVIER, a 25 year old mixed black and Latino man, stands in JONAH's open doorway. His shoulders are wide as a tank. A beaten up backpack wrests neatly on them.

He sticks his head, curiously, into JONAH's apartment.

JAVIER

Jonah, why so dark?

He wanders inside and sees JONAH compulsively rubbing his hands together, unable to move beyond the threshold of the closet.

He kneels in front of JONAH and gently takes his hands to stop the compulsive rubbing. He doesn't say a word, just stares into JONAH's wider, terrified eyes and waits for it to pass.

JONAH's breathing slows. For a moment he stares into JAVIER's sympathetic gaze, before he averts his gaze to escape the pity and stands-- rushing away from it all.

JONAH
(His hands still shaking)
Who t..t..tracked all these
d..d..damn leaves in here?

60 INT. APARTMENT-LATER

60

JONAH picks at his bandaged hand as JAVIER changes the light bulb.

JONAH
I d..d..don't usually... I can
change my own l..l..lightbulbs you
know.

JAVIER
Don't worry about it. I get it.

He flicks on the light switch.

JAVIER
There. No harm done.

JONAH
Can I m..m..make you dinner or
something?

JAVIER
I just came from eating, but we're
still on to watch the results come
in tonight right?

JONAH nods.

61 INT. APARTMENT-LATER

61

JONAH sits on the bed skimming through a novel, as JAVIER tries to bury himself in his textbook.

Every few minutes, JAVIER looks from the silent TV screen to the US map hanging above them.

JAVIER
Ready to turn it on yet?

JONAH doesn't look up from his book. JAVIER closes his. He anxiously taps his pencil against the cover.

JAVIER
I'm a little scared.

JONAH looks up from his novel. He carefully considers JAVIER'S features, but doesn't speak.

JAVIER
I'm confident, but scared, you know?

JONAH doesn't nod. He doesn't speak. He just listens. JAVIER reaches for the remote.

JAVIER
Let's do this.

62 INT. APARTMENT-MOMENTS LATER

62

JONAH and JAVIER stand side by side, shading in the map above their bed to match the electoral map.

JONAH colors Vermont, Virginia, Massachusetts, Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey, DC, Illinois, Rhode Island, New York, and Connecticut blue.

JAVIER shades Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, Arkansas, Indiana, Kentucky, West Virginia, South Carolina, Tennessee, Oklahoma, Mississippi, Alabama, Texas, Kansas and Nebraska in red.

JAVIER glances at the screen as he works.

JAVIER
She took New Mexico!

JONAH moves across the map to mark it in blue.

63 INT. APARTMENT-MOMENTS LATER

63

The boys sit cross legged on the futon. Their faces lit up by the TV screen. The partially completed electoral map hangs above them.

JAVIER anxiously caps and uncaps his marker.

JAVIER
Why is he leading in Ohio?

The glow of the screen accentuates JONAH's wide, scared eyes. He glances at JAVIER, before sliding his bookmark out of the novel.

JAVIER
He's only sweeping the South. We knew that would happen...

JAVIER
California still has to be counted. That's 55 votes...

He makes two columns: Trump and Clinton. He sneaks a glance at JAVIER before starting to add up the current electoral votes.

JONAH starts to add the states leaning Trump and those leaning Clinton to his totals.

JONAH scribbles out his totals. He takes states that went blue for Obama-- Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Ohio-- and adds them to Clinton's total.

It doesn't help.

JAVIER
Fuck it. I'm coloring in California now.

JAVIER optimistically and frantically begins coloring in the map. Part way through scribbling he realizes he is holding the red marker.

JAVIER
(Laughing, tense)
Toss me blue?

JONAH tosses him the blue marker.

JONAH checks and rechecks his math. He knows she can't win...

He looks back at JAVIER, whose slight smile has broken into a sunrise grin. He colors as fast as his heart pounds. The marker SHRIEKS against the map.

He believes his enthusiasm can win her the presidency.

JONAH crumples the book mark and shoves it in his pocket. He places his hand on JAVIER'S arm to halt the coloring.

JONAH

I'm...

JAVIER stares at him. All motions freeze and he listens just as before.

JONAH looks down and smiles apologetically.

JAVIER

Don't be nervous. She's got this.

JONAH

I'm going to put some Ramen on.
W..w..whenever my Mom was worried
about something she'd cook. You
want any?

JAVIER

Yeah, okay.

64 INT. APARTMENT-LATER

64

The novel sits propped open beside JONAH as he dumps the flavor packet inside. He leans over the pot to smell the ramen. Steam rises above his face and KAYIN SINGING DEEP RIVER floods the room.

JONAH stares at the open window. The wind blows up the curtain and carries in the music. He stirs the ramen to its rhythm.

JONAH's hips sway as he stirs.

JAVIER (O.C.)

Fuck, he's leading Wisconsin.

The music ends. JONAH tries to glimpse the singer from the window. No one is outside. JONAH stares at a man sitting on the building steps smoking a cigarette.

65 INT. APARTMENT-LATER

65

JAVIER shovels ramen into his mouth. Sweat beads along his forehead. He starts counting votes on his fingers.

JAVIER

If she takes Minnesota... ten...
Pennsylvania... twenty...
Michigan... and...
(Beat.)
She can't win....

He sets his bowl of ramen on the futon and starts to pace.

He goes over to his backpack and starts throwing folder from the bag.

JAVIER
Where is it?

JONAH
Javier...

JAVIER's fist emerges from the door with a rosary wrapped around it. He kneels on the floor in front of JONAH.

JAVIER
(Whispering.)
Our Father Who Art in Heaven,
hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom
Come, they will be done on Earth as
it is in Heaven. Give us this day
our daily bread and Forgive us our
trespasses as we forgive those who
trespass against us. Lead us not
into temptation, but deliver us
from evil.

JAVIER's quivering hands move to the next bead. JONAH tries to take the rosary from him.

JONAH
(Wavering)
J..j..javier...

JAVIER yanks the rosary to his chest.

JAVIER
(Fervently.)
Hail Mary Full of Grace the Lord is
with you. Blessed are you among
women and blessed is the fruit of
your womb Jesus. Holy Mary Mother
of God pray for us sinners now and
at the hour of your death. Amen.

JAVIER's eyes cloud with tears, but he doesn't cry.

JAVIER
Hail Mary Full of Grace

JONAH
It..it..it'll be ok..k..kay...

JAVIER'S voice starts to break as he prays. JONAH stares at the single tear that break through his stoic eyes. He wants to reach out and caress, to smooth circles on JAVIER's cheek, but he has forgotten how to raise his arms.

NEWS ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
 The *New York Daily News* reports a
 "House of Horrors."

JAVIER
 The Lord is with you.

JAVIER's body begins to fold in grief. His voice grows louder.

JONAH looks around them rapidly. He can't tell whether he hears GUNSHOTS or FIREWORKS bursting outside. He staggers towards the map and stares at it.

JAVIER
 (Simultaneously.)
 Blessed are you among women and
 blessed is the fruit of your women
 Jesus.

JONAH
 Javier, listen. I think there's
 f..f..fireworks outside.

NEWS ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
 The *New York Times*, *The Daily Morning News*, and *The Washington Post* all report "Trump triumphs."

JAVIER
 Holy Mary mother of God pray for us
 sinners now and at the hour of our
 death, Amen.

JONAH
 She had to win...

JAVIER's trembling hands drop the rosary beads. He scrambles to pick them back up. His words don't miss a beat. They drum louder in even, processed beats.

JONAH stares at him from the map, trembling.

NEWS ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
 (Simultaneously)
The Wall Street Journal, *Arizona Republic*, and *USA Today* declare:
 "President Trump."

JAVIER
 Hail Mary full of Grace...

JAVIER

(Growing louder.)

The Lord is with you. Blessed are you amongst women and blessed is the fruit of your womb Jesus. Holy Mary mother of God pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death.

JONAH

Javier, please. Let's just turn it off and go to bed. Please, while she can still win...

JAVIER

Amen.

SILENCE. JAVIER starts the prayer again. His voice fast, afraid.

JONAH can't move from the window to comfort him.

66

INT. APARTMENT-MORNING

66

JONAH juts up, awake. The TV is still on. JAVIER's rosary lies, abandoned, in front of the futon.

LOCAL NEWS ANCHOR

In a shocking victory, Donald Trump cinches the election...

He stares at the TV, wondering if it was just part of his nightmare.

JONAH

Javier?

He listens for the gurgle of coffee, a toilet flush, the bathroom sink.

The apartment answers him, BIRDS CHIRPING as they fly south and CARS STARTING as people drive to work.

JONAH notices, JAVIER's rosary lying in front of the bed. He picks it up and stares at the beads, looking for an answer. He tucks them in his pocket.

- 67 INT. APARTMENT-MOMENTS LATER 67
- JONAH moves, slow as a ghost, through the apartment's kitchen, empty bedroom, and bathroom. In each space he looks for JAVIER.
- 68 EXT. STREET-AFTERNOON 68
- JONAH kicks a beer can as he walks down the street. He doesn't care that rain streams down around him.
- He passes a couple, covering themselves with a newspaper as they make out against a light post. His hand gropes her boob over her shirt, and then under, as JONAH passes.
- 69 EXT. RIDGE-EARLY EVENING 69
- JONAH sits amongst the broken glass and used needles on the ridge. His legs dangle over the edge.
- He stares down over the sunset and the interstate. The cars that pass him are just far enough away to look small.
- He's soaked from the beating, icy rain. His clothes hang heavy around him, but he doesn't shiver.
- He opens his mouth, and for the first time in his life the scream doesn't come bursting forward. Tears flow instead.
- 70 I/E. APARTMENT-EVENING 70
- JONAH struggles with the keys to his building.
- 71 INT. APARTMENT-MOMENTS LATER 71
- JONAH reaches his apartment. Taped to the door is a note with black lives don't matter scrawled across the header.
- JONAH rips off the note and crumples it without reading the rest.
- 72 INT. APARTMENT-LATER 72
- JONAH sits slumped at the card table eating baked beans cold from the can.
- As he eats, the apartment floods with the sound of a FAMILY LAUGHING. There are children's GIGGLES punctuated with their PATTTERING FOOTSTEPS. A mother's PICCOLO TITTERS performance is interrupted by the happy PIG SNORT that is her true laugh.
- A father's BELLY CHUCKLES run a bass line for the symphony.

The LAUGHTER and the VOICES fade. JONAH leans forward and picks up JAVIER'S rosary. He looks at his reflection in the faceted beads.

FLASHBACK TO: Subtitle: I. Rosary.

The apartment hallway. JONAH bumps into JAVIER as they walk in opposite directions. JAVIER'S textbook falls to the floor. JONAH helps him gather it.

JAVIER

Thank-you.

JONAH

Don't mention it.

LATER: JONAH'S apartment. Early morning, so dark it still seems like night.

A lamp is turned on, behind JONAH, who sits stiffly at the card table. He holds the rosary.

JAVIER lays, passed, on the futon.

He stirs. JONAH sits nervously as he sits up.

JAVIER

The fuck am I?

JAVIER reflectively reaches into his pocket.

JAVIER

Where's my wallet?

JONAH raises the wallet.

JONAH

I d..d..didn't steal anything. I swear.

JAVIER walks over to the table and snatches his wallet and the rosary. He goes back to the sleeping bag and starts checking the contents.

JONAH

H..h..honet I didn't. I was just checking for ID, medical stuff.

JAVIER shuts his wallet, satisfied that nothing has been stolen. He lays back and holds the rosary over his head, studying it in the moonlight.

JAVIER
How long was I out for?

JONAH
B..b..bout half an hour. I was just
'bout to call 911. Thought I'd wait
a little though.

JAVIER nods and goes back to playing with the rosary. He catches JONAH watching him and pockets the beads.

JAVIER
I got them in the Army.

JONAH
How long'd you serve?

JAVIER
Six years. I've been out for awhile
now.

(and)
I guess I'm still not sure what to
do with all my time.

JONAH
Aren't you a s..s..student?

JAVIER's lips pull into a tight grimace.

JAVIER
I'm studying modern and classical
languages. The Army needs
translators.

JONAH
So you're going back?

JAVIER
(Shrugging)
Nothing else for me to do but
re-enlist. I was never good enough
at anything else.

(and)
I'd have to cut my hair though.
That makes me kind of sad.

He presses the rosary to his heart and shakes his head.

END FLASHBACK.

73 INT. APARTMENT-LATER 73

JONAH's muddy clothes lie in a pile on the bathroom floor. He stands in front of the mirror. The shower runs behind him.

He splashes water on his face. As he stands in the steam, he tries to cry. His face contorts. He breaths deep sobs, but nothing comes.

He looks at his numb face and red eyes in the mirror.

He looks at the laundry basket, overflowing with clothes in the corner.

74 INT. APARTMENT-MOMENTS LATER 74

JONAH, now dressed, takes a basket of clothes to the basement.

He places them in the machine and throws in a Tide pod. He sits on top of a dryer and waits.

75 INT. APARTMENT-LATER 75

JONAH pulls the full garbage bag from the bin. As he walks towards the door he passes a violin case on the floor.

FLASHBACK TO: Subtitle: II. Military.

The apartment. JONAH opens the door for JAVIER in the hallway as he carries a to his room.

JAVIER

I can't believe you put a lock on the front.

JONAH

It's the new security system. Landlord didn't want people just wandering in and buzzing to get to the rooms anymore.

JAVIER gestures towards the violin case.

JAVIER

Do you play?

JONAH

No. My brother did... I got one for him.

Both men focus on their keys-- JONAH unlocking his apartment, JAVIER locking his. Before JONAH disappears inside, JAVIER...

JAVIER
About the other night...

JONAH
D..d..don't worry about it.

JAVIER
Hey, a couple of my buddy's and I are going out to see a movie. Would you like to join?

JONAH
No t..t..thank you.

JAVIER
Well, if you're ever interested, hit me up.

He looks at JAVIER, recognizing something about him in himself.

JONAH
Do you play b..b..basketball?

Later: a park. JONAH and JAVIER are finishing a game of pig. JAVIER shots and misses a shot from mid court. Earning him a G.

JAVIER and JONAH walk towards the bench.

JAVIER
I can't believe you made that shot. Di you used to play?

JONAH shakes his head.

JONAH
I played f..f..football in college.

JAVIER
Still you're good.

JONAH turns the ball in his hands.

JONAH
I've h..h..had a lot of free time.

JAVIER sits down and takes a drink.

JAVIER
Same, at least you're more
productive with yours than I am
with mine.

JONAH watches curiously as JAVIER picks at the Army label on
his water bottle.

JONAH
What was it like? In the
M..m..middle East?

JAVIER
(His voice cracks slightly,
but there are no tears.)
In Fallujah?

JONAH
I'm s..s..sorry. I shouldn't have
asked... It's just...

JAVIER looks at JONAH.

JAVIER
It's fine. Ask away.

JONAH
Yeah. D..d..did you ever like...

JAVIER
Kill anyone?

JONAH
Y..y..yeah.

JAVIER
Everyone asks that. A lot of the
major conflicts happened before my
time. I met guys who's minds have
never left. I'm lucky to only have
killed a few mother fuckers.

JONAH
How do you know they were mother
fuckers?

JAVIER
Don't ask me that. Or any military
man. When you're there... you're
doing what you've gotta do.
Believing what you've got to
believe.

JONAH

How d..d..did you deal with that?

JAVIER

I'm still trying to work that out.
Right now I'm self medicating.
Booze and Veteran's bars, the age
old cure.

(and)

I'm not in as much pain as some of
the other guys. I have friends who
wake up in the middle screaming and
who think they still feel their
blown off limbs. I'm lucky I don't
have pain like that.

(and)

Why're you asking?

JONAH

I had a... someone I cared about a
lot... they d..d..died. I guess I'm
still trying to work somethings out
too.

JAVIER watches JONAH stare through him, through the sky. He can see the memory play out in JONAH's eyes. He knows better than to ask.

JAVIER

You know, I have a lot of friends
with that two million year stare.

(and)

You wanna play again next week?

JONAH looks back at JAVIER.

JONAH

Y..y..yeah. I'd like that.

END FLASHBACK.

76

EXT. APARTMENT-LATER

76

JONAH carries his bag of garbage and the violin out to the bin.

He accidentally tips the garbage can when he throws the trash away. It clatters against a neighbor's window.

Lights flash on inside the building and A MAN is quickly out on the stoop.

MAN
What the fuck, man?

The man shoves JONAH, who cowers against the wall as the MAN starts to kick him.

DORINDA, an eight year old girl, charges at them from a pick up truck. A roller suitcase bounces behind her.

The MAN raises his leg to kick JONAH again.

Her father, DAVID, flies out of the truck. He's younger, barely older than JONAH, and dressed in a blue work shirt with his name stitched over the pocket.

DAVID
Dorinda, shit don't get in the middle of that.

He grabs DORINDA's sweatshirt hood and pulls her back.

DORINDA
But he's being an asshole!

MAN
He threw a trash bin at my window.

DORINDA
He bumped it as he was throwing out the trash...

She looks at her father, pleading for help.

DAVID pulls her away from the man.

The MAN stares JONAH down.

MAN
What kind of pussy needs a six year old to protect 'im?

DORINDA sticks her tongue at the man who stick his out back.

DAVID
Dorinda, that's enough. Go inside and buzz your Aunt Faye, okay?

DORINDA
But he...

DAVID
Go.

DORINDA hangs her head. She drags her suitcase inside, where she waits in the doorway, watching her father.

DAVID

(To the MAN)

Hey, I'm not trying to start something, but my kid's around. She's here to see her Mom, and I just can't leave her if shit like this is going on.

MAN

I understand. I'm sorry she had to see that.

DAVID

Whatever, if it doesn't happen again I can forget about it.

He motions for DORINDA to go upstairs as the MAN pushes his way back inside.

DAVID

(To JONAH)

You need a ride or something?

JONAH shakes his head no.

DAVID heads back to his truck. JONAH sits down on the stoop and hangs his head. He forgot his keys.

DORINDA pounds on the doorway. DAVID looks and sees her pointing adamantly at JONAH.

DAVID

Listen, it would really make the kid feel better if you let me help.

JONAH looks up at the emptiness of the building. He looks at DAVID'S inviting smile.

DAVID

I don't bite, I promise.

JONAH picks up the violin and follows him down the driveway.

77

EXT. PICKUP-NIGHT

77

JONAH sits in DAVID'S parked pickup, violin on his lap. He peers through the window at a woman buying scratcher tickets.

He examines the stereo system, the interior, and the gauges on the car. They look nice, very clean.

DAVID climbs into the pick up, carrying a store bag. He pulls out a Mountain Dew and a krumbcake. He doesn't buckle his seatbelt before he starts to drive.

He offers JONAH a piece of the krumbcake.

JONAH

No thanks, I'm good.

DAVID shrugs and keeps on eating.

DAVID

My little girl's a spit fire ain't she?

JONAH nods in agreement. DAVID shakes his head.

DAVID

I always thought having kids would be easier. Like I thought I'd be this hero who could make anything better with a band aid or a bedtime story. They're harder than that though. What make 'em happy and sad... I didn't know it was such a puzzle. You got any?

JONAH shakes his head no.

DAVID

Good on you man. Finish school and stuff. Jesus, if I'd have started school before I had her...

He laughs at his loss.

DAVID

Who knows. I probably wouldn't have done any better.

DAVID pulls his truck onto a backroad and parks to finish his food.

DAVID

Can I ask you something?
(Without waiting for him to answer.)
My little girl... She's upset I voted for Trump. Her mom... she keeps saying shit like I want all Dee's friends to get deported. I *never* said any of that bullshit. Her Mom's a fucking hypocrite... I

DAVID
 shouldn't have said that. She's a
 wonderful woman, really. Great Mom.
 I just wanna be able to feed my
 girl again. I want people to have
 rights but if I can't feed my
 child... there's something more
 important than that...

His eyes drill into JONAH, desperate for a confirmation of
 his identity.

JONAH
 Look man, I just need to get where
 I'm going.

DAVID stashes his trash in a side pocket.

DAVID
 (Disappointed)
 Where you need to be?

78

I/E. PICK UP-LATER

78

JONAH and DAVID sit, each of them slammed up against the car
 door, staring straight forward.

They approach an intersection. DAVID slows the vehicle down,
 preparing to switch lanes.

DAVID
 Turn here?

JONAH
 Nah, man. Just keep s..s..straight.

JONAH stares out the window, searching for a place to stop.
 They pass a liquor store, a strip club, a bar.

DAVID
 (Trying to ease the tension)
 Christ, this town should just hand
 you a bottle of gin when you hit
 city limits.

JONAH points to a street corner in the distance where ea
 public park is.

JONAH
 You can drop me there.

DAVID pulls over and JONAH gets out.

DAVID

Any advice for me? Before you go?

JONAH looks at DAVID. His eyes aren't angry or frustrated, they're just done.

He picks up his violin and walks away from the car without closing the door. DAVID watches wide eyed as JONAH walks towards a group of protesters.

He shuts his door and drives away.

JONAH watches the protesters from a far.

They are huddled, a found family that keeps a fire alive as the night gets black. One by one, they move towards the flame, sometimes to add kindling, other times to give testimony.

Protest signs reading: Grad my pussy I dare you, He's not my president, pussy bites back, and America was never great are the only things that distinguish them as protestors.

STRANGER ONE

My daughter was born with stomach cancer. She's in remission, but I'm scared she'll never find coverage. We would've hit her life time limit when she was three years...

The woman burst into tears. Another stranger hugs her.

STRANGER TWO

(A slam poem.)

November 8th 2016./Today the flag hangs her head/Red, white, and blue curls covering her face/She can't be bothered to lift it and start at the hurricane she's swept up in./Instead she hangs red, red, red blood spilling out from her body./Her democracy was raped for a corrupt bargain./ No one cared that she was with her.

People snap, and JONAH, although watching from a distance finds himself snapping along.

They are quiet for a beat, JONAH sees a gay couple standing at the edge of the crowd. They grip each other's hands. Knuckles with with tension. Every so often the look at each other, checking in with deep love.

One of them looks at JONAH. He smiles and nods.

STRANGERS
 (Singing)
 Deep river...

JONAH's body goes rigid. The song is familiar. Soft tears touch his cheeks.

79

EXT. PARK-NIGHT

79

JONAH sits down on a bench. His phone to his ear.

JONAH
 Umm... K..k..kayin... It's
 J..j..jonah. I know. I'm surprised
 too.
 (Beat.)
 I know it wasn't cool to do you
 like that...
 (Off Kayin's response)
 What do I want? I guess I just want
 a ride home. See my baby brother.

FLASHBACK TO: Subtitle: III. Out

The park. JONAH and JAVIER sit panting on the bench after another round of Pig.

JONAH
 I never used to be into this game.

JAVIER
 Like I'm gonna believe that. In
 three weeks you've never let me win
 once.

JONAH
 I used to refuse to play.
 (and)
 That person I knew who... They used
 to love it.

JAVIER
 Yeah?

JONAH
 Yeah. They were so good, I could
 never win and I hated it.
 (Chocking a little)
 The night before they d..d..died...
 they were playing with my brother.

JAVIER listens, absorbing JONAH's pain.

JAVIER
 Why do you always use they? And
 person instead of he or she?

JONAH
 I didn't r..r..realize I was doing
 that.

JAVIER
 So?

JONAH
 It was a he.

JAVIER
 Your best friend?

JONAH
 Something l..l..like that.

JAVIER watches JONAH, waiting for him to continue.

JONAH
 We were t..t..together.

JAVIER listens to the pain in JONAH's voice. He can tell
 this is the first time JONAH's told someone this.

He gives him a hug.

JAVIER
 I'm sorry.

END FLASHBACK.

JONAH searches for TERRON's number in his contacts. He
 almost cries when he realizes why it's not there.

KAYIN sits in a car, watching his brother for a beat, before
 he HONKS.

KAYIN
 You just gonna sit there getting
 rained on?

JONAH looks at the violin on the park bench, then back at
 his brother.

JONAH
 Can you pop the trunk first?

80 INT. JONAH'S FAMILY HOME-NIGHT

80

JONAH sits at the kitchen table watching as KAYIN prepares a pot of coffee.

He studies his brother carefully, noting each little difference. He's bigger. Puberty has been kind to him. It sculpted his arms and has left him with a decent 5 o'clock shadow. His hair is trimmed closer to his skull.

The shy, skinny kid he was lives on only in his gentle movements. He gathers the mugs as if he were making love to a woman.

He soundlessly sets a mug in front of JONAH and sits down.

JONAH
Mom and Dad around?

KAYIN
Mom's at work. Dad's asleep.

JONAH nods. He's familiar with the routine. He looks around the house and marvels at how little has changed.

The boys stares at each other, suddenly tense. KAYIN is wildly protective over his parents.

JONAH
What've you been up to?

KAYIN
I started the nursing program at
Mont. Co.

JONAH smirks.

KAYIN
Don't laugh. It's good work. I'm
the only man in there with fifty
women.

JONAH
It suits you. You getting any of
that pussy?

KAYIN looks down, an embarrassed smile.

JONAH
You are aren't you.

KAYIN takes out his phone and shows his brother a picture of a girl. They're dressed up and standing in front of a church.

KAYIN

Her name's Shawna. She's a smart girl. And funny. Best woman in the program. She's kicking my ass.

JONAH

(Testing)

Shawna. That's real good. I like that. Sounds s..s..sexy when you whisper. Real alluring.

(and)

Whatever happened to that high school girl you were hard up for?

KAYIN

We dated for a bit. I don't know, it didn't work out. You know how it goes.

JONAH

Yeah I do.

(Sadly)

Hey, what'd D..d..dad ever do with my old car?

KAYIN

It's in the driveway. Want to see it?

81 EXT. JONAH'S FAMILY HOME—MOMENTS LATER

81

KAYIN shows JONAH out the side of the house. JONAH walks ahead of him, his pace quickening when he sees the car.

He stops a few feet short and stares at it. It looks exactly like he remembers it.

KAYIN watches him, uncomfortable for a beat.

KAYIN

It's getting late, we should head out before Mom gets back.

JONAH

Please, I'd like to see her.

KAYIN

She'll be tired. Come back tomorrow.

KAYIN reaches for his brother's arm to lead him away. JONAH shakes him off.

JONAH
I want to see her.

KAYIN
Jonah, come on.

JONAH
Why won't you let me see her?

KAYIN
Because you haven't been around in
four years. You want to see her?
Call her, stop by, don't disappear.

JONAH
I had to. I left for...

KAYIN
Who yourself? Because you didn't
want her to know you were gay? Dad
told us. We know. You had no reason
to leave. You were just being
selfish.

JONAH
(To himself, processing)
He said it would destroy her...

JONAH, overwhelmed, leans into his mother's hug.

82

INT.CAR-NIGHT

82

KAYIN pulls up in front of JONAH's apartment.

KAYIN
You really going to call
Mom tomorrow?

JONAH nods.

JONAH
I have to. She'll wanna t..t..talk
about the Eagle's game.

KAYIN
Alright.

KAYIN extends a fist, JONAH bumps it. The violin arrangement
of DEEP RIVER plays softly on the radio.

JONAH
That the song you p..p..played at
that recital?

KAYIN

Yeah. I still listen to it every now and then.

JONAH

It's a w..w..weird song. I heard it earlier tonight and I couldn't stop thinking about that last line about crossing over into c..c..campground.

KAYIN

It doesn't fit the rhythm. There's too many syllables. They put it in there though to refer to camp meetings where slaves could meet to share their sorrows, hopes, and just be together. Like a family. It was one of the first places they could organize and resist. They left it in the song because it was too important.

JONAH watches KAYIN, impressed by his knowledge.

JONAH

Did you ever play after that?

KAYIN shakes his head.

KAYIN

I never got a new violin. It's for the best though.

(and)

Well, see you man.

JONAH

Yeah, see you.

JONAH gets out of the car and starts walking towards the building.

KAYIN

Hey, you forgot you're stuff in the trunk.

JONAH

I'll get it tomorrow. Just be sure to bring it inside for me.

JONAH watches, smiling, as KAYIN drives away. He goes to the stoop and sits down. He leans against the wall, waiting for sleep to come.

83 EXT.APARTMENT-MORNING 83

Dawn is just starting to peak out over the trees. JONAH leans against the stoop.

84 EXT. POOL-DAY 84

JONAH floats in the blue green, chlorine filled pool. He dives towards the bottom.

JONAH (V.O.)

I've known rivers ancient as the world and older than the flow of human blood in human veins.

85 EXT. RIVER-CONTINUOUS 85

He swims deeper and deeper, eventually coming up for air in the grey currents of a river.

JONAH (V.O.)

My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

JONAH floats along the top of the water, face staring up at the moonlight.

JONAH (V.O.)

I bathed in the Euphrates when the dawns were young. I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.

JONAH closes his eyes as he floats past the full moon.

JONAH (V.O.)

I looked upon the Nile and raise the pyramids above it.

When he opens his eyes, he is floating in the ocean. He flips himself over and realizes he can stand upright.

He sees KAYIN sitting at the edge of the water, letting it wash over his feet.

JONAH (V.O.)

I heard the singing along the Mississippi.

JONAH waves him. KAYIN shakes his head no.

JONAH (V.O.)
 When Abe Lincoln went down to New
 Orleans and I've seen its muddy
 bosom turn all golden in the
 sunset.

He waves again, and KAYIN swims out to join him. They swim
 out into the sea together.

JONAH
 I've known rivers. Ancient, muddy
 rivers. My soul has grown deep like
 the rivers.

86 EXT. APARTMENT-MORNING

86

JAVIER walks up to the building and finds JONAH on the
 steps. He wakes him.

JAVIER
 Jonah? What're you doing out here?

JONAH
 I f..f..forgot my key.

JAVIER helps him inside.

87 INT. APARTMENT-MORNING

87

JONAH stands in the doorway of his apartment, JAVIER
 lingering behind him. The place has been ransacked. Chairs
 are toppled over, drawers have been pulled out of the
 cabinets-- their contents strewn on the floor.

JONAH stares wide eyed at the mess. Taped to the door is
 another note, almost identical to the one he received
 earlier.

He takes it off the door and crumples it in his hand. JAVIER
 pushes past him and starts cleaning up the kitchen.

JAVIER
 (Matter of fact.)
 They peed in your sink.

He turns the faucet on and starts filling the sink with dish
 soap.

JONAH remains in the doorway, staring at the crumpled note.
 A flash of anger plays across his face as he tears it in
 two.

JAVIER cleans up the trash in the living room, garbage bag in hand. He grimaces as he picks rotting food off of the floor. As he passes by, JONAH takes the bag from him.

JONAH

D..d..don't.

The two men hold eye contact. JAVIER nods, almost imperceptibly, understanding JONAH's need to do this for himself.

JAVIER

I'll put on coffee.

JAVIER goes to the kitchen, righting things as he goes.

88 EXT. JONAH'S FAMILY HOME-MORNING 88

KAYIN stares down at the violin case in the trunk. He pops the metal tabs tenderly and takes the instrument out of its case.

89 INT. APARTMENT-MOMENTS LATER 89

JONAH starts to fix things in the living room. He sighs as he works. Eventually, he is attracted to the window. he goes to it and raises his fist. The pieces of the note fly out over the parking lot.

JONAH watches as they descend, fist still raised over the brave, new world.

Fin.