

WHO MADE THE POTATO SALAD?

Written by

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INT. THERAPIST OFFICE - DAY

Modern Art Circa 1960's inside of a mid-century modern styled room.

Two Black hands rest with fingers interlocked.

The hands belong to the happy couple of BRYAN WILDS (Late 20's) athletic build with a reserved manner and Michaela "Mikey" Pearl, she embodies pure charm.

DR ZORA (LATE 40'S) sits just off frame on a couch.

ZORA (O.S.)

So how is the... happy couple?

Bryan and Michaela try to speak at the same time.

BRYAN

You go.

MICHEALA

We're so good! It was rough for a sec. Maybe a minute. But yeah I think we're headed for the greener pastures now.

ZORA (O.S.)

First time meeting the family--

MICHEALA

First time meeting the fam, yes. But you know for the first time in my life. I'm that cliche--I'm that girl with a man and I'm a little nervous about meeting 'the Mom.'

BRYAN

Really?

MICHEALA

Yeah she's, ya know, the "state prosecutor" she's mean, she's tough. He holds her in such high esteem.

BRYAN

I don't know about all that.

MICHEALA

His sister, with the great journalism career and her white boyfriend.

ZORA

Bryan, you and your sister have the same career? I didn't know that.

MICHEALA

Yes, except she's...

BRYAN

Successful?

MICHEALA

No, no, I wasn't going to say that--

She blinks "help" to the therapist.

ZORA

Where were you headed Michaela with your original thought. More on the mom?

MICHEALA

Yes, thank you. When I meet his mom I want to be...

(admitting to herself)

Impressive. I want to impress her. I want to impress them. Even for his uncle he hates.

BRYAN

Wow.

ZORA (O.S.)

Bryan, how does that make you feel? Knowing that Michaela wants to be impressive for your family.

BRYAN

You ain't gotta be impressive for them niggas!

Michaela laughs.

ZORA

Bryan remember we're not hiding behind comedy--

BRYAN

Right. Right.

(looking at Michaela)

You're perfect how you are. I love you. This trip is going to be a breeze.

Long Beat.

MICHEALA
(rolling her eyes)
Oh, and apparently this woman can
cook!

INT. KITCHEN - DAY - CHRISTMAS EVE

Full-on food-porn. Shot after shot of an immaculate feast being prepared.

A ham with pineapples and cherries goes in the oven. Sweet potatoes with marshmallows. Macaroni and cheese. Collard Greens. Stuffing. You get it.

The hands preparing the food belong to IDA GRAHAM-WILD (late 50's) dressed in nice workout clothes with an apron overtop.

Ida works up a modest sweat while she prepares a feast.

Everything about her home is a little too nice. Her kitchen is filled with the newest and best appliances. The lighting is state of the art.

Ida's five-thousand-dollar french bulldog waits patiently for Ida to drop food on the floor, which she never does.

The name "Mariah" is etched on her 24 karat collar.

We get the sense Ida is lonely. On a monitor screen, she sees a man try to ring the doorbell but he is encumbered by a giant turkey.

She walks through the foyer to open the front door. The man distorted by the glass.

JAMES
Damn Ida, you still can't figure
out your garage door.

IDA
It's broken and nobody's coming out
until after the holiday.

JAMES
It's broken or you don't know how
to use it?

JAMES GRAHAM (40's), Ida's brasher younger brother, brings in a Fried Turkey.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

JAMES

So, big little sis, where do you want my masterpiece?

IDA

You can set it on the kitchen table for now.

James sets the turkey down on her glass kitchen table. Then turns his attention to the french bulldog Mariah. He opens her doggy treats jar. He kneels before Mariah.

JAMES

And how are you miss five-thousand? You talk yet?
(to Ida)
She talk yet?

IDA

Leave *Mariah* alone.

UNCLE JAMES

For five thousand, you better learn how to do something.

IDA

And what do you?

JAMES

(pointing to the turkey)
I'm a god damn American Icon. Let me use the restroom real quick.

James goes to the nearest restroom. Closes the door, and through it, we hear a steady stream of urine that anyone could be proud of..

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

Where's Ciarra? She couldn't come help her mother cook.

IDA

Her flight got delayed because of the snowstorm. And I'm not going to talk to you through the bathroom door.

The stream is still going, and James flushes the toilet prematurely. He comes out of the bathroom.

Ida stares at James.

JAMES

What?

He goes back in and washes his hands.

She still stares.

IDA

Did you flush the toilet... early?

James looks guilty. He leans back in the bathroom and flushes the toilet.

He starts walking toward Ida. She stares again.

JAMES

What now?

IDA

Wash your hands again. Nasty--

James goes back in the restroom.

JAMES

Okay now big sis don't be disrespecting me.

IDA

Don't be disrespecting me, tryna put your peepee hands all over our food.

JAMES

Like I was asking before: where is Ciarra?

IDA

Like I said before: Ciarra is late because of the snowstorm. And I don't see you asking about Bryan--
(beat)
Are you and Bryan gonna be okay?

JAMES

We'll be fine.

IDA

I'm not taking a trip to the hospital this year.

A fancy doorbell jingle that's way too long.

JAMES

It's open--
 (the doorbell cuts him
 off)
 You got too much new shit going on
 in here.

IDA

Get the door.

Ida looks at a small monitor on her counter, which has a feed to the front door camera. It shows two people waiting patiently.

James walks away and opens the door.

JAMES (O.S.)

Baby Girl!

CIARRA (O.S.)

Uncle James!

Ciarra Wilds (27) the very strong, formidable offspring of Ida, comes running into the house. She sets down a cooler of prepared food.

CIARRA (CONT'D)

Ma!

She gives Ida a big hug.

IDA

Hi Cici!

She grabs a treat for Mariah and pets her.

CIARRA

Hey, ladybug.

Ciarra washes her hands and springs into action. Takes her food out of the cooler and starts setting her dishes up.

James walks in, followed by Alex(28), the white scruffy buzzcut, Chicago native boyfriend of Ciarra. To a younger eye, they would see he has some style, but to her Uncle James and Ida he looks like a loser.

ALEX

(coming in for a hug)
 Hi, Ms. Ida

IDA

Hi, Alex.

She gives his back a quick insincere pat during their embrace.

JAMES

I'm gonna turn the game on if I can figure out how to work your tv and shit.

IDA

What happened to helping?

JAMES

(sarcastically)
My dirty ass good for nothing hands.

IDA

You're right.

JAMES

(to Alex)
You watch football?

ALEX

Nah, I'm more of a hockey guy.

JAMES

You gotta be shitting me--

ALEX

Ah! Just kidding. You thought I was white white huh, Uncle James.

JAMES

I did. The boy she brought last year was white as hell.

Alex stops walking.

ALEX

That was me.

JAMES

I meant the year before last.

CIARRA (O.S.)

No, he didn't.

They start toward the living room again.

ALEX

You need anything babe? Ms. Ida?

CIARRA

Nope we got it in here. You're good.

Uncle James shakes his head.

James and Alex enter the living room.

JAMES (O.S.)

Now how the hell do you change the channel?

(beat)

Oh!

CUT TO:

EXT. IDA'S HOUSE - DAY

It's still sunny, but the snow is really coming down.

Bryan and Michaela arrive at the front door.

BRYAN

You ready?

MICHAELA

Never.

Bryan rings the doorbell. It's too loud and too long.

MICHAELA (CONT'D)

(re: doorbell)

Fancy.

BRYAN

(very fast and matter-of-fact)

Real quick tho: me and my Uncle James got into a fist fight last year and it landed one of us in the hospital; and we haven't been on speaking terms and this is the first time since then we've all been together.

MICHAELA

What? Excuse me? You wait 'til now? Which one of you went to the hospital?

BRYAN

(sarcastic)

Him, of course.

MICHAELA

That's not cute. This isn't cute.
 (whispering)
 What did you even fight about? I
 don't take you for a violent guy...

BRYAN

I don't think I would use the word
 "violent"--
 (door opening)
 Hey!

Ciarra opens the door for her brother.

CIARRA

Yo!

BRYAN

Yo!

He motions for Michaela to go in.

CIARRA

Hi Mikey good to see you again?

MICHAELA

Ciarra! Good to see you too.

They hug.

BRYAN

(stepping-in)
 Who all here?

Walking toward the kitchen.

CIARRA

You've seen the cars. If you're
 asking me if Uncle James is here?
 He is.

Michaela trying to keep her volume low so only Bryan and
 Ciarra can hear him. While they take off their winter
 layers...

MICHAELA

On that very loud note: I would
 like to know why you thought it was
 a good idea not to mention this,
 Bryan. It seems very like, I don't
 know, important to tell me how you
 put your uncle in the hospital.

BRYAN

We don't talk about it.

CIARRA

Yeah we don't talk about anything in this family. It's a problem-- my therapist agrees.

BRYAN

In a way I'm treating you just like family.

MICHAELA

Not. Cute. And you think it is. And it's not.

BRYAN

I was asking if Dame was here actually, C.

CIARRA

Not yet.

BRYAN

Damn, that nigga live down the street.

CIARRA

He's *your* best friend.

BRYAN

Yeah but we ain't really talked for like two years.

MICHAELA

You haven't talked to your best friend in two years.

Bryan winces.

BRYAN

We talk but you know...

MICHAELA

(simply)

No.

Bryan rounds the corner into the kitchen.

MICHAELA (CONT'D)

Men are crazy, Ciarra. I should've never switched back.

CIARRA
Girl. That makes two of us.

KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

BRYAN
(almost singing)
Hey Momma!

IDA
Hey Son! How was the flight?

Hugging.

BRYAN
Slightly delayed but other than
that it was fine.

IDA
You must be Mikey.

MICHAELA
Yes, nice to meet you!
(holding up a pie wrapped
in foil)
It's hideous but it makes up for it
in taste. Pumpkin pie by way of
Louisiana.

IDA
Thank you so much. Ciarra will you
put this in a dish while I get
ready.

Bryan walks toward the living room.

LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The living room has shiny leather couches and bright lamps.

BRYAN
Y'all in here watching the game and
couldn't come open the door.

ALEX
Oh my bad, Bryan.

BRYAN
You good Alex-- good to see you,
bro.

ALEX

Good to see you too.

JAMES

So that's how we starting out, huh?

BRYAN

I'm just saying.

(beat)

How are you Uncle James?

James shakes his head, then goes back to football.

BRYAN (CONT'D)

Hey Mikey come here.

JAMES

Mikey? I knew it.

James stands up.

Michaela walks in cautiously.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Why, hello. I always say he was built like an athlete for no reason but here the reason is.

MICHAELA

Oh. I'm not sure if I'm flattered or I need an adult. Pleasure to meet you, Uncle James. I've heard a lot about you. Well, not everything.

JAMES

There's lots more to learn.

She holds out her hand. James takes it and shakes it.

UNCLE JAMES

Nice grip.

She walks over to Alex.

MICHAELA

Michaela, but people call me Mikey.

ALEX

I'm Alex, Ciarra's boyfriend. Very nice to meet you Mickey.

MICHAELA

You too, Alex. Ciarra's got good taste.

ALEX

(returning the compliment)
The Wilds know how to pick'em.

JAMES

(to Bryan quietly)
Okay, Buck. I see you nephew. She got the fries with the shake. Maybe there's some hope for you.

BRYAN

Thanks. I'mma set the table. You're welcome to stay here and watch tv.

JAMES

(taking a sip of beer)
I know.

MICHAELA

(pointing to a hallway)
What's back there?

BRYAN

Uh, the guest room.

MICHAELA

Will you show me?

BRYAN

Sure?

Michaela grabs Bryan's arm, and they walk into the guest room from the living room.

Once in the guest room, Michaela closes the door.

MICHAELA

Bryan, talk to me.

BRYAN

What do you mean?

Michaela starts pacing.

MICHAELA

You're not talking to your best friend for a year. Which is mad weird and something our therapist would've liked to know, I'm sure.

(MORE)

MICHAELA (CONT'D)

You've been in a fist fight which is like a first date question but the fact it landed a family member in the hospital... I would deem that sort of important.

Long beat.

MICHAELA (CONT'D)

Hello, hi --is there anything else or something you want to expound on?

BRYAN

Remember how I told you my dad left my Mom two years ago for one of his students? Well, Dame knew the girl and he kept telling me she wasn't a bad person and I shot the messenger so-to-speak and stopped talking to him. *But*-- I called him up and buried the hatchet last week. Invited him to dinner tonight. We caught up on life and you. We good. We bros.

MICHAELA

Okay, okay... That kinda makes sense. What about Uncle James?

BRYAN

What are you, a cop?

MICHAELA

Sorry, but I'm just trying to catch up.

BRYAN

If you say "but" after "sorry," the apology doesn't count anymore.

MICHAELA

(rolling her eyes)

It's not an apology, Bryan. What about Uncle James?

BRYAN

Wow--

(beat)

He called my Dad a pedophile and said all this mean shit. And you see: he's an asshole. So I hit him. And we went back and forth for a while.

Michaela listens and nods.

MICHAELA

Hmm. Okay. Thank you for sharing. I need you to stop lying.

BRYAN

I never lied.

MICHAELA

I need honesty. Clarity. Communication.

BRYAN

You sound like Ciarra.

MICHAELA

Can you do that for me? From here on out. If it's not something you can do let me know.

BRYAN

You're going to break up with me over Christmas dinner?

MICHAELA

Is it something you can do or not?

BRYAN

I'll be honest and I'll be better. It was hard for me to talk about... I apologize.

MICHAELA

I can understand that.

Michaela moves closer to Bryan, and they hug.

MICHAELA (CONT'D)

Merry Christmas, Baby.

BRYAN

Merry Christmas, Mikey.

CUE: "MERRY CHRISTMAS BABY" BY RAY CHARLES

INT. IDA'S MASTER BATHROOM - NIGHT

Ida's bathroom is filled with steam while she showers.

We push in on her in an ominous way: on Ida's vanity, a small swallow of moscato in a wine glass and two pain killers await her.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

CIARRA (O.S.)
Buck, open that dishwasher.

Bryan looks in: billows up to reveal pristine gold forks, knives, spoons etc...

Ciarra finishing items by placing them in dishes and finishing them with garnish.

Ida comes from upstairs fresh-faced in a blue dress on par with the other things in her house.

CIARRA (CONT'D)
Oh mommy, you look beautiful.

IDA
Awe thank you, Ci.

MICHAELA
That's a beautiful dress, Ida.

BRYAN
Yeah, momma.

IDA
Thank you both.
(to Ciara)
Ciara, if you wanna get changed I got it from here.

CIARRA
I'm good. I'm just going to wear this.

IDA
What you wore on the plane?

CIARRA
(shrugging)
Yeah.

IDA
Well I don't think there's a problem with looking nice. And perhaps it'll bring some normalcy.

CIARRA

Bringing normalcy and pretending things are normal are two different things.

Ida puts down her sweet potatoes.

IDA

I don't think wearing something nice to dinner is pretending things are normal. I also think things are "normal."

CIARRA

My therapist says--

IDA

Okay. Jesus Christ, child. Never mind.

Ida storms into the dining room to set the table.

Michaela and Bryan look at each other.

Ciara leaves the kitchen to go change.

DINING ROOM - LATER

The dining room table is set with the newest architectural digest china on top of a pressed dining room table cloth.

MICHAELA

Ms. Wilds this is one of the most beautiful spreads I have the pleasure of ruining.

They all agree and praise Ida for her meal.

JAMES

Well I made the turkey. Fried turkey, by the way.

BRYAN

(Ciara)

No mac and cheese this year? It was so much...fun last year.

(to Michaela lowered voice)

It gave us all diarrhea.

JAMES

Gave us the runs. Peeing out your booty hole--

IDA

Nuh huh, no. Not at the table.
Bryan where's Dame... could you
call him--

A very long and obnoxious doorbell rings.

Bryan goes to open the door.

IDA (CONT'D)

Okay, the doorbell's a little long
and I don't know how to change it.

ALEX

(lying)
I like it!

They all lie in agreement.

MICHAELA

It's definitely not the worst and
loudest thing I've ever heard.

Ciarra looks at Michaela like "Did you just insult my
mother's doorbell."

Michaela adverts her gaze in a "No, I didn't, but if I did
I'm sorry."

Bryan comes back in with his childhood best friend, DAME
UDOKORO (29) lovable and laissez faire.

DAME

Yo!
(walking around)
Uncle James, what up!

They dap and hug.

JAMES

Hey--Boy! You are freezing.

DAME

Yeah, I road my bike.

Dame makes his way around the room hugging people.

IDA

In a snowstorm?

DAME

Yeah I just got my car out the shop
and I didn't want to risk getting
in a crash. It's bad out there.

(MORE)

DAME (CONT'D)
 (switching to Ciarra)
 Chicago wind!
 (to Alex)
 Good to see you again Bro.

ALEX
 You too, man.

DAME
 Michaela, I've heard a lot about
 you.

MICHAELA
 Hopefully not too much.

DAME
 Only good things. I promise.
 (finally, Ida)
 This dress is beautiful, Ms. Wilds.
 Thank you for having me.

IDA
 (sincerely)
 You know you're always welcome.

BRYAN
 No matter how late you are...

DAME
 Bro you know how it goes:

CUT TO BLACK.

Big title on screen: NEVER ON SCHEDULE BUT ALWAYS ON TIME.

Simultaneously:

DAME (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Never on schedule but always on
 time.

INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Everyone is seated.

A beat.

BRYAN
 Okay, who wants to say grace or
 whatever?

JAMES

Ain't no whatever boy. We need all
the God we can get.

Long beat.

IDA

Everyone stand, hold hands.

Everyone does. Pleasantly and as awkwardly as holding hands
can be.

IDA (CONT'D)

Oh heavenly father, thank you for
allowing all of my children to be
under one roof again. Life has been
trying but I know there's nothing
we can't get through with christ
who strengthens us.

Bryan lets out a light scoff.

JAMES

(to Bryan)

Excuse me.

IDA

In your name we pray. Amen.

Everyone says: "Amen"

JAMES

(to Bryan)

Something funny, Bryan?

Bryan takes a second as everyone sits down and settles back
into their seats.

BRYAN

I mean... I think it's funny that
"god" puts you in a situation just
to get the credit when he "pulls"
you out.

CIARRA

That's not how God works.

BRYAN

Seems to me that your therapist
would say God is a master
manipulator. That's just my
opinion.

MICHAELA

Bryan could you pass the cranberry sauce?

BRYAN

You don't even have food on your plate.

MICHAELA

I just want you to stop talking.

JAMES

Let me tell you something--

IDA

Stop. Stop.

(beat)

Please, let's not start.

JAMES

(to Bryan)

You ain't right.

(low)

We know where you get it from--

Bryan stands up.

It's tense.

ALEX

(cutting the tension)

May I carve the turkey?

JAMES

It's my turkey. How you gon' carve my turkey. Ciarra get him.

CIARRA

Then carve it Uncle James.

DAME

Yeah let me get a wing please.

MICHAELA

Why don't you sit, baby? It's all good.

BRYAN

(sitting)

No, It's not.

Ida looks stressed.

CIARRA
 Mom, you want me to--
 (switching)
 Are you okay?

IDA
 James, I don't understand why you
 have to be like that.

James stops carving.

CIARRA
 Oh man.

IDA
 You're the adult.

JAMES
 He's in his twenties Ida. Almost
 thirty. You've babied him. Paid his
 rent. Paid his college. Paid for
 everything in his life. How's he
 repaid you?

IDA
 He's my child, James--

JAMES
 No, no, he's your son. He's not
 your "child."

Bryan stands up again.

MICHAELA
 Bryan.

Long beat.

James gets ready.

BRYAN
 I'll be back.

MICHAELA
 Let me come--

BRYAN
 No, no, you're good.

DAME
 Let me roll with ya brother--

BRYAN

You good, Dame. I'ma just get some air.

He grabs Ida's shoulder on the way out.

IDA

Sorry, Momma.

Bryan leaves the dining room.

EXT. IDA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Snow falls outside as we peer through the house into the scenic depiction of this family, silent and sad while a feast awaits them.

INT. SUBURBAN POLICE STATION - NIGHT - LATER

It's a slow night at the police station. Most cops are home with their families. One unit is out on patrol. All that's left at the station besides dispatch is DETECTIVE MAURICE BROOKLYN (30's) a hometown hero turned hometown detective. He's a bachelor who takes his work seriously.

The other person with him is rookie cop RUDY GRAY (late 20's) trying to make a good impression even if that means missing his newborn's first Christmas.

The station is quiet as the camera pans around the modest, new, and poorly built station.

Rudy and Brooklyn sit in chairs drinking egg-nog.

The TV flickers light on their faces. It's playing "IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE" (1946); they're at the scene where the pool opens up at the ball.

BROOKLYN

You ever notice that the same guy jumps in the pool twice and he's dry both times?

RUDY

Word? I've never seen this movie before.

BROOKLYN

You've never seen 'It's A Wonderful Life?'

RUDY

Nah I don't think I've watched a grey movie before.

Beat.

BROOKLYN

"Grey?" You mean black and white?

RUDY

It looks grey to me...

BROOKLYN

Yeah... but the term is black and white.

RUDY

Sorry sir, I mean black and white... oh wait I've seen Wizard Of Oz a bunch. Does that count?

BROOKLYN

(thinking)

...No. Because Oz is in color.

RUDY

(nodding)

Ah--

BROOKLYN

You know what: it's not a competition--sure it counts.

RUDY

Thank you, sir.

BROOKLYN

Stop calling me sir. I'm like a year older than you.

RUDY

I think you're ten years older than me.

BROOKLYN

Ten? Cuz you're?...

RUDY

...Twenty-Six.

BROOKLYN

And I'm thirty-six... And that's ten years.

(MORE)

BROOKLYN (CONT'D)

(beat)
Definitely don't call me sir.

RUDY

Okay.

Beat.

BROOKLYN

Do you spell grey with an "e"?

RUDY

My last name? I spell with an "e".
Why, how would you spell it?

BROOKLYN

Either way. With an A or E but I'm
always curious--

RUDY

Holy shit. Didn't realize you
could spell it both ways.

BROOKLYN

How long you been on the force?

RUDY

A year, sir.

Rudy winces and looks up at the ceiling.

RUDY (CONT'D)

Do you have a family s-

BROOKLYN

I have a girlfriend.

RUDY

Cool, cool. How long y'all been
together?

BROOKLYN

Seven Years.

RUDY

Seven! Me and my wife have only
been together for three.

BROOKLYN

Yeah. Well, I guess I think there's
more to life than starting a
family.

RUDY
 (sincerely)
 Really? Like what?

Brooklyn looks at Rudy with an "are you serious face."

A radio clicks on. Brooklyn pauses the movie.

BROOKLYN
 Go for Brooklyn.

DISPATCH RADIO
 Merry Christmas, Detective. We have
 a possible Ten Fifty-Six at the
 Wild's Household. Over.

An insert: at Rudy looking up Ten Fifty-Six in his digital handbook, and he runs his finger over the word "SUICIDE."

BROOKLYN
 The Wild's? The state prosecutor
 Ida Wild? Over.

DISPATCH RADIO
 Yes sir, that's the one. Over.

BROOKLYN
 (gathering his things)
 Copy that. The Rook and I will head
 that way. Send me the location,
 please.

Rudy stops looking at his phone and starts to get up.

Brooklyn notices Rudy staring at his son's baby photo, which is his phone's lock-screen.

BROOKLYN (CONT'D)
 Over and out.
 (beat)
 Hey Rook.

RUDY
 Yes, sir.

BROOKLYN
 Why don't you go home.

The Wild's address blinks onto Brooklyn's phone.

RUDY
 What?

BROOKLYN

Yeah man go home. I know it's your son's first Christmas. I'm sure your wife would love to have you.

RUDY

Oh nah. I'm good, detective.

BROOKLYN

No, I insist, go home. It's odd-- these calls don't start generally coming until tomorrow morning. But I know these people personally. Head on out.

RUDY

Really?

BROOKLYN

Yep, Merry Christmas.

RUDY

Merry Christmas, Sir.

They both walk out.

EXT. POLICE STATION - CONTINUOUS

Brooklyn and Rudy walk outside with their jackets. Their cars are covered in snow. It's dead quiet.

RUDY

Thank you again.

BROOKLYN

Don't mention it. Be safe on the road.

Rudy gets in his rickety yellow car. When he starts it the car sounds like someone being stabbed. This startles Brooklyn.

RUDY

(rolling down his window)
Merry Christmas.

BROOKLYN

Merry Christmas.

Brooklyn knocks snow off his state-issued all Black Ford Focus.

Gets in his car. Shuts the door. Turns the engine over, and the lights flash into the camera...

CUT TO:

EXT. IDA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Brooklyn gets out of his car and grabs his large Black trench coat. No footsteps lead to the door. He takes note of the cars in the driveway.

With a deep breath, he rings the doorbell. The tones are long and ridiculous. He hears footsteps.

Ciarra opens the door.

BROOKLYN
 (trying to talk over the
 doorbell)
 Hello, I'm detective Brooklyn. We
 got a call about a possible
 suicide. I beat the ambulance, the
 snowstorm probably slowed them
 down. May I?

CIARRA
 Of course, come in.

The mood inside is now quiet and somber. Dreary.

BROOKLYN
 (quietly)
 Do you mind showing me the body?

Ciarra takes a deep breath.

CIARRA
 Yeah okay.
 (she freezes)

BROOKLYN
 I understand. Can you tell me where
 to go.

CIARRA
 Yeah through the living room into
 the guest room.

LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Brooklyn walks into the living room where James, Dame, Mikey, Alex, all sit in shock...

BROOKLYN
 Good evening. Is...

They kind of all nod and motion into the guest room.

BROOKLYN (CONT'D)
 Thank you.

He walks through the living room into the guest room.

GUEST ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The guest room is a bed with some sparse decoration. On the floor is Ida hunched over.

From the ceiling fan is her son, Bryan-- and what seems to be a tie around his neck as a kind of noose.

BROOKLYN
 Ms. Wilds? It's me, detective
 Brooklyn.

Ida lifts her head up and looks at him. Her face is a mess of makeup and tears.

IDA
 Excuse me.

BROOKLYN
 I'm so sorry for your loss.
 (pulls out a set of black
 latex gloves)
 If you'd allow me to just double-
 check for a heart beat.

IDA
 (she makes a clear path.)
 Sure, pardon me.

Brooklyn feels Bryan's left wrist. Nods.

He then goes up to his neck without really looking at him and checks the pulse again there. He nods.

BROOKLYN
 Do you mind if we talk in another
 room?

Ida walks over to Bryan's feet and grabs his foot.

IDA
 (to Bryan)
 I'll be back.

Walking through the living room. Everyone is silent.

IDA (CONT'D)

Can someone keep him company?

Everyone is taken aback.

DAME

I will, Ms. Ida.

IDA

Thank you, Dame.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Glasses of water sit on the kitchen table. Ida and Brooklyn face each other. Ciarra comes into the room to help.

BROOKLYN

Do you mind giving me a brief
rundown of what happened before the
incident?

IDA

We were all sitting in there.
(pointing to the dining
room)
Eating. And then we noticed he'd
been gone for a while.

BROOKLYN

"He" is Bryan, correct?

IDA

Yes. My son Bryan Wilds. You might
have known him as Buck.

BROOKLYN

I did. He was a few years younger
but I know he could really play.
(gently)
He moved away some years back?

IDA

Yes, after grad school he moved to
Los Angeles. He brought his
girlfriend with him to visit today.
He was a tech writer but was also
an author.

(pointing to a plaque on
the wall)

You know he won an award at grad
school?

BROOKLYN

I heard he was doing well. Saw him on socials. His girlfriend is here now?

IDA

Yeah she was in the living room when you walked by. She's the girl who's not Ciarra.

BROOKLYN

Thank you, and did anything seem off or unusual?

IDA

No. We've been... off balance as a family since my husband-- ex-husband left. So things have felt I don't know a little strange but this year I thought we were going to get back to normal--

Ida trails off and looks into space. She's through.

BROOKLYN

Do you mind if I talk to your daughter Ciarra?

Ida doesn't respond.

Ciarra walks into the kitchen.

IDA

(energetic, almost robotic)

Detective, do you want some food?

BROOKLYN

No, I'm fine.

IDA

(standing up)

You probably haven't had any food.

CIARRA

(reaching for her)

Mom?

IDA

I'm fixing a plate!

Brooklyn reaches for Ciarra as a way to say 'don't worry about it.'

BROOKLYN
 (to Ida)
 Thank you.

Ida walks away.

BROOKLYN (CONT'D)
 (again gentle)
 Hi Ciarra. I'm Detective Brooklyn.
 I'm very sorry for your loss--

His dispatch radio clicks on.

DISPATCH RADIO
 Dispatch for Brooklyn:

Brooklyn turns down the radio.

BROOKLYN
 (to Ciarra)
 I'm so sorry. One second.

CIARRA
 It's fine.

BROOKLYN
 (quietly into the radio)
 Go for Brooklyn.

DISPATCH RADIO
 The ambulance is stuck and they're
 too nervous to send another at the
 moment. Over.

Brooklyn smiles weakly at Ciarra and moves further away from her.

INT. FOYER - CONTINUOUS

BROOKLYN
 I figured, but is there an ETA at
 all? Over.

DISPATCH RADIO
 Not at the moment but under an hour
 I hope. Over.

Brooklyn looks up at the polished chandelier.

Suddenly he gets the feeling someone is watching and shoots his gaze over to the front door. Only to see his reflection in the glass.

DISPATCH RADIO (CONT'D)
Detective?

BROOKLYN
(moving into a corner for
more privacy)
Yes uh. Okay well, the body is
still up. It seemed like he could
fall at any moment-- the victim
hung himself from a ceiling fan.
Over.

DISPATCH RADIO
Oh that's so horrible. Understood.
I'm afraid you'll need to leave him
unless you think someone else could
get hurt and let the paramedics cut
him down. I know it's not ideal.
Obviously the paramedics will leave
him up too if you suspect foul
play. Over.

BROOKLYN
No. no. It very much appears to be
self inflicted. I'll do my job and
get out of here if the snow allows
it. Over.

DISPATCH RADIO
That's a good idea, sir. Over and
Out.

Brooklyn walks back into the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

BROOKLYN
Apologies. Where was I? You found
the body?

CIARRA
He looked almost alive when I saw
him.

BROOKLYN
He was alive?

CIARRA
No I don't think he was alive
because he was cold when I touched
him but he seemed it. That's a
weird way to say it.
(MORE)

CIARRA (CONT'D)

It almost seemed like he was angry
at me or I don't know...

BROOKLYN

How long ago was this?

CIARRA

Maybe like two hours ago.

BROOKLYN

What took so long to call the
police? Or Ambulance.

CIARRA

Shock, I guess.

BROOKLYN

Who found him?

CIARRA

Um. Michaela.

BROOKLYN

I thought you saw him first.

CIARRA

No I was saying he looked angry
when I saw him.

BROOKLYN

Hmm. You said alive didn't you?

Brooklyn takes a second to eat a few bites. It's an odd power
move.

Ciarra waits awkwardly.

BROOKLYN (CONT'D)

Could I trouble you for a glass of
water?

CIARRA

(nervous)

Sure.

Ciarra goes to the fancy fridge and pours a glass of water in
an elegant glass.

CIARRA (CONT'D)

I forgot to put ice in.

BROOKLYN

No ice is perfect.

Brooklyn takes the glass and drinks the entire glass of water.

Ciarra sits back down.

Brooklyn continues as if the interruption didn't happen.

BROOKLYN (CONT'D)
Michaela was Bryan's...

CIARRA
Boyfriend. I mean, girlfriend.
She's in the living room.

BROOKLYN
Thank you. Any problems that you
know of...

CIARRA
Not really.

Long Beat.

BROOKLYN
"Not really?"

CIARRA
I'm feeling a little faint. Am I
free to go?

BROOKLYN
Free to go?--I'm in your house.

CIARRA
(genuinely asking)
Is that a yes?

BROOKLYN
Of course you're "free to go"

Ciarra gets up and Brooklyn shakes his head.

INT. DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Brooklyn sits at the head of the dining room table.

***This scene will be the classic rotating people
interrogation***

MICHAELA
There were no problems until we got
to the front door then, boom.
(MORE)

MICHAELA (CONT'D)

He says he put his uncle in the hospital. Beat up an old man.

MATCH CUT TO:

UNCLE JAMES

She said "old?" I had too many beers-- and yeah.--I'm sorry he took his life though. I would've never wanted that-- Still my nephew. Still my sister's son.

MATCH CUT TO:

CIARRA

He and Dame fell out. He kinda left Dame holding the bag on it.

MATCH CUT TO:

DAME

It was like a thousand dollars. I don't care about that money. I just loved working on something with my friend.

MATCH CUT TO:

MICHAELA

Ciarra said I found the body? We found the body.

MATCH CUT TO:

UNCLE JAMES

Who does Michaela think she is coming in talking all this shit.

MATCH CUT TO:

ALEX

Uncle James, nice? I mean I asked to carve the turkey and he got upset. So... ya know. I don't know.

MATCH CUT TO:

UNCLE JAMES

You can't carve another man's turkey. The hell is wrong with y'all?

(hard switch)

I'm devastated. And Bryan and I had our differences of course.

(MORE)

UNCLE JAMES (CONT'D)

But his mother is my big sister and seeing her sad is the worst thing in the world. No one on earth deserves happiness more than her and she's been getting the worst news over and over.

INT. OFFICER RUDY GRAY'S HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

ZOSHA GRAY (late 20's) Rudy's wife sits with a perplexed furl on her face and a silk bonnet on her head.

ZOSHA

Let me get this straight-- The man told you to stop calling him "sir," and you kept on doing it.

Rudy is undressing out of his uniform.

RUDY

Babe. I did a lot too.

ZOSHA

It's so cliché Rudy. Why couldn't you stop?

RUDY

It just got worse and worse. The more I didn't want to say sir the more I said it.

Zosha looks at him puzzled. She scrunches her face.

RUDY (CONT'D)

Don't look at me like that-- you're going to complain I'm giving you wrinkles later.

She keeps staring.

RUDY (CONT'D)

And this look is mean. The "why did I marry this dumb motherfucker" look.

A beat.

ZOSHA

I don't want to be mean, but we worked so hard to get you this job. You even volunteered for Christmas duty. So to hear you fucked it up is sending me--

RUDY

Fucked it up? That's strong, Zosh.
He let me go early so who fucked
what up. 'Namsayin'?

ZOSHA

Yeah because you were mocking him
or that "sir" shit like a god damn
90's sitcom.

RUDY

Wait, you think he was mad at me.

RUDY (CONT'D)

Shit. Should I have stayed? Was
that a test?

ZOSHA

I don't know. Why don't you check
on him?

RUDY

I can't check on my superior like
that but I can ask how it went
or...

Rudy gets an idea. He grabs his walkie.

Turns it on.

RUDY (CONT'D)

(into the walkie)
Hi, dispatch?

Zosha mouths "hi?"

DISPACTCH RADIO

This is dispatch. Over.

Rudy clears his throat.

RUDY

This is officer Rudy-- Rudy Gray.
Officer Rudy Gray.
(to Zosha)
You're making me nervous.
(back to dispatch)
Over.

DISPACTCH RADIO

...Copy that, Officer Gray.
(beat)
Go for it. Over.

RUDY
Right I'm calling-- radioing in to
check the progress of Detective
Brooklyn.

GUEST ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Dame is in the room looking at his friend. Maybe he was
talking.

DAME
Oh excuse me.

BROOKLYN
You're alright.

IDA
I'm glad you were in here with him.

Brooklyn does a quick visual inspection at the tie
precariously dangling above the bed.

BROOKLYN
Okay I'll wait for the ambulance
with you and then I'll be on the
way. I do think we should stay
clear in case he falls--

Brooklyn gently guides Ida out of the room.

INT. FOYER - MOMENTS LATER

Ida looks out the window in the dark abyss of snow.

IDA
Detective, you don't think there
was anything wrong or suspicious.

BROOKLYN
No, I truly don't.

IDA
I noticed Michaela had a lot to
say.

Michaela reveals herself from the dining room.

MICHAELA
I did have a lot to say!

IDA
I'm sorry I didn't know you were there.

Ciarra walks into the foyer, overhearing...

CIARRA
What's going on? What's this fucking tone Michaela.

MICHAELA
My tone is your mom thinks I had a lot to say.

CIARRA
Well you fucking did bitch.

MICHAELA
Oh "bitch?"

Stepping closer to one another.

CIARRA
Yes. Bitch. Whats up?

MICHAELA
Your brother was a fucking liar... And dishonest.

CIARRA
That's the same thing you stupid fuck.

They lunge at each other.

Brooklyn steps in between.

Alex, Dame, and James join them in the foyer.

BROOKLYN
Everybody calm down.

James and Alex help Brooklyn separate them.

CIARRA
(quick and through gritted teeth)
Get your goddamn hands off me Alex.

ALEX
Sorry. Yes. Okay.

Everyone takes a second to settle.

Then a noise in the dining room. An "ow" as someone bumps into something. Then some humming.

Everybody does a mental count of who's in the foyer.

Ida realizes everyone is accounted for first and calls out.

They all listen in complete silence.

IDA

Hello?

Around the corner comes Bryan.

Bryan is standing there. Not dead. Holding a plate with only a turkey wing and mashed sweet potatoes. He's high out of his mind.

He notices everyone is standing in the same room.

BRYAN

Dang.

TITLE SCREEN IN BOLD LETTERS: **WHAT DID I MISS?**

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

What did I miss?

Back to scene.

Beat.

Then P-A-N-D-E-M-O-N-I-U-M.

Everyone is screaming. Ida runs and jumps into him with a hug.

BRYAN (CONT'D)

Whoa my food.

Bryan's food falls to the floor.

Ciara joins in on the hug. Dame too.

CIARRA

Oh my god!

BRYAN

Dude steps away for an hour gets love when he's back.

CIARRA

What the fuck Bryan!

BRYAN
Ciarra why are you yelling?

CIARRA
Cuz you're dead! You are dead
Bryan.

BRYAN
(concerned)
I'm dead?

Bryan kinda feels himself.

BRYAN (CONT'D)
(high)
Quit playing.

JAMES
You sick sick fuck you. You gross
mean, disgusting.

BRYAN
Wow.

Everybody starts yelling at Bryan at once. It's pandemonium
again.

BRYAN (CONT'D)
(laughing)
Yo y'all are bugging.
(noticing Brooklyn)
Yo! Brooklyn, what up man it's been
a minute.

BROOKLYN
(over everyone)
This is sick. I don't know why
someone would do this to their
family and loved ones. Hold on.
(into his walky)
Detective Brooklyn for Dispatch.

Michaela stands silent. Shaking her head.

BRYAN
Wha- Michaela? What did I do now?

DISPATCH RADIO
Go for Dispatch.

BROOKLYN
We can 86 that ambulance to the
Wild household. Over.

DISPATCH RADIO
Is everything okay?

BROOKLYN
Seems like it was some sort of
hoax. Just a shitty joke.

BRYAN
(interjecting)
What Joke?

DISPATCH RADIO
Copy that. Over.

BROOKLYN
Thank you dispatch. Over and out.
(back to Bryan)
Just gross man seriously. I'm
disgusted too.

MICHAELA
The layers of trash human you are
to reveal itself it's unbelievable.
Look at what you did to your own
mother.

Ida is crying on his shoulder.

Bryan starting to get this isn't a game.

BRYAN
I'm really sorry. What did I do? I
just thought it'd be better if I
went downstairs, and everyone could
eat without me. No one even texted
me. I thought y'all were fine. I
would've come back.

BROOKLYN
How did you do it?

BRYAN
Do what?!

CIARRA
Bryan. Kill yourself. Or at least
made it seem like that.

BRYAN
What!

UNCLE JAMES
Gross.

BRYAN
Kill myself. I'm right here.

Bryan feels his body.

BRYAN (CONT'D)
Mom. Mom please. What happened?

IDA
You hung yourself back there.

BRYAN
Back where- in the guest room?

Ida points back to the guest room.

BRYAN (CONT'D)
With what?

UNCLE JAMES
This what happens when you spare
the rod. You were a burden on my
sister at times, but at the very
least, you could say that you had
never hurt my sister. But today is
a new day, Buck.
(beat)
Ima get my gun. Keep that ambulance
coming Brooklyn.

Uncle James tries to leave through the front door.

Dame and Brooklyn stop him.

DAME
Now hold on Uncle James--

UNCLE JAMES
Ain't no hold on. You see what he
did to us.

Brooklyn and Dame hold Uncle James Back.

Bryan sits with his confusion. He goes back to the guest
room.

Everyone follows. A kind of procession, if you will.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

They all march through the living room into the guest room.

INT. GUEST ROOM - CONTINUOUS

IDA

Oh my god.

Bryan's body is gone. There's no tie. The ceiling fan is no longer broken.

BRYAN

So what did I do?

UNCLE JAMES

You cleaned it up.

BRYAN

(getting angry now)

Cleaned what up!? What the fuck are y'all talking about? Is *this* the prank? Y'all knew I was getting high and decided to pretend I'm a ghost or some shit. Are y'all filming this? Is *this* funny?

MICHAELA

Don't yell at us. Don't you dare.

BROOKLYN

You're sick.

(suddenly to Ida)

May I use your restroom?

She points to the bathroom inside the guest room.

BROOKLYN (CONT'D)

Excuse me.

Brooklyn quietly rushes off.

DAME

Bro, you were hanging there.

CIARRA

Eyes bloodshot ceiling fan hanging.
Bryan really. Stop.

JAMES

(concerned)

Boy you ain't right. He ain't right.

BRYAN

So I hung myself from the fan?

Everyone says "yes" in their own way.

BRYAN (CONT'D)

Then how did the fan not break?

Everyone says "it did" in their own way.

BRYAN (CONT'D)

Then why is it not broken now?

JAMES

You tell us, you god damn...

(thinking)

Piece of shit.

BRYAN

Nice.

JAMES

Why would you do this to your mother? Why Bryan? I really want to know.

There's a silence.

BRYAN

Everyone, I'm so sorry. But I have no idea what you're talking about.

Brooklyn comes out of the restroom.

BROOKLYN

(agitated)

I'm getting out of here. I hope you folks have a merry Christmas. Hopefully I can still move my car.

MICHAELA

Wait.

(long beat)

I want to press charges.

Everyone is a little stunned.

Brooklyn wants to roll his eyes, but sighs instead.

BROOKLYN

Ida, do you want to press charges?

Ida looks pensive.

JAMES

Ida. Big sis. You have to teach this boy a lesson. This took years off your life. All our lives. The shock alone.

MICHAELA

I say we take a vote. Who wants Ida to press charges--

CIARRA

It doesn't work like that. You can't force my mom to press charges.

(to Brooklyn)

Does it work like that?

BROOKLYN

Your Mom's a fantastic lawyer she knows how it works. But for the record, no it doesn't work like that. This would be Ida's call to make--

BRYAN

Can I interject and say-- What the fuck. Press charges? No one has explained how the ceiling fan is fixed. If it was ever broken? No one has proved to me that I did what you say I did.

ALEX

You fixed it while we weren't looking.

BRYAN

Really Alex?

ALEX

I'm sorry man. I'm just saying I vote for press charges.

Ciarra looks incredulous. Alex holds his ground.

JAMES

(to Alex)

Got your balls son.

BRYAN

We already established the vote is not a thing!

MICHAELA

How convenient for you.

CIARRA

(to Michaela)

Yo shut the fuck up!

IDA

Stop!

Everybody waits in silence again.

DAME

No wait.

Everyone looks at Dame. The silence continues.

DAME (CONT'D)

No... we all saw it. Bryan was really dead.

They all start thinking.

DAME (CONT'D)

I was in the room with him for at least thirty minutes. Didn't move, didn't blink. Nothing. For thirty minutes.

ALEX

Well, maybe you're in on it and you helped him clean.

CIARRA

Now you're mister fucking idea man are you?

ALEX

Maybe I am.

IDA

Let him finish.

DAME

We know what we saw. Brooklyn, did you not inspect the body?

IDA

(interjecting)
He did. I saw it.

BROOKLYN

(annoyed)
Yeah. I did.

CIARRA

And you thought he was dead too.

BROOKLYN

(more annoyed)
It's implicit bias.
(MORE)

BROOKLYN (CONT'D)

I assumed he was dead so I didn't check his pulse like I should have.

IDA

No. I'm with Dame, he was dead. I felt him.

BRYAN

Uh. I'm not dead. I'm here. Let's try to remember. I'm here and not dead. This is already freaky enough.

Michaela's iciness starts to melt.

JAMES

Yeah but he's clearly not now.

DAME

Ciarra, Ms. Ida, we saw it right? The fan was ripped down too.

BROOKLYN

It was probably the shock. We weren't paying attention. Trust me, anything can happen to you when you're under shock like that. You see things and fill in the other things that don't make sense...

Dame strokes his face. Deep in thought.

DAME

Bryan what did you do when you left the dinner? Exactly.

BRYAN

I went to smoke.

DAME

Try to be very specific.

Bryan looks at everyone gazing at him.

BRYAN

Okay. Okay. Well after Uncle James was a grade-A asshole, I went to smoke. Alone, in the basement.

FLASHBACK: We see a quick flashback of Bryan telling Michaela and Dame he wants to be alone.

UNCLE JAMES

So you could go set up.

BRYAN

Anyways. Michaela you know how I took an edible on the plane.

MICHAELA

No, you said you were bringing edibles I didn't know you took one.
(slightly laughing)
So you're just dishonest all the time--

BRYAN

Okay, I'm sorry so I took an edible on the plane. But I forgot I took one.

UNCLE JAMES

You forgot you took *the* drugs?
C'mon.

ALEX

Nah, Uncle James it's kind of easy to do. No one really says "drugs."

CIARRA

Especially not "the drugs."

BRYAN

So, I forgot I took it. Or at least I think I forgot. So when I hit my pre-roll. I think I got higher than I've ever been.

BROOKLYN

You planned a horrible prank?

BRYAN

No, I passed out. Like hard zonked. Then, when I woke up. It was hot.

DAME

Hot?

BRYAN

I turned the heater on in the basement. A space heater. So I opened the basement door to let some heat out.

DAME

Okay remember to be specific.

BRYAN

I took a shit before that. Is that specific enough for you?

DAME

Yes. So, crisp air--

BRYAN

I opened the door and it was so nice and crisp outside.

INSERT: WE SEE BRYAN STANDING SILOUTED BY THE BASEMENT DOOR WINDOW SNOW FALLING AROUND HIM. HE'S REAL HIGH. HE WALKS SLOWLY.

BRYAN (CONT'D)

It was so nice-- I decided to walk.

BROOKLYN

Walk where?

BRYAN

Just to the front of the house. I saw someone on the phone talking in the foyer.

Brooklyn thinks.

BROOKLYN

I- remember that.

FLASHBACK BROOKLYN: SEEING SOMETHING AND THINKING IT WAS HIS REFLECTION.

BROOKLYN (CONT'D)

I thought I saw something but when I looked I saw my own reflection.

DAME

And when that happened. I was still back there with the body. If you guys believe I had nothing to do with it.

MICHAELA

Okay. Well. Why don't we check the basement? Surely there must be something down there to corroborate your story.

CIARRA

"Corroborate," I never realized how much of a--

MICHAELA
What? Say it.

CIARRA
CUNT!

EVERYBODY
Ciarra!

MICHAELA
Look at the pot calling the kettle
nigger!

EVERYBODY
Michaela!

UNCLE JAMES
Foul.

BROOKLYN
Let's check the basement.

DAME
And for footprints.

Brooklyn rolls his eyes.

BROOKLYN
I'm leaving after this.

JAMES
You guys do that if you want I know
he's lying.

INT. BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Ida's basement is filled with the past. All the things she's replaced upstairs have ended up down here. Couches, stoves, computers, TV's, treadmills collecting dust.

Amongst the clutter there's a carpeted area with a tv, a heater, and a couch. Bryan has led the small group of Dame, Brooklyn, Ida, Ciarra, Michaela, and Alex to this spot.

BRYAN
This is where I was for the hour.

DAME
You broke out the Super Nintendo.

BRYAN
Yessir.

MICHAELA

You got high and played video games. While we were all worried about you.

BRYAN

Sure as hell beats y'all's alternative where I was... checks notes... dead!

Brooklyn inspects the area.

Dame starts copying him and starts looking at things too.

Quick Cuts:

- A) Brooklyn and Dame looking at Bryan's pre-roll.
- B) Brooklyn and Dame looking at the heater.
- C) Brooklyn and Dame looking at the video game.
- D) Brooklyn and Dame outside with everyone inspecting the footprints.

Back to scene.

DAME

What do you think detective?

BROOKLYN

(more annoyed than before)
His story checks out in a way. I really don't care.

IDA

Well, what does that mean if his story checks out and he was dead upstairs.

BROOKLYN

No one saw him for that hour. There's no real way to say. So in a sense he's innocent. I'm leaving. Congrats, Bryan, on your very mean, very senseless and very convincing trick.

Brooklyn looking at the basement door.

BROOKLYN (CONT'D)

Can I go out this way?

CIARRA

Yeah it leads to the front of the house.

BROOKLYN

You guys have a merry Christmas. Please don't call us again tonight.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

James watches football highlights from the game he watched earlier. He's cut a slice of Michaela's pie and eats like you might eat something delicious and you're alone.

UNCLE JAMES

(re: tv)

That boy is a man. That boy is. A. Man. Ooo wee.

He takes a few more bites of pie-- we slow push in on him.

Then from the guest room comes Brooklyn. (This is a jump scare.)

UNCLE JAMES (CONT'D)

Holy shit! You scared the fuck out of me. God damn.

BROOKLYN

(confused)

Sorry.

UNCLE JAMES

I thought you went down to the basement with everyone else.

BROOKLYN

Why are they in the basement?

UNCLE JAMES

Because you agreed to go down there.

BROOKLYN

I just went down to the restroom and when I got out everyone left.

UNCLE JAMES

Well they're downstairs doing a search.

BROOKLYN

A search for what?

UNCLE JAMES

To "corroborate" Bryan's story--
are you okay?

BROOKLYN

I'm fine. Are you okay?

UNCLE JAMES

You don't remember talking about
going downstairs to check out
Bryan's story.

BROOKLYN

I don't because we didn't because--
that conversation never happened.

Uncle James stands up feeling an uneasiness. He stares at his
pie.

BROOKLYN (CONT'D)

What are you looking at?

UNCLE JAMES

I'm checking this pie for the
drugs.

BROOKLYN

Which way is the basement?

UNCLE JAMES

(pointing)
Just around the corner on your
left.

The caravan of basement dwellers return: Dame, Bryan, Ciarra,
Michaela and Ida all walk into the living room.

They all take note of Brooklyn standing next to Uncle James.

CIARRA

Brooklyn? I thought you left.

BROOKLYN

What, no? I just went to the
restroom.

Everyone seems a little puzzled.

DAME

How'd you get back up here so fast?

BROOKLYN

What are you guys talking about?

UNCLE JAMES
(fully vindicated)
See, that's what I said, you went
to the basement!

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Detective Brooklyn walking through the icy cold front yard.
The warm yet fucked-up suicide prank house behind him.

Brooklyn stares back at it for a second then keeps walking.

He finally arrives at his car on the street. It's covered in
ice. There's a glow from some of the houses around with
ambient Christmas lights hitting his car. He gets in.

INT. BROOKLYN'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

He checks his phone battery; it's almost dead and he connects
it to the charger. He turns on the car to get some heat.

He reaches for his radio to put that on a charger too and...
that's when he realizes... he doesn't have it and he'll have
to go back inside the house.

BROOKLYN
Aaaaah-- Fuck me!

Brooklyn rests his head on the back of the seat. Lets out a
cold steamy sigh.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. IDA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Emotions and confusion have started to race a little.

BRYAN
Brooklyn, you were, without a
doubt, one hundred and ten percent
in the basement with us!

DAME
(hyping his boy)
One hundred and ten bro!

BROOKLYN
I'm sorry you're all wrong.

MICHAELA
 So you're right and all...
 (doing a brief count)
 8 of us are wrong?

CIARRA
 Your ego is insane. Men.

ALEX
 I'm a man and I gotta say you're
 wrong too, Brook.

BROOKLYN
 Don't call me that.

ALEX
 Sorry.

UNCLE JAMES
 Man this fool sounds just like
 Bryan. The weird lies.

BRIAN
 I wasn't lying.

BROOKLYN
 I'm not lying.

ALEX
 Something seriously fucked is going
 on. I can feel it.

IDA
 Wait, everybody quiet.

Just then, the loud ass doorbell that's way too long chimes
 through the house. Even though it's the same doorbell from
 earlier it feels much heavier.

BROOKLYN
 Why are you guys acting so scared?
 It's probably the EMTs missing the
 relay.

They all ignore Brooklyn.

James joins the huddle of house guests.

IDA
 (somewhat hushed and
 hurried)
 Okay listen to me. In the kitchen,
 next to the sink there's a camera
 monitor it'll show us who's at the
 front door.

BRYAN
Okay I'll go check it.

Bryan walks across the hallway to the kitchen as fast as possible very purposely not looking at the front door.

Bryan from the kitchen...

BROOKLYN (O.S.)
Uh! Um! Someone else come here
please. Please now. Please--

Ciarra, Alex, and Michaela make the brief trek over to the kitchen. They too are careful not to look at who's outside the glass front door.

POV FROM THE PERSON OUTSIDE THE HOUSE WATCHING AS THEY WALK BY.

ALEX (O.S.)
(repeated, frantic, and to
no one in particular)
Holy fuck, holy shit. Holy fuck me.
Holy.

CIARRA (O.S.)
Momma!

Uncle James, Dame, and Ida all walk through to the kitchen.

There's a loud bang at the glass clearly whoever it is saw them. The doorbell starts to chime again.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Ida makes her way to the kitchen to see what we already know.

Detective Brooklyn is outside waiting to be let in.

However, there's already a Detective Brooklyn inside now.

UNCLE JAMES
(full on stammer)
What um-- does what-- what does
this mean?

Detective Brooklyn from the other room. Agitated, bemused, annoyed all in one.

BROOKLYN (O.S.)
What could all of y'all possibly be
so scared of.

DAME
Brooklyn, stay there.

BROOKLYN (O.S.)
I'm going to see who it is with my
actual eyes and I'll let you know
if you should hide. You people I
tell ya...

EXT. HOUSE - SAME TIME

Brooklyn puzzled and cold--

OUTSIDE BROOKLYN
(to himself)
What the fuck are these people
doing?
(out loud)
Hello!

He bangs and presses the doorbell again.

He sees another person enter the hallway. Through the frost
and glass, its not very clear who it is, but it looks like
him, but it obviously can't be.

OUTSIDE BROOKLYN (CONT'D)
Hello?

Inside Brooklyn walks closer to the glass door. Once he gets
a foot away he stops.

The two Brooklyn's look at each other through distorted
glass, reflections, in disbelief.

Outside-Brooklyn's POV: The dark figure inside the house
backs away without saying anything.

INT. HOUSE - SAME TIME

Inside-Brooklyn terrified and confused slowly backs away
looking at his other self through the glass scared to turn
his back.

KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The house guests are entirely silent and scared.

BROOKLYN
 (slowly and hesitant)
 What did you guys see on that
 monitor?

They all clear a way to see for himself... himself.

Brooklyn stares at the monitor in silence. His back to them.

BROOKLYN (CONT'D)
 It's another joke... Right, Bryan?

BRYAN
 There are no pranks happening man.
 That looks like you.

BROOKLYN
 It's gotta be a loop from earlier
 and you guy...
 (getting louder)
 And you guys all brought me over
 here to fuck with me! To fuck with
 me!

The guests all deny it.

UNCLE JAMES
 No way. No way man. We're just as
 lost as you-- we called you cuz we
 all thought this dummy killed--

The Front Door slams shut. All silent.

Ida eyes her kitchen knives.

Inside-Brooklyn catches her eye-line and grabs the knife set
 for himself.

They all let out a shriek.

Brooklyn pulls out a knife.

Outside-Brooklyn with snow on him, walks into the Kitchen.

TO BE CLEAR: THERE ARE NOW TWO IDENTICAL DETECTIVE BROOKLYNS
 in the kitchen.

CIARRA
 What. The. Fuck.

MICHAELA
 Oh-this shit.

The Brooklyns look at each other. They both pull out their guns at the same speed and the same way.

Everybody ducks and cringes out of the way.

IDA
No, don't wait!

Then the Brooklyns put their guns away in an "I-come-in-peace" fashion.

BROOKLYN
Who are you?

BROOKLYN
Who are you?

BROOKLYN (CONT'D)
Nah mother fucker. Who are you?!

BROOKLYN (CONT'D)
Nah mother fucker. Who are you?!

The Brooklyns both pull their guns out again. Everyone huddles together.

BROOKLYN (CONT'D)
Point your gun at me?

BROOKLYN (CONT'D)
Point your gun at me?

Both Brooklyn's holster their guns again.

Everyone is terrified but Dame, who is the only one capable of talking through the horror of the moment.

DAME
Which one of you came to the house for the suicide call.

BROOKLYN
I did! No. Me! He's a fake.

BROOKLYN
I did! No. Me! He's a fake.

Scared yet determined, Dame tries again.

DAME
One at a time...Um. Let's start with you. Outside-Brooklyn.

James points to outside Brooklyn with a few specs of melting snow on his Black coat. It's pretty easy to tell them apart based on that.

DAME (CONT'D)
Did you go to the basement?

OUTSIDE BROOKLYN
Yeah I just came back for my walkie-talkie.

INSIDE-BROOKLYN
 (holding the walkie-
 talkie)
 You mean my "radio." This guy
 doesn't even know the right word.

OUTSIDE/COAT-BROOKLYN
 The words are interchangeable!--

MICHAELA
 (to Inside-Brooklyn)
 So you didn't go to the basement?

INSIDE-BROOKLYN
 No. I came out of the restroom and
 everyone was gone.

Everyone starts to "hmm and ha."

CIARRA
 Coat-Brooklyn what was your
 favorite dish of the food you ate?

OUTSIDE/COAT-BROOKLYN
 Uh. The sweet potatoes.

CIARRA
 Hmm. Interesting.
 (Inside Brooklyn)
 And you?

INSIDE-BROOKLYN
 Sweet-Potatoes. But that's easy,
 that's everyone's favorite.

JAMES
 (to know one in
 particular.)
 Nope not true. That's not true.

More hmm's and ha's.

ALEX
 Okay what's the deepest darkest
 secret you've never told anyone?

CIARRA
 Oh good question, Alex?

ALEX
 Thank you, Baby.

INSIDE-BROOKLYN
 This is dumb.

Hmm's spring forth.

INSIDE-BROOKLYN (CONT'D)

Ah I had sexual relations with a
teacher in high school.

Dame whistles.

OUTSIDE/COAT-BROOKLYN

Okay but I know that too.

INSIDE-BROOKLYN

What was her name?

OUTSIDE/COAT-BROOKLYN

Ms. Pringly.

BRYAN

Oh my god wasn't she like eighty.

BROOKLYN

Seventy.

BROOKLYN

Seventy.

CIARRA

Oh my god you were sexually abused?

BROOKLYN

She just sucked my dick.

BROOKLYN

She just sucked my dick.

DAME

Okay let's focus.

IDA

Let's take a vote on who's the
imposter.

BRYAN

Do we have enough information, Mom.

IDA

Go with your gut.

MICHAELA

Our guts--

IDA

On the count of three everybody
point on who they think the
imposter is. One, Two, Three...

Everyone but Ciarra points to Inside-Brooklyn. Ciarra quickly
switches.

Inside-Brooklyn smiles and then his face shifts. His eyes become bloodshot with a green puss-like tent. His brows becomes larger and furled. His voice becomes deeper and movements twitch.

JAMES
 (re: Inside-Brooklyn's
 transformation)
 Lord in heaven!

INSIDE-BROOKLYN
 (pointing toward the
 ground)
 No, no, I'm from much further
 south.

Outside-Brooklyn gets out his gun.

Inside-Brooklyn (imposter) gets out his gun.

INSIDE-BROOKLYN (CONT'D)
 Not sure how you figured it out.
 (to outside Brooklyn)
 As for you. You don't need that
 gun.

Bryan steps to the front of the group, putting himself between Inside/Demon Brooklyn and everyone else.

INSIDE-BROOKLYN (CONT'D)
 If it isn't worthless Bryan,
 stepping up to die first.

Inside-Brooklyn grabs a knife and starts feigning a clap with both gun and knife.

He's closer to the group and Outside-Brooklyn squeezes off a round. It hits him in the stomach but Inside Brooklyn isn't phased.

INSIDE-BROOKLYN (CONT'D)
 I wanted to leave you with this.

Inside Brooklyn takes the knife and runs it across his arms spewing blood at the group. It hits them across the face, in the eyes, in their mouths. Everywhere.

The group spits and retching everywhere.

Inside/Imposter Brooklyn cuts open his abdomen, pulls out his intestines, and starts taunting them with it. He twirls like a lasso.

INSIDE-BROOKLYN (CONT'D)
Aha! You guys like this?!

They continue to retch.

ALEX
You're a sicko man.

Inside-Brooklyn starts to lick his intestine until finally, enough blood has spilled from his body, and he passes out and dies.

There's a long silence.

Brooklyn the real one, looks part embarrassed and another part taken aback, by watching his own death. He clears his throat.

BROOKLYN
Well. Um. I'm sorry?

IDA
Is it dead? What was it? What is it?

DAME
Like a demon or something.

JAMES
I told you we needed Jesus, boy! I said it. Yes, I did.
(dinky voice)
"can we say grace or whatever"
(switching back)
Or whatever!? Or whatever?! Now we got demons. Demons in your mother's house.

BRYAN
I didn't bring demons. I don't know how to manifest demons. If anyone brought Demon's it's Brooklyn.

BROOKLYN
Whoa, whoa, hold on. I was just as confused as y'all.

CIARRA
Wait so this means that Bryan's body earlier was a demon body?

BROOKLYN
Huh.

BRYAN

See, I wasn't lying! So I accept all y'all's apology.

ALEX

Sorry Bryan--

UNCLE JAMES

Man don't apologize to that mother fucker. He still went to go do the drugs in the basement and left his demon with us.

MICHAELA

I think we know now that we don't control the demon.

IDA

Okay, so what do we do now?

DAME

Wait, wait, wait. How do we know that we are not with a demon... now.

Everyone starts to slowly separate from one another. Suspicious.

Alex goes and grabs a knife.

Everyone gasps.

ALEX

Sorry. I thought- I thought we were about to face off.

BROOKLYN

Let's not panic.

Just then, Inside-Brooklyn's body spouts a little blood from his mouth.

CIARRA

Oh shit he's coming back to life!

Everyone starts to panic and run around. They all leave the kitchen.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

In a hurried and rushed manner. They pass coats out of the hallway closet.

James yells and punches through the garage glass.

There's a silence.

JAMES

Fuck this garage door. And fuck all
your fancy appliances too.

EXT. HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

BROOKLYN

Whatever this is, is a bad idea.

Dame trying to ride his bike on top of fresh snow. The guests
kind of cheer. He's getting somewhere. We reveal he rode
about nine feet away from them in the slightly wrong
direction.

DAME

He may be right.

INT. HOUSE - FOYER - MOMENTS LATER

All the guests pile in from outside. They shake off the cold
and start to head back to the living room.

Just as the door shuts.

The power goes out.

CIARRA

Oh shit, the demons done cut the
power!

Everyone runs around again.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

A room lit by lanterns and candles. Everyone is in a somber
mood.

CIARRA

Sorry I panicked, everybody.

They all say it's "okay" in their own way.

Everyone seems a little worn out from the screaming, running,
panicking plus the snow.

Ida anxiously looks at everyone sitting on her furniture
covered in blood and sweat.

Bryan eyes his mother's discomfort.

BRYAN
Sorry about your furniture and
dinner... and all this Mom.

IDA
(poorly lying)
Oh it's okay it's fine. Ya know...

Ida looks down and tussles with her dress.

IDA (CONT'D)
(genuine)
I'm just glad we're together and
everyone is safe.

BROOKLYN
Okay, so now what we know we can't
leave. Lets strategize and talk.

DAME
Agreed, we need to figure out what
the demons want and where they come
from.

JAMES
I don't wanna know what they want.

MICHAELA
I disagree! I think it's very
important to know.

The conversation continues.

Alex tries to get Ciarra's attention.

He waves at her, he tries staring really hard.

ALEX
(low and quick)
Ciarra. C!

Unfortunately for Alex, Ciara has now joined the larger
conversation.

CIARRA
(to the group)
Well, let's try to get back to the
beginning--

BRYAN
Ciarra, Alex has been trying to get
your attention for a minute.

Everyone looks at Alex who was in the middle of waving frantically.

ALEX
Ciarra can I talk to you?

CIARRA
Uh sure.

BROOKLYN
Stay in the room.

CIARRA
We got this.

They move to the corner of the room.

CIARRA (CONT'D)
What's wrong Alex?

ALEX
My stomach is killing me. Like, you have no idea.

CIARRA
Why don't you--

Ciarra looks back at everyone. They all pretend to be looking somewhere else.

CIARRA (CONT'D)
Why don't you just go poo-poo?

ALEX
I'm not a child. You don't have to say it like that.

CIARRA
Okay fine. Go take a dirty nasty shit.

ALEX
You don't think I thought about that?

Beat.

CIARRA
So, what? You want me to ask the group if Alex can go potty.

ALEX
No, I wanted a sidebar with my girlfriend. To like, decompress.
(MORE)

ALEX (CONT'D)

And tell her what's going and maybe see how she's doing. But instead, I'm being met with hostility.

Beat.

Ciarra sighs.

CIARRA

It's been--

ALEX

I know it's been a day. Demons and death and snow...

CIARRA

Maybe we should just ask.

Alex clears his throat. The group stops their conversation and becomes attentive.

ALEX

Hello.

GROUP

Hi.

ALEX

I have to use the restroom, and I was hoping.

IDA

Please just use the bathroom it should be fine. Right, everyone?

The group seems skeptical.

BROOKLYN

It will of course, be fine.

ALEX

Right of course it will.

Alex goes toward the hallway restroom; everyone watches.

ALEX (CONT'D)

(nervously)

I hope I don't get stage fright.

DAME

I get it dude. Going in front of all of us. Takes some balls.

CIARRA

Would everyone stop mentioning his balls all the time-- I'll keep everyone talking baby. So go ahead.

Alex goes in and closes the door.

JAMES

(shaking his head)
That boy.

MICHAELA

I would be nervous having to take a shit in front of everyone. He might not be able to go at all--

Loud, outrageous, farts and the sounds of big bombs splashing down.

Everyone pretends they don't hear the carnage coming from the restroom.

CIARRA

The food was really delicious Mommy. You must've really--

More sounds and carnage.

ALEX (O.S.)

God damn!

Bryan, completely unable to handle the awkwardness starts nodding as if he's listening to a song no one else can hear.

MICHAELA

(to Bryan)
What are you doing?

BRYAN

(still nodding and now humming)
Nothing. What are you doing?

MICHAELA

Why are you humming?

BRYAN

I'm not.

More carnage from the restroom.

JAMES

He ain't even flush once, he's going to clog that bitch up, and I ain't gon' fix it.

CIARRA

He knows how to use a toilet.

DAME

Let's let the man go in piece, damn.

Finally, the first flush.

They all listen closely.

CIARRA

(told-ya-so)

That sounded smooth to me.

MICHAELA

Yeah that was a smooth flush.

The sound of toilet paper being swatted, then pulled, then ripped. Silence then flush.

Then the faucet.

JAMES

One wipe. One!?

IDA

James--

JAMES

I have put in some work in my life, but after that, you best believe that wasn't no one wipe shit.

BROOKLYN

It could've been really solid.

JAMES

Ain't nothing solid about what we just heard.

CIARRA

Let's just let it be, please. We have a lot to worry about--

The door unlocks and Alex walks out with a nervous grin.

ALEX

How's the convo going out here.

BRYAN

Great we're just happy to have you back, Bud!

ALEX

Glad to be back! I feel like a million bucks.

He reaches for a fist bump with Bryan. Looks like he might cry and holds out his fist.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Bow!

Alex then hugs Ciarra.

Everybody shutters.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Where were we?

DAME

Right, right. I think we were trying to go back to the source of when the madness started.

BROOKLYN

It starts with Bryan's death.

BRYAN

Not my death. I'm here.

IDA

Whatever it is, it likes death.

MICHAELA

It did really seem like it wanted us to find Bryan. The same way it wanted us to watch it die in the kitchen with Brooklyn.

DAME

Okay, let's all go back to the bedroom again and start from there.

Brooklyn, slightly annoyed he's not in charge, nods his head and motions for everybody to head back.

As they start to walk, the hallway bathroom door starts to open.

Everyone slowly turns around.

CIARRA

Oh shit.

A NEW ALEX EMERGES, WE'LL CALL HIM (POO-ALEX)

DAME

Wow.

Poo-Alex looks at everyone looking at him.

POO-ALEX

(remembering)

Oh.

He goes back into the restroom and washes his hands.

POO-ALEX (CONT'D)

What's wrong now?

ALEX

What do you mean what's wrong.
You're a...

POO-ALEX

Duplicate.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Duplicate.

ALEX (CONT'D)

No, you're the duplicate!

POO-ALEX (CONT'D)

No, you're the duplicate!

BROOKLYN

No, let's not start! We know you
both don't know.

MICHAELA

(to Brooklyn)

When, you were duplicated how did
you know you were real?

ALEX

Guys, I'm the real one.

POO-ALEX

Guys, I'm the real one.

Everyone tells the Alex(s) to shut up.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A group huddle of Brooklyn, Michaela, Ida, James, Dame,
Ciarra, and Bryan. They talk with their backs turned.

BRYAN

I think we have our answer.

The group un-huddles.

The two Alex(s) separated on either side of the room.

DAME

We the people of this house. Say
that you--

(pointing at Poo-Alex)

That came out of the restroom
second, are the demon.

POO-ALEX

No, fuck you!

ALEX

Yes!

Poo-Alex switches to his demon face. Starts laughing. His
motion becomes sporadic. His voice distorted.

POO-ALEX (CONT'D)

So you figured it out.

ALEX

Yep, Bitch! Bye, see later hoe. You
demon fuck you! Good luck killing
yourself.

POO-ALEX

You think you're so clever you
bunch of... Bugaboos!

Everybody exclaims.

CIARRA

Alex!

ALEX

Oh! Whoa! Demon, that's not cool,
man. Hold-on.

POO-ALEX

You golliwogs!

MICHAELA

What year are these terms from?

BRYAN

Wow, Alex!

ALEX

That's the demon man.

DAME

A demon's words are a sober man's
thoughts!

ALEX

That's not true. That's not a saying.

POO-ALEX

Don't worry about it, Alex. We know they're just a bunch of no good...

Off this Alex runs to stop Poo-Alex from finishing his very racist outdated rant.

IN SLOW MOTION: ALEX RUNS TO GRAB BROOKLYN'S GUN.

POO-ALEX (CONT'D)

Tar baby having...

SLOW MOTION: BROOKLYN LOOKS AT ALEX CRAZY FOR REACHING FOR HIS GUN. ALEX APOLOGIZES THEN SETS HIS SIGHTS ON THE KITCHEN.

POO-ALEX (CONT'D)

Paramore-loving... Gotta say it, ginger ale? Not that great.

JAMES

That's cold.

POO-ALEX

I think you people eat spaghetti more than Italians.

Ida gasps.

IDA

It's good.

POO-ALEX

But why is it sweet, Ida?

IDA

(loss for words)

Uh- well--um--

IN SLOW MOTION: ALEX IN THE KITCHEN GRABBING A KNIFE.

POO-ALEX

Why is it that you can only clean your houses listening to music from forty years ago?

MICHAELA

Why wouldn't you clean to Anita?!

Slow-Mo: Alex comes running passing everybody to get to Poo Alex.

POO-ALEX

I know why. Because you want to
make everything a good time, you
lazy, no good, low-down, ni--

Alex stabs Poo-Alex in the liver.

The group all groans.

POO-ALEX (CONT'D)

You ni--

Alex stabs Poo-Alex in his chest, now.

They all grown again.

Poo-Alex spits up blood everywhere. Poo-Alex with all that he
can muster.

POO-ALEX (CONT'D)

You dirty ni--

Alex stabs Poo-Alex from under his mouth the knife goes
through his chin and mouth.

The group is disgusted.

BROOKLYN

Jesus.

Alex is covered in blood.

ALEX

Sorry, he was going to call you
Niggas!

INT. RUDY'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Rudy lays wide awake looking up at the ceiling.

RUDY

Zosh, you awake?

ZOSHA

No.

RUDY

Do you think--

ZOSHA

Either do it or don't. Don't ask
me. I'm tired.

Rudy shoots up, leans into his son's crib and kisses him.

RUDY

Okay. I understand, baby. I'm gonna make you proud.

ZOSHA

(turning over)

Make me proud as quietly as possible.

CUT TO:

INT. IDA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

BROOKLYN

So it's shit.

DAME

It would seem it is shit.

Everyone is drinking water in the kitchen, lounging, and pondering. They pass around one of Bryan's pre-rolls.

Everyone hits it, but when it gets to James.

JAMES

I have never smoked in my life and I sure as hell ain't gon' start tonight.

BRYAN

You could just say no thanks.

Michaela gets the conversation back on track.

MICHAELA

A shit demon?

DAME

Precisely.

JAMES

So we're saying that everyone who's taken a shit, a demon version of themselves comes.

BROOKLYN

So, Bryan, you must've taken a shit when you left the table.

BRYAN

Yeah. I said that, remember?

BROOKLYN

Okay, well that's it.

DAME

Wait no, I took a poo after dinner too.

IDA

I used the restroom too.

Brooklyn thinks.

BROOKLYN

Well maybe it's what you ate. Dame and Ida what did you have?

DAME

Well that's easy for me; just turkey and sweet potatoes.

CIARRA

The palette of a four-year-old. That wasn't very helpful. Mom what about you?

IDA

I don't remember. That feels like days ago. A bit of everything, I think.

MICHAELA

Wait this doesn't make any sense. Because Bryan didn't eat anything.

ALEX

Yeah she's right, he left before we cut the turkey.

Bryan works up some nerve.

BRYAN

Well... I did eat some things.

IDA

You didn't have a chance.

Ida eyes James. James eyes her back.

BRYAN

I spooned the food.

JAMES

What the hell is that.

BRYAN

Before we ate. I took a spoon. And I tasted the dishes.

MICHAELA

Are you fucking kidding me? With the same spoon?

Bryan nods.

MICHAELA (CONT'D)

You. Are. A. Maniac, Bryan. A psychopath.

IDA

You put a dirty spoon from dish to dish and ate off of it?

MICHAELA

I am so disgusted.

CIARRA

We get it you're grossed out.

MICHAELA

Are you not?

JAMES

I have been saying since forever. The boy ain't right!

MICHAELA

Well, wait this could mean that Bryan's the demon, and poisoned all the food.

DAME

No because Ms. Ida and I still took poos with no demons.

BROOKLYN

Right so, Bryan. What did you spoon?

MICHAELA

Nasty.

BRYAN

All of it, I guess.

BROOKLYN

Well we know it's not turkey and
sweet potato.

ALEX

Greens, Mac and Cheese, and Potato
salad.

Ida laughs to herself.

CIARRA

What Mom?

IDA

I had everything but the potato
salad.

There's a silence.

CUT TO BLACK.

Big Title on screen: WHO MADE THE POTATO SALAD?

BROOKLYN (O.S.)

Who made the potato salad?

EXT. FARMERS MARKET - DAY - FLASHBACK

It's a bright winter day in the south-side of Chicago.

Ciarra has her reusable shopping bag and is ready to buy some
fresh produce.

Amongst a sea of white faces, there's a lone spice seller.
Brenda (late 40's), she's Black and looks angry. Ciarra
recognizes this anger and walks over to her.

CIARRA

Hey Girl! What you got going on
here?

BRENDA

Ain't nothing much. Just some
homegrown spices. But you know
these whites moving to the
southside... They don't want no
damn spice.

CIARRA

Well girl, you know I do! Whatchu
got?

BRENDA

Whatchu need? Tell me what you're making and I can make it special?

CIARRA

Wow. Love it. I'm thinking of making the potato salad this year for my family's Christmas dinner.

BRENDA

Okay, okay. How big is the family?

CIARRA

We're small. Ya know, maybe something smokey to throw on top, like paprika or something.

BRENDA

Well I have something a little better than paprika?

CIARRA

Smoked paprika?

BRENDA

(amused)
No.

CIARRA

Chili powder?

BRENDA

Nope.

CIARRA

Smoked chili powder?

BRENDA

(not amused anymore)
Stop!

CIARRA

(pleasant)
Okay.

Beat.

BRENDA

(pointing down)
Pene del Diablo.

The red mound of spice seems to move.

CIARRA

Oh wow.

(very unsure)

Okay. Okay. Um. Now I'm not sure
but that sounds like "devil" in the
title.

BRENDA

Yes, it means devil's dick.

IDA (V.O.)

Devil's Dick!

SOUND BRIDGE TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - PRESENT

Ida looks furious.

IDA

Child, did you put the devil's
penis in our food?

JAMES

Ciarra.

Ciarra takes a deep breath for courage.

CIARRA

Please let me speak my truth.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. FARMERS MARKET - DAY - WHERE WE LEFT OFF

CIARRA

Devil's Penis. Wow, that's a name.
Sounds spicy though. I'll take it.

BRENDA

Okay great.

Brenda picks up a scoop.

CIARRA

How much is it?

BRENDA

It's 50 dollars a pound.

Long beat.

Ciarra looks at all white people passing Brenda over. Then she looks down to the mound of the red powder. Then back to Brenda's eager face.

 CIARRA
You take card?

 BRENDA
No.

Ciarra lets out an angry, nervous laugh.

 CIARRA
Of course not.

Ciarra walks away with a pound of Devil's Dick.

 BRENDA
 (calling after her)
Good luck girl!

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Brooklyn, Ida, Bryan, James, Dame, Michaela, and Alex all stare at Ciarra with bewildered faces.

 ALEX
Babe...why?

 CIARRA
I wanted to do something special.
Try something new.

 IDA
You asked me for my recipe. The
recipe my grandmother gave to my
mother and so-on.

 CIARRA
Yes but what's wrong with trying--

 IDA
No Ciarra. No! Try a new dish then.
Try anything you like. But when you
asked me what you could bring, and
I said "potato salad." Then you
asked me for our recipe. I wrote it
down and sent a photo. Did I say
put the devil's penis in the
goddamn food?

 CIARRA
Mom.

IDA
Is that what I said?

CIARRA
No, of course not.

IDA
Of course not! When people come home for the holidays, maybe you'll understand this when you're older. But when people come home, they come home for comfort. So even if you hate my potato salad--

CIARRA
I don't hate your po--

IDA
Even if you did. You're not cooking for me. You're cooking the comfort food for the family. For a lot of us, this is the only time in a year we get to eat this food. Be this indulgent. Not count calories, nor steps.

Dame mouths "nor" and takes note.

IDA (CONT'D)
Last year it was the eight cheese macaroni, when we only need one. Two max! That had me running back and forth from the restroom. While taking my brother to the hospital I thought I was going to ruin my car. So I opted out of the food poisoning this year. God damnit! God damn this family.

BRYAN
I think he already has.

IDA
It's what we deserve.

Long sad silence.

Brooklyn clears his throat.

BROOKLYN
Why don't we finish this.

JAMES
I'm up next lets get this over
with.

Ciarra stares at Ida.

Ida ignores her gaze, partially embarrassed by her own
outburst.

JAMES (CONT'D)
You mother fuckers better get
ready.

INT. HALLWAY BATHROOM - DAY

Everything in the bathroom is gold plated and rose painted
walls.

James sits focused on the toilet. Deep in thought. Replaying
the events of the night? Or maybe how his life ended up here.
Him on the toilet while people listen intently.

Knock knock.

DAME
Uncle James--

JAMES
Shut the hell up!

DAME
For sure, for sure.

Beat.

DAME (CONT'D)
(quickly)
I just wanted to say we're going to
put some music on out here so we
won't be listening.

JAMES
I don't give a fuck if you listen
or not.

DAME
Right, right. Cool cool.

James starts yelling. He pushes, he strains.

There's some banging on the door.

BROOKLYN

You okay?

Brooklyn opens the door.

POV: JAMES POOPS HARD. VEINS BULDGING AND ALL.

Brooklyn closes the door.

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

(more to himself)

I can't unsee that-- I can't unsee that.

Then finally a loud single splash. An Immediate flush.

INT. BATHROOM - SAME TIME

James now waits for his next go.

But from under him he feels some heat. He looks down into the toilet to reveal a hand reaching up from the depths of hell.

JAMES

Oh shit.

James pulls up his pants and rushes out.

INT. HALLWAY - OUTSIDE OF BATHROOM

Brooklyn, Ida, Ciarra, Michaela, Bryan, Alex and Dame wait outside the restroom, knives at the ready. Brooklyn with his gun drawn.

James opens the restroom door.

JAMES

Get ready.

He runs past them. A waft of stink follows him.

They all groan.

BRYAN

Jesus, the smell.

Michaela gets dizzy but keeps it together.

IDA

You didn't want to use an air freshener or something James?

JAMES

It's already here. I saw its hand
reaching up from the toilet.

Dame holds his breath and closes the bathroom door.

DAME

(out of breath)
God.

CIARRA

Okay so... now we wait.

Long beat of them looking at their knives and each other.

Ida is in a daze. Ciarra tries to make eye contact with her
and Ida ignores her.

Bryan tries a smile at Michaela; she adverts her gaze.

Brooklyn takes a deep breath with his hand on his gun. He
shakes his head in a "how did I end up here" kind of way.

Dame is focused on the door. Almost trying to see through it.

Alex being the only one that's actually killed his own demon,
has an air of confidence in his stabbing ability.

James comes from the kitchen with a knife of his own.

Finally the door starts to open.

Everyone steps back.

Michaela rushes to stab the demon coming out and she stops
short.

We reveal: it's a young boy around the age of ten... We will
call him YOUNG JAMES(10) small, scared, yet courageous.

Ida drops her knife.

JAMES

I'll be damned.

IDA

Jimbo!

CIARRA

Who's Jimbo?

JAMES

It's what they used to call me when
I was younger.

Brooklyn relaxes a bit. Everyone takes a step back, except for Ida.

YOUNG JAMES

Ida.

IDA

Yeah.

YOUNG JAMES

What's going on?

IDA

That's so hard to explain. I don't think I know.

YOUNG JAMES

Did Dad make it?

IDA

Oh. No, he didn't.

Young James nods with determination.

YOUNG JAMES

(a statement)

So I'm the man of the house now.
That's what he said I'd need to be.

IDA

No, no. You aren't a man. You're just a baby. We should've never put that responsibility on you.

JAMES

Don't listen to this demon child
Ida!

Young James moves from the hallway to the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Everyone follows him.

Young James takes in the house. He nods.

YOUNG JAMES

You did good.

IDA

We did good, Jimbo.

YOUNG JAMES
I helped?

IDA
Of course.

YOUNG JAMES
(pointing at Bryan)
He doesn't think so.

BRYAN
Me?

YOUNG JAMES
Yeah, you.

Young James opens the fridge. Pulls out a grape sparkling water. Cleans the rim with his shirt. And then pops it open.

He takes a sip.

YOUNG JAMES (CONT'D)
Bleh! What's this?

CIARRA
It's sparkling water.

YOUNG JAMES
Damn, y'all ain't got no soda.

CIARRA
It's better to think of it as water
that has flavor.

YOUNG JAMES
No thanks.

Young James sets the drink down.

YOUNG JAMES (CONT'D)
So, who's going to do it?

IDA
Do what?

YOUNG JAMES
Kill me.

IDA
No one is going to hurt you, Jimbo.
No one.

YOUNG JAMES

Nah, it's okay, Ida. It's what I deserve. Bryan what do you say?

BRYAN

I don't want to kill you.

YOUNG JAMES

Sure you do.

IDA

James! Stop this. No one wants to hurt you.

JAMES

Stop talking to him like that. Ida he's not real.

YOUNG JAMES

No one wants to hurt me? But this family already has.

Young James picks up his sparkling water again. Ready to give it another try. He sips.

YOUNG JAMES (CONT'D)

Okay, Ciarra. I get it.

Young James starts to talk through the dining room.

DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Young James circles around to the chair James was in earlier.

YOUNG JAMES

So Bryan this is where you cracked my ribs and sent me to the hospital.

BRYAN

I cracked your ribs?

YOUNG JAMES

(nonchalant)
Yeah!

JAMES

He's lying.

YOUNG JAMES

C'mon James. Tell 'em how you couldn't work or go to work sights. Almost lost a few contracts.

BRYAN
I didn't know I'm sorry.

YOUNG JAMES
We almost lost our business, that
business that bought you two of
your first bikes.
(to Ida)
The business that helped you when
you were down.

IDA
I'm sorry.

YOUNG JAMES
Don't be sorry. Put me out of my
misery.

Young James picks up a knife.

They all step back. Young James cuts off a piece of turkey.

He eats it. Then moves to the mashed sweet potato's. He
spoons it into his mouth.

Everyone looks at Bryan.

BRYAN
See, I'm not the only one.

MICHAELA
He's a demon and a child. He's
demon-child. Which one are you?

BRYAN
Whatever man.

YOUNG JAMES
Damn, Ida. You cook just like them.

IDA
Who?

YOUNG JAMES
Our ancestors.
(with menace)
But I like your cooking more
Ciarra.

Young James picks up a spoon of her potato salad and starts
flinging it to the floor, making a mess.

DAME

Okay, so what are we going to do?
James maybe you should take over.

JAMES

Like, kill it? I'm not like Alex I
can't just go sticking knives into
things. I see now why he was so
anxious to cut the turkey... The
boys a cutter.

CIARRA

That's not what a cutter is Uncle
James. A cutter cuts themselves.

JAMES

...And what did he do.

ALEX

What? It was for the team!

MICHAELA

Let's get back, please.

Young James keeps eating the sweet potato's.

YOUNG JAMES

I agree. Lets get back to who's
going to do it. Yeah, Alex you
wanna go for it? Over compensate
for Ciarra. Hope she doesn't notice
she's too good for you. It's just
so painfully obvious.

CIARRA

That's not true.

YOUNG JAMES

Baby Girl c'mon it's true. You
would rather be with Michaela than
Alex. You and Michaela have been
keeping a little secret--

CIARRA

Okay, I'll do it!

IDA

No one is going to do anything!

YOUNG JAMES

(disappointed)
Okay...

FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Young James moves to the foyer. He starts up the stairs.

BROOKLYN

You've gone far enough.

Not turning around Young James keeps up the stairs.

YOUNG JAMES

Shoot me then.

Young James enters Ida's Bedroom.

The group all follow in.

IDA'S - BEDROOM

Once everyone is inside Ida's bedroom they don't see Young James.

He pops out with Ida's wine and pain killers.

CIARRA

You keep wine in your bathroom,
Mom?

YOUNG JAMES

(reading the bottle)
Mo-sca-to.

He lifts it to his lips.

YOUNG JAMES (CONT'D)

Much better.

He spins the pill bottle cap. Then turns the pill bottle cap again.

YOUNG JAMES (CONT'D)

Hmm?

He spins it again and again--until he finally bites it off.

YOUNG JAMES (CONT'D)

That cap must've been broken.

IDA

What are you doing?

YOUNG JAMES

Something you've only done in your
wildest dreams.

(MORE)

YOUNG JAMES (CONT'D)
 (re bottle & pills)
 You've got the recipe. I'm going to
 make the meal.

IDA
 Don't!

James grabs Ida.

JAMES
 Just let him, Ida. It'll be over
 soon.

IDA
 Well, I'm not going to watch.

Ida starts to leave the room.

YOUNG JAMES
 (taking a pill or two)
 You know Ida. I'm surprised you
 can't do it. You left me in that
 town with Mamma. To go to your
 fancy law school. To marry your
 fancy husband. And to have your
 fancy kids.

Young James takes a swig of wine. Then back to more pills.

YOUNG JAMES (CONT'D)
 A husband I knew was good. I was a
 few years early but I knew it. And
 what did you leave me for? To lock
 me up.

IDA
 What?

YOUNG JAMES
 Young men. Trying to do their best
 for their families. Maybe not the
 best way. So you put them in jail
 and throw away the key.

IDA
 You don't mean this.

YOUNG JAMES
 Trust me. We feel this way.

IDA
 The law is the law I didn't write
 it.

YOUNG JAMES

In any case. You killed and ruined many "Jimbo's" lives. Family-alike, many-a-times.

BRYAN

Just hurry it up.

Young James finishes the Moscato.

He smiles at Bryan. Then a tear falls from his face.

YOUNG JAMES

(you've hurt me the most)
Though my big sister has chosen you over me every time. I understand her. Because I've chosen you over me too.

Young James is fully crying now.

YOUNG JAMES (CONT'D)

And how do you repay me? You hit me!

BRYAN

Well it was a fight.

YOUNG JAMES

No it wasn't!

The mood changes in the room.

YOUNG JAMES (CONT'D)

All I've wanted from the family is for someone to say "good job." I carried this family for years. I carried it before your dad and after him. And all anyone can do is be fucking sad all the time. Well maybe I wanna be sad too.

JAMES

Be quiet.

YOUNG JAMES

No! We just want love, James!

JAMES

Shut up!

James throws a lamp at the kid and misses.

Young James nods and goes to Ida's bed.

He takes off his shoes and lines them up neatly.
He gets under Ida's covers and falls into the big-sleep.
Ida goes over to him.
James tries to hold her back and she shrugs him off.
She tucks the demon version of her younger brother in.
Then sits down next to his shoes.

CIARRA

...Mom.

Ciarra waves her off.

Ida takes another moment. Then stands.

IDA

I just miss him so much.

JAMES

But Ida I'm right here.

Ida realizes he's right. James is there. Her brother.

Ida walks over to James and hugs him.

IDA

Thank you, James. You did such a good job. You've been the perfect brother. The perfect protector and the man of this family. I'm so sorry if I've ever made you feel otherwise.

Ciarra joins the hug too.

CIARRA

We're so ungrateful, Uncle James.
We don't deserve you.

JAMES

Alright alright.

Bryan walks over.

BRYAN

I love you, Uncle James. I'm so sorry that I hit you and that I've hurt you.

(MORE)

BRYAN (CONT'D)

I apologize that I've never given you credit and the gratitude for the things you've done for me. I've always looked up to you.

Bryan joins the hug too.

DAME

(running in)

I love you Uncle James!

The group all grabs shoulders and leans into one another.

CUT TO BLACK.

In A Big Bold Title:

"WE LOVE YOU UNCLE JAMES"

CIARRA (O.S.)

We love you, Uncle James.

INT. IDA'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Everyone is in the group hug. Even Brooklyn has his hand on James' shoulder in a show of solidarity.

Everyone except Michaela.

Bryan looks up from the embrace.

BRYAN

Where's Michaela--

Just then, a loud bang that almost rattles the house.

JAMES

Fuck was that!?

Everyone rushes out of the room and down the foyer steps and BANG!

CIARRA

It's coming from the garage.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The group rushes into the kitchen. The kitchen door going to garage door is open.

Michaela is in one of Ida's white luxury SUV's.
Slamming into the back of the garage trying to break through.

INT. GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

BRYAN

Oh my god, Michaela, what are you doing?

BROOKLYN

Are you trying to steal the state prosecutor's car in front of an officer?

Michaela is silent, just rips the car in reverse, and rams the garage door again.

The group screams.

BRYAN

Mikey!

DAME

Your demon is still inside you.

Michaela rolls down the window.

MICHAELA

I don't know y'all like that.

BROOKLYN

What?

MICHAELA

I don't know y'all like that! And I am not about to poop in front of y'all.

BRYAN

Oh, Michaela come on.

MICHAELA

Nope!

Michaela backs out this time she makes it.

Slams through the garage door.

Everybody runs through the hole she's made.

EXT. GARAGE - ALMOST DAWN - CONTINUOUS

Michaela is now shifting gears again.

IDA

You're really going to take my car?

MICHAELA

I'm sorry Ms. Wilds. You have a lovely home.

BRYAN

What about us?

MICHAELA

"What about us?" What about *us!*"
Are you crazy? Boy, you got way too much fucked up shit going on with you and this family.

BRYAN

I love my family. My mother hasn't made a lot of easy decisions but she's always made me feel loved and has always supported me even though I don't make her life any easier. My sister is the nicest person in the world, and I don't care that she paid a hundred dollars for demon dick and fed it to us and made us all shit demons. I love her for that.

MICHEALA

You love her for that?

BRYAN

My Uncle's an asshole. But he taught me to be strong. He's only tough on me because childhood trauma and pressures of growing up to fast. Also he probably needs to find love.

JAMES

What?

BRYAN

Dame's my best friend and I'm sorry I've been a bad friend all this time.

DAME

Love you bro.

BRYAN
Alex, you're cool.

ALEX
Thanks...

BRYAN
Brooklyn I just met you tonight but
it's been nice hanging out and all
bro.

BROOKLYN
Fasho, fasho.

BRYAN
If you don't like us it's your
loss.

They all kind of nod in proud agreement.

BROOKLYN
Um, Michaela-- Sorry to cut you off
Bryan, are you all good?

BRYAN
I'm more than good I got my family.

BROOKLYN
Great.
(back to Michaela)
Michaela, might I hitch a ride?

Ida gasps.

BROOKLYN (CONT'D)
I just gotta get home and take a
shower.

DAME
Oh-um. Me too!
(to the group)
I'll come back tomorrow and get my
bike.

Brooklyn and dame get into the car.

BROOKLYN
(talking through the
passenger door)
For the record I completely
disagree with how she's going about
this.

DAME
 (from the backseat)
 Yes, me too. I'll holla at you guys
 tomorrow--

The car starts to pull off.

DAME (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Merry Christmas!

Just then a rickety yellow car comes screeching and sliding
 down the icy street.

It slams into a tree and air bags deploy.

Michaela, Dame, and Brooklyn get out of the car at the end of
 the driveway.

James, Bryan, Ciarra, Alex, and Ida all carefully and quickly
 meet them at the end off the driveway.

Struggling to get out of the car is Rudy.

EXT. END OF DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

Everyone looks confused.

MICHEALA
 Who is this?

BROOKLYN
 It's one of my rookies...

RUDY
 (finally catching his
 breath)
 You weren't answering any of your
 com lines so I volunteered to come
 search for you here.

BROOKLYN
 Oh, thanks. I'm leaving now.

RUDY
 What happened? Why are you still
 here?

BROOKLYN
 It's a long story and you wouldn't
 believe me if I told you.

RUDY
 Try me.

BROOKLYN
Nah.

RUDY
What?

BROOKLYN
Yeah we're all done here.

RUDY
(to Michaela)
Ma'am?

MICHEALA
(mocking)
Sir?

IDA
I'm tired.

The group agrees.

Michaela, Dame, and Brooklyn get back into Ida's SUV and maneuver around Rudy's crash.

DAME (O.S.)
(through the window)
Merry Christmas.

Rudy watches them drive away confused.

RUDY
(to himself)
That was my moment.

He turns around to see the group of Alex, James, Ciarra, Ida and Bryan walking away.

RUDY (CONT'D)
So you guys are good?

They all respond in the affirmative.

RUDY (CONT'D)
This is fucked up.

They don't turn around and keep walking.

Once they get in the house Rudy hears music.

CUE: ANITA BAKER SWEET LOVE.

Rudy walks toward the house.

INT. HOUSE - VARIOUS LOCATIONS

Every one in the house is busy cleaning and they all ignore Rudy as "Sweet Love" blasts through the sound system.

Rudy is shocked by the carnage that is Ida's home.

RUDY
(loudly to Ida)
What the hell happened here?

Ida can't hear him over the music.

Rudy tries to help move something for Ciarra.

CIARRA
(go away)
I got it.

Rudy looks around angry and frustrated.

He finds his way to the dining room.

DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Rudy helps himself and makes a gigantic plate a of food: including but not limited to *the* potato salad. He pockets some of the super nice silverware.

Just before leaving the dining room he sees Mariah (the Dog) and takes her too. No one seems to notice.

EXT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Rudy gets in his busted car with the dog and food in hand. He starts the car and it sounds like someone is being stabbed.

He reverses the vehicle out of the tree that it's lodged and drives his raggedy piece of shit away.

Big Titles:

GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR DEMONS

THE END