



ECHO LAKE

ENTERTAINMENT



Written by
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The hero of this movie is a dog.
Scenes will be primarily shot to convey his POV.

A DOG PANTING.

EXT. CORNFIELD - NIGHT

We're floating over a field of Indiana corn. Swaying in the breeze. But we don't hear the rustling.

Don't hear any other sounds.

Just panting.

Filling our ears. Rhythmic.

We float over more corn until we come to a TOYOTA RAV4 following a CROP TRACTOR along a two-lane highway.

We float through the windshield...

INT. TOYOTA RAV4 - NIGHT

...past JEANNIE (39) and VICTOR (38) in the front and ASHER (12, Captain America shirt) in the backseat. We land on...

A DOG in the cargo area. Terrier mix. Black and tan wiry coat. Chin resting on the seat back. Saliva drips from his tongue.

Panting.

This is GARY (9, weathered nylon collar). 45lbs. The hero of our movie.

His golden eyes are trained on a TENNIS BALL in Asher's hand.

Jeannie and Victor are bickering, but we don't hear it. Don't care about any of it.

We're just focused on that ball.

Panting.

Asher tosses the ball into the back. Gary leaps for it. Catches it in his mouth.

His panting replaced by the sounds inside the car... Country radio. The whistle of the A/C vents. Our ears attuned to it all.

JEANNIE
I'm telling you, I can make it.

Jeannie cranes her neck, trying to see oncoming traffic around the spiked wheels of the tractor's cultivator.

VICTOR
Just wait.

JEANNIE
He's going 28.

VICTOR
He'll turn off before Shelbyville.

Gary drops the ball back in Asher's hand. Asher gives him a pat. Gary loves this game, almost as much as he loves Asher.

More panting.

Asher tosses the ball back to him. He leaps. Misses. Tumbles into bags of groceries.

Doesn't care. Rummages for the ball.

VICTOR
Asher, careful with the dog.

ASHER
He likes it.

Gary brings the ball back to him. He certainly does.

More panting.

Jeannie steers towards the center lane.

VICTOR
Honey --

JEANNIE
I got it.

Jeannie commits. Pulls out. Right into an oncoming MINIVAN. HONKKKKKKK.

VICTOR
JEANNIE!

Jeannie jerks the RAV4 back into the right lane. The minivan whips past.

That was close.

JEANNIE
Everyone okay?

They all nod.

Gary's eyes are still fixed on the ball in Asher's hand.

Panting.

Louder now. Really getting worked up.

Jeannie follows the tractor through a curve. The tractor comes to a stop.

JEANNIE

Great. Now we're going zero.

VICTOR

We'll get home when we get home.

Jeannie nods. He's right.

The DRIVER gets out of the tractor and heads to a gate. He starts unlatching it.

Gary stares at the ball.

Panting.

PANTING.

Suddenly...

He goes silent.

Ears rise. Hearing something. Something the others can't. He turns. Looks out the rear window...

Something on the other side of the curve. Impossible to see around the corn. And then...

HEADLIGHTS burst into frame.

A TOW TRUCK going 60mph.

No time for the others to turn around.

THE TRUCK HITS US.

Black.

A long beat.

HISSING.

A SMOKING RADIATOR

Shredded apart by the cultivator's wheels.

We pan across a graveyard of parts... A drive axle. A hood. A splintered window.

A paw.

Stepping across broken glass.

Gary limps past the wreckage of the RAV4. Hurt, but somehow alive.

He sniffs the air, searching for something. Suddenly turns. Picking up a scent. There. Up ahead in the ditch...

That blue Captain America shirt peaking through the tall grass.

Gary hobbles over to Asher. He's lying face down. Gary nudges him over with his nose. Asher's face is scratched and dirty.

Gary licks him.

He doesn't move.

Gary barks.

No response.

He stares down at Asher.

A long beat.

Gary spots that tennis ball still clutched in his hand. He grabs it in his mouth. Lies down next to him. Rests his chin on the lifeless boy.

Pants.

Red and white light strobes across Gary's face. An ambulance approaching. But we don't hear the siren. Just panting.

Cut to black.

Silence.

A beat.

Then...

Toenails clawing at linoleum.

INT. GREENWOOD ANIMAL SHELTER - DAY

Gary is led down a hallway on a leash by a pair of KHAKI PANTS. Gary limps on his front leg, which is now in a blue CAST.

KHAKIS
C'mon, buddy. This way.

Khakis pulls him through a door into the

KENNEL AREA

BARKING! Everywhere. Pouring out of the cages around us. Gary looks terrified.

KHAKIS
I know, I know. It's okay. C'mon.

Khakis leads Gary into a bottom kennel. Shuts and latches the gate behind him.

KHAKIS
Thatta pup.

Gary backs into a corner. Shaking. He watches as another pair of legs appears next to khakis. These in jeans.

JEANS
Surrender?

KHAKIS
Crash. Near Deer Valley. Poor guy lost his whole family.

JEANS
Name?

KHAKIS
They didn't give me one.

JEANS
Age?

KHAKIS
Vet said eight, maybe nine. He's got a fracture in his front leg.
(beat)
What are his chances?

JEANS
We'll do what we can.

Jeans hangs a clipboard on the cage and heads off with khakis.

Gary listens to the cacophony of barks.

Trembles.

THE NEXT DAY

Gary hasn't moved. A bowl of kibble sits in front of him. He's not hungry.

He watches pairs of legs pass his cage.

No one stops.

ANOTHER DAY

Gary paws at his cast, trying to pull it off.

A family leads a German shepherd past on a leash.

ANOTHER DAY

A pair of HANDS points an iPhone into the cage at us.

HANDS

Smile.

Gary looks at the phone, scared.

HANDS

Just one good picture? Please?

ANOTHER DAY

Gary rests his chin on his paws, watching more legs pass by.

And then --

ASHER walks up to his cage in that Captain America shirt.

Asher?!

Excitement pours out of Gary. He leaps up, losing control of his tail.

Asher wraps his fingers around the gate. Smiles in at Gary.

ASHER
What's wrong with him?

Gary blinks.

It's not Asher. It's a PONYTAILED GIRL (11) in a blue shirt. She stares at his leg.

PONYTAILED GIRL
Mom...what's wrong with him?

A pair of yoga leggings appears next to her.

YOGA LEGGINGS
C'mon.

Yoga leggings ushers the girl off.

Gary watches them leave.

ANOTHER DAY

Gary stares at his food, still not interested.

A pitbull is led off on a leash.

ANOTHER DAY

Gary paws at his cast. *God it's itchy.*

Jeans leads a pair of brown Carhartt work boots past his cage.

JEANS
Just got him in. Husky, roddy mix.
Stunning blue eyes. Lucky you came
when you did, folks have been
calling about him all morning.

Jeans and boots disappear.

A beat.

The boots return, stopping in front of Gary's crate. Then...

A FACE lowers down into view. Round and warm with a mustache. This is CAMERON (44). Overweight. Buzz cut. Wire glasses that magnify his lonely eyes.

He studies Gary. Jeans appears next to him.

CAMERON
What happened to his leg?

JEANS
Car accident. He's been through a
lot.

This seems to resonate with Cameron. He stares at Gary. Gary
stares back.

JEANS
You wanna see that husky?

EXT. GREENWOOD ANIMAL SHELTER - DAY

Sunlight blasts us in the eyes.

Gary limps out of the shelter. Squints. Seeing sun for the
first time in days.

Cameron leads him on a leash over to a red 2003 Chevy S-10
pickup. An Indianapolis Colts horseshoe on the rear window.
He opens the passenger door.

Gary steps back.

CAMERON
Come on, boy.

Cameron pats the passenger seat. Gary doesn't move.

CAMERON
It's okay. C'mon.

Cameron goes to pick up Gary. Gary takes another step back,
his eyes fixed on the truck.

CAMERON
The truck? Is that it? We don't
like the truck?

Gary definitely doesn't.

CAMERON
It's like four miles to the house.

Gary stares up at him.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Cameron carries Gary along the side of the highway.

FURTHER DOWN THE HIGHWAY

Gary stands in the ditch, watching Cameron catch his breath.

CAMERON

Okay, up we go.

Cameron picks Gary back up. He walks on.

CAMERON

I coulda had a husky with really cool eyes, ya know? Probably would've loved ridin' in trucks.

EXT. CAMERON'S HOME - DAY

Cameron carries Gary up to a single-story with vinyl siding and dented garage door. The only thing that's been cared for is the lawn, which is impeccable.

He sets Gary on the porch. Unclips a CARABINER OF KEYS from his jeans. Flips through them to find his door key.

Gary watches wind chimes clink and clang. Then, something else catches his attention. Past the chimes, in the window of the house next door --

A PAIR OF EYES.

Staring directly at Gary through the blinds. Bloodshot. Unblinking.

Gary doesn't like them. He whimpers. Backs up.

Cameron opens the door.

CAMERON

C'mon, boy.

Gary looks back at the window. The eyes are gone.

INT. CAMERON'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Gary tentatively enters. Peers into the living room. Worn hardwood floors. Popcorn ceiling stained from a leaking roof. Dusty 37" Vizio. A red Lowe's Home Improvement vest and toolbelt hanging up in the hall.

He looks at it all, overwhelmed. Spots a

UTILITY CLOSET

Washer and dryer off to one side. Enough room for Gary on the other.

Gary limps in and lies down next to the washer. Stares up at Cameron. Starts shaking. Cameron watches the frightened pup.

CAMERON

We need dinner.

MOMENTS LATER

Gary hasn't moved. He lies in the utility closet, pawing at his cast.

Cameron sets a dog bowl down in front of him. The bowl reads **BOOMER**. It's full of shredded CHICKEN.

CAMERON

Sorry 'bout the bowl.

Gary ignores the food.

Cameron sits down next to him. Grabs some chicken. Holds it out. As he does, we notice *his pinky finger is missing*.

Gary sniffs the chicken. It's still a no.

CAMERON

I know. It's been a lot, huh? Just take as long as ya need.

Cameron leans against the wall, rests his hand on the floor in front of Gary. Waits.

Gary stares up at him.

HOURS LATER

Cameron snores against the wall, that chicken still in his hand.

Gary watches him in the darkness. His eyes shift from Cameron to the chicken.

Cameron.

Chicken.

Cameron.

Chicken.

Gary licks his lips. *Man that chicken smells good.*

He inches towards it, keeping an eye on Cameron. Starts eating the chicken. Cameron stirs. Smiles at Gary.

CAMERON
That's a good boy.

Gary licks Cameron's hand clean.

CAMERON
Rotisseries are two for one at
Kroger, so you eat as much as you
want, kay?

Cameron grabs more chicken. Hand-feeds Gary.

MORNING

Gary's eyes flicker open in the morning sun. He's staring at his bowl. It's been refilled with kibble. A water bowl next to it.

Blankets have been tucked in around him to form a makeshift dog bed in the utility closet.

A CLUNK comes from across the hallway.

It's Cameron tightening a LEAKING PIPE under the bathroom sink. He turns on the sink. Checks the leak. Good enough.

He closes the cabinets. Shakes his head. *Damn old house.*

Sees Gary watching him.

CAMERON
Mornin', boy.

Cameron flips off the light and approaches.

CAMERON
I gotta run an errand. You gonna be
okay here for a bit?

Cameron crouches down in front of Gary. Scratches behind his ears. Gary's eyes grow heavy. *That feels good.*

CAMERON
Keep an eye on the place, a'right?
You're in charge.

Cameron kisses Gary on the top of the head. Leaves. Gary listens to him lock the front door.

A silent beat.

Gary looks around the house.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Gary enters, tentative.

Sniffs.

His nose leads him to the breakfast nook.

He hops up onto the bench. Sniffs a plate of toast crust. Eats the crust. Continues on...

Sniffs his way to a framed photo of a BORDER COLLIE on a shelf. A faded leather dog collar with "BOOMER" on the tag is wrapped around the photo.

Gary intently sniffs the WHITE HAIRS on the collar. Learning all about Boomer.

Gary looks down into the corner and spots a basket of dog toys. A kong, a rope tug, tennis balls.

Next to it, there's a DOGGY DOOR.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

Gary pushes through the doggy door. Steps out onto the porch. Looks around the yard. Manicured grass. Meticulous landscaping.

Limps over to a bush. Pees on it.

As he does, he sniffs the air.

Smelling something in the wind.

Something interesting.

Gary continues along the fence line, following the scent to a WOODEN GATE at the back of the property. Paws have dug up the soil underneath it. No doubt the work of Gary's predecessor.

Gary sticks his nose under the gate. Sniffs. The scent is out there.

He pushes his way under. Gets stuck on his shoulder blades. Tries to free himself. Pulls the gate up in the process.

CLANG.

The latch unhooks. Gate creaks open.

Gary noses out to the

WOODS

Gary puts his nose down. Crunches his way through the leaves behind Cameron's house.

He follows the scent to a hickory tree. Sniffs it. Full of smells. Not the one he's tracking. Moves on.

Deeper into the woods...

There. Under the leaves. He's right on top of it now.

Gary digs.

The scent grows stronger. Feeds his excitement. Pulls up...

A TURD.

From a raccoon. Maybe a possum. He smells it. Nudges it around with his paw. Then, yep, he eats it.

Dogs be dogs.

As Gary does his thing with the turd, we PULL BACK to see that his digging has uncovered something else...

A single, rose-colored adidas woman's sneaker.

That's odd.

Gary spots it, too. He approaches, cautious. Sniffs. Paws at it. It doesn't seem like a threat. Actually seems kind of interesting.

He grabs it in his mouth as a SHADOW falls over Gary. Gary turns to see --

A towering bearded man in a trucker hat silhouetted against the sun. This is RANDY (53). He stares down at Gary with bloodshot eyes.

It's the neighbor we saw earlier. Gary's directly behind his fence line.

RANDY

Drop it.

Randy takes a step forward. Gary backs up.

Another step.

Gary TAKES OFF with the shoe in his mouth.

Randy gives chase.

Gary sprints back through the gate. Doesn't break stride.
Hits the doggy door at full speed.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Gary's toenails skid across the floor. He slams into the cabinets.

Gary gets up. Shakes himself off.

The door handle RATTLES.

Rattle, rattle, rattle.

A silent beat.

The flap on the doggy door RISES. Randy stares in at Gary, eyeing the shoe hanging from his mouth.

He reaches an arm through the doggy door. Then another. Pulling himself towards Gary.

Gary backs up. Whines.

Randy squeezes and twists. An impossibly tight fit. Determined to get in.

Determined to get that shoe back.

Closer and closer...

He just keeps coming.

Almost inside the house.

SLAM.

A truck door shuts, startling Gary.

He looks through the living room and out the far window to see that Chevy S-10 back in the driveway.

Cameron's home.

Gary turns back to the doggy door.

Randy is gone.

Gary sits there.

Panting.

Then, he turns and carries the shoe off. Back to the

UTILITY CLOSET

He drops it. It falls into the heap of blankets.

Cameron enters, fumbling to get his carabiner of keys out of the door.

CAMERON

Hey buddy.

Cameron crouches in front of Gary with a shopping bag.

CAMERON

You do okay here by yourself?

He pets Gary, not noticing the shoe.

CAMERON

Picked something up for ya.

Cameron pulls a ventilated dog KNEE BRACE out of the bag.

Gary sniffs it.

Cameron heads into the hallway and grabs a pair of gardening shears out of his toolbelt. He returns and cuts off Gary's cast. Peels the bandaging and plaster away.

CAMERON

Good riddance to that itchy thing.

He slides the new brace over Gary's leg. Velcros it in place.

Gary looks at the brace. Moves his leg. It feels good.

Really good.

He looks up at Cameron, surprised. Cameron beams back.

A TING TING TING sound echoes up from the A/C VENT next to them. Gary startles. Cameron sighs...a common noise in this old house.

CAMERON

It's okay, boy. It's just the water heater.

Cameron grabs his toolbelt. He opens a warped hallway door. Gary listens as he descends a set of stairs into the basement.

Gary approaches the A/C vent. Cautiously noses up to the brown grille.

Listens to that TING TING TING echo up from the basement.

Then, the noise stops.

A beat.

Footsteps come back up the stairs.

Cameron reappears with his toolbelt. But he's brought something else up from the basement, too. A vacuum-sealed freezer bag of SALMON.

He holds it up.

CAMERON

You like fish?

INT. UTILITY CLOSET - EVENING

Gary devours a salmon fillet in his dog bowl. It's the greatest thing he's ever tasted.

He licks his bowl clean. Looks up at Cameron who's eating salmon on the couch and watching the Colts game.

Gary hops up next to him. Stares at Cameron as he eats, hoping he might drop some.

CAMERON

What? This is mine. You had yours already.

Gary: *So?*

Cameron forks the last piece. Gives it to Gary. He scratches behind his ears as he watches the Colts run the ball.

CAMERON

(nods to TV)

See this kid? That's J.T. Elliott.
He runs a four three. We like him
cuz he's got two German Shepherds.

(adds)

And cuz he runs a four three.

Gary rests his head on Cameron's lap. His eyes grow heavy as Cameron scratches.

CAMERON

Maybe I call you Elliott?

He can call him whatever he likes, as long as he keeps scratching.

Gary can't hold his eyes open any longer. He closes them.

Black.

Silence.

A long beat.

A SHRIEK.

LATER

Gary opens his eyes. He's still on the couch. The TV is on but Cameron is gone.

Another SHRIEK. Followed by a CRASH. Coming from Cameron's bedroom.

Gary gets up. Passes the TV. A picture of a NURSE (32) is on the local news. We catch the chyron --

SEARCH FOR SHELBYVILLE WOMAN CONTINUES

Gary crosses the hallway, heads into

CAMERON'S BEDROOM

A LAMP lies on the floor. COVERS pulled off the bed. PILLOWS scattered everywhere.

And in the middle of the bed...Cameron. Covered in sweat. Tossing and turning. He mumbles in his sleep --

CAMERON

Please... Let me out... I'll be good this time... *please!*

He SHRIEKS.

Gary hops up onto the bed.

He stands there, watching Cameron have his nightmare. Seeing someone who's suffered trauma. Relating to the feeling.

Or maybe he's just a dog.

Either way, Gary lies down. Rests his chin on Cameron's chest.

CAMERON

Please... *please...*

Cameron trails off. Begins to settle down. Gary's presence comforting.

Gary stares out the window. Watches a SQUIRREL scamper across the fence. Right past --

RANDY.

Staring in at Gary from his kitchen window. Gary looks again.

He's gone.

The squirrel runs back across the fence, but Gary pays it no attention. His eyes trained on Randy's window.

MORNING

Cameron groans, stirs awake. Cracks a sleepy eye. Spots Gary lying on his chest.

A happy sight.

CAMERON

Hey buddy.

Cameron scratches behind his ears. Gary melts.

CAMERON

That's the spot, huh?

It sure is.

CAMERON
Whatta ya think...wanna come to
work with me today?

He's not thinking about anything except how good those
scratches feel.

That TING TING TING of the water heater faintly fills the
room. Cameron groans: *You gotta be kiddin' me.*

He wills himself out of bed. Grabs his toolbelt. Heads
downstairs.

EXT. CAMERON'S HOUSE - DAY

Cameron leads Gary down the driveway, zipping up his Lowe's
vest.

Gary eyes Randy's house. The shades are all drawn. Impossible
to see in. Then movement... One of the shades snapping
closed.

They were being watched.

Cameron doesn't notice. He opens the passenger door of his
truck. Gary stops.

CAMERON
Still?

Gary looks up at Cameron. *Still.*

Cameron pulls a Ziploc of shredded salmon out of his pocket.
Pours it onto the passenger seat. He walks around the truck
and gets in the driver's side.

Gary eyes the salmon.

INT. CAMERON'S TRUCK - DAY

Cameron starts the engine. Gary is now next to him on the
passenger seat, gobbling up the salmon.

CAMERON
(smiles)
Thatta boy.

Cameron scratches behind his ears. Reaches over, shuts the
door.

INT. LOWE'S HOME IMPROVEMENT/GARDEN CENTER - DAY

Gary's leash is tied to a shelf of pool supplies in the back. He lies next to a water bowl, watching Cameron stack bags of chlorine with a tattooed co-worker in a STRAW HAT (38).

STRAW HAT

You asked Debbie about this?

CAMERON

'Course. She was cool with it.

STRAW HAT

Seems that way.

Straw Hat nods to the MANAGER near the registers, who looks about as uncool as you can look about any situation.

CAMERON

What am I supposed to do, leave him alone all day in a new house? No way.

STRAW HAT

He's got your other one to play with.

Cameron clenches his jaw, uncomfortable. Straw Hat clocks this.

STRAW HAT

No... What? What happened?

CAMERON

Cancer.

STRAW HAT

Fuck man. I'm so sorry. He was like super young wasn't he...

A CRUNCHING fills our ears, drowning out the conversation.

Gary turns to see a shopper eating a peanut butter wafer energy bar as she studies a row of plants. This is KAT (28, overalls, blonde bob).

Gary smells the peanut butter and gets up. He heads over, his leash just long enough to reach her.

He sits next to her, pants.

KAT

Dude, seriously?

More panting.

KAT
Beat it. Get outta here. Your
breath stinks.

Gary doesn't move.

KAT
What?

She follows his gaze to the energy bar.

KAT
This is mine. Get lost, dude. Go.

He's still not moving. Kat sighs. Pulls off a piece. Tosses
it over his head.

He turns around, gobbles it off the floor. *How good is peanut
butter?*

He comes right back. Sits next to her.

KAT
Really?

Cameron approaches, grabs Gary's leash.

CAMERON
Buddy, no. Leave her alone.

Cameron looks up at Kat. Smiles.

CAMERON
Sorry about him. He's friendly if
you want to pet him.

KAT
Not a dog person.

CAMERON
You're kidding.

She's not.

CAMERON
Can I help you find anything?

KAT
(re: plants)
I need something bulletproof.
Completely unkillable.

CAMERON
Chinese evergreen. They're made for
folks like you. Aisle five. C'mon,
I'll show ya.

As Cameron leads her off, he eyes her Waffle House name tag.

CAMERON
A Kat that hates dogs?

KAT
Don't like cats either.

Gary watches Kat head off. Licks the crumbs off his lips.

EXT. HIGHWAY - EVENING

Cameron drives.

Gary has his head out the window, drinking in the scents from
the cornfield. Tongue flapping in the wind.

Being a dog again.

Happy again.

EXT. CAMERON'S HOUSE - EVENING

Gary still has his head out the window as Cameron pulls into
the driveway. Gary looks at the house.

The front door is open.

Cameron sees it, too. He looks concerned. Grabs his toolbelt
off the seat. Pulls out those shears.

INT. CAMERON'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Cameron enters, clutching the shears, trying to be brave.
Gary follows him in.

CAMERON
Hello?

The house has been rifled through -- drawers pulled out,
clothes strewn on the floor.

Someone was looking for something.

CAMERON
(to Gary)
Stay.

Cameron heads into the basement to check downstairs. Gary doesn't like any of this. Ducks into the

UTILITY CLOSET

Wedges himself in the corner. Tucks his tail between his legs. Spots that WOMAN'S SNEAKER lying in the blankets.

He grabs it in his mouth. Comforting.

Cameron comes back upstairs. He closes the front door. Locks it. Takes a breath.

CAMERON
It's okay, boy. They're gone. We're okay.

Trying to convince himself as much as Gary.

His eyes land on that shoe in Gary's mouth.

CAMERON
Where in the world did you find that?

Cameron grabs it. Holds it up.

As Cameron studies the shoe, Gary's focus shifts past it, out the window to Randy's house...

RANDY STARES THROUGH THE BLINDS.

Watching Cameron holding the shoe.

Gary barks.

Barks again.

Cameron follows Gary's gaze out the window.

Randy's gone.

CAMERON
What's wrong, boy?

Off Gary, watching the house next door, uneasy --

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Gary lies on the bed. Cameron brushes his teeth in the background.

But Gary's focus isn't on Cameron. It's trained out the window on Randy's house. Looking for any movement.

Cameron spits. Turns off the bathroom light.

Climbs into bed.

He kisses Gary on the head. Kills the bedroom light.

Darkness.

All we see is Gary's eyes.

Fixated next door.

LATER

Middle of the night. Gary's fallen asleep.

His ears suddenly perk up.

Hearing something. Something we didn't. He looks out the window. Scans Randy's house for movement. Nothing.

A quiet beat. Then a

BANG.

Coming from inside the house. *Inside Gary's house.*

He looks at the bed...

Cameron is gone.

Another beat. Then --

The sound of GLASS SHATTERING out in the hallway.

Gary leaps off the bed. Crosses to the closed bedroom door. Paws at it, concerned.

It's not budging.

A CRASH comes from the other side of the door.

Gary puts his nose to the ground. Peers under the crack. Catches a glimpse of

CAMERON BEING THROWN INTO THE WALL WITH A BLOODY FACE.

He tumbles out of view.

Someone's beating the shit out of his owner!

Gary barks.

He paws the door. It doesn't budge.

Another CRASH in the hallway.

Gary whines.

More pawing. This time, one of his paws slips down the door, clipping the door handle.

Clang.

It moves, but not enough to unlatch.

He swipes his paw again.

Clang.

The latch clears the strike plate this time, but then latches again.

Oh to have opposable thumbs.

Gary swipes with both paws.

Clang.

This time his dewclaw CATCHES on the handle, pulling the door with it.

It unlatches. CREAKS open.

Gary pushes his way into the

HALLWAY

It's eerily quiet.

A picture frame lies shattered on the ground.

Beyond it, more picture frames smashed on the floor. The console table lies on its side. A shattered lamp FLICKERS.

Gary sniffs.

Smelling something. Ahead of him on the floor --

Drops of blood.

And then MUFFLED CRIES.

Coming up through the A/C vent.

Gary approaches the vent. Ears raised. Listens.

The cries are coming from Cameron. His owner is in trouble.

Gary pushes his snout against the brown grille covering the vent. It's loose. He pushes harder, pulling one end out of the drywall. Manages to nose past the grille.

Pushes his head into

THE VENT

It's dark in here. A sliver of light coming from below us.

Gary looks down towards the light.

He's seeing through the A/C duct *straight down into the basement.*

His view is obscured by another grille, but he can make out the cracked concrete floor.

Cameron's cries are louder down here.

Gary turns his head. Trying a new angle. Looking for Cameron.

Spots a chest freezer. Turns his head again. More concrete floor.

And then finally --

CAMERON.

There he is.

Sitting on a metal chair.

Scratches on his neck and face.

Sobbing.

Gary shifts around to get a better view, and that's when something odd comes into focus --

There's something under Cameron on the chair.

No, *someone.*

He's sitting on the lap of a WOMAN (37).

A gag tied around her mouth. Her face filled with cuts and terror.

She holds Cameron as he sobs.

Cameron brushes her mussy blonde hair off her forehead. Whispers...

CAMERON

Who am I?

Cameron gently pulls down her gag.

CAMERON

Who am I?

WOMAN

(terrified)

You're a good boy. You're a good boy.

More tears run down Cameron's face. Those words meaning everything to him.

As the woman holds Cameron, the tag on Gary's collar CLANGS against the side of the vent.

She looks up. Meets eyes with Gary through the slats.

She stares at Gary with pleading eyes: *help me*.

And then those SHEARS explode through her throat.

Cameron's driven them into the back of her neck and out the front.

She tries to scream, but can't.

Cameron sits there on her lap, watching her squirm. Not with pleasure, but with sorrow and disappointment.

She tumbles off the chair. Crawls away from Cameron. Towards the corner. Grabbing a 2x4 piece of wood on her way. Bangs it against a BRASS PIPE.

Ting. Ting. Ting.

This has been the source of the sound.

Her last futile pleas for help.

And then she goes still.

We PUSH IN on Gary as he eyes Cameron. Impossible to tell if Gary understands anything he's seeing.

Or maybe he understands everything he's seeing.

His tag hits the side of the vent again. Clang. Cameron looks up.

Gary is gone.

Off Cameron, curious --

UTILITY CLOSET

Gary pulls his head out of the vent.

Listens to Cameron's Carhartt boots making their way up stairs.

They appear in front of Gary. Cameron looks down at him, then over at the open bedroom door.

CAMERON
How'd you get out?

Cameron spots Gary's tail tucked between his legs. He gives Gary a warm smile.

CAMERON
It's okay, bud.

He crouches down. Scratches behind his ears.

CAMERON
Everything's okay.

Gary melts. His eyes grow heavy. Powerless to his spot.

CAMERON
Yeah. That's a good boy.

His tail slowly starts to untuck.

Cameron stands. Reaches up to the top shelf of the closet. Pulls down one of those red Lowe's shopping baskets full of CLEANING SUPPLIES... bleach, plastic gloves, gardening tarp.

INT. HALLWAY - LATER THAT NIGHT

Cameron cleans up broken glass and pieces of lamp.

Gary watches from the other end of the hall, still a little uneasy. He's next to a broken picture frame. The picture is of a TEENAGE CAMERON. His FATHER (43, balding) and MOTHER (39, petite, blonde pixie cut) have their arms around him in front of a Christmas tree.

Cameron picks up the photo. A warm memory. He delicately removes it from the broken glass. Precious to him.

INT. GARAGE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Gary watches Cameron load a human-shaped COCOON of gardening tarp into the bed of his Chevy. Cameron crosses over to a work bench. Grabs that rose-colored sneaker.

He tucks the sneaker inside the cocoon next to A SECOND ROSE-COLORED SNEAKER. A complete pair.

Cameron opens the passenger door of the truck. Smiles at Gary.

CAMERON
C'mon, we're goin' for a ride.

Gary brightens. He likes the truck.

INT. CAMERON'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Gary has his head out the window, tongue flapping in the wind.

Cameron wipes blood from his face with his sleeve.

EXT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

Cameron pulls the truck up to an abandoned farmhouse with a collapsed roof. A rotting BARN sits in the back.

Both buildings have been completely neglected. Oddly, the landscaping has not. The grass, hedges, vegetable garden...all carefully cared for.

Cameron gets out of the truck. Gary follows him. They walk along the edge of a CORNFIELD.

Gary sniffs the air.

Something odd out here.

Gary follows Cameron to a '98 Case COMBINE HARVESTER. Cameron gets in the cab. Pats his leg.

CAMERON

Up we go.

Gary climbs up next to him.

HARVESTER

Cameron pulls out his carabiner of keys. Fishes for the right one. Cranks the engine.

It hiccups and stalls.

Cranks the engine again.

VRRM! Diesel POURS from the smoke stacks.

CAMERON

Stay here.

Cameron gets out. Shuts the door.

Gary listens to the harvester idle.

He sniffs the cab. Follows his nose to the seat. Then, under the seat.

Paws at something...

Wedges in the corner.

Hooks his claws on it.

Pulls out a DOGGY BONE. Half chewed.

Scoops it up into his mouth.

The door CLUNKS open. Cameron climbs back inside. He flips on the overhead FLOODLIGHTS. Shifts the harvester into gear.

Drives it forward. Into the cornfield.

Cameron starts the header.

The BLADES of the header begin sucking up downed corn. The harvester rattles and shakes as the corn is CHEWED UP and the chaff is blown out the back.

Gary sits next to Cameron's seat, bone in his mouth, taking it all in.

He squints through the dusty window at the small patch of light in front of them.

Spots a BUNNY race past.

And then something else up ahead...

That HUMAN-SHAPED COCOON. Lying right in their path.

Cameron accelerates the header blades to full RPM.

They HIT the cocoon.

The harvester SHAKES and BUCKS. The GEARS SCREAM OUT.

Gary looks concerned, Cameron does not.

Routine for him.

He reaches a hand down. Strokes Gary's head, comforting.

Out the rear window, a RED SLUDGE sprays into the cornfield.

And then the harvester settles. The squealing ends. The spray stops.

Cameron turns the harvester around. Drives back towards the farmhouse.

Suddenly, the engine SEIZES and dies.

CAMERON

Goddamnit.

Cameron cranks the engine over. No response. Cranks again. Nothing. He opens the door and climbs out.

CAMERON

(to Gary)

Let's go, bud.

Gary climbs down after him. Cameron and Gary head back to the truck, leaving the harvester sitting in the field.

Leaving the dog bone lying in the cab.

We push in on the bone. Getting a close look at it.

Not like any doggy bone we've seen before.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Gary lies on the bed, watching Cameron's bloody flannel tumble around in the washer out in the hall.

Cameron enters, toweling off from a shower.

CAMERON
G'night, boy.

He kisses Gary on the head like he always does, then crawls into bed.

CLICK. The lights go out.

Gary watches Cameron's bloody clothes circle. Listening to the clink and clang of the buttons.

Processing.

He finally shuts his eyes, soothed by the sound.

EXT. BACKYARD - MORNING

Gary sniffs around a bush. Finds his spot. Lifts his leg. Does his business. As he pees...

Creek!

The rear gate swings open.

That's odd.

Gary lowers his leg. Approaches the gate, curious. Gazes out at the woods.

HUSHED VOICE
Go on.

Gary looks up. Randy stares at him from his side of the fence.

Gary BARKS.

Randy holds up his hands. He's weathered but tough like his Cummins trucker hat. He talks in hushed tones.

RANDY
Shhh. Easy. I'm not gonna hurt ya.

Gary cocks his head, curious.

RANDY
Go on now. Get.

Gary studies Randy.

RANDY
You gotta go. Understand?

Gary doesn't.

RANDY

Get out of here. It's not safe for
you to--

SLAM! A screen door slams shut behind them.

Cameron is on the back porch. He smiles at Randy.

CAMERON

Mornin', Randy.

Randy gives him a polite nod but his eyes say something else:
I'm onto you.

RANDY

Mornin'.

CAMERON

Everything alright?

RANDY

Your gate was open.

Randy pulls it closed.

RANDY

Figured you wouldn't want your dog
gettin' out.

CAMERON

Must've blown open. I sure
appreciate that. C'mon boy.

Cameron pats his leg. Gary trots over to him. Cameron goes to
head inside. Stops.

CAMERON

By the way...had a break in
yesterday. Strangest thing. They
didn't take a cent. You didn't
happen to see anything did you?

Randy stares at Cameron, understanding the subtext: *I'm onto
you, too.*

CAMERON

Probably just kids. I'll be sure to
take a look at that latch.

Cameron heads inside. Randy watches, concerned, as Gary
follows him.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Gary finishes a bowl of kibble. Looks up --

Cameron snores on the couch in front of *SportsCenter*.

Over in the hallway, the basement door is open. Our first look at the back side of it. It's no ordinary door. Three inches thick and covered in soundproofing with a steel deadbolt.

Gary's eyes drift to the staircase beyond it.

INT. BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Click. Clack. Click. Clack.

Gary descends the stairs. The walls are lined with SOUNDPROOF INSULATION. Far newer than anything else in the house.

Gary stops on the last stair. He sniffs.

It smells weird.

He peers into the darkness. No windows. Just concrete walls, all around us. Impossible to see anything down here.

At least for a moment. Gary's eyes begin to adjust and so do ours. Like someone raised the brightness 10%.

The power of the canine retina.

Gary moves forward. Past the chest freezer. Under the vent.

Comes to a patch of concrete stained red. A puddle of blood was here.

He looks further into the basement --

Another red stain. And another. And another.

They're all over the basement.

Gary spots something stuck in a crack in the concrete.

Approaches.

Paws at it. Pulls up a

FINGERNAIL.

Painted rose.

A HAND REACHES OUT AND GRABS GARY.

Gary jumps! Crashes into a stack of 2x4 boards in the corner. Spins around.

Cameron approaches.

CAMERON
It's me, buddy.

Gary looks up at Cameron, uneasy.

Cameron crouches down. Holds out his hand for Gary to sniff.

CAMERON
You're not scared of me.

Cameron scratches behind his ears. Gary slowly begins to soften.

CAMERON
Yeah, that's a good pup.

We linger on Gary's eyes, studying Cameron. Trying to piece it all together...

EXT. FARM - DAY

Gary sits under the shade of the harvester, panting.

Cameron talks with a MECHANIC (55, overalls) near the engine compartment.

MECHANIC
Never seen a cylinder head crack like this. Whatta ya been chewin' up, concrete?

CAMERON
Must've hit a rock.

MECHANIC
Big fuckin' rock, tell ya that.

The wind shifts. Gary sniffs the air, smelling something.

Something familiar.

It's coming from the barn. He gets up. Follows his nose.

CAMERON
How long to get a new one?

MECHANIC

Hard to say. Probably a few weeks.

CAMERON

Weeks?

MECHANIC

What's the rush? Don't look like you've harvested out here in a decade.

CAMERON

It was my dad's rig. He'd want it to
be . . .

The conversation fades away as Gary slips into

THE BARN

As abandoned as the rest of this farm. Gary sniffs past a fallen beam, around pallets. Heads over to a row of GOAT CAGES.

He enters one. Looks around the cage. A thin layer of hay on the concrete. Markings etched in the wood on the far wall.

Stick figures.

As if carved by a child.

The rusted gate of the cage CLANGS behind him, startling him. It's Cameron.

CAMERON

Whatta ya doin', bud?

Cameron looks around the cage, uneasy.

CAMERON

Spent a lot of time in here. Mom said I was misbehavin', but I wasn't tryin' to. I really wasn't.

He shakes his head.

CAMERON

All I wanted was to be a good boy.

He looks down at Gary, softens.

CAMERON

Just like you.

He crouches in front of Gary. Scratches behind his ears.

CAMERON

You're a good boy. You know that?

Cameron stares intensely into Gary's eyes.

CAMERON

I need you to know that.

All Gary knows is how good that feels. Cameron smiles at him.

CAMERON

C'mon, let's get outta here.

Cameron stands. Gary follows him out of the cage. As they make their way to the barn doors, Gary suddenly stops.

There's that smell again.

He follows his nose over to an old HARVESTER HEADER. Sniffs around the blades. Past dirt and leaves and small rocks...

And there.

Caught in one of the blades.

A clump of white fur.

Fur that Gary has seen before.

COLLIE FUR.

Cameron whistles from the barn doors.

CAMERON

C'mon Elliott! Time to go!

Gary looks at the fur, then to Cameron.

He follows Cameron out.

INT. GARDEN CENTER - DAY

Gary's back in his spot next to the pool supplies. His head is on his paws, bored, as he watches pairs of legs cross in front of him.

CAMERON (O.S.)

How much did you water them?

KAT (O.S.)

I didn't.

He looks over to see Cameron approaching with Kat.

Holy shit it's the peanut butter lady.

Gary perks up. His tail starts to wag.

CAMERON

At all?

Kat nods. Cameron tries to hide his horror.

CAMERON

Plants are like all living things.
They just want a little love.
That's all they want.

KAT

I need something that doesn't
require any love. Can barely take
care of myself.

Cameron nods.

CAMERON

I think we're gonna need to go
artificial. Wait here, I'll see
what we've got in the back...

Cameron heads off. Kat looks down. Gary's sitting next to her side.

He pants.

KAT

Amazing. You again.

Gary stares up at her.

KAT

I don't have any food for you.

Gary doesn't believe her.

KAT

C'mon, man. Just leave me alone.

He cocks his head, doesn't understand.

KAT

Go bother someone else.

But he likes her.

KAT

I'm just gonna ignore you.

That's okay. He doesn't mind. He sits there, smiling up at her. Panting.

Kat rolls her eyes.

Cameron returns, clutching an artificial plant.

CAMERON

Good news, you can't kill this baby. Bad news, I've only got one in stock.

INT. GARDEN CENTER/CHECKOUT - MOMENTS LATER

Gary watches as Cameron rings Kat up at a register.

CAMERON

Warehouse has been kinda slow but ya should have the others next week.

He bags up her plant. Hands it to her with a smile.

CAMERON

And try to take care of yourself more than your plants? We all need love.

Kat just needs her plant.

KAT

Thanks.

Cameron watches her head off. As she disappears, his expression turns dark.

He hits a button on the register. Her information starts printing:

**Katherine Wilkins
718 North Willow Road
Hill Valley, Indiana 46217
3175558740**

He tears off the page and slips it into his pocket. Like he's done this before.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

VRRT. Gary lies on the bed, watching Cameron use a DRILL to unscrew the bedroom door handle.

He digs around in a Lowe's shopping bag. Pulls out a ROUND DOOR HANDLE.

VRRT. VRRT. He mounts the new handle. Doggy proof.

He switches on the TV on the dresser. Turns up the volume.

Smiles at Gary.

CAMERON

Be good while I'm gone, 'kay?

He kisses Gary on the top of the head.

Closes the door.

The latch CLICKS.

Gary climbs to the window. Peers out the blinds.

Cameron gets in his truck and drives off. Randy sits in the dark next door with an old DSLR, snapping photos of Cameron.

Behind Gary, a picture of the woman in the basement appears on the NEWS with the chyron:

MISSING WOMAN TAKEN FROM HOME

Her photo is added to a collage of other missing women. ALL WITH SHORT BLONDE HAIR. ALL PETITE.

All reminiscent of Cameron's mother in that photo.

Just like Kat.

MORNING

A chorus of robins wakes Gary at the foot of the bed. He looks behind him.

Cameron is back. Asleep.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Gary eats a bowl of kibble. Cameron enters, zipping up his Lowe's vest. Crouches down in front of Gary.

CAMERON

Can't take you with me today,
buddy. Debbie's gonna write me up
if I bring you in one more time.

He pets Gary.

CAMERON

I know, she sucks. You'll be
a'right here on your own, though.
I'll be back before ya know it.

He kisses Gary on the top of the head. He snags his carabiner
of keys from a hook above the breakfast nook and heads off.

Gary watches him leave.

He stands there in the kitchen.

Alone.

His eyes land on that basket of toys in the corner.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Silence. Then...

A TENNIS BALL bounces down the hallway. Gary bolts into
frame, chasing after it. His leg clearly feeling much better.

GARY PLAYS FETCH WITH HIMSELF

Catching the ball in his mouth, then flinging it free again.

--Sending couch cushions flying.

--Knocking pictures off the wall.

--Tipping lamps over.

We FIND HIM standing in the living room. Panting. Tennis ball
in his mouth. Furniture a mess.

He drops the ball on the floor.

Taps it with his paw. As if wanting it to do something on its
own. It doesn't. He stares down at it, glumly.

It's just not the same playing alone.

Bang.

Gary's ears rise.

What was that?

He looks around, scanning the living room. Doesn't see anything.

He BARKS.

Nothing.

He listens. A long beat. Then --

CLANG!

The mailbox slot SLAMS OPEN and a handful of letters falls in. The slot closes.

Gary relaxes.

Just the mailman.

LATER

Gary sleeps, curled up on a couch cushion he knocked off.

Bang.

Gary jerks awake. He could've been asleep five minutes or five hours. Either way, there's that sound again. Or was he just dreaming it?

His ears rise. Listens.

Bang.

Definitely not dreaming it.

Bang.

Bang.

Gary gets to his feet, heads into

THE HALLWAY

Bang.

It's coming from the basement door.

Gary approaches, sits down in front of the door. Stares at it.

Bang.

Bang.

A long beat, then -- THE DOOR HANDLE RATTLES.

Gary cocks his head, studying the handle.

RattleRattleRattleRattleRattleRattle

Gary BARKS.

The rattling stops.

A long beat.

Gary BARKS.

No response.

Gary turns, heads into the utility closet. Sticks his head past that grille into

THE VENT

Looks down into the basement at that cracked floor.

He BARKS.

A long beat.

Then FOOTSTEPS...coming down the stairs.

A FACE steps into view below him --

ASHER.

His Asher. In that Captain America shirt. He stares up at Gary through the vent.

ASHER

Help...

Gary blinks.

It's not Asher. It's Kat. The peanut butter lady. In a blue hoodie streaked with dirt. A WELT below her left eye.

KAT

Help me.

Gary smiles at his friend.

KAT

Go get help. Help! You understand?

Gary cocks his head. He doesn't.

Kat looks around for something more useful than Gary.

She grabs that metal chair. THRASHES it against the concrete wall. Hoping someone without a tail might hear.

KAT

HELP!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Loud on Gary's ears but --

EXT. CAMERON'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

-- barely audible out here. The insulated basement doing its job.

The chirps from the robins are louder than Kat.

INT. VENT - SAME TIME

Kat drops the chair. Collapses to the ground amongst the blood stains.

Screams.

Frustration and helplessness and terror pouring out.

And then another sound. Behind Gary. Keys in the doorway. Cameron returning home from work.

Gary pulls his head out of the vent.

UTILITY CLOSET

He turns around just as Cameron enters and takes in the mess he made playing fetch.

CAMERON

What in the world? Buddy...! You missed me *that* much?!

He crouches in front of Gary. Pets him.

CAMERON

Yeah, I missed you, too. Look what I got...

Cameron reaches into a plastic bag. Pulls out a DOG BOWL with **ELLIOTT** on the side. Gary sniffs it.

A distant SCREAM echoes up from the A/C VENT next to them.

Cameron studies the vent, smile fading.

He gets up. Crosses to the basement door and unlocks it with his carabiner of keys. He heads downstairs, shutting it behind him.

Gary sticks his head back past that grille into

THE VENT

To see Cameron descend the stairs. He comes to a stop on the final step. Looks down at Kat.

She stares back, trying to get a read on her captor. Impossible to do.

A tense beat.

He moves towards her.

She backpedals into the corner. Grabs one of those boards. Clutches it like a weapon.

Cameron passes her.

Grabs the chair instead. Places it in the center of the room. Turns to Kat.

CAMERON

Have a seat.

Kat doesn't move.

CAMERON

It's okay.

He pats the chair. Kat stands. Eyes the staircase. Too far. He'd get her before she reached it.

She cautiously heads for the chair. Sits, her eyes glued on Cameron.

He smiles at her. Gently takes the board from her hand and puts it on the floor. Then, he sits on her lap. Wraps her arms around him.

Kat sits there, holding Cameron, weirded the fuck out.

He whispers something in her ear that Gary can't hear.

She mumbles something back.

CAMERON

Louder.

KAT

(wtf?)

You're a good boy.

Cameron nods.

CAMERON

Again.

KAT

You're a good boy.

Kat glances at that board next to the chair. She reaches down, fingers dancing around over top of it. Just out of reach.

CAMERON

Who am I?

KAT

You're a good boy. You're a good boy.

Cameron's eyes start to fill with tears as Kat's fingers connect with the board. She snatches it up and SWINGS.

BASHING it into the side of Cameron's head.

Cameron tumbles off the chair.

Gary barks. Concerned for Cameron. Or Kat. Maybe both.

Kat doesn't hesitate. She SPRINTS for the staircase. HURDLES up the steps when --

CAMERON'S HAND LATCHES ONTO HER ANKLE.

She screams, trying to kick free, but Cameron's too strong.

He DRAGS her back down the stairs. Pulls her into the basement. She flails against his grip.

CAMERON

Stop it. STOP IT.

He strikes her across the face. Kat crumples to the floor.

Gary barks. This time, definitely for Kat.

Cameron stares down at her. Shakes his head.

CAMERON

I asked you to stop. I can't be a good boy if you're causin' trouble.

Cameron heads upstairs, rubbing the side of his head.

CAMERON

No dinner tonight.

Gary looks at Kat, concerned, then pulls his head out of the vent.

UTILITY CLOSET

He turns around to see Cameron locking the basement door. Cameron spots Gary, brightens.

CAMERON

You must be starving.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Gary finishes eating in his new bowl. As he licks his lips, he looks over at the basement door.

Studies it, concerned.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Cameron pets Gary while watching the Colts game and drinking a PBR.

Just a man and his dog and the game and --

Ting. Ting. Ting.

That pipe banging.

Coming from downstairs.

Gary lifts his head up. Looks over at the basement door. Cameron turns up the volume on the TV, drowning it out.

CAMERON

Here we go, boy...fourth and goal.

Cameron scratches behind Gary's ears, lulling him back down.

The Colts hike the ball.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Gary sleeps at Cameron's feet. Gary's ears suddenly rise. He lifts his head up.

Ting. Ting. Ting.

The faint sound of that pipe banging again.

He gets up.

Heads through the open bedroom door.

INT. VENT - MOMENTS LATER

Gary pushes his head into the vent. Peers down at --

Kat banging one of those 2x4s into that brass pipe. Not the first person to try this. Maybe not even the second.

KAT

Help!!! Somebody! Can't you fucking
hear me?!?!?

They can't.

But Gary can.

He gives a soft bark.

Kat stops her banging and looks up. Meets eyes with Gary.

KAT

Great. You again. You gonna get me
outta here?

Gary studies her.

KAT

Go get help. HELP. HELP.

He cocks his head, trying to understand what she's asking.

A long beat.

Then --

He pulls his head out of the vent.

Kat looks surprised.

We STAY ON Kat, listening to his toenails click clack on the wood floor above her.

Gary going somewhere.

The toenails stop.

Kat listens.

No sound.

Then...the toenails start up again.

Coming closer. *Coming back.* Kat stares up at the vent as --

Gary pushes his head back through. He's brought something with him. Something in his mouth --

THAT TENNIS BALL.

Gary drops it through the vent.

Clang.

It hits the vent cover above Kat, and rolls into the corner.

Gary smiles, just trying to be a good boy and bring her what she wants.

Which he's pretty sure is a tennis ball.

KAT

That's great. Fuckin' great. He's gonna kill me. You understand that?!

He doesn't. Not yet, at least.

Kat slides down the wall and slumps onto the floor.

EXT. CAMERON'S NEIGHBORHOOD - MORNING

Cameron walks Gary. As Gary stops to sniff a bush, we see

A POLICE CAR

Approaching behind them.

Cameron sees it, too. He keeps his head down as the car pulls up next to them and follows beside them for an uncomfortable beat.

It drives on.

Up ahead, another cruiser idles down the street the other way.

Searching the neighborhood.

Cameron tugs Gary's leash.

CAMERON
Let's go, boy.

They turn and head back to the house.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Gary sits at the window, watching Cameron in his Lowe's vest get in his truck and head to work.

The house falls silent.

A beat. Then --

Rattlerattlerattle.

Gary turns.

The basement door handle is rattling around.

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR

Kat is crouched at the top of the stairwell, trying to pick the lock with an EARRING. She gets the post wedged into the lock. Grips the ring.

Turns.

The post SNAPS.

KAT
Fuck!

She punches the door.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

Kat comes back down the stairs.

She hears a metal clang and looks up. Gary stares down at her, his tag clanging against the vent.

Another tennis ball in his mouth.

KAT
Seriously, dude?

He drops it.

Clang.

It hits the vent cover and rolls into the corner next to the other.

KAT
Is that all you do?

Gary whines: *play with me.*

KAT
Great job. Real helpful.

He stares at her. Waiting for her to throw it back. Finally realizes she's not going to. Pulls his head out of the vent.

We STAY ON Kat studying the tennis balls. Something striking her.

INT. UTILITY CLOSET - MOMENTS LATER

Gary naps against the washing machine.

Clang.

His ears perk up.

Clang.

It's coming from the vent. He noses his head back into

THE VENT

He looks down at a pair of dirty Converse. Kat's shoes. She's on her tippy toes on that metal chair.

The vent is rattling back and forth.

Clang. Clang. Clang.

The vent cover swings open. The tennis balls bounce to the floor.

Kat's head pokes into view. She peers up at Gary. He stares down at her. Getting a full look at each other's faces for the first time since Kat was taken.

If the vent were bigger, Kat could crawl right through it. But it's not.

She points a finger at him.

KAT

Stay.

Gary watches as Kat climbs off the chair.

She picks one of the tennis balls off the floor. Carries it to the corner. Reaches under the water heater to a pile of WET SOOT.

She drags her finger through the soot, then across the tennis ball.

Writing a message:

help basement

Kat climbs back on the chair. Holds the ball up.

KAT

You want the ball?

Gary perks up. *Very much so.*

She lines it up. Throws it to Gary. It clangs against the side of the vent. Way short.

Falls back down to her.

Gary keeps his eyes glued on the ball.

Kat gives it another toss. It clangs into the vent. Gary snaps at it.

Short again.

EXT. CAMERON'S HOUSE - DAY

The distant CLANG of that vent.

Clang.

Clang.

Clang.

INT. BASEMENT - SAME TIME

Kat throws the ball over and over again.

Short each time.

Saliva drips from Gary's jowls. He whines. Adjusts his position.

All he needs is a chance.

If Kat could just get closer to the vent. She looks around. Spots those 2x4 pieces of wood.

She gets down. Grabs the boards. Stacks them onto the chair. Four boards high. Looks unstable, but her only shot.

She climbs up. Steps onto the boards.

They shift beneath her.

She fights to gain her balance. Holds the ball up towards Gary.

KAT

Watch.

Gary's never watched anything more in his life.

KAT

One... two...

Gary tracks the ball as Kat moves it up and down to the count.

KAT

...three!

She throws.

The boards give out.

Kat falls to the floor.

Her left ankle snaps as it hits concrete.

She screams.

Clutches her foot, withering in pain. Grits her teeth.

Tries to breathe.

Doesn't want to look, but she does. Her foot pointing out the wrong way.

Fuckfuckfuck.

Knows what she has to do.

Sets it.

Shrieks.

But we don't hear it. Don't hear anything except a high-pitched WHINE filling our ears.

Kat collapses to the ground. Head swimming. Stares up at a blurry ceiling and blurry vent and blurry Gary...

Holding something in his mouth.

Something yellow.

Vision starting to clear. Sound coming back. Gary coming into focus with the tennis ball in his mouth. Panting.

He caught it.

KAT

Go.

Gary stares down at Kat.

KAT

Go...get outta here.

Gary doesn't move.

KAT

Go!

A long beat. Gary finally pulls his head out of the vent with the ball.

Kat shuts her eyes, weathering another wave of pain.

Thunk. Thunk. Thunk.

She opens her eyes.

The tennis ball bounces on the floor beside her. She looks up.

Gary is back.

KAT

No, no, no...

Gary: *yes, yes, yes.* He pants, excited. Just like how we met him in the opening. Ready to play more fetch.

Certain he's being a good boy by bringing the ball back.

The tennis ball rolls to a stop next to Kat. She lies there, defeated.

Gary stares at her, ears up. Panting.

Throw it.

She doesn't.

He finally lies down, resting his head on the vent.

It's okay, he'll wait.

LATER

A RUSTLING sound.

Gary's eyes open. Below him, Kat rummages through that freezer. Her weight on her good leg.

Digs past pie crusts, packs of AA batteries...

She pulls out a vacuum-sealed bag of salmon. Gary perks up. She tosses it aside.

Finds a box of HOT POCKETS. Opens it up. Pulls one out. Manages to bite off a piece.

Chews.

Like eating plywood. But at least it's something.

She sits down with the box, cringes as she stretches her hurt leg out in front of her.

She takes another bite of Hot Pocket. Chews. Stops.

Starts to cough.

A piece stuck in her throat. Coughs more, struggling to get it out.

Gary gets to his feet.

He barks.

And barks and barks and barks.

Kat finally convulses forward, like she's about to puke.

Coughs the piece up.

She catches her breath. Looks up at Gary who continues to bark above her. In a total frenzy.

On Kat, studying Gary. *Learning something big.*

She starts coughing again.

Gary continues to spiral above her.

Barking louder.

Kat coughs harder. Clutches her throat. Gary's in a full panic now. He pulls his head out of the vent.

Kat stops coughing. Stares up at the vent.

KAT
That's it. C'mon...

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

Gary barks into the empty living room. As if there's someone that could help.

But there isn't.

He's alone.

Or is he?

We RACK FOCUS past Gary, out the window to

RANDY.

Watching Gary through the blinds next door.

Gary sees him, too. Approaches the window. Continues to bark.

The blinds suddenly flip shut.

A beat. Then...

Gary spots Randy heading through his kitchen. Towards the backyard.

Gary takes off through the house.

INT. BASEMENT - SAME TIME

Kat listens to Gary's toenails racing across the floor.

C'mon... c'mon...

EXT. BACKYARD - SAME TIME

Gary bursts out of the doggy door. Stands on the patio. Barks.

Randy appears in the yard next door.

RANDY
What's wrong? Huh?

He unlatches Cameron's gate. Cautiously enters the yard, looking around for any sign of Cameron. Then turns his eyes back to the distressed Gary.

RANDY
What happened? What is it?

Gary continues to bark.

Randy approaches the door.

RANDY
Someone in there?

More barking. Gary heads back inside through the doggy door.

Randy crouches down. Opens the flap. Peers inside.

RANDY
Hello...?

BASEMENT

Kat looks up at the vent. Did she just hear something?

She limps to the chair. Painfully pulls herself onto it. Stands. Cranes her neck to the vent. Listens. Ever so faintly, echoing across the sheet metal --

RANDY (O.S.)
Hello? Anyone in there?

Kat nearly falls off the chair.

KAT
Help! HELP ME!

She pounds on the side of the vent with her fist.

KAT
HELP!!!!!!!!!!

BACKYARD

Randy can hear the faint sounds of Kat banging out here.

RANDY
Jesus christ. I knew it...

Randy pulls off his jacket.

KITCHEN

Gary watches as Randy pushes his head through the flap. Then starts to squeeze his shoulders through. Just like before.

Kat continues to scream and bang downstairs.

RANDY
I hear ya. Keep yelling! Keep yelling!

BASEMENT

Kat hears Randy's words. Starts to cry. Relief washing over her.

KAT
Down here! I'm down here!

Kat bangs on the vent.

KITCHEN

Randy grits his teeth, fights to squeeze through the doggy door. Kat's bangs driving him forward.

He gets one shoulder through.

Then the next.

Looks up at Gary.

Only something is wrong... His face is no longer determined. It's screwed up in pain.

His eyes filled with fear.

He opens his mouth to speak. But instead of words

Blood.

Trickles down his chin.

The door swings open, revealing

THOSE SHEARS STICKING OUT OF RANDY'S BACK.

Cameron stands in the doorway behind him. Randy flails, trying to reach the shears to pull them out, but he can't. The door is blocking his reach.

Randy tries to scream. Can't do that either. Just silent gasps as he kicks his legs.

Gary whimpers, ducks under the kitchen table. He doesn't like this at all.

Cameron stares at Randy stuck in the doggy door.

CAMERON

You shoulda stayed on your side.

He sadly watches as Randy bleeds out.

But Gary's eyes aren't on Randy. They're trained on Cameron. For the first time, looking at his owner not with love but with fear.

INT. BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Kat stands on that chair, staring up at the vent.

KAT

Hello?!

A long, silent beat.

KAT

HELLO?!

Then --

CLUNK.

The basement door unlocks. Kat climbs down. Rushes to the stairs. Almost forgets about her ankle. Adrenaline taking over.

Looks up at the door, hopeful, as

A human-shaped cocoon of gardening tarp TUMBLES TOWARDS HER.

She dives out of the way as the cocoon crashes into the far wall. She looks over at the jumble of tarps... Randy's DEAD EYES peering out at her.

She opens her mouth to scream, but nothing comes out.

The door upstairs shuts and locks. Those Carhartt boots descend the staircase.

Cameron appears. Stares at Kat. Then his attention shifts past her to the chest freezer.

VENT

Gary watches from above as Cameron empties the freezer. Pulling out the salmon, the pie crusts, the batteries.

Stacks it all on the floor.

He grabs the corners of the cocoon. Hoists Randy in. Pushes him down. The lid won't close. Tries another angle. Still not going.

Cameron grabs Randy's leg. BREAKS it. Grabs the other. BREAKS that one, too. Heaves them down.

The lid closes. A temporary holding spot.

Cameron turns to see Kat looking at him, horrified.

CAMERON

No, no, it's okay.

He sits down beside her on the floor.

CAMERON

I'm just tryin' to make this work.
Thought it would last time. Really
did. It was so sad...what happened.

He rests his head on her shoulder. Grabs her hand and puts it on his head.

CAMERON

You want this to work, right?

Kat nods, freaked the fuck out.

CAMERON

(softly)
Who am I?

Tears fill Kat's eyes.

KAT

You're a good boy.

As she holds him, she eyes the CARABINER OF KEYS clipped to his belt loop.

INT. UTILITY CLOSET - NIGHT

Gary lies next to the washing machine, watching Cameron get ready for bed. Cameron peers out the bedroom door.

CAMERON
C'mon bud, bed time.

But Gary doesn't move. His tail tucked between his legs.

CAMERON
Aww, buddy...

Cameron approaches. Squats down in front of Gary.

CAMERON
You didn't like what happened today, huh?

He definitely didn't.

CAMERON
Yeah, me neither. But they'd have come for us otherwise. Put both you and I back in a cage. I had to protect us. You understand?

Cameron reaches a hand out to Gary. Starts scratching behind his ears.

CAMERON
I'm never gonna let them put us back in a cage. *Ever.*

Gary's eyes start to grow heavy, but we ANGLE ON his tail.

It stays tucked.

INT. BACKYARD - DAY

Gary lies in the grass watching Cameron dig a small TRENCH just beyond the fence line with a shovel.

Cameron finishes and pulls out a spool of ELECTRIC CABLE.

He starts lying it in the trench, covering it with dirt.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Cameron sits on the floor next to Gary in his Lowe's vest. He holds an ELECTRIC COLLAR in his hand. Tests it by pressing a button on an app on his phone.

VRRRT!!!

It shocks Cameron so much he drops the collar.

CAMERON

Shit.

He checks the intensity setting on the app: *forty milliamps*.

Dials it way back. Tests it again.

Vrrt.

Better.

He goes to fasten the ELECTRIC COLLAR onto Gary. Gary resists. Fidgets.

CAMERON

I know. I'm sorry, buddy. But that gate was wide open.

He manages to get it on. Pets Gary lovingly.

CAMERON

I can't lose you, too.

He kisses Gary on the head. Stands. Grabs his carabiner of keys off that hook.

CAMERON

Be good, boy.

Gary watches Cameron leave.

INT. VENT - DAY

Gary peers down into the basement. Spots Kat slumped next to the freezer. Cameron's given her that **BOOMER** dog bowl with leftover chicken Gary didn't eat. She ignores it, staring at the far wall.

Numb.

She hears Gary above her and looks up. Sees the red light on his collar.

KAT

You're stuck here now, too, huh?

Gary rests his chin on the vent. Kat eyes him.

KAT

Never understood it...why everyone loves you guys. My neighbors had this pitbull when I was growing up. Big mother fucker. Twice the size of you. Used to bark at me on the way to school. Such an asshole.

Gary listens.

KAT

I was so scared of him I'd run past his fence. 'Till one day he got out. Chased me down. Had to get twelve stitches in my hand.

Kat shakes her head.

KAT

I don't care how cute any of you are, I don't trust you. No offense.

Gary stares at Kat, none taken.

KAT

I shouldn't have to apologize for that, right?

Gary can't offer her an answer. Only compassionate eyes.

She sighs: *I can't believe I'm talking to a dog.*

She looks around the basement.

KAT

I'm running out of time.

Talking to herself now more than Gary.

She peers up at Gary. The only friend she has in this place. Her only chance out of it.

KAT

I need you to get me his keys. His *keys*.

Gary cocks his head.

KAT
I know. I know. You don't
understand.

Kat looks over at the freezer. An idea forming...

She hobbles over. Opens the freezer. Reaches her hand past those tarps.

Starts feeling around Randy's body.

Pulls her hand back out. She's holding Randy's HOUSE KEYS.

She holds the keys up to the vent. JINGLES them back and forth.

KAT
Keys. I need his *keys*.

Gary yawns. His eyes grow heavy. He couldn't care less about the keys.

Kat jingles them harder.

KAT
Look at me. Keys! Keys!

Gary looks about ready to take a nap. Kat looks around. Needs a new tactic.

She spots that pile of freezer food on the ground next to her.

She grabs one of those bags of salmon. Rips it open. Gags at the smell of warm fish.

Gary has the opposite reaction.

His eyes spring open. He licks his lips.

Kat limps to the chair. Pulls herself onto it. Holds the fish up to the vent.

KAT
Is this what you want?

Gary can't remember ever wanting anything more in his life.

KAT
Come on then. You gotta get closer.

Gary squeezes lower into the vent. Down...down...down.

As far as he can.

Kat pulls off a piece of salmon. She JINGLES the keys in front of Gary, then throws the fish.

A short throw, but it doesn't matter. No chance Gary's missing it.

He lunges forward. Snatches the salmon. Gobbles it up with one bite.

KAT

Again.

Another jingle. Another piece of salmon.

Training Gary.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Gary sits behind Cameron as he makes spaghetti. But Gary's focus isn't on the food.

It's on that carabiner of keys jingling on Cameron's belt loop.

Jingle.

Jingle jingle.

Suddenly more interesting to Gary.

Cameron plates his spaghetti. He unclips his keys and hangs them above the breakfast nook. Heads into the living room.

We STAY ON those keys. Jingling on their hook. Gary stares at them. His ears raised.

He licks his lips. A Pavlovian response.

He hops up on the nook. Approaches the keys. Sniffs them.

The keys stop jingling.

A long beat. Gary waits for them to do something.

They don't.

He heads off. Down the hallway.

PRELAP: A DIESEL ENGINE cranks over.

EXT. FARM - DAY

Gary lies in the shade under Cameron's truck, chewing on that odd-looking bone.

Out in the cornfield, Cameron is trying to start the combine with its fresh cylinder head. It won't fire. The mechanic waves him off.

MECHANIC

Wait. Wait. Hang on...

The mechanic leans his head into the engine compartment. Makes an adjustment.

MECHANIC

A'right, try 'er again.

Cameron cranks the ignition. This time the engine ROARS TO LIFE. Exhaust pours from the smokestacks.

Cameron shifts the combine into reverse.

Backs up through the cornfield. Parks it next to the barn.

Ready for use.

INT. CAMERON'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Cameron and Gary ride back from the farm. "Bad Moon Rising" by CCR plays on the radio.

Cameron drums his fingers on the steering wheel, in a good mood. He lowers the window for Gary.

Gary doesn't put his head out this time. He keeps his eyes on Cameron instead.

LATER

Cameron turns onto his street. Gary perks up, curious. Seeing something up ahead. Red and blue lights flickering across his face. Rotate to reveal...

A POLICE CRUISER parked in front of Randy's house. Two OFFICERS peer through Randy's windows.

Cameron sees them, too.

Shit shit shit.

He hits the garage opener and pulls around the cruiser.
Drives into the garage.

Avoiding eye contact with the officers.

Cameron closes the garage door and leaps out of the truck,
snagging his TOOLBELT on the way.

Gary follows him into

THE HALLWAY

Cameron unclips his carabiner of keys. Unlocks the basement
door.

Storms downstairs.

BASEMENT

He finds Kat cowering in the corner. Stomps towards her.

She EXPLODES upwards, SLASHING at his face with the BOTTLE
OPENER on Randy's keys. A planned attack.

SLICES into his cheek.

Continues to slash. Desperate. Maybe now or never.

CAMERON
Goddammit. Stop! STOP!

He throws her into the far wall. The keys go flying. Her head
SMACKS the water heater. Stuns her.

CAMERON
I said stop!

A BARK comes from behind Cameron. Gary has come down the
steps and is not a fan of what's happening to his friend Kat.

Cameron ignores him. More pressing things...

He pulls a roll of DUCT TAPE from his toolbelt. Tapes over
Kat's mouth.

Grabs ZIP TIES. Ties her wrists to that brass pipe. As he
does, Kat looks around, dazed. Spots something next to the
freezer... A tennis ball.

That tennis ball.

With her message.

The DOORBELL rings.

Cameron jabs a finger at Kat.

CAMERON
Not a sound.

Cameron heads back upstairs, wiping blood off his cheek.

CAMERON
C'mon, boy.

Gary watches Kat struggling against the zip ties. Trying to reach that tennis ball with her foot.

She manages to kick it. It rolls over and comes to a stop in front of Gary. She pleads through the duct tape: *take it*.

CAMERON
(calls down)
I said c'mon.

Gary looks up at Cameron, then back to Kat.

Kat pleads again: take it.

Gary grabs the tennis ball in his mouth.

Carries it upstairs.

EXT. CAMERON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

An OFFICER (43, ex-military) waits on Cameron's porch. Rings the doorbell again.

OFFICER
(calls)
Greenwood PD.

Cameron opens the door. Smiles. Tries to hide the cut on his cheek with his hand.

CAMERON
Evening officer.

OFFICER
Sorry to bother you. We're doing a welfare check on your neighbor, Mr. Reeves, but he isn't answering.

Gary appears next to Cameron with that tennis ball. Stares up at the officer.

We see **help** peeking out between Gary's teeth.
Neither men notice.

OFFICER
Can you tell me the last time you
saw Mr. Reeves?

CAMERON
Not quite sure actually. He keeps
to himself.

OFFICER
Have you noticed anything unusual?

CAMERON
Next door? No. But, like I
said...don't see much of him.
Should I be worried?

OFFICER
He didn't show up for church. There
was some concern.

Gary drops the tennis ball.

We TRACK with the ball as it rolls away... and away... and
away... down the hall and comes to a stop near the bathroom.

Impossible to see from the door.

OFFICER
Do you know if he had any health
issues?

Gary BARKS at the officer.

CAMERON
Shhh, boy.

But Gary doesn't shh. He barks again and again. As if he
knows this officer can help. As if he knows the officer is
Kat's only chance.

Or he's just a dog who barks at people at the door.

Either way, Gary's gotten the officer's attention.

CAMERON
Quit it.

The officer studies Gary, then the cut on Cameron's face.

Something not feeling right.

The officer peers into the house.

OFFICER
Sir, are you alone in the house?

CAMERON
I am.

OFFICER
Do you mind if I take a quick look
around?

A long beat.

CAMERON
(smiles)
Of course.

Cameron pulls the door open. The officer clicks on his flashlight. Enters.

INT. CAMERON'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The officer scans the living room with his flashlight.

CAMERON
Hope you can't get arrested for a
dirty house, cuz I'll be going to
jail.

The officer heads down the hallway. As he does, Cameron reaches into his toolbelt.

Pulls out the shears.

We FLOAT DOWN to the officer's boots making their way across the wood floor, and then continue down THROUGH THE FLOOR into

THE BASEMENT

Where Kat is ziptied to the pipe, listening to the CREEK of the wood.

He's directly over top of her.

She SCREAMS through the tape and BEATS her hands against the pipe.

Clang. Clang. Clang.

HALLWAY

The officer shines his light into the kitchen. Impossible to hear the clangs up here.

Or is it?

The officer turns around. Shines his light on the warped basement door.

In the background, we notice Cameron is now standing a lot closer to the officer than we last saw him.

The officer approaches the door. Crouches down in front of it.

Cameron is closer again.

The officer leans forward. Brings his ear to the handle. Listens intently.

Cameron is right behind the officer.

Gary watches from the living room as Cameron draws the shears from behind his back. Squeezes the handle. Goes to swing --

Bark!

The officer looks over at Gary panting in the living room.

Then his attention shifts to the hallway.

Cameron is back by the front door. The shears on the console table.

The officer stands. Approaches Cameron.

OFFICER

Thanks for your time.

CAMERON

(smiles)

Always happy to help you boys in blue.

OFFICER

If you see Mr. Reeves, have him give us a call?

CAMERON

Absolutely.

The officer leans down. Picks something up.

THE TENNIS BALL.

OFFICER

Think I found what your dog wanted.

He holds it out for Gary. Cameron spots the letters written on the ball.

He snatches it from the officer.

CAMERON

(explaining)

You don't want to touch his toys.
So much slobber.

Cameron wipes his thumb across the ball. SMEARS THE MESSAGE.

The officer studies Cameron.

OFFICER

You should take a look at that
cheek.

The officer leaves. Cameron shuts the door. Looks down at the smeared message on that tennis ball.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Kat yanks against the zip ties with all her weight. They bite into her wrists, but she keeps tugging until...

Snap.

The ties break. She rips the tape off her mouth. Pulls herself to her feet. Turns around. Cameron is there at the bottom of the stairs. Gary is next to him.

Cameron holds that tennis ball.

CAMERON

Do you know what they would've done
to me if they found this?

Cameron STRIKES her in a flash of rage. She collapses to the ground.

Gary BARKS.

And barks.

And barks.

Cameron turns to him.

CAMERON
Shhhh, buddy. It's okay.

Cameron approaches Gary. Gary takes a step back.

CAMERON
Hey. Hey. It's alright.

He crouches down in front of Gary.

As he does, Kat looks at the CARABINER OF KEYS jingling from his belt loop *right in front of her*. Then her eyes drift over to the pouch of salmon near the freezer...an idea forming.

CAMERON
Everything's okay.

Cameron scratches behind Gary's ears. But this time, Gary's eyes don't grow heavy. They stay wide open, focused on Cameron. Distrusting.

CAMERON
You almost got us in big trouble today. I love you but you gotta listen to me, 'kay?

Cameron stands and sees that Kat is now in the corner. What he doesn't see is her wiping salmon off her hand behind her back.

He stares at her, no longer filled with hope but with disappointment. *Knowing what he has to do.*

CAMERON
C'mon, boy.

Cameron heads for the staircase.

Gary glances at Kat, then dutifully follows Cameron. As they head upstairs, we ANGLE ON: Cameron's carabiner. It shimmers, greasy.

Tiny pieces of salmon stuck in the keychain.

INT. UTILITY CLOSET - NIGHT

Gary sits next to the washer.

Cameron rummages around on the shelf above him. Pulls down that Lowe's SHOPPING BASKET filled with the bleach and the gloves and the tarp.

Cameron sets the basket by the locked basement door.
Preparing for what's to come.

He heads over to the console table.

Grabs those shears.

A CAR DOOR SHUTS outside, catching his attention. He crosses to the window.

OUTSIDE: That police cruiser is still parked in front of Randy's house. The lights are off. The officers are inside. One talks on the radio.

Cameron sighs. *Shit.*

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Cameron tosses the shears on the counter. Fishes a PBR out of the fridge.

He hangs his carabiner on its hook.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Cameron sits on the couch, sipping his beer, glancing out the window at that police cruiser.

Waiting.

Gary lies down in the utility closet. Rests his head on his paws. Closes his eyes.

LATER

A car engine starts outside, waking Gary.

He crosses to the window. Watches the POLICE CRUISER RACE OFF towards some emergency, lights flashing.

Gary turns around.

Cameron didn't hear. He's asleep, snoring on the couch.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Gary laps at his water bowl. Finishes drinking. Sniffs the air as he dribbles water onto the floor.

Something catching his attention.

He follows his nose to the breakfast nook. Hops up on it.
Looks up at that

CARABINER OF KEYS.

The tiny bits of salmon tantalizing his nose.

He cranes his neck.

Starts licking.

The keys jingle as he licks them and licks them and licks them and...

CLANG!

The keys fall to the floor.

Gary hops down. Continues licking. Making sure he gets it all. As he does, we RACK FOCUS to that BOTTLE OPENER sawing a NOTCH into the bottom the basement door.

Then a pair of EYES stare through the notch, watching Gary.

It's Kat. Lying on her stomach, face on the floor.

She whispers to him.

KAT

Good dog.

Gary sees her. She points at the keys. Five feet away from her. Devastatingly close.

KAT

The keys.

Gary cocks his head. Just stares at her. Kat pushes a piece of salmon through the notch.

KAT

Just like before. Remember?

Gary makes a beeline for the fish and scarfs it up.

KAT

That's it. Now the keys. *The keys.*
Remember?

She points furiously back at the keys. Her energy excites Gary. He gives a little bark.

KAT

Shhh!

She peers into the living room. Has just enough of an angle to see Cameron's feet. He continues to snore.

Kat turns back to Gary.

KAT

The keys.

More frantic pointing. Gary turns around. Heads for the keys.

KAT

Yes. That's it!

...and straight past them. Disappearing around the corner.

Shit.

STAIRCASE

Kat lies there on her stomach. Looking around for Gary.

KAT

Hey.

She scans to the left, the right.

KAT

Hey!

But he's gone.

She pulls herself up. Drops the salmon. Hopelessness washing over her.

And then...

A jingle.

Kat looks back under the door. Sees --

HALLOWAY

A FURRY PAW batting around the keys.

Kat frantically rips off a piece of salmon.

KAT

Yes. Yes. Good dog!

She pushes it through the notch. Gary approaches. Eats the fish.

KAT

The keys...

Kat points at the keys, but she doesn't have to. Gary's already heading that way, a connection formed in his brain between the sound and the food.

Gary bats the keys with his paw. Jingle. They slide closer to Kat.

Four feet away.

Gary goes to get his reward. Gobbles up the fish.

KAT

Again.

Gary paws at the keys.

Jingle.

Three feet.

Gary eats his fish.

Kat eyes Cameron in the living room. His feet are still there. Still snoring.

Jingle.

Two feet.

Fish.

Kat stares at the keys. They're so close.

KAT

C'mon... c'mon...

Jingle.

One foot.

Right in front of Kat now. As Gary eats his fish, she pushes her finger through the notch. Straining. Her fingertip dancing next to the keys.

Jingle.

Gary SLIDES them over. Paw and finger connected by the carabiner for a moment.

He did it.

But that happy sight is overshadowed by another sight...

Over in the living room, CAMERON'S LEGS ARE GONE.

Fuck. Fuckfuckfuckfuck.

Kat pulls the carabiner through the notch.

THE STAIRCASE

She sits bolt upright. Clutching the keys. Eyes wide. Heart racing. Holding her breath as she listens to those Carhartt boots approaching.

Creek. Creek. Creek.

Kat looks down. They're right on the other side of the door.

CAMERON (O.S.)
(groggy)
Whatta ya been eatin' boy?

The boots continue past the door. A BATHROOM FAN clicks on. A TOILET SEAT clunks up. She listens as Cameron starts to pee.

Now or never.

She fumbles through the keys on the carabiner. Tries one. No good. Another.

Click.

The deadbolt unlocks.

She turns the handle. The door CREAKS as she opens it.

HALLWAY

Gary looks surprised to see Kat surfacing from the basement. She puts her finger to her mouth. *Shhh*.

He stares at her for a beat, then turns and heads into the kitchen. As if saying

Follow me.

Or he's just hungry.

Either way, Kat shuts the basement door and hobbles after him.

Passes the hall bath. On the other side of the cracked door, we can hear Cameron finishing up.

Kat keeps moving. Into

THE KITCHEN

Gary waits for Kat. As soon as she enters, he turns and noses through the doggy door.

Kat limps after him. Quietly opens the door. Slips out to --

THE BACKYARD

Latches the door behind her.

She limps across the backyard, gritting her teeth. Gary by her side.

They get to the back gate. Kat unlatches it and swings it open.

Greeted with a happy sight.

THE WOODS

Acres and acres of trees. As vast as the basement was confined.

Freedom.

Kat runs for it. Her Converse tearing through the leaves. Adrenaline masking the stabbing pain in her ankle.

Not wasting a second to look back.

BEEEEEP.

What was that? Doesn't matter. She keeps moving.

BEEEEEP.

It's coming from behind her. She glances over her shoulder. And there's Gary.

Standing just inside the gate. Just inside the visible fence. He tries to pass it, but --

BEEEEEP.

His collar goes off, shocking him. Gary barks.

CAMERON

(re: collar)

Can't believe they let these go up
to eighty milliamps. I'd never put
that much into a dog.

He presses and holds a button on the app.

EE...

Kat SCREAMS!

Gary barks.

And barks.

And barks.

But Cameron doesn't let up.

...EE...

He watches, disappointed, as Kat thrashes on the ground.
Fighting to open her hands.

Kat's eyes roll back in her head, then...

She goes still.

...EEEP.

He lets go of the button.

Kat lies there unconscious.

He studies her for a long beat. Then, something steals his
attention. A SOUND coming from behind him.

Low and deep and rhythmic.

Like a sickly outboard motor. Only it's not a motor.

It's Gary.

Head low. Eyes fixed on Cameron.

Growling.

A side of Gary we've never seen before. Taking Cameron by
surprise.

Cameron crouches in front of Gary. Reaches a hand out to
scratch behind his ears.

CAMERON
It's okay, boy.

But this time, it's not okay. He messed with Kat, and Gary didn't like that.

His growling grows.

Cameron hovers his hand there, looking into Gary's eyes. The eyes of a dog he no longer has control of.

And it breaks Cameron's heart.

CAMERON
(nods)
Okay. Okay.

He pulls his hand back. Reaches into his pocket and grabs a DOGGY BISCUIT. Sets it on the ground in front of Gary.

Cameron picks Kat up and carries her towards the house.

Gary watches them head off, his attention on Kat. Concerned for his friend.

He follows them into the house. Snapping up that treat on his way.

Can't pass up food.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Gary follows Cameron down the hallway. Panting.

Panting quite a lot, actually.

His heart racing.

Gary's POV: The overhead lights turn fuzzy.

He follows Cameron into

THE GARAGE

It's not just the lights that are fuzzy in here. Everything is.

Cameron puts Kat in the bed of his truck. Turns around to face Gary. His face is blurry, but we can still make out the tears in his eyes.

Gary loses his balance. His hind legs start to give out.

He looks up at Cameron, confused.

CAMERON

I'm so sorry, boy. I hate that I
have to do this again.

Gary takes another step. And collapses. As he hits the
concrete, everything goes BLACK.

Blackness.

Silence.

A long beat.

Then...

A rustling sound.

CORN.

Swaying in the breeze.

The image we started with. Only now we're seeing it from a
different angle.

We're on the ground.

EXT. CORNFIELD - NIGHT

Gary lies in the dirt. His eyes flickering open. Unable to
move. Unable to do anything except watch that corn sway back
and forth.

Peaceful.

Until...

An ENGINE ROARS to life in the distance.

Gary strains. Turns his head towards the noise. Is greeted by

A ROTTING FACE RIGHT NEXT TO HIM.

Randy. His head peeking out of that cocoon of tarps.

Beyond Randy is Kat's limp body, lying in the dirt.

And beyond that...

The HARVESTER.

Sitting in the dark. Rumbling. An angry monster in the shadows.

HARVESTER

Cameron sits in the cab. Gary's collar on the dash. He's crying. This is killing him.

He wipes his eyes on his sleeve, steeling himself.

Flips on the overhead floodlights. Stares out at his three incapacitated targets. Shifts into gear.

Drives forward.

CORNFIELD

Gary squints into the floodlights. Impossible to see. Doesn't need to. Knows he only has a few seconds.

So does Kat.

He tries to pull himself up, but his muscles don't respond. The sedative still coursing through his body.

WWWHRRRRRRRR!!!

Those STEEL BLADES spin to life. Shredding apart downed corn as they approach.

HARVESTER

Cameron accelerates the blades to full RPM.

Flips off the floodlights.

He can't watch this time.

CORNFIELD

Gary whines. Continues fighting to move his legs. It's no use.

Rests his head back down in the dirt.

Looking at Kat in her blue hoodie. Only it's not Kat that he sees.

It's a boy.

His boy.

Asher. Lying there in his Captain America shirt. How Gary found him the night of the crash.

He blinks and it's Kat again. He stares at her. About to lose another human he cares about.

Can't let that happen.

Recommits. Somehow, impossibly, summons the strength to pull himself up.

Stands.

WWWWWWHHRRRRRRRRRRRR!!!

Those steel blades are five feet away.

He grabs Kat's hoodie in his mouth. Sinks his claws into the dirt. PULLS BACKWARDS.

In short bursts. Tugging Kat slowly across the field. Racing those blades. So many of them.

Not going to make it.

Pulls faster.

Frantic.

HARVESTER

Cameron grips the wheel as the combine starts to SHAKE AND BUCK. The gears SCREAM.

Out the rear window, RED SLUDGE sprays into the cornfield.

He doesn't look. Can't look.

Another best friend gone.

CORNFIELD

Only he isn't.

Gary lets go of Kat's hoodie beside a row of corn. They made it.

Gary did it.

Because, unlike Cameron, he's a fucking good boy.

He's the best boy.

He licks her face. She doesn't move.

Keeps licking.

Covering her face in slobber.

Her eyes flicker open. Confused and scared. She takes in her surroundings...

Kat's POV: The corn. The combine chewing Randy apart. A furry snout staring down at her.

Gary BARKS. As if to say: *we gotta go.*

And he's right.

That diesel engine throttles back.

HARVESTER

Cameron shuts the header off. Sits there in his misery.

Listens to the engine idle.

Something catches his eye. Something in the rearview mirror...

Movement.

Gary and Kat running off.

Shit.

Cameron leaps to his feet. Throws the door open. He skips the steps. Jumps straight down into the --

CORNFIELD

Lands on the dirt. Pulls out those SHEARS.

Runs.

UP AHEAD: Kat grits her teeth, limping along on her ankle. Gary barks at her, trying to get her to go faster. Already at full speed.

Cameron's closing fast.

They'll never make it in the open. Gary seems to know this. Spots that BARN up ahead.

He barks. Takes off for it, slipping through one of the broken doors.

Kat limps in after him.

INT. BARN - NIGHT

Gary leads Kat past the pallets and the old header. Down that row of animal cages.

Takes her into the far cage just as --

CLANG.

The barn doors swing open and Cameron steps inside. He scans the barn, shears shimmering in the moonlight.

Whistles.

CAMERON

C'mon, boy. Where are ya?

Gary hunkers low with Kat in the far cage, ignoring Cameron.

Cameron moves deeper into the barn. Past the pallets. Comes to the row of cages. Eyes them.

He approaches the first cage. Swings open the metal gate.

CLANG.

No Gary or Kat.

CAMERON

You remember what it was like, boy?
Seeing the world through a gate?

He moves to another cage. Swings open the gate. CLANG. Empty.

CAMERON

Wondering if you were ever gonna
get out? If anyone even remembered
you were there??

CLANG. Another cage. Getting closer.

CAMERON

Got so hungry I would've done
anything to break free...and I did.

Cameron traces the stump where his pinky finger used to be across the latch of the next gate.

CAMERON

All we wanted was love and they put
us in a cage.

CLANG.

CAMERON

I love you too much to let them do
that to you again.

Kat spots Cameron approaching the cage next to her. She looks
for Gary.

He's gone.

WTF?

She scans the barn for him.

Spots a pair of eyes staring at her through a SMALL GAP under
the back wall.

It's Gary standing OUTSIDE THE BARN. He's crawled out through
the gap.

Big enough for Gary, too small for her.

CLANG.

Cameron's in the adjacent cage. Time's up. No other option.

She BOLTS for that opening.

Cameron sees her. Gives chase. Ten feet behind. Closing.

Kat dives to the dirt. Claws her way under the wall.

OUTSIDE THE BARN

Gary barks as she pulls herself forward. The jagged wood of
the wall BITING into her back. Doesn't care. Squeezing.
Kicking. Willing herself through. When --

She SCREAMS.

INSIDE THE BARN

Cameron's SUNK THE SHEARS INTO HER CALF. Grabs her legs.

Kat kicks them free.

OUTSIDE THE BARN

Pulls herself out. Struggles to her feet. Falls. Blinding pain.

Two bad legs now.

Pulls herself up again. Pushes forward. Pure survival.

Hobbles after Gary.

Blood runs down her leg, staining her Converse. She doesn't look down. Doesn't look back. Keeps her eyes forward.

On Gary.

Leading her into the

CORNFIELD

Twisting and turning through the rows.

Deeper and deeper.

Kat finally collapses. Can't go anymore. Hiding the only option now.

She checks her leg. It's not good. Covered in blood and not stopping. She pulls off her hoodie. Starts to tie it above the wound.

Gary doubles back. Stands next to her.

Panting.

Kat grabs his muzzle.

KAT

Shhh.

Gary quiets.

A distant WHISTLE rings out.

CAMERON

Heads through the cornfield. Flashlight in one hand. Shears in the other.

CAMERON

C'mon boy. Where'd ya go?

He whistles again.

GARY AND KAT

Gary's ears rise, but he stays by Kat's side. Not going anywhere. Listening to Cameron whistle and whistle and whistle. And then

Silence.

Gary and Kat sit there for a long beat. Listening to the rustling of the corn in the breeze.

No other sounds.

Eerie.

And then...

SOMETHING EXPLODES OUT AT THEM.

Gary BARKS.

Just one of those BUNNIES racing through the cornfield.

But Gary's bark gave them away. A beam of light hits Kat in the face.

Cameron's found them.

Kat leaps to her feet, but it's too late. He grabs her. Throws her to the ground. Her head hits the dirt.

She looks up, dazed. Cameron is on top of her. Pinning her down.

CAMERON

I'm a good boy. A *good boy*.

As he draws the shears, a low, guttural SOUND comes from behind him.

Cameron turns to see

Gary.

Head low. Fangs bared.

Growling.

A growl we haven't heard from him. Animalistic. Instinctual. Something coded not just into Gary, but all Garys. A need to protect their human.

Gary has to protect his human.

And his human is not Cameron. Has never been.

He EXPLODES forward. SINKS HIS FANGS into Cameron's arm. Cameron SCREAMS as Gary rips him to the ground.

Gary proceeds to maul Cameron. Systematically tearing him apart. It's the most horrific and cathartic mauling of a serial-killing, dog-murdering asshole you've ever seen.

By the time Gary is done, Cameron is a blubbering, bloody mess. Neck shredded. Face bitten apart. Missing an eye.

Gary backs up. No joy from that. Only duty.

He stands in front of Kat protectively. She looks shocked.

The weight of what Gary just did for her sinking in.

Cameron tries to speak to Gary, his neck gurgling and bubbling. Can't get any words out.

Kat crawls over to Cameron. Digs his phone out of his pocket.

Dials 911.

As she places the call, she turns back to Gary. Studies him. His muzzle stained red. Concern filling her face.

KAT

You gotta go.

Gary doesn't move.

KAT

Go. You can't be here when they show up. Go on! Get the hell outta here!

He doesn't move. Kat tosses a rock at him.

KAT

GO!!!

More rocks. Gary looks confused, but turns. Heads off into the cornfield.

Kat watches him leave.

EXT. FARM - NIGHT

The barn is surrounded by POLICE CRUISERS and AMBULANCES. Paramedics load Cameron into the back of an ambulance. Still alive. Destined for another cage.

Beside him, Kat gets her leg attended to, surrounded by concerned FAMILY.

We PULL BACK to find

Gary.

Watching the scene from under the harvester.

On his own again.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Gary noses around a ditch as cars whip past in the background.

He finds a beer bottle. A plastic bag. Suddenly perks up. Sniffs the air.

Picking up the scent of something. Something really interesting.

Follows his nose over to

A STYROFOAM BOX.

Long John Silver's logo on the lid.

Jackpot.

He noses it open. Starts to lick up the scraps of fish. Behind him, an ANIMAL CONTROL truck pulls to a stop.

PRELAP: Barking.

INT. GREENWOOD ANIMAL SHELTER/KENNEL AREA - DAY

Gary stares out at us from behind a gate.

He's in the top kennel this time. Listening to the cacophony of barks around him.

He watches a FAMILY walk past below him. They don't stop. It's as if he's not even there.

Different view, same life.

He rests his head on his paws. Closes his eyes. Tries to sleep.

Clang.

Clang. Clang. Clang.

Gary opens his eyes. Someone's fumbling with his latch. They finally get it unlocked. Open the gate.

A long beat.

A WORKER (32) pokes his head up, holding an iPhone.

WORKER

Alright...picture time. Smile.

The worker sticks the phone in Gary's face and snaps a few photos.

He pulls the camera back down. As he does, we REVEAL --

KAT.

Standing at the other end of the hallway.

Holding a tennis ball.

Gary and her meet eyes.

As Gary starts to lose control of his tail...

BLACK.

END