

STRANGER DANGER

Written by

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INT. TRUCK - DAY

A DAD(40s) is driving his son, MALCOLM(10), to his Boy Scout meeting. The atmosphere in the car is tense. Music is playing, but neither of them are listening. Dad switches the channel.

RADIO (V.O.)

The sheriff's department have put out a warning stating that nine of the twelve escaped fugitives from last night's break out at Coyote County Corrections Center are still at large and should be considered armed and dangerous-

Dad turns it off. More awkward silence follows.

DAD

You psyched?

MALCOLM

What?

DAD

You psyched Mal? You psyched to go camping with your scout buddies this weekend, and of course, your biggest buddy of all.

Dad gives him a desperately happy look. Malcolm just looks on, confused.

MALCOLM

Psyched?

DAD

You know, psyched? Kids don't say psyched anymore?

MALCOLM

I-

(a beat)

I don't know Dad.

DAD

You don't know? You're not down with the jive?

MALCOLM

I guess not.

Dad is trying to get a smile from him. Malcolm's not cooperating.

DAD
You know Mal -
(takes a deep breath)
I'm really sorry about how things
have been lately between your
mother and I. It can't be easy on
you.

MALCOLM
Ummm yeah... it's... different.

DAD
Not to mention with her working all
the time now.

MALCOLM
It's not that bad.

DAD
Oh I'm sure Mal. You've always been
tougher than you look. I'm just
saying, it has to be hard and it's
ok to let it show from time to
time.

MALCOLM
Ok...

Malcolm continues to stare out the window. Awkward silence.

DAD
Who picks you up from school these
days? You know I would love to, but
looking for a new job and a new
place to live at the same time is
no easy feat for me right now.

MALCOLM
It's ok.

DAD
Are you taking the bus?

MALCOLM
Sometimes.

DAD
Are the kids on the bus giving you
a hard time?

MALCOLM
No. They're fine.

DAD
You sure Mal? Because last time you
rode the bus, they weren't fine.

MALCOLM
Dad, I'm fine. They leave me alone
now.

DAD
I have a hard time believing that!

Dad's outburst frightens Malcolm. He starts counting cars
that pass by.

DAD (CONT'D)
I'm sorry.

MALCOLM
(whispering)
1 - 2 - 3 - 4

DAD
I'm really sorry Mal.

MALCOLM
(whispered)
5 - 6 -

DAD
There was no reason for me to yell
at you like that.

MALCOLM
(whispered)
7 - 8 -

DAD
It's just - the way those kids
treated you. You're my son Malcolm.
I could never live with you being
bullied.

More awkward silence. Malcolm restarts his counting of cars
but quieter.

DAD (CONT'D)
You know Mal, I was a lot like you
when I was your age. I was shy like
you are and a lot of people in this
world see that as weakness-

MALCOLM
9 - 10 - 11 -

DAD

But it's not Malcolm. It's really not. So, whatever those kids say to you, know that it's not true.

MALCOLM

12 - 13 -

DAD

Mal, please look at me.

Malcolm turns to face his Dad.

MALCOLM

It's Alec.

DAD

What?

MALCOLM

Alec, mom's friend from work. He picks me up. I don't take the bus anymore.

DAD

Mal, I think you're a bit confused. Alec isn't mom's friend from work...He's her boss.

MALCOLM

That explains the nice car he drives.

Dad slams on the brakes suddenly. His gaze is fixed on the white knuckles of his hands that are strangling the steering wheel. The car behind Dad beeps at him and goes around.

ANGRY DRIVER (O.S.)

Learn how to fucking drive!

Dad is snapped out of his trance and continues to drive.

DAD

I'm sorry about that Mal. I'm -

Dad stumbles over his words as he fights back tears. Malcolm looks back out the window and goes back to counting the cars that pass.

Dad starts to text someone named Alec. "Is it true? U fucking my wife!" He looks over at Malcolm and sends the text.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER - DAY

Some scout leaders are setting up for the meeting by stacking chairs. NEIL(40s) look to nervously counting chairs while FORD(60s) the crusty scoutmaster reads an article about the prison riot. Ford takes a deep breath and returns to his work.

FORD

Neil, how many are we expecting for this weekend?

NEIL

Two dozen at most.

FORD

Only two dozen?

NEIL

It might be less than even that. We had a couple parents say they're pulling their kids out this morning. The news must have them pretty shaken.

FORD

Hmmm... I guess we didn't need to get so many chairs out then? How are we on volunteers?

NEIL

Not great, I had to take whoever we could get.

FORD

Will we have one parent to each group?

NEIL

Barely...

FORD

Then this camping trip has survived against all odds.

NEIL

If one more parent backs out though-

FORD

Don't worry, I have that covered.
Ned!

Ford gestures to NED(17), an older boy scout. Ned is busy setting up chairs, but drops what he's doing immediately upon Ford calling him over.

He rushes over with the stiffness of an army trainee approaching their drill sergeant.

NED
Yes Scoutmaster Ford sir!

FORD
Dial it back a bit Ned.

NED
Sorry sir.

FORD
Neil, this is Ned. He's one of our older scouts.

NEIL
Gonna be an eagle soon then.

NED
I, uh, I sure hope so.

NEIL
Ned, can I give you some advice?

NED
Certainly sir.

NEIL
Don't hope so, plan so. What is your plan to for your service project?

NED
Uhh-

NEIL
You already hesitated too long.

FORD
Neil, you can give the kid a break. It was sustainable greenhouses for the less advantaged. That was the plan for Ned's service project. That was until he turned the greenhouse into a grow house.

NEIL
Grow house?

FORD

Ned built and used the faculties to grow large amounts of marijuana. He was caught and blamed it on some of his friends. Ned was the only one of the guilty party that had a merit badge in hydroponics, but he's also the only one of with daddy's lawyer on retainer, so here he is.

NED

I had a lapse in judgment when it came to who I spent my free time with scoutmaster sir and for that, I am very sorry.

FORD

If we need someone to fill in Ned will do just nicely, won't you Ned?

NED

Yes sir.

FORD

Because you don't want the cops hearing about that hydroponics badge now do ya Ned.

NED

Uhh, it would not be ideal sir.

FORD

No it wouldn't so you're more than happy to help out this weekend, aren't you Ned?

NED

Yes Scoutmaster Ford sir.

FORD

Good, now go put some of the chairs back. We don't need that many.

NED

Yes sir!

Ned scurries off back to his work.

NEIL

Ford, this is very unethical.

FORD

Neil, that is the least of our problems right now.

EXT. COMMUNITY CENTER - DAY

We see Dad's truck pull up with Malcolm. Dad is staring at his phone. He looks irritated.

We see other kids pull up and getting dropped off by BOTH their parents.

Dad receives a text back.

"You're lucky she's still letting you see Malcolm after what you did. If you keep harassing me or her that will quickly change. Do your son a favor and get help Dave!"

Dad looks paralyzed by anger. He could explode any second. He looks over at Malcolm, who is still quietly counting to himself and Dad starts to silently do the same for himself. Dad calms down.

DAD

Hey Mal, I'm gonna swing around and look for a spot. You go on ahead and meet with your friends.

MALCOLM

Ok.

Malcom gets out of the truck. Dad looks at the text still lingering in his messages and his expression shifts.

He goes to his wife's texts. They have just been him apologizing over and over again with her not responding. He holds his phone up to take a picture.

DAD

Hey Mal!

Dad snaps a picture as Malcolm turns around to face him.

MALCOLM

Yeah Dad?

Dad lowers the phone.

DAD

I love you.

MALCOLM

I love you too.

Dad sends the picture to his wife with the caption, "You and Alec aren't taking him away from me."

Dad puts away his phone and speeds away, leaving the parking lot in the dust.

Malcolm does not notice. He walks by all the kids hugging their parents goodbye and enters the community center.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER - DAY

Malcolm takes his seat in the back despite all the open chairs. He looks across the way and sees a few kids his age sitting together. DEAN(10), CARTER(10), and EVERETT(10) are snickering to each other as they look Malcolm's way. He pretends to not notice.

BEN(O.S.)

Hey Mal.

Malcolm looks over to see a fat kid named BEN(10) coming over to sit next to him.

MALCOLM

It's Malcolm. Only my dad calls me Mal.

BEN

Oh yeah, I remember you saying that - or well, now I do.

(chuckles)

You want some Oreos?

Malcolm looks at him and then glances over at the snickering bullies.

MALCOLM

I'm not hungry.

BEN

Ok, I made sure to pack a lot for this weekend, so I got plenty to spare. I'm only telling you though so it'll be our little secret.

MALCOLM

Ok.

BEN

You hear the news?

MALCOLM

What?

BEN

The news about the escaped inmates.

Malcolm shakes his head casually.

BEN (CONT'D)

It's pretty wild. A bunch of inmates started a riot and broke out. They even killed a few cops. They say they still haven't gotten all of them. It's all over the news. It's frickin' wild.

MALCOLM

Are we safe?

BEN

My dad said we should be fine out in the woods, so I think we're chilling.

Malcolm looks at the door.

BEN (CONT'D)

If you're waiting for Stewart, he's not coming. He told me while we were playing Minecraft last night.

MALCOLM

I wasn't. I'm waiting for my dad. He is coming with us on the camp out.

BEN

Oh that's cool. I wish my dad would come to these.

MALCOLM

I don't.

Ben gives Malcolm a funny look. Ned comes through the doors looking a little flustered. Malcolm looks over expecting it to be his dad, but is relieved to see that it's not him.

Ned rushes up to Ford and Neil.

NED

Scoutmaster Ford, I did a headcount and we are at a nice even 28.

FORD

Look at you, you can somehow still count after all that pot you smoked.

NEIL
Is that including parent
volunteers?

NED
Yes sir.

FORD
Wait, that's including parents?

NED
Yes sir. Parents included.

FORD
Shit.

NED
Did I do something wrong? I can do
a recount if you're calling for a
recount sir.

NEIL
We're missing a parent.

FORD
Ten said they'd help out this
weekend. Who are we missing?

Neil looks around.

NEIL
I see everyone except David Evers.

FORD
David Evers?

NEIL
He's the father of Malcolm Evers.

FORD
Is his son here?

NEIL
Hmm..
(looks around the room)
Yes, he's sitting in the back
there.

Ben notices the scout leaders looking their way. He swallows
the Oreo he's eating and nudges Malcolm, who is still looking
at the door waiting for his dad.

BEN
(mouth full)
Malcolm, I think the scoutmaster is
looking at us.

MALCOLM
So?

BEN
They might take my Oreos away.

Ford and Neil start to come their way.

BEN (CONT'D)
Crap, they're coming over.

Ben wipes his mouth and swishes some water around.

BEN (CONT'D)
If they ask what I was eating, it
was like a carrot or something.

Ford and Neil approach Malcolm.

FORD
Hey there Malcolm. It's great to
see you could join us this weekend.
Your dad around by chance?

MALCOLM
He's parking the truck.

FORD
Oh wonderful, we just wanted to
know. He'll be joining us won't he?

MALCOLM
That's what he told me.

FORD
Great, you must be excited to camp
out with your old man?

MALCOLM
I guess.

FORD
He guesses. All right, well, don't
let him hear how excited you are.

MALCOLM
I won't Scoutmaster Ford sir.

Ford pats Malcolm on the back.

FORD
Good kid. If you're not in my
group, I'll be seeing you and your
dad up at Red Rock.

Ford walks away with Neil.

BEN
I was so scared they were going to
bust me.

Ben rubs his stomach after eating all those Oreos.

BEN (CONT'D)
(burps)
I'm glad I brought extra toilet
paper.

Malcolm turns to look at the doors.

EXT. COMMUNITY CENTER - DAY

Malcolm walks out the door and sees the empty parking lot. He
steps out into it and looks around.

INT. TRUCK - DAY

Dad is driving furiously as the radio plays the news.

RADIO(V.O.)
The death toll from the riot has
grown to 7 as another officer has
passed away due to injuries
sustained during the break out-

EXT. COMMUNITY CENTER - DAY

Malcolm look around some more, but it's clear that his dad
isn't coming.

MALCOLM
Dad?

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER - DAY

The Scouts have begun the meeting and are saying the pledge
of allegiance. Malcolm goes up to Neil and tugs on his shirt.
Neil leans down and Malcolm whispers in his ear.

MALCOLM
My dad's not here anymore.

NEIL
Where did he go?

Malcolm shrugs.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Ned is holding a clipboard.

NED
Evers, Kramer, Diaz, Burns,
Ronalds, and Lee, you are all with
me.

Ford and Neil look on as the groups of scouts and parents
gather around a bus.

FORD
Told ya the burnout would come in
handy.

NEIL
I still think we should try to
contact Mr. Evers again. It's not
normal to just drop your kid off
and bolt like that.

FORD
Yes it is. I've seen plenty of
deadbeat dads treat the scout
camping trips like a weekend-long
daycare.

NEIL
Should I call the mother?

FORD
And guarantee the kid comes back
home to a fight between mommy and
daddy. Look at him.

We see Malcolm staring off aimlessly.

FORD (CONT'D)
The kid's balls haven't even
dropped yet and he has a ten
thousand yard stare that could bore
a hole through a wall.

NEIL

Maybe he should be in another group then? I doubt Ned is going to be the leader a kid like him needs.

FORD

Neil, this doesn't have to be complicated. Let's just get the rats on the bus and get out of here.

NEIL

Ford, you're not worried about the news are you?

FORD

Why would I be Neil?

The two share a tense stare.

NEIL

You know what I mean?

FORD

I trust the authorities to do their job. I trust you will too.

Ford walks away and Neil takes a deep breath.

Ben and Malcolm stand together waiting.

BEN

Oh brother, of course we get grouped up with them. Don't tell them about the Oreos. They'll call me fat - and I'll have to share some with them.

The three bullies approach.

DEAN

Hey it's Big Ben and Little Mike.

MALCOLM

It's Malcolm.

DEAN

You look more like a Mike to me.

Malcolm blankly stares at Dean.

MALCOLM

My name is Malcolm.

DEAN
Stellar comeback dude.

BEN
His dad calls him Mal.

DEAN
Mal? I can work with Mal. See ya on
the bus Mal.

The bullies walk off. Malcolm looks at Ben.

BEN
What? It sure beats Big Ben.

The two boys stare at Dean as he goes to talk with another group of scouts. Malcolm takes a deep breath and starts to count.

MALCOLM
1, 2, 3-

INT. BUS - DAY

Kids file in while Ned counts.

NED
4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 - wait.

Stops a kid while he double checks his counting.

NED (CONT'D)
We're good. 10, 11, 12-

Malcolm and Ben enter. As Ben passes Dean and his friends, he is tripped. They hoot and holler as Ben tumbles into Malcolm. Both hit the dirty bus floor hard.

EVERETT
Double kill!

CARTER
That's a collateral bro!

DEAN
Watch your step Big Ben. The floor
is sticky. Just ask Mal down there.
You all right Mal?

The two sheepishly get up and head to the back of the bus and sit down. Ben frowns as he looks in his bag.

BEN

Ah man, the Oreos got crushed.

Ben eats some of the smashed pieces and shrugs. Malcolm stares out the window as the bus pulls away.

EXT. BUS - DAY

We see the buses pull out of the parking lot. As they head down the road, several police cars with their sirens blaring come speeding past. Malcolm counts them on his hand as they speed by.

INT. TRUCK/RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY

We see Dad is counting as well. He has tears in his eyes and the picture of Malcolm on his phone.

We see him take a breath and glare at a nice car in a driveway. He gets out of his car. We hold on the picture of Malcolm.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. BUS - CONTINUOUS

Malcolm looks out the bus window with the same blank expression.

FORD (O.S.)

Everyone off the bus and to your group leaders!

We follow the kids as they leave the bus.

EXT. TRAILHEAD - DAY

The scouts come barreling out of the buses and sort into their groups.

FORD

Find and gather around your group leader!

Malcolm and Ben find Ned and stand by him.

NED

Yellow group with me! Yellow group!
You guys are in Yellow group right?

The boys nod.

NED (CONT'D)
Great, I'll be right back.

Ned hurries off to a nearby port-a-potty. CHANCE(10), an effeminate looking boy joins them.

CHANCE
Is this yellow group?

BEN
Yeah.

CHANCE
Yellow is my group too. I guess we'll be camping together.

BEN
Yup, my name is Ben and this is Malcolm.

CHANCE
My name is Chance.

DEAN(O.S.)
What type of name is Chance?

Dean and his two goons stroll up.

CHANCE
It's my name. My dad gave it to me.

DEAN
Did he name you that because he was hoping there be a small chance you might not turn out gay?

Dean and the others laugh at Dean's joke.

CHANCE
That's not nice.

DEAN
You gonna cry about it Chance?

CHANCE
I'll tell on you.

The bullies hoot.

DEAN
Oooh shit, he's gonna tell on me guys.

Ned returns to the group.

NED
Oh great, you're all here now.

CHANCE
He is being mean.

Chance points at Dean.

NED
Guys, come on be nice to each other.

DEAN
I wasn't trying to be mean. Chance just can't take a joke.

CHANCE
You weren't joking.

NED
What did he say to you?

CHANCE
He said I was named Chance because there was a small chance I wouldn't be gay.

Ned snickers to himself before regaining his composure.

NED
That's - that's not funny. We must be accepting of those of all backgrounds in this troop. You all understand?

The bullies nod their heads and mumble in agreement. Ned points at Dean.

NED (CONT'D)
You apologize to Chance.

DEAN
Sorry Chance.

NED
Now Chance, accept his apology.

CHANCE
I don't think he's actually sorry.

NED

Guys, we have a long weekend ahead of us. Please don't make this harder than it has to be.

CHANCE

Ok, I accept his apology.

NED

Awesome, now let's head out. We don't want to be the last group to Red Mountain.

EVERETT

Red Rock you mean?

NED

Yeah, I was testing you there. Good job on passing the test.

He gives Everett an awkward high five.

BEN

What trail are we going on?

NED

Bear River trail.

Neil stands on a rock to speak to the groups.

NEIL

We are under an extreme fire warning, so please go over the basic fire safety guidelines with your scouts before heading out! That means put out your fires after you're done with them, watch for any loose embers or smoldering match sticks on the ground, and keep a shovel or pale of water nearby at all times in case-

Neil trails off once he realizes none of the groups are listening. They're all talking over him.

NEIL (CONT'D)

They're not listening.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Nope, they never do.

(yelling)

There will be extra s'mores for the first group to reach Red Rock!

The scouts all suddenly perk up and cheer.

FORD
You ready?

The scouts cheer in response.

FORD (CONT'D)
I said are you all ready!

They cheer back louder.

FORD (CONT'D)
Good to hear. I'll be seeing you
boys at Red Rock!

The scouts groups start to head out on their respective trails.

NED
Yellow group roll out!

Ned takes the lead. One of the bullies bumps Malcolm as they rush to be in the lead.

EVERETT
Oh I'm sorry dude.

Chance and Ben help Malcolm up.

EVERETT (CONT'D)
I don't think we've been formally
introduced yet. My name is Everett.

BEN
Hi, I'm Ben.

CHANCE
I'm Chance.

EVERETT
I remember.

He looks at Malcolm.

EVERETT (CONT'D)
And you're Mal right?

MALCOLM
Malcolm.

EVERETT

Anyways, now that we're through with the formalities. Let's talk business.

Everett whips out his Nintendo Switch.

EVERETT (CONT'D)

Smash bros tonight. You boys down?

BEN

Woah, you brought your switch!

EVERETT

Yup and enough joy-cons for everyone.

BEN

That's awesome! I tear it up as King Dedede. You all won't stand a chance.

EVERETT

We'll see about that. You two in?

CHANCE

I never played, so I don't know if I'll be any good.

EVERETT

Well, there's always a chance right? Pun intended.

CHANCE

Oh yeah... that's funny.

EVERETT

How about you Malcolm?

MALCOLM

Sure, I'll play.

EVERETT

Yeet! I'll be seeing you fellas on the big battlefield.

Everett returns to Carter and Dean.

CHANCE

He was nice.

BEN

Yeah, Everett seems pretty chill I will say.

MALCOLM
He's friends with Dean...

Malcolm glares at the three boys ahead teasing each other.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)
He can't be that nice.

BEN
Yeah, but he's got Smash Bros.

CHANCE
Is Smash Bros fun?

BEN
(incredulous)
Is Smash Bros fun? Yeah, it's
pretty fun. I can give you some
tips...

Malcolm lets Ben and Chance get ahead as Ben babbles on about Super Smash Bros. Malcolm stops and watches all the other groups leave for their respective trails. Malcolm stands there alone. The trailhead grows quiet as the groups move farther out.

Malcolm sees a shadowy SILHOUETTE in the trees.

MALCOLM
Dad!

The silhouette moves out of view.

Malcolm takes a deep breath and continues his counting while he catches up to the others.

EXT. TRAIL - DAY

The boys are marching along a trail by a creek.

NED
Follow me boys! Follow me! Come on,
follow me!
(a beat)
You know, I'm not hearing anyone
singing along. I won't stop singing
until I hear everyone singing along
now. The words are real simple.
Follow me boys! Follow me!

The boys unenthusiastically join. Ben looks back at Malcolm and signals to him if he wants an Oreo. Malcolm shakes his head, but Chance nods and so Chance and Ben share an Oreo.

NED (CONT'D)

Come on now, who's not singing? I should be hearing more voices.

DEAN

It's the ones in the back.

BEN

(chewing)

I'm singing!

NED

Sounds like you're chewing.

DEAN

Of course he'd be stuffing his face full.

The bullies laugh.

NED

Come on guys, be nice.

Ned isn't helping.

NED (CONT'D)

How about this. We choose a song to sing. How about that?

CARTER

Sicko Mode!

NED

How about something more appropriate.

CHANCE

How about Ariana Grande's Side to Side?

DEAN

(sarcastic)

That's appropriate.

The bullies all laugh.

NED

If you guys can't take this seriously, I'll just go back to the old song.

CHANCE

I was serious.

DEAN
Oh, we could tell.

The bullies laugh.

NED
I'm glad to see you boys are getting to know each other. I really am. You guys will become as close as brothers out in these woods. By the end of this trip, I hope I can be like a big bro to all you awesome dudes. But, first things first.
(stops and turns around)
I don't know which of you is which. Tall guy, front of the line. What's your name?

DEAN
Dean Diaz.

Ned smiles at Dean before turning back around and continuing on.

NED
Dean Diaz! Now that's a great name.

DEAN
Yeah, everyone will be saying it one day.

NED
Now that's a great attitude. What do you want to do once you're all grown up Dean Diaz? Must be pretty important if everyone is gonna be talking about ya?

DEAN
The best shooter in the NBA.

NED
Basketball player? I guess I shouldn't be surprised with how tall you are for your age. I'm sure you'll grow up to be one of the greats.

DEAN
One of? I'll be THE great.

NED
I'm loving your ambition Diaz.
Anyone else here play any sports?

CARTER
I do!

NED
You do? What sport?

CARTER
Baseball! I'm the third best
pitcher in the league.

NED
3rd best! We got one of the greats
right here, right now, in the
flesh! That's amazing, uhm...

A drawn out pause is shared between Ned and Carter.

CARTER
Yeah, it's pretty cool.

NED
Yeah it is, but like... what's your
name?

CARTER
Carter.

NED
Carter, I can't wait to see your
name one day playing in the big
leagues. I can see it now on the
big screen.
(announce voice)
HOMERUN CARTER-

He waits for Carter to tell him his last name. Carter does
not take the hint.

CARTER
And Diaz. Double Homerun.

CARTER (CONT'D)
Double homerun?

NED
You guys are the first to invent
it.

DEAN
I don't even play baseball.

NED

Well, I'm sure if you did, you'd be great.

DEAN

I'd be better than third in the league, that's for sure.

Carter looks hurt. Ned notices and changes the subject.

NED

Speaking of third! How about you third in line?

EVERETT

Me?

NED

Yeah, you. What's your name again?

EVERETT

My name is Everett Lee.

NED

It's nice to meet ya Everett. What can you tell me about yourself?

EVERETT

I don't play any sports.

NED

That's fine. I'm sure you have other interests.

EVERETT

I like playing video games.

NED

Oh, so we got ourselves a gamer? I'm a bit of a gamer myself. You ever play Fortnite?

EVERETT

No, not really. Fortnite's kind of lame if you ask me.

NED

Wow, a controversial opinion among this group, I'm sure.

CARTER

Eh...

DEAN
I only play 2K.

BEN
I play Fortnite!

NED
Oh cool! Big Ben right?

BEN
Just Ben please, and while I disagree with Everett about Fortnite being lame, he's entitled to his opinion.

NED
Wow, that's very grown up of you Ben.

Everett leans over to Carter.

EVERETT
(whispers)
He thinks Fortnite isn't lame and he mains King Dedede...
(louder)
He's so grown up.

Ben hears the last part and watches the two boys snicker at his expense.

NED
Next down the line is a name I know all ready. Chance! You're an Ariana Grande fan, right Chance?

CHANCE
How did you know!

NED
You wanted us to sing one of her songs earlier.

CHANCE
Oh yeah.

NED
Last and certainly not least I'm sure.
(announcer voice)
Iiiitz-

Ned waits for Malcolm to tell him his name. Malcolm is just staring off into the forest. He thinks he sees something.

Malcolm stops when something moves between some branches.

NED (CONT'D)
He's really not paying attention,
is he?

Ben nudges Malcolm.

BEN
Malcolm?

Malcolm is snapped out of his trance. He looks worried.

MALCOLM
There's something out there.

Malcolm looks over at the group and points into the dark and foreboding woods.

DEAN
Ah, fuck you man!

NED
Dean Diaz, watch your mouth!

DEAN
What! He's throwing off the vibe
saying freaky shit like that.

Chance starts crying.

EVERETT
Speaking of throwing off the vibe.

Ned kneels down to console Chance.

NED
Oh Chance, he was probably wrong.

CHANCE
(through tears)
Probably!

NED
Definitely, he was definitely
wrong.

Ned gives Malcolm a stern look.

NED (CONT'D)
You were wrong...

MALCOLM
Malcolm.

NED

Nice to meet you Malcolm. It's good to know you have an active imagination. Save it for story time by the campfire, ok.

Ned then pats Chance on the shoulder.

NED (CONT'D)

You feeling better now?

CHANCE

Yeah.

NED

Awesome! Back to it then. Follow me boys.

(starts singing)

Follow me! Follow me boys! Follow me boys, follow me!

Malcolm gives the woods one last look before turning around and following the others, counting to himself as he does.

We shift to woods POV. We see a BLOODIED HAND move some branches out of view. Their hand returns to a CLENCHED and SHAKING fist as the scouts move out of their view.

EXT. TRAIL - LATER

Malcolm's count is MUCH further along as the boys are deeper into the woods now. He watched Dean and the other two make fun of Ned behind his back by imitating his gait.

Ben listens to Malcolm count quietly to himself.

BEN

Why do you do that?

Malcolm looks at Ben.

MALCOLM

Do what?

BEN

Count like that? I'm not judging. I just notice you do it a lot.

MALCOLM

It's just something my dad does.

INT. DAD'S OFFICE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Close up of Dad with his eyes closed as he counts. Malcolm is peeking in from the door.

DAD
1..2...3..

EXT. TRAIL - DAY (PRESENT)

We return to the boys on the trail.

MALCOLM
So I do it too.

Ben nods.

BEN
Like father, like son.

Malcolm nods and looks out at the woods, continuing his counting.

MALCOLM
(whispered)
1, 2, 3, 4-

CUT TO:

INT. DAD'S OFFICE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

We zoom out to see Dad's office has been wrecked. Dad is out of breath after punching several holes in the wall.

DAD
5...6...7...8...9...

We see Malcolm peeking in as sirens can be heard in the distance.

EXT. TRAIL - LATER (PRESENT)

Malcolm is snapped back to reality by the sound of police sirens.

BEN
(still chewing)
That's pretty close.

CHANCE

I thought we were deep out in the woods?

CARTER

Man, you can't escape the pigs no matter how far from the farm you get.

DEAN

Facts right there.

BEN

You think they're looking for one of the maniacs who escaped?

CHANCE

Maniacs?

BEN

It was all over the news before we left. A bunch of inmates broke out and murdered some cops.

CHANCE

Wh-what? Are we safe?

BEN

If they're looking for em all the way out here, then who knows? He could be anywhere. Maybe that's what Malcolm saw stalking around in the bushes?

Chance is starting to hyperventilate.

BEN (CONT'D)

Ah man Chance, I'm sorry.

CARTER

Are you crying again?

Chance rushes forward toward the front where Ned is. Tears are in his eyes.

DEAN

Someone get some Ariana Grande playing. It might lift his spirits.

Ned notices Chance crying after taking out his airpods.

NED

Is everything all right buddy?

CHANCE
A-are we in danger?

NED
What?

The sirens flare and Ned suddenly understands.

NED (CONT'D)
Oh that-
(snickers)
That is something you all do not
need to worry about out here.

CHANCE
They said there was a bunch of
escaped inmates on the loose.

NED
There are a small number of inmates
that are unaccounted for, but the
police will find them. No one can
hide for too long these days.

DEAN
You could hide out in these woods.

Dean holds up his cell phone.

DEAN (CONT'D)
Because I can't get like any wi-fi
out here bro.

NED
Hey guys, lets put the phones down
and try to enjoy nature, shall we?

Sirens blare in the distance as if to retort Ned.

NED (CONT'D)
They're probably just passing
through. We're not far from our
first campsite guys and you know
what we're gonna do when we get
there?

No one bothers to respond.

NED (CONT'D)
We're gonna sit down, start
ourselves a nice big camp fire, and
roast ourselves some wiener dogs.
Yeah boys, it's gonna be wiener
time!

Carter, Everett, Dean, and Ben laugh.

NED (CONT'D)

What? What's so funny about wiener time?

They laugh some more.

NED (CONT'D)

Wiener time isn't supposed to be funny, it's supposed to be serious. Why are all you laughing at Wiener time?

They keep laughing. Ned is enjoying the bit too much.

NED (CONT'D)

Stop laughing at wiener time! Wiener time! It's wiener time, come on guys.

He's killing these kids. They won't stop laughing.

CARTER

Wiener time! Wiener time! Wiener time!

The kids minus Malcolm and Chance all start chanting wiener time. Ned joins and charges forward.

CHANCE

I'm a vegetarian!

CARTER

Not when it's wiener time!

EXT. CAMPSITE -DAY

Ned sees that there are no hot dogs in his bag. There's no food what so ever.

NED

Shit...

He notices Ben setting up.

NED (CONT'D)

Hey Big Ben.

BEN

Just Ben is ok.

NED
Yeah, no problem. I gotta little
question for you. You got any Oreos
left?

BEN
Oreos?

Ben shakes his head.

BEN (CONT'D)
No Oreos. I'm all out of Oreos.

NED
All out?

BEN
Not even a crumb. I, uh, shared a
little too much.

NED
Did you bring any other snacks?

BEN
I brought some stuff for s'mores.

NED
You did!

BEN
Yeah, in case anyone wanted extra.

NED
You're a life saver Ben.

Ned stands in the middle of the camp.

NED (CONT'D)
Hey guys, guess what's for dinner
tonight?

EVERETT
(snickering)
Wieners!

NED
Nope.

EVERETT
But you said we were having
wieners!

NED
Not anymore. We're gonna be
snacking on some s'mores over the
fire. You boys hype or what!

Semi-enthusiastic cheers from the kids. Chance pulls on Ned's shirt.

NED (CONT'D)
Yeah Chance?

CHANCE
I have gelatin allergy. I can't
have marshmallows.

NED
You can't? You sure?

CHANCE
I am.

NED
All right, we'll figure something
out in a sec. Just give me a sec ok
buddy.

CHANCE
Ok.

NED
Great, high five?

Chance and Ned share an awkward high five.

NED (CONT'D)
Yeah!

INT. TENT - DAY

Ned has torn his bag apart searching for food.

NED
Shit, shit, shit! Where is it! No,
I did not forget the fucking walkie
talkie too. You got to be kidding
me!

He finds his scout leader guide among his things and flips through it. He finds a section on wild berries.

EXT. CAMPSITE - DAY

Ned calls Chance over.

NED
Hey Chance, I got a special task
for you.

He hands Chance the book opened to the wild berry page.

NED (CONT'D)
You think you could find me some
wild berries. I'm trusting this
task only to you.

CHANCE
Why only me?

NED
Since you can't eat any of the food
we have, that's why.

CHANCE
Oh ok.

Chance hurries toward the woods.

EXT. BRUSH - DAY

SOMEONE is watching Chance from the bushes as he rushes off.
Their gaze shifts to the axe lying near a tree stump. Malcolm
seems to briefly spot them for a moment.

EXT. CAMPSITE - DAY

Malcolm is trying to get a better look at what he saw in the
bushes when Ned grabs the axe and starts to shout for the
boys to gather around.

NED
All right, raise a hand if you ever
chopped wood before?

None of the boys raise a hand.

NED (CONT'D)
That's ok. We can't all be
outdoorsmen. Lucky for you guys,
you got an soon to be eagle scout
as your leader, so listen up. First
thing's first is you make sure you
have swinging room.

Ned swings the axe slowly around him.

NED (CONT'D)
You're a little too close. You're
in what I call the splash zone, so
maybe back up a little.

The boys back up.

NED (CONT'D)
A little more.

They back up more.

NED (CONT'D)
Great, now that I've given myself
plenty of room to swing, I can lift
my axe up without any worry or...

He readies the axe.

NED (CONT'D)
Hesitation.

Ned brings the axe down at a weird angle and it bounces off
the piece of wood.

NED (CONT'D)
Second thing second... always do a
practice swing. Every piece of wood
is different. It can be shaped all
weird like this one and that can
throw things off. Always do at
least one practice swing-

Ned swings and misses again.

NED (CONT'D)
Maybe more if you feel its
necessary.

He misses another swing.

NED (CONT'D)
Another practice swing. Practice
makes perfect.

Ned takes a deep breath.

NED (CONT'D)
Ok, this time for real.

Ned takes extra long in the wind up and lining up his swing. He brings it down and while the axe sticks into the wood, it does not chop in two.

NED (CONT'D)

Oh...

(a beat)

This is good actually. It's a great teaching moment as this will happen to even the best of wood choppers from time to time. Your axe is going to get stuck in the wood. It's just gonna happen... you can't really prevent it.

Ned tries to pull the axe out of the wood.

NED (CONT'D)

Usually, you just pull it out.

Ned can't pull the axe out.

NED (CONT'D)

But uhh when that doesn't work-

Ned picks up the axe by the handle and starts bashing the piece of wood against a tree.

NED (CONT'D)

You do this.

The wood sloppily cuts in two and falls off the axe.

NED (CONT'D)

We call that the lumberjack method. Only do that when it's really stuck (out of breath) My lord... all right, who wants to earn their wood chopping badge?

EXT. CAMPFIRE - LATER

Malcolm and Ben are gathering sticks for the fire.

Ned is showing Carter how to chop a piece of wood. He makes sure to give him plenty of space before telling him to swing.

BEN

What do you think of Ned?

MALCOLM

He's fine I guess.

DEAN
He's a fucking idiot.

Ned walks up to the three boys while Carter buries the AXE in the tree stump, leaving it there.

NED
All righty, how we looking here?

He looks at the makeshift fire pit with the gathered tinder and kindling.

NED (CONT'D)
Looks good. Looks safe. Looks ready
for some fire!

Ned pulls out a lighter.

BEN
Aren't we supposed to start a fire
the natural way?

NED
Fire was man's first invention.
There is no natural way to start
it.

Ned kneels down and lights the campfire.

NED (CONT'D)
You still have those s'mores Ben?

BEN
Yes sir.

NED
Awesome, bust that stuff out. It's
s'mores time!

Carter comes running up.

CARTER
S'mores time!

NED
S'mores time!

BEN
Wasn't it supposed to be wiener
time though first?

NED
It's s'mores time now!

BEN
If you say so.

Ben starts unloading chocolate, marshmallow, and gram crackers from his bag.

Malcolm looks around. The AXE is now gone and so is Chance.

MALCOLM
Where's Chance?

NED
(to himself)
Oh shit, that's right.
(to the boys)
Can you all help me call Chance back. I sent him on a little mission.

EVERETT
A little mission? I want to go on a little mission.

NED
Chance!

BEN
Chance!

CARTER
Chance, it's s'more time! Get back here now!

EXT. WOODS TRAIL - DUSK

SCOUTS (O.S.)
Chance! Chance, come back!

Chance is humming to himself as listens to music on his headphones. He gathers berries and puts them in a bag he's hanging on a tree nearby.

As he goes back and forth from the tree, we see a SILHOUETTE of someone step into view. They open Chance's bag and find the scout's guide. They rip a page out and leave Chance alone.

Chance hears the other calling and gathers his stuff and leaves.

EXT. CAMPFIRE - DAY

Chance emerges from the woods.

NED
Atta boy-scout! Welcome back.

CHANCE
I don't know which are safe to eat
and which are not.

He pours the berries on the tree stump where the AXE was previously.

NED
That's ok. I'll figure it out.

Ned looks at them and quickly realizes he doesn't know which are safe either.

NED (CONT'D)
Hmmm... you have that book I gave
you?

Chance nods and hands Ned the scouting manual. He opens it see the wild berry section is ripped out.

NED (CONT'D)
Uhhh... what?

He flips back and forth.

NED (CONT'D)
(under his breath)
Why is that page the one's that's
ripped out? What the fuck. Like,
what the fuck!

He looks back and forth.

NED (CONT'D)
All right uhhh... ok. Here goes
nothing...

He looks at the other boy scouts by the campfire.

NED (CONT'D)
All right scouts, gather round!
It's time for a pop quiz.

The scouts gather around the stump.

NED (CONT'D)

Who can tell me which berries are safe to eat?

BEN

Don't eat the green ones.

NED

That's right, we don't want to eat the green ones.

Ned separates the green ones.

Are there any other colors we should avoid?

CARTER

I think like yellow is bad... right?

BEN

Yeah, yellow is bad. We don't want yellow.

Ned separates the yellows.

NED

No yellows. Correct! You guys are on a role. We're down to two berries. Red and orange. Which is safe?

The kids all look confused.

CARTER

Red or orange?

BEN

Red is the color of strawberries.

NED

That they are, that they are.

CARTER

Orange is the color of oranges

NED

That too.

DEAN

So it's red because there are no orange berries?

Ned thinks on it and then shrugs.

NED

Maybe.

CHANCE

Should we look it up?

NED

Maybe instead you guys could remember your scout training hard enough and tell me the right answer.

DEAN

Do you know the right answer?

NED

Of course, it wouldn't be a quiz though if I didn't test ya now, would it?

DEAN

I vote red then.

CARTER

I vote red too.

BEN

I don't know. It might be a trick.

EVERETT

Red is too obvious. I vote orange.

NED

Guys, there's no trick.

BEN

So it's red?

NED

It's whatever the correct answer is.

BEN

I don't know then. My berry knowledge is pretty limited.

DEAN

No shock there.

The bullies laugh.

NED

Come on guys, let's take this seriously. Whatever you pick, I'll eat.

EVERETT

I thought you knew the right answer?

NED

I do... but do you?

He looks around at them.

BEN

I'm like 50-50.

CHANCE

I could go either way.

DEAN

I vote red.

CARTER

Yeah, I'll go red.

EVERETT

Red works for me.

NED

Is that how all of you vote?

BEN

I don't know. I'll vote red too. That seems to be the consensus.

CHANCE

I'm gonna vote orange to be different.

DEAN

You would.

NED

Guys, this isn't about building a consensus. It's about being right. I'm gonna eat whatever you choose. In fact, you all will as the berries you choose will be our dinner.

DEAN

We have to eat berries for dinner? There's no meat in berries!

CARTER
My mom says I'm a growing boy.
Growing boys need meat!

CHANCE
There are other ways of getting
protein that aren't meat.

CARTER
And end up like you, fuck no! I
need meat. Winer time! Wiener time!

The boys start chanting wiener time.

NED
There is no wieners.

The boys stop chanting.

NED (CONT'D)
I lied. The berries are all we got.
So, I'm asking you boys again,
which color?

The boys all shrug.

DEAN
We don't know. Just tell us the
right answer.

Ned confidently eats the red berries.

NED
You guys were right... It was red.

Ned's face starts turns with the sound of his stomach.

BEN
I packed extra for more s'mores.

CARTER
Hell yeah! more s'more time!

The boys start to chanting more s'more time as Ned anxiously
sits down by the campfire and prepares for the worst.

JUMP CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Ned is shitting his brains out in the woods. He looks over
and sees that he also just ran out of toilet paper.

NED
Oh no... Oh no!

He closes his eyes and contemplates.

NED (CONT'D)
Uh hello!

He shakes his head.

NED (CONT'D)
No, that's... that's fucking
stupid.

He look around and grabs some leaves. He contemplates some
more.

NED (CONT'D)
Hey campers! Hey guys! You're
leader need some TP! Guys!

He hears some rustling.

NED (CONT'D)
Hello?

More rustling.

NED (CONT'D)
Guys, is that one of you? Hello?

Rustling continues until it suddenly stops.

NED (CONT'D)
Is anyone there?

Out of the brush pops out a bloodied DEPUTY. He has his gun
raised, but looks disoriented. He turns on his flashlight and
shines it at Ned.

NED (CONT'D)
Holy shit!

DEPUTY
Hands up!

NED
Woah, woah, woah I'm not the guy
you're looking for!

DEPUTY
I'll be the judge of that. Stand up
with your hands in the air!

NED
I-I don't - sir, I'm a bit -
indisposed.

The deputy looks him over in disgust.

DEPUTY
Who are you?

NED
Ned Kennedy sir. I-I'm leading some
boy scouts on a camping trip.

DEPUTY
Boy scouts?

NED
They're nearby I swear.

DEPUTY
There's a dangerous man on the
loose in this area. You need to
gather your campers and get them
out of these woods now-

The Deputy gets an AXE buried into their head by a figure off
screen. We see the deputy's blood splatter on Ned.

NED
Oh my god! Oh my god! Oh my god!

Ned shits everywhere. The deputy collapses and reveals a
shadowy SILHOUETTE standing right behind them. The shadowy
Silhouette grabs Ned by the shirt.

NED (CONT'D)
If you want it, you can take it.
You can take whatever you want from
me.

STRANGER (O.S.)
You can keep the pants.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Ned is killed off screen, but his cries echo across the
woods.

EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

The scouts hear Ned's screams. Dean and his friends scream
back playfully.

The others continue roasting their s'mores.

CHANCE

Ned sure is taking a while.

BEN

Maybe he had to go number 2 as well.

Everett holds up his switch.

EVERETT

You guys ready to lose in smash?

A figure approaches the fire from behind Everett. It's at this time Malcolm notices it's not Ned.

DEAN

(sarcastic)

How was your hike there Ned?

STRANGER

Oh kids...

The STRANGER(40s), a tall, muscular dirty man with Ned's bloodied sash and a deputy's jacket on, comes stepping out of the shadows and into the fire light. He has blood all over his face.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

There's been an incident with your scout leader Ned.

The boys all look up stunned at the Stranger's appearance.

BEN

What happened?

STRANGER

A bear got him.

CHANCE

A bear!

DEAN

No way.

STRANGER

He's not dead... yet, but I was sent ahead to gather you guys and get you all moving. So, get your shit packed up and lets vamoose.

The boys all stare at him in silence.

DEAN
You're kidding right?

STRANGER
I'm not.
(claps his hands)
Let's go now! Fucking move it!

The boys start to pack up out of fear.

MALCOLM
Are we going back home?

STRANGER
Home? No! Don't you worry. None of
you are going home.

BEN
Even after our scout leader got
mauled by a bear!

STRANGER
You bet cha.

The Stranger notices Everett turning off his switch.

STRANGER (CONT'D)
What's that!

EVERETT
This is my Switch.

STRANGER
Hand it over! Hand it over right
now!

EVERETT
Why?

The Stranger grabs Everett's switch out his hands.

EVERETT (CONT'D)
Hey!

The Stranger smashes his switch on the ground and throws it
into the bonfire. Everett is stunned beyond words.

STRANGER
Technology is not allowed while
camping. I thought this was the boy
scouts for fuck's sake!

EVERETT
You can't-

Everett grabs his mouth to stop a cry from spilling out.

STRANGER

If I catch any of you with anything
you shouldn't be having, there will
be hell to pay. Don't test me!

CHANCE

Wh-what about cell phones? I-I have
a cell phone.

Chance presents his cell phone to the Stranger. He grabs it,
smashes it, and throws it into the fire. Chance starts to
cry.

STRANGER

No need to cry. I'm not mad at you.
You told me you had one. If any of
you have a cell phone, please
follow - what was your name?

CHANCE

Ch-hance

STRANGER

Ch-cance, that's a great name Ch-
chance.

The Stranger shows him Ned's bloodied sash and nametag.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

I'm Ned.

CHANCE

Ned?

STRANGER

I'm named Ned too. Now please
everyone, follow Ch-Chance's lead
and hand over your cell phones.

DEAN

So you can destroy them!

STRANGER

Well - yeah, someone didn't tell
you guys the rules and how strict
they are. You don't bring
technology on camping trips. If any
contraband is found by your scout
leader, it is his right to destroy
it on the spot.

He gestures to the destroyed tech in the bonfire.

DEAN
That can't be legal.

STRANGER
Your parents signed a waiver that gives us the right to do so. We will, however, compensate you for any damages after the trip.

He pats a crying Everett on the head.

STRANGER (CONT'D)
Mommy can buy you a new one later.

DEAN
You mean they'll pay us back?

STRANGER
Yup, that means I want five more smashed phones at my feet before I'm done tearing down this tent. If that is not the case then I will leave you for the bears.

The Stranger goes to tear down a tent. The kids all look a mixture of stunned and confused.

CARTER
I could get a free upgrade out of this. My phone's been so slow lately.

Carter gets his phone out and tries smashing it with a rock.

BEN
That's because each time you update the software, it makes the phone slower. It's how they get cha to buy a new one.

Ben smashes his phone to bits and throws it in the fire along with the others. Everett is the last to smash his phone, tears in his eyes as he does so.

STRANGER
I count only four more in there. Who's holding out?

DEAN
Mal.

MALCOLM
I don't have a cell phone.

STRANGER

I thought every kid did these days?

MALCOLM

Not every one. You can search my stuff if you don't believe me.

STRANGER

The man who offers his cell to be tossed has nothing to hide. I believe you shy guy. Now let's hurry and get the fuck out of here boys. That bear could be anywhere and let me tell you, he is hungry.

The boys break the camp down and roll out. They hear the sound of a helicopter nearby. The Stranger tenses up and hurries them along.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

Move now!

DEAN

Why? It just sounds like a-

STRANGER

It's a UFO, we gotta go!

BEN

Wait what?

The Stranger pushes them deeper into the woods and away from the sounds of the helicopter.

CHANCE

What about the fire?

STRANGER

No time, we gotta go now!

They leave the campfire going.

EXT. TRAIL - NIGHT

The scouts follow the Stranger along the trail. It's very dark.

BEN

Should I get my flashlight out?
It's so dark.

STRANGER

No, you might attract the UFO.

DEAN
That wasn't a UFO.

STRANGER
Yes it fucking was!

The Stranger's outburst startles the boys.

STRANGER (CONT'D)
Now do any of you have bug spray
for these fucking mosquitos!

He slaps at his neck in manic anger.

CHANCE
I-I do.

Chance goes up and hands The Stranger his bug spray.

STRANGER
Thank you Ch-Chance. I'm getting
fucking eaten alive out here.

CHANCE
You sure do cuss a lot sir.

STRANGER
What the fuck you say?

CHANCE
I...

STRANGER
It's ok. I was just fucking with
ya. Yeah, I cuss a lot.

CHANCE
Why?

STRANGER
Why? Why the fuck not.

CHANCE
Because cussing is bad.

STRANGER
There are worse things you can do,
I assure you.

CARTER
I wish I could cuss as much as I
wanted to.

STRANGER

You can. Go ahead. I'm not gonna stop you.

Silence follows.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

This isn't some trick. You can say whatever curse word you want.

CARTER

Whatever word?

STRANGER

Yup, whatever fucking word you want.

CARTER

Fuck...

CHANCE

Fuck.

BEN

Fucking shit.

STRANGER

That's it? That's all you kids got?

DEAN

Shit on my dick.

The boys laugh.

CARTER

Dick on my shit.

DEAN

Don't fucking copy me butt fucker.

CARTER

Suck my shit dick fuck butt.

Kids laugh.

EVERETT

You're both bitch fucks.

CARTER

Bitch fucks! That's a good one.

DEAN

No it's not. You guys don't even know how to curse right.

EVERETT
Yeah we do fucker face.

Kids laugh. Dean rolls his eyes.

BEN
Ned Two, can we say really bad words?

STRANGER
After fucker face, the sky's the limit.

BEN
Ok then... Cunt!

CARTER
Cunt? What's a cunt?

BEN
It's like bitch, but worse I think.

DEAN
Bitch isn't even that bad.

CARTER
Call your mom a bitch and see what happens.

DEAN
I will if you call yours a cunt.

CARTER
I don't even know what a cunt is, so it could actually mean something really nice and she'll take it as a compliment.

DEAN
It's a bad word. It can't mean something nice.

BEN
Bitch actually means female dog and dogs are awesome, so I wouldn't mind being called a bitch.

DEAN
Hey Ben.

BEN
Yeah?

DEAN
You're a bitch.

The bullies snicker.

BEN
Ned Two, what is a cunt? I think
Dean's being one right now.

Dean shoots Ben a glare.

STRANGER
It's what's between a woman's legs.

BEN
Her pelvis?

DEAN
No dumbass, he means her pussy.

BEN
Oh.

CARTER
I love pussy!

DEAN
You don't even know what a pussy
is?

CARTER
Yeah, I do. It's what girls have.
Girls have pussies. Boys have
dicks...
(a beat)
And balls.

DEAN
Well, congrats. I'm sure you're
gonna pass sex ed knowing all that.

CARTER
I'll pass sex ed when I make a girl
cum.

DEAN
You fucking dumbass. Girls don't
cum. Only boys do.

CARTER
Well, I learned that girls can if
you find the clitoris. I hear it
can be hard to find, but if you do,
she will cum. I'm right aren't I?

STRANGER
(Chuckles)
You're getting there.

BEN
What if you can't find the
clitoris?

CARTER
Then me and her are gonna have to
just search for it allllll night. I
won't mind.

They suddenly hear the sound of a helicopter nearby. The
Stranger tenses up.

STRANGER
The UFO is back.

They look up and see a helicopter with a spotlight scanning
the woods.

CARTER
They looking for something?

STRANGER
Yeah, new test subjects. You boys
better follow me or you're gonna
get dissected by some aliens!

The Stranger runs off into the darkness and the kids
hesitantly follow.

EXT. STREAM - NIGHT

The Stranger emerges at a rocky stream that is only lit up by
the few streaks of moonlight breaking through the canopy.

STRANGER
You kids ever been rock hopping?
It's a fun game.

CHANCE
It sounds dangerous.

STRANGER
Hardly as long as you watch your
step.

DEAN
How are we supposed to do that in
the dark?

EVERETT

It wouldn't be a game if there
wasn't a challenge.

STRANGER

Exactly, Game Gear has got the
right idea.

CHANCE

So it is dangerous?

STRANGER

Only if you little shits don't
listen.

DEAN

What is that supposed to-

The Stranger hushes him.

STRANGER

Would you just listen.

The crew hear the sound of the water running across the
rocks.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

If you listen then you'll know
exactly where to step.

The Stranger successfully hops across several rocks.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

Follow me boys and try to keep up.

The Stranger vanishes into the dark as he hops across more
rocks.

BEN

How are we supposed to see?

CARTER

I don't know.

DEAN

This guy is nuts. None of what he's
saying makes any sense.

BEN

How does hearing running water help
me know where the rocks are? I
can't hear rocks? Unless there's
some trick or something?

MALCOLM

Team work.

DEAN

What?

MALCOLM

We have to use team work. Listen to each other to know which rocks are safe and hold hands to make sure we don't fall in the water.

DEAN

Hold hands?

CARTER

I thought the other kid was the gay one?

EVERETT

He's right. How else would we be able to hop across rocks in the dark.

CARTER

Well you two can hold hands, I'll just follow the leader.

Carter hops across some rocks only to slip and fall.

BEN

Carter, whoa! Are you ok?

We see him shakily get back up. The bottom of his pants are drenched in water.

CARTER

Ahhh man!

Chance extends a hand.

CHANCE

Need a hand?

Carter begrudgingly accepts.

EXT. STREAM - LATER

Beams of moonlight streak across the rocks. The boys are now hand in hand slowly hopping across them.

DEAN

Is it safe?

BEN
I don't think so.

Ben slips and Dean lets go of him.

BEN (CONT'D)
Ah shit!

EVERETT
Sploosh!

CARTER
Did you do a cannonball man? There
was so much splash!

CHANCE
Guys, we have to work together.

DEAN
If it weren't for me, we all would
have gone down with him.

Ben stumbles in the water. He's helped by Malcolm who breaks
away from Chance.

MALCOLM
I got you Ben. Stop thrashing.

BEN
It's so cold man. I might get
hyperthermia.

DEAN
You'll be fine. You got the extra
layers.

The sound of the helicopter returns.

STRANGER (O.S.)
You're losing the game now boys.
You better hurry!

The Stranger's voice echoes down the dark stream.

CARTER
Damn, he's far ahead.

EVERETT
I don't want to lose the game.
Let's go!

The helicopter is getting closer. It has a searchlight. The
Stranger appears in the dim shine of the spotlight.

STRANGER

I said hurry up!

The kids are all roused to hurry. They abandon teamwork and start to move forward in panic.

Malcolm almost falls on to a sharp rock but is saved by the Stranger.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

I got you shy guy.

He carries Malcolm away from the searchlight and into the brush with the others to hide.

BEN

Why are we hiding?

The Stranger hushes him.

BEN (CONT'D)

It can't hear us! I can't even hear us!

STRANGER

Someone cover Cannonball's mouth.

Everett covers Ben's mouth. The helicopter circles around and then leaves.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

We survive to be probed another day.

He puts down Malcolm after he notices the gun in the Stranger's jacket. He gives Malcolm a smile and a wink.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

You watch your step or I will.

The Stranger moves ahead. Everett eagerly follows after him.

EXT. STREAM - DAWN

Ben is looking at one of his nasty scrapes he got from the fall. Malcolm is walking next to him as the other boys are a head of them.

BEN

Ah man, this sucks.

MALCOLM

Dean's a dick for letting you go like that.

BEN

Dean's a dick. Period. End of story. Don't even bother with a sequel.

Malcolm smiles. He looks ahead at the daunting shadow of the Stranger leading the pack.

DEAN

Are we even on a trail anymore?

STRANGER

No.

CARTER

Are we gonna stop soon?

STRANGER

We stop when I say we stop.

CARTER

Is that soon?

STRANGER

No Clitoris, it ain't.

The boys begrudgingly march along.

EXT. STREAM - DAY

The boys are still on the march, but are going much slower now. The Stranger has not slowed down one bit. He looks back at the tired group.

STRANGER

You all hitting your limit?

The boys don't respond at first.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

(chuckles)

I said you boys hitting your limits?

BEN

I'm tired if that's what you're asking.

STRANGER

Cannonball is tired, but Cannonball only speaks for Cannonball. What about the rest of ya?

DEAN

We've been hiking for hours and we haven't slept.

STRANGER

Well then, I know what will wake you all up. It's another game. In fact, it's called the JUMPING GAME.

EXT. CLIFF - DAY

The Stranger throws down his pack and points at a cliff overlooking the water.

STRANGER

You're all going to jump off that.

DEAN

You're fucking with us?

STRANGER

No, no I'm not fucking with you. I'm dead serious. Everyone here is going to jump off that cliff.

DEAN

Or what?

STRANGER

You'll lose the game. You don't want to lose the game now do you?

DEAN

That's not a game! That's suicide!

STRANGER

You hear that everyone? He's already lost the game and he hasn't even played yet.

DEAN

What are you talking about?

STRANGER

The rest of you that aren't pussies, follow me!

The others slowly follow. Dean looks at Chance.

DEAN
Even you?

CHANCE
I'm not a pussy.

Dean relents and runs after the others.

Ext. Clifftop - day

The scouts all gather around the cliff's edge minus their shoes, socks, and shirts. Malcolm looks off the ledge. The cliff is a lot higher than it looks.

STRANGER
The game is quite simple. I call
your name and you jump. Easy as
that.

Ben peers over the cliff.

BEN
Easier said than done.

STRANGER
Actually-

The Stranger pushes Ben off the cliff.

STRANGER (CONT'D)
It's as easy as that.

The boys react in shock before rushing to look over the cliff. Ben is safely swimming at the bottom.

BEN
Ah man, I just got dry!

CARTER
Holy crap, he lived.

STRANGER
That was just a demonstration.
You're not done yet. Get your fat
ass back up here.

BEN
Ah, ok.

Ben swims back to shore.

STRANGER
Game gear, you're up next.

EVERETT
What?

STRANGER
You're jumping next.

EVERETT
I- I don't think I can play this game.

STRANGER
What? Can you only play ones that aren't real?

EVERETT
I can't die playing those ones.

STRANGER
Yeah but nothing worth doing is ever risk free and the best games to play are always the most dangerous ones. You can press x to jump or you can just... jump.

Everett looks on in fear.

EVERETT
Jumping won't change anything about me.

STRANGER
Don't be so sure about that.

Ben returns.

STRANGER (CONT'D)
Hey, Cannonball.

BEN
Yes sir.

STRANGER
You're up again. Jump.

BEN
But I just - ah, screw it.

Ben does a running start.

BEN (CONT'D)
Cannonball!

Ben does a massive cannonball into the water. The kids all cheer.

CARTER

Wow, that was huge! You see that splash!

CHANCE

He made waves!

STRANGER

You see how little he hesitated. Hesitation is doubt and doubt is poison. By jumping he has removed the poison from himself and become more of a man. Remove your poison Game Gear. Become a man.

Everett steps up, takes a deep breath, and jumps. He resurfaces without issues.

EVERETT

That wasn't so bad.

STRANGER

You hear that? It wasn't so bad.

He looks at Carter.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

All right Clitoris, you're up.

Carter takes a deep breath and jumps.

CARTER

Oh Fuck!

Carter splashes down safely.

CARTER (CONT'D)

I'm alive! I'm alive!

The Stranger looks at Chance and Dean.

STRANGER

You still a pussy?

Dean looks down and still seems unsure.

CHANCE

We can jump together and hold hands.

Dean scowls and jumps. He splashes down safely.

STRANGER
You scared?

CHANCE
A little bit.

STRANGER
It's easier if you close your eyes first.

CHANCE
That'll just make it scarier.

STRANGER
No it won't. Trust me.

Chance takes a deep breath and closes his eyes. The Stranger picks him up and throws him off the cliff. Chance screams bloody murder, but upon surfacing, he looks ecstatic.

CHANCE
That was the craziest thing I've ever done in my life!

DEAN
He didn't even jump on his own.

CHANCE
I'll go again. That was awesome!

EVERETT
Are we allowed to go again?

BEN
I already went twice, so I don't see why not.

EVERETT
Ned Two, can we jump again?

STRANGER
Of course, but only after everyone has gone.

The Stranger looks over at Malcolm.

STRANGER (CONT'D)
You think I forgot about you shy guy. You're up.

Malcolm approaches the cliff. He has extreme vertigo.

BEN
Come on Malcolm! You got this!

CHANCE
It's not that bad Malcolm. It's
actually pretty fun!

DEAN
Just jump already Mal.

EVERETT
Mal become a man.

CARTER
Yeah, become a man Mal.

The kids start chanting "Mal be a man." Malcolm closes his
eyes and starts to count.

MALCOLM
1-2-3

He jumps and as he does.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. MALCOLM'S ROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Malcolm lies in bed. The chanting of the boys has morphed
into his parents fighting.

MALCOLM
4-5-6-7

Suddenly there's a crash as someone throws something.

JUMP CUT TO:

EXT. CLIFF - DAY (PRESENT)

Malcolm resurfaces and everyone cheers.

BEN
Yeah Malcolm!

CHANCE
You did a good job!

CARTER
He's a man now!

EVERETT
Can we go again.

The kids all grow wide eyed as a shadow grows over them. The kids all swim away as the Stranger lands with a giant splash.

CARTER

Damn, that was bigger than
cannonball's splash.

The Stranger doesn't resurface.

CHANCE

Wait, he's not coming up.

BEN

Oh my god, did he hit the bottom?

Suddenly the water bubbles and out of the water emerges the Stranger covered in mud and algae. He resembles a swamp monster.

STRANGER

Rraaaa!

He chases after Chance who seems genuinely afraid. He chases the kids around and they all laugh and scream as they flee the Stranger.

BEGIN MONTAGE

-Stranger and scouts play and throw mud at each other.

-They swim and jump off the cliff some more.

-Stranger teaches them to spear fish, start a fire, and actually chop wood. Malcolm thinks he notices some blood on the axe when it's his turn, but the Stranger forces him to chop the wood before taking the axe away.

END MONTAGE

EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

The boys are roasting skewered fish over the fire. Chance takes a bite of his fish and looks sick.

BEN

If it makes you feel any better,
some vegetarians do eat fish.

DEAN

Then they're not vegetarians
dumbass.

BEN
No, it's a thing. They have a word
for it and everything. Pisscatarian
I think they call it.

CARTER
(giggles)
Pissatarian.

EVERETT
It's piscopalian.

CARTER
No, that's like a religion I think.

EVERETT
Ned Two, what's the word for a
vegetarian that eats fish?

The Stranger is staring into the fire intensely. He does not respond.

EVERETT (CONT'D)
Ned Two?

CARTER
Ned?

DEAN
Anyone home?

CARTER
You think he's sleeping with his
eyes open?

They all stare at the Stranger who seems to be stuck in a trance.

BEN
He's not even blinking.

Dean waves his fish on a stick close to the Stranger's face.

DEAN
You hungry?

He gets some laughs from the others.

DEAN (CONT'D)
Doesn't it smell sooo good.

He gets so close he touches the Stranger and he reacts by grabbing the stick and pulling Dean in. He starts to choke him. He stops himself.

STRANGER
What are you doing?

He looks around at the scared kids and let's go of Dean. They all sit in awkward silence. Stranger starts to laugh.

STRANGER (CONT'D)
Gotcha! You should have seen the look on your face. Scared the little shits right out of ya.

Some of the kids sheepishly join him in laughing. Dean and Malcolm do not.

STRANGER (CONT'D)
You kids want to be really scared though?

CHANCE
Not particularly.

STRANGER
Don't be a pussy. Every camping trip needs a good campfire story.

CARTER
Like a scary story?

STRANGER
The only stories worth telling by a fire are the scary ones.

CARTER
I got one. In fact, it's based on a true story.

CHANCE
I don't like when they're based on true stories.

Chance hides his face.

BEN
Don't worry, whenever they say that it definitely means it's made up.

CARTER
This ain't made up. It happened quite recently.

BEN
You're not talking about the escaped convicts, are you?

The Stranger looks at Ben intensely. Malcolm notices.

CARTER

Nah, this story even more recent than that. It takes place in a forest like this. It's about a group of boy scouts... just like us.

Chance cowers and whimpers.

CARTER (CONT'D)

So the story begins on a night not unlike this one. A group of boy scouts are roasting marshmallows by the fire when their leader has to suddenly leave. "I gotta go!" He said and fled into the dark woods. Nature called him and he had to answer. So, there he was, taking a mighty piss-

The boys chuckle

CARTER (CONT'D)

When he heard something rustling in the bushes. "Probably a squirrel." He thought to himself. That's when-

Carter gets up from his seat.

CARTER (CONT'D)

Rraaaaa! It was the piss bear!

The kids all laugh.

CARTER (CONT'D)

Why are you all laughing? This story is true. It's about Ned. Old Ned obviously - Ned One. He was mauled by the piss bear who's still out there lurking in the woods waiting to maul anyone who dares go out at night to take a whizz.

CHANCE

That's not funny. Ned One got hurt!

CARTER

I said it was a true story.

DEAN

Is the piss bear pisscatarian?

The kids laugh. Chance puts down his stick with the fish still on it. He's lost his appetite.

STRANGER

That was a nice try, but now it's time for you all to hear a real scary story.

CARTER

The piss bear is a real scary story.

More giggling.

STRANGER

No, it's not!

The kids all grow silent.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

The murder at Red Rock Mountain, however, is.

BEN

There was a murder at Red Rock Mountain?!?

CHANCE

I-isn't that where we're going?

STRANGER

Yes, you boys know how the mountain got its name?

The boys all shake their heads no.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

I'm not surprised. It's not a story to tell children.

CHANCE

Then maybe you shouldn't tell us it.

EVERETT

We're not children anymore. We're men now.

STRANGER

That you are. That you are...

The Stranger pauses.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

Before it was called Red Rock Mountain, the area was named after some boring old pioneer. After the murder, no one ever thought to call it anything else again.

BEN

What happened?

STRANGER

A boy scout troop camped out there as that has always been tradition. But this was no normal boy scout troop. These were some of the most disobedient, disrespectful, little fuckers that have ever dawned the sash and tie. Their scoutmaster, however, was the opposite. He was kind, polite, and as patient as a saint. He had to be to deal with these little shitheads on a routine basis and not a single one of them!

(voice breaks)

Not a single fucking one ever really showed him any respect. Lack of respect can drive a man mad. Even a good one... especially a good one. There was one scout in particular, Big mouth-

DEAN

Big mouth?

STRANGER

He had a big mouth. He was mean to say the least. In a troop full of mean kids, he was the meanest. He could make a grown man cry.

DEAN

Big mouth sounds like a chad.

STRANGER

He was a kid. Kids are assholes by nature. Especially when they don't know any better and he didn't know any better. He dared another scout, a small one they all liked to pick on, to jump off a cliff near what would soon to be called Red Rock.

BEN

Uh oh.

STRANGER

The good scout almost jumped, but at the last second, the scoutmaster stopped him. "What do you think you're doing!" The scoutmaster was so mad his fist was shaking.

The Stranger's fist begins to shake.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

The little scout knew to worry when he saw that fist shake. Big mouth, however, laughed and said it was "just a dare." The scoutmaster was furious. "You could have killed him!" He yelled. "It was just a joke and he was just too stupid to know any better." I'll never forget what he said next, "It's natural selection!"

(laughs)

Big mouth thought that was a good enough defense. "He's my son!" The scoutmaster yelled. "You could have gotten him hurt."

BEN

Wait, the scoutmaster is the other scout's dad?

CARTER

Plot twist!

STRANGER

Big mouth didn't know either. When he learned that fact, he said something he really shouldn't have.

DEAN

What did he say?

STRANGER

"That makes sense."

Dean and Carter smile and chuckle.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

Funny... I'm sure he thought so too. Then the scoutmaster took his shaking fist and struck big mouth so hard, he stumbled right off the cliff. There was a short scream and then silence.

(a beat)

(MORE)

STRANGER (CONT'D)

The rocks had finally gotten their name.

CHANCE

It was an accident.

STRANGER

Maybe, but the lying after wasn't. The scoutmaster refused to admit to what he did. They ruled out it being an accident pretty quick. Someone had tried to make the body look worse after the fall by smashing its head in with a big rock. They blamed the scoutmaster's son.

CHANCE

But he didn't do it!

STRANGER

I know, but when his son finally had the courage to tell the police that it was his father who had done it, they didn't take his word over the Scoutmaster's. He was the adult after all. Adults are better liars.

BEN

What happened to the son?

STRANGER

He went into Juvy as an innocent child, but he didn't come out as one. He went missing not too long after that.

CARTER

And the scoutmaster?

STRANGER

He kept his job, his freedom...HE kept everything.

CHANCE

That's not fair.

STRANGER

That's life kids. Bad people getting away with murder. No scarier story to tell than that.

A drawn out silence follows as the Stranger stares into the fire.

DEAN

The story's probably not even true.
There's no way a scoutmaster could
get away with killing a kid like
that.

STRANGER

We can make it true!

The boys are startled. The Stranger laughs.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

I was just kidding. You should all
see the look on your faces. My
story sure did scare you. It's
ok... it was suppose to.

The Stranger gets up and heads to Ned's, now his, tent.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

I'll see you all in the morning.
Sleep tight.

The kids are left alone at the campfire.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. TENT - NIGHT

The boys are all awake laying in their sleeping bags.

BEN

Hey, is anyone awake?

CHANCE

I am.

EVERETT

I'm still up.

CARTER

Yeah, I ain't sleeping with the
killer scout leader on the loose.

DEAN

Guys, shut up. I'm trying to sleep.

CARTER

Welcome to the club.

DEAN

He's not real. That story was made
up.

CARTER
How do you know?

DEAN
Because the mountain is called Red
Rock for the time they killed a
bunch of Indians there.

CHANCE
Native Americans.

DEAN
Whatever, the point is the story's
not true.

BEN
Then can you come with me while I
pee?

DEAN
What? No!

BEN
I thought you weren't scared?

DEAN
Doesn't mean I want to watch you
pee.

BEN
You don't have to watch. It's just
like... there's safety in numbers
out there.

Malcolm gets up.

MALCOLM
I'll go with you Ben.

BEN
Thanks Malcolm.

CARTER
Watch out for the piss bear.

EXT. CAMPSITE - NIGHT

Ben and Malcolm step out of the tents, but don't go far. The
campfire is still burning nearby.

Malcolm looks towards the Stranger's tent and sees it's open,
but it's too dark to see inside it. Ben starts to pee, but
seems to be having trouble getting his stream going.

He yawns and looks toward the campfire. His eyes widen and the sound of his stream strengthens at the sight of whatever he sees by the fire.

BEN

Ma-Malcolm.

MALCOLM

Yeah?

Malcolm turns his head to see what has Ben startled. There's a BLACK BEAR by the fire eating Chance's half eaten fish on a stick.

BEN

P-piss bear.

The bear notices them and stands up to get a better look at the boys.

Ben slowly backs away. The bear lifts its nose and sniffs the air. Ben sniffs his fingers.

BEN (CONT'D)

I think it smells the fish on us.

The bear starts moving toward the boys. Ben starts to move, but Malcolm stays frozen. He's frozen in fear.

We see the bear's massive shadow overtake Malcolm's as it stands over him.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. HOME - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Malcolm stands in the shadow of his father. MOM(40s) is lying on the ground behind Dad, having just been struck by him.

DAD

Mal, it's not what it looks like.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. CAMPSITE - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Back to Malcolm standing petrified in front of the bear.

BEN
(whispered)
What?? You've never seen what a
bear looks like? Come on.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

Everett notices the bear's shadow stretched across the
canvas.

EVERETT
Guys, I think there's a bear
outside our tent.

DEAN
It's probably just Ben's fat ass.

EVERETT
It doesn't look like it.

Dean sighs and gets up.

DEAN
They're probably just trying to
fuck with us.

He crawls over to the unzipped tent flap.

EXT. CAMPSITE - NIGHT

Malcolm gives Ben a panicked look. Ben holds out his hand and
Malcolm takes it. The boys slowly move toward the tent. The
bear cuts them off.

Dean pops his head out.

DEAN
Nice try fat ass-

Dean sees the bear and immediately zips up the tent flap.

BEN
That fucking dick.

Malcolm tugs on Ben's arm and points at the Stranger's tent.
Ben nods. The two start move that way. The bear sniffs at
them, but sees something in the darkness behind them. The
boys use the distraction to run to the Stranger's tent.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

Dean hides in his sleeping bag. Everett lifts his head up.

EVERETT
What was it?

Dean doesn't reply. Carter who is next to him, nudges him.

CARTER
Dean?

Everett and Carter then see the shadow of the bear and hide in their sleeping bag as well.

INT. STRANGER'S TENT - NIGHT

Ben zips up the tent flap. Malcolm looks around.

MALCOLM
H-he's not here.

BEN
What?

MALCOLM
The sleeping bag is empty.

BEN
Look around.

MALCOLM
He's not here Ben.

BEN
(angry whisper)
No, for a fucking weapon!
(a beat)
Sorry for yelling at you.

EXT. CAMPSITE - NIGHT

The bear's gaze follows something out in the darkness. It moves as if to track it. Then, it hears some commotion in the scout's tent.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

The bear shadow cast on the boys.

CARTER
P-piss bear is real.

DEAN
Shut the fuck up.

INT. STRANGER'S TENT - NIGHT

Ben and Malcolm are frantically searching the tent. Malcolm finds a deputy's badge covered in blood and the ripped out scout's guide page on berries, also covered in blood.

BEN
I found the axe.

Ben lifts up Ned's axe.

BEN (CONT'D)
Dang, it's heavy.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

The bear pokes its head against the tent. Chance almost screams, but Everett is quick to cover his mouth.

INT. STRANGER'S TENT - NIGHT

The boys hear Chance's stifled cry.

BEN
They need our help now.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

The snout of the bear is aggressively probing the tent as the boys inside cower in fear.

INT. STRANGER'S TENT - NIGHT

MALCOLM
We have an axe.

BEN
I don't know if I can kill a bear
with an axe.

MALCOLM
It's an axe.

BEN
It's not the axe that's the
problem, it's me.

MALCOLM
I'll do it then.

BEN
What?

MALCOLM
I can do it.

BEN
You sure?

MALCOLM
I've swung a bat at something big
before.

BEN
Well this is an axe Malcolm.

Desperate cries from other tent.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

The three boys try to muffle their cries as the bear slashes
at the tent. It rips open the tent flap and Dean panics.

DEAN
Fuck, help! Help us please! Help!

INT. STRANGER'S TENT - NIGHT

MALCOLM
We gotta do something!

Malcolm takes the axe from Ben's hands and leaves the
Stranger's tent.

EXT. CAMPSITE - NIGHT

Malcolm creeps toward the bear with the axe, which is shaking
in his arms. He's counting under his breath.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Malcolm creeping down his home's hallways with a bat shaking in his arms and counting. We hear his Dad screaming.

DAD (O.S.)
You think I'm fucking stupid! You
think I don't have two fucking
eyes!

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. CAMPSITE - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Malcolm is getting close enough to the back of the bear to swing. The bear is poking its head against the scout's tent, still trying to get in. Malcolm takes a deep breath and he steadies his hands. He's about to swing at the bear. That's when he notices there is a BLOOD STAIN on the axe.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. HOME - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

We see a blood stain on the bat Malcolm is holding with his Dad lying on the ground with blood coming out his head.

DAD
(stunned)
Malcolm...

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. CAMPSITE - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Malcolm returns to reality. His hesitation cost him his chance to swing. The bear turns its head and looks him dead in the eye. The bear doesn't look angry. It just looks curious. It stands up on its hind legs to get a better look at him.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

The boys see the bear's massive shadow cast over the boys in the tent. Suddenly, there are flashes of gunfire as the bear is shot. Its shadow drops.

EXT. CAMPSITE - NIGHT

Malcolm looks behind him to see the Stranger pointing his gun at the bear, a cigarette in his mouth. He takes a drag and looks down at Malcolm.

STRANGER
Go ahead and swing.

Malcolm looks stunned.

STRANGER (CONT'D)
I said swing dammit.

Malcolm swings the axe onto the dead bear's head. The axe sticks in its skull.

STRANGER (CONT'D)
You would've killed him...

The Stranger pulls the axe back out of the bear's skull and slings it over his shoulder.

STRANGER (CONT'D)
Next time, don't hesitate.

The Stranger takes one last drag before tossing his STILL LIT CIG out into the darkness.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

Everett lets go of Chance. Everett then goes to check out what happened.

CARTER
What are you doing? Are you insane!

EXT. CAMPSITE - NIGHT

Everett unzips the flap and pokes his head out. He smiles at the sight of the dead bear and the Stranger standing over it.

EVERETT
I knew it!

INT. TENT - NIGHT

The others get up to see.

DEAN
What the hell happened?

Everett looks back at them.

EVERETT
Ned Two killed the bear!

EXT. CAMPSITE - NIGHT

The Stranger puts down the axe and checks his ammo. He has only one bullet left in his gun.

STRANGER
(whispering to himself)
Shit, should have left the little
fucker swing.

CHANCE (O.S.)
Is everything safe out there?

STRANGER
It is now kiddos. It is now.

All the kids come out of their respective tents. They look stunned to see a dead bear.

CARTER
Holy shit!

EVERETT
Piss bear got fucked up by Ned Two!

Chance gets close to the bear's body.

CHANCE
That was justice for Ned One.

DEAN
Is that the bear that got Ned One?

STRANGER
Sure.

EVERETT
Get fucked piss bear!

Chance hugs the Stranger.

CHANCE
Thank you for saving us.

The Stranger pushes him off.

STRANGER

You should be thanking shy guy over there.

Everyone looks at Malcolm, who still looks stunned at what just happened.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

He was one that killed the bear with this axe. I just shot it after.

CHANCE

Malcolm killed the bear?

CARTER

There a bear killing badge?

EVERETT

There is now. Mal, you're the man!

DEAN

Should we like call someone?

STRANGER

The bear's dead. There's no need to call anybody. Real men solve problems on their own. Not scream for help.

He gives Dean a pointed look.

EVERETT

That's right! Mal's a real man!

CARTER

Mal IS the man.

They start chanting Mal's the man.

STRANGER

Tell me boys, you all wanna earn your skinning badge?

The kids cheer.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

Then after you boys want to know what bear tastes like?

CHANCE

Is bear even edible?

STRANGER

Anything with meat can be eaten.

CHANCE

Well, I am hungry.

DEAN

What happened to being a vegetarian?

CHANCE

The bear tried to eat me first, so I think it's only fair.

EVERETT

I want first cut!

EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

Carter, Everett, and Chance are skinning the bear. Dean is on his own sulking while Malcolm and Ben look on.

Everett rips out the Bear's eyes. He hold them over his own.

EVERETT

I see you.

CARTER

Man, that's just nasty.

Everett giggles and continues to mutilate the dead bear, drenching himself in blood in the process. Malcolm looks on with Ben.

MALCOLM

I didn't kill that bear.

BEN

I would just take the credit if I were you. I mean, everyone thinks you're awesome and, like, you kind of are. You approached a bear with an axe to defend the others. That's bravery dude.

They watch the others begin to cook the bear meat.

MALCOLM

There was a deputy's badge in Ned Two's tent.

BEN

A what?

MALCOLM

A deputy's badge. It had blood on it too. So did Ned's axe even before I swung it.

Ben shrugs.

BEN

Maybe he's a deputy. He never said he worked for the Boy Scouts and all that blood had to have belonged to Ned One. He got mauled by a bear for crying out loud.

MALCOLM

That doesn't explain how the blood got on the axe. Ned left the campsite without it.

BEN

Ned Two was covered in his blood when he found us. Maybe he just got some on it when we were packing up.

MALCOLM

The blood was only on the bladed end Ben.

Ben looks unsure of what to make of this.

BEN

Hmm, that is peculiar.

Chance walks up to them.

CHANCE

Hey Ben, I cut off a piece of a bear to eat that's probably too big for me. Do you want to share it?

BEN

Sure, I'll share some bear with ya Chance.

Ben gets up. Malcolm look over at the Stranger who is entranced by the fire.

EVERETT (O.S.)

Hey Mal?

Malcolm looks over suddenly at a blood drenched Everett.

EVERETT (CONT'D)
You sure you don't want a piece of
your own kill?

MALCOLM
I'm not hungry, thanks.

EVERETT
If you say so, but I insist you
take this.

Everett hands him one of the bear's claws.

EVERETT (CONT'D)
Better than any merit badge, that's
for sure.

Malcolm takes the claw and looks it over. It's sharp and
bloody.

MALCOLM
Thanks Everett.

Malcolm puts the claw in his pocket and looks over at the
Stranger.

Everett notices Malcolm staring at the Stranger. Everett gets
close to Malcolm.

EVERETT
He's the coolest isn't he?

MALCOLM
Yeah... he's cool.

EVERETT
Way better than Ned One. I'm glad
he got mauled.

Malcolm looks alarmed by Everett's statement.

EVERETT (CONT'D)
Ned Two is a real man.

Everett walks back to the campfire. Malcolm looks back over
at the Stranger who is staring right back at him.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMPFIRE - DAWN

We see the bear's sloppily skinned pelt lying on the ground
like a rug that Dean, Ben, and Chance are all sleeping on.

The other boys are eating their bear meat by the campfire except for Malcolm. He sits and stares at the sleeping Stranger. The faint but familiar sound of helicopter rotors is heard approaching.

CARTER

Man, there sure are a lot of
helicopters out here.

The boys see a spotlight shining off in the distance.

CARTER (CONT'D)

What do you think they're looking
for?

The Stranger awakens and spring to life.

STRANGER

We gotta go! Everyone up! We gotta
move!

DEAN

(sleepy)
It's just another helicopter-

The Stranger pulls the sleeping bag right out from under Dean.

STRANGER

I'm not fucking around. Let's go!

The kids all frantically gather their things.

CHANCE

Where are we going?

STRANGER

It's time for another game of rock
hopping. Who's ready?

DEAN

Rock hopping? Right now? Fuck you!

The Stranger strikes Dean hard.

STRANGER

Don't be a Big Mouth. We know what
happens to Big Mouths!

Dean looks at the others, pleading for help.

DEAN

Guys, he just-

EVERETT

You were asking for it Big Mouth.

The kids all go back to gathering their things.

STRANGER

Let's go, let's go-

CUT TO:

EXT. STREAM - DAWN

Stranger is forcing these kids to hastily hop from slick rock to slick rock. It's still dark as the canopy covers most the light cracking through from the sunrise

STRANGER

Let's go! Come on, you boys don't want to get probed now do ya?

Ben falls hard on to a sharp rock, hitting his knee against it.

BEN

Ahh fuck, my knee!

CHANCE

Ben, are you ok?

BEN

My knee!

STRANGER

Don't be a cry baby Cannonball. Get up!

BEN

I-I don't think I can.

The Stranger grabs Ben and pulls him to his feet.

STRANGER

Yes you can!

We hear Ben's knee crutch. He let's a cry of pain so loud it echoes across the water.

CHANCE

Ben!

STRANGER

God dammit!

The Stranger picks up Ben as the helicopter spotlight approaches.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

Let's go!

The boys hurriedly follow except for Malcolm. He looks up at the helicopter, as if to wait for it. He feels a tug on his arm. It's Chance.

CHANCE

Malcolm, come on!

MALCOLM

That's not a UFO.

CHANCE

We all know it's pretend. It's for the game.

MALCOLM

It's not a game Chance. Not to him.

The helicopter heads in a different direction.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

I think we're in danger.

CHANCE

Malcolm, let's go before he gets mad.

(tears in his eyes)

Please...

Malcolm relents and the two follow after the others.

EXT. STREAM - MORNING

The boys follow the Stranger as he carries Ben.

CARTER

Ned Two, can we slow down?

STRANGER

No slowing down when we got a UFO on our tail Clitoris.

BEN

Can stop pretending? My leg is really messed up.

STRANGER

We'll stop once we're safe.

MALCOLM

Safe from a UFO or a search
helicopter?

STRANGER

What makes you say it's a search
helicopter?

MALCOLM

What makes you say it was a UFO?

STRANGER

Because I asked my friend who works
as fire rescue pilot to fly around
like one. It was all made up.

CARTER

What?

The Stranger stops and sets down Ben before turning around to
face the others.

STRANGER

I'm sorry about Ned One. This trip
would have gone a lot smoother if
he had been the man to lead you
boys, not me.

EVERETT

Don't say that Ned Two. You're way
better than Old Ned. He got mauled
by a bear he sucked so much.

STRANGER

You know that's true but... I'm not
cut out for this. I know that.

(tearing up)

It's just... when I was your guy's
age, I went on a camping trip just
like this one and it didn't go the
way it was supposed to and that
hurt.

(pauses)

It really fucking hurt!

(gulps)

I don't want you boys to hurt they
way I did. I want you to have fun
and The UFO... I thought it be a
fun distraction from the bear
mauling but... it wasn't - it's
not. It was dumb. It was stupid. It
was really fucking stupid!

(MORE)

STRANGER (CONT'D)

And now one of you is hurt and
can't go on, so we might have to
leave him behind.

Ben shakily gets to his feet.

BEN

Wait what, it's not that bad. I
mean, I can still kind of go on.
I'll just be limping a bit I guess.
Might need someone to lean on, but
I think I got plenty of-

All but Malcolm and Chance back away from Ben

BEN (CONT'D)

Well I gotta couple friends who can
help me. That should be enough.

STRANGER

You sure?

BEN

Yeah.

STRANGER

Good, because you see that cliff up
ahead.

The Stranger points to a high up cliff distantly ahead of
them.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

You're jumping off that.

The Stranger turns around and keeps going.

CHANCE

I don't think he should be jumping
off anything-

STRANGER

If you don't jump, you get left
behind.

The Stranger continues on. Everett eagerly follows and the
other boys nervously do so as well.

EXT. CLIFFSIDE - DAY

The kids reach the cliff that the Stranger picked, but the
water beneath it is too shallow.

BEN

I can't jump into this. Life isn't Minecraft dude. This is not enough water to break my fall. You gotta tell him guys... you gotta tell him this is too dangerous.

CARTER

I don't think we can jump off this cliff Ned Two.

STRANGER

Not with that attitude.

DEAN

The water's too shallow.

STRANGER

Not if you catch him.

CARTER

Catch him! Have you seen him?

BEN

Yeah I'm fat as fuck! They can't catch me.

STRANGER

They can catch you Cannonball.

BEN

I don't think so-

STRANGER

Stop using your own doubt against them!

BEN

I'm not, I just - I just think this is too dangerous.

STRANGER

Game gear, you'll jump to prove these boys wrong for me, will ya?

EVERETT

Yes sir.

Everett starts to head up to the top of the cliff.

STRANGER

Game gear, stop! You were just meant to prove a point. Cannonball, get your fat ass up there.

BEN

But-

STRANGER

Now!

Ben slowly limps his way up to the cliff face.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

Everyone bunch up and be ready. His
life is in your hands.

The boys gather.

CARTER

This a crazy.

CHANCE

If we don't catch him, he's-

MALCOLM

Dead. We need to catch him.

Malcolm looks at the others.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

We NEED to catch him.

The others nod, though most look unsure they can do it.

STRANGER

Your landing pad is ready
Cannonball. Jump!

Ben hesitates.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

Don't make me come up there and
push you.

Ben gulps and takes a deep breath. He looks down to make sure
he's aiming right and jumps.

CHANCE

Here he comes!

The boys catch him, but Ben lands on Dean hard and hurts him.

DEAN

Motherfucker!

The boys help Ben up off of Dean.

CARTER
He's alive!

MALCOLM
You ok?

BEN
(in pain)
I think it's a bit more than
sprained now.

DEAN
Lay off the fucking Oreos fatass!

STRANGER
There you go boys. Now you're real
men.

DEAN
You're a fucking crazy person is
what you are.

STRANGER
Don't be a Big Mouth.

DEAN
Don't be fucking crazy, you fucking
crazy person.

The Stranger clenches his fist, which starts to shake.

STRANGER
All right, I think I know who's
next.

DEAN
I'm not jumping!

STRANGER
It's the jumping game. You have to
jump when I tell you to.

DEAN
How about we play the go fuck your
self game. You go fuck yourself
when I tell you to.

The Stranger's fist shaking increases in intensity.

STRANGER
Don't-

DEAN
Go fuck yourself!

The Stranger grabs Dean and starts to aggressively carry him up the cliff.

DEAN (CONT'D)

Let go of me! Let go! Heeeeelp!
Someone help!

STRANGER

Bunch up boys. He's coming down next.

CARTER

Holy shit.

EVERETT

(chuckles)
He was asking for it.

CHANCE

(whispered)
What do we do?

MALCOLM

We get ready to catch him.

The others look stunned at the sight of the kicking and screaming Dean in the arms of the Stranger who looks stone faced and solemn as he ascends the cliff.

DEAN

Help! Somebody call for help!

MALCOLM

Guys!

They all look at Malcolm.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

We catch him no matter what.

Ben nods.

BEN

(pained)
No matter what.

They all gather and get ready.

EXT. CLIFF TOP - DAY

The Stranger reaches the cliff with a kicking and screaming Dean in his arms.

DEAN

You're a fucking lunatic! I'll tell my parents. I'll tell the scoutmaster! I'll tell them you hit me! I'll tell them everything.

STRANGER

Is that so?

DEAN

Yeah, that's fucking so.

STRANGER

You threatening me Big Mouth?

DEAN

You bet motherfucker! You're in deep shit for what you've done to me!

The Stranger looks over at a nearby rock. He smiles. Dean notices and his demeanor shifts.

EXT. CLIFFSIDE - DAY

Dean's raving suddenly stops. The boys all anxiously await his jump. Dean does not jump. He is instead thrown.

Dean's body limply falls away from the boys.

MALCOLM

Spread out... Spread out!

Malcolm catches him, but the force of Dean falling knocks Malcolm into the water.

Malcolm emerges from the water with a panicked gasp. He turns his head to see Dean's head has been CAVED IN. Malcolm freezes at the gruesome sight.

CHANCE

Is he ok?

Chance runs up, but upon seeing Dean's dead body, he covers his mouth and starts to cry.

CARTER

What happened-

Upon seeing Dean everyone goes into a panic.

BEN

He's dead. Oh my God, he's dead!

CARTER

We should of caught him. We could
of caught him!

MALCOLM

I did catch him.

EVERETT

He wasn't a real man.

The kids all give Everett a look. Malcolm backs away and gets the bear claw out of his pocket. He looks over to see the Stranger running down from the cliff to the boys.

STRANGER

Boys! Boys!

The Stranger sees them gathered around the dead body.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

No... No!

He runs up and pushes the boys out of the way. One of which is Ben. The Stranger cradles Dean in his arms.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

Wake up kid. Wake up!

Malcolm puts his bear claw to the Stranger's throat. The Stranger immediately ceases his crying.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

MALCOLM

Someone grab his gun. It's in his
back right pocket.

STRANGER

Shy guy, you're making a big
mistake.

MALCOLM

No I'm not. You killed Ned and took
his place. He's one of the escaped
convicts the cops are after. That
helicopter he makes us run from at
night is them searching for him. I
even found a deputy's badge covered
in blood among his things. He's not
to be trusted.

STRANGER

I have a deputy's badge, because I am a deputy boys. Now please, stop with this nonsense. Your friend - your fellow scout - needs your help right now!

MALCOLM

He's dead. You killed him!

STRANGER

He's not dead... not yet.

MALCOLM

Yes he is! He was dead before he even hit the water. You killed him!

The Stranger's fist begins to shake.

STRANGER

It was an accident boys.

MALCOLM

Accidents don't happen on purpose. You killed him and threw him off that cliff!

STRANGER

No, I didn't.

MALCOLM

Yes you did!

STRANGER

(stern)

No, I didn't kill him.

MALCOLM

Someone get the gun from him!
Someone, just grab it, please!

Everett gets the gun from his pocket. He pauses and looks at it for a moment before pointing it at Malcolm.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

Everett why?

The Stranger overpowers Malcolm. The Stranger takes the bear claw from Malcolm and throws it away. It then looks like they're fighting each other.

Chance, Carter, and Ben are screaming while Everett has the gun pointed at them to keep them from interfering.

EVERETT

Stay back! Let em settle it like men.

STRANGER

Raaaaahhhhh!

The Stranger is playfully pretending to beat up Malcolm.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

I'm a monster! I'm a big bad monster who wants to eat you all! Raaahhhhh!

He stops and looks at the others.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

Or, I'm human... and I made a mistake. I did not kill Big Mouth. Big Mouth killed himself by not listening to me. Is it my fault that he was so disobedient? That he was so mean? That boy was just mean. Mean to everyone. Mean to me, mean to Clitoris, mean to Chance, mean to Cannonball, mean to Game Gear, and even to you shy guy! (pauses)

He thought being mean is what made him strong. Now look at him.

The Stranger then gets up and pushes Dean's body deeper into the stream to be carried off by the current.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

His death will not stop us from reaching Red Rock Mountain. Nothing will. We are going to march without stopping straight to it. You all understand?

The boys stare at him in stunned silence.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

I said you all understand!

EVERETT

We understand.

STRANGER

Good, then let's go.

Chance goes to help Malcolm up.

STRANGER (CONT'D)
No...He isn't coming with us. He's
on his own.

Chance and Ben give Malcolm a pained look.

STRANGER (CONT'D)
Let's go or you'll be left behind
with him.

Malcolm gets up on his own and nods at the others to go ahead. He watches them march away as we pan out on a shot of him standing in the middle of the stream, watching the others leave him behind.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Malcolm counts under his breath as he wanders the woods aimlessly looking for help.

MALCOLM
1-2-3-4-

Malcolm is getting lost, but keeps on going.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)
5-6-7-8-

The trees are becoming disorienting as he tries to find a way out of the thicket.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)
9-10-11-12-

Malcolm's counting is slowing down, but not his breathing. Malcolm leans against a tree as he has a panic attack.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)
Thirteen...four-

He sinks to the forest floor as the fear fully sets in. Malcolm starts to cry.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)
(crying)
Help - I need help! Help!
pleeeeeease!

Malcolm looks up and the trees are spinning.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)

I just want help! I need help!
Help! Please, help me! Anyone, help
me!

As Malcolm cries and the drumming in his head quiets down, he hears a rumbling nearby. He catches his breath and heads in its direction.

EXT. CLEARING - DAY

Malcolm walks out to a wide open clearing. Far on the other side of him is a raging wild fire. Malcolm stares at it in astonishment.

MALCOLM

Fuck.

EXT. MT TRAIL - DAY

Ben is looking at the huge plume of smoke rising into the sky. Chance is helping him walk.

BEN

You think that's a forest fire? It
looks a bit too thick to be from a
campfire.

CHANCE

I-I don't know.

There's a long silence shared between the two boys.

BEN

Chance, are you ok?

CHANCE

I... I don't know.

BEN

Me neither.

The boys look ahead at the Stranger who is quietly leading the pack. Everett is right behind him and then there's Carter walking in the middle.

BEN (CONT'D)

(whispered)

When we get to Red Rock, we tell
them everything.

CHANCE
Will they believe us?

BEN
Of course they will.

CHANCE
Even if he's a deputy?

Everett looks back at them.

BEN
He's not a deputy. I think Malcolm
was right about Ned Two.

CHANCE
We're in serious danger then.

BEN
Dean's dead. Malcolm was left
behind. Of course we're in danger.
But, as long as we play along for
now, we should be ok.

STRANGER
You two trying to be left behind.
Hurry it up!

The two quicken their pace to catch up to the others. The Stranger looks up a sheer, rocky path that isn't meant for hiking anymore. He turns around to face the entire group.

STRANGER (CONT'D)
Up ahead is a short cut. If we take
it, we'll cut an hour off our hike
up to Red Rock. I will see you at
the top right behind me, or I won't
see you at all. Good luck.

The Stranger begins his rough ascent up. Chance and Ben look unsure, but forge on ahead. Everett steps on a rock and it comes loose, it tumbles downward and nearly nails Chance and Ben.

EVERETT
(chuckles)
Watch out below!

Chance and Ben recover from the close call and try their best to keep up with the others as the hike gradually turns to a rocky climb. We pan out towards the smoke on the horizon.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST - DAY

We see a puddle reflecting the smoke. Malcolm steps in it as he runs along. He stops to catch his breath, but notices a trail of footprints similar to his own. He checks his shoe and sees that it's the same type. They're scout tracks. He follows them in hopes of maybe finding the troop who made them.

EXT. FOREST TRAIL - DAY

Malcolm looks exhausted. He comes to a tree and leans against it as he tries to catch his breath.

NEIL(O.S.)
You ok kid?

Malcolm looks up to see a hand being extended to him. It's Neil and his group of scouts.

MALCOLM
Help... we need help.

Malcolm collapses.

EXT. MT TRAIL MID - DUSK

Ben is struggling up the mountain. Chance is doing his best to help him. The other three have reached the top of by now.

STRANGER
If you don't get his fat ass up
here in the next 30 seconds, I will
leave you both behind!

Carter stares off at the wild fire stretching across the horizon.

CARTER
If we help them now, they'll get up
here faster than on their own.

EVERETT
We can also leave them behind like
you said we would Ned Two.

Carter looks disgusted at Everett.

STRANGER
The only reason I haven't is
because I was feeling nice.

The Stranger picks up a rock.

STRANGER (CONT'D)
I'm not feeling nice anymore.

The Stranger throws a rock down at the two boys below. This causes other rocks to fall down around them. Everett joins him while Carter looks on in terror.

EXT. RED ROCK - NIGHT

Malcolm wakes up in Neil's arms. He is immediately concerned.

MALCOLM
Wh-where am I?

NEIL
Hey kid, you'll be ok. You're safe now.

Malcolm looks and sees a troop of boy scouts on the move.

MALCOLM
The others, they're not safe.

NEIL
We know about the fire. We're gathering at Red Rock to be evacuated. Scoutmaster Ford is already there and got his and the other groups out.

MALCOLM
He left.

NEIL
No, he is still there with the police. Nobody is leaving until we get every single scout out of here.

MALCOLM
My friends in my troop aren't safe.

NEIL
Where are they? I knew putting that kid in charge of you all was a bad idea. We haven't been able to contact him for awhile.

MALCOLM
He's dead.

NEIL

What?

MALCOLM

One of the escaped convicts. He killed him. He killed Ned. He killed a deputy too. He even killed one of us.

NEIL

Wait, you're saying an escaped convict is out here too?

MALCOLM

He has the others. If we don't get them help, he'll kill them all too.

NEIL

Ok, ok, ok, calm down. We'll get them help. I need to make a call. Can you walk on your own?

Malcolm nods. Neil sets him down and gets a walkie talkie out.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Ford, one of Ned's scouts that I found, he woke up and... it might be worse than we thought-

He walks off. Malcolm shakes as he walks.

SCOUT

You scared?

Malcolm nods.

SCOUT (CONT'D)

It's ok. I am too. A wild fire can be scary, but I know they'll protect us. They know what they're doing.

Malcolm stares at Neil who has his back turned .

NEIL

You're telling me you don't believe him?

FORD (V.O.)

I'm telling you to get the kid to me and I'll talk to him.

NEIL

I think he's telling the truth.

FORD (V.O.)

I'm sure he thinks he's telling the truth. He's a kid Neil. Kids can be wrong. We have bigger, more urgent problems right now. Focus on getting your scouts to Red Rock yesterday. That's all that matters right now.

EXT. RED ROCK - NIGHT

Ford turns to face a cop.

FORD

He's out there and he's got a few of our kids as hostages.

SHERIFF

One of the search helicopters was tracking a group near the east side of the mountain. That must be them.

He looks over at the group of various state and federal Law enforcement before him.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)

All right, we have a lead on the suspect. Let's get moving. Time is of the essence with this wildfire.

They roll out.

EXT. MT TRAIL MID - DUSK

The smoke chokes the boys as they slowly ascend up the mountain side.

BEN

(coughing)

I can't breathe. I can't see!

CHANCE

Does it matter? There's only one way to go-

A rock nearly hits them.

CHANCE (CONT'D)

Up...

Chance looks up to see the Stranger and Everett gleefully throwing rocks down at them.

EXT. RED ROCK - DUSK

Neil and his troop arrive with Malcolm in toe. Ford and a two other scout leaders are waiting. There's only two deputies left among them.

FORD

Oh thank god. You sure took your sweet time.

NEIL

I tried to get them here as fast as I could.

FORD

I'm sure, now the sun's setting and a forest fire is coming right for us. Where's the kid?

NEIL

He's right here.

Neil steps aside and points to Malcolm. Ford nods at the deputy to come over.

FORD

Malcolm, it's been a rough couple of days for you, I'm sure.

MALCOLM

I hope you brought more than two deputies for him.

DEPUTY

Son, we are aware of the dangerous man posing as your scout leader. I assure you, the sheriff, the other deputies, and even agents from the FBI, are out there searching for him and your friends as we speak. He will not get away with what he's done.

MALCOLM

He's not trying to get away. He's coming right for Red Rock.

EXT. MT. TRAIL MID - NIGHT

The cops cough and wheeze as they shakily descend the rocky mountain with their flashlights.

EXT. MT TRAIL TOP - NIGHT

Everett nudges the Stranger and points to the cops who are unaware of them. The Stranger smiles and looks over at a large nearby boulder.

STRANGER

You both better help me with this
or you're going down with it.

Everett does not hesitate to help, while Carter apprehensively joins them in pushing the boulder.

EXT. MT TRAIL MID - NIGHT

The cops stumble around the rocky trail now covered in smoke.

SHERIFF

Jesus Christ! I can't see shit!

One of the agent's flashlights lands on Chance who is desperately trying to get the officer's attention while lying on the rocks.

DEPUTY

Sheriff! I see one of the kids down
there!

The Deputies rush ahead. The agents try to slow a few of them down.

AGENT 1

Hold up, we don't have eyes on the
suspect. He's supposed to be with
them.

The agent looks around as the deputies reach Chance and the others. Chance weakly points to Ben.

CHANCE

(croaking)
Help him...

One of agents gives oxygen to the boys.

AGENT 2

Do you know where the bad man is?

Chance points up the mountain.

CHANCE
(couching)
Where else could he be?

The agent, looking for the Stranger, looks upward as he feels something.

AGENT 1
You feel that?

The Sheriff and the agent look up to see a massive rock slide coming down on them. The sheriff grabs his radio.

SHERIFF
Dispatch!

Before he can even finish, a boulder crushes him. The other deputies and agents are all crushed and killed by the avalanche that ensues. We see the shadowy silhouettes of the Stranger and Everett looking down at what they caused.

EXT. MT TRAIL TOP - NIGHT

Carter looks terrified at what he did. Everett looks proud.

CARTER
No! Why did we do that?

The Stranger pushes Carter down the mountain.

STRANGER
It was just a joke. You were just
too stupid to know any better.

He laughs and so does Everett. The two set off toward Red Rock.

EXT. MT TRAIL MID - NIGHT

Carter slowly gets up and dusts himself off. He finds Ben and Chance alive under some rocks and dead bodies.

CHANCE
(crying)
There's no use. We're fucked.
Absolutely fucked!

Carter puts his hand out.

CARTER
There's still a chance.

Chance nods and Carter helps him to his feet. They grab Ben and continue the climb.

Ext. RED ROCK - Night

Malcolm and the other scouts anxiously wait for the evac chopper.

FORD
What do you mean there's not enough
choppers!

DEPUTY 1
A manhunt and a wild fire demand
both, so we're eating into each
other's resources out here.

FORD
I think more than a dozen innocent
kids is more important than one
escaped convict.

DEPUTY 2
He's killed cops. More than all the
others combined.

FORD
He's killed a kid now too.

DEPUTY
And he could kill more if we don't
stop him.

FORD
He's coming here. The kid who got
away said it himself.

MALCOLM
I didn't get away.

The adults turn to face him.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)
He let me go.

The adults go back to ignoring him.

DEPUTY
We can't know he's coming right
here for certain.

FORD
It's where we're evacuating.

DEPUTY
He doesn't know that.

MALCOLM
He told us a story about how Red Rock got its name. Is it true that a scout leader killed a boy scout here and blamed it on his son.

Ford becomes visibly uncomfortable.

FORD
That's not how Red Rock got its name and that's not what happened.

MALCOLM
What did happen?

FORD
It's not something you need to worry about.

MALCOLM
What really happened at Red Rock!

One of the deputy's radio buzzes. The adults go back to ignoring him.

DEPUTY 1
(into radio)
Wait, you lost contact with all of them.

The two Deputies walks off.

MALCOLM
Don't ignore me!

Ford starts to walk away.

MALCOLM (CONT'D)
It was you, wasn't it?

Ford stops and turns to face Malcolm. His fist begins to shake. Malcolm notices. Before either can react, a child's scream is heard. Everyone looks to see Everett and the Stranger coming up the trail.

DEPUTY
Dispatch, we have eyes on!

EVERETT
Help! Help me, please!

DEPUTY 2
He has a hostage.

EVERETT
He wants to kill us all!

FORD
Jesus Christ...

Ford recognizes the Stranger, even through the smokey haze.

STRANGER
Hey Dad!

FORD
Christopher?

DEPUTY
Sheriff, come in...

STRANGER
He's not gonna come in.

The deputies look nervous.

STRANGER (CONT'D)
Fire's getting close fellas. Let's make this quick.

EVERETT
Pleeease, help me pleeeeeease.

DEPUTY
You'll be all right son.

MALCOLM
The kid isn't a hostage. He's his friend!

STRANGER
Oops.

The Stranger lets go of Everett and he runs to one deputy, while the Stranger shoots the other.

EVERETT
Save me!

The nervous deputy panics and shoots Everett. They all look stunned at the Deputy's split second decision to shoot the seemingly innocent child, the Deputy most of all.

DEPUTY 1
(into radio)
Di-dispatch.

FORD
W-what the fuck is wrong with you!

Ford in a fury grabs a rock and bashes the deputy's head in. This distracts the other deputy, who the Stranger shoots with his last bullet. Neil freezes in panic.

FORD (CONT'D)
What have I done?

STRANGER
Thanks for the help Dad.

The Stranger strikes Ford with an axe. He falls the ground with the axe still in his stomach.

STRANGER (CONT'D)
Even though you started it... Kind
of.

The Stranger laughs to himself and then leans down to whisper into his father's ear. The Stranger makes sure to rest his full weight on the axe's hilt.

STRANGER (CONT'D)
But don't you worry Dad. I'll
always be here to finish your
messes.

The Stranger grabs a rock and smashes Ford's face in. The Stranger notices Malcolm. He gets up from his father's corpse and over to the deputies to grab their guns. He approaches Everett, who is bleeding out on the ground.

STRANGER (CONT'D)
Sorry Game Gear.

Everett reaches his hand out.

STRANGER (CONT'D)
That's game over.

The Stranger finishes him off with a bullet to the head before tossing the guns off the ledge. He then turns his attention over at the others.

NEIL
Please don't kill me! Please, I
have done nothing to you, please!

STRANGER

That's true, you have done nothing to me. I don't even know who you are? You are literally nothing to me.

The Stranger points at the cliff nearby.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

You're going to jump that cliff for me.

NEIL

I-I-I-

STRANGER

Don't make me ask again.

Neil hesitantly moves towards the cliff.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

Go!

Neil half jumps, half stumbles off the cliff. The Stranger approaches the cliff and looks down and smiles.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

All right kids, let's play a game. It's called the jumping game. I tell you to jump off something and you do it. Everyone over to this cliff right the fuck now, because you're all jumping off it!

SCOUT

W-we can't jump off that.

STRANGER

Yes you can and yes you will.

SCOUT 2

It doesn't look safe.

STRANGER

You're right, it isn't.

The scouts all stare at him in terror.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

Don't make me repeat myself.
Everyone to this fucking cliff now!

The scouts scream and whimper, but obey him all the same. All the scouts are lined up at the cliff except for Malcolm.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

Now jump.

The scouts hesitate.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

Jump!

The scouts all jump leaving Malcolm and the Stranger alone.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

Shy guy, get over here.

Malcolm shakes his head no. The Stranger turns to face him.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

You think you're tough. You're not.
Get over here.

MALCOLM

No, I won't.

STRANGER

Shy guy-

MALCOLM

The name is Malcolm and I fucking
won't!

The Stranger steps forward. Malcolm steps back.

STRANGER

Where are you gonna go Malcolm?
There's no where to run to.

MALCOLM

I don't care.

STRANGER

Malcolm, get the fuck over here!

Stranger steps forward. Malcolm steps back. The Stranger
fists begins to shake. Malcolm with tears streaming down his
face shakes his head defiantly.

MALCOLM

No.

STRANGER

Malcolm, do as I fucking say!

The Stranger lunges for him and Malcolm throws the bloodied
rock at his head as he charges forward.

Malcolm goes to pull the axe out from Ford, but can't get it out. The Stranger pulls it out for him and pushes Malcolm to the ground.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

You know Malcolm, you're a lot like
me when I was your age.

Malcolm crawls away from the Stranger whose fist begins to shake.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

Let me do you a favor I wish
someone had done me.

Malcolm's closes his eyes and counts as he prepares for what's coming his way.

SUDDENLY, Carter comes charging in and tackles the Stranger. The Stranger easily picks Carter up and throws him off the cliff. Chance and a still unconscious Ben stand with Malcolm as the Stranger turns to face them down. His fist is CLENCHED and SHAKING. Malcolm notices and readies himself.

As the Stranger lunges forward, Malcolm pulls the axe free and swings it at him. Malcolm opens his eyes to see he buried the axe in the Stranger's head. Malcolm didn't hesitate. The Stranger died with a smile on his face. Malcolm lets go of the axe and looks around at the forest fire and then at the ledge.

CHANCE

Malcolm, you ok?

Malcolm looks over the ledge.

MALCOLM

There's no where else to go.

CHANCE

A chopper will come.

MALCOLM

We'll be dead before it does. We
have to jump.

Chance looks unsure.

CHANCE

I- I don't know if I can.

MALCOLM

It's either we jump or we burn.

Malcolm puts his hand out for Chance. They grab Ben together and Malcolm counts in his head before jumping.

BEN
(waking up to see cliff)
Oh fuck, of fuck!
(looks behind him)
What did I wake up to! What did I
wake up to-

They all jump.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Malcolm wakes up in a hospital bed. There's a scoutmaster asleep next to him.

MALCOLM
(raspy)
Hello? Hello?

The cop wakes up.

COP
You're finally awake. Thank God
you're finally awake. You were
giving us quite a scare.

MALCOLM
Where am I?

SCOUTMASTER
You're in the hospital. You're safe
now. You're friends are too. You
guys are some brave kids. That jump
could have been fatal, but we all
know you had no choice.

MALCOLM
T-the man, he was Scoutmaster
Ford's son.

SCOUTMASTER
Yes, we are aware. He was targeting
his father, but a man that evil, a
man that broken, he just wanted to
hurt as many as he could. He was
like that since he was as young as
you are now. Thanks to you Malcolm,
he won't hurt anyone ever again.
(MORE)

SCOUTMASTER (CONT'D)

We're all very proud of you for what you did.

MALCOLM

Where's my mom?

The scoutmaster pauses. He was dreading this question.

SCOUTMASTER

You're mom... Oh Malcolm, I have some real bad news about your mother. Your father after he abandoned you at the community center, went to the home of your mother's uhh boyfriend.

MALCOLM

Alec?

SCOUTMASTER

Yes, she was there with him when your father showed up.

(pauses)

He killed them both and then himself Malcolm.

A long pause follows.

MALCOLM

What?

Malcolm looks beyond distraught. Tears are in his eyes and yet he has no strength to cry.

SCOUTMASTER

Son, you have faced more than any child I have met and coming out this ordeal only to be meant with another...

He seems lost of words.

SCOUTMASTER (CONT'D)

You're strength will not go unrecognized Malcolm. Nor your friends. What you've been through - What you're going through now - it takes courage that few posses, but son - you posses it. That's why-

INT. CEREMONY HALL - DAY

We see Malcolm, Ben, Chance, and Carter, all dressed in formal wear over their bandages and casts. They stand along side the other scouts in a line as a scoutmaster awards them each a merit badge.

SCOUTMASTER(V.O.)

We're giving you this early. The merit badge of courage. We made it just for you, your friends, and the brave man who did his best to protect you all.

We see Neil. He is somehow the least roughed up looking of all of them. He is also the only one crying at the ceremony.

SCOUTMASTER (V.O.)

You earned it son. You all did.

The boys grab and hold each others hands. They raise them in the air as the crowd cheers.

We zoom in on Malcolm's fist and see that it is CLENCHED and SHAKING.

THE END

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