

PINNED

Written by

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FADE IN

A pair of eye's fill the screen.

Off screen a GUN SHOT fires. The eyes strain.

We pull back slowly to reveal:

The eyes belong to a young boy hauling ass, rounding the bases of an old patchy baseball diamond.

SOUND LEVEL MUTED: Fans cheer as he ramps up his effort.

SUPER: 1970

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)

Inside each of us is a yearning. A striving. Thoreau referred to it as "Quiet desperation."

Young competitors stand by eyeballing the scene under the shadow of their fathers' watchful and attentive eyes.

The Dad's have one eye on the competition, and the other sizing up the competitors yet to compete.

MAN'S VOICE (V.O. CONT'D)

We are born with it. When we are young, it seems to be the rocket fuel that propels us to victories...

EXT. BASEBALL DIAMOND - MORNING

Our boy peels around third and strides his way toward home plate. The crowd is ecstatic!

THE CROWD

(Various cat calls from everyone)

Come on Ben run! Run!

The crowd begins stomping their feet on the bleachers and chanting in unison.

THE CROWD

Go Ben Go! Go Ben go! Go Ben go!

Ben whiffs over home plate.

UMPIRE

Time!

MAN'S VOICE (V.O. CONT'D)

It's a place deep within us that relentlessly spurs us on. It seems like an empty space. Something's missing.

Ben brakes himself to a stop with his hands on the backstop and gasps for air. Several boys come over to congratulate him.

MAN'S VOICE (V.O. CONT'D)

We try to fill it in many ways, nice things, a big house, a new car, a boat, a relationship, work, play, sports, stuff.

The boys continue to mingle and congratulate Ben as we scan the various faces and expressions of the crowd sitting in the bleachers.

MAN'S VOICE (V.O. CONT'D)

But that space is not empty... it's occupied.

(LONG PAUSE)

Occupied by fear.

We continue to scan the faces in the crowd.

Fear of one another, fear of the unknown, fear of death, fear of life, fear of failure, fear of success.

Whatever we strive to fill it with last's but a moment. Much like the ebb and flow of the tides, the satisfaction drains out as quickly and imperceptibly as it came. Fear remains.

THE CROWD

(various voices again)

Way to go Ben! What's his time?

The UMPIRE relays the time to an OLD MAN sitting at an even older foldout card table. He writes the time down.

The Umpire turns to the crowd in the stands to relay the time.

THE CROWD  
(various voices)  
Wow! No chance! That's movin'! Way  
to go Benny!

MAN'S VOICE (V.O. CONT'D)  
The striving never ends.

SOUND LEVEL FADES UP TO NORMAL:

BACK TO:

Close on the same set of eye's as we pull back to reveal our daydreamer hero. (Ben) gazing out the window of a moving vehicle. His dreamy gaze softened to a slight smile.

MAN'S VOICE (DIFFERENT THAN THE V.O.  
VOICE)  
Damnit we're late.

EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

A late 60's Ford F-250 drives up to the edge of a gravel parking lot adjacent to a large open area with a makeshift baseball diamond on lined on the field with a rickety backstop.

The man (JOHN) and Ben climb out of the truck cab.

JOHN, (Early 30's) ruggedly handsome and athletic build wearing a pendleton logging shirt and blue jeans exits the cab while concentrating on the competition taking place in various locations throughout the field.

Ben (8) does the same. Ben is slight of build, a little awkward and quite small for his age. He sports an adult sized baseball cap, a faded under jersey, one size to small for him, blue jeans and well worn and faded black PF Flyer tennis shoes.

An enormous and cumbersome adult size baseball glove swings upon his left hand as he walks with purpose toward the field.

Ben and John make their way toward the registration table in the near distance.

A SERIES OF SHOTS:

In the distance we can see a young boy being fervently "coached" by his father. The boys head is held low in defeat.

Another father with his arms around his two young sons, all three of them laughing and enjoying the festivities.

We slowly pull back further to reveal a large open field with a baseball diamond at the nearby corner.

Banners and adverts for local businesses hang on the outfield fence.

We are at a Pitch, Hit and Run competition sponsored by the local Little League. Proud fathers stand next to their sons viewing the competition with focused concentration.

This is an annual event that the entire town looks forward to every year. The boys compete at three different stations.

Some boys are pitching through an old tire and others are running bases for best time. The rest are batting off of a live arm. (Daddy pitch)

There are onlookers at each station. Food vendors and local businesses in makeshift booths pepper the large open field. There is a festive air to the morning.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Hey John! Great to finally see you  
two out here.

John turns to look over his shoulder to find PETE and his SON catching up to them.

John, not wanting to talk, stays focused on the field.

JOHN

Yeah, Beth thought it'd be a good  
idea. (He gestures with a nod  
toward Ben)  
He won't leave me alone about it.

PETE

Well hey, good luck!

Pete and his son split off in another direction.

John waves goodbye without missing a step.

JOHN

Thanks Pete. You too.

He and Ben walk up to the registration table.

## EXT. REGISTRATION TABLE - MORNING

Home made signs indicate that lines are set according to the first letter of the last name. John and Ben stand in the M-P line.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)  
Hey guys!

Racing up to John and Ben is, JUDY, (Late 30's) she sports a baseball uniform complete with a baseball hat with Team Mom embroidered on it. She even has on baseball cleats. Her hair is bright red and her lipstick an even brighter red. The make-up is way too colorful and the fake QT tan fools nobody. Everything about Judy is overdone, pretentious and loud.

JUDY  
(All pretense)  
Beth said you might be out here  
this morning. Isn't it exciting?

Judy Bends at the waist to look Ben in the eyes.

JUDY  
Hi Benny, look.

She points to a table a few feet away.

First, second and third place trophies stand upon it, perfectly lined up like little soldiers glistening in the morning sun.

Ben smiles and nods.

John rolls his eyes and looks away to avoid acknowledging the trophies.

Ben looks up at John and points to the trophy table. John nods OK. Ben makes his way over.

JOHN  
(deadpan)  
Where's Dick?

JUDY  
Oh, you know Richard. Work, work,  
work. I suppose someone has to pay  
for all the toys, including our  
brand - new - motor home! Hey You  
guys should come by and see it  
later!

John continues eyeing the field.

JOHN  
well, we're going out to the  
property after this.

JUDY  
(Condescending)  
Oh! Still working on that little  
project huh?

JOHN  
(annoyed, deadpan)  
Yep, still on that little project.

JUDY  
I'm telling you. The motor home was  
the best investment ever. No muss,  
no fuss, just load and go.  
(She laughs at her own clever quip)  
Well, if your plans change come by  
later. Bring Bethy. I'm dying to  
show her the photos from our cruise  
to the Bahamas.

John ignores Judy and scans the field clocking all of the  
different stations and the competitors.

JOHN  
Yeah, sure, that sounds like a lot  
of fun. I'll tell her.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)  
Next.

JUDY  
Well, I better get going. I gotta  
get the Tucker Trucker to his next  
station. He's already broken the  
base running record! Bye!

Judy waves and peels away glancing around to seek out the  
next unsuspecting Father son duo to which she can brag to.

John barely lifts a hand to wave good bye.

Ben has wondered over to the trophies.

EXT. TROPHY TABLE - CONTINUOUS

Ben admires the trophies.

He looks over his shoulder out at the field in the distance.

The field is packed with people and rife with activity.

John comes up behind him and touches him on the shoulder. He reaches out for Ben's wrist.

Ben studies his father's eyes as John places a wrist band on his wrist.

John motions to Ben to follow him. Ben takes one more look over his shoulder, his eyes linger on the trophies as he and John walk away.

John nudges him and gestures toward the field.

JOHN  
(Sotto voce)  
Come on let's get this over with.

They head off toward the base running station where earlier we witnessed Ben in his dream break the base running record.

EXT. BASE RUNNING STATION - MORNING

John motions for Ben to stand in line with the other boys.

Ben does as told.

It is clear that Ben is the smallest boy out here. The other boys are warming up: stretching, chewing bubble gum as if it were chewing tobacco, spitting like the pros.

Most of the boys have baseball team uniforms on.

A boy crosses home plate.

UMPIRE  
Time!

The umpire relays the time to the old man at the table. He writes the time down then looks up.

OLD MAN  
Next.

Ben is distracted by all of the activity going on around him and on the field.

OLD MAN  
Next! Come on boys, keep the line moving!

Ben is nudged by a much larger boy standing behind him. Ben looks up at him. He towers over Ben.

Ben smiles. The boy doesn't bend a facial muscle. Ben sighs, turns, then walks toward home plate.

John nervously scans the crowd.

EXT. BASEBALL DIAMOND - SAME

Ben steps up to the plate and takes a runners stance. He is focused. His eyes locked onto the first base bag.

JOHN

He can't hear! So you'll have to drop an arm or something!

A MAN WITH A STARTER PISTOL turns his ear toward John and strains to hear better.

MAN WITH STARTER PISTOL

What's that?!

JOHN

He can't hear the gun! You'll have to signal him!

MAN WITH THE STARTER PISTOL

What do ya mean he can't hear!

John scowls.

JOHN

He can't hear.

The man with the starter pistol doesn't register what John is saying.

John nervously scans the crowd nearby. And as if telling a secret...

JOHN

(softly)  
He's deaf.

Note: from here on out, any time Ben and John speak, it is implied that they are using a home made sign language that only Ben and John understand. Ben is proficient at lip reading as well. John will speak and gesture. When Ben signs, sub-titles will be displayed.

The man with the pistol nods his head and walks closer to Ben.

There is a moment of awkwardness as the officials have to disrupt their well rehearsed routine to accommodate Ben.

John self consciously looks around to see how many people heard the exchange.

Ben has not moved. He remains in his runners stance, his eyes glued to first base.

The man with the starter pistol walks up in front of Ben and raises his arm. Ben's eyebrows narrow as he anticipates the arm drop.

The arm drops and Ben takes off.

TIME KEEPER  
Hold on, hold on, I wasn't ready.  
Just a sec.

John rolls his eyes.

JOHN  
(Sotto voce)  
Fuck.

Ben sprints toward first base. He's giving it all he's got, but not moving very fast.

Ben rounds first and sprints to second base. He rounds second and makes his way toward third. An OFFICIAL enters the field.

He stretches his arm and hand out to signal for Ben to stop.

OFFICIAL  
Whoa, whoa hold on there tiger!

Ben slows to a stop.

He looks up to the official and shrugs.

The official points toward the starting line at home plate.

Ben looks toward home plate and scans the crowd sitting behind the backstop.

Several people are waving him back to the starting line.

EXT. BASEBALL DIAMOND-SAME

OFFICIAL  
Gotta start over partner.

Ben jogs back toward home plate.

John shakes his head and shouts at the officials.

JOHN  
Come on! Get it together guys!

John, once again self consciously clocks the onlookers to see how many people have witnessed Ben's miscue and his exchange with the officials.

Ben quickly makes his way to home plate. He takes a runners stance once again.

Ben looks over at John and gives him a thumbs up.

John, with a stern look, gives him a slight nod.

Ben looks away from John and fixes his eyes on first base.

Out of the corner of his eye he sees the arm drop.

He digs in and takes off.

His skinny arms pump wildly as he rounds first base.

He rounds second base.

The fans are cheering him on.

He is pumping as fast as he can but he might as well be walking, the speed just isn't there.

John bites his lower lip and again clocks the crowd to see their reaction to Ben's performance.

Ben's eyes strain with effort. With his head tilted back and the rest of him leaning into the curve he rounds third base.

His left foot tags the base and slips on the moist surface of the bag.

He goes airborne, rolls over mid air then thuds to the ground and rolls in the mud to a stop.

THE CROWD  
(Various reactions)  
Ooooo. Is he OK?! Somebody help him up!

The other young competitors snicker and mock Ben as their parents try to hush them.

Ben begins to drag himself up to his knees.

John enters the field.

He jogs over to Ben grabs him with one hand under Ben's arm and yanks him up to his feet.

John hand gestures to Ben

JOHN

Why the hell did you tag the base  
with your left foot?! You should  
have tagged the base with your  
right foot! Anybody knows that!

BEN

(nods in agreement)

John hustles him down the third base line toward the umpire.

JOHN

Can he get another chance?!

UMPIRE

Sorry, no go. It's the rules.

JOHN

Yeah, well the rules don't account  
for a wet base do they?!

UMPIRE

Sorry, I don't make 'em.

JOHN

That's bullshit!

John turns his back to the Umpire pulling Ben with him.

JOHN

(Sotto voice)

Asshole.

John leads Ben off the field.

JOHN

(Signing)

Let's go home.

Ben stops in his tracks and breaks lose of John's grip.

BEN

(Shakes his head no)

John turns toward Ben and stares him down.

He catches Pete and his son nearby watching the exchange.

John gathers himself, looks at his watch, then scans the field.

JOHN  
What's the point?! I'm running late  
as it is.

Ben's head drops in disappointment. John shakes his head, looks at his watch one more time.

JOHN  
Damnit. Alright, Come on.

They make their way over to:

EXT. PITCHING STATION - MORNING

Several boys are lined up facing an old tire hanging from a makeshift iron stand. One boy is pitching through the tire.

The crowd is smaller, but no less enthusiastic.

John and Ben walk up and Ben takes his place amongst the boys.

John steps off to the side.

He waves to get Ben's attention.

Ben turns towards John.

John points to the Port-a-potty in the near distance and mimics a pissing stance.

BEN  
(With a laughs at John's  
gesture then shakes his  
head no)

John points to himself then motions to the Port-a-potty that he has to go.

BEN  
(nods yes in response)

John turns and walks toward the Port-a-potty.

Ben takes his place in line.

BOYS VOICE (O.S.)  
Hey! No cuts!

A large FAT KID shoves Ben in the back. Ben falls to the ground. Some of the other kids laugh.

Ben looks up and scans the faces of the boys who are laughing. He decides to laugh with them, not realizing they are laughing at him.

He gets up, brushes himself off then takes his place in line.

The fat kid steps up to the pitching rubber and stares the tire down.

With the crowd looking on, he winds up and with great effort hurls the ball.

The ball thuds into the side of the tire. The fat kid grimaces.

An UMPIRE in full regalia shouts.

UMPIRE  
Ball! You got two more pitches.

The fat kid concentrates even harder. He winds up, throws the ball hard and fast.

The ball sails over the tire into a group of people walking toward the parking lot. They all scatter.

THE CROWD  
(various voices)  
Heads up! Watch out! Incoming!

The ball narrowly misses one of the crowd members.

The fat kid grimaces.

He looks over at Ben and glares.

Ben is laughing.

The fat kid lumbers up to Ben.

FAT KID  
What are you laughing at dumbass?!

Ben does not respond.

FAT KID  
I said, what are you laughing at?

The fat kid shoves Ben and Ben jerks backward.

His brow furrows as he backs away while the fat kid lumbers toward him.

John has witnessed this exchange, and hurries over to the boys.

JOHN  
Hey! Knock it off!

He steps in between them and separates them.

A very large FAT MAN walks up to John.

LARGE FAT MAN  
Hey! Get your hands off my boy!

The large fat man squares up to John.

JOHN  
Your boy shoved my boy.

LARGE FAT MAN  
I saw what happened. Your boy was laughing at him.

JOHN  
No he wasn't. He was laughing at the people ducking from the ball.

LARGE FAT MAN  
Well, keep your hands off my boy or-

John closes the gap between them.

JOHN  
Or what asshole?! Huh, What?!

The umpire steps closer.

UMPIRE  
Come on guys not in front of the kids. Take it somewhere else.

John stares the large fat man down.

Ben watches on with concern. He studies the men closely reading their facial expressions and body language.

The large fat man grabs his son by the shirt.

LARGE FAT MAN  
Come on let's get out of here.

FAT KID  
I have one more pitch!

LARGE FAT MAN  
I said, were going!

FAT KID  
Daaaaad!

The large fat man gives his son the stink eye and drags him away.

John looks to Ben and motions him to follow him.

JOHN  
We're going home.

The crowd roars to life off screen.

Ben looks over at the hitting station where the crowd is on its feet wildly applauding a player who just hit one over the fence.

John looks up too, then back to Ben.

Ben gestures.

BEN  
Can I hit?

John looks down at his watch, shakes his head and thinks for a moment. He turns Ben by his shoulder and shoves him toward the hitting station.

JOHN  
Go.

EXT. HITTING STATION - MORNING

The usual line up and wait routine as we have already experienced. The crowd here is much larger and very loud.

Ben takes his place in line.

John steps off to the side.

PARENT VOLUNTEER  
Next Up!

Ben is handed a batters helmet. He strides to the plate tapping both feet and swings the bat in a circular motion just like the pros do.

A dad volunteer is perched on the mound. It's clear by the complete baseball uniform and cleats and requisite chewing tobacco in his mouth that he takes this all a little too seriously.

Ben locks his eye's onto the pitcher.

John looks on with anticipation.

The pitcher winds up.

Ben grips the bat tighter and narrows his brow.

The pitcher in full stride slings the ball toward Ben. It's not just a fast ball, It's a screamer. Overkill to say the least.

Ben with no time to react, flinches and buckles as the ball pierces deep into his left shoulder. Ben crumples to the ground dropping the bat and his helmet slides off his head to the ground

The Crowd (O.S.)  
Ooooooooo!

John races over to Ben and bends over to help him to his feet.

JOHN  
Come on get up. Get up, people are watching.

He grabs Ben and yanks him to his feet. Clearly Ben is in pain. Holding his left shoulder.

John brushes Ben off and looks out toward the pitcher on the pitching mound.

The pitcher isn't the least bit concerned, he tosses a spare ball to the shortstop for a little round about.

John leaves Ben at home plate and hustle out to the pitching mound toward the pitcher.

JOHN  
Hey asshole! This ain't the fucking major leagues.

The pitcher turns to see John hustling toward him.

PITCHER  
He should have dodged it!

Hearing that, John sprints the last few steps and:

John tackles the guy to the ground pins him on his back and starts swinging.

Other fathers race over to break up the fight. John keeps punching wildly. His prey, the pitcher covers up his face best he can.

FATHER #1 (O.S.)  
Hey! Hey!

Father #1 tackles John off the pitcher and another father falls on top of them and a gang pile develops quickly.

JOHN  
Get off me God damn it! Get off me!

Pete runs up and pushes the other fathers off of John.

PETE  
Hey! Hey! Break it up. C

The pitcher gets up and brushes himself off.

PITCHER  
(sotto voice)  
What an asshole.

Pete clears the men away. Helping John to his feet. John pushes him away.

PETE  
John, what the hell are you thinking? Settle down.

John stares Pete down. There is an awkward silence as everyone waits to see what John will do next.

John motions toward Ben who is standing off to the side not quite sure what to make of this scene.

JOHN  
We're going home.

John strides toward the parking lot.

Ben quickens his pace to catch up to him.

John, without turning to look at Ben, holds his hand out to motion Ben to stay behind.

Ben stops walking and focuses on John's outstretched arm forbidding him to walk next to him.

Ben watches Johns back as he hurries to the car, leaving Ben far behind.

Ben then runs to catch up to his father and begins to follow John several steps behind as he makes his way to the truck.

EXT. TRUCK - MORNING

John slams the baseball glove into the truck bed then climbs into the cab. Ben does likewise.

INT. TRUCK - MORNING

John, staring straight ahead, starts the truck. No words or signs are exchanged.

He backs the truck out of the dirt parking lot and peels off down the road.

Ben looking over his shoulder stares out at the trophy table as it shrinks into the distance.

EXT. TRUCK - SAME

The truck makes its way through this one street town.

INT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

John stops the truck at a red light at a four way intersection.

Ben's eyes fix upon an A&W Drive In. The sign is dated and faded, but the drive up stalls are all packed with kids and dads celebrating.

Some of the boys carry trophies.

Ben looks on.

John tries hard to avoid the scene on the corner. He looks away and...

JOHN  
Come on damn it! I hate this light.

Ben looks on at the A&W. The kids are all laughing it up and having a great time.

The light turns green and John jerks the truck off the line.

They pass several strip malls, gas stations etc. This post WW II town needs a serious face lift. Nothing has been renovated since the late forties.

EXT. MCLEARY HOUSE - FRONT YARD - LATE MORNING

BETH (Early 30's, a natural beauty with no make up on.) Works in the garden. The house is a modest post World War II three bedroom rambler. It is quaint, surrounded by small but meticulously cared for gardens in various little islands around the house.

John's truck pulls into the driveway.

Beth stands and waits with anticipation for Ben and John to get out of the cab.

Ben and John exit the truck.

Beth greets them with a smile, anticipating a great account of the competition.

BETH  
(Speaking to John and  
signing to Ben.)  
Well, how'd it go?!

Ben, in stride, passes his mom without a response and makes his way to the front door. John does likewise.

JOHN  
That answer your question?

BETH  
What happened?

JOHN  
I don't want to talk about it.

BETH  
What happened? Why is your lip bleeding?

John rushes past Beth toward the house.

BETH  
John?!

INT. MCLEARY HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

We follow Ben down the hallway into his bedroom.

He takes off his baseball cap and rifles it into his closet then flops onto his bed and stares at the ceiling.

We can see in the b.g. through Ben's window that Beth and John are having a heated argument.

Ben looks around his room.

INT. BEN'S ROOM

Typical boys room - a mess! A fish tank, a turtle in a fishbowl, lot's of found objects from nature proudly displayed on a makeshift shelf.

Several home made projects are scattered about the room. Mostly made with sticks and twine and old scrap lumber and used rusty nails.

There are no trophies, no sports memorabilia.

On his night-stand, along with a pocketknife and several wire bound notebooks stacked atop one another sits a framed family photo of Ben, John and Beth. All of them beaming with happiness.

It is clear that the photo was taken a few years earlier.

Ben reaches over to pick up one of the notebooks on the night stand, opens it, pulls a pen out of the wire binding and begins to write.

He writes a few sentences then pauses, places the notebook back and stares at the ceiling for a moment.

Ben gets up, walks out of his room and makes his way down the hallway.

INT. MCCLEARY HOUSE-HALLWAY- CONTINUOUS

He begins to turn into the kitchen just as John and Beth enter the front door. They continue to argue.

Ben stops and takes it in.

BETH

Who cares if he gets a stupid trophy!? As long as he had fun!

JOHN

That's exactly my point! He didn't have fun! And neither did I! And...

it's not a stupid trophy, it  
represents an accomplishment!

BETH  
Competing is an accomplishment!

JOHN  
You don't know shit about  
competing, or sports, so stay out  
of it!

BETH  
He might never be an athlete John!  
He might never be the boy you  
wanted and so what, he's the boy we  
have and he's a great kid.

John points at Ben.

JOHN  
It was humiliating. OK! I knew  
before we went out there this would  
happen.

Ben sees John pointing right at him and knows that the argument is about him and the competition.

This scene is not uncommon for Ben.

Ben turns back down the dark hallway, back to his room.

Beth and John continue arguing.

BETH  
That's the real concern here! Your  
ego!

JOHN  
My ego has nothing to do with it!  
It's about dignity. You didn't have  
to deal with the embarrassment, the  
humiliation! Asshole fathers! Crazy  
fucking Judy!

BETH  
Our son embarrasses you?!

JOHN  
What? No! That's not what I said!

BETH  
Yes it is! You just said it!

JOHN

You know what I mean! I--

BETH

Yes, I do! Our boy has a father who cares more for his reputation than his son's feelings!

JOHN

This is bullshit, I gotta get ready.

John turns his back to leave.

BETH

One day John! One day is all I asked for! You decided you weren't going to enjoy it long before this morning!

JOHN

What do you want from me!? I took him didn't I?

BETH

Oh big deal! I'm sorry you had to sacrifice so much to spend time with your son.

JOHN

You act like we never spend time together! I take him to the property with me, don't I?!

BETH

Yeah, and he watches you work!

JOHN

I'm doing it for us! All of us!

BETH

What's the point?! Huh? What are we all going to do when we finally get out there John?! More of this?!

JOHN

This is bullshit.

John turns and heads back toward the front door.

BETH

Yeah, John, that's your solution to everything! Just clam up and walk away!

John stops at the door, hesitates, then walks out, leaving Beth in the front room.

EXT. MCQUEARY HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

John hurries his way around the side of the house toward the back yard to a work shed.

He enters the shed.

INT. WORK SHED - CONTINUOUS

Old rusty tools are piled in disarray in the corner. Other garden supplies are scattered about. Fishing rods, old yellowed boxes, an oily work bench cluttered with unfinished projects. Layers of dust have claimed this place as it's own.

In the background, hanging on the faded grey wooden walls, we can make out several dusty photographs cheaply framed.

We can barely make out the images.

-- A much younger John in a football uniform, down on one knee, smiling for camera.

-- John standing next to two other boys, each of them holding trophies, proud as can be.

-- John, as a boy, in a baseball uniform smiling big for the camera.

-- A letter of intent from the University of Washington.

-- John 18, with a football uniform on, smiling for camera.

Also on the wall, hangs a shelf with several trophies from various sports, Football, Basketball, Baseball, with dust and cob webs clinging to them.

John fumes as he shuffles around the work shed, picking up tools and throwing them next to the door. He picks up a large chain saw and sets it next to the door.

Not sure what to grab next, in frustration he grabs an old rustic door knob and hurls it at the wall across from him.

Like a trapped animal he paces the width of the small space.

He stops and leans against the work bench to cool off.

Tight on Johns face we linger for a while.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BEN'S ROOM - LATER

Through Ben's window we see Beth and John packing the truck with supplies. Clearly they are not talking.

Ben snatches the small pocket knife from his bed-stand.

From his closet, he picks up a bow made from a tree branch and twine. A couple of whittled sticks make up his quiver.

EXT. FRONT YARD - AT THE TRUCK - MORNING

Ben rushes out the front door toward the truck where he is greeted by Beth with a hug and a kiss.

Unlike John, Beth's signing is textbook perfect, she speaks too in order to train Ben to lip read.

BETH  
(signing)  
I love you, be careful and have  
fun. I'll see you tonight! OK?

She hugs Ben.

Ben's return hug speaks volumes of his deep love for his mother. John is distracted and oblivious to the exchange.

He checks off his list of equipment and supplies on a small note pad with a cheap disposable pen that he has removed from his shirt pocket.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)  
Keep your chin up Ben, you'll get  
'em next year!

Beth and John look up to see a MAN in his truck slowly passing by.

Ben notices his mom and dad look up at the man in the truck, he does likewise.

Beth smiles and waves in return.

BETH  
(Signing to Ben)  
He said keep your chin up, you'll  
get them next year.

Ben is nonplussed, he knows the truth.

John, annoyed by the interruption, remains silent and places the pad and pen back into his pocket. He is a man on a mission.

He throws the last few tools in the truck bed and...

JOHN

(Gesturing and speaking to  
Ben)

Come on, let's get going, we're  
already getting a late start.

Beth reaches out to Ben as if to give him another hug but instead hands him a small baggy with homemade chocolate cookies in it.

She smiles.

Ben smiles back.

Beth places her hands on Ben's shoulders facing him toward her.

BETH

(signing)

Fresh from the oven, made just for  
you.

BEN

(Ben smiles in return)

Beth lets out a playful laugh then cradles his face and kisses him on the forehead.

BETH

I'll have your favorite dinner  
waiting for you when you get back.

Ben's eyes twinkle with gratitude.

John gestures to Ben to get into the truck, and turns his back on Beth.

JOHN

Be back at five.

Ben and John climb into the cab of the truck and drive away, leaving Beth waving goodbye in the distance behind them.

Ben waves back to her in the side view mirror.

INT. TRUCK CAB - DAY

As John and Ben drive out to their destination.

John concentrates on the road while Ben looks out the passenger side window.

FADE TO:

EXT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

The truck makes it's way along winding, twisting, narrow, muddy roads, through thousands of acres of thick evergreen forest.

INT. TRUCK CAB - DAY

Ben slouches against the window while watching the trees whiz by.

John slows and turns right onto another muddy road.

Ben sits up, and motions to his father.

BEN  
(Gestures to John)  
Can I drive now?

John thinks for a moment then stops the truck. He stares at Ben then...

EXT. TRUCK - DAY

John exits the truck, walks around the front, and climbs in the passenger side door.

Ben with a big grin on his face slides over behind the wheel.

INT. TRUCK CAB - SAME

JOHN  
(Gestures and speaks)  
Do you remember what to do?

BEN  
(Nods yes)

Ben at the wheel, puts it in gear.

John quickly clutches the wheel.

JOHN  
Wait!

He points to the rear view mirror.

JOHN  
Your mirrors.

Ben reacts and adjusts the rear view mirror and the side mirror, John does the same with the passenger mirror.

John adjusts the side view mirror.

JOHN  
Is this good?

BEN  
(Ben nods no)

JOHN  
This?

BEN  
(Ben nods yes)

John nods in return and looks straight ahead.

Ben presses the accelerator and drives the truck down the muddy road, picking up speed as he goes.

John is tense and very alert.

Ben, barely peeking over the dashboard, has a satisfied grin on his face.

John, reaches over and touches Ben on the shoulder.

JOHN  
(gestures)  
Slow down a bit.

Ben looks to John and nods but hesitates to slow down.

Suddenly the truck comes to a hairpin turn.

Ben's eyes flash wide as he cranks the wheel into the turn.

EXT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

The truck slides around the bend and barrels through frame.

INT. TRUCK CAB - CONTINUOUS

Ben slams on the brakes and skids to a stop.

EXT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

They are greeted by what looks to be a river. But is in fact, a washed out fire road that still has rushing water flowing over it from the torrential rains that fell throughout the evening.

INT. TRUCK CAB - CONTINUOUS

John motions to Ben to switch places again.

EXT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

They both climb out of the cab and switch places.

INT. TRUCK CAB - CONTINUOUS

John takes time to think the situation through. His head swivels right to left as he assess the degree of danger.

JOHN  
(Gestures to Ben)  
Hold on to something.

Ben grips the arm rest.

John puts the truck in gear and slowly inches the truck toward the mini-rapids.

EXT. TRUCK - DAY

As the truck inches forward plumes of water form around the wheels and rise above the wheel-well.

The truck begins to rock.

INTERCUT: INT./ EXT. TRUCK CAB - SAME

Ben holds on tight and swivels his head in all directions to get the most of this adventurous crossing.

John grips the wheel to steady himself and the truck.

The rear end of the truck loses traction and slides to an angle.

John presses the accelerator.

The tires spit water and mud then gain purchase and the truck straightens.

Ben is pitched forward, he stops himself with both hands on the dashboard suddenly he is then thrown sideways.

Ben slams into John who loses his grip on the wheel.

The rear end of the truck slides again.

Ben steadies himself and a slight smile breaks loose. He's having fun.

John grabs the wheel and again accelerates to straighten the truck.

Ben notices a squirrel skittering across a fallen tree further down the river-road. He smiles.

The truck breaks through, gains traction, crosses to the other side, and stops.

John looks back at the river of water and shakes his head.

He gestures to Ben.

JOHN

You OK?

BEN

(Smiles and nods yes)

John just stares out the windshield, relieved that they have made it to safety.

John puts the truck in gear and the truck speeds off down the muddy road.

FADE TO:

EXT. LOG CABIN SITE - DAY

The truck appears from the dark forest and turns into an open clearing and stops.

We immediately see why John chose this spot to build on. It is breathtaking, pristine, virgin land.

We see a small private cove with a view looking out across the ocean to the horizon.

Majestic evergreens blanket the land.

In the near distance we see a small clearing set back about 50 yards from the cove's shoreline.

The cove is flanked on both sides by massive cliff faces smothered in evergreens.

Sitting upon a concrete slab in the middle of the small clearing are the beginnings of a log home. Logs are stacked upon one another like Lincoln Logs.

This is the beginning of a classic old style log cabin.

INT. TRUCK CAB - DAY

John gestures to Ben to start unloading the truck.

They both exit the truck cab and make their way around to the truck-bed.

EXT. TRUCK BED - CONTINUOUS

Ben and John begin to unload. John dons a pair of work gloves then hefts a large rope over his shoulder then lifts the chain saw, leaving the cooler and groceries in the back of the truck bed.

Ben grabs his home made bow and arrows and stands near the truck.

John makes his way down a narrow pathway to the shoreline of the cove.

EXT. COVE - WORK-SITE - DAY

The walls of trees smothering the land and those John has cut down scattered throughout the site inform us that he has indeed taken on a very ambitious project.

Upon arriving at the cove. John stops, drops the rope and pauses a moment to take in the view.

He then makes his way to the shoreline.

Ben watches on from the truck.

John looks over his shoulder toward Ben.

JOHN  
(Gesturing and speaking)  
Don't wander off too far! And be  
careful.

Ben nods as he too takes in the view.

Spread out in front of him is an expanse of tall grass, felled trees and a large cove of mud beyond. Beyond that is the pacific ocean with the horizon in the far distance.

The tide is presently out but high tide comes in during the course of the day transforming the mud flats into a large lagoon.

EXT. WORK SITE - DAY

John jerks the starter pull rope bringing the chain saw to life. The noise from the saw bites into the peaceful atmosphere of the forest.

John, without hesitation begins working, leaving Ben to entertain himself.

EXT. TRUCK - DAY

Ben looks up, his eyes follow a Bald Eagle soaring high in the sky, carving lyrical lines through the vast empty space.

The eagle then alights upon a tree limb protruding from one of the trees blanketing the cliffs nearby.

Various forms of forest life go about their daily ritual with hurried activity.

Except for the grind of the chain saw, even John, outfitted with his logging gear,(88's, corks and yellow safety helmet) seems to fit in with this environment.

The Bald Eagle takes flight once again.

Ben focuses on the eagle as it leads to:

Towers of dark grey thunderhead clouds peaking over the tree lined cliffs above.

Ben turns his attention toward John and watches as John wields the chainsaw like an expert.

## EXT. WORK SITE - DAY

John is hard at work cutting a notch in the lower half of a tall tree, one of many that line the shoreline.

The whine of the saw echoes throughout the forest.

## EXT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

While John continues to work, Ben wanders off to a small creek.

## EXT. CREEK - DAY

A salamander darts into the water as Ben approaches.

Ben squats down next to a tadpole hole. A small frog leaps into the tall ferns just a few feet away.

Ben stares for a moment at his reflection in the water.

He points his finger into the water disturbing the water's surface.

He smiles at his reflection as it breaks up and distorts.

In the close distance, two squirrels chase each other over the fallen trees and under-brush.

Ben pulls the baggy of cookies from his pocket and begins feeding the squirrels.

Cautiously, they take the small chunks of cookie from his hands.

A smile expands across Ben's face.

## EXT. WORK SITE - DAY

A lone tree gradually fills the frame, as it falls slowly toward the ground.

It makes an astounding display of destruction as it crashes through the neighboring trees, ripping off limbs in the process.

The top half lands with a thud in the mud flats while the bottom half of the tree lands with a loud thump on an already felled tree lying on the muddy shoreline.

EXT. CREEK - SAME

Ben continues to play.

EXT. WORK SITE - SAME

John begins to limb the tree.

Suddenly, the tree shifts, startling John.

He jumps back and freezes for a moment.

He assess's the situation then continues to limb the trees.

Just as quickly as he returns to cutting and with no warning, one of the limbs on the upper tree snaps, causing the tree to begin to roll.

The large hulking tree rolls over but this time with more force and momentum.

Branches crack and snap.

John jumps back to avoid the tree, but this time he trips.

The chainsaw drops from his hand narrowly missing his thigh.

As John tries to quickly regain his footing the tree rolls over on top of his legs.

JOHN  
(winces and screams out in  
pain)  
Awwwww!

The tree branches crack under the weight of the tree as it slowly settles on both of John's legs.

JOHN  
Fuck! Ahhhhhh!

EX. CREEK - DAY

Ben, whose back is turned, naturally doesn't hear nor witness this terrible accident. He continues to play.

EXT. WORK SITE - SAME

John wrenches in pain.

JOHN  
God Damnit! Awwwww!

He attempts several times to get a grasp on the trees branches to see if he can leverage himself out from under the massive trunk.

He looks over at Ben and realizes that he is oblivious to the situation.

He looks around for something to throw.

He reaches for some small stones.

Stretching as far as he can, John barely manages to roll three stones with his fingertips into his palm.

He throws them toward Ben.

After a couple of close attempts he finally lands one right in front of Ben, catching Ben's attention.

EXT. CREEK - CONTINUOUS

Ben looks up and over his shoulder toward the cove. He races toward the work site.

EXT. LOG CABIN SITE - DAY

Ben dashing toward the shoreline clocks John pinned under the tree. He doubles his effort across the clearing.

EXT. WORK SITE - CONTINUOUS

Upon arriving at the water's edge Ben sloshes through the mud to reach John. He attempts to budge the tree pushing with all of his might.

John waves him off.

JOHN  
You can't move it!

John glances overhead and sees that the beautiful day has now become a dark and foreboding storm about to unleash itself on the scene below.

Off screen the whine of the chainsaw putters then stops.

John looks over at the chainsaw, it is now sitting in the mud and a veneer of water.

He gestures to Ben to pick it up and hand it to him.

Ben does as ordered.

With effort he sludges through the mud and water, picks up the heavy saw with both hands, hauls it to John and hands it to him.

John begins pulling on the starter rope.

Exhausted after several attempts, John yanks the rope one more time. The saw starts up.

He raises the saw, then begins immediately to cut into the tree trunk.

Ben watches on.

After just a few seconds, the saw stalls.

After several desperate pulls to start the saw to no avail, John opens the fuel cap to find it, empty.

JOHN

God Damnit!

He gestures to Ben.

JOHN

Go to the truck and get the gas can.

Ben does as ordered.

EXT. TRUCK - SAME

Arriving at the truck, Ben notices that there is no gas can to be found only the cooler and a couple of grocery bags.

He desperately searches around the truck and scans the clearing. No gas can.

Ben runs back to John.

EXT. WORK SITE - DAY

Ben races up to John.

BEN

(Shakes his head No.)

JOHN

Yes! It's right there in the back  
of the truck!

BEN

(Shakes his head no)

JOHN

Yes it is! It's there in the truck!

Ben just stares at John.

John grabs the small note pad out of his pocket.

He looks it over.

Everything has been checked off except the gas can and a few other items.

In his haste to get going, or perhaps the untimely interruption by the passing motorist earlier that morning, he neglected to finish the list.

JOHN

Shit!

John's face is turning pale. He begins to shiver.

He is aroused by a crack of thunder in the distance.

Looking around he notices intermittent rain drops begin to pitter - patter on the surface of the water that has now crept in to the lagoon.

He looks down at his legs.

His eyebrows narrow.

All expression drains from his face.

THE TIDE IS COMING IN.

The soft pitter - patter of rain drops build in volume and tempo. There is an eerie dampening of the sounds of the forest. Thunder continues to explode in the distance.

EXT. WORK SITE - CONTINUOUS

John gestures to Ben.

JOHN

Get our jackets.

Ben runs to the truck retrieves two jackets and returns and hands one to John.

JOHN

Hold on.

John declines the jacket. Ben drops it on top of the upper tree.

John clocks a tree on the shoreline and looks back at the truck. He considers an option.

He reaches into his pocket for the pad and pen.

He begins to write.

He holds the pad up to Ben to read while pointing to the rope.

JOHN

I need you to get the rope on the shoreline.

He writes again, raises the pad for Ben to read.

JOHN

Bring it here to me.

John nods to Ben to make sure he understands.

Ben nods his head yes and quickly runs to retrieve the rope.

John scans the tree that's pinning him down for a good place to tie the rope around.

Ben hustles back to John, dragging with great effort, the large rope.

EXT. WORK SITE - CONTINUOUS

John begins to write on the pad but just as he is about to write something, the pad slips out of his hand and into the water.

JOHN

Damnit!

He quickly retrieves the pad from the water and tries to write on the pad but to no avail.

While looking down he clocks the water level which has risen enough to half submerge his thighs.

Ben watches on, focusing on John's face.

Johns face is pale. His lips quiver from the cold. There is an unusual look of panic on John's face that Ben has never seen before.

John instinctively places the pen back into his pocket.

JOHN  
I need you to Focus. Read my lips  
Ben.

BEN  
(Ben nods yes)

John points to a place on the tree several feet further up from where he is pinned. (This top half of the tree reaches out further and is partially submerged in deeper water.)

JOHN  
(Gestures and speaks)  
Throw one end of the rope over the  
tree and wrap it around and double  
tie it real good.

Ben with a look of concern nods yes.

John point to a tree close to shore.

JOHN  
Then go around that tree there,  
then loop the end over the trailer  
hitch on the truck.

BEN  
(Ben shakes his head no)

JOHN  
You can do it! Take your jacket off  
first.

Ben hesitates.

JOHN  
Ben you've got to do this!

Ben looks over at the tree then clocks the truck in the distance.

He removes his jacket and sets it aside on the tree that sits abreast of the one pinning John.

Ben slowly climbs onto the tree. He gets up to his knees and carefully makes his way out toward the place John pointed to.

John watches on.

The rain is now pounding down heavy upon the scene.

Ben reaches the spot and hesitantly lowers himself into the frigid water leaving the end of the rope on the opposite side of the tree dangling in the water.

Ben with only his head out of the water, studies the water then looks back at John.

JOHN  
Hurry up!

John gestures to Ben to go under the tree.

Ben stone faced and scared shitless looks to his father one last time then,

He takes a deep breath and disappears under water.

EXT. UNDERWATER - CONTINUOUS

Ben frantically begins to breast stroke under the tree, Just as he is half way under it his shirt gets caught on a branch.

Holding the rope with one hand he grabs a branch with his free hand and pulls mightily with the other to swim out from under the tree, but to no avail.

EXT. WORK SITE - CONTINUOUS

John with anticipation, focuses on the spot where Ben has disappeared underwater.

EXT. UNDERWATER - CONTINUOUS

Ben's eyes are wide open, he pulls again. Nothing.

In a panic, he drops the rope grabs anything he can get his hands on and pushes back from where he came, breaking his shirt loose as he punches through the surface of the water gasping for air.

EXT. WORK SITE - CONTINUOUS

John waves his hands violently to get Ben's attention.

JOHN  
Ben!

Ben still gulping for air, gulps water as well. He quickly grabs a branch and pulls himself closer to the tree for safety. He looks over at John.

JOHN

Do it again!

Ben breaths heavily, staring daggers at John.

JOHN

(Gestures and speaks)

Do it again! Use the limbs of the tree to pull yourself through.

Ben trying to catch his breath offers no response.

He scans the water's surface and locates the end of the rope, clutches it then takes a deep breath and descends into the cold water again.

EXT. UNDERWATER - CONTINUOUS

He grabs a branch and this time descends even deeper to easily clear the tree and pulls himself through to the other side and resurfaces again gasping for air.

EXT. WORK SITE - CONTINUOUS

Ben now on Johns side of the tree looks over at John and notices that the water level has now reached Johns waist. He looks up to John's face.

John is oblivious that the water level has risen substantially. He gives Ben a thumbs up.

JOHN

(speaking and gesturing)

Good job. OK, now throw the rope over the top and climb over the tree and double tie it real good.

Ben nods and does exactly that.

He throws the rope over then pushes some of the excess over the tree. Then proceeds to climb over the tree. He looks back at John to see if the extra weight makes a difference.

JOHN

It's OK, I'm fine.

Ben climbs over the tree and begins to tie the knot.

John waves his hand to get Ben's attention.

Ben looks over at John.

JOHN  
(John gestures and speaks)  
Real tight!

Ben finishes tying the knot. Climbs back on the tree and crawls his way back to John.

EXT. WORK SITE - CONTINUOUS

JOHN  
Grab the end there.

John points to a section of the line close by that is partially under water.

Ben sloshes his way to the rope, clutches it then looks to John for more instruction.

JOHN  
(Gestures and speaks)  
Back the truck up to the shoreline.  
Wrap the rope around that tree  
there.

John points to the tree on the shoreline.

Ben clocks the tree as well.

JOHN  
See the loop in the rope?

Ben looks down at the rope in his hand.

BEN  
(Ben nods yes)

JOHN  
Place that over the trailer hitch.  
The keys are on the seat.

Ben shakes his head "no."

JOHN  
Yes! God Damnit!

Ben remains motionless. His eyes begin to moisten. His teeth chatter from the cold.

John's eyes narrow and with a stern voice.

JOHN  
You do what I say!

Ben remains motionless.

The storm has picked up and the torrent of rainfall casts an eerie ominous roar upon the scene.

A long beat as Ben and John have a stare-down.

A classic standoff.

Ben studies John's face: His eyes, his mouth, the slight wrinkles of age, the rivulets of water streaming down his face.

For the first time in his life Ben sees fear registered upon his fathers face.

John sets his jaw and stares Ben down.

Ben remains still. His face registers no emotion.

Suddenly the trunk of the tree comes to life and begins to roll. This could be the break John needs.

Johns eyes widen as he reaches out to grasp the branches of the tree. He pulls hard. His face strains with effort.

EXT. UNDERWATER - CONTINUOUS

John's legs move a few inches out from under the trunk.

EXT. ABOVE WATER - CONTINUOUS

JOHN  
Awwwww!

He pulls with great effort.

Ben races out into the water slogging his way toward the opposite side of the tree that John is on and quickly clutches two branches and begins to pull with everything he's got.

JOHN  
Aaaaaagh. Come on! Come on!

His waist breaches the surface.

Under excruciating pain, he continues to pull.

JOHN  
AwwwwwWWWWWWWWWW!

Ben grabs two branches and pushes with all of his might to help John break free.

Just as John is about to pull both legs loose, the tree rolls toward him again, this time taking John further under the water's surface.

John loses his grip and panics as he violently gropes for anything that he can gain purchase on.

Ben reaches over the tree and searches for a hand to grab.

Their hands clasp.

Their hands straining to remain connected slowly slip apart from one another's. John in one last desperate attempt clutches two tree branches straining to keep from going under. The tree settles.

JOHN  
(Guttural primal scream)  
AwwwwwWWWWWWWWWWWWWW!

Everything settles.

JOHN  
(Wincing in pain)  
Ahhhhh!

Ben watches on.

WE HOLD ON THIS FOR A BEAT:

In the grip of panic, John begins to hyperventilate and...

JOHN  
Noooooooooooo! Noooooooooooo!

Ben stares at his father, motionless.

Tears begin to pool upon Ben's eyes.

Suddenly the tree moves again.

John's eyes snap open wide.

As he is pulled under, he winces and instinctively reaches down to grab one of his legs.

JOHN  
Aaaaaaaaaaaaa!

The trunk shifts again and another broken branch pins his arm. He stretches out his other arm to grasp another tree limb.

He cries out.

JOHN  
Nooooooooooooooo!

Ben reaches out with both hands for John to grasp onto but John wont let go of the branch.

He pulls hard, stretching to keep his head above the water's surface.

His face contorts as he cries out.

JOHN  
Let me go! God Damnit!

The tree settles.

Except for the roar of rain pelting the surface of the water, all is still and motionless.

We pull back to reveal in center frame, a man, a boy and an inevitable death by drowning.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WORK SITE - DAY - LATER

The sheets of rain continue to pelt down upon the scene.

John is stone faced. It is clear that he has given up physically and mentally.

His eyes are open but he's lost in thought.

We push in slowly toward John's eyes to reveal:

FLASHBACK - MONTAGE, NO SOUND: A series of random scenes from John's POV displayed quickly.

-- Beth screaming at him during their morning argument.

-- The large fat guy squaring up to him.

-- Ben getting shoved to the ground by the fat kid.  
-- Beth kissing Ben on the forehead.  
-- The check list with the gas can unchecked.  
-- Ben and Beth learning sign language together with a tutor watching on.  
-- A quick flash of a hand rushes towards frame and fills it to black.  
-- Ben sitting on Johns lap (age 6) driving the truck.  
-- A quick flash of a blurred figure fills the frame while pushing two arms toward frame knocking us to the ground.  
-- A close up of Beth's face, she is laughing, as John tickles her on the couch, the cameraman sets the camera down askew on the coffee table and joins the pile on. It's Ben.  
-- A quick flash of blurred image of a woman getting slapped.  
-- Another moment from the morning argument breaks through.

BETH  
(muted)  
Yes, I do! Our boy has a father who cares more for his reputation than his son's feelings!

-- John attempting sign language with Beth tutoring him, he doesn't get it, Beth laughs. Frustrated, he quits, shakes his head, gets up, and storms off, leaving Beth disappointed.

BACK TO:

PRESENT DAY:

EXT. WORK SITE - DAY

John's face fills the screen.

We slowly pull back out of John's thoughts to reveal:

The water level is now nipping at John's ear lobes.

He stretches his neck and strains to keep his mouth and nose out of the water.

## INT. TRUCK CAB - SAME

Ben with his jacket on looks down at the gear indicator and puts the truck in drive.

He raises his head and strains to see over the steering wheel.

He carefully pulls the truck forward a few feet.

He stops, then puts the truck in reverse and looks back towards John and the shoreline.

He presses the accelerator, the truck begins to move backward. He works the steering wheel back and forth.

## EXT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

The truck zigzags backward toward the shoreline.

Ben stops at the shoreline.

He climbs out of the cab then makes his way to the back of the truck and grabs the end of the long rope and loops it over the trailer hitch.

## EXT. WORK SITE - DAY

In the near distance a fishing boat leisurely passes by.

Ben can't hear it of course, but it startles John out of his stupor.

Although he can't see it, John strains as he listens for the boat's motor over the rain pounding on the surface of the water.

JOHN

Hey! Hey! Over here! Help! Over  
here!

The fishing troller slowly glides by.

John continues to listen as the sound of the troller's motor fades away.

Waves from the wake of the troller reach John and begin to slap against him and the shore.

A wake wave overtakes John.

JOHN

Hel-

He gags on a gulp of seawater.

His head goes under.

Then reappears.

He spits water and gulps for air.

JOHN

Hel-

Another wave overtakes him.

He reappears, spits out water, and gropes for oxygen.

Another wave - John's face goes under.

He surfaces once more.

JOHN

(Gasping, choking, spitting)

The waves begin to subside.

John struggles to catch his breath.

His face is pale, lips are blue and his teeth begin to chatter.

EXT. TRUCK - SAME

Ben puts the truck in gear and pulls it forward. The rope pays out, lifts off the ground and begins to straighten.

Ben gives it more gas, the rope pulls taught and begins to strain under the load.

EXT. WORK SITE - DAY

Hearing the motor of the truck roar to life John looks over his shoulder straining to see Ben pulling the truck forward.

John clocks the tree looking for movement. It shakes and quivers a bit but does not budge.

John concentrates on the knot in the rope.

The knot begins to slip.

JOHN  
(Sotto voce)  
Come on. Hold.

INT. TRUCK CAB - CONTINUOUS

Ben presses the accelerator, the truck doesn't move.

EXT. WORK SITE - CONTINUOUS

John continues to concentrate on the knot.

JOHN  
Hold.

EXT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

The rear tires are gaining no purchase on the saturated ground. They spin freely.

EXT. WORK SITE - CONTINUOUS

John's body begins to shake and his eye lids begin to quiver. Stage two hypothermia has set in.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

-- THE TRUCK

-- THE ROPE PULLED TAUGHT

-- THE KNOT SLIPPING

-- THE ROPE WRAPPED AROUND THE TREE ON SHORE SLIPS

-- THE ROPE

-- THE REAR TIRES OF THE TRUCK SPINNING FREELY

-- THE KNOT SLIPS MORE

-- SUDDENLY THE ROPE SNAPS AND THE TRUCK LURCHES FORWARD.

INT. TRUCK CAB - SAME

Ben stops the truck. With anticipation he looks over his shoulder to see if the tree has moved.

He shoves the gear lever in park then climbs out of the cab.

EXT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

He runs to the back of the truck.

The storm rages on.

EXT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Ben looks out towards John and sees that the water level has now risen to engulf most of Johns head. All that can be seen is John's face straining to gasp for air.

Ben races to the shoreline then scrambles out onto the tree to reach John.

He peers over the tree to look down at John.

John looks up to Ben's face.

There is a long pause between them. Ben cannot hold it in any longer he begins to weep.

John just stares at his son.

The storm has subsided to a drizzle.

Rings of water dance around John's lips, nose and eyes.

Father and son stare deep into one another's eyes. No words are exchanged for a long beat.

Ben wipes tears from his eyes to clear his vision.

JOHN

I'm sorry...

I'm sorry Ben.

John's eyes moisten, he begins to breath heavy.

JOHN

I...

His eyes are engulfed by the water. Leaving only his lips and nose barely breaking the surface.

Water trickles into his mouth he spits, and gasps for air.

JOHN

John panics and begins wildly shaking his head and stretching his neck to gasp for air.

JOHN

Ben!  
Ben!

EXT. UNDERWATER - CONTINUOUS

John's POV: Looking up through the waters surface. He can barely make out Ben's face. It's as if he's looking through a drinking glass.

The only sound that can be heard underwater is a slight sloshing of the water with each move John makes.

EXT. WORK SITE -CONTINUOUS

BEN'S POV: John's lips stretch for air, water seeps into his nose and mouth.

John takes a long deep breath.

His lips and nose finally sink beneath the surface.

John's face is fully submerged under a thin veneer of water, his eyes open and shut.

We've just witnessed John's last breath.

Hold on John's submerged face filling the screen. He stares, motionless, helpless.

Hold for a long beat on this eerie moment.

Ben wipes tears from his eyes, looks down and grunts and groans trying to desperately to say something.

He reaches down, grabs John's head trying to lift it out of the water.

John shakes his head lose and shakes it to gesture no.

Tears stream down Ben's face.

Hold on Ben's face.

Suddenly his eyes snap open.

BEN'S POV: He spots the pen in John's shirt pocket.

He quickly reaches into John's shirt pocket and pulls out the white disposable pen.

He raises it to his mouth and bites down on the business end of the pen and pulls the tip and ink-filled tube out of the pen's casing.

He bites down to remove the plug on top.

He slowly dips the pen beneath the waters surface and carefully slips it between John's lips.

John purses his lips then blows hard into the casing, water sprays out of it.

We can hear John suck and blow fast paced short breaths through the pen casings narrow opening.

Small bubbles form around the opening.

The pen protrudes up out of the water just inches above the water's surface.

John's chest heaves with every breath.

Ben, in a panic, looks back at the truck and one last look at John..

He quickly scrambles over the tree leaving John alone.

Upon reaching the shore Ben runs to the truck cab and climbs in.

The storm picks up again as they often do in the Northwest. Sheets of rain again begin to pound down upon the scene.

INT. TRUCK CAB- DAY

Ben starts the truck, looks back towards John in the distance.

He shoves the truck in drive and speeds out onto the narrow muddy road they came in on.

The tires spit mud filling the screen.

INT. TRUCK CAB - DAY

Sheets of rain pummel the windshield which renders the wipers useless.

Ben concentrates on what little road he can see ahead.

Just a blurry mosaic of brown and green color shapes is all he can make out.

INT./EXT. TRUCK - DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS AS:

The truck slides around several tight corners, roaring through frame.

Suddenly the truck fishtails off the road out of control.

Ben slams on the brakes.

The truck bed slides through frame and comes to an abrupt stop.

Ben, wide eyed and breathing heavy, looks around.

He stomps the gas pedal, but the truck doesn't move.

EXT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Ben jumps out of the cab, arms overhead to cover his face from the BB shots of rain peppering his face.

He moves around to the back of the truck.

He looks down to see that one wheel is stuck in the mud.

He spots the other wheel hanging off the edge of the road over a 50 foot ravine.

He walks around to get a closer look.

His foot slips slamming Ben to the ground.

Both legs fold over the edge of the road. He begins to slide over the edge.

He turns over onto his stomach and begins to claw at the muddy ground to stop his momentum.

His foot bumps up against a small branch sticking out of the side of the cliff. He toes it.

With effort he strains to pull himself up and over the cliff's edge onto the road.

He quickly turns over onto his back, lifts himself to sit upright and pumps his arms and feet shuffling backwards to get a safe distance from the edge of the cliff.

He sits up, wide-eyed and breathing heavy.

He peers over his shoes looking down at the bottom of the ravine.

Trying to catch his breath he stares at the bottom of the ravine for a moment.

He then stands and scans the area.

Lying on the opposite side of the road are several large weathered pine tree boughs.

Ben dashes over to them.

He bundles them together and with effort drags them over to the rear of the truck.

(The rain is merciless in its attempt to flood the land. It's a torrential downfall typical of Northwest storms. Gale force winds pummel the brush and trees)

One at a time, Ben wedges the pine boughs under the tire that is half buried in the mud.

He makes his way to the cab of the truck and climbs in.

INT. TRUCK CAB - CONTINUOUS

While watching the tire in the rear view side mirror, Ben presses the accelerator.

CROSS CUT: INT./EXT. TRUCK - DAY

The tires spin freely.

Ben's foot presses down harder on the accelerator again.

The tire spins.

His foot lets up.

His eyebrows narrow.

His foot presses down on the accelerator again.

The tire continues to spin.

EXT. TRUCK - DAY

Ben exits the cab and makes his way to the rear of the truck.

He shoves the pine branches further under the tire.

He stands and thinks for a moment.

A shard of lightning cleaves the sky startling Ben.

He looks up at the sky, nothing but grey, black clouds and shots of rain.

He then fixes his eyes upon the tire and studies it for a moment.

He removes his jacket then wedges it between the tire and the pine branches.

Ben makes his way back to the truck cab and climbs in.

INT. TRUCK CAB - CONTINUOUS

Ben presses the accelerator.

He cranks the wheel left and right.

The truck begins to rock back and forth.

EXT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Finally, the tire gains purchase on the jacket and the truck gradually breaks free and lurches back up onto the road.

INT. TRUCK CAB - CONTINUOUS

Ben roars off down the muddy road.

Lightening flashes and thunder continue to crack overhead as the rain floods the land.

EXT. FORREST ROAD - DAY

The truck wipes through frame several times as it makes its way around tight corners splaying mud in every direction.

INT. TRUCK CAB - CONTINUOUS

Instantly, something slams into the windshield, Ben jolts his head back and slams on the brakes, bringing the truck to a sliding stop.

He spots a crack running the length of the windshield and something large on the hood of the truck.

He exits the truck.

EXT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

A large tree branch lays across the hood of the truck.

Ben grabs the branch and with considerable effort drags it off the hood.

The wind driven rain lashes at his face.

As he climbs up to get into the cab, he stops, looks up ahead and freezes.

He notices something we've been hearing since he got out of the truck to remove the branch.

The rains have caused the washed out road to swell into a raging river.

Paralyzed with fear, Ben just stares for a long beat at the violent turbulence daring him to cross.

He climbs in and closes the door.

INT. TRUCK CAB - CONTINUOUS

Ben, wipes his eyes with his arm, takes a deep breath and slowly inches the truck forward.

EXT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

As the front end of the truck begins to enter the water the truck immediately begins to twist sideways.

The stampede of water pounds the side of the truck.

CROSS CUT: INT/EXT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

He presses the accelerator pedal down.

The truck begins to tilt sideways, he struggles to keep from losing his grip on the wheel.

He steadies himself as the truck is pushed and shoved about from the gushing water.

He looks down and notices that the water has now entered the truck through the floor board.

The water level is rising quickly.

The trucks motor stalls.

The truck is half submerged in the raging river, tossed about, losing traction and pushed down river.

INT. TRUCK CAB - CONTINUOUS

Ben, in a panic, whips his head in every direction to get a clearer look outside the cab of the truck.

Suddenly he is thrown across the seat into the passenger side window.

His head slams into the window, opening a gash in his forehead. He grabs his head and winces.

Like a rag doll, he is thrown once again to the opposite side of the cab.

He tries to open the door, but to no avail.

He tries the power window, no go.

The water level has now reached above the seat and slowly creeping its way upwards.

Blood mixed with water races down Ben's face.

He wipes his face to see better.

EXT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

We watch the truck being thrown about at the mercy of the river.

The storm has stepped up it's assault. Thunder explodes overhead.

A shard of lightening cleaves the canopy of black and gray sky.

The gushing water pummels the truck down river.

INT. TRUCK CAB - CONTINUOUS

Ben looks over his shoulder and takes note of the pass-through window leading out to the truck bed.

He grabs the latch and pulls with all he's got.

His hand slips on the first attempt.

A second attempt, it opens.

With great effort Ben begins to pull himself through the narrow opening.

He looks up and sees that the groceries and cooler have let loose their contents and have spilled out over the rails into the river.

He watches as the river drags everything away.

With one last pull of the arms, Ben exits the truck cab.

To break free, he kicks his foot against the pass through.

He falls into the water filled truck-bed losing a shoe in the process.

EXT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Suddenly, the truck jolts to a stop.

The truck begins to lean down river.

The upriver side begins to lift.

In a panic, Ben's head swivels back and forth looking for an option to safety.

The truck turns over.

Ben, not being able to see anything, reaches out.

His hands grope for something to grab hold of.

Finally, he grabs hold of a tree limb.

He pulls himself toward the limb.

Drags himself up onto the fallen tree and hangs on with everything he's got.

The force of the river continues to pound the overturned truck into the fallen tree.

With every surge, the truck pounds the fallen tree violently.

## EXT. FALLEN TREE - CONTINUOUS

Ben steps carefully across the fallen tree, grasping limbs to steady himself. The wind driven rain continues to lash at him.

The raging water below is just inches from the base of the tree.

Ben's foot slips causing both feet to lose traction.

His knuckles blanch as he squeezes the tree branch.

With all his strength he gradually pulls himself up and kicks one leg over the fallen tree, then stands once again.

With measured steps he reaches the end of the fallen tree.

He sees a large gap between him and the other side of the road.

He adjusts his stance and nods three times in count and with a burst of energy...

Ben leaps from the tree and lands just inches from the edge of the river.

His shoe-less foot slips in the mud, breaching the surface of the water.

The river beast begins to pull him under.

He claws at the mud to get to solid ground.

The current is too powerful. It drags him away.

Ben waves his arms frantically trying to keep his head above water as he shrinks from view, hurling down river.

## EXT. RIVER - CONTINUOUS

Ben is carried mercilessly down river around a bend close to the shoreline and then...

Suddenly He is jolted to a halt.

He grimaces in pain as his back bows.

A large branch jutting out into the current has stopped his momentum.

The force of the water continues to bow Ben's back. His face contorts in pain.

He struggles to look over his shoulder, to see...

The river current churning and bubbling, taking branches and underbrush with it.

With great effort, wincing in pain, Ben rolls over to his stomach.

Gasping for air, he grabs the large branch and begins to slowly pull himself up to safety.

After several tugs he pulls himself to higher ground then rolls over onto his back.

EXT. FORREST - TWILIGHT

Ben, lying on his back, his chest heaving, gulps for air.

He stares up at the sky.

Shots of rain pelt his muddy face.

A mixture of blood, water and mud renders Ben barely recognizable as the fresh-faced boy we met earlier.

BEN'S POV: Bullets of rain plunge down from the thunder clouds. Early evening is setting in.

INT. MCCLEARY HOUSE - TWILIGHT

BETH  
Twenty four hours!

Beth listens.

BETH  
They left this morning around eleven.

(Listening)  
I've already told you I don't know where it is! I have a photograph of it before he started clearing it.  
He wanted it to be a surprise.

Beth, with a phone to her ear, paces in the front room.

BETH  
It's a white Ford Truck. F-250.  
(Listens, Frustrated)

I don't know what year. It's older.

Beth sits down next to a lamp and side table. On the table is a framed copy of the same photograph we saw in Ben's room earlier.

She stares at it.

BETH  
It's going to get dark soon.  
Listen, if it wasn't for the storm  
I wouldn't be bothering you with  
this.

Beth stands and paces again.

BETH  
They were suppose to be home at 5.  
He would have called. He always  
stops to call before he heads home.

In the background is a prepared dinner on the family dining table, untouched. The nice table cloth, the silver and china all speak of "Truce". Candles continue to burn to the nubs.

BETH  
(Listening)  
Wait for what?! Did you see the  
storm that just passed through?!  
I'm Sorry. I'm sorry, I just...

Beth takes a deep breath to calm herself.

She sits back down and curls up on the chair.

BETH  
I don't know...  
(softly)  
...It's just a feeling I have when  
something's wrong.

Hold on Beth.

She sits up abruptly.

BETH  
Thank you! Thank you!  
(Listening)  
Yes, I know where it is! I can be  
there in less than an hour. Thank  
you so much.

She sets the phone down and races around the house to grab her purse, jacket, car keys and darts out the front door.

BACK TO:

EX. FORREST ROAD - TWILIGHT

The rain has stopped, the storm has passed. The forrest is silent.

Ben shuffles down the middle of a very long stretch of muddy road that slices through the dense forest. The forest is thick with timber and dark.

The various voices of the forrest come to life once again.

Reminiscent of a medieval forest, green moss drapes across the tree branches throughout the forest. (This is a familiar sight on the Olympic Peninsula.)

Ben's bare foot is cut up and bloody. He limps along.

Trickles of dried blood and mud have left tracks upon his face. Our fresh-faced little boy has seasoned in just a few short hours.

We stay with him, as he drags his feet down the long stretch of road.

Ben's face is expressionless. His eyelids begin to close.

His eyes open and close from fatigue. He is not so much walking, as he is stumbling along.

He makes his way slowly over the muddy road.

Ben, now delirious from exhaustion doesn't recognize anything familiar.

He slowly wheels his body around, wincing in pain.

His brow wrinkles.

He swivels his head. He can barely make out anything.

He walks a few steps in several different directions then...

He falls to his knees and begins to sway.

With effort, he rises to his feet and begins to shuffle forward.

After a few more steps, he stumbles again, then crumples to the ground.

Ben lies there motionless, staring straight ahead. His body shivers.

Ben's shadowy figure lies shaking on the forest floor.

BACK TO:

EXT. WORK SITE - TWILIGHT

The tip of the pen fills the frame. It is now only an inch above the water's surface.

John's submerged face fills the screen. We see his eyes flutter, as he fights to stay awake.

His eyes flutter one last time, then close shut.

The pen begins to tip over.

CLOSE ON PEN:

The TIP OF THE PEN slowly falls to the surface of the water.

The pen is less than a quarter of an inch from breaking the surface and going under.

JOHN'S FACE:

John's eyes flash open. He bites down hard on the pen.

He jerks his head to the side trying to get the pen to stand upright.

With determined effort, using his tongue, he manages to get the pen to stand upright.

VOICE (O.S.)  
(Barely audible)  
Wow! Check this out!

EXT. LOG CABIN SITE - TWILIGHT

Two Backpackers: STEVE and KALA, saddled with large backpacks come upon the scene.

They traverse their way toward the water's edge.

They stop just a few short yards from where John is submerged under water.

KALA  
Are you sure we're not lost.

STEVE  
I promise you we are not lost.

KALA  
This is beautiful! Look at the cliffs.

Steve spots the tools and timber.

STEVE  
Looks like someone's building here.

KALA  
We should get going and find a place to set up before it gets too dark.

STEVE  
We'll stay here.

KALA  
We can't stay here.

They both scan the area for signs of people.

STEVE  
There's no one here. It's just for the night.

KALA  
It's trespassing.

STEVE  
Jesus, are you serious. It's no big deal. We can get a good nights sleep, then move on.

KALA  
What if someone shows up?

STEVE  
Trust me, OK? I'm hungry and I'm tired. Let's set up before it gets dark.

BACK TO:

EXT. WORK SITE - TWILIGHT

CLOSE ON JOHN'S FACE

His eyes roll left to get a clearer look at Steve and Kala.

JOHN'S POV:

Through the surface of the water John clocks the blurry images of the backpackers standing on the shore.

CLOSE ON JOHN'S EYE'S

He strains to see more clearly.

BACK TO:

STEVE AND KALA

They are oblivious to the fact that a man is buried under water just a few feet away.

BACK TO:

JOHN'S FACE:

John, wide eyed, hums a cry for help through the pen, being careful not to lose it out of his mouth.

JOHN'S POV:

We see Steve and Kala turn and walk back toward the clearing.

JOHN'S FACE:

John, noticing them leaving, closes his eyes and with greater effort hums louder through the pen's casing.

He strains to see the two backpackers through the water.

JOHN'S POV:

The hikers disappear out of sight.

INT. AIRPORT LOBBY - TWILIGHT

Beth strides through glass doors into a small nondescript Airport lobby.

She clocks the room for people and walks up to two men in uniform. (DEPUTY SHERIFF PATTERSON and DEPUTY REYNOLDS)

In the back ground on the tarmac outside, a pilot is doing a flight check on a rescue helicopter.

BETH

I'm Beth McCleary.

SHERIFF

Mrs. McCleary I'm Deputy Sheriff Patterson. This is Deputy Reynolds, with Search and Rescue.

BETH

Did you find them?

SHERIFF PATTERSON

Not yet. We were told you have a photograph of the location.

Beth rifles through her purse.

BETH

I do, I do...

Beth struggles to find the photo.

BETH

Damnit!

She loses her composure, closes her eyes shut to gain it back.

She takes a deep breath and resumes looking through her purse.

BETH

Here it is.

She hands Sheriff Patterson the photo. He looks it over.

INSERT PHOTO:

It is a self taken photo of John at the site. He has a big smile on his face and his arms are stretched out and open wide as if to surprise.

SHERIFF PATTERSON  
Yep that's him alright.

BETH  
You know my husband?

DEPUTY REYNOLDS  
That can be anywhere.

SHERIFF PATTERSON  
Is this the only photograph you  
have?

BETH  
Yes, I'm sorry. You know John?

SHERIFF PATTERSON  
Well, ma'am we're checking with the  
County Register's office, cross  
referencing your husbands name with  
property owners in the area...  
This isn't routine for us. And yes  
I do know your husband.  
(to Deputy Reynolds)

He was a hell of an athlete. We  
played ball together in High  
School. That's why I'm doing this.  
I just hope no one gets wind of it.

BETH  
I appreciate it.

Beth offers her hand up for a handshake.

BETH  
I'm Beth.

They shake.

The drama of the evening has taken it's toll on her.

BETH  
Can I come with you?!

SHERIFF PATTERSON  
I'm afraid not. We'd prefer you to  
stay here.  
(Pointing to a woman  
behind the counter)  
Karen, our dispatcher will keep you  
posted. OK?

Beth looks to KAREN sitting behind a counter in front of a desk mic listening to a police scanner.

Hearing the chatter on the scanner, Beth's eyes lock onto the scanner. She listens for any information about John or Ben.

DEPUTY REYNOLDS  
Ma'am you gonna be OK?

Beth, lost in thought, is startled back to the conversation.

BETH  
I'm sorry?

DEPUTY REYNOLDS  
Are you going to be alright?

BETH  
(Sotto voce)  
No.

The whine of the helicopter, whines to life outside interrupting the moment.

Beth makes her way over to a seating area close to the counter. She sits and watches the Sheriffs exit the building onto the tarmac.

FADE TO:

EXT. FORREST - NIGHT

Ben shuffles slowly down the narrow muddy road.

His eyes are closed. His clothes are drenched in mud, blood, and sweat.

He stumbles to the ground.

He curls up defeated and just stares straight ahead into the distance.

FROM BEN'S POV:

In the near distance, a car races through frame (Ben has reached the main road).

His eyes open.

He stumbles to his feet and shuffles toward the main road.

Expressionless, Ben stands in the middle of the road swaying back and forth.

CROSS CUT: INT. LOGGING TRUCK CAB/EXT. MAIN ROAD - NIGHT

Two truckers are laughing it up. The passenger, Bud, is drinking a beer and continuing to restate the punch line to a funny joke. The driver, TOM, tilts his head back and laughs loudly.

Ben's eyes squint as a bright light fills the screen.

BEN'S POV:

Racing up over the rise of the road, the logging truck is barreling down toward Ben.

The loggers continue to laugh. Tom gestures to Bud.

TOM  
Hey, give me another one of those  
will ya?

Tom turns his head to watch Bud as he reaches behind his seat searching for a beer. He grabs one and looks up and spots Ben.

BUD  
Stop!

Ben, with his eyes closed, hears nothing. He remains still.

Tom stomps down hard on the brake.

The logging truck begins to skid.

Smoke billows out over the rear tires.

Tom fights to crank the steering wheel.

The truck begins to jackknife.

The rear tires begin to bounce up and down from the weight of the load. Plumes of blue smoke fill the air.

Tom cranks the wheel right then left to counteract the jackknife motion.

The grill of the large truck overtakes the frame.

The truck skids to a stop.

Ben hasn't moved a muscle.

The truck cab is inches from Ben.

Blue smoke wafts past frame.

TOM  
Holy shit!

They bolt out of the cab, jump down and race to the front of the truck.

With its headlights flooding the scene, the large logging truck sits askew idling loudly.

Tom and Bud shout to each other over the trucks roaring motor.

BUD (O.S.)  
It's a kid!

He grabs Ben by the shoulder and gives him a shake.

BUD  
Hey Partner!

Ben opens his eyes and just stares at Bud.

TOM  
What's he doing all the way out here?!

Ben lifts his arm slowly and points down the road.

The men turn to look.

Bud looks at Tom.

BUD  
Car accident.

Tom nods in agreement.

Bud scoops Ben up into his arms and carries him to the truck's cab.

Tom jogs to the drivers side.

He grabs a tattered blanket from behind his seat and throws it to Bud.

Bud wraps Ben in the blanket then lifts Ben up into the cab of the logging truck.

INT. LOGGING TRUCK CAB - NIGHT

Tom slams the large truck into gear, cranks the wheel right and begins driving down the narrow muddy road.

THE LOGGING TRUCK ROARS THROUGH FRAME.

INT. LOGGING TRUCK CAB - NIGHT

Tom is on a CB radio.

TOM

Yeah, yeah, Copy that. We're on the old fire road leading out to Mud Cove.

VOICE ON CB RADIO

How old is he?

Tom looks to Ben for an answer to the question.

Ben does not respond.

TOM

How old are you?

BEN

(no response)

Tom nudges Ben.

TOM

Hey, how old are you?

Ben reads his lips.

Opens his hands to display ten fingers.

His hands are cut up, muddy and bloody.

TOM

He's 10.

VOICE ON CB RADIO

He was just standing there?

TOM

Yep, damn near killed him. And us.  
Hey put a shout out to the  
Sheriff's will ya? Most likely a  
car accident.

VOICE ON CB RADIO  
Roger that, Out!

TOM  
Out!

TOM  
(Nudging Ben)  
Who was with you?

Ben does not respond.

Tom just stares at him for a moment.

Bud studies Ben.

Ben's eyes flutter then finally close. He leans against Tom's shoulder.

Tom looks to Bud. They stare at each other for a moment.

TOM  
So much for bowling tonight.

The logging truck roars through frame.

BACK TO:

EXT. WORK SITE - NIGHT

The pen barely breaks the water's surface. The water level remains steady.

JOHN'S FACE UNDERWATER:

We gradually PUSH IN on his eyes.

FLASHBACK:

-- John is sitting on the floor across from Ben (age 5) trying desperately to communicate to him in sign language. He struggles with it. Ben laughs playfully.

-- John growing more frustrated, tries once again to connect with his son.

JOHN  
(Gestures to Ben)  
Why not do it this way, it's easier.

BEN  
(Shakes his head no)

Ben shows John once more the correct way to sign.

JOHN  
That's bullshit, they make it  
harder than it needs to be.

-- John catches Ben laughing at him playfully.

-- Suddenly, John reaches out and swats Ben upside the head,  
knocking Ben over to the ground.

Ben looks up in fear.

JOHN  
Don't laugh at me! I'm not the deaf  
and dumb one God Damnit!

Ben shocked and frightened fixes his eyes on John's hand and  
then onto John's eyes.

MATCH CUT TO:

FLASHBACK: JOHN AS A YOUNG BOY (AGE 8)

INT. KITCHEN

YOUNG JOHN'S POV:

Mean bloodshot eyes fill the screen.

JOHN'S FATHER  
What are you looking at! Huh! Ya  
little shit!

JOHN'S FACE:

We see the same look of shock and fright on young John's face  
as was on Ben's previously.

JOHN'S FATHER:

His father turns and proceeds to push his John's mother  
across the kitchen.

BACK TO:

PRESENT DAY:

EXT. WORK SITE - NIGHT

JOHN'S FACE UNDERWATER:

His chest heaves and his stomach pumps up and down.

Small bubbles froth upon the tip of the pen.

We can hear John moaning through the pen.

Hold on this moment for a beat.

INT. HELICOPTER COCKPIT - NIGHT

Air traffic control chatter is heard just barely beneath the roar of the engine and the whop, whop, whop, of the rotor blades.

The pilot we saw earlier along with Deputy Reynold's and a SEARCH AND RESCUE TEAM scan the ground below with a search light.

EXT. FOREST BELOW - SAME

The helicopter glides along the coast. The searchlight scans the forest below. The forest is thick and spreads out forever.

A call comes in through the radio.

RADIO (O.S.)  
K996W this is K993W do you copy?  
Over.

INT. HELICOPTER COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

DEPUTY REYNOLDS  
This is K996W, we copy, over.

RADIO  
We just got word, two loggers  
picked up a young boy along the old  
fire road leading out to Mud Cove,  
Over.

DEPUTY REYNOLDS  
Copy that. We're on our way, Over.

RADIO  
This is K993W over and out.

DEPUTY REYNOLDS  
K996W, out.

EXT. HELICOPTER - CONTINUOUS

The helicopter peels off and banks hard in the opposite direction.

INT. AIRPORT LOBBY - NIGHT

KAREN  
I just over-heard, that a ten year old boy was found on one of the old fire roads, several miles out.

Beth stands and darts to the counter.

BETH  
Ben?

KAREN  
He's pretty beat up, but he's alive.  
A couple of loggers picked him up.  
They said he's having a hard time talking.

BETH  
He's deaf.

KAREN  
He's what?

BETH  
He's deaf... and... mute.

KAREN  
I'm sorry...

BETH  
For what?

KAREN  
Well, what I mean is...

BETH  
I know what you meant, it's OK. And my husband?

Karen shakes her head no.

Beth turns to look out at the night sky and walks back to her seat squeezing the life out of her purse.

Beth turns quickly to Karen.

BETH  
Can my car make it out there?!

KAREN  
I doubt it. The roads are pretty bad.

BETH  
Can I get a ride out there?

KAREN  
I'm sorry all of our vehicles are out. You're better off staying here... I'll keep you posted.

She smiles.

KAREN  
Promise.

Beth turns and races toward the lobby door and exits.

EXT. AIRPORT PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Beth bolts out into the parking lot toward her car. She looks up to see in the near distance, a NICELY DRESSED MAN getting into a shiny new black Chevy truck decked out to the max; running lights, wench etc.

Beth shouts across the parking lot.

BETH  
Excuse me! Excuse me!, Can you help me?! It's an emergency!

MAN

I'm sorry, I'm running late as it is. I gotta get home to my family.

BETH  
Me too! Except mine's stuck out there somewhere!

Beth strides across the parking lot toward the truck.

NICELY DRESSED MAN

What?

BETH

My husband and son were in an accident. The Sheriff is looking for them. They found my son. Some place called Mud Cove.

NICELY DRESSED MAN

Yea, I know where it is. That's a long way out.

BETH

They said my car won't make it on the roads out there.

NICELY DRESSED MAN

They're right.

BETH

I'll pay you... Please, I have to get out there.

NICELY DRESSED MAN

I don't need your money... If I were you, I'd just sit tight and let the Sheriff department do their job... It's what we pay them for.

He opens his door and climbs in.

NICELY DRESSED MAN

Look, I'd love to help, but I'm already running late. I'm sure everything will work out just fine.

He starts up the truck and pulls out of the parking lot.

Beth watches as the truck shrinks into the distance.

Her eyes cast downward, she walks back toward her car.

INT. CHEVY TRUCK - NIGHT

In the rear view mirror, the nicely dressed man spots Beth in the far distance slowly making her way back to her car.

He slows then stops the truck.

He thinks for a moment, then shakes his head and with a sigh...

EXT. AIRPORT PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

The truck returns to the parking lot and drives up behind Beth's car, just as she is about to open the car door...

The nicely dressed man leans out of his window.

NICELY DRESSED MAN

Hey!

Beth turns.

NICELY DRESSED MAN

Hurry up! Hop in!

She hustles back to the truck and climbs in.

INT. CHEVY TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

BETH

Thank you so much.

NICELY DRESSED MAN

My wife's gonna kick my ass for  
being home late.

BETH

I'll vouch for you.

Beth reaches her hand out.

BETH

Beth.

He shakes her hand.

NICELY DRESSED MAN

Rick.

A slight smile of relief breaks upon Beth's face.

BACK TO:

INT. LOGGING TRUCK CAB - NIGHT

The logging truck has come upon the washed out road. It's not nearly as violent and is certainly no match for this massive truck.

As they cross the road, Tom and Bud notice the Ford truck turned upside down wedged beneath the tree.

They look at each other fearing the worse.

Tom looks down at Ben, who is now awake.

TOM  
Is that yours?

Ben does not respond.

Tom nudges him and Ben looks up.

TOM  
Is that yours?

Ben, reading his lips.

BEN  
(Nods yes)

TOM  
Was your dad or mom in the truck  
with you?

BEN  
(Nods yes)

Tom looks over to Bud.

Bud's reaction.

Tom nudges Ben to get his attention, then points to him then to one of his own ears and shakes his head.

BEN  
(Nods yes)

TOM  
(Looks at Bud)  
He's deaf.

Bud shakes his head in disbelief.

TOM  
Are - your - parents - in - that  
truck?

BEN  
(Shakes his head no)

Ben points down the road.

BUD

That way?

BEN

(nods yes)

Tom and Bud take a quick look at each other and...

TOM

(Gesturing with his hands  
and, speaking slowly.)

Can you show us with your hands  
what happened?

BEN

(Ben reading his lips nods yes)

The logging truck roars off down the muddy road.

BACK TO:

EXT. LOG CABIN SITE - NIGHT

Steve and Kala are stoking a fire.

The loud diesel engine of the logging truck can be heard  
roaring up to the scene.

KALA

I knew it!

The logging truck screeches to a stop.

Tom jumps out and runs toward the backpackers..

Bud reaches behind his seat and pulls out a large chainsaw.

He opens the gas cap while on the run to join Tom.

TOM

Grab the hand wench too! Hurry!

Bud stops, turns, then runs back to the truck.

EXT. LOG CABIN SITE - CONTINUOUS

Tom races up to Steve and Kala.

KALA

Hey, hey we were just leaving!

Tom on the run.

TOM  
Watch the boy in the truck will ya?!

KALA  
What?!

He runs past Steve and Kala.

TOM  
The boy in the truck. Watch him!  
Get him something to drink!

Tom races ahead toward the edge of the cove.

Bud, carrying the chainsaw and hand wench, passes Steve and Kala and catches up to Tom.

They both race to the water's edge.

Tom and Bud scan the site looking for John.

Steve and Kala run to the truck and find Ben slouched on the seat.

Steve spots the cuts and bruises on Ben.

STEVE  
Wow.

In the background, the whop, whop, whop, whop of the helicopter blades can be heard closing in.

Steve and Kala look up.

KALA  
What the hell is going on?

INT. HELICOPTER COCKPIT - NIGHT

PILOT  
There it is.

The helicopter circles overhead shining the search light down upon the scene.

EXT. LOGGING TRUCK CAB - CONTINUOUS

Kala and Steve reach into the cab and carry Ben across the clearing to their tent.

INT. TENT - CONTINUOUS

They enter the tent and begin to remove his drenched and muddy clothes.

Ben pushes them away.

KALA

You gotta take the wet clothes off  
in order to get warm.

Ben just stares at her.

KALA

OK, tell ya what... Let's at least  
take the shirt off... OK?

Ben pauses for a moment then gives a slight nod.

Kala removes his shirt. His skinny body is ravaged from the storm. There are cuts and bruises everywhere.

Ben's battered body tells the story of his ordeal clearly.

There is a solemn beat shared between the three of them.

EXT. WORK SITE - CONTINUOUS

The helicopter pilot speaks through an onboard loud speaker.

PILOT

Pierce County Sheriff Search and  
Rescue, do you copy?!

Tom pulls a handheld Ham radio clipped to his belt and holds it up to the pilot.

PILOT

(Through the on board loud  
speaker)

Switch to Channel 14.

Tom does as ordered.

The helicopter search light scans the ground for John.

TOM

(Into the radio)

Do you see him? The boy said he was  
over here!

PILOT (THROUGH TOM'S RADIO SPEAKER)

Negative.

TOM

Damnit! Bud?!

Bud in the middle distance scans the area.

BUD

Nothing!

TOM

Keep looking!

The Helicopter continues to circle.

Bud splits off in another direction.

Tom's eyes sweep the area.

TOM

Where are you?

BUD (O.S.)

Over here!

Tom looks a few yards up the shoreline to Bud.

Bud waving his arm and pointing down to John.

BUD'S POV:

John's face, submerged under water, can barely be seen in the dark.

Bud bends over to get a closer look.

Bud spots the pen first then John's submerged face.

BUD

How in the hell...?

CUT TO:

EXT. CHEVY TRUCK - NIGHT

The truck fishtails around a tight turn spitting a rooster tail of mud and water.

INT. CHEVY TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

RICK  
(mid conversation,  
rattling on)

... So he say's he can't give me  
much on the trade, so instead, he  
offers up a set of sheep skin seat  
covers. Who the hell uses those  
things any more? Ha! (He laughs  
loudly)

His laugh startles Beth out of a blank stare.

BETH  
Oh..., I'm sorry. I was... I was  
thinking.

RICK  
No apology necessary, I get it.

They hit a bump in the road and the truck leaps into the air.

Beth grabs the hand hold above.

RICK  
(laughing)  
Ye hawwww! I've always wanted to do  
that! My wife won't let me take it  
out in the sticks. She say's it'll  
ruin the value. Fuck that! What's  
the point then, right?

Beth looks to Rick.

BETH  
Right.

RICK  
Damn straight!

BETH  
Can you please go faster?

RICK  
Really?!

Beth nods.

BETH  
Really.

RICK  
You got it!

Rick plunges the accelerator to the floorboard.

EXT. FORREST ROAD - CONTINUOUS

The Truck splatters mud into frame and shrinks away.

BACK TO:

EXT. WORK SITE - NIGHT

Tom hustles over to Bud.

BUD  
He's alive!

Tom looks down and see's John's face and the pen barely peaking out above the water's surface.

TOM  
Is that a pen?

BUD  
Yep.

TOM  
No shit?

JOHN'S POV: Looking up at Tom and Bud crouched over him.

John can only hear muffled noises and can barely make out what is going on.

TOM and BUD'S POV: Looking down at John.

John shuts his eyes then opens them. (Is this real? Or a dream?)

TOM  
Get him something else to breath through!

Tom picks up the chainsaw and yanks it to life.

He begins cutting.

Bud tares off toward the tent.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

Ben lying down with his head propped up looks out through the tent's entrance.

He can see in the distance, Tom wielding the chainsaw.

INT. TENT - CONTINUOUS

Bud bursts through the tent's entrance.

BUD

We need something for him to breath through!

KALA

Him? What him?

BUD

The boys father!

KALA

What?!

BUD

His dad is pinned under a tree submerged under water.

Kala and Steve share a look.

STEVE

Where?

Bud points to where Tom is working.

BUD

There! Where my partner's cutting.

Kala and Steve clock the spot where Tom is cutting.

STEVE

Oh my God.

Kala reacts.

BUD (O.S.)

This'll do.

Bud finds a plastic Coke bottle. He pours out the contents and fishes into his pocket.

BUD

Damnit!

Ben reaches into his pocket and pulls out his pocket knife and offers it to Bud.

BUD

Thanks partner, you're a life saver.

The full weight of that line falls on Ben.

With Steve, Kala and Ben watching on, Bud quickly cuts the bottom of the plastic bottle off, closes the knife and then hands it back to Ben.

He peels away toward the rescue site.

BACK TO:

EXT. RESCUE SITE - NIGHT

Tom working.

The chainsaw knifes it's way through one section of the log.

Bud arrives with the Coke bottle and...

bends down and touches John's face.

John flinches.

Bud gives John the OK sign.

He covers the opening on the bottle with his thumb then lowers it to John's mouth careful not to allow any water to seep in.

He brings it to John's lips then begins to insert it into his mouth.

John shakes him off. He is not prepared to give up the pen just yet.

Tom begins to cut another section of the tree.

Bud tries once more.

John, past delirium, shakes him off again.

BUD

I'm trying to save your life,  
Damnit!

He tries once more, this time more forcefully.

John fights him by closing his lips tighter.

Bud persists.

The bottle top separates John's lips.

Bud forces it into his mouth.

The pen tips then drops to the surface floating away upon the rings of water made by the working men.

John gulps for air through the plastic bottle.

Tom suddenly straightens up.

TOM  
Got it!

Tom hands the chainsaw to Bud.

Bud sets it down on a dry section of the felled tree.

The tree rolls over.

The chainsaw falls into the water.

The tree begins to pull John under.

John, still underwater shouts. The Coke bottle drops from his mouth.

Simultaneously the sawed off piece of tree trunk bobs to the surface releasing John's legs.

Bud grabs John under the arm pits and snatches him up out of the water.

JOHN  
(Chokes for air)

The log rolls over one last time.

TOM  
We got him! We got him!

John hangs on Bud's shoulders wincing in pain and coughing, groping for oxygen.

Tom and Bud wave up to the helicopter.

INT. HELICOPTER COCKPIT - NIGHT

PILOT  
They got him.

DEPUTY REYNOLDS  
Can you land in the clearing?

PILOT  
It's tight.

EXT. RESCUE SITE - CONTINUOUS

The helicopter circles to prepare to land.

BACK TO:

INT. CHEVY TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

The truck comes upon the washed out road.

Rick brings the truck to an abrupt stop.

RICK  
Whoa!

BETH  
Go through it.

RICK  
Seriously?

BETH  
Go through it! That's what this  
thing's made for, right?

RICK  
OK, what the hell. Why not?

EXT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

The tires spin, gain purchase, and the truck plows its way  
through the water.

INT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

BETH  
Oh my God.

She spots the truck wedged under the fallen tree and notices that it has been battered severely.

Beth takes it in.

BETH  
Come on, come on.

Rick steps on the gas and cleaves a swath through the water and speeds away.

BACK TO:

EXT. RESCUE SITE - NIGHT

The helicopter has landed and John is being lifted into the helicopter port-side door.

He looks back to see Ben being carried by the rescue team from the tent to the helicopter.

Steve, Kala, Tom and Bud, look on.

Ben, being carried by one of the members of the S & R team, looks toward the helicopter.

He can barely make out his dad's face in the back of the helicopter.

John is swaddled in a blanket.

Paramedics hook him up to an IV and oxygen.

They work on his legs.

Ben and John's eyes meet as one of the rescuers passes Ben to another rescuer on board.

John's eyebrows narrow as he studies Ben's face, which is covered in dried blood and mud.

Ben stares back at John.

The rescuers slide Ben next to John.

John reaches out to Ben and pulls him closer to nestle his head into his chest.

He squeezes Ben tightly.

EXT. LOG CABIN SITE - NIGHT

The Chevy truck races into view and slides to a stop.

Beth jumps out of the truck and sprints toward the helicopter.

Beth races across the field waving her arms.

BETH  
Stop! Stop! Wait!

She cannot be heard over the mixture of loud noises.

Tom see's Beth and radios into his handheld radio.

TOM  
Hold on! I repeat, hold on!

INT. HELICOPTER COCKPIT - NIGHT

The helicopter pilot looks out and sees Beth sprinting toward the helicopter.

PILOT  
Roger that.

Beth makes her way to the port-side helicopter door.

Her eyes find John first, then Ben wrapped up in John's arms.

John and Beth share a look.

One of the rescuers helps Beth in through the bay door.

She crosses over them and sits next to John.

She breaks down and weeps while lying her head on John's shoulder and wraps her arms around both John and Ben.

EXT. LOG CABIN SITE - SAME

Tom, Bud, Steve and Kala look on, as the helicopter lifts, circles, then tilts toward the open ocean and shrinks into the night sky.

FADE TO:

SUPER: TWO WEEKS LATER

EXT. LOG CABIN SITE - DAY

It's a stunningly beautiful day. Not a cloud in the sky. A far cry from what we've experienced here before.

A truck emerges from the narrow forest road, pulls up to the clearing and stops.

Beth exits the cab from the drivers side.

Ben slides over, follows her out and quickly runs around the front of the truck to the passenger side.

INT. TRUCK CAB - DAY

John watches Ben run around the front of the truck.

EXT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Ben opens the passenger side door.

John hands Ben his crutches, grabs Ben's hand, steadies himself and stands.

He has a cast on one leg that rises above his thigh.

Beth joins them.

All three stand together, scanning the site.

BETH  
It's beautiful....

Ben looks up at his mom.

Beth spreads her arms wide then...

BETH  
(signing to Ben)  
Beautiful.

Ben smiles.

John's eyes sweep the site.

JOHN  
(whispers)  
Surprise.

He grins.

Beth grins back and pulls him in tighter next to her.

She signs to Ben.

BETH  
Let's go down to the seashore.

Ben nods in agreement. They begin to walk.

John hesitates. Beth stops.

BETH  
We can go later.

JOHN  
No... Let's go.

BETH  
Are you sure?

JOHN  
Yep.

They all slowly make their way toward the shoreline.

John struggles with the crutches.

They come upon the edge of the cove. The tide is out.

EXT. WORK SITE - DAY

John looks down and studies the tree that had him pinned.

He takes a long pause.

BETH  
We can go back, John.

JOHN  
(softly)  
I'm alright.

Beth, looks away avoiding the tree altogether.

She clocks the beautiful surroundings as she takes a deep breath, holds it, then exhales with a smile.

Ben mimics her.

Her smile breaks wider in response as she winks at Ben. Ben smiles back.

John, deep in thought, studies the tree.

He looks up and around to shake off the impending emotions.

He spots in the distance, his jacket, crumpled up and soggy, washed up onto the muddy shoreline.

Beth noticing John deep in thought.

BETH

(She signs to Ben) Let's get the picnic out of the truck Ben.

Ben nods but lingers by John's side.

Beth breaks away toward the truck.

Ben standing at John's side looks up at him.

John looks down, studies Ben's face then grins.

Ben smiles back.

Ben stares up at his dad contented.

He gives John a thumbs up.

John smiles back and returns the thumbs up.

John pulls him in tighter to his hip.

Ben hugs his dad in return.

Dad and son look out over the ocean to the horizon. Arms around each other.

Ben looks over his shoulder and seeing Beth almost trip over a branch, breaks away from John, runs up to Beth and reaches for her hand.

Holding Beth's hand, Ben helps steady her while they make their way back to the truck to unload.

John looks down once again at what could have been his watery grave.

He takes it in for a long beat.

He turns to crutch back to the truck and as he does something catches his eye.

Lying a few yards away, half buried in mud on the shoreline is the disposable pen.

He crutches over to it. Looks down and stares at it.

JOHN'S POV:

The pen lying in the mud.

BACK TO JOHN.

He bends over, picks it up, and continues to study it for a moment.

He then places the pen into his shirt pocket and crutches himself to the truck to join Beth and Ben.

EXT. TRUCK - SAME

Beth and Ben are unloading grocery bags from the truck bed.

John joins them.

We hold a moment on this moment.

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)

When I was born, dad had to give up  
his scholarship, quit college and  
go to work to support my mother and  
I...

We scan the site one last time panning up toward the cliffs,  
and continue up to the blue sky.

MATCH CUT TO:

BLUE SKY FILLS THE FRAME

SUPER: 2000

We slowly tilt down past a few cumulus clouds in the sky and upon the distant horizon.

MAN'S VOICE (V.O. CONT'D)

...I'm told he was quite an  
athlete. The townsfolk nicknamed  
him Super Boy.

EXT: CEMETERY - DAY

We move down from the blue sky to reveal a MAN'S profile as it rises into and fills the frame.

MAN'S VOICE (V.O. CONT'D)

We never talked much about the  
events that took place that spring.

We slowly continue to tilt down the man's body in profile to his feet and land on:

A GRAVESTONE:

INSERT: John McCleary

Loving Father and Husband

1940 - 1978

MAN'S VOICE (V.O. CONT'D)  
According to the U. S. Department  
of labour, logging, by any measure,  
is the most dangerous occupation in  
the United States.

EXT. CEMETERY - GRAVE SITE - CONTINUOUS

The man: Ben, (now 40) a spitting image of his father. Looking down at John's gravestone.

MAN'S VOICE (V.O. CONT'D)  
In the summer of '78, 6 loggers  
were killed due to either equipment  
failure, uneven terrain or bad  
weather. Dad was one of those 6.

In the background a WOMAN, (BEN'S WIFE) stands next to a Sedan, smiling as she watches two toddler TWIN GIRLS (BEN'S TWIN DAUGHTERS) play tag with each other.

The two girls play and frolic in the grass.

CLOSE ON BEN'S FACE:

In the b.g. a black Mercedez glides through frame. We follow it then continue with the girls playing.

BEN (V.O. CONT'D)  
The day before he was killed we  
were in the backyard cleaning up  
the shed. Out of nowhere he says...  
"Ben, what we fear to communicate  
runs our lives."  
(Long pause)  
That was it, that's all he said...  
I've never forgotten it.

EXT. THE SEDAN - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON: Ben's wife watching their two girls play. She looks over at...

Ben in the near distance looking down on John's gravestone.

Ben studies the gravestone then looks up and scans the surroundings locking eyes on...

BEN'S POV:

Further down the drive path, a MAN IN A SUIT exits the Mercedez with a small bouquet of flowers and walks onto the cemetery lawn.

Ben watches on:

The man stops and stares down at the gravestone.

He then places the flowers on the gravestone.

CROSSCUT: EXT. THE SEDAN/JOHN'S GRAVE SITE - CONTINUOUS

Ben looks over at his two daughters.

They laugh wildly while chasing each other around the open field of perfectly manicured grass.

He then looks over to his wife.

She turns her head and catches Ben looking at her. She gives him an understanding smile and signs to him.

BEN'S WIFE  
(signing)  
You OK?

Ben looks at her with a satisfied expression.

BEN (V.O. CONT'D)  
Mom says dad never felt like he was good enough. That he never measured up to the expectations.

Ben breaks a smile, nods yes, then...

BEN  
(signing)  
I'll just be a minute.

BEN'S WIFE  
(signing back)  
Take your time.

Ben looks over at the man in the suit.

BEN'S POV:

The nicely dressed man struggles with his emotions.

BEN (V.O. CONT'D)  
I didn't have any expectations.

Ben, then looks over at his two daughters.

BEN'S POV: The girls attempt to do somersaults in the grass.

BEN (V.O. CONT'D)  
He was my father.  
(Long pause)  
I needed a dad.

Ben begins to walk back toward the car.

He lurches at the girls to surprise them and pulls a monster face and with his "claws" in the air, begins to chase them.

A broad smile opens upon Ben's wife's face while she looks on.

The girls scream with playful fright and laughter. Ben chases them.

BEN'S TWIN DAUGHTER'S  
(Giggling and screaming,  
various)  
Daddy! Daddy come get me! No get  
me!

Ben continues to play tag with his girls.

BEN (V.O. CONT'D)  
He never got the chance to finish  
the cabin. Mom had to sell the  
property a few years back. I flew  
over it once while taking my editor  
out to look at piece of property  
nearby.

Ben frolics in the grass rolling on the ground with the girls.

Both girls laugh and giggle wildly, chasing Ben with their best monster faces.

FLASHBACK:

INT. AIRPLANE COCKPIT - DAY

Tight on Ben's face looking out of the small airplane window.

BEN'S POV DOWN BELOW:

A large house sits nestled in the cove. Three young children play basketball on the court below. The cove is barely recognizable now.

BEN (V.O. CONT'D)  
A slew of emotions dumped  
throughout my body all at once.  
Jealousy, anger, sadness.  
The concrete slab where the cabin  
was to sit was turned into a  
basketball court. I wanted to  
scream out "Hey my dad built that!"

BACK TO:

PRESENT DAY:

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Ben stops playing with his girls then walks over to his wife and hugs her close.

EXT. SEDAN- DAY

Ben and his wife watch the girls play in the near distance.

Ben looks around and...

BEN'S POV:

Spots the man in the suit getting into his Mercedez and watches as he drives away.

Ben and his wife look on as the girls continue to play tag.

BEN (V.O. CONT'D)

I've heard it said that...

CUT TO:

EXT. GRAVE-SITE - JOHNS'S GRAVESTONE - CONTINUOUS

INSERT: John's gravestone.

John McCleary  
Loving Father and Husband  
1940 - 1978

BEN (V.O. CONT'D)  
Life is but a short dash between  
two dates.

BACK TO:

EXT. CHEVY IMPALA - CONTINUOUS

The two girls run up to Ben and his wife. Each lifts a girl to their hip.

Ben presses his daughter skyward, she screams with delight. He lowers her and gives her an Eskimo kiss.

BEN (V.O. CONT'D)  
We begin our dash with infinite  
possibilities and yet each of us  
leaves behind one particular dash  
that is uniquely our own.

The daughter in Ben's arms cradles his face gently and turns it towards her. She squeezes his cheeks so his lips turn into fish lips.

BEN'S DAUGHTER  
Daddy, who died?

BEN  
(Signing to her)  
Grandpa John.

Ben's daughter continues to play with his cheeks focusing on his lips as...

BEN'S DAUGHTER  
Was he nice?

Ben wags his finger in front of her face and shakes his head.

Ben's daughter rolls her eyes, drops her hands away in mock frustration then signs to Ben.

BEN'S DAUGHTER  
(Signing and speaking)  
Was he nice?

BEN  
(Signing back)  
He was.

BEN'S DAUGHTER  
(Signing and speaking)  
I'm hungry.

BEN  
(Signing back, with a grin)  
Me too.

Ben looks to his wife and gestures to her that they can go now.

Ben's wife and kids pile into the car.

Ben glances towards his father's gravestone once last time.

CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - JOHN'S GRAVE STONE - DAY

John McCleary  
Loving Father and Husband  
1940 - 1978

BEN (V.O. CONT'D)  
He lived his dash in silence and  
fear. He never showed it...

BACK TO:

EXT. CHEVY IMPALA - CONTINUOUS

Ben turns, walks back to the car gets in and the car drives off down the pathway.

FADE TO:

INT: A DESK - LATER THAT NIGHT.

A lone candle flame burns steady, shedding light upon...

A man's hand, writing with a white disposable pen.

We can barely make out a stack of several journals on the desk.

In addition to the journals, we can see three books neatly lined up on the desk.

On the spines of each we can barely make out the titles "The Quiet Night", "Pathways, Bridges and Thresholds" and the name on the spine of each is, Benjamin McCleary.

The hand continues to write.

BEN (V.O. CONT'D)  
Perhaps fear is the rocket fuel  
that propels us. Perhaps it's not  
an enemy after all.

The measured tick, tick, tick, tick of a clock can be heard in the back ground.

The hand stops writing, pauses, then gently places the pen down on the journal.

BEN (V.O. CONT'D)  
Without it we might not move  
forward. Forward towards the things  
we want. In the end I suppose it  
all comes down to choosing the  
right things. The things that  
matter.

We tilt up slowly to reveal Ben's face filling the frame. He stares at the flame for a long beat then...

BEN (V.O. CONT'D)  
The striving never ends.

Blows the flame out.

CUT TO BLACK: