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INT. SUPERMARKET - AFTERNOON

We see a brightly lit modern, well-stocked supermarket. Rows and rows of products, everything from cokes, beers, chips, beans, veggies, pasta, etc., are stocked eight feet tall on all sides. American consumerism at its most ostentatious. Soft and insipid muzak is cooing from unseen speakers. People of all shapes, races, and ages are milling about, shopping and minding their own business.

We see a CLOSE UP of a stuffed row of baby care products - pregnancy kits, ovulation predictors, formula, pacifiers.

A young man, the FATHER, is tentatively surveying the goods while talking on a cell phone. He is a little scruffy and disheveled, but blandly handsome nevertheless. He is pushing a cart full of sundry everyday household goods.

FATHER

(on cell phone)

What else?

MOTHER (O.S.)

Did you get the gas medicine?

FATHER

(on cell phone)

Yeah, and even with a coupon the stuff is over six bucks. A little tube...

MOTHER (O.S.)

I know...I know but we really need it.

FATHER

I hate spending this money. *Hate* it. Did I tell you that I hate it?

Babies are so expensive. How much is the bill from St. Johns? Five hundred and ten dollars?

Oh, and the excitement with the air conditioning...a broken AC during July in *Houston*?

This is killing us.

(MORE)

FATHER (CONT'D)

Babies and funerals, they get you on both ends? Do you know what they charge for caskets? *Thousands* of dollars for a little pine box. And that's the low end.

Gouging bastards, it should be illegal.

We hear the sound of a baby crying in the background. The FATHER winces. There is a PAUSE in the conversation as the BABY wails.

FATHER (CONT'D)

(on cell phone)

You there, babe?

MOTHER (O.S.)

Yes.

FATHER

He's crying again?

MOTHER (O.S.)

Yes.

We hear the sound of the MOTHER weeping. The FATHER rubs his forehead.

FATHER

(on cell phone)

He was only down for like, what, forty minutes?

MOTHER (O.S.)

I don't know. If that. He's always crying.

FATHER

(on cell phone)

I am so sorry.

MOTHER (O.S.)

It's alright.

FATHER

(on cell phone)

I'll get home as soon as I can and I want you to barricade yourself in the bedroom and get some solid sleep, okay?

MOTHER (O.S.)
Okay.

FATHER
(on cell phone)
What else?

MOTHER (O.S.)
What?

FATHER
(on cell phone)
What else do we need?

MOTHER (O.S.)
I'm sorry. I'm so tired.

FATHER
(on cell phone)
Don't worry, I know. It's alright.

MOTHER (O.S.)
We need a baby monitor.

FATHER
(on cell phone)
A baby monitor?

MOTHER (O.S.)
Yes. We need to start thinking
about letting the baby sleep on his
own soon. The baby monitor will
let us hear if something's wrong.
Just a second, alright?

The MOTHER moves away from the phone for a second and we hear her trying to comfort the still screaming baby.

MOTHER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
He's going to fuss for a long time.
This is terrible. Do you hear him?

The FATHER sees a Maxim-like men's magazine on an adjacent magazine rack and ogles for the cover for a brief moment as the MOTHER is heard distantly in the background.

FATHER
(on cell phone)
Do we really need a baby monitor
now? We've been spending so much
money lately.

MOTHER (O.S.)

Yes, we really need one. We need to hear him at night so we can check up on him. We need to hear if he chokes or is having trouble breathing. When he wakes up we need to make sure he's okay. We really need one.

FATHER

(on cell phone)

Okay, I'll get a cheap one then. Babe?

The FATHER puts the magazine back on the rack.

MOTHER (O.S.)

Sure. Just make sure you get one that has a few of those....a couple of those...little amplifier things. You know, the things that amplify the baby so we can hear him in several rooms? We need one that has a couple of those.

The baby screams in the background ever louder.

FATHER

(on cell phone)

Okay. Anything else

MOTHER

Come home soon.

FATHER

(on cell phone)

I will. I love you.

MOTHER (O.S.)

I love you too. Get home soon.

FATHER

(on cell phone)

I will. Bye.

MOTHER (O.S.)

Bye.

The FATHER flips close his cell phone and looks over the available baby monitors. Like he expected, there are several different options. His eyes scan the prices and he

relinquishes an agitated sigh. Babies sure are expensive. He grabs two monitors and looks them over. Then a lone monitor catches his eye. The two that he's holding in his hand are priced at \$37.95 and \$35.99, respectively. The one that his eye catches says "\$19.95 with Rebate".

The FATHER puts the other two down and grabs the cheaper monitor. There is only one of these left. After he grabs it, the row is empty of product. Obviously a popular option.

The monitor is an obvious cheap knock-off of more popular models. Also, the box is refurbished as we see a big, red sticker has been slapped across the front advertising as much.

The FATHER pauses a moment then makes his mind up. He tosses the cheap, refurbished monitor into his cart and makes his way to the front of the store.

CUT TO:

The FATHER is standing in front of a checkout counter. A pleasant but frumpy and apple-cheeked CLERK is scanning his goods. She is wearing a HUGE pin on her lapel that says, "TIS THE SEASON...TO SAVE ON GROCERIES!".

Behind her a BAGGER is taking care of the groceries. He is a slightly stooped, dark and brooding character hidden under an Astros ball cap about two sizes too big for his narrow, aquiline head.

CLERK

Did ya get everything ya needed,
hon?

FATHER

I did.

The FATHER notices that the BAGGER is slowly putting his groceries in plastic bags. The FATHER, with a slowly building sense of unease, notices that the BAGGER completely stops when he grabs the baby monitor and slowly looks at it as if it held great interest, like a long lost artifact from the past just unearthed.

BAGGER

It picks up everything.

FATHER

Excuse me?

The BAGGER holds up the baby monitor for the FATHER to see.

BAGGER

This here. It picks up everything.
You can hear *everything*.

CLERK

(to the BAGGER)

Shush! Focus on the groceries,
Dale. Let the customer be.

CLERK (CONT'D)

(to the FATHER)

Never mind him, sir.

The CLERK makes conspiratorial koo-koo eyes at the FATHER and subtly cocks her head over in the BAGGER's direction.

CLERK (CONT'D)

Sometimes we take too much interest
in the groceries and not enough in
the bags, don't we?

FATHER

It's okay.

The BAGGER sneers then sulkily resumes his work. He delicately places the baby monitor in a bag.

INT. CAR - AFTERNOON

The FATHER is behind the wheel of a well-used truck. The sky is quickly darkening around him. He reaches down and flips on his headlights. As he turns on his street he slowly rolls by a woman standing still near his house.

The FATHER waves at the woman and she meekly waves back. We see a CLOSE UP of the woman in the street. Her large, thick eyeglasses have fogged up.

She is bone thin and almost lost in an loose, thin t-shirt and baggy, unflattering jeans. Her hair is thin and hangs loosely across her bony face.

The FATHER pulls into his driveway, grabs his groceries, departs his car and heads for his front door. The woman stands in front of his house on the sidewalk looking at him. The FATHER, halfway to his front door, turns around towards the woman and approaches her.

FATHER

Hello, can I help you, ma'am?

WOMAN
(speaking in an odd,
hushed tone)
I just wanted to say
congratulations.

FATHER
Congratulations?

(beat)

For what?

WOMAN
For your new baby?

FATHER
Thanks.

(beat)

I'm sorry. Do I know you?

WOMAN
I'm Barbara. I live two houses
down. The one with the yellow
shudders.

FATHER
Okay. Yeah. Thanks.

BARBARA
I often hear the baby crying. He
cries a lot.

FATHER
Crying? Yeah, he does. A touch of
the colic, I'm afraid.

BARBARA
Oh, I'm sorry. Colic. Is that it?

FATHER
Yeah, we think so.

BARBARA
The baby's fine other than the
colic?

FATHER
Yeah, just colic.

BARBARA
That's good.

(beat)

How often are you able to stay with
the baby?

FATHER
Excuse me?

BARBARA
Are you able to stay at home with
the baby at all? During the day?
Is the baby in day care?

FATHER
No, mom is with him most days.

(beat)

Do you have kids?

BARBARA
No, I don't.

(beat)

BARBARA (CONT'D)
If you need anything at all just
let me know. I know how hard it
can be.

BARBARA reaches out and touches the FATHER'S arm.

FATHER
(looking down at BARBARA'S
hand on his arm)
Okay, we will. Thanks.

(beat)

Hey, I got to get inside and
relieve the wife.

(beat)

Nice chatting with you.

The FATHER walks away from BARBARA. As he walks away we see
a CLOSE-UP of BARBARA still staring at the FATHER.

BARBARA
 Anything at all. I know how hard
 it can get.

FATHER
 Alright.

BARBARA
 (under her breath as she
 watches the Father enter
 the house)
 Take care of him...

INT. HOUSE LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

We are on the insides of a pleasant, but somewhat modest living room. A worse-for-wear couch lines the back wall and a large carpet covers the floor. The room is a mess with discarded fast food boxes and assorted trash strewn about. Outside the large, front window we see that it is getting darker.

We hear the tail-end of the FATHER'S conversation outside: "Nice chatting with you.", "Anything at all. I know how hard it can get.", and, "Alright."

A pretty YOUNG woman, the MOTHER, is sitting on the couch folding laundry. She appears tired and stressed and very hot.

A fan is blowing on the ceiling above her. Another fan is plugged into the wall and is blowing on the bassinet. The TV is on as she is absently watching the evening news where they are covering the weather.

Beside her, at her feet, is a white-laced bassinet.

She leans down from her folding and gazes at the BABY (which we do not see) for several seconds.

We hear the BABY fidget a little then fall into what appears to be a temporary slumber.

The MOTHER returns to her chores and gazes at the TV screen.

TV WEATHERMAN - (O.S.)
 ...that combined with a warm pressure
 front coming in from the east, we
 are going to see some serious heat
 and humidity across east Texas
 tonight and tomorrow.
 (MORE)

TV WEATHERMAN - (O.S.) (CONT'D)

So be sure to keep cool and try to keep out of the sun the next day or two...

THE FATHER enters the front door carrying an armful of groceries.

FATHER

Hi, babe.

The MOTHER shoos THE FATHER down and points to the sleeping BABY. The FATHER grimaces, tip toes over to the bassinet, smiles down into it, then plops himself down next to the MOTHER.

FATHER (CONT'D)

(quietly)

How long has he been sleeping?

MOTHER

He's not really sleeping. Any second he's going to start crying again. I looked some more online. I'm almost one hundred percent sure he's got colic.

The FATHER roots around in his grocery bag and pulls out a tube of medicine.

FATHER

Well, maybe this gas medicine will help?

MOTHER

Hopefully.

FATHER

Man, it's hot in here.

MOTHER

It's awful. When can your guy get out here again?

FATHER

He said tomorrow morning at the latest.

MOTHER

Should we call someone else, I mean, this is dangerous.

FATHER

I actually did while I was away.
There's no one that can come
sooner. I am going to try to
fiddle with it today. Either way
it's going to be expensive.

The FATHER absently looks at the television screen.

FATHER (CONT'D)

(muttering)

Hot today. Hot tonight. Hot
tomorrow.... Just hot...

MOTHER

We need to open up all the windows
tonight. Keep the fans blowing
nonstop...

FATHER

I just had the weirdest
conversation.

MOTHER

With who?

FATHER

This woman. Her name is Barbara.
I think she just moved in down the
street.

I just talked to her right outside
the door right before I came in
just now.

She was standing there right in
front of the house. Just standing
there. Did you see her?

MOTHER

No. What did she say?

FATHER

Real weird, you know? Kind of *off*.

Wanted to talk about the baby, give
her congratulations. Odd...

MOTHER

What did you say?

FATHER
That everything was fine.

MOTHER
No, what did she say first?

FATHER
What? She...

MOTHER
(loudly, starting to cry)
What did she say first?

FATHER
Baby, listen...

MOTHER
What did she ask about the baby?

FATHER
Nothing. Please...

MOTHER
What did she say about *our* baby?

FATHER
Please...

MOTHER
(exploding in anger)
Everyone wants to tell us what to
do with *our* baby. Everyone has an
opinion.

Your mother...

FATHER
Baby!

MOTHER
No listen! Your mother thinks I'm
a bad mom because I can't breast
feed..

FATHER
Who cares what my mom thinks?

MOTHER

Your sister...you listen to me!
Your sister has no right making
little comments about not putting
socks on the baby's feet when we
all went to the lake house.

The BABY starts to whimper. The MOTHER really starts to lose it. The FATHER rushes over and holds his wife, soothing her.

FATHER

Baby, baby, please.
Shush....shush...

The MOTHER buries her head in her husband's arms.

FATHER (CONT'D)

Listen....listen... No one's
opinion matters, baby. No ones.
You're a great mom. I know you
are. No one's coming down on you.
They mean well, they do, even
though it seems like they don't.

Please. Now, I want you to leave
us here. I can take care of him.
Leave us and go sleep. You are so
tired. So tired. Sleep as long as
you can. I'll take care of
everything. Everything.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

The FATHER is setting up the baby monitor. He is seen plugging in one amplifier in the living room. Like before, the bassinet sits next to the sofa. The BABY is still quiet.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE MASTER BATHROOM - EVENING

The MOTHER is unseen in the master bedroom bathroom while the FATHER sets up another amplifier. In the BACKGROUND we hear the sound of caps being pulled off of medicine bottles, the sound of the faucet being turned on and off. A bedside clock reads: 6:26 P.M.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE STUDY - EVENING

The FATHER is seen setting up an amplifier in a room used as a study.

INT. HOUSE NURSERY - EVENING

THE FATHER is seen plugging in a baby monitor receiver into a wall socket next to a cradle. The nursery is artfully, but modestly decorated, in gender-neutral colors - greens, yellows, and browns. A large window along the back wall leads out into the verdant backyard. He stands up and turns it on. A red light quickly flickers on. Then the FATHER departs.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE KITCHEN - EVENING

We see the FATHER doing dishes and cleaning up the kitchen. Some time has passed. From the windows we see that it is pitch black outside. We see CLOSE UPS of baby formula. The FATHER takes the formula and throws the empty bottles into the trash.

The phone rings and the FATHER picks up the receiver. We see a CLOSE UP of the caller ID screen: NEWHOUSE, BARBARA. The FATHER frowns, considers answering it, then decides to leave it unanswered. The call turns over to an audible voice message.

FATHER

(voice message on phone)

Hello, we're away for the moment.

Feel free to leave a message and we'll be sure to call you back.

Bye, bye.

We hear a BEEP then a brief silence, a pregnant pause. The FATHER stops washing a plate and listens. Nothing is heard. Eventually the phone on the other end is hung up and we hear a BEEP.

The door to the master bedroom creaks open and out walks the MOTHER bleary-eyed.

FATHER (CONT'D)

Well, good evening, sleepy-head.

MOTHER

Hi.

FATHER

How was your deep slumber?

MOTHER

Good. Great. These pills I'm taking really make you sleepy. I think I might have slept too much.

The MOTHER bends over and stares into the bassinet.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

How's the little guy doing?

FATHER

No kidding, can you believe he has been sleeping the almost the entire time you were down. I just fed him a few minutes ago. He should be going down again soon.

MOTHER

Know what that means?

FATHER

He'll be up all night.

MOTHER

He'll be up all night.

(beat)

Who called?

FATHER

I think it was a wrong number?

The FATHER walks over and holds up the baby monitor amplifier that was set up in the living room for the MOTHER to see.

FATHER (CONT'D)

Set up the monitor.

MOTHER

Does it work?

FATHER

Let's see. You stay here and I'll go into the nursery and make some noise. See if you can hear me.

MOTHER

Okay.

The FATHER turns the amplifier on and we hear the sound of light static. He hands the amplifier to the MOTHER, smiles, and then sprints out of the room.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE NURSERY - EVENING

The FATHER runs into the nursery and picks up the receiver. He leans in close to talk into the device.

FATHER

(into the receiver)

Hello, yeah, could I
have..umm...one Gut Buster with
cheese...don't forget the cheese!
Did you get the cheese?

Ummm...one large fries....ummm...

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Sitting on the couch, the MOTHER is holding the amplifier up to her ear. From the receiver we hear the FATHER'S voice.

FATHER (O.S.)

...and...umm...one large cola....

*Did you get all that? Gut Buster
with chee, one large fry, one large
cola....*

From the amplifier, we hear the FATHER drop the receiver and stomp out of the nursery. A moment later he re-enters the living room.

FATHER (CONT'D)

Did you hear me?

MOTHER

Silly.

The amplifier suddenly pops to life as we hear garbled and random sounds of a woman speaking.

AMPLIFIER

(a woman's voice, soft,
almost a whisper)

*...you sure about (garbled)...some
damage there (garbled)...got to
make sure that...(garbled)...it is
beyond me that they would know
that....*

The FATHER and MOTHER share bemused looks. The FATHER sits down next to the MOTHER. As they hold up the receiver to their ears we continue to hear a the woman in the amplifier.

AMPLIFIER (CONT'D)

*...make a little more money that
way...(garbled)...see? A little
more money and we could be
off...(garbled)*

The woman's voice trails off into laughter. Then the receiver crackles briefly and goes silent, only a faint purr is heard. The FATHER shakes the receiver and holds it close to his ear. Nothing more is heard.

FATHER

What was that all about?

MOTHER

I don't have the faintest.

FATHER

Did you recognize that voice?

MOTHER

No.

Why? Did you?

FATHER

No.

MOTHER

I heard that baby monitor's
can...you can hear..from like other
houses.

FATHER

Like from other baby monitors?
Sharing frequencies?

MOTHER

Yeah.

FATHER

Weird.

(looking keenly at the
monitor)

Cheap ass Mexican baby monitors.

(beat)

So, what was she saying? Money
stuff? She sounded so....creepo.

From the bassinet the BABY starts to cry again.

MOTHER

I'll get a bottle.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE NURSERY - NIGHT

We see a CLOSE-UP of the MOTHER putting the baby in the crib.
The BABY is howling.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The FATHER is locking the front door. From the receiver we
hear the BABY crying. The FATHER rubs his eyes. It is
unbearably hot. The FATHER wipes his forehead and goes over
and opens the windows in the living room.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE MASTER BATHROOM - EVENING

The MOTHER is in a nightie. She is washing her face. The
receiver in the bedroom broadcasts the still screaming baby.
The clock on the bedside table displays: 10:16 P.M.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE ATTIC - EVENING

The FATHER is tinkering with the broken air conditioning unit
in the attic. He is drenched now.

He turns some knobs futilely and when nothing happens strikes the side with a wench. Distantly, in the background, from some nearby receiver, we hear the BABY crying.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE MASTER BATHROOM - EVENING

The MOTHER is atop the sheets, seemingly already asleep. Next to her, on a bedside table, fleetingly, we see the novel JUDE THE OBSCURE.

The FATHER quietly steps into bedroom from the adjacent bathroom. He has taken a shower and is in some cotton undershorts. The BABY is screaming from the receiver.

MOTHER
(numbly)
Turn it down....

The FATHER goes over to the receiver and turns it down.

MOTHER (CONT'D)
...but not off.

The FATHER crawls into bed next to his wife then turns off the light.

Only the bedside clock is seen and the steady red light atop the baby monitor. The clock reads: 11:34 P.M.

FADE TO:

The clock now reads: 12:41 A.M. The FATHER tosses and turns. He can't sleep. He is sweating all over despite the fact that no sheets or blankets are covering him. The MOTHER is turned away from him, seemingly asleep. The BABY starts to cry.

FATHER
(softly)
Sweetie?

The MOTHER doesn't stir an inch.

The FATHER leans back and rubs his eyes. Suddenly, the amplifier briefly makes a strange crackling sound. The voice coming from the amplifier is the same woman from earlier in the evening. The woman's voice is intermingled with the sound of the BABY crying.

AMPLIFIER
(woman's voice, soft
playful)
...(garbled)...four, five, six,
seven...(garbled)...you ready for
this? I can see
you...(garbled)....sweet, sweet
baby....

The FATHER jumps up out of bed, turns the amplifier completely off, then out of the room.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE HALLWAY - NIGHT

The FATHER creeps down the hallway in the dark. The sound of the howling BABY grows LOUDER as he makes his way to the BABY'S NURSERY.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE NURSERY - NIGHT

The FATHER opens the door to the nursery. We see him from the perspective of the BABY'S crib. He is a barely seen and still silhouette in the darkness. The BABY'S scream is constant and unyielding. The BABY is alone.

FATHER
Alright, you wore me down.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE LAUNDRY ROOM - NIGHT

The FATHER turns on the light and roots around a hamper full of dirty laundry. He finds a t-shirt that appears to be less soiled than the others. He takes it out and shakes it. He sniffs the pits then puts it on. In his hands we see a beat-up leather wallet and some car keys.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE NURSERY - NIGHT

From the POV of the still crying BABY crib we see the FATHER. He is bleary-eyed. The FATHER reaches down and the camera shakes, mimicking the BABY being picked up.

FATHER
Wanna go for a ride, kiddo?

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - NIGHT

The FATHER is driving his car. There are no cars on the street, he is alone. The BABY is behind him screaming. Above, overhead lights fly past. The FATHER stares numbly ahead. There is a clock in the dash. It reads: 1:10 A.M.

FATHER
(gazing into the rearview
mirror)
Come on....

(beat)

...what is wrong with you?

CUT TO:

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT

The CAMERA is still in the car. We see the front of a dingy, all night convenience store. The BABY is still inside the still running car. We hear the BABY as he is still crying. We see the FATHER standing in front of the bullet-proof screen silently haggling with the clerk as he makes a purchase.

DISSOLVE TO:

The FATHER still now standing along the side of the store. He is smoking as he talks into a cellphone. He appears anxious, agitated.

DISSOLVE TO:

Same POV, same sound of the BABY crying. We see that the FATHER is no longer talking on his cell phone. He opens a paper bag and pulls out what looks to be a cheap bottle of wine. Guiltily, looking over his shoulder, we see him twist open the cap and down the bottle in a few quick gulps. Then we see the FATHER pull out another bottle...

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - NIGHT

The FATHER is driving home. The BABY is still crying. The car's radio is on, fighting for attention with one another. The FATHER is listening to some kind of weird, late night, trucker's conspiracy radio show. We see the clock on his dash. It reads: 1:39 A.M.

RADIO SHOW

(on radio)

...listeners have to believe it's uncanny. With days of one another, the Secretary of State, the President of Iraq meet, and then? The Iraqi oil fields are ablaze.

And who's there to put Humpty Dumpty back together again?

You know who, you know who....

CLOSE-UP of the FATHER'S face as he drives. The BABY screams behind him. CLOSE-UP of the FATHER'S eyes, so red, so tired.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE NURSERY - NIGHT

The FATHER is bent over the crib once again. The BABY screams at full volume. The FATHER walks away and turns off the light.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The FATHER has camped out on the couch in the living room. He checks the amplifier and briefly turning it up hears the BABY whimpering briefly, then suddenly, go quiet.

Momentarily satisfied, the FATHER sprawls out on the couch and pulls up a blanket over his head. We see the wall clock. It reads: 2:07 A.M.

FADE TO:

Blackness. From within the blackness, distantly, we hear:

AMPLIFIER

(woman's voice, softly)
 ...shush...shush....they're not
 going to do a thing....there's no
 way I'm going to let them...

CLOSE-UP of the FATHER'S eyes opening, suddenly. He picks up the amplifier.

AMPLIFIER (CONT'D)

...your ears are so tiny....like
 little clamshells....I could just
 eat you...

The FATHER gets up off the couch. On unsteady feet he kicks a plastic toy on the floor making a huge, jarring crash.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE HALLWAY - NIGHT

We see the FATHER walking down the hallway. We hear that the BABY is crying again, full-bore.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE NURSERY - NIGHT

The FATHER opens the door to the nursery. The BABY is wailing. He flicks on the light and looks around. He walks over to the crib.

In mid-stride the FATHER stops and looks down. We see a mid-sized, wet stain in the carpet, right in front of the crib. Intermingled through out the stain are a few leaf fragments. The FATHER crouches down and inspects the stain and frowns.

He checks the windows and the closet.

From the POV of the bottom of the crib we see the FATHER reach down and pat the BABY.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The FATHER is checking the locks on the front door. From the amplifier we hear the BABY whimpering softly.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE KITCHEN - NIGHT

The FATHER is checking the windows and locks alongside the back of the house.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE MASTER BATHROOM - NIGHT

The FATHER creeps into the master bedroom. We see the still form of the MOTHER. The amplifier crackles and spurts gently. We see that it is 2:48 A.M. from the bedside clock. The FATHER checks the windows. Lastly, the FATHER approaches her as she sleeps but hesitates, then leaves.

FADE TO:

Blackness. Suddenly, we hear the sound of water violently hitting a window, the rumble of a large machine outside. CLOSE-UP of the FATHER'S eyes as they manically open, bloodshot and alert. The FATHER jerks up out from the couch. He rushes over to the window and peers out. From over his shoulder we see a huge truck-like vehicle slowly prodding it's way up the street. From the vehicle's back we see periodic sprays of some kind of fine, white liquid spurting out to the left and to the right.

FATHER
 (with arch sarcasm, to
 himself)
 Never a bad time for Ye Old
 Midnight Mosquito Truck....what a
delight...

The FATHER observes the mosquito truck as it goes past his house.

FATHER (CONT'D)
 That's right. Kill those little
 bastards. Spray 'em good! Spray
 'em!

The FATHER crawls back to the couch and falls asleep.

FADE TO:

Blackness. Then, the sound of a BABY crying.

FATHER (CONT'D)
 (coughing)
 Please. What now?

The FATHER buries his head under a pillow. The, again, we hear a woman's voice through the amplifier. The BABY'S crying is intermingled with the sound of the woman.

AMPLIFIER

...won't let anything happen to you....shush, be quiet, shush....I can't let them have you! You won't suffer anymore....

The FATHER bolts up from the coach and sprints out of the living room.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE HALLWAY - NIGHT

The FATHER flies through the hallway. We hear the BABY crying from his nursery. Ahead of the FATHER we see light from under the BABY'S room.

The FATHER arrives at his son's door and finds that it is locked. Crying from inside the room continues. The FATHER repeatedly tries to gain entrance but to no avail, the door won't open. He shouts and he slams into the door with his shoulder.

We see a blinding quick glimpse of the outside of the master bedroom. We see fleeting images of the end of the bed, images of the covers pulled low towards the end.

The crying suddenly stops.

Finally, at that moment, the FATHER opens the door to the nursery.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE NURSERY - NIGHT

The FATHER stands in front of the room. The door is hanging from it's hinges, slightly askew. We see a CLOSE-UP of the FATHER'S face - abject shock and incomprehension.

FATHER

What?

We see the crib. Splotches of red are splattered across the front. We see the MOTHER standing with her back to us, her head hanging low.

FATHER (CONT'D)

Sarah?

The MOTHER turns around and is sobbing uncontrollably. The FATHER takes a few tentative steps toward her.

FATHER (CONT'D)

Bryce?

The MOTHER shrieks and we see sudden, quick shots of...

...the MOTHER'S arm raised up high over her head holding a large kitchen knife...

...the MOTHER'S eyes manic and quivering....

...the FATHER'S own eyes searching and desperate...

...the FATHER, from the back with the MOTHER obscured in front of him, the MOTHER'S arm slashing down repeatedly...

...the mobile hanging above the crib, still swaying slightly, a small drop of blood on it...

...the FATHER sliding to his knees in front of the MOTHER...

...CLOSE-UP of the MOTHER'S face panting with rivulets of snot hanging from her nose, her eyes watering...

The MOTHER starts crying softly, whimpering.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

We see the house from the outside. We see bright light erupting from one of the rooms, presumably the BABY'S nursery.

From outside, we hear The MOTHER'S whimpering evolves into a pinched, blood-curdling scream.

As the camera pulls away the MOTHER'S scream continues, gradually getting fainter, but never-ending....

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HOUSE FRONT YARD - DAY

It is a bright cheerful day, not a cloud in the sky. Dozens of people are milling about outside the house.

An official looking woman, dour and stern in manner is holding a clipboard walking around the crowd. Dozens of fold-away tables are set up outside the house. Hundreds of personal effects are on top of the tables, each one clearly and neatly labeled.

A young couple, the wife clearly expecting, pause in front of one of the tables. They look down. Something catches their eye.

2ND FATHER

Look at this.

The baby monitor is lying on the table, bright and shiny. Seemingly never used. Brand new. The 2ND FATHER holds up the monitor for his wife to scrutinize.

2ND MOTHER

Hmmm...definitely could come in handy
in a few weeks.

The 2ND FATHER looks over his shoulder at the official looking woman.

2ND FATHER

Excuse me, miss?

The COURT CLERK saunters over to the young couple.

COURT CLERK

Yes, sir.

2ND FATHER

What do you do when you're
interested in something?

COURT CLERK

If you want an item, mark it down
in your form there. At 4 P.M.
sharp there will be an auction. If
you bid enough, it's yours.

2ND MOTHER

Never mind, hone. Your Aunt Pat
already got us one of these in my
last shower. It completely slipped
my mind.

COURT CLERK

Buns in the oven will do that to
ya, huh?

2ND MOTHER

I know. Pregnancy and memory loss,
what's the connection?

The 2ND FATHER puts the baby monitor back on the table. The new couple and the COUNTY CLERK walk away but the monitor lying still captures our attention.

Even though it's not plugged in, the device crackles to life. A buzz, slight and barely heard over the din, is heard.

AMPLIFIER

(woman's voice)

...shush, little one, sleep...shush.

FADE OUT.