

EVERY ROOM IN THIS HOUSE IS HAUNTED

by

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EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

A PAPER BOY finishes his route in a quiet suburban neighborhood at the end of a long summer day.

The sun is setting.

All is right with the world in this Rockwellian town.

Until the silence is obliterated by heavy metal music blaring from a used-but-still-passable Sedan as it turns onto the street.

Something's not quite right about the music though. As loud as it is, it sounds muffled. Can't make out any lyrics. It's more like vibrations with a rock melody.

The Sedan leisurely rolls down the long street. Slows as it reaches its destination: a two-story house, three if you count the tower-like attic. White and green linoleum siding. Lawn hasn't been mowed in weeks.

The car windows rattle from the oddly muted rock tunes as it rolls into the driveway. Parks. Idles. Bumper sticker reads: **I TEACH HONOR STUDENTS AT HUDSON MIDDLE SCHOOL.**

An ancient and portly NEIGHBOR LADY storms out of the house next door. She's pissed. Shouting something. The muffled rock music drowns her out.

INT. SEDAN - SAME

The driver of the Sedan - KEN (30s, scruffy but attractive) - sits in the idling car, staring at the house.

He takes a breath like someone convincing themselves it's time to walk to their own execution.

He shuts off the car. The music dies instantly.

EXT. HOUSE - SAME

The neighborhood is quiet and peaceful once again.

The Neighbor Lady's shouting still can't be heard.

Ken steps out of the car slowly, like he's got nowhere to be and is going to take his damn time getting there.

He slams the door of his Sedan. It doesn't make a sound.

He stares at the house like he hasn't seen it in ages, taking it all in.

Neighbor Lady is pissed at the lack of acknowledgement. She strides over, still shouting at Ken.

We can't hear what she's saying. Because Ken can't.

He taps the Sedan's roof like a final decision's been made.

Goes to the trunk of the Sedan.

Pops it.

Reaches for the closed box inside.

Neighbor Lady arrives and grabs his arm. Spins him around. Berates him and points at his car and motions around the nice quiet neighborhood and points at him for being some sort of real asshole for disturbing the peace.

Only we can't hear a word of it. Because Ken can't.

At first he gives her a look like "huh?"

Then he fishes in his pocket.

A look of confusion crosses his face.

He tries the other pocket.

Not there either. Shit.

He goes back to the driver side door.

Neighbor Lady moves with him. Now she's even more furious because this asshole has the gall to not only not answer her, he's ignoring her! Acting like she's not even there! Who the fuck does this punk think he is anyway?!

INT. SEDAN - CONTINUOUS

Ken opens the driver's side door and sits on the edge of the seat as he digs through the mess on the passenger seat. Not there either.

He checks the floor.

Bingo!

He practically dives as he fishes his phone off the floor.

EXT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

He's already texting something when he stands back out of his car.

Neighbor Lady doesn't give him much room. Is he serious right now?! Texting when she's trying to reprimand him? Well fuck him!

Ken turns the phone around and holds it out for Neighbor Lady to read.

She doesn't understand. Swats his hand away, still shouting.

Ken rolls his eyes. He holds out the phone again, this time pointing at it insistently.

Neighbor Lady sighs and puts on the reading glasses that dangle around her neck.

She looks at the phone. Ken's typed her a message:

I'm Deaf. Sorry for the loud music.

Neighbor Lady shoots him a look - somewhere between embarrassment and disbelief. She says something, trying to confirm the message.

Ken purses his lips, annoyed she's not getting it and points at the phone again.

Neighbor Lady looks at the phone, then back at Ken. Then goes right back to reprimanding him.

Ken sighs. Turns the phone back around. Types something.

Neighbor Lady just goes right on talking and pointing and repeating her earlier sentiments.

Ken turns the phone back around for her to see.

She stops talking just long enough to read it:

Could you type me the message? I can't hear you.

Her jaw drops. This asshole's being a smartass now? She gives him a piece of her mind.

Ken tucks his phone under his armpit and uses his hands to try sign language with her:

If you can sign, that'll work too. Otherwise...

No subtitles. If you know, you know. If you don't...

It seems like it might finally be clicking with Neighbor Lady. But she tests his claims one more time.

Ken scrolls back to his previous message and shows it to her again:

I'm Deaf. Sorry for the loud music.

It finally clicks. She gets it. She's not happy about it, but she gets it.

She uses both hands to wave Ken off - the universal old person sign for "I'm sick of dealing with this shit" and heads back to her house.

Ken watches for a moment, shaking his head at her entitlement.

He pockets his phone.

Shuts the car door.

Goes back to the trunk.

Pulls out the box - it's heavier than it looks. He has to use an elbow to shut the trunk.

He starts for the house. Spots a pile of newspapers on the lawn. It seems to sadden him.

With a sigh, he heads to the papers.

Puts the box on the ground.

Gathers the papers - puts them on top of the box.

Picks it all up - lifts with the knees.

He spots Neighbor Lady holding her front door open to keep staring at him. She still looks pissed.

He manages to heft the box's weight to one arm so he can give her a quick wave.

She snorts like a Clydesdale and heads inside, letting the screen door slap shut behind her.

Ken smirks. Readjusts his grip on the box - both hands.

He turns to the house, about to head in... but something's off. He stops cold. Looks the house over.

Spots something near the top of the house. He takes a couple steps back, looking up. His demeanor darkens. Now he's the one who's pissed.

He adjusts his grip again to get a free hand -- raises a powerful middle finger at the attic window.

A long-lasting "fuck you".

Another sigh. Both hands on the box again, almost losing a newspaper in the process.

He heads toward the house.

Up in the attic window - the curtain is held open by a solid black entity. Too dark to make out who or what it is other than it's clearly looking down at Ken and is the object of his epic flip-off.

The dark figure lets the curtain swing shut.

Ken enters the front door.

Shuts it behind him.

The last bit of daylight tucks behind the horizon, draping this quiet suburban town in darkness.

TITLE CARD: EVERY ROOM IN THIS HOUSE IS HAUNTED

INT. HOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT

Ken sets the box on the floor and locks the front door.

He closes his eyes and takes a big, calming breath. Lets it out through pursed lips.

Finally, he turns to take in his surroundings.

The house is dark. Quiet. Empty.

He just stares into the darkness for a moment - breathing, motionless.

He finally clicks on the light switch on the wall.

The foyer light shows off a counter by the door: a key bowl, wilted flowers in disgusting water, a few books lined up with bookends, a framed photograph.

On the wall across from it - thrift store artwork.

Ken gathers the newspapers he brought in and drops them in the key bowl.

He sifts through the newspapers, checking the dates. Finds the one he's after and rolls the rubber band off - it goes shooting across the room.

He opens the paper to the obituaries. Scans. Frowns. What he's after isn't there.

He discards the paper and goes back to the pile. Finds a different one.

Pops the rubber band off. Goes to the obits. Stops - this is it.

A picture of a couple in their 60s, posing happily in front of the very house in which Ken stands.

The obit headline: **LOCAL COUPLE SURVIVED BY DEAF SON.**

Their names are listed, of course, but we'll just know them as MOM and DAD.

Ken reads the obit... sniffs his emotions back as he folds the paper and starts toward the box he brought in - but the framed picture catches his eye.

He grabs it slowly, a look of nostalgia on his face.

It's a photographed family portrait, taken at an odd angle - the camera is near the ground, pointed up the steps where the family poses one-per-step: MOM (30s), DAD (30s), GRANNY (60s), the DOG, and SIX-YEAR-OLD KEN.

Ken glances over at the steps leading to the second floor.

Back to the picture, admiring it.

Remembering it...

FLASHBACK - INT. HOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT

If we could hear anything, it'd be controlled chaos as orders are barked by a PHOTOGRAPHER, the Dog is wrangled, Mom and Dad argue over who should sit where.

The only thing not in the midst of chaos is Six-Year-Old Ken, already seated half-way up the steps, watching all.

PRESENT - INT. HOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT

Ken's nostalgic look wipes clean. He cocks his head - something's off about the picture.

FLASHBACK - INT. HOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT

Granny walks the Dog up the steps, holding it by its collar.

She positions the Dog on the step just below Six-Year-Old Ken and enlists the boy to keep the mutt still. With a smile, Six-Year-Old Ken runs his fingers through the Dog's fur.

Granny takes a seat just below the Dog, taking part in the conversation with Mom, Dad, and Photographer.

Six-Year-Old Ken feels like something is off. He leans back carefully to see the Dog baring its teeth, growling at something upstairs.

PRESENT - INT. HOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT

In the photo: Granny has her hands on the Dog, forcing it to look forward while she smiles awkwardly for the camera. Six-Year-Old Ken looks at the camera, but isn't smiling - only looking that direction because he was told to do so.

Ken peers closer at the photograph.

He's focused on the top of the photo - the top of the stairs... heavy shadows where you can't see what's beyond the banister.

FLASHBACK - INT. HOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT

Six-Year-Old Ken stares at the growling Dog, afraid.

Below, Mom and Dad take their spots on the lower steps.

The Photographer gets down to his oddly-placed camera. He waves a final command to get people to scoot just a hair one way or the other.

Six-Year-Old Ken starts to turn around to see what's upstairs that's got the Dog in attack mode.

At the Photographer's command, Granny grabs the Dog with both arms and forces him to look toward the camera.

She swats Six-Year-Old Ken's knee to get him to look at the camera.

He obediently does... but he doesn't smile. He feels something behind him. Above him. In the dark.

PRESENT - INT. HOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT

Ken's breathing hard, eyes locked on the banisher just above his six-year-old self. His eyes widen in disbelief.

There, at the top of the photo... a hand wrapped around a post of the banister.

FLASHBACK - INT. HOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT

The photographer takes the picture. A flashbulb goes off, illuminating the family and the hand reaching out from the darkness to grip a post of the banister.

The moment the picture is taken, the Dog tears away from Granny and races upstairs barking and snarling. The hand retreats from the banister.

Six-Year-Old Ken turns around to look up into the darkness, trying to see what the Dog chased off.

Granny brushes past Six-Year-Old Ken, rushing upstairs to retrieve the Dog.

The tableau is broken, but the Photographer got the shot.

PRESENT - INT. HOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT

Ken fingers the photograph as if touching to see if that phantom hand is real.

He looks up the stairs. Darkness there.

He holds the photo to compare the view.

No hand at the banister now... but there could be. Whatever was in the photo could still be there.

Ken slams the framed picture back on the counter.

Storms over to the box he brought in.

Opens the flaps. Tosses the newspaper with his parents' obituary in. Pulls out two large gasoline jugs.

He sets one gasoline on the bottom step.

Glances up the stares into the darkness.

He flips the darkness off.

He opens the gasoline he's still holding.

Splashes some around the foyer.

Gas on the papers in the key bowl.

Gas along the flowers and picture frame.

Gas on the art on the opposite wall.

Gas on the floor.

With another glare up the steps, Ken steps into the room to the left of the foyer tossing gas over whatever's in there.

Up the stairs, the darkness is ominous - as if something's watching. But we can't... quite... see what.

INT. HOUSE - PIANO DEN - NIGHT

Ken splashes gasoline on a chair stacked with magazines.

Splashes gasoline on a lint-covered doggy bed in the corner.

On framed bits of artwork on the wall.

He's about to splash some gas on an ancient rocking chair draped with a knit yarn blanket - but stops, given pause by a memory...

FLASHBACK - INT. HOUSE - PIANO DEN - DAY

Granny - now 70s - rocks gently in the rocking chair, knitting the yarn blanket.

She smiles. Closes her eyes briefly as her body sways to music. We can hear the same melody she's enjoying, but it's muffled... more vibration than actual music. She opens her eyes again, directing her smile across the room.

TEENAGE KEN plays the piano. He smiles back at her, never breaking his stride playing a song he can't hear.

Granny rises from the rocking chair.

She shuffles over to the piano, drapes the work-in-progress over Teenage Ken's shoulders and gives him a tender kiss on the cheek.

He smiles up at her.

Granny looks like she's trying to remember how to say what she wants. She signs:

I'm going to lie down.

Teenage Ken nods. Adds a bit of virtuoso showboating to his playing to get a laugh out of her.

She smacks him lightly on the shoulder for being a goofball and shuffles away.

Teenage Ken finishes the last couple notes of his song, then turns to watch Granny leave the room.

But he freezes with panic.

Standing behind the rocking chair, unseen by Granny but staring at her with a murderous gaze, is a CHARRED GHOST - female, skin and clothes black with crusty ash.

In an attempt to warn Granny, Teenage Ken starts banging the keys of the piano.

Granny stops inches from Charred Ghost to look back at at her grandson. Thinking he's goofing off some more, she applauds - first normal hand-clapping, then remembers to do it in sign-language.

Despite Teenage Ken's distraught look, Granny leaves the room chuckling.

The Charred Ghost watches her exit.

It turns to glare at Teenage Ken, twitching and smoking.

Teenage Ken swallows his fear, locks eyes with the Charred Ghost.

It moves around the rocking chair, never taking its eyes off Teenage Ken. It sits in the rocking chair. Embers flake off its skin.

Teenage Ken just watches it.

The Charred Ghost stretches a hand out... motions for Teenage Ken to continue playing.

Teenage Ken swallows again. Nods ever-so-slightly.

He turns back to the piano. Places his fingers on the keys. Nervously glances over his shoulder at the Charred Ghost.

It points more insistently.

Teenage Ken starts playing a song - distilled to melodic vibrations.

The Charred Ghost leans back in the chair, smoke wafting as it sears the varnish. It seems to relax, comforted by the music.

PRESENT - INT. HOUSE - PIANO DEN - NIGHT

Ken stares at the rocking chair, haunted by the memory.

He splashes gasoline on the chair and the knit blanket.

Then he moves on, pouring a trail of gas along the floor to the piano.

He stops pouring. This piano means something to him. Harder to burn than the rest.

He runs a hand along the lid, creating a trail in the dust.

A sad breath. He puts down the gas can and props the lid open.

INSIDE THE PIANO

Macrophotography from deep inside the piano's guts. The POV of something staring up at Ken through the strings and hammers.

PIANO DEN

Ken makes his way to the piano bench. Sits.

He plucks a couple keys, testing it out. He can't hear the sounds, but he can feel the vibrational changes.

Satisfied that the notes are good enough, he plays.

Light frequencies reverberate, giving hints of the song played even if it sounds nothing like a piano.

Ken closes his eyes. His whole body seems to dance as he plays with soul.

INSIDE THE PIANO

That view from deep inside. Whatever's down there makes its way slowly to the surface. Toward the hammers pounding chords. Toward freedom.

FLASHBACK - INT. PIANO DEN - DAY

Mom (early-30s) plays the piano - the resonance of what she plays builds upon the vibrations Ken plays 30 years from now.

Dad (mid-30s) enjoys his wife's tune as he paces back and forth, trying to soothe a crying INFANT KEN in his arms.

Mom gives Dad a "poor baby" look, which Dad answers with a loving smile.

Infant Ken won't stop wailing!

PRESENT - INT. PIANO DEN - NIGHT

Ken keeps playing, eyes closed as the music fills him... but he cocks his head to one side, eyebrows knit with growing concern. Something feels off about the vibrations.

FLASHBACK - INT. PIANO DEN - DAY

Teenage Ken keeps playing, his own song's vibrations building atop those from his future self and his Mom from over a decade earlier, creating a thick cacophony of dissonance.

FLASHBACK - INT. PIANO DEN - DAY

Mom keeps playing, eyeing her family with discomfort at the volume of her child's screams.

She strikes the keys harder, as if to drown the baby out.

PRESENT - INT. PIANO DEN - NIGHT

Ken keeps playing... but the vibrations are all wrong.

Three songs across three decades, layering over one another - separately beautiful, but a mess when mashed together like this.

And something else.

Something dark is twisting the vibrations, pulling the harmonies out and replacing them with dissonance.

INSIDE THE PIANO

Something oozes toward the surface, suffocating the notes being played. Wanting out! It begins to take shape...

FLASHBACK - INT. PIANO DEN - DAY

Dad keeps pacing, rocking his screaming child, speaking unheard words of affirmation and encouragement.

He doesn't notice as he passes the very reason Infant Ken is wailing to begin with -- a pale MAN with wild hair, the middle of his face missing from the SHOTGUN blast that ended his life.

Shotgun Man stares at the child, pissed at the disturbance.

PRESENT - INT. PIANO DEN - NIGHT

Ken keeps playing, his face twisted with disgust.

FLASHBACK - INT. PIANO DEN - DAY

Teenage Ken keeps playing, frantic and sweaty.

The Charred Ghost still behind him in the rocking chair, watching the performance.

Teenage Ken hits a wrong note and freezes.

The sour note rings out loud and clear, cutting through the multi-decade-dissonant-chaos.

Charred Ghost glares, rises from the chair in a super-fast jerking motion.

Teenage Ken goes back to playing as if nothing happened.

Charred Ghost takes a step toward him.

FLASHBACK - INT. PIANO DEN - DAY

Mom keeps playing.

Dad keeps soothing and pacing.

Infant Ken keeps wailing.

Shotgun Man cocks his head at the child.

PRESENT - INT. PIANO DEN - NIGHT

Ken stops playing. Something's wrong.

He looks over his shoulder at the rocking chair.

Nothing there.

FLASHBACK - INT. PIANO DEN - DAY

Teenage Ken keeps playing, more frantic than ever.

Charred Ghost stands directly behind him, now, towering over him like a militant instructor.

PRESENT - INT. PIANO DEN - NIGHT

Ken shoots up from the piano bench. Comes around the side of the piano, staring at the wall where Shotgun Man might be. Nothing there.

FLASHBACK - INT. PIANO DEN - DAY

Mom can't take any more of the crying. She slams the cover over the keys so hard it startles Dad.

They start to argue about the crying infant.

Mom yanks the screaming child out of Dad's arms.

They keep shouting at each other as Mom carries Infant Ken away, passing right by Shotgun Man without ever knowing it.

Dad is exacerbated. Leans on the piano.

Shotgun Man turns his attention to Dad and the two come face-to-face.

PRESENT - INT. PIANO DEN - NIGHT

Ken turns slowly to the open piano.

The darkness inside it.

The wrong vibrations are deafening for us now!

FLASHBACK - INT. PIANO DEN - DAY

Dad stares right through Shotgun Man without seeing him. Walks right through the apparition as it explodes like dust around him.

FLASHBACK - INT. PIANO DEN - DAY

Charred Ghost raises a hand... brings it down on Teenage Ken's shoulder--

MATCH CUT TO:

PRESENT - INT. PIANO DEN - NIGHT

A black OOZY hand erupts from inside the piano and slams down on the edge, gripping it in preparation to climb out!

Ken startles.

He lurches forward, knocking out the lid stilt and slamming the lid down on the hand, splashing it apart like sludge.

The vibrations cease the moment the lid slams shut.

The lid thumps as whatever's inside tries to power its way out.

Ken leans on the lid to keep it shut. It rattles against him.

Breathing heavy, he looks around for something to help.

The fireplace. The poker.

He takes a couple steeling breaths. Lifts the piano lid high.

The SLUDGY GHOST inside rises - its oozy arms, head, and shoulders lifting out of the string-works inside.

Ken slams the lid back down as hard as he can, knocking the thing back inside.

He makes a run for the fireplace poker.

Yanks it out of the tool stand, spilling the other tools.

He almost stops to clean it up. Rushes back to the piano, seeing the Sludgy Ghost pushing the lid back open for its escape.

Ken swings the iron poker. It slices through the Sludgy Ghost's oozy arm, dissipating it like dandelion dust. The lid slams back down.

Ken raises the poker and, with all his might, stabs it down into the piano lid.

It only sinks into the wood a couple inches. Not good enough.

Ken's eyes go wide, like "shit!"

He tries to force it deeper in. Doesn't work.

The lid lifts a bit as the Sludgy Ghost pushes against it.

Ken slams it back down, squirting more black sludge out.

Frantic, he looks around for an answer.

The other fireplace tools? Nope.

The piano bench? No.

A pile of sheet music... with a tool box on top. Bingo.

He hurries to the tool box and throws it open, ignoring the opening piano behind him.

He pulls out both a hammer and a large rubber mallet. He weighs the options, not sure which is better.

Taking both pounding tools with him, he rushes back. Leaps onto the piano, slamming the lid back down with his weight, causing another eruption of black sludge.

He stands on the lid. Slams the hammer down on poker.

All it does is vibrate hard enough to hurt.

He tosses the hammer aside. Kneels. Grips the poker in one hand and slams the top with the mallet.

The poker sinks into the wood.

A "thank God" smile crosses Ken's face.

He gets to work pounding the poker in deeper.

The piano lid rattles underneath him, as the Sludgy Ghost tries desperately to get out.

Ken ignores it. Just keeps pounding the poker deeper and deeper.

One smash after another.

Until, finally, the poker tip breaks through the side of the piano, locking the lid in place.

Ken climbs off the piano.

The lid still rattles as the Sludgy Ghost tries to escape, but the poker has it locked firmly in place.

Ken tosses the mallet aside, breathing heavy and sweaty.

He flips the Sludgy Ghost off with two middle fingers.

Grabs the gas can - dumps gas on the piano.

The sludge-covered floor.

The sheet music stack.

A little more on the piano.

He takes another breath, staring triumphantly at the rattling piano, then turns to face frosted-glass double doors to the next room.

There's a silhouette seen through the frosted glass.

For a long beat, he stares at the silhouette.

Swallows his fear.

Sets the gas can on the floor.

Grabs the knobs of both doors, never breaking eye contact with the silhouette.

Throws open the double doors - nothing there. Just the entrance to the kitchen.

He lets out the breath he was holding.

Grabs the gas can.

Moves on to the next room, leaving the piano rattling behind him.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Ken enters the kitchen.

He closes his eyes and inhales. It's a nice fragrance of decades of delicious food that takes him back--

FLASHBACK - INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Mom and TEN-YEAR-OLD-KEN stand side-by-side, happily working together to make breakfast.

Ten-Year-Old Ken mixes a large bowl of pancake batter.

Mom adds a handful of chocolate chips to his batter.

She offers a chocolate chip to her son, who nods excitedly and opens his mouth wide.

Mom takes aim with the chocolate chip. She shoots! Misses and pegs the boy in the cheek.

They both laugh.

Mom lines up a second. She shoots! She scores!

She throws her hands up in victory as Ten-Year-Old Ken chews his chocolate with a grin.

Mom holds out the bag of chocolate chips, which the boy takes, excited.

Mom opens her mouth.

Ten-Year-Old Ken lines up a shot. He shoots!

Misses entirely, the chocolate chip sailing past Mom's head.

Laughter from both.

Mom opens her mouth for a second shot.

Ten-Year-Old Ken shoots! The chip bounces off Mom's chest. She catches it and pops it in her mouth anyway.

She holds a hand out for the bag, but Ten-Year-Old Ken holds it tight to his chest, not ready to give up. He holds up one finger - one more try.

Mom gives him a side-eyed look, not sure about this.

He gives her a "pleeeeeeeeeeease" pouty face and bounces with energy.

Mom relents. She bends over at the waist, giving her son an easier, more eye-level target.

Ten-Year-Old Ken tilts his head to one side, then the other, really trying to figure out the trajectory. His hand is still buried in the chocolate chip bag.

Mom looks at an invisible watch on her wrist, taps her foot with mock-impatience.

Ten-Year-Old Ken smiles mischievously.

In one motion, he takes his hand out of the bag and, before Mom can realize he's tricked her, throws a whole handful of chocolate chips!

The candy separates like buckshot - a couple chips make it into Mom's mouth but most bounce off her face, bounce off her chest, or miss entirely.

Mom gives her boy a shocked reaction.

Ten-Year-Old Ken drops the bag of chips and puts his hands in the air in surrender.

In a blur, he turns to run. Mom's faster. Catches him.

She tickles him relentlessly. Lifts his shirt and blows raspberries on his belly.

A loving, happy bond.

PRESENT - INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Ken stares down at the floor where the tickle attack happened all those years ago, smiling from the memory. A tear trickles down his cheek.

He splashes gas on the floor.

Gas on the counter.

He turns on all four burners of the stove, then blows out the flames so it's just gas pouring out.

Turns on the oven.

Yanks off the bottom panel and blows out the pilot light, leaving only gas flowing.

He stares at the glass window of the stove door. Slowly, he reaches out to the switch that turns on the light inside.

Nervously, he clicks it on.

MATCH CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - INT. KITCHEN - DAY

The light inside the stove clicks on to reveal there's a DEAD CHILD inside!

Six-Year-Old Ken jerks back from the stove, freaked out of his mind.

The Dead Child watches him.

Six-Year-Old Ken cautiously moves to the stove again.

Clicks the light off.

Swallows hard. Leans against the glass.

Clicks the light on.

The stove is empty.

He looks confused.

Clicks the light off. Clicks it back on. Empty.

Clicks it off. Clicks it back on. Empty.

Clicks it off.

Six-Year-Old Ken turns his attention to the heat knob. Stares at it, debating if he should, then nods to himself and turns the stove on full-blast.

He doesn't hear Dad pounding toward him, annoyed.

Dad yanks the boy's arm to get him away from the oven, reprimanding him.

Six-Year-Old Ken starts to sign to his dad:

There was someone in the--

But Dad doesn't care. He slaps the boy's hands aside and keeps right on telling him off... probably something about how he's wasting electricity and he shouldn't play with the stove because it's dangerous and doesn't he have homework or something he should be doing instead of breaking the expensive appliances.

Six-Year-Old Ken tries to sign:

I'm sorry!

But Dad grabs him and pulls him away from the oven, shouting as he drags the boy away.

A moment later, Granny arrives, wondering what the hell's going on.

Dad explains to her what the boy was doing and that he wants him gone, complete with pointing at the stove and making a "shoo" motion to get the kid outta here!

Six-Year-Old Ken watches their discussion - Dad seeming so upset and Granny trying her best to calm him.

Granny finally takes Six-Year-Old Ken's hand and leads him away from the Kitchen, leaving Dad to calm himself.

Dad glances at the oven, then back at Six-Year-Old Ken as he and Granny disappear around the corner to go upstairs.

Dad walks back to the oven and crouches, staring into the glass window.

He clicks the light on.

The Dead Child is in the oven again, glaring straight at Dad.

Dad looks around through the glass, trying to see what had his son so spooked.

He doesn't see the ghost right in front of him. Even when the Dead Child slams his hand against the glass.

Finally, Dad clicks the oven light back off, turns off the heat, and leaves.

The dark oven seems much more ominous than any oven should.

PRESENT - INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Ken stares at the oven, expecting it to contain a Dead Child. But the light is on and there's nothing there.

He opens the door, letting the gas leak out just like it is from the burners.

He heads through the kitchen to the entrance to the Dining Room and the rest of the house, but stops just as he's about to step over the threshold.

His eyes get a far-away look to them as a thought overtakes him. He's struggling internally. Trying to fight some urge.

Finally he exhales in defeat.

Turns to stare at a door just a few feet away.

He steps away from the threshold. To the door.

Grabs the doorknob.

Takes another steeling breath.

Turns the knob.

FLASHBACK - INT. STAIRS TO THE BASEMENT - DAY

Ten-Year-Old Ken at the top of the stairs, holding the door open, peering down into the darkness.

Terrified. He can't do this. Slams the door shut.

PRESENT - INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Ken can't do this either, storms away from the slammed door, back to the threshold and into the next room... the door to the basement left alone... for now.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

A long table meant to host holiday dinners. Walls crowded with framed photographs of both this family at various stages and their extended family, including old-timey pictures of when Granny was young.

The gas can hangs at Ken's side. He glances around the room. Nostalgic awe overtaking him.

Slowly, like he's in a museum of fine art, Ken makes his way around the perimeter of the room.

He smiles slightly to himself as he inspects each photo.

Posed family pictures.

Stuffy blown-up yearbook shots.

Professional graduation photos.

Candid shots someone took with a Polaroid.

Ancient sepia-toned and black-and-white stills from bygone eras of smiling happy people who don't realize how quickly age and extra generations will come.

As Ken appreciates these snapshots of the past, ghostly specters of these memories appear around the table...

Infant Ken in a high chair. Mom feeding him with an airplane spoon.

Six-year-old Ken, Ten-year-old Ken, and Teenage Ken all sitting around the table with their plates piled high.

Granny telling a joke that's got Dad in stitches.

Mom and Dad at various ages walking back-and-forth, putting out food and eating and talking.

And as Ken gets to the final picture, he spots movement in the reflection on the frame's glass...

Behind him, over his shoulder, up on the ceiling -- a TWISTED GHOST... its joints snap in different directions and its body contortions at insane angles as it crawls across the ceiling and walls like a spider. Its eyes glow. Saliva drips from its busted jaw of jagged broken teeth.

Ken swallows. He whips around to face the monstrosity--

MATCH CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Infant Ken sees the Twisted Ghost crawling across the ceiling, staring straight at him.

The baby wails, flailing his arms about and knocking the spoon of food out of Mom's hand.

Curious, Twisted Ghost snaps some of its limbs into a new direction and skitters across the wall, closer to the table.

MATCH CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Six-Year-Old Ken holds his breath, watching the Twisted Ghost approach along the wall.

Nobody else at the table sees the misshapen spectre. They don't notice the boy turning his head to watch it. They don't sense his fear. They're all too busy talking and telling stories, laughing up a storm with several NAMELESS FAMILY MEMBERS crowded around the table for Thanksgiving dinner.

The Twisted Ghost drops off the wall to the floor, vanishing behind some oblivious family member.

MATCH CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Ten-Year-Old Ken ducks down to look under the table, trying to keep the Twisted Ghost in his line of sight.

Can't see anything through the sea of legs.

He sits back up and startles to see the Twisted Ghost rising, standing directly behind Dad.

The adults around the table argue about something. It's getting heated. None of them care as Ten-Year-Old Ken points straight at the ghost to warn them.

Twisted Ghost climbs over Dad, who doesn't notice... but feels heartburn where Twisted Ghost presses a hand to his chest for leverage to climb over him.

Ten-Year-Old Ken breathes quicker, watching the Twisted Ghost get onto the table.

Twisted Ghost contorts and snaps as it walks across the dinner table.

Nobody sees it - arguing through it like it's not there, eating food it just stepped in without realizing.

MATCH CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Twisted Ghost stops and crouches right in front of Teenage Ken.

Teenage Ken stares back, holding his ground, used to the monstrosity's antics!

Twisted Ghost snaps his head and joints.

Teenage Ken won't be intimidated.

Twisted Ghost smiles.

Teenage Ken cocks his head, confused by the gesture.

Twisted Ghost snaps its head to stare at Granny, sitting a couple chairs away.

Teenage Ken shakes his head, seeing if anyone else notices.

They don't. As usual.

Twisted Ghost takes a couple of grotesque steps until it's in front of Granny.

Teenage Ken is freaked once again. In an attempt to get someone's attention. He slaps his hands on the table.

If anyone notices, they don't pay him any attention - eating and discussing.

Twisted Ghost leans in close to Granny.

She doesn't see him. But maybe she feels him? She slows her eating... stops with her fork in her potatoes, a concerned look crossing her face.

Teenage Ken slaps the table more forcefully. Rapidly.

Family members finally start noticing, but they look more annoyed at his actions than interested in what's wrong.

Granny turns to look at Teenage Ken. He signs:

Get away from the table!

She squints at him. He signs:

It's right in front of you!

Slowly, Granny turns forward.

She looks right into the drooling face of the Twisted Ghost.

Her eyes widen. She drops her fork. She sees it.

The Twisted Ghost picks up a chunk of turkey meat... shows off the shard of bone in it.

Granny opens her mouth like she's about to say something.

Twisted Ghost rams its hand straight into Granny's mouth, jamming the food and bone down her throat.

Teenage Ken hits the table fucking hard, getting a few people to yell at him to knock it off. But his focus - as he shoots up from the table - is totally on Granny and the murderous spirit that's forearm deep in her mouth.

Granny slams the table with both hands, knocking over her drink, drawing attention to herself as she chokes.

Everyone at the table sees Granny choking - clutching her throat between table slaps, her mouth open unnaturally like she's trying to cough or speak but can't - they see no ghost, just Granny choking on a turkey bone.

Dad gets out of his seat at the opposite end of the table and rushes to his mother's aid.

Everyone else watches, helpless spectators.

Dad gets Granny out of her chair and performs the Heimlich maneuver, trying to get her to cough out the turkey bone.

But Twisted Ghost keeps its arm rammed down her gizzard, holding the bone in place.

People are crying now as Dad tries to save Granny.

Twisted Ghost stares victoriously at Teenage Ken who glares back, breathing fast and angry.

Having had enough, Teenage Ken dives at the Twisted Ghost!

To everyone else, it looks like the teenager just leaps onto the table, crushing food and making a mess, knocking stuff off the table as he rolls across it and onto the floor.

But he's tackled it! Both Teenage Ken and Twisted Ghost land on the floor in a heap.

Twisted Ghost contorts, snapping its joints like a constantly adjusting bag of bones. It escapes Teenage Ken's grasp and points back at Granny.

Dad lowers Granny to the floor. She's dead and limp, her lips blue. Choked to death.

Everyone splits their focus - sadness about Granny, and annoyed at Teenage Ken's antics.

Teenage Ken stares at her, covered in the food he landed in. He fields disappointed and pissed off looks from the other family members as they crowd around Granny's corpse, blocking his view like he doesn't deserve to see her after what he just did.

Teenage Ken turns to Twisted Ghost.

The monstrosity is back on the ceiling, smiling and drooling as it skitters across like an insect. It stops, turns back.

MATCH CUT TO:

PRESENT - INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Ken stares at the Twisted Ghost, hands clenched into tight fists.

He grabs a photo off the wall and throws it.

Twisted Ghost skitters aside, letting the picture frame shatter against the wall where it just was.

It has to maneuver to dodge another thrown picture frame.

And another.

Ken starts throwing everything available at the spirit.

He picks up one of the dining room chairs and throws it as hard as he can.

Breathing heavy, he watches as the Twisted Ghost simply fades into the shadows. Its glowing eyes blink out of existence.

Ken supports himself on the table, overwrought with emotion. He breaths heavy, skin turning red with rage.

He tosses chairs aside.

Flips the table.

Punches the wall.

Smashes more pictures.

He cuts his hand open on a shard of broken glass. That slows him down to coddle the bleeding wound.

Another glance at the ceiling, but the Twisted Ghost has left.

Ken stumbles around the wreckage to a chest of drawers. Opens it. Cloth napkins for special occasions.

He ties a napkin around his bloody hand. Winces as he pulls it tight to staunch the blood flow.

As a final act of anger, he tosses a handful of cloth napkins around the room.

He goes back to the gas can.

Splashes the napkins.

Splashes the toppled table.

The fallen chairs.

The shattered pictures.

He stops at the only photo still on the wall - his smiling Granny.

He gets teary-eyed staring at it.

Kisses his fingers. Touches the kiss to the photo's cheek.

He walks away.

The smiling photo stares into the room.

FLASHBACK - INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Six-Year-Old Ken rides a Big Wheel into the Living Room from the Kitchen.

His intension is to ride through to the Foyer, but the TV turns on suddenly, causing him to slam on the brakes.

He stares at the TV, confused how it turned on.

He looks around the empty room and spots the remote control on the couch.

He gets off his Big Wheel and shuffles over to the couch.

Grabs the remote. Turns to the TV. Clicks it off.

Without another thought, he sets the remote down on the coffee table. Hurries back to the Big Wheel to continue his circuit of the house.

The TV turns on.

Six-Year-Old Ken stares at it, confused, eyebrows furrowing.

He turns back to the coffee table.

The remote is gone.

Wide-eyed, he looks back to the couch.

The remote lies on the far arm of the couch.

Six-Year-Old Ken swallows.

Gets off his Big Wheel.

Slowly, worried, he walks to the couch.

He pushes on the first couch cushion. Testing it.

Presses the middle cushion.

Gingerly touches the third cushion - the one closest to the remote.

Nothing there.

He stares at the remote control like it's some unknowable relic.

He takes a few short, steeling breaths.

Then grabs the remote and runs back toward the TV with it as fast as he can.

He turns back to the couch, expecting something to be there.

There's not.

He looks back at the TV.

Points the remote. Turns it off.

He glances back at the couch.

Nothing there.

Back to the TV.

It's off.

Looks at the remote.

Nothing unusual there.

His whole body relaxes.

A thick, chubby finger shoots in from behind the boy and hits the power button.

Six-Year-Old Ken startles and whirls around.

He's still alone in the room. TV on. Nobody there.

The TV starts flicking through channels.

Confused, he hits buttons on the remote, trying to go the other way or stop it or turn it off, but nothing seems to work.

The channels change faster and faster.

The remote control suddenly flies out of the boy's hands.

He turns to follow its trajectory back to the couch.

But still there's nobody there.

The TV suddenly turns to static.

Six-Year-Old Ken turns back to it.

In the middle of the static, there seems to be a silhouette.

The child moves closer to the TV.

The silhouette seems to take shape - darkening in the middle of the TV, the static unable to hold its ground.

He gets on his knees, staring into the dark shape in the middle of all that static. Mesmerized.

We push in on the TV until it fills everything...

PRESENT - INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

...we pull out of the TV - its static lights the room.

Ken stares down at it.

He leans forward, face-to-face with the dark silhouette in the middle of all that static.

He reaches out and taps the glass.

Nothing happens.

He eyes the controls on the TV. Hits the power button.

Nothing happens.

He presses it again, repeatedly.

Nothing happens.

He steps forward and yanks the power cord out.

The TV remains on. Remains on static.

Ken stares at it, concerned.

He bristles from a feeling - something's different. He turns to the couch and freezes.

Sitting on the couch are two MORBIDLY OBESE GHOSTS. One MALE, wearing a dirty wife-beater. The other FEMALE, wearing a stained muumuu. Both of them have jaundiced skin with gnarled blue veins. Both of them are covered in moss and mold, as if they haven't moved from that spot in their entire lives (or after-lives).

The Obese Ghosts stare at Ken. Ken stares right back. For a long moment, it's a standoff between the living and the dead.

Then the Male Obese Ghost lifts the remote toward the TV.

Clicks.

The channel changes - the static is replaced with an image of this very living room. Like a CCTV monitor... Ken standing near the TV, the Obese Ghosts on the couch.

Ken turns to see what's on the TV... just as the TV Ken turns to inspect it.

He looks around, trying to find a camera to see how this is happening.

But there are no cameras.

Every time he thinks he's figured out where one might be the image on the TV changes angles -- like it's a sitcom.

The Male Obese Ghost raises the remote again. Click!

The TV changes to the scene of Six-Year-Old Ken riding in on the Big Wheel and dealing with the TV turning on by itself and the remote moving on its own.

Ken moves closer to the screen to watch. It's like a revelation to see this memory play out on screen.

Female Obese Ghost takes the remote from her "husband" and - Click! - changes the channel.

Now it's Teenage Ken on the screen. And his parents. And other family and friends. All dressed in black. A large picture of Granny on an easel.

Her funeral wake.

Ken swallows, staring at this memory. He reaches out and touches the screen.

We push in on the TV until it fills everything...

FLASHBACK - INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

...we pull out of the TV, into the wake in progress.

Even though the conversations in progress are inaudible, grief hangs heavy - almost tangible.

Teenage Ken stands in the middle of it all - not sure what to do or where to go.

A couple random people put hands on the boy's shoulder as they pass - a means of silently comforting him.

Another couple says something to him ("Sorry for your loss" or "Good to see you again") but their verbal sentiments are wasted here.

Teenage Ken nods a sad thanks regardless.

That's when he spots Dad glaring at him from across the room.

Dad's drunk. Takes another gulp as he gives a sarcastic nod to someone expressing their sympathies.

Teenage Ken glances around, wondering if there's someone or something else earning his father's stink-eye.

There's not.

Dad mumbles something and downs the last of his latest boozy beverage. He pushes his way through the mourners.

Mom seems to know what's going on and tries to stop him, but Dad yanks out of her grip and shoves someone out of his way, knocking them on their ass.

Dad won't be kept from his target: Teenage Ken. He gets in his son's face, slurring anger the boy can't hear.

Teenage Ken is afraid of his Dad's anger, tries to sign:

Dad, what's wrong?

--but Dad slaps his hands away, spouting some angry "don't flap those at me" kind of insult.

Teenage Ken tries again:

Are you mad at--

--but Dad cuts him off by chucking his empty tumbler against the wall where it shatters, getting everyone's attention and halting all conversation.

Teenage Ken turns from the shattered glass to his Dad, still not a clue what's happening.

Dad cuffs the boy around the back of his neck, throwing insults and profanity in his face.

Mom grabs Dad, trying to make him stop making a scene. Dad shoves her away. Other Mourners keep her from going down.

Dad grabs Teenage Ken again and overpowers him to force him to the

DINING ROOM

and shoves him against the dining table.

Dad shouts his peace, pointing to the floor where Teenage Ken tackled the Twisted Ghost.

Then points across the table where Granny died in his arms while he tried to save her life.

Then jams a finger in Teenage Ken's chest with one hand, pointing back to the floor with the other, shouting about Ken's shenanigans and blaming him for Granny's death.

Laying it all out there.

Everyone hears it. All the mourners. Probably the neighbors. Everyone but us. And Ken.

Dad's becoming increasingly emotional - red-faced with shouted anger, giant tears of a man who's lost his mother stream freely.

And Teenage Ken tries to pay attention, putting the pieces together with each new action - realizes Dad is blaming him for the death of his own grandmother.

He shakes his head - it's not like that. He tries to sign that it wasn't his fault, but Dad knocks his hands away without ever slowing his tirade.

Teenage Ken sees all the faces staring at them.

He sees the Twisted Ghost on the wall, watching.

Dad yanks the boy's face around to look him in the eye, further pissed that the boy would be distracted at a time like this.

Cuffing his neck, he yanks him back to the

LIVING ROOM

and throws his son to the floor.

Some Mourners try to keep their distance from the spectacle.

Others try to block Dad, but he's an unstoppable bull.

Someone tries to help Teenage Ken up. A COUSIN, maybe.

Dad hits the Cousin in the chest with both hands, knocking him over the coffee table.

Turns his attention down to his son on the floor. Shakes his head - disgusted by the boy and filled with rage and grief.

He makes a choice. Shouting's not quite enough. He leans down and punches Teenage Ken in the face.

That's enough. Several Mourners try to drag Dad away.

But he frees himself from the mob and delivers another hard shot to Teenage Ken's face.

And the world smashes to static.

For a long moment, there's just the static.

PRESENT - INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

We pull out of the static on the TV.

Ken stares at the screen, tears streaming down his face.

He turns to the couch.

The Obese Ghosts are gone.

He glances around the room. He's all alone.

He looks down at his hands. He's holding the remote.

Slowly, he points it at the TV.

Click.

The room is plunged back into the darkness of night.

He puts the remote on the TV.

MOMENTS LATER

Ken splashes gasoline on the chairs.

The couch.

The coffee table.

The TV.

The gas can is finally empty. He chucks it into the room as he storms into Foyer.

INT. HOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT

Ken beelines to the other gas can he left on the bottom step.

Unscrews the lid, letting it drop.

He looks up the stairs before him.

They seem to stretch - an impossible task he should just call it quits on.

He takes a moment to clear his thoughts. Clear the illusion. Then marches

up

the stairs

to

the second floor -

purpose

and hatred

and painful memories driving him.

Up the stairs

until he

reaches

the

SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY

He glances down the steps he just came up.

The distance seems to stretch and twist, becoming way more than the single flight he ascended.

Again he shuts his eyes to the illusion. Grabs the banister for support.

FLASHBACK - INT. FLASHBACK - HOUSE - FOYER - DAY

The family on the steps for that Christmas photo.

Six-Year-Old Ken senses something.

The Dog runs up the steps after whatever's lurking in the darkness.

PRESENT - INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

There's movement in the darkness.

Ken feels it. His eyes pop open.

Nothing there.

He glances around. Where to start?

He makes his way to a closed door a few feet from the steps.

Turns the knob. Door won't open.

Weird.

He pushes.

It won't budge.

He throws his weight into it, practically falling into the--

BATHROOM

The decor in here looks like it's stuck in the 80s - lots of mossy green and puke yellow over age-yellowed beige.

Ken looks at the door, wondering what was wrong with it.

Glances around the bathroom.

He opens the medicine cabinet, curious.

Not much here. No tell-tale medications. No indication of sickness or mental illness or anything other than a prepared home.

He shuts the mirrored medicine cabinet door. In the reflection, his Mom stands in the bathtub, staring at him.

Ken whirls around to the tub.

Nothing there.

Back to the mirror. Mom's gone.

Ken splashes gas on the sink.

The toilet.

The shaggy rug beside the tub.

The gross wallpaper.

He starts to head back into the hall... but stops. Feels a presence.

He turns back.

FLASHBACK - INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Mom relaxes in the tub, her nudity hidden by the bubbles of a bath bomb.

She doesn't notice the top of a hairy head rise out of the water near her feet.

Thick black hair...

blackened scalp...

yellow eyes rising just above the water, staring at her.

The BATHTUB GHOST stares at her for a long, menacing beat...

Then submerges again just before--

The bathroom door bursts open. Teenage Ken rushes in wearing PJs and looking sick as shit.

He startles briefly at the sight of his bathing Mom - she adjusts herself in the tub at the same moment, hiding more of her body under the water - but it doesn't stop him from getting to the toilet just in time.

He vomits into the porcelain bowl.

Mom watches him over the ledge of the tub, concern for her sick child etched on her face.

She turns her ring around and taps the diamond on the side of the tub.

The vibration travels into the tile floor where Teenage Ken can feel it.

He looks over his shoulder.

Mom signs to him -

You OK?

He raises his hands to answer... but his eyes go wide. More vomit into the toilet.

Mom looks like she feels so bad for the boy.

Then she reacts to movement in the water.

She glances around herself, trying to figure out what it was.

Sees nothing.

Glides her hands around in the water, moving the bubbles out of the way.

Doesn't see anything.

She glances back at her son's purging with a concerned look.

She lies back in the water - significantly less relaxed, just staring at the ceiling.

The Bathtub Ghost rises again, slowly - just to the eyes - right beside Mom's head.

Mom doesn't realize at first.

Then she turns and jerks at the sight of it.

But she's not fast enough. The Bathtub Ghost grabs her with a hair-covered hand and plunges her under the water.

Two more hands grab and pin her arms.

Two more hands grab and pin her legs.

She's almost totally submerged, pinned underwater by all these hands, unable to kick or sit up or splash.

Unable to alert her deaf son - just several feet away, puking his guts up.

Teenage Ken takes a beat... wipes his mouth clean with toilet paper.

Once he's sure the puking is done, he flushes.

He just leans against the toilet for a moment, exhausted and dehydrated.

He glances at the tub.

No movement. No Mom.

His face scrunches in confusion.

He watches the motionless tub for a long moment.

In the tub, unseen by her son, Mom fights against the strength of the Bathtub Ghost's many hands. It's a losing battle. She's fading fast.

Teenage Ken slowly gets to his feet. Still doesn't see Mom. The bathtub is quiet and still.

He averts his eyes so he won't see his naked Mom as he moves to the sink.

He rinses his mouth out.

He's about to leave when he sees the tub in the reflection of the medicine cabinet's mirror.

He sees the Bathtub Ghost's hair and yellow eyes staring at him.

He quickly turns to the tub - spots a flash of Mom's skin submerged.

He runs over and sees his Mom underwater, motionless. In a hurry, he kneels and tries to lift her out of the water.

Can't. The various hands of Bathtub Ghost hold her firm to the bottom.

After several failed attempts to tug her free, Teenage Ken reaches for the tub stopper.

UNDER WATER

Yanks the stopper out. The water starts to drain.

BATHROOM

He tries again to free Mom, but it's still not working.

The water level dips... then stop suddenly.

UNDER WATER

Thick hair clogs the drain.

BATHROOM

Teenage Ken plunges his hand back into the water.

UNDER WATER

His hand grasps the hair. Yanks it out and holds it aside so water can go down the drain.

More hair clogs it.

Teenage Ken's second hand reaches into the water. Using both hands, he keeps the hair out of the drain so the water levels can fall.

BATHROOM

Teenage Ken struggles to hold the massive weight of the hair out of the drain - constantly having to readjust his grip to keep it out.

The water goes down.

Mom is revealed - nude and still.

The hands are no longer on her. They claw at the porcelain as they're yanked down the drain with the water.

One hand grabs Teenage Ken's arm.

The boy clenches his teeth as the Bathtub Ghost tries to take him down the drain with it.

And then it's all gone. Just Teenage Ken at the side of the tub, out of breath and exhausted. Mom lying motionless in the tub.

Teenage Ken finally goes to her. Now he can sit her upright.

But she's not moving.

He tries shaking her.

Nothing.

Rolls her head back and forth.

Nothing.

He begins doing chest compressions. Opens her mouth to do CPR - but stops.

Something's there. In her mouth.

Black hair.

He grabs the hair in his fingers and pulls.

And pulls.

Inches of thick hair.

A foot.

More and more comes out of Mom's mouth - her throat.

Finally he gets to the end - a knotted mess, nearly 3 feet of hair.

And Mom suddenly gasps for air, eyes wide with panic.

She takes in her surroundings. Looks at her son - her savior. Not giving a shit that she's naked, she hugs Teenage Ken tightly.

When she lets him go, he shows her the rope of hair he pulled from her throat... but it's melting.

They stare at it together as the rope melts like an overheated ice cream cone - black dripping into the tub and racing to the drain like it's got a mind of its own.

Within seconds, all the hair is gone without a trace.

Mother and son share another look in freaked-out wonder.

PRESENT - INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

Ken steps out of the bathroom.

He glances at the remaining doors -- one a few feet from the bathroom, one across the hall from that, one just behind the banister to the stairs, a bit of dark hallway beyond that.

He stares at the banister.

FLASHBACK - INT. FOYER - DAY

The family on the steps for that Christmas card photo.

Six-Year-Old Ken turns - too slow to see the ghost at the banister - as the Dog goes chasing after whatever was lurking.

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

The Dog goes zooming down the hall - past the bathroom, into the open door a few feet away...

INT. GRANNY'S ROOM - DAY

The Dog follows the scent into Granny's room.

The place is all old-timey things: knit blanket and quilted spread on the bed, knickknacks line the bureau and a large wooden steamer trunk along the wall.

The Dog stares at the closet door, barking.

The closet door slowly opens on its own.

Dog backs up a couple steps, still barking but not quite willing to get caught unaware.

Once the closet is open, Dog decides to throw caution to the wind and races into the darkness of it.

And then there's stillness.

Granny enters the room a couple moments later, calling out for the Dog.

Six-Year-Old Ken arrives behind Granny, looking around.

Granny's clapping and calling the Dog's name to get it to come out, knowing she saw it come in here.

But the Dog is nowhere to be found.

Six-Year-Old Ken peeks under the bed.

Nothing there.

Granny gives up and leaves to try another room.

Six-Year-Old Ken stares at the open closet. Did a hanging shirt just move?

He walks to the closet and shoves hanging clothes to either side, looking for his trusty Dog.

It's not in here.

He cocks his head at something.

A paw print on the back wall.

He holds clothes out of the way.

Leans in close to the wall.

Not a paw print... a paw! A hint of the leather-like pad of a paw, the very tips of two claws poking through the plaster. As if the Dog tried to escape but the wall solidified before it could.

Six-Year-Old Ken stares at it. Touches the pad and retracts his hand, freaked.

PRESENT - INT. GRANNY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Ken stares into the open closet.

Granny's clothes are long-since removed, but the hint of a paw remains. As if nobody's ever noticed since then.

Ken kneels and touches the leather pad, now desiccated with decades past.

MOMENTS LATER

Ken splashes gas around the room.

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

Ken approaches the room across the hall from Granny's room. Turns the knob.

INT. MOM AND DAD'S ROOM - NIGHT

Ken enters. Everything here is just as he remembers it.

FLASHBACK - INT. MOM AND DAD'S ROOM - NIGHT

Mom and Dad argue - full blown shouting match.

From the mannerisms Mom's making, it would appear they're arguing about what happened to her in the bathroom.

And Dad doesn't believe her. He thinks she's out of her fucking mind.

And she is sick of him treating her as lesser - not believing her, gaslighting her, going after their son.

Which just pisses Dad off more.

Teenage Ken watches from the hall - seeing it all unfold but not interfering.

FLASHBACK - INT. MOM AND DAD'S ROOM - NIGHT

Ten-Year-Old Ken watches from the hall... through the cracked open door.

Inside, Mom and Dad are fucking.

But that's not what he's watching.

He cocks his head...

FLASHBACK - INT. MOM AND DAD'S ROOM - NIGHT

Teenage Ken cocks his head... Mom and Dad's fight isn't what he's watching.

There's a DWARF GHOST sitting astride Dad's shoulders - it's face twisted with demonic, erotic pleasure, feeding on the energy of the fight.

FLASHBACK - INT. MOM AND DAD'S ROOM - NIGHT

Ten-Year-Old Ken watches the same Dwarf Ghost mounted on Dad's shoulders as Dad fucks Mom. That same euphoric look on the ghost's face as it feeds on the sexual energy.

SPLIT SCENE

On one half of the screen, Ten-Year-Old Ken watches the Dwarf Ghost feeding off the sexual energy of Mom and Dad fucking. It seems to make Dad go harder.

On the other half of the screen, Teenage Ken watches the Dwarf Ghost feeding off the violent energy of Mom and Dad fighting. It seems to make Dad go harder.

Ten-Year-Old Ken reaches out for the cracked-open door like he's going to go in to warn them... but decides against it.

Teenage Ken reaches out for the wide-open door like he's going to go in and warn them... but decides against it.

The Dwarf Ghost senses the boy and looks right at him with a snarl.

The Dwarf Ghost senses the boy and looks right at him with a snarl.

Ten-Year-Old Ken recoils, gasps.

Teenage Ken recoils with a gasp.

Dad hears him - turns his attention off Mom to glare at his son. Storms over to slam the door.

Dad hears him - turns his attention off Mom to glare at his son. Storms over to slam the door.

PRESENT - INT. MOM AND DAD'S ROOM - NIGHT

Ken starts splashing gas around.

On the bed.

The floor.

The walls.

The dresser.

In the closet still full of hanging clothes, minus whatever his parents were recently buried in.

He moves to go back into the hall.

The door slams shut, blocking his way out.

He turns the knob and opens the door. It only gets about four inches ajar before yanking out of his grasp to slam shut again.

He tries to open it again, but it won't budge.

He puts the gas can down and tries with both hands.

Won't budge.

He rattles the door.

Slams against it.

It isn't moving. He's trapped.

He grabs an alarm clock off the bedside table.

Smashes it against the door knob.

And again.

And again - the door knob gets knocked off.

He tosses the wasted alarm clock aside. Shoves the rod of the door knob and looks out the hole in the door.

The Dwarf Ghost stands in the hall. It rushes forward at impossible speed, staring back at him with green eyes.

Ken instinctively recoils.

He stands and kicks the door.

The Dwarf Ghost answers by the entire door rattling in its hinges.

Then the entire room rattles like an Earthquake.

Decorations fall off the walls.

Clothes fall off hangars in the closet.

Knickknacks move across the dresser or tip over.

The remains of the alarm clock dance on the floor.

Ken struggles to hold his ground.

He bumps into the gas can, knocking it over and spilling more fluid than he meant to waste on this room.

Suddenly it all stops.

Ken's breathing hard - afraid.

He moves back to the door and looks through the hole where the knob was.

The Dwarf Ghost is gone.

He tries the door. It opens.

He grabs the gas can and hurries into the

SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY

and moves to the last room up here.

INT. KEN'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ken storms in and doesn't waste time inspecting the room or reminiscing or anything like he's done in past rooms.

He just wants to get this done.

He splashes gas on his old bed.

FLASHBACK - INT. KEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Six-Year-Old Ken is freaked out of his mind. Pulls the covers taut across his chin, ready to dive under to hide from what's got him spooked.

Long spindly shadows creep across his bed as some sinister creature reaches for him.

PRESENT - INT. KEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ken splashes gas across the walls - still decorated with posters from his youth.

FLASHBACK - INT. KEN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Teenage Ken reads a book about **HOW TO HUNT GHOSTS**.

A phantom breeze rattles the row of posters on his wall.

Suddenly the faces in the posters are bleeding from their eyes and noses. They look to him for help. But he stands and backs away... straight into some sinister force, towering over him.

PRESENT - INT. KEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A massive hand - four times larger than any human's - stretches out from under the bed.

Ken doesn't notice it, too occupied with the job at hand.

He splashes gas on the dresser loaded with models and figures.

FLASHBACK - INT. KEN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Ten-Year-Old Ken zooms around the room with a model airplane like the ones on his dresser. Happy and alone.

Suddenly all the other models and figures sweep off the dresser onto the floor.

He looks back to see the mess scattered around the room.

Then something dark appears behind him. A monstrously large hand snatches the model airplane from his hand.

Ten-Year-Old Ken watches in shock as his plane rises toward the ceiling.

PRESENT - INT. KEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ken splashes gas on the clothes in the closet.

He turns to hurry out of here but is forced to stop in his tracks.

A GIANT GHOST finishes dragging itself out from under the bed and rises to its feet. It's so tall it has to stand hunched - its back pressed against the ceiling. It wears a nice suit and a frighteningly permanent smile stretches literally ear-to-ear.

Ken backs away. Glances at the open door.

He makes a move to go around, but the Giant Ghost blocks his path and shoves him back, forcing him to roll across the bed to cushion his fall.

The Giant Ghost takes a long stride toward Ken.

Ken pulls himself under the bed.

The Giant Ghost crouches down where Ken just was, and looks under the bed with that haunting smile.

Ken yanks himself out the other side of the bed and runs for the door.

Giant Ghost lumbers after him, only needing two steps to clear the distance.

Ken gets there first and slams the door shut behind him.

SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY

Ken holds the door shut with all his might as it rattles from the Giant Ghost trying to escape.

He spots the hatch to the attic - the cord hanging down.

FLASHBACK - EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Ken raises a powerful middle finger at the attic window. A long-lasting "fuck you".

Up in the attic window - the curtain is held open by solid black entity. Too dark to make out who or what it is other than it's clearly looking down at Ken and is the object of his epic flip-off.

PRESENT - INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

Ken looks from the attic hatch cord to the door he's holding shut.

Then to the stairs - he could leave right now. He could be done and just get the fuck out of here.

But he makes a different choice. One he silently curses himself for it.

He lets go of the door and runs for the attic door. Jumps and reaches for the cord.

MATCH CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Ten-Year-Old Ken grabs the cord. Pulls.

The hatch opens, releasing a rickety accordion ladder, which Ten-Year-Old Ken pulls to the floor and locks in place.

He looks up into the dark attic above.

Picks up a flashlight he'd set down.

Climbs the ladder.

He reaches the top and pokes his head into the attic.

MATCH CUT TO:

PRESENT - INT. ATTIC - NIGHT

Ken's head pokes up into the attic.

He glances around... spots a flashlight near the opening - the same flashlight he used many years ago.

He tries it - it works.

He climbs the rest of the way into the attic, lugging his gas can with him.

He slowly sweeps the flashlight around the room to inspect it.

There's tons of boxes.

Packed dusty shelves.

Old broken furniture.

A mouse scurries through the light beam.

FLASHBACK - INT. ATTIC - DAY

The attic is lit by sunlight streaming through the open window facing the street, curtains diffusing it.

Ten-Year-Old Ken makes his way through the room, using his flashlight only to illuminate dark corners and to read some boxes easier.

He's looking for something.

PRESENT - INT. ATTIC - NIGHT

Ken and his light pass the same boxes he saw as a kid.

He splashes gasoline on those boxes.

FLASHBACK - INT. ATTIC - NIGHT

Ten-Year-Old Ken moves to a bookshelf of papers and books.

He sifts through it, moving things aside.

PRESENT - INT. ATTIC - NIGHT

Ken splashes gas on the bookshelf.

FLASHBACK - INT. ATTIC - DAY

Ten-Year-Old Ken moves deeper into the room.

A large music box pops open, getting his attention.

PRESENT - INT. ATTIC - NIGHT

Ken shines a light on that same music box.

FLASHBACK - INT. ATTIC - DAY

The ballerina inside the music box starts twirling as her music silently plays.

PRESENT - INT. ATTIC - NIGHT

Ken swings the flashlight around to an old record player.

FLASHBACK - INT. ATTIC - DAY

The record player comes to life, dropping the needle and playing a silent song.

Ten-Year-Old Ken glances between the two music-playing devices.

As he stares at the record player, the volume knob turns on its own, cranking up the volume to max - which, of course, doesn't effect Ten-Year-Old Ken at all. Or us.

Cautiously, the boy inspects the record player.

It's not plugged in.

PRESENT - INT. ATTIC - NIGHT

Something across the room falls off a shelf, getting Ken's attention.

He points the flashlight that direction.

Nobody there.

He swings toward the window.

MATCH CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - INT. ATTIC - DAY

Ten-Year-Old Ken also swings toward the window.

A solid BLACK FIGURE stands at the window. Featureless.

The boy gasps and takes a step back.

PRESENT - INT. ATTIC - NIGHT

Ken's flashlight illuminates the curtains.

No Black Figure.

He walks straight for the window.

FLASHBACK - INT. ATTIC - DAY

Ten-Year-Old Ken backtracks away from the window.

The Black Figure doesn't move.

PRESENT - INT. ATTIC - NIGHT

Ken arrives at the window, exactly where the Black Figure stood. He lifts the curtain aside to look outside.

MATCH CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - INT. ATTIC - DAY

The Black Figure lifts the curtain to look outside.

Ten-Year-Old Ken keeps backtracking.

He trips on a box on the floor and goes down hard.

The Black Figure drops the curtain and turns to look at the boy.

MATCH CUT TO:

PRESENT - INT. ATTIC - NIGHT

Ken drops the curtain and turns to look around the room behind him. Nothing there.

He lets out a disappointed breath, then turns back to the window.

The Black Figure is right there, between him and the window. It jerks toward him.

Ken jerks away, swinging the flashlight to defend himself.

The Black Figure bats the flashlight aside, sending it flying across the room.

FLASHBACK - INT. ATTIC - DAY

Ten-Year-Old Ken gets to his feet and makes a run for it.

PRESENT - INT. ATTIC - NIGHT

Ken backs away, splashing gasoline around the room as he goes, never taking his eyes off the Black Figure as it floats toward him.

FLASHBACK - INT. ATTIC - DAY

Before Ten-Year-Old Ken can reach the hatch, Black Figure steps out of the shadows in front of him - somehow it travelled the length of the room in an instant.

The boy skids to a stop. Panicked.

The Black Figure leans forward and visible sound vibrations fill the air, emanating from its featureless-face -- it's screaming.

PRESENT - INT. ATTIC - NIGHT

Ken keeps splashing gas.

Black Figure keeps floating toward him.

FLASHBACK - INT. ATTIC - DAY

The visible vibrations intensify. Sound starts to cut through the silence - soft at first, but quickly building.

Ten-Year-Old Ken shakes his head like there's a ringing in his ear that's startling and painful.

The Black Figure's tinny scream reverberates and grows louder.

PRESENT - INT. ATTIC - NIGHT

Ken reaches the hatch, where he empties what's left of the gas in a puddle.

FLASHBACK - INT. ATTIC - DAY

The screaming crescendos exponentially.

Ten-Year-Old Ken covers his ears as his face scrunches in pain.

PRESENT - INT. ATTIC - NIGHT

Ken throws the gas can at Black Figure.

It bats the plastic container aside.

Ken pulls out a lighter. Opens it. Glares at Black Figure. Flicks one the lighter's flame.

FLASHBACK - INT. ATTIC - DAY

Ten-Year-Old Ken can barely take the screaming.

Thankfully, it stops as Black Figure rises back to its full height.

Ten-Year-Old Ken takes that as his cue and makes a break for the hatch.

Black Figure grabs his arm just before he can get to it.

Searing pain!

PRESENT - INT. ATTIC - NIGHT

In the light of the flame, a scar is visible on Ken's arm - a long handprint where he got grabbed all those years ago. It's been there this whole time, but this is the first time attention has been drawn directly to it.

With his free hand, Ken flips Black Figure off.

It responds by letting out that scream.

FLASHBACK - INT. ATTIC - DAY

Ten-Year-Old Ken yanks to escape Black Figure's grasp.

It takes several good tugs, but he finally frees himself.

And falls down the open hatch!

PRESENT - INT. ATTIC - NIGHT

Ken drops the flaming lighter.

In slow motion, it falls toward the final puddle of gas.

FLASHBACK - INT. ATTIC - DAY

Ten-Year-Old Ken falls in slow motion.

PRESENT - INT. ATTIC - NIGHT

The lighter inches closer and closer to the puddle.

FLASHBACK - INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Ten-Year-Old Ken continues falling alongside the ladder.

PRESENT - INT. ATTIC - NIGHT

The fumes above the puddle ignite before the lighter lands, blooming.

FLASHBACK - INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Ten-Year-Old Ken finally slams on the floor.

PRESENT - INT. ATTIC - NIGHT

The lighter finally lands in the puddle, igniting it all.

Time returns to normal as the line of gas ignites in a moving trail of flaming death.

Black Figure rights itself, seemingly afraid.

Ken gives a second middle finger to accompany the first.

The flames rush past him and down the ladder.

He lets himself drop down the open hatch.

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

He lands on his feet hard - twists his ankle and stumbles.

The flames race through the house, eating every bit of fuel it can as it spreads along the gas trail.

Ken makes a run for it.

The massive hand and arm of the Giant Ghost smashes out of Ken's childhood bedroom.

It paws around, trying to find Ken to crush him.

Ken realizes he's not getting out that way.

He instead goes to the banister and swings himself over as the flames rush down the stairs.

FOYER

He lands poorly on the stairs and can't keep his balance.

He rolls down the flaming steps.

He stumbles to his feet and goes for the front door.

Starts opening it - but before it's ajar enough to leave, the door slams shut.

He looks behind him.

The Black Figure is at the top of the stairs.

Impossibly fast, it travels the distance to Ken and grabs him around the throat.

Searing pain!

Ken bats at Black Figure, trying to release its grip.

Before he can, the Black Figure throws him into the--

PIANO DEN

The room is on fire.

The piano rattles as the Slime Ghost inside tries to free itself. The iron poker holds it shut.

Ken's neck now wears the still-smoldering imprint of Black Figure's hand. His cloth napkin bandage catches fire.

He quickly gets it off his hand and tosses it aside as he scrambles to his feet, coughing from the smoke.

He runs through the piano den, trying to cover his airways from the smoke, passing the rumbling piano, into the--

KITCHEN

He stops, noting the gas still on from the stove.

Eyes wide, he hurries past it, making his way for the entrance to the dining room.

He glances back to see the Dead Kid climb out of the stove and the Black Figure enter, growing in size as it stumbles through.

Ken hurries into the--

DINING ROOM

He plans to run straight through to get back to the front door, but the Twisted Ghost grabs him from above, lifting him off the ground as the room burns around them.

Ken flails, trying to escape the Twisted Ghost's grip.

It snaps and pops its joints, then throws Ken back the way he came.

KITCHEN

Ken crashes into cabinet doors.

Black Figure towers over him.

Without a choice, Ken scrambles to the door to the basement - the only place that's not on fire.

Black Figure grabs his arm before he can go down.

Searing pain!

Ken yanks and pulls and rips.

Black Figure leans forward - its scream pierces through Ken's deafness.

The fumes from the stove finally ignite.

It explodes!

The explosion startles Black Figure, and Ken is suddenly free, tumbling down the steps to the basement as the explosion destroys the main level of the house and the ghosts.

INT. BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

Ken lands at the bottom of the steps.

The door slams shut, blocking the view of the fire and plunging the basement into darkness except for some moonlight streaming from a couple windows high up.

DINING ROOM

The place blazes.

LIVING ROOM

The rug and furniture burn.

PIANO DEN

Everything's on fire.

BASEMENT

Ken gets to his feet - but he's hurt. Can barely stand.

His throat and arm are covered in hand-shaped embers. Soot stains his skin and clothes. He coughs for clean air.

He takes a step, but his ankle gives out, dropping him to the floor again.

FOYER

Flames everywhere.

SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY

Everything's on fire. The doors to all the rooms are open - everything ablaze.

ATTIC

A burning support beam gives out and falls to the floor as all the stored memories burn.

BASEMENT

Smoke leaks through the ceiling as the floor above burns.

Ken's trapped - injured and alone under a burning and soon-to-collapse house.

He tries to get up again. Can't. Collapses.

He sighs with defeat. Rolls over onto his back.

Just lies there, accepting his fate.

He raises his arms, flipping a double bird to the house above him.

He smiles, laughing at his own misfortune.

Then drops his arms to the cement floor.

Closes his eyes. Shakes his head in disbelief, a couple more irritated laughs rock his body silently.

For a long moment, he just lies there - eyes closed, catching his breath, defeated.

He opens his eyes.

Raises his head slowly, confused.

Standing across the basement from him are Mom, Dad, and Granny. Mom and Granny smile, joyful to see him. Dad looks emotionally distant.

Ken sits up, staring at them in disbelief.

FLASHBACK - INT. ATTIC - NIGHT

Dad (60s) comes up using Ten-Year-Old Ken's flashlight.

CUT TO:

Dad's looking for something among the boxes of ancient memories.

CUT TO:

Dad finds a photo album and smiles with the memory of it.

The smile washes away a moment later - something's off. He turns and is face-to-face with Dark Figure.

Dad Screams.

FLASHBACK - INT. MOM AND DAD'S ROOM - SAME

Mom (60s) startles awake.

FLASHBACK - INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

Mom approaches the attic ladder, using a cellphone for light.

She shines her light up to the open hatch.

Nothing there.

Something feels very wrong... she slowly turns... all the upstairs ghosts stare at her - The Bathtub Ghost, Dwarf Ghost, and Giant Ghost all standing in the doorways of their respective rooms.

Mom's eyes widen with panic and she screams.

She climbs the ladder into the--

ATTIC

--and comes face-to-face with Dad who's died of a heart attack right by the hatch.

Mom startles... then startles again when the Black Figure appears beside her.

Mom falls off the ladder--

HALLWAY

--she bounces off ladder, injuring herself.

A moment later, Dad's limp body is pushed out the hatch, crushing Mom.

The ladder accordians back up, closing the attic hatch.

Mom lies there - Dad's corpse crushing the air out of her.

She gasps for breath again and again, but all in vain... suffocates to death while the other ghosts watch.

PRESENT - INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Mom and Granny make their way over to Ken, leaving Dad behind.

The family matriarchs take Ken's arms, help him to his feet.

Tears flow from all three, as they embrace.

VARIOUS SHOTS OF THE HOUSE

The house burns. Everything engulfed.

Bits of the ceilings hang and fall, unable to withstand the flames.

A large chunk crashes to the Living Room floor.

BASEMENT

The women react to hearing the falling chunk of ceiling upstairs. Ken doesn't.

The women pull away from the embrace.

Ken stares Granny in the face - both crying.

Granny kisses the young man's cheek.

She squeezes his hand and steps away, forcing Ken to balance with just his Mom's help.

Mom holds her son steady. She runs her hands over his cheeks - so happy to see him, but knowing this is the end.

Ken signs:

I miss you.

Mom nods - she feels the same.

She hugs him tight and showers his cheek with motherly kisses.

Then she steps away, forcing Ken to stand on his own - which is really hard to do with how banged up he is.

A chunk of the ceiling above them collapses, nearly hitting Ken.

He can see the raging fire upstairs. Smoke pours in.

Ken turns to Dad who looks somewhere between pissed and worried.

Ken takes a stumbling step toward him.

Dad stops him with a hand up.

Ken gulps. Nods his understanding despite his hands balling into fists of frustration.

Dad looks up at the burning ceiling.

Then over at Mom and Granny. They both stare back at him with concern - silently pleading.

Dad looks back at Ken.

Ken doesn't know what to do or how to react.

Dad snuffles back any emotions he might be feeling and looks around.

He walks over to one of the windows.

After a moment's hesitation, Dad smashes the window.

Ken cocks his head, wondering what's going on.

Dad points to the window like "well? A little help?"

Ken tries to walk over, but collapses.

Mom moves to help him, but Dad halts her with that same "stop" hand movement.

Dad drags a step stool over to the wall under the window. Then backs away, motions for Ken to do it himself.

Ken stares at him, helpless and hurt.

He turns to Mom and Granny.

Mom just watches him, crying. Granny smiles and nods her encouragement, motioning for him to get up.

Another piece of flaming wreckage falls into the basement.

There's not much time.

Ken drags himself across the floor, debris falling around him.

Dad moves to Mom and Granny, watching Ken's progress.

Ken reaches the step stool.

Uses it as leverage to get up. With great effort he climbs onto the step stool.

He smashes out the rest of the window.

There are emergency lights outside along with the orange glow of the flames.

Ken tries to jump to climb out, but his leg gives out and he collapses again, knocking the step stool aside.

Mom looks away, unable to watch her son get hurt.

Granny steps toward him, wanting to help.

This time it's Ken who gives the "stop" hand movement.

He shares a look with Dad, who nods his respect.

Ken drags the step stool back to its place.

With effort, he gets up. Uses the wall for leverage to mount the step stool.

He glances back at the ghosts of his family.

They're all watching. All smiling. The women have tears streaming down their faces.

Ken signs:

I love you.

Mom and Granny are choked up and repeat the sign.

Dad just nods, looks away, not wanting anyone to see the tears that finally leave his eyes.

Ken looks at the window - his destination outside.

He tries to jump again. Again his legs don't want to, but he keeps himself from falling.

One more jump.

He manages to grab the window this time.

He pulls himself up, scrambling against the wall.

He pulls himself out.

EXT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Ken pulls himself out into the night air, illuminated by the flames of the house and the emergency lights.

Neighbor Lady - who's standing outside, watching the FIREFIGHTERS try to put out the raging house fire - spots Ken climbing out the basement window.

She yells.

Nobody pays attention to her.

She yells again, waving her arms to get someone's attention.

Finally a Firefighter looks in her direction.

She points at the window, shouting that Ken's there.

Firefighter turns. Sees what she sees.

He grabs one of his fellow Firefighters and rushes over.

The two men help Ken the rest of the way out of the house.

They're shouting and asking if he's alright.

He points to his ears. Signs:

I can't hear you.

They seem a little flustered by that, but nod, and put his arms around their shoulders to carry him away from the burning house, across the lawn where an ambulance is just arriving.

Black Figure's all-piercing scream sounds out.

Everyone reacts, grabbing their ears or jerking in pain.

They all watch as the burning house completely collapses.

Ken watches the rubble come down.

For a moment, in the middle of the burning wreckage, Black Figure stands, staring back at Ken with its featureless face.

Ken flips it off with a smile before he starts coughing from smoke inhalation.

The PARAMEDICS take over, putting an oxygen mask over Ken's face.

The Black Figure is gone.

The house is gone - just flaming rubble.

The entire quiet suburban neighborhood has come out to see what's happening.

The Paramedics get Ken into the ambulance.

He keeps watching the fire for as long as he can, staring straight at us as the ambulance doors slam shut.

THE END.