

LEWISTON

by

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"LEWISTON"
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EXT. LEWISTON PARK - NIGHT

A soldier stands silhouetted against a star-filled sky. His rifle is ready, stance alert, but his face is lost in shadow.

A POLICE RADIO SQUAWKS--

RED AND BLUE FLASHES begin to sweep across the soldier's body, but he doesn't react.

The soldier is a bronze WAR MEMORIAL on a stone pedestal.

The police gathering below don't even notice it - they're too busy marking off a crime scene: stretching yellow tape, aiming lights, snapping photos. Voices are hushed.

TITLE OVER: TEN YEARS AGO

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE PARK - SAME TIME

Along the block of tidy pre-war homes, a few curious residents peer from their front porches, standing among BURNED OUT JACK-O'-LANTERNS and other HALLOWEEN DECORATIONS.

EXT. LEWISTON PARK - CONTINUING

A DETECTIVE talks to a uniformed COP, lighting a cigarette.

DETECTIVE
Kathy Foster got cut up.

COP
When? What happened?

DETECTIVE
Tonight. Some drunk, other side of the park.

COP
She okay?

DETECTIVE
Yeah. Had to ride to St. Claire's in back of her own rig. Marcus was so rattled she had to redo his dressing with him goin' about 70 down Franklin Street.

COP
Was it our perp?

The detective turns toward the cordon of crime scene tape, where a BODY lies on the grass: a man in a suit sprawled like a broken puppet. His torso is a soggy red mass.

DETECTIVE
No, this guy wasn't stabbed. He--

CARTER (O.S.)
Do not smoke here!

Nearby, county coroner BILL CARTER (35) stands motionless. The detective stubs out the cigarette, pockets the butt.

DETECTIVE
Sorry, Bill.

Another POLICE CAR pulls up; Carter trots over to open the passenger door. A rumpled, elderly man gets out: JAMES FOLEY (70), the retired coroner.

FOLEY
Evening Billy.

CARTER
Jim. Thanks for coming out.

FOLEY
Quite a story you called me with.

They begin walking toward the body.

CARTER
Raymond Carbone, 41. Time of death between midnight and two A.M.

FOLEY
Still warm. Always hated those. Cause of death?

CARTER
Preliminary exam shows multiple penetrating trauma--

FOLEY
I'm not the DA, Billy.

CARTER
He was shot.

FOLEY
How many times?

CARTER

Five.

FOLEY

Sure it's not six?

Carter shoots a look at Foley.

FOLEY

But that's not what got me out of my warm bed, Billy. Nothing strange about a multiple GSW these days. You said something else.

Foley and Carter reach the crime scene tape.

CARTER

You want to examine him?

FOLEY

Oh, I don't think so.

A police tech squatting near the body calls to Carter.

CSI

Found another entry!

FOLEY

Six. Go on, Billy. What was it you said on the phone? If you'd had any doubts you wouldn't have called me.

CARTER

Each wound appears to be from a different type of weapon. Calibers range from, oh, maybe a 38 to something over 50. Guy's chest is dog food. Doesn't make any sense.

Carter turns to look at Foley.

CARTER

Does it?

FOLEY

Let me show you something, young Billy.

Foley reaches into his coat, produces a WRINKLED BROWN ENVELOPE.

FOLEY

I've been saving this for 30 years.

He cups his hand under the envelope. The nearby cops have been listening, and they aim their FLASHLIGHTS at Foley's palm. He shakes the envelope.

SIX DIFFERENT BULLETS tumble into the light, dented and deformed, glittering like strange jewels.

They range from a tapered modern slug to a rough musket ball. Carter's eyes are wide. Everyone turns to look at the body, from which a few WISPS OF STEAM are beginning to rise.

FOLEY
Getting chilly.

FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN

EXT. DOWNTOWN LEWISTON - AFTERNOON

MONTAGE - Welcome to Lewiston, an old Northeastern town perched on the line between city and country. The late October weather is mild and fall colors are at their peak.

TITLE OVER: PRESENT DAY

Lewiston has Colonial roots; HISTORIC BUILDINGS stand on every block. There's a modest business district, tree-lined residential streets. HALLOWEEN DECORATIONS in most yards.

INT. DOUG'S ROOM - SAME TIME

Small hands embellish a KID'S DRAWING OF A GUN.

DOUG FOSTER (12) sits at a DESK in his cluttered bedroom, completely absorbed in the drawing. Small for his age, his hair is too long, his clothes out of style. He's a loner.

Much of the wall over Doug's desk is covered with a haphazard COLLAGE OF WAR PHOTOS AND CLIPPINGS: weapons, explosions, aircraft, battles. Centered is a SNAPSHOT of a smiling 35-ish man in a modern Army uniform, standing in a rocky landscape.

INT. LIQUOR STORE - SAME TIME

LEONARD SHAY (70), a former academic sunken into bad habits and regrets, drops some cash on the counter. The cashier bags a liter of cheap brandy. Shay grabs the bag and exits.

EXT. LIQUOR STORE - CONTINUING

Shay glances across the street, sees BOB (35), a homeless man.

Bob wears LAYERS OF OLD CLOTHES and a thousand-yard stare. His grimy, threadbare jacket bears the name of a former owner, now Bob's name.

Shay and Bob make eye contact. Shay gives him an odd look, full of pity, then shuffles off down the sidewalk.

KATHY FOSTER (40), tall, fit, hometown pretty, steps out of a nearby diner with a BAG OF TAKE-OUT FOOD and COFFEE; she wears the UNIFORM of a Lewiston EMT. She walks up to Bob, hands him the food.

KATHY

And would you care to see a dessert menu?

Bob smiles, nods at the sidewalk.

KATHY

Right.

Kathy puts the food and coffee on the sidewalk.

BOB

You're the greatest.

KATHY

You're gonna make me blush. Anything else you need?

Bob shakes his head. Kathy gets a sudden chill and hugs herself.

KATHY

See ya.

She smiles and walks away. Bob picks up the coffee, pops the lid, and drinks it down in two big gulps. He devours a burger just as fast. It seems like the best meal he's ever had.

Bob leans back against the luncheonette's front window.

A moment later-- FROST FORMS ON THE WINDOW AROUND HIM LIKE AN AURA, spreading outward over the glass.

INT. DOUG'S ROOM - CONTINUING

An INSTANT MESSAGE pops up on Doug's computer screen, from MEGO: "Wanna come over, C my model?" Doug pounds out NO in reply and continues drawing.

Doug's cell phone rings. He turns it off.

A phone rings in another room. Doug ignores it.

INT. FOSTER KITCHEN - SAME TIME

Kathy rushes in from outside, drops a BAG OF GROCERIES on the counter and grabs a CORDLESS PHONE.

KATHY

Hello?

INT. DOUG'S ROOM - CONTINUING

Kathy calls from downstairs.

KATHY (O.S.)

Doug, it's Megan O'Donnell!

DOUG

I'm not here!

Kathy appears in the doorway to Doug's room, carrying the phone.

KATHY

Are you kidding me? Douglas, your best friend is going through a bad time! Now you take this phone and you speak to her!

DOUG

Mom...

KATHY

Talk!

Kathy hands Doug the phone. He slumps into a chair and turns off the mute. Kathy leaves.

DOUG

Hey.

MEG (V.O.)

Don't hey me!

INT. MEG'S ROOM - SAME TIME

MEG O'DONNELL (12), blond, thin, with gestures and expressions quick as a camera flash. She'd be pretty if she didn't look shell-shocked. Near tears, she storms around her room with a cell phone. Her bravado feels like an act.

MEG

I am so mad I could kill you,
Foster! You, you, you, you just,
you suck ass!

Meg passes a FRAMED PHOTO on her desk: herself with a YOUNGER BROTHER, both grinning into the camera.

She moves to a TELESCOPE on a TRIPOD, aimed out her bedroom window; a large MAP OF THE MOON fills an adjacent wall. Meg grabs the telescope and begins hunting for Doug's house.

MEG

You're the first person I've felt like talking to in days and all you can tell me is NO! Not even a "Wassup?" I need, I just, I just want to take my mind off Mark for a little while and my folks won't let me go out and, and I just need to think about something else, ya know?

INTERCUT WITH

INT. DOUG'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Doug is chagrined.

DOUG

I'm sorry, Meg.

MEG

Oh, is that an apology, suck-ass?

DOUG

I'M SORRY!

MEG

Pretty lame.

DOUG

Well what do you want me to do!

Doug stands in front of his bedroom window, looking toward Meg's house.

Meg sees him through the telescope.

DOUG

Meg, I'm just, I'm creeped out, and I don't know what to say to you! Honest, Meg. Call me a suck-ass again, maybe you'll feel better.

MEG

Okay. Suck-Ass!

DOUG
How's that?

MEG
A little better. Okay, so you wanna
come over?

DOUG
I guess. How's your model coming?

Meg glances at a strange MODEL on a table near her desk.

MEG
It's almost finished. How about
yours?

DOUG
Um, it's gettin there.

MEG
Yeah, I'll bet. Hurry up.

She ends the call.

INT. FOSTER KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

Doug rushes into the kitchen carrying a FOLDER bulging with photos, news clippings, and papers. He grabs his coat from a hook by the door. Kathy is spooning FOOD from pots into plastic containers.

DOUG
Mom, I'm going over to Meg's.

KATHY
Not alone you're not.

DOUG
Okay, you can take me.

KATHY
I'm not a taxi service, kiddo.

DOUG
I thought you wanted me to be nice
to her!

KATHY
Doug, look at the time!

DOUG
So be a little late.

KATHY

Doug, I can't "be a little late." I work in--

DOUG

--In a life-and-death job. People depend on you.

KATHY

Yeah, they do, smart guy, and I--

DOUG

--and you never know when you might have to save a life.

(almost a whisper)

You make a difference.

Kathy shifts gears, softens.

KATHY

You make a difference...

DOUG

Oh, yeah. Somebody might drop dead if I don't finish my homework.

KATHY

Doug...

DOUG

See you later.

Doug turns to head back upstairs. Kathy groans.

KATHY

Hold on.

Kathy grabs a POLICE RADIO from the counter, hits a button.

KATHY

Central?

A burst of STATIC, then...

MARCUS (V.O.)

Central. What's up Kathy?

KATHY

Hey Marcus. How's the watch?

MARCUS (V.O.)

Quiet. I'm makin my famous three-alarm chili.

Doug glances from Kathy to the refrigerator. Held in place with magnets, a small POSTER reads:

VIETNAM WAR MEMORIAL DESIGN CONTEST

KATHY
Okay, see you in a 20.

MARCUS (V.O.)
I'll save you a Zantac. Central clear.

Kathy rushes to put leftovers in the fridge.

KATHY
Meg's Mom or Dad will take you home. I will call them. Do not walk! Promise me, Douglas. By eight o'clock, okay?

DOUG
Yeah.

KATHY
That it?

DOUG
Thanks.

KATHY
Regular statesman.

DOUG
I could just ride my bike.

KATHY
Not a chance.

Doug looks down at a stack of home-printed FLIERS on the table--

MISSING - MARK O'DONNELL - LAST SEEN OCTOBER 25. The face of Meg's little brother smiles up from the paper.

Kathy grabs the fliers and they head out the door.

INT. FOSTER CAR - DUSK

Kathy's SUV cruises past houses decorated for Halloween. Entering downtown, they stop at a red light next to the park.

Kathy looks through a stand of trees. She can just make out the WWII MEMORIAL: a brawny bronze marine atop a granite pedestal, eyes level, rifle at the ready. Kathy gets a far away look. Doug notices.

DOUG
You thinkin about Dad?

KATHY
Hm? No... Yeah.

She looks straight ahead.

KATHY
We're okay. We're doing okay.

The light turns green. Kathy hits the gas.

As they pass the next corner she notices homeless Bob. For a second, they make eye contact. Doug also notices Bob, but sees him as a threat.

DOUG
I can protect you, you know. If anybody ever tries to hurt you, I can protect you.

Kathy melts, overcome with love and concern.

KATHY
I know. I know.

EXT. LEWISTON PARK - CONTINUING

The light turns green, and Bob watches Kathy and Doug drive away. He starts to move along the sidewalk, but stops when he notices a discarded BALLPOINT PEN. He picks it up.

INT. MEG'S ROOM - NIGHT

Meg is explaining her model to Doug in a machine-gun barrage of words. Her eyes are red, but the tears are gone. The framed photo of Meg and her brother is nowhere in sight.

MEG
...and since the three columns represent the three men from Lewiston who got killed in Vietnam, I put these little, like, nooks, little, little recesses on each one. On the inside, see? And this is the coolest part.

(MORE)

MEG (cont'd)

Inside each little nook space
there's a letter the soldier
actually wrote to his family back
home. How cool is that?

Doug looks out the window through Meg's telescope, trying
hard not to be impressed.

DOUG

But what if you can't get the
letters?

MEG

What do you mean? I have them right
here.

She produces three LETTERS in PLASTIC SLEEVES.

MEG

But my favorite part is this big
lighted sphere on top of the whole
thing. It'll give like this soft
glow over the whole memorial.
You'll be able to see it for miles!
But I'm stuck on how to do it in
the model. I have a halogen bulb in
here now but it gets too hot. I
think I need a dimmer. What do you
think? A dimmer?

Doug sits on the edge of Meg's bed, sighs.

DOUG

I think you suck.

MEG

Suck-ass!

DOUG

It's great, Meg! I mean, I
shouldn't bother doing anything.

MEG

Doug! Let me see what you're
working on.

Doug hands over his folder of printouts, photos, and
drawings. Meg spreads them out on her desk.

MEG

It's a diorama, right?

DOUG

Yeah.

MEG
This could be good, Doug.

DOUG
I was gonna use 3 GI Joes.

MEG
(singsong)
Doug plays with dolls...

DOUG
They're action figures!

Meg sorts through more items from Doug's folder, finds a collection of PHOTOS of the existing memorials. Some are COPIES OF OLD NEWSPAPER PHOTOS, others are new SNAPSHOTS.

MEG
What about these?

DOUG
I wanted to show how mine would fit in with the other memorials. Compare 'em.

MEG
Excellent! Shows you're thinking of the whole park.

Meg lays out the photos, listing them one by one.

MEG
Revolutionary War, Civil War, Spanish American, World War One, World War Two. All five. This could be great, Doug! You could literally show your idea against a background of history!

DOUG
Yeah, that's right!

MEG
Well I can't see why you're so depressed about this. You just need to get to your act together.

Meg continues exploring the items in Doug's folder. Doug starts organizing the photos.

DOUG
You're right. I'll do it. I will. Thanks, Meg.

MEG

You're welcome. What's this?

From the clutter of Doug's papers, Meg picks up a SMALL, GRAINY NEWSPAPER IMAGE: a statue on one of the memorials.

DOUG

The Minuteman. Revolutionary War.

MEG

Can't be. It's different.

DOUG

Huh?

MEG

Look at his hands.

ELAINE (O.S.)

Knock knock.

ELAINE O'DONNELL (40), Meg's mom, stands in the doorway. She's been crying, though she tries to smile. Meg's emotional wall crumbles, and the mood darkens.

MEG

Hi Mom.

DOUG

Hi Mrs. O'Donnell. Um, Meg's been helping me with the contest.

ELAINE

That's good. That's good. Just a few more days. Well. Um, Meg, I think I should take Doug home now. Your father is downstairs.

MEG

Okay.

Elaine walks away. Doug packs his stuff back into the folder, turns to face Meg, deeply uncomfortable.

DOUG

Thanks a lot, Meg.

MEG

Sure.

DOUG

Um, I'm sure Mark's okay. They'll find him.

Meg looks away, fiddles with things on her desk.

MEG

I know.

DOUG

I'll let you know how I make out.

MEG

Sure.

After Doug leaves, Meg opens a drawer and takes out the framed photo of herself and Mark.

She stares at her brother's face a moment, then picks up one of the VIETNAM LETTERS.

MEG (V.O.)

"Dear Mom. I don't want you getting too worried. I'm actually in a pretty safe place. We're dug in good, and the incoming usually hit on the hill past us. But a lot of the guys have a pretty hard time out here. It's a hot, dirty, mean war, and guys get hurt, and sometimes they get killed. Seems like an awful place to die, so far from home. Hope I make it back to you okay. You know I'll try. Love you forever, Gary. Danang, April 4, 1968."

Meg wipes her eyes.

IRONS (V.O.)

It's important to remember.

INT. HOTEL DINING ROOM - NIGHT

TED IRONS (55), businessman and candidate, is speaking at a posh campaign fund-raiser. He stands at a podium in a room full of round tables and 200 well-heeled SUPPORTERS.

IRONS

That's why I support the memorial. That's why I proposed the referendum that will fund the memorial. And that's why, on the day the memorial is completed, I will be the first to dedicate a prayer for the brave young men who gave their lives. Because we must remember.

The room breaks into applause. Standing in the shadows is NOVAK (50). He claps without emotion and eyes the crowd like a sentinel. He is dapper, fit, dangerous. He works for Irons.

IRONS

But there are other things we must remember as well. As election day nears, it's important to remember who your friends are.

Good natured chuckles around the room. Irons joins in.

IRONS

As your Senator, I will serve this state aggressively, tirelessly, just as I now serve our business community. I will be the Senator who makes a difference. Thank you, and may God bless you all.

THUNDEROUS APPLAUSE. People rise to their feet. Novak adopts a practiced smile and joins the group near Irons, who offers hearty campaign handshakes all around.

INT. O'DONNELL MINIVAN - NIGHT

Doug stares out the window as Elaine drives him home. She keeps glancing into shadows and down side streets. A motion ahead attracts Doug's attention. It's homeless Bob, swinging something around over his head.

ELAINE

I wish they would lock that man up.

Doug watches Bob as the car drives on.

EXT. DOWNTOWN LEWISTON - CONTINUOUS

Bob watches the minivan drive by. A moment later he brings the object he's been swinging to the ground: a length of rope with an old can tied to the end.

Bob bends down over the can. It's full of discarded BALLPOINT PENS, point down. He pulls one out, draws a line on his palm. He coils the rope, packs away the can and walks off.

INT. DOUG'S ROOM - LATER

Doug is posing three GI JOE FIGURES in a group, checking their positions from different angles. He places a long CARDBOARD BACKGROUND behind them, simulating the actual setting in the park.

INT. MEG'S ROOM - SAME TIME

Meg is rooting through a BOX OF HOUSEHOLD JUNK. She finds a DIMMER, and plugs it into the power cord for the lighted sphere on her model. She turns out her room lights, and slowly turns up the dimmer, peering under the sphere.

INT. VACANT COMMERCIAL BUILDING - SAME TIME

Bob is in a derelict back room, sitting at a stained WORKBENCH. In front of him is his can of discarded pens, and an EMPTY CAN. He sits on an old CRATE.

With great reverence, Bob unwraps an item from his knapsack: a new MARBLE NOTEBOOK. He takes a PEN from the full can. On the cover of the notebook, he writes CHOSIN. Bob opens to the first page.

FROST FORMS ON THE WORKBENCH WHERE HIS ARM RESTS, SPREADING OUTWARD.

Bob begins writing names: Abrell, Barker, Christianson, Gomez... He doesn't get far when the ink stops flowing. He drops the pen in the empty can, takes another from the full can, a different color. He keeps writing. He writes a repeating sequence of names, over and over, changing pens as needed.

His eyes well up. A tear falls on the page. He tries to wipe it away, but it's already frozen.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYM - DAY

MONTAGE - Long rows of FOLDING TABLES fill the space, each bearing ENTRIES in the Vietnam War Memorial Design Contest.

STUDENTS, PARENTS, TEACHERS and LOCALS wander among the tables. Doug and Meg are both in the Middle School area, standing by their entries. Kathy talks with some other parents near a FOOD TABLE.

Meg talks with a few GIRL CLASSMATES, who stop to admire her entry.

Doug is downcast. All the entries around him look exactly like his. He commiserates with a couple of BOY CLASSMATES.

Ted Irons, accompanied by an entourage of POLITICAL STAFFERS, is glad-handing every registered voter in sight.

SHAY wanders among the tables, looking at the entries. As he passes Irons, there's a moment of tense eye contact.

AT DOUG'S TABLE

Doug glances toward the street doors, where Bob is talking to a trio of CONTEST OFFICIALS. Bob is holding out his notebook, trying to explain something. The officials shake their heads. They gradually work Bob closer to the exit, and finally raise their voices and point to the door. Bob is crestfallen, but he turns and exits.

IRONS (O.S.)

This is fine work, young man.

Doug turns to find Irons a few feet away, admiring his entry. A PHOTOGRAPHER'S FLASH goes off in Doug's face.

DOUG

Thanks.

Doug shuffles his feet. Irons is all candidate.

IRONS

What's your name, son?

DOUG

Doug. Foster.

IRONS

I'm Ted Irons, Doug. Pleased to meet you.

Handshake, more flashes.

IRONS

Doug, did you know that I sponsored this memorial project?

DOUG

Um, I think so.

IRONS

I did it because it honors the members of this community who have made the ultimate sacrifice. That's what these proud figures stand for.

Irons bends close to Doug's model, looks over the photos of the older memorials.

IRONS

These aren't merely lifeless shapes in bronze. They are living memories that matter deeply to our citizens. Do you understand, Doug?

DOUG

Yeah. Yeah, I do!

IRONS

Well I wish more people did. Thanks for chatting, Doug. Very nice meeting you, and I look forward to being your man in Washington.

Irons shakes Doug's hand again, and Doug beams. More flashes. The entourage moves away. Pleased, Doug looks at his model, then back toward Irons, and--

Bob steps into his sightline, a few feet away. Bob turns, and Doug is pinned by his thousand-yard-stare.

Bob carefully places his NOTEBOOK in an empty space at the end of Doug's table, then puts a small TOY SOLDIER on top. He nods at Doug, looks at his model, smiles.

BOB

That's good.

Bob slips out.

Doug approaches the notebook, picks up the toy soldier: typical green plastic, customized with a bad paint job. He opens the notebook, sees page after page of names in a rainbow of colors.

MEG (O.S.)

What's that?

Doug spins around - Meg stands behind him.

DOUG

That creepy street guy put it here. Look at these names.

MEG

Maybe you should tell somebody.

DOUG

I think he wanted to enter the contest. Just with names. Wow.

MEG

That doesn't make sense, those aren't the right names.

DOUG

He put this with it.

Doug hands Meg the toy soldier.

DOUG
 You're right, though. What's CHOSIN
 mean? Meg?

Meg is staring horrified at the toy soldier--

MEG
 This is Mark's!

For a moment Doug doesn't make the connection.

DOUG
 Mom! MOOOOMMMM!

Across the gym, Kathy begins running toward them.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL GYM - LATER

A crowd of KIDS, PARENTS and TEACHERS has gathered outside the gym. Kathy stands close behind Doug.

All attention is on a POLICE CAR pulled up at the curb, about 50 feet away. Bob sits in the backseat.

A uniformed COP approaches Doug and Kathy. He hands Doug a digital camera; its screen shows a photo of Bob. Doug nods. The cop thanks him and turns away.

DOUG
 Hey, don't you wanna know...

The cop ignores Doug and walks back to the patrol car. As the car drives away, the kids and parents seem relieved, but not Kathy. She is sad and anxious.

Meg and her PARENTS huddle near the entrance, watching. Meg turns to her mother.

MEG
 They'll find him now, right?

ELAINE
 Yes, sweetheart. Your brother will
 be home soon. Very soon.

Meg lets a shred of hope creep into her heart. She hugs her mom hard.

INT. FOSTER LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Doug is channel surfing while Kathy talks on the phone in the KITCHEN. Doug scans through quick images and sound bites: doctors, lawyers, and cops confronting death, saving lives, righting wrongs. He kills the TV and shuffles away.

INT. DOUG'S ROOM - CONTINUING

Doug flops onto his bed and stares at the ceiling, sullen and withdrawn. A moment later, Kathy appears in the doorway.

KATHY

Hey.

Doug ignores her.

KATHY

I have to go. I'm on til one, so...
There's lasagna...

Silence.

KATHY

It's better if we talk, Doug.

DOUG

(sarcastic)
Mother, look at the time!

KATHY

Don't get smart with me, Douglas!
We should talk about Mark! And Meg.
About what's happening!

DOUG

What's the point? They got the guy.
Mission accomplished.

KATHY

Yeah, maybe.

DOUG

What's that mean?

KATHY

Nothing, just... maybe that guy has
nothing to do with Mark.

DOUG

What are you talking about?

KATHY

Look, I know this guy, okay? He's
confused all the time, and most of
what he says makes no sense. But
there is no way he would ever hurt
anybody.

Doug's eyes are full of questions. Kathy sits down on the bed. She points to a SCAR on her neck.

KATHY
Remember this?

DOUG
You fell off the porch. When I was
little.

KATHY
No. I didn't.

Kathy shifts her position and reaches for a memory she'd rather forget.

KATHY
You were two years old. Halloween
night. We answered this call and,
and things went bad. There was this
drunk in the park. He looked like
he'd been beat up. Huge head lac,
bleeding like crazy. We didn't see
he had a knife.

She feels the scar on her neck.

KATHY
It could've gone worse, but that
guy, he comes out of nowhere and
knocks the drunk about 20 feet. He
was so strange. He helped Marcus
get me in the rig. And then we
started to think he must be sick.
He was so cold! Like somebody you
pulled out of a frozen lake. We
wanted to bring him with us, but he
kept saying he had to get
somewhere. Made no sense. Few days
later, he just showed up on the
street, still dressed up for
Halloween.

DOUG
What do you expect? He's some kind
of whack job.

KATHY
Doug, he saved my life!

DOUG
Big deal.

Kathy is stung, but tries to hide it. She stands and turns her back to Doug, hiding the tears starting in her eyes.

KATHY

Yes, it was a very big deal. So excuse me if I'm not thrilled that he's sitting in a cell right now. People are so quick to blame somebody. They should realize things don't always work out the way you expect.

DOUG

Yeah, like with dead fathers.

KATHY

STOP IT! YOU STOP THIS! Why are you acting this way?

Doug rockets off the bed--

DOUG

Why can't I help!

Kathy shakes her head, confused.

DOUG

Find Mark!

KATHY

Oh, Doug. You're just...

DOUG

I'M NOT JUST A KID!

KATHY

Doug, come on...

DOUG

I could help!

KATHY

The police will handle it.

DOUG

I should go down there, to the police station. I'm the one who saw the guy! Maybe--

KATHY

You are not to leave this house!

Doug stares a challenge at Kathy, eyes overflowing.

KATHY

Okay, here it is. I have trusted you alone since your last birthday, treated you like a grown-up, and I've never regretted it. If you make me regret it tonight, then you most definitely are just a kid.

Kathy marches downstairs.

Doug sees himself in a mirror: a little kid, crying. He runs out.

INT. FOSTER ATTIC - CONTINUOUS

A bulb winks on over an ARMY FOOTLOCKER, with FOSTER stenciled on the top.

STILL CRYING, DOUG SNAPS THE LATCHES AND OPENS THE LID.

Inside are small BOXES, bundles of SNAPSHOTS, newspaper CLIPPINGS about the Iraq war. Also an embroidered BATTALION INSIGNIA bearing the words LOCK AND LOAD.

Doug opens a small CARVED WOOD BOX, revealing a collection of mementos: a BRONZE STAR, some CAMPAIGN RIBBONS, a few SMOOTH PEBBLES, a PLAYING CARD, a RIFLE BULLET. Doug lines them up on the edge of the lid, creating a sort of shrine.

He picks up an ENVELOPE with his name written on it, removes a SINGLE SHEET OF PAPER wrinkled and torn from much handling. He starts reading.

It begins, "Dear Doug... If you're reading this..."

Doug drops the letter and surrenders to his tears.

INT. DOUG'S ROOM - LATER

Doug sits at his desk wearing his father's UNIFORM JACKET, the too-long sleeves bunched up on his arms. He's adding more details to his gun drawing.

Reaching for another pencil, he knocks his folder of research material off the desk, and the papers and photos scatter on the floor.

As he picks them up, one clipping catches his eye: the old photo that Meg claimed was different. He lays it on the desk, then finds his own photo of the same statue. He sees the difference.

Doug repeats the comparison with old and new photos of another statue. Again, he sees a difference. Astonishment spreads over his face, and he pushes his drawing aside.

INT. DOUG'S ROOM - LATER

SPREAD ACROSS A WALL NEAR DOUG'S DESK IS A COMPARISON OF THE FIVE WAR MEMORIALS.

Under each soldier is a list of the differences he's found between the old and new photos. Arm positions have shifted. Bent knees have straightened slightly. All the changes are so subtle, no one would ever notice without a careful comparison.

Doug examines the photos of the Spanish American War memorial. His notes call attention to the soldier's BANDOLIER. Under the oldest photo, he has written "4 BULLETS."

Doug bends over a newer photo, looking through a magnifying glass. Here, the bandolier contains--

DOUG

Three bullets. Only three.

Doug turns his attention to his own photo of the same statue. The angle is wrong, and the bandolier isn't visible at all.

He notices a fragment of a newspaper story at the bottom of a printout showing the oldest photo of the same soldier. He can just make out: MURDER IN WAR MEMORIAL PARK, with the subhead, BULLET RIDDLED BODY STIRS FEAR IN LEWISTON.

Doug stands and backs away from the wall, eyeing the pictures of the soldiers with sudden fear.

DOUG

What is goin on here...

But then his eyes land on the photo of his father. With a deep breath, he stands up as straight and tall as possible.

INT. FOSTER GARAGE - NIGHT

Doug wheels his bike out of the garage and races off.