

Ed's Dead
an original screenplay by
D.P. Swanson

WGAW 1541120

D.P. Swanson
91 Old Rd
Franklin, Tasmania, Australia 7113
011 61 3 6266 3151
darren.swanson@hotmail.com

FADE IN:

EXT. A SUBURBAN HOUSE - NIGHT

A MAN walks the path to a front door, his features not shown.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Another man, MAN 2, and a WOMAN hurriedly peel the clothes off one another in a semi-lit room, kissing and fondling in between the undoing of buttons and zippers, their faces too shadowed to reveal their features.

The front door of the house opens and MAN 1 enters the room and pauses for a moment.

Man 2 pushes the woman onto the bed passionately, bumping a bed-side table hard in the process, items on the table THUMPING and CLANKING to the floor.

The off-scene RUCKUS can be heard by the first man as he stands there. He walks away, into another room.

A samurai sword is mounted over the mantle of a fireplace and man 1 reaches for it, unsheathing the sword with a metallic SCHLINK, the metal glinting in the darkness.

Now the woman is on top, her breasts heaving to her sexual movements, both her and the man moaning and on the verge of climaxing, eyes closed and lost to pleasure as the door in the background opens silently, the silhouette of the first man and the sword. He marches in toward them quickly, sword poised to run the woman through, he thrusts at the woman's back...

CUT TO BLACK:

A series of BLOOD-CURDLING SCREAMS echo and then fade.

FADE IN:

To the eyes of a man snapping awake to blinding daylight, from a dream, from a different location and a different time.

INT. SHACK, TASMANIA, AUSTRALIA - DAY

ED is in his late thirties, tall and thin, grubby and unshaven and he sits bolt-upright on a dirty old couch, awakened from a dream. He holds his head to the pain of a hangover and squints in the afternoon sun which has him lit in obnoxious glare.

The floor to the shack is strewn with empty mini bottles labeled with various spirit brands, and he manages to get

himself into a sitting position, and he sits there, holding his head.

On the floor is a photo album, lying slightly askew and open to a photo of a younger and sober Ed, happy with his family—a wife and two young daughters.

He sits, looking at the album and then he reaches down and straightens it up so that it's now square to him. When he reaches, his sleeve climbs up his arm and reveals the scars of an attempted suicide at his wrist.

EXT. SHACK - MOMENTS LATER

Ed opens the front door, which leads out to a veranda over a dirt floor.

O.S, there's the noise of a TRUCK laboring up a hill.

Ed leans against the door frame, takes a swig of something out of a large plastic soda bottle and he watches for the vehicle.

On the gravel road which runs in front of Ed's shack, a BUDGET hire truck appears, cresting the hill.

Ed watches with interest.

INT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

DAN, a nicely dressed man in his twenties is driving the truck. His pretty young wife HAILY is seated in the passenger seat. Haily has similar features to Ed's wife in the photo.

Dan looks to his right and almost does a double-take.

DAN

Jesus.

Through his window, we can see Ed's property in all its hill-billy glory. Rubbish surrounding a badly built shack. Pigs, goats and chickens running around freely. Ed eye-balling them from his front door. He waves.

Dan flicks his index finger up from the steering wheel and nods, executing the country wave.

DAN (CONT'D)

Welcome to Tasmania.

Haily is now looking at Ed's place, concern showing on her face.

EXT. ROAD - CONTINUOUS

The truck drives on past Ed's for another fifty meters before the left indicator comes on.

As it turns into a driveway, we can see the vehicle has a Victorian license plate.

Ed watches for a moment longer, another swig of hair-of-the-dog and he wipes his mouth with the back of his hand, smiles menacingly and retreats inside.

EXT. DAN'S COTTAGE - LATER

The truck has the sliding door raised to the cargo bed and a metal ramp is lowered. Dan is inside picking up a cardboard box, one of only a few left.

From the front door of the house, which is a cute Victorian cottage, Haily walks out, looking toward the driveway.

HAILY

Dan! Lunch!

EXT. VERANDA - LATER

The couple are enjoying a lunch of sandwiches and juice, seated on a bench seat on a veranda which runs the length of the house.

The view from the veranda is breathtaking, encompassing the Huon River with Egg Island in the middle. This house sits high on a hill, overlooking the village which is about a kilometer away with the river running behind it.

Dan stands and leans against the rail, taking the scenery in.

HAILY

Nice view, huh?

Dan remains focused on the view.

DAN

Shame about the neighbors. Lots of pictures of the wonderful water views.

He looks at his wife.

DAN (CONT'D)

But not a damn one of mister Tassie-
As up the road.

INT. VILLAGE CORNER STORE - DAY

Dan is seated at the counter, newspaper and coffee before him, casually flipping through the pages.

Haily is learning the point of sale system, shown by an elderly lady EMMA. A CUSTOMER waits patiently.

HAILY

Two dollars and eighty five cents change.

CUSTOMER

Thanks, luv.

The customer gathers up his plastic bag and takes off.

HAILY

Thank you. Bye, now.

EMMA

See, that wasn't so hard.

HAILY

Nah. It's easy.

She smiles.

HAILY (CONT'D)

Thanks for your help, Emma.

Emma smiles back and then nods towards Dan.

EMMA

When's he gonna learn the shop?
He's not gonna just sit around like
a great lump is he?

Haily chuckles but Dan is not really impressed.

HAILY

Yeah, Dan. When are you going to learn the shop?

DAN

We've talked about this, Haily. A couple of months before the *baby* is born.

A flash of mock-anger from Haily.

EMMA

You're pregnant? Oh, that's wonderful, darl. When're ya due? You hoping for a girl or a boy?

Dan smiles. Pay-back's a bitch!

CUT TO:

Late that afternoon, Haily flips the sign on the front door around to CLOSED and she uses a key in the door to lock it.

Dan is at the point of sale computer, messing around.

Haily is behind him now and she leans into him gently, watching as he clicks around.

HAILY

You think we did the right thing?

Dan continues to work and he shrugs a little.

DAN

I guess so. Is this a better place to raise a child? That's what it's all about, really.

HAILY

What about you? Is this a good place to raise a husband?

Dan chuckles and wraps his arms around his wife's waste, squeezing her.

DAN

I'm just a man. Feed me steak, beer and sex and I'm happy anywhere.

She slaps his shoulder, playfully disgusted.

Dan returns to the computer screen.

Haily peels away from him and begins to gather up her stuff.

HAILY

You ready?

DAN

I just need to re-install the driver for the receipt printer. I'll walk home.

HAILY

Don't be too late.

They smile at each other and Haily opens the door and leaves.

INT. HAILY'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Haily's car drives down the main road of the village and she flicks the left indicator for a turn up an intersecting road to their house.

EXT. INTERSECTION - CONTINUOUS

As the car turns, we get to see the street sign, posted on the road Haily and Dan now live on. The sign reads-

CEMETERY RD

INT. HAILY'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Haily pulls into the driveway of their house and as she places the vehicle into park and shuts the engine off, she absentmindedly gazes across the road to Ed's dump. She turns back, about to reach for the door and Ed is standing at her window. She startles, grabbing her chest and smiling nervously. After a moment, she winds down the window.

Ed smiles at her through rotten teeth, wobbly on his feet.

HAILY

You scared me.

Ed is about to talk and when he does, he slurs very badly because Ed is drunk all the time.

ED

(mumbling, slurring)

Just wanted to drop you off a house-warming resent.

Haily listens carefully.

He pulls out a bare-root plant from behind his back much like someone would present flowers. The plant is morbidly twisted and dirt falls off the ball-root as he moves it.

ED (CONT'D)

(mumbling)

Blueberry. You need to plant it now or it'll die.

Haily just looks at him in shock.

ED (CONT'D)

(mumbling)

I'm Ed. Ed Wiggins. Live cross the road.

HAILY

Haily. Nice to meet you, Ed.

Ed smiles back and opens the door for her.

She steps out cautiously and we see she is so very tiny against this tall man.

ED
(mumbling)
I know your property pretty well. I
have a good idea where to plant it.

He goes to walk off, toward the house, and Haily tries frantically to come up with something to stop him.

HAILY
Wait!

Ed stops.

HAILY (CONT'D)
I don't have a spade.

Ed looks at her.

HAILY (CONT'D)
Besides. It's getting late and I
have to get tea ready for my husband.

Eds eyes narrow and his jaw sets. He suddenly becomes serious, almost menacing, like Haily has pressed most of his buttons and there's only one or two more left.

HAILY (CONT'D)
He'll be home any second so why don't
you leave the blueberry here and
I'll plant it tomorrow, okay?

Ed watches her a moment before placing the plant on the ground.

ED
(mumbling)
You better. Otherwise, it'll die.

The two stare at each other- Ed looking scary and Haily scared.

HAILY
I promise.

Suddenly he smiles broadly and says something like-

ED
(mumble)
Treacle.

And then he walks by her.

Haily stands there a moment longer, watching him go, breathing a sigh of relief.

CUT TO:

Night has fallen on the cottage and Dan walks down the footpath to the front door, his key at the ready. But the door opens suddenly and Haily is there, frantic.

HAILY

We have to move back! Like, right now!

INT. HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

DAN

I'm sure he's harmless.

HAILY

I don't care! He's drunk and scary and I don't want him as a neighbor.

Dan studies his wife for a moment before stepping towards her and pulling her in for a hug.

DAN

Look, I'll get the scoop from the locals. In the meantime, I promise I won't leave you alone again, okay?

Haily looks into her husband's eyes and feels secure in his embrace.

HAILY

Okay.

DAN

I'll go talk to him tomorrow.

CUT TO:

Morning, the next day, Dan is at the front door and he opens it to go outside and a spade falls in, CLANKING on the floor. It was propped against the door.

Dan turns his head, to look back inside.

Haily is there and she watches Dan, agitated.

HAILY

It's him.

EXT. CEMETERY ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

Dan walks along the road, spade in one hand, blueberry plant in the other, over to Ed's place.

EXT. ED'S SHACK - MOMENTS LATER

At the door of Ed's shack, Dan places the plant and spade against the wall and then he KNOCKS on the door.

DAN

Hello?

In the background, behind a small iron water tank, Ed sits bolt upright, only his head and upper torso visible as a young pig SQUEALS and runs away from him.

Dan turns to the noise of the pig and Ed fumbles with something at his waste hurriedly, before standing, picking up his bottle of booze as he rises.

Dan tries to figure out what he stumbled upon but deliberately shakes it from his head.

DAN (CONT'D)

Are you Ed?

Ed looks at the plant and spade at the door-step.

ED

(mumbling)

What d'ya want?

DAN

I'm Dan from across the road. You met my wife yesterday. Gave her a plant.

Ed looks at Dan nonplused.

DAN (CONT'D)

And this morning I found a spade at my door-step.

(indicates over his shoulder)

ED

Just try'n to help out.

DAN

Thanks but we don't need anything.

Ed takes a slug from his bottle.

Dan's losing his confidence.

DAN (CONT'D)
I'd appreciate if you didn't come
onto my property again, okay?

ED
This is the country. I help you.
You help me.

Dan tries to maintain eye-contact. To not drop his eyes.
To not show submission.

Ed leans in way too close.

ED (CONT'D)
But, you wouldn't know about that,
would you? You're a dirty city rat.

For a split second, Dan looks down, not long but just long
enough to change the balance of power.

Ed knows it. He smiles.

He walks to his front door and enters the house, CLOSING the
door and leaving Dan alone.

INT. COTTAGE - NIGHT

Dan and Haily are watching TV. Haily is now showing a baby-
bump. O.S the noise of a loud revving ENGINE is heard as it
drives fast up Cemetery Road.

They both look to the window.

HAILY
I wish they'd slow down. The poor
wallabies don't stand a bloody chance.

The CAR does slow down, as if stopped outside.

Dan stands walks over to the fire-place, opens the door and
moves the embers around with a steel fire poker. He closes
the door.

DAN
Need more wood. Back in a sec.

Haily continues to watch TV as Dan leaves.

EXT. COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Dan walks toward a stack of fire wood, the vapor from his
warm breath visible in the cold night.

Down the road, in front of Ed's place, a car is parked, ENGINE
running and blowing out exhaust.

Ed is at the car, talking to someone through the window.

Dan picks up some wood, watching the scene across the road.

Something is exchanged between Ed and the driver through the car window, Ed placing the thing he received in his jeans pocket.

Dan watches a moment longer before retreating back to the cottage with an arm-load of wood.

EXT. PUB - ESTABLISHING - EVENING

Haily's car pulls up to the local pub.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Haily is behind the wheel as Dan fumbles through his wallet, checking for cash.

DAN

What do you want?

HAILY

I don't know. A nice red or something.

INT. PUB - MOMENTS LATER

Dan is at the bar with a bottle of red wine and a six-pack of beer in front of him.

An OLD TIMER is seated nearby.

The female BAR ATTENDANT walks some change over to Dan and dumps it on the bar.

BAR ATTENDANT

Thanks.

Dan shoves the change in his pocket.

DAN

Do you know Ed, up Cemetery road?

She scrunches up her face, trying to recall.

DAN (CONT'D)

You know, the place looks like a dump. Crap and livestock everywhere.

BAR ATTENDANT

Oh. Mumbles.

DAN

Mumbles?

BAR ATTENDANT

I only know him as Mumbles. I've heard of him. Nothing good, mind you.

DAN

How so?

BAR ATTENDANT

Probably just rumors, but I heard he killed his wife on the mainland.

OLD TIMER (O.S.)

S'not a rumor. S'true.

Dan gives his attention to the old bar-fly.

OLD TIMER (CONT'D)

Caught his woman cheat'n on him and ran her through with a bloody samurai sword.

Dan looks at the old man incredulously.

OLD TIMER (CONT'D)

Best stay away from him.

The old man taps his temple and winks.

OLD TIMER (CONT'D)

Fuck'n psychopath.

DAN

He's my neighbor.

The old man chuckles.

OLD TIMER

No shit! Wouldn't want to be in your shoes then, mate.

EXT. CEMETERY ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

Haily's car drives up the steep hill of Cemetery Road. The gravel road is bathed in the last rays of warm daylight but just over the hill, a mass of impenetrable dark clouds are on the move, on the verge of sucking the remaining light from the valley.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

As Haily drives she sneaks a few peeks at her husband, a little concerned about his darkened mood, booze on his lap.

Dan stares ahead, zombie-like.

As the car crests the hill, about to pull into the driveway of the cottage, Ed can be seen seated on the ground on the street in front of his shack. There's a soda bottle of booze by his side which he picks up clumsily, as he hoists himself to a wobbly stand, giving Haily and Dan the stare.

Dan and Haily look at each other.

INT. COTTAGE KITCHEN - MORNING

The house is darkened due to every window dressing in the house being closed, blocking out the morning sun.

Haily is at the kitchen, filling up and electric kettle with water. Job done, she set's it in its receptacle and flicks the switch to start the boiling process. She turns to the window and grabs an edge of the curtain to open it up to the light and when she pulls it back, she screams and jerks back in fright, her hands going to her mouth. A MAN is at the window, face contorted with pain, blood on his face, t-shirt covered in blood, grasping an injured shoulder which is the source of the bleeding. He taps on the window.

MAN

I need the cops.

EXT. COTTAGE - LATER

Dan has a towel, which he is trying to tie around the wounded man's shoulder.

The man flinches and grimaces in pain as a knot is tied.

DAN

What happened?

MAN

Fuck'n Mumbles stabbed me, man.

Dan responds with concern.

DAN

Why?

The knot is done and the man looks at the make-shift bandage.

MAN

We were sit'n there smoke'n a pipe
and he pulled out his sword and just
went ape-shit. No reason.

DAN

Was it a samurai sword?

The man nods.

There's the CRUNCHING of gravel under tires and both men
turn around to see a cop car pulling up, with an ambulance
behind it.

CUT TO:

At the patrol car, Dan talks to the COP.

COP

You the bloke who called it in?

Dan nods.

CUT TO:

At the house, through the kitchen, Haily watches on.

DAN

The guy over there asked me to.
Says Ed from up the road stabbed him
with a sword.

The policeman shakes his head as if not surprised. He puts
the car into drive.

DAN (CONT'D)

You know Ed?

COP

Bloke's a tad unstable. Pretty
intelligent fella when he's not drunk.

DAN

That's nice. You gonna arrest him?

COP

Depends if knuckle-head over there
wants to pursue it. Usually these
type of things tend to blow over
once everyone's calmed down.

(pause)

I'll see you in a few minutes. Might
need you to make a statement.

Dan nods and the cop car continues towards Ed's place.

INT. COTTAGE - LATER

Dan and Haily are in the kitchen, Haily giving her husband a look.

DAN

What?

HAILY

I wanna go back to Melbourne.

Dan sighs. If only it were that easy.

HAILY (CONT'D)

We moved here to get away from this sort of crap. I can't handle it and I don't want to raise our child here.

DAN

We can't just move back, Haily. We got a mortgage on the store. A mortgage on this house.

She knows this is true but it's not what she wants to hear.

HAILY

Lets just leave, then. We'll stay at my parent's for a while.

DAN

Who's gonna run the store?

HAILY

We'll pay someone.

DAN

With what, Haily? All the profit goes to the mortgage.

HAILY

Damn it, Dan!

She puts her hands on her belly, rubbing her baby-bump.

HAILY (CONT'D)

You're supposed to have the answers. You're supposed to protect us.

Dan is hurt by this but rather than push this to the next level, he concedes and walks away.

CUT TO:

Later that night, Haily and Dan are in bed, Haily asleep but Dan, lit up by the glow from a clock-radio, is still awake.

There's an echoed POP from outside and the clock radio goes off, the power cut.

Another POP, POP, POP and loud CRACKS, like branches breaking.

Dan sits upright and fading in through the window, an orange glow appears, getting brighter.

Dan tries to figure out what's what when the glow becomes brighter. Suddenly he rips off the covers and leans over to shake Haily awake.

DAN

Haily, wake up! We got a fire!
Quick!

EXT. CEMETERY ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

From the road, there are four people standing there, lit up by Ed's house which is fully ablaze, embers sailing off into the night.

Haily and Dan are here, along with their neighbors ROSS and PETER. All are hastily dressed in jackets over pajamas or sweat pants, gum-boots on their feet. Peter is casually sucking on a beer, as if at a barbecue.

DAN

You think he's in there?

Peter chortles.

PETER

No such luck.

ROSS

He probably lit it.

Dan and Haily look over to Ross.

ROSS (CONT'D)

Why not. Type of thing he'd do.

The shack is all but destroyed with only two corner posts left, supporting twisted roof iron which CRASHES down.

PETER

Ed was way behind with rent. I'm betting the landlord had someone do it.

DAN

Who's the landlord?

PETER

A big-time crim in Sydney. Has a contract out on his head and can't set foot in Tasmania again. I could see him hiring some thugs to do this. Drive Mumbles off his property.

Dan and Haily don't believe it. Neither does Ross. He snickers.

PETER (CONT'D)

Okay, smart arse. Who is he then?

ROSS

He's a millionaire playboy from Perth. He's buying up all the properties around here to build a resort.

Peter chuckles.

PETER

Good one, Ross!

ROSS

That's what I heard.

The four neighbors go back to watching the fire. Peter takes a drink from his beer bottle.

PETER

Well, whoever it was, they could'a bulldozed all his crap into one big pile first and *then* set it on fire. Kill two birds with one stone.

The others consider this, some nodding in agreement, as sirens WAIL in the distance.

INT. STORE - DAY

Haily is serving customers while Dan is stocking up a fridge with soft-drinks.

The store phone RINGS.

Dan sets the last can on the fridge shelf and makes his way to the counter.

He picks up the phone.

DAN

General store.

LANDLORD (FILTERED)
Could you tell me about the house
fire last night.

DAN
Are you from the paper?

Haily is too busy with customers to notice the conversation.

LANDLORD (FILTERED)
I'm the landlord.

Dan freezes for a moment and then walks the cordless phone
out the back door, trying not to be noticed.

DAN
I got a bone to pick with you.

LANDLORD (CONT'D, FILTERED)
Is that right? Look, all I wanna
know is how bad it is. Is the place
destroyed?

DAN
Yes. And Ed's done a runner.

Another pause.

LANDLORD (FILTERED)
Thanks for your time, pal.

DAN
Wait! I live across the road from
him. What if he comes back?

LANDLORD (FILTERED)
So?

DAN
So? He's a frigg'n lunatic.

LANDLORD (FILTERED)
How's that my problem?

DAN
You're responsible for this. You
have a duty of care, here pal!

LANDLORD (FILTERED)
Hey, fuck you! I can rent out to
whoever I want!

DAN

If he comes back and kills someone
it'll be your fault. Can you live
with that?

LANDLORD (FILTERED)

Oh, he'll be back. I guarantee it.

DAN

What do I do?

LANDLORD (FILTERED)

I dunno, fucking grow a pair and
take him down. Protect your family,
that's what I'd do.

DAN

You don't know me.

LANDLORD (FILTERED)

You know, I don't but you're starting
to sound like a real pussy to me.

DAN

Fuck you! If I had a gun maybe I
would take him down!

A pause.

LANDLORD (FILTERED)

Really?
(pause)
Too cool.

DAN

What?

LANDLORD (FILTERED)

Thanks for the info, pal.

The landlord hangs up.

CUT TO:

Dan walks back into the store, phone in hand, looking a tad
confused.

HAILY

Who was that?

Dan has no idea what she's talking about.

DAN

What? No-one.

EXT. ED'S PROPERTY - DAY

A pick-up is here, with a caged trailer hooked to the back. There are people running around the ruins and other crap, trying to catch chickens, goats and pigs. Ross is one of the people here.

Dan appears on the road, walking toward Ed's place.

Ross is running after a chicken, which has the better of him. He gives up, out of breath, just as Dan approaches him.

DAN
Any sign of Mumbles?

Ross shakes his head.

ROSS
Shot through, I'd imagine. Blessing
in disguise, this fire.

DAN
What are the cops doing?

ROSS
Cops are bloody useless. They had
plenty of chances to arrest him before
all this happened.

DAN
What else has he done?

ROSS
Well, there was the stabbing, you
already know about. A couple of
fist fights and, oh- before you guys
came here, he threatened to kill the
bloke who used to own your house.

DAN
Really?

ROSS
Was gonna chop him up with his bloody
sword.

Just then, Haily appears on the road, walking their way.

ROSS (CONT'D)
He seems to have a thing for your
wife, there. He mentioned her to me
a few days ago.

Dan is surprised.

ROSS (CONT'D)

Just talking crap about how pretty she is and how she reminded him of his wife.

Haily is almost here. She smiles radiantly.

ROSS (CONT'D)

Look, Dan. If he comes back, you do what ever you have to to protect your family. Don't put your faith in the cops. They won't do shit until someone's dead.

Haily approaches.

HAILY

Can I help?

Dan smiles at her, a little distracted.

EXT. COTTAGE - EVENING

Haily and Dan pull their car into their driveway and Haily shuts the engine down.

HAILY

I'm gonna water the garden. See you inside.

Dan smiles and the two get out of the car.

CUT TO:

At the front door, there is a long, thin rectangular box. Dan appears from around the corner and he stops to look at the box.

INT. COTTAGE - MOMENTS LATER

The box is on the kitchen table. In the background, through the kitchen window, Haily is busy with a hose, her baby-bump much bigger now.

Dan comes back from the fridge with a beer in hand, walks over to the table, places the beer down after a sip and starts to peel the tape from the top, which is holding the flaps down. He pulls back a flap, looks inside and almost has a shit-fit, recoiling back.

He quickly folds the flap back down and looks around to see that Haily is still busy, then after confirming she is, he pulls the box apart even wider, reaches in and pulls out a rifle magazine and a box of ammo.

He quickly places the items back in and as he does, we can see a hunting rifle with a scope and a large bulging envelope.

Dan pulls out the envelope, opens it up and his eyes go wide with amazement.

From his POV, there is a large wad of hundred dollar bills, several thousand dollars, and a note.

He has a quick look around and opens the note. It reads-

DO WHAT YOU SAID AND THE MONEY'S YOURS. DON'T DO IT AND THERE'LL BE MORE FIRES.

BE A MAN. DON'T BE A PUSSY.

PS- THE GUN IS UNTRACEABLE SO JUST LEAVE IT FOR THE COPS AFTER YOU'RE DONE.

INT. STORE - DAY

Through the window, it's pouring down rain outside.

Dan is at the counter, coffee and newspaper in front of him but ignored. He's daydreaming, watching the rain.

EXT. CAR - LATER

Haily is driving up cemetery road, on her way home with Dan as a detached passenger. She's happily blabbing on, rain still pouring down.

HAILY

I think we should get into gourmet local foods, cause' all my customers have been absolutely screaming for it.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Dan is not listening, gazing out the window his attention drawn to the front.

HAILY

I'm thinking chutneys, jams, chocolates...

Up ahead, someone in a black raincoat with a back-pack is walking up the hill.

Dan shows interest, sitting up straighter and leaning forward.

Haily doesn't notice.

HAILY (CONT'D)

Ooo! How about truffles? I hear
Tassie truffles are the best...

As the car goes by the pedestrian, Dan watches through the window.

EXT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

As he passes, the pedestrian is revealed as Ed, drinking from a scotch bottle, rain splashing off his hood and coat. He raises his face to look in Dan's eyes and a wicked smile escapes. He forms a gun with his index finger and thumb and aims, and shoots at Dan. I'm baaack!

Through the rain-beaded car window, Dan watches on.

EXT. ED'S PROPERTY - NIGHT

A tent is set up next to a camp fire, where Ed is seated on a log, eating. He's scooping out baked beans from a can and when done, he chucks the empty can over his shoulder. He then fumbles around for something at ground level, and comes up with a bottle of booze which he finishes off and chucks as well.

In the back-ground, a twig SNAPS. Ed hears it, his eyes moving but he gives nothing away. Instead he yawns, stretches and goes to the tent.

A weak light pops on in the tent, revealing Ed's silhouette. A GUN SHOT EXPLODES and echoes, the tent moves a little from an instantly formed tear and the silhouette of Ed collapses in a motionless heap.

Dan lowers the rifle, breathing heavily, nervous, wearing latex gloves.

A light from Ross' house flickers on behind him, a DOG BARKS in the distance and Dan looks around, places the rifle on the ground and slinks away, crouching low.

INT. COTTAGE - LATER

The door to the fire-heater opens and the latex gloves are thrown in.

Dan closes the door and sits back on his haunches, watching the flames, highly agitated, hands to his mouth, rocking back and forth.

EXT. COTTAGE - NEXT MORNING

The car pulls out of the driveway, Haily driving as usual. Dan is despondent and in the passenger seat.

As they turn onto the road, he glances towards Ed's place, expecting to see a ruckus.

There's nothing.

INT. STORE - LATER

Dan is at his usual spot at the counter, by the window as Haily chats to a customer. He has his paper, scanning for local news and his sips his coffee. Fading in, a SIREN can be heard, getting louder.

Dan perks up, looks out the window, Haily and the customer doing the same, as an ambulance SCREAMS past the store.

Dan watches, his nervousness ebbing as he realizes the ambulance is not going up Cemetery road.

INT. CAR - AFTERNOON

Dan is driving this time, looking a little more at ease as he and his wife head up Cemetery road, homeward bound.

As they crest the hill, approaching their house, Dan and Haily are in awe at the sight before them.

HAILY

Holy shit! What's going on?

Dan becomes nervous.

Through the windshield, at Ed's place is the mother of all crimes scenes- cop cars, lights blazing, onlookers leaning on crime tape, cops everywhere, plain clothes detectives, forensic techs, the coroner, paramedics. You name it. CSI heaven.

EXT. CEMETERY ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

Haily and Dan walk closer to the scene and in the foreground, a few cops and techs are examining the tent, which is torn and bloody, Ed's body partially visible inside, the photo of himself with his family lying next to a bloody hand.

An officer is carrying a plastic bag with the rifle.

The cop from earlier is here and he notices Dan and Haily. He begins to walk toward them.

Haily is curious but Dan is having a hard time hiding his nervousness.

HAILY

What the hell's going on?

COP
Ed's dead. Murdered.

HAILY
I thought he shot through because of
the fire.

The cop shakes his head.

COP
Nah. Turns out it was faulty down-
lights. Accident waiting to happen.
Luckily, Ed was with friends. He
came back yesterday.

Dan has become deathly pale and is sweating profusely.

Haily is aghast. She looks at Dan.

HAILY
Are you okay, Hun?

The cop looks at Dan suspiciously.

COP
Yeah, Dan. You okay?

Dan looks at both of them, his head spinning, on the verge
of throwing up or passing out.

DAN
Got the flu, I think.

The cop doesn't appear to be buying it.

DAN (CONT'D)
What about his landlord? I heard
the landlord was a suspect.

COP
What landlord? Suspect for what?
Ed's murder?

DAN
No, the fire. I heard the landlord
started it to run Ed off because he
hadn't paid rent.

The cop is puzzled.

COP
There's no landlord. Ed owned the
place. Used to be his parent's
property.

Dan dry-heaves.

DAN
I got to go home.

He turns and promptly walks away, the cop eye-balling him.

INT. COTTAGE BEDROOM - NIGHT

Later that night, Haily is sound asleep in bed by herself.

INT. COTTAGE, LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dan is on the computer, on the internet. On the screen is a SEARCH ENGINE. Dan types in EDWARD WIGGINS. He clicks around until there's an image of a much younger Ed with two children on screen, and an abbreviated news article under the picture. It's the same picture from Ed's photo album.

Dan clicks on the news story, dated several years ago, and reads aloud.

DAN
Edward Wiggins and his two children,
Katie and Aleisha, were lucky to
escape, as the crazed attacker
Nicholas Bishop, searched for them
in the house, after brutally murdering
his wife...

Dan's eyes widen.

DAN (CONT'D)
...with a samurai sword.

CUT TO:

Morning, with Dan asleep at his desk, the news story about Ed still on screen, an empty bottle of red wine on the desk. Haily appears in the back-ground.

HAILY
Dan?

Nothing from Dan. He's out cold.

Haily goes to him and tries to shake him awake, glimpsing the computer screen in the process.

Dan stirs.

Haily reads.

HAILY

Searched for them in the house, after brutally murdering his wife with a samurai sword.

Dan raises his head, tasting a hang-over in his mouth.

Haily is intrigued. She points to the screen.

HAILY

Is that Mumbles?

DAN

Huh?

HAILY

On the computer. It looks like Mumbles.

DAN

It is. He didn't do it.

HAILY

Didn't do what?

DAN

Didn't kill his wife. Someone else did it.

HAILY

What are you talking about?

Dan looks at Haily. Her soft, pretty face. So innocent.

DAN

There's no landlord and Mumbles didn't kill anyone.

HAILY

That's not surprising. Who'd actually be stupid enough to believe all the small-town crap people spew out.

Dan starts to cry.

DAN

Me. I'm stupid enough.

Haily puts her hand on his shoulder.

HAILY

Aw, Dan. You're not...

DAN

I killed Ed.

It doesn't register for a second. Haily continues to smile, starts to be shocked, goes back to smiling then settles on shocked.

HAILY

What are you talking about?

DAN

I thought, I mean you and I thought we were in danger and then I heard about Mumbles killing someone, then the stabbing, then the fire, then the landlord and then the gun and the money showed up right before Mumbles came back, I thought...

HAILY

You killed Mumbles? How could you?

DAN

I don't know, I really thought we were in danger...

HAILY

Wait a sec. The money. What money?

DAN

Someone paid me to kill him. They sent me a gun and fifty thousand dollars.

Haily is taken aback.

HAILY

Fifty thousand dollars?

Dan opens a drawer and pulls out the note that came with the gun. He hands it to her.

DAN

Too cool.

Haily takes it and starts to read but is distracted by something.

HAILY

Too cool? Where have I heard that before? Too cool.

We stay on Haily as she tries to figure out why this phrase is so familiar.

DAN (O.S.)

I dunno. The landlord said it. But how would you know?

HAILY
The landlord?

Flash-back to that first meeting with Ed and Haily:

EXT. DRIVEWAY - AFTERNOON

ED
(mumbling)
Treacle.

ED (CONT'D)
(mumbling)
Treacle.

Slowed down-

ED (CONT'D)
Toooo coooool.

Back to present time-

Haily gasps in air.

HAILY
Mumbles is the landlord!

Dan is shocked.

DAN
That's crazy. Mumbles hired me to
kill himself?

HAILY
Of course! Suicidal insurance scam,
crazy, whatever. *He* is the landlord.

Dan thinks about it for a moment, then snaps back to reality.

DAN
Look, it doesn't matter. The cops
are on to me. What do I do?

Haily starts to think, cogs rotating a million miles per
hour.

HAILY
We don't know for sure they're on to
you. They haven't come around yet.

There's a KNOCK at the door.

EXT. COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Our local constable is at the front door.

COP

Police.

INT. COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Dan and Haily look at each other.

HAILY

Just a minute!

EXT. COTTAGE - MOMENTS LATER

The officer is waiting at the door when Haily opens it, smiling politely.

INT. COTTAGE - LATER

Now the officer is seated at the kitchen table, drinking coffee, and then scribbling in his note pad.

Haily is at the table but no sign of Dan.

COP

So, you didn't hear a thing?

HAILY

No, not a thing. I'm a heavy sleeper anyway. Plus the fact that there are shots going off almost every night with all the hunters.

The cop continues to write.

HAILY

Any suspects? Any leads?

COP

We think it's drug related. Ed was dealing marijuana from his house and we think it may have been the result of a deal gone bad.

Haily is relieved.

The cop looks around.

COP (CONT'D)

Where's your husband?

EXT. BUSH - CONTINUOUS

Dan is struggling through the scrub, the envelope in his hand, pushing aside horizontal branches, some of which snap back unexpectedly and whack him in the face.

There's a small rocky area up ahead and when Dan reaches it, he lifts up a couple of rocks, places the envelope down and returns the rocks, covering the money.

INT. COTTAGE - LATER

Haily has the door open for the policeman, about to take his leave.

COP

Thanks for your time. I hope your husband feels better soon.

HAILY

Thank you.

They exchange smiles.

She watches him walk away and she's suddenly startled by a noise behind her.

DAN (O.S.)

Pssst!

She turns to find her husband a little worse for wear- hair messed up, clothes dirty and in disarray and scratches all over his arms and face.

HAILY

(whispering)

Geez, you scared the crap outa me!
What happened to you?

DAN

What did they say?

HAILY

You're in the clear. They think it's drug related.

Dan breathes a sigh of relief.

HAILY (CONT'D)

So what now?

EXT. ED'S PROPERTY - DAY

The framework of a Mac Mansion rises from the ashes of Ed's place. A new house is being constructed. A proper, big house with construction workers running around busily.

Peter and Ross look on from Ross' yard, sitting in fold-up chairs, enjoying a beer and the sunshine.

A brand new SUV rolls up, Haily driving with Dan, the passenger. Dan's window goes down as they pull to a stop across from Ross and Peter.

DAN

You guys getting an early start?

They raise their beers.

Dan nods towards the construction site.

DAN (CONT'D)

Any guesses?

PETER

I'm going with Ross' millionaire playboy landlord.

Ross shakes his head.

ROSS

Nah.

Peter looks at him to continue.

ROSS

Al-Qaeda's building a new hide-out.

Laughter from the men.

PETER

(to Dan)

What do you think?

DAN

It's one of Mumbles daughters. She's filthy rich after collecting on the old man's life insurance.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Haily nudges Dan to shut up.

EXT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Ross and Peter look at each other and shake their heads.

PETER

Nah.

Dan laughs and taps the side of his new car.

DAN

I gotta run.

(MORE)

DAN (CONT'D)

See you at the barbecue tonight.
Don't forget to bring your togs.

PETER

See ya.

ROSS

Bye.

The SUV pulls away, the two men watching.

ROSS

The store must be good to him. New
car. New pool.

PETER

Don't make that much in a little
country store.

ROSS

How does he make his money, then?

PETER

I heard he's a hit-man.

Ross looks at him for a second and the two men crack up with
laughter.

FADE OUT:

The End.