

Grave Messages
by
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EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

It's drizzly and gray. A rectangle of MOURNERS sport black umbrellas as they watch a coffin lower in their midst.

Name on the gravestone: WILLIAM KING.

ELLIOT STRAUB (20ish) stands out in the crowd. Too manly to cry, yet there's something inside just below the surface, possibly just a hurt little boy.

He squeezes the hand of CAMILLE KING (20ish) who, out of duty and love, sheds enough tears for both of them.

She takes a sad glance toward Elliot and he's heartbroken. He brings a tender thumb up under her eye, wipes away some of her tears.

The stalwart MRS. KING (50ish) looks like a mourning Russian peasant. Rather than crying she coldly stares at Elliot and Camille. Her face twists into a mask of disappointment and disgust.

Across the grave, FRANKLIN RICE (20ish) eyes the couple as well. He squints as he tightens his lips. Franklin may be bit more brawn than brain but what brain he has is definitely working overtime.

Elliot lowers his hand from Camille's face. They both watch the casket until the lines lowering it go slack.

Behind them MRS. STRAUB (50ish), oblivious to everything but the obvious, full of the moment, lets out a loud sob.

EXT. CEMETERY ROAD - LATER

The drizzle has stopped. The mourners have scattered, most are either in their cars or driving away.

Elliot and Camille saunter through the marble forest, hand and hand, lost in their reverie.

Someone calls Elliot's name.

Elliot, suddenly aware and curious, frowns when he sees the caller. He releases Camille's hand and puts his arm around her as if to guard her from what's to come.

ELLIOT
Hello Franklin.

Camille looks up.

Franklin leans against a monument. He eyes Camille.

Camille smiles at him, averts her gaze then frowns.

FRANKLIN

Camille. Just wanted to say how sorry I am about your brother.

CAMILLE

Thank you.

An uncomfortable moment of silence, Camille sidles up a bit closer to Elliot.

ELLIOT

I better get her home.

Franklin nods his understanding, but as they begin to step away.

FRANKLIN

I heard they buried him with his cell phone.

Elliot shoots a deadly look at Franklin, like he might lunge forward at any moment.

ELLIOT

This isn't the time.

Franklin holds his arms up in peace.

FRANKLIN

Woah! I just heard the rumor is all.

CAMILLE

It's alright. Franklin, it's not true.

FRANKLIN

But one of the morticians said...

ELLIOT

She said it's not true. So fuck off! Okay?

FRANKLIN

Alright! Alright. Jeeze.

Elliot pulls Camille protectively closer, then quickly escorts her away. He shoots a dirty look over his shoulder at Franklin.

Franklin seems worried.

INT./EXT. ELLIOT'S CAR

Full of fury, Elliot helps Camille into the passenger's seat. He slams the door. Camille winces.

He hurries to the driver's side but once inside the car...

ELLIOT

I can't believe that asshole,
showing up here like that.
Especially after... What does he
think he's going to do, steal you
back from...

CAMILLE

I'm not a possession.

He glances in Franklin's direction.

ELLIOT

Damn right, I should have punched
him in the face, that would've...

A calm touch from Camille on his arm interrupts.

CAMILLE

Is that how you'd want Bill to
remember you?

ELLIOT

But...

Elliot hangs his head.

ELLIOT

No.

CAMILLE

Then let's go, it's been a long
day.

Elliot nods. He starts the engine.

INT. ELLIOT'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Elliot stares solemnly ahead as he drives. Camille watches
him with compassion.

CAMILLE

I miss him too, Elliot.

Elliot snaps out of his trance.

CAMILLE

When they told me he was dead, I
had this weird feeling. Like
everyone got the message mixed
up. Like it was me that actually
died.

ELLIOT
(anger)
Don't say that!

Camille pouts.

Elliot reigns in his anger, then over-emotionally...

ELLIOT
He was my best friend, dammit!

He bangs his flat hand against the steering wheel. He glances at Camille.

A lone tear falls down her cheek. Elliot once again wipes it away with his thumb.

ELLIOT
It's enough that he's gone. I don't want to think about losing you too.

Camille smiles for the first time since we've met her.

A loud RINGTONE spoils the mood. Both of them jump at the noise. The car swerves.

Camille holds back a gasp.

ELLIOT
I thought I turned it off.

With one hand Elliot fumbles at his pocket as the car lurches. Camille, panics, bats his hand away from his pocket.

CAMILLE
I'll get it.

Elliot puts both hands on the wheel and adjusts course. He squirms and giggles as Camille fiddles around in his pants.

ELLIOT
Hey, that tickles.

CAMILLE
Watch the road.

Elliot sobers but still squirms. Camille plucks the cell phone from his pocket and presents her find.

CAMILLE
I've got it!

ELLIOT
Give it here.

Elliot reaches out for the phone but Camille snatches it away before he's even close.

CAMILLE
Unh-unh. You drive.

She looks at the small screen and teases him.

CAMILLE
Oh! One new message.

ELLIOT
Camille! That's private!

CAMILLE
From another girl, no doubt.

She fiddles with the buttons.

ELLIOT
Of course not...not unless my
mother...

Camille shoots a puzzled look at the phone.

CAMILLE
How...?

Elliot, concerned, turns toward her.

ELLIOT
What? Who sent it?

The car drifts. Camille fiddles with more buttons.

CAMILLE
Bill.

She lets that sink in.

CAMILLE
It says, "It's dark here, buddy.
I can't see. Bring some light,
would you?"

Elliot's eyes go wide.

CAMILLE
You don't think...

Elliot's eyes narrow.

ELLIOT
No. I don't! I think it's
Franklin. Somehow he got a hold
of your brother's phone and...

Camille looks up.

CAMILLE

Oh my god! Look out!

She stares straight out the windshield in horror. Elliot follows her gaze.

Outside a truck heads directly toward them. It's horn blares.

Elliot quickly turns the wheel.

BANG! Followed by the twisting, screeching metal sounds of Elliot's entire world crashing.

Elliot is thrown about the car then

BLACK

EXT. ROAD - LATER

Flashing amber lights wash Elliot's scratched and bloody face. His eyelids flutter but remain closed.

We pull back smoothly.

Elliot lies on the road, his unmoving body in a crumpled supine pose. A PARAMEDIC shouts as he runs toward him.

PARAMEDIC

There's one over here!

A group of EMERGENCY PERSONNEL examine the car. The driver's door is torn open. One COP peeks inside. Then he turns his head away in dry retch.

We continue to pull back.

Another Paramedic rushes toward the group that surrounds Elliot. He carries a long board.

Truck and car tangle into a mess of metal at point zero. An EXTRICATOR seems perplexed by the puzzle. The disgusted Cop shouts excitedly at him over the roof but it's muffled by our distance.

COP

Someone's inside! Someone's...

Elliot's eyes open as they lift him. He struggles but restraints hold him tightly to the long board. Even though he's far away now, his shouts are still audible.

ELLIOT

Camille! Camille!

BLACK

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

The room is dimly lit. Elliot lies in the hospital bed. His eyes flutter open. He seems unsure of his surroundings.

He calls out to Camille but there is no answer.

He attempts to sit up but a pain in his side causes him to lie back down.

ELLIOT
Hello! Anybody?

He waits for an answer but none comes.

He holds his side and groans loudly as he sits up once again. This time he succeeds.

He exits the bed and hobbles across the room to a door, which he opens.

CORRIDOR

Florescent lights flicker on and off as Elliot shuffles down the hall. Odd, there's no one else around.

He seems uneasy. His eyes dart back and forth looking for anything familiar.

Then, in the distance, at the end of the corridor, Franklin leans against the wall. His attention set on his cell phone. He presses some buttons.

Elliot's lips tighten.

ELLIOT
(to himself)
Son of a bitch!
(to Franklin)
What the hell are you doing here?

Franklin looks up and smiles. He presses one final button on his phone.

A loud familiar RINGTONE catches Elliot's attention. He looks down at his hand where his cell phone has appeared.

Elliot raises the phone to eye level and reads the small screen: YOU HAVE 1 NEW MESSAGE(S).

He presses a button on the phone looks at his inbox. At the top of the queue there is a message from BILL.

Elliot glances suspiciously over the top of his phone. Franklin has disappeared.

ELLIOT
What the hell?

Back to his phone. He presses another button. The message displays: IM WAITING FOR YOU BUDDY. Elliot's eyes widen.

BLEEP. The noise catches Elliot's attention. BLEEP. He breathes quickly. BLEEP. He follows the sound to a door labeled ICU. BLEEP. He presses his ear against the door. BLEEP. He opens it.

ICU

Only one bed is occupied, and that occupant is a bandaged-up Camille. All of the machinery in the room seems to be attached to her by various wires and tubes like she was the heart of some insane Rube Goldberg invention.

An EKG next to her bed quietly BLEEPs a constant song.

Elliot rushes to Camille's side. He takes her hand, lowers his head both to hide his tears and his shame.

ELLIOT
I'm so sorry.

A quiet moment.

BILL (O.S.)
I've found Camille! And is she
ever angry with you.

Elliot's head snaps toward the voice. The impact of what he sees pushes him backwards.

Standing at the foot of the bed is Bill. He is dressed in a suit jacket, shirt and tie but no pants. His skin is whitish green.

ELLIOT
Bill! You can't be here. You're
dead.

Bill smiles evilly.

BILL
I'm waiting for you, Buddy.

The ICU spins.

A familiar RINGTONE plays.

ROOM - DAY

Elliot awakes with a gasp. He winces as he turns on his side to grab his phone. The RINGTONE stops.

He stares at the small screen on his phone: YOU HAVE 1 NEW MESSAGE(S).

Elliot presses some buttons.

Then the message: SOUNDS LIKE CAMILLE IS CALLING. ILL TRY AND FIND HER.

Elliot reels back. He grits his teeth as he hefts his legs over to the side of the bed.

His room door opens. Mrs. Straub's eyes go wide as she enters. She rushes to his side.

MRS. STRAUB

Easy, honey. You have a fractured rib. It could have been a lot worse but...

ELLIOT

Mom. -- Where's Camille?

MRS. STRAUB

Just lie back down, honey.

ELLIOT

I want to see Camille!

MRS. STRAUB

(sigh)
Honey, Camille's in no condition to see you.

ELLIOT

Why? What's wrong with her?

Mrs. Straub seems nervous.

MRS. STRAUB

She in a coma.

ELLIOT

A..?

Elliot stops. The fight drained from him. Mrs. Straub smooths his hair.

MRS. STRAUB

Now honey, it was an accident. It is not your fault.

ELLIOT

I know because it's Franklin's fault!

MRS. STRAUB

Franklin? Little Frankie Rice?

ELLIOT

He messaged me while we were driving home. That's what caused me to lose...

MRS. STRAUB

Honey, you know your not supposed to use your phone in the car.

ELLIOT

So it is my fault.

MRS. STRAUB

I didn't say that.

ELLIOT

I'm telling you Mom, Franklin's dangerous.

MRS. STRAUB

I just don't see how...

Elliot thrusts his phone at Mrs. Straub. She takes it cautiously. She stares at it with confusion.

MRS. STRAUB

"Sounds like Camille calling. I'll try and find her." It doesn't make any sense.

ELLIOT

Look who sent it.

MRS. STRAUB

Bill. Bill? Oh, honey. Someone's playing a horrible prank on you.

ELLIOT

Yes. Franklin.

MRS. STRAUB

Franklin's as bent out of shape about this as you are. And he's such a sweet boy. He asked how you were, he's very concerned.

ELLIOT

You talked to Franklin?

MRS. STRAUB

Just a few minutes ago.

ELLIOT

He's here?

MRS. STRAUB

He came to see Camille. He was...

ELLIOT

They let Franklin visit Camille?!

Elliot's fight is back. He holds his side and takes a deep breath then hops off the bed.

MRS. STRAUB

Whoa! Where do you think you're going, mister?

ELLIOT

To see Camille. She's in danger.

MRS. STRAUB

The doctor's are doing what they can.

ELLIOT

From Franklin!

Elliot hobbles away. He grabs his phone from Mrs. Straub and is out of the room before she can react. Exasperated, she follows him into the

CORRIDOR

It's not deserted or dimly lit like it was in his dream.

Elliot has a mission and Mrs. Straub isn't far behind. The corridor's inhabitants curiously watch as they pass.

MRS. STRAUB

Honey, Misses King doesn't want you anywhere near Camille.

ELLIOT

That bitch.

MRS. STRAUB

Elliot! She's just upset. And she has every right to be.

ELLIOT

She never liked me.

MRS. STRAUB

You put her daughter in a coma! --
Accidentally, of course.

ELLIOT

Franklin put her in that coma!
And she let him see her.

They pass a nurses station. Mrs. Straub makes apologetic motions at the nurses. One wary nurse picks up a phone.

Elliot turns right and disappears.

MRS. STRAUB

Honey, this isn't a good idea.
Wouldn't you...

Mrs. Straub turns right too, into

ANOTHER CORRIDOR

Nearly the same as the last. Mrs. Straub gains on Elliot.

MRS. STRAUB

... rather be back in your nice
warm room.

Then that familiar RINGTONE again. Elliot stops and works at his phone's buttons. Mrs. Straub gets her chance to catch up.

MRS. STRAUB

Another message? What's it say?
Who's it from?

Elliot hands her the phone and quickly heads down the hall.

MRS. STRAUB

Elliot! Wait!

Mrs. Straub reads the message as she follows Elliot, but then she stops. On the small screen: IVE FOUND CAMILLE! AND IS SHE EVER ANGRY WITH YOU.

She calls out to Elliot.

MRS. STRAUB

Elliot! It's a prank. It doesn't
mean anything.

But Elliot is gone.

ANOTHER CORRIDOR

Seated, against the wall, toward the middle of the corridor is the formidable Mrs. King. When she notices Elliot, she stands. She stashes something into her sweater pocket.

Elliot stops. His expression indicates he might turn tail, but he steels himself and heads bravely toward Mrs. King.

With a dour look, she doesn't wait for him to arrive.

MRS. KING
What do you want?

ELLIOT
To see Camille.

MRS. KING
That is not going to happen. So
you might as well just turn
around and leave.

They're as close as they're going to get now.

ELLIOT
But you let Franklin see her.

MRS. KING
That, is not your business.

ELLIOT
Where's he anyway? I thought he
was here.

MRS. KING
He went home. No reason for to
stay. But that is also not your
business.

ELLIOT
Did Franklin say something? Is
that why you won't let me see
Camille?

MRS. KING
No, it's quite simple. I don't
trust you.

ELLIOT
Franklin's a liar. He's jealous,
vindictive and dangerous. He
wants Camille back and he'll stop
at nothing to...

MRS. KING
At least when he is with my
children I don't have to worry
about them turning up dead.

ELLIOT
Franklin's responsible for what
happened to Camille, Misses King.
Not me.

MRS. KING
That seems unlikely since you
were the one driving.

ELLIOT
He's been sending me disturbing
messages...

Mrs. King pffts.

ELLIOT
...from Bill!

She gives Elliot some interest. Elliot conspires.

ELLIOT
I'm beginning to suspect that
maybe Bill's death wasn't an
accident. Maybe Bill threatened
to expose Franklin for the liar
he is, so Franklin killed him.

MRS. KING
Oh! Really?

ELLIOT
Franklin got a hold of Bill's
phone somehow. What better time
than when Bill died.

MRS. KING
But that's impossible. Bill was
buried with his cell phone.

Elliot mouth opens in shock.

MRS. KING
So, unless Franklin did some
quick digging, I don't see...

ELLIOT
Then he got it some other way.
However he did it, Misses King,
I'm certain Franklin is sending
those messages.

Another pfft.

MRS. KING
Go home, Elliot.

ELLIOT
You have to believe me.
Franklin's to blame and I'm going
to prove...

She looks past him and nods.

A big strong ORDERLY grabs Elliot from behind. Elliot
struggles to break free.

ELLIOT
No! Stop! Please, Let me see
Camille!

Mrs. Straub watches, worried.

MRS. STRAUB
Careful! He's my son.

A DOCTOR appears. He inserts a needle into Elliot's quivering arm.

ELLIOT
What are you doing? Stop!

DOCTOR
That should calm you.

Elliot tears his arm away and reaches out toward Mrs. King.

ELLIOT
Misses King, please, you know I
love Camille. You know I wouldn't
do anything to harm her. Please.
I beg you. Let me see her before
they take me away. Tell them
you'll let me see her. Please!

MRS. KING
I've already told you Elliot,
that is not going to happen. You
can not see Camille. Camille is
dead.

She turns and walks away.

Elliot stares forward with a stunned expression. Mrs. Straub stands behind him, her mouth covered in shock.

And the world fades away...

BILL (V.O.)
I've found Camille! And is she
ever angry with you.

Then a familiar RINGTONE.

INT. ELLIOT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Elliot lies in bed. At the sound of his RINGTONE, his eyes snap open. His breathing quick, he glances around and smiles at the familiar surroundings.

Relief, it was only a dream.

He sits up and lets out a yelp. Disappointed, he grabs his side.

ELLIOT

Shit!

He reaches for his cell phone off the bed stand and in the process notices a photo of Camille sitting behind it. He stops for a moment to gaze at her.

Then he looks at the small screen on his phone: YOU HAVE 1 NEW MESSAGE(S).

He hits a few buttons. The message: IM WAITING FOR YOU BUDDY.

Thin lipped Elliot lowers the phone. He shakes his head.

ELLIOT

Fucking Franklin.

(to Camille's photo)

I've got to find that phone.

He winces as he gets out of bed.

HALLWAY

Fully dressed, Elliot tip-toes down a dimly lit hallway, past a slightly open door. He stops. He leans toward the door and listens to faint snoring.

Satisfied, Elliot continues on his way.

ENTRY WAY

Elliot stealthily approaches the front door. He grabs a set of keys off of a hook on the wall. They jangle.

He silences them with his other hand. Then he listens.

Not a sound.

EXT. STRAUB RESIDENCE

Elliot loads a shovel and a pickaxe into the back of a car. Then he walks around to the driver's side and gets in.

The car rolls backwards down the driveway without benefit of the engine or headlights. When it hits the street it comes to life. The car zooms off.

INT. CAR

Elliot drives down the quiet suburban street. In contrast heavy metal music blares from the car's stereo. Elliot's pumped up, he hits the steering wheel hard with his flat hand.

A fence runs along one side of the street. Elliot pulls over to the side of the road and parks near the fence.

He turns off the ignition. The loud music stops.

That familiar RINGTONE again. Elliot stares at his phone which sits on the seat next to him. He grabs it, presses some buttons. On the screen: IM RIGHT BEHIND YOU.

He turns to look at the back seat. But nothing is there.

With a growl, Elliot opens the car door.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE CEMETERY

Elliot unloads the pickaxe and shovel from the back of the car and carries them as he walks to the cemetery gate.

He examines the gate for a moment, gives it a shake. It isn't going to open.

He searches for another way in. He shakes his head.

That familiar RINGTONE again. Elliot jumps. He drops the pickaxe and shovel, they clang loudly. He jumps again.

He angrily tears his phone from his pocket then presses a few buttons.

On the small screen: DONT GIVE UP SO EASILY! YOUVE ALMOST FOUND ME.

Elliot stares toward the gate for a moment. He grabs the shovel and throws it over. It clangs as it hits the ground.

Elliot nods. He throws over the pickaxe.

A deep breath then he runs quickly toward the gate. He leaps. When he grabs hold he's nearly at the top.

He winces, holds his position for a moment while the pain subsides, then he proceeds to climb.

EXT. CEMETERY

Light spills out from Bill's exhumed grave. A fully loaded shovel appears above the rim then it drops it's cargo on a nearby mound. The shovel heads back into the grave and the sound of scooped dirt is heard.

Elliot's confused. He lowers the shovel quietly to the ground, but he holds the pickaxe at the ready.

He sneaks up on the grave. He peers in. He sees Franklin digging. Something's not right.

ELLIOT

What the hell are you doing here?

Franklin screams. His shovel flies out of his hands as he turns and loses his balance. He falls backward to the floor of the grave. He gazes up at Elliot.

FRANKLIN

You scared the shit out of me. I could of had a heart attack!

ELLIOT

That would have been gentler than what I have planned for you.

Elliot slaps the handle of the pickaxe and smiles.

Franklin scrambles nervously away. He sits against the far side of the grave, out of Elliot's reach.

FRANKLIN

Whoa! What's going on?

ELLIOT

You killed Camille.

FRANKLIN

I what?! Camille's dead?

Franklin seems confused.

ELLIOT

Like you don't know.

FRANKLIN

You're lying...

ELLIOT

Why would I do that?

FRANKLIN

Because of Camille. Because of Bill.

ELLIOT

That why you're sending messages?

FRANKLIN

You're getting messages?

ELLIOT

No, the man in the fucking moon is getting messages. Who do you think?

FRANKLIN

What do they say?

ELLIOT
Stuff only you, I or Bill would
know.

FRANKLIN
I'm getting them too!

ELLIOT
Yeah, right!

FRANKLIN
Why the hell do you think I'm
digging up Bill's grave?

ELLIOT
To bury the evidence.

FRANKLIN
Six feet under?

Franklin pulls his phone out of the jeans pocket. He
presents it to Elliot.

FRANKLIN
See for yourself. I'm just trying
to find out what the hell is
going on!

Elliot bends to grab the phone.

ELLIOT
I can't reach it. Bring it
closer.

FRANKLIN
Drop the pickaxe.

Elliot thinks about it. No way.

ELLIOT
Throw it.

Franklin does.

Elliot catches the phone. He looks at the small screen.
He's not impressed.

ELLIOT
You could have sent those to
yourself.

FRANKLIN
But I didn't.

ELLIOT
You don't expect me to believe
Bill's sending them.

FRANKLIN

There's only one way to find out.

Franklin grabs the shovel.

Elliot scans the area. He eases his pickaxe to the ground. He seems a bit uneasy as he throws Franklin's phone back.

ELLIOT

I'm not saying I believe you but okay.

FRANKLIN

Okay? Okay, what?

ELLIOT

Keep digging.

Franklin grumbles as he stands.

FRANKLIN

And no offer to help?

ELLIOT

Don't push it. I'll keep you company.

Franklin plunges the shovel into the ground.

FRANKLIN

I don't need your company.

ELLIOT

You're in a cemetery at night, digging up a dead guy that you believe you're getting messages from and you don't need my company?

Elliot scans the area again. A sudden shiver makes him tremble.

A COPSE OF TREES NEARBY

From inside the trees, the scene seems quiet. The faint outline of Elliot can be seen through the branches, light spills out from the grave below him.

The tree branches move. Is it the breeze?

BACK AT THE GRAVE

Franklin digs. Elliot seems glum. He throws a handful of dirt at Franklin.

FRANKLIN

Cut it out.

ELLIOT

You think Bill wants revenge or something?

FRANKLIN

I thought you didn't believe it was Bill.

ELLIOT

Say it is. Do you think he'd want revenge?

FRANKLIN

On you?

ELLIOT

I don't know. Me? You?

FRANKLIN

Why would he want revenge on me?

ELLIOT

You're right. Silly to even think about it. It's not Bill. -- But if it's not Bill and it's not you, that means someone else knows.

FRANKLIN

Maybe someone else was there?

ELLIOT

Not likely. But there's one more possibility.

FRANKLIN

What?

ELLIOT

You could have told someone. Who did you tell, Franklin?

FRANKLIN

Not to tell. I was too drunk to remember anything. Just like I told you.

ELLIOT

But you remember more than you're saying, don't you.

FRANKLIN

No.

ELLIOT

Then how did you know the messages were from that night.

Franklin stops digging. He holds the shovel tightly.

ELLIOT
What exactly do you remember,
Franklin?

Franklin shakes his head.

FRANKLIN
I already told you.

Elliot leans toward him, threatening.

ELLIOT
Tell me again.

FRANKLIN
I still don't know why the hell
you and Bill asked me along...

EXT. CAMPSITE - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

A couple of tents, an ax in a wood stump. Franklin drinks a beer in the warmth of the campfire.

FRANKLIN (V.O.)
but I was determined to make the
best of it.

Franklin winces. At the edge of the camp light Elliot and Bill argue.

ELLIOT
You can't tell Camille about Amy!

FRANKLIN (V.O.)
You and Bill were arguing about
something...

BILL
She's my sister!

FRANKLIN (V.O.)
Firewood, I think. Who was going
to go get more firewood?

ELLIOT
She'll hate me! She'll run back
to Franklin.

Elliot glances toward Franklin. Franklin waves back dumbly. Elliot grimaces.

Bill walks away and mutters under his breath.

BILL
Maybe she'd be better off.

ELLIOT

I heard that! -- Where the hell are you going? This isn't done.

FRANKLIN (V.O.)

Bill went for the wood. Only he forgot to bring a flashlight, that was his mistake.

Bill walks beyond the light cast by the fire.

BILL (O.S.)

It's dark here, buddy. I can't see. Bring some light, would you?

Elliot walks toward the tent in angry silence.

A frog's croak breaks the silence. Bill mocks.

BILL (O.S.)

Sounds like Camille is calling. I'll try and find her.

FRANKLIN (V.O.)

You and I stayed at camp.

Franklin watches, fully aware.

BILL (O.S.)

I've found Camille! And is she ever angry with you.

Elliot snatches a flashlight from just inside the tent. He stares into the darkness, thin-lipped.

BILL (O.S.)

I'm waiting for you, buddy.

Elliot strides toward the edge of the of light. He grabs the handaxe from its resting place in a tree trunk before he plunges into the darkness.

The flashlight creates a circle of light before him.

ELLIOT

Where the hell are you?

BILL (O.S.)

I'm right behind you.

Elliot spins but Bill isn't there.

ELLIOT

I'm not laughing, Bill.

BILL (O.S.)

Don't give up so easily! You've almost found me.

FRANKLIN (V.O.)
I must have passed out because I
don't remember anything else.

Elliot waves the light around frantically. Woods ahead. He runs into them.

Franklin watches as light spills from the woods in fractured rays.

ELLIOT (O.S.)
I can't let you tell Camille!

A loud scream and Franklin's eyes open in alarm. He stretches himself a bit to try can catch a peek.

All he sees is the fractured light. It seems to be moving toward him.

Franklin hurries to his tent.

BACK TO SCENE

Elliot leans over the side of the grave.

ELLIOT
That's all you remember?

Franklin glances over his shoulder at Elliot.

FRANKLIN
That's it!

Then he fakes a smile. Elliot regards him skeptically.

INT. TENT - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

Franklin watches through a small opening in his tent flap.

Elliot returns to camp covered in blood. He stops. He looks toward Franklin's tent.

Franklin pulls away from the opening, into the shadows.

BACK TO SCENE

Franklin's smile falters.

FRANKLIN
The next thing I remember is us
searching for him in the morning.
Finding him at the bottom of that
ravine, all torn up and...

Franklin shivers, then he slams the shovel into the ground, THUNK!

FRANKLIN
I think I've hit it.

Franklin kneels. He scrapes away the dirt from the top of the coffin. Elliot's watches closely, a successful change of subject.

FRANKLIN
Grab that crowbar from my
backpack, will you? I'm going to
need it.

Elliot hurries to a backpack that lies nearby on the ground. As he lifts it, a cell phone drops out.

He picks up the phone and stares at it. Then he nods. Thin-lipped, he glances back over his shoulder at the grave.

ELLIOT
So you think we'll find Bill's
cell phone inside?

Elliot presses some buttons. He's sending a message.

FRANKLIN (O.S.)
Don't know. Hurry up with that
crowbar...

ELLIOT
I don't think it's in here...

FRANKLIN (O.S.)
Then bring me the backpack...

ELLIOT
Wait! I've found it.

Elliot presses one final button. Then he sticks the phone in his pocket.

FRANKLIN (O.S.)
Great, I want to get the hell out
of...

Franklin's phone RINGS.

FRANKLIN
Shit!

Franklin rips the phone from his pocket and stares at it perplexed.

FRANKLIN
Another message from Bill.

Elliot lifts the pickaxe.

ELLIOT
What's it say?

FRANKLIN
"Your number's been disconnected,
Franklin Straub."

Franklin looks up.

FRANKLIN
What the hell?

The pickaxe comes down against Franklin's head but glances off. It knocks Franklin back and to the bottom of the grave.

Franklin lies face up, a bloody gash diagonally down his forehead. He doesn't move.

Elliot drops the pickaxe on the side of the grave. He holds his injured side and breathes quickly as he scans the cemetery. He's alone.

He glances over at the mound of dirt. He grabs his shovel off the ground and starts filling in the grave.

A COPSE OF TREES NEARBY

From inside the trees, the faint outline of Elliot filling the grave can be seen through the branches. A hand moves to the foreground and the tree branches part.

Mrs. King exits the copse of trees.

BACK AT THE GRAVE

Elliot shovels.

MRS. KING (O.S.)
Just what is going on here?

Elliot crouches at sound of her voice. He looks down toward Franklin. Think, Elliot.

ELLIOT
Misses King! I'm so glad you're here. It was just like I said. Franklin killed Bill then he stole his phone.

Mrs. King stands grave side and stares into it's depths.

MRS. KING
My god! What have you done?

ELLIOT

He tried to kill me. I had no choice...

MRS. KING

I should believe you?

ELLIOT

Camille would want you to. You know that.

Mrs. King seems thoughtful for a moment. She lifts the bloodied pickaxe from the ground and stares at it with disgust. She turns it over and holds it by its handle like a cane.

MRS. KING

Alright then. For the moment let's say I will give you the benefit of the doubt. But I will need proof?

Elliot seems stumped, then he takes the phone from his pocket and hands it to her.

ELLIOT

Here's the phone! It's has all the messages on it. Have a look.

Mrs. King glances at the phone display. .

MRS. KING

Good. And now you will fill the grave.

Elliot stares at her in awe. He shovels again.

ELLIOT

You know, Misses King, I had you figured all wrong.

MRS. KING

How is that?

ELLIOT

I thought you'd want to go directly to the police.

MRS. KING

What would they do? Would they bring back Bill? No. Franklin was a talkative young man and I will miss him. He didn't deserve his fate, but sometimes sacrifices must be made in order that justice may be served.

ELLIOT

Franklin deserved what he got,
believe me.

MRS. KING

Belief, Elliot, is a mysterious
thing. When someone believes they
will do most anything protect
that belief. Like you for
instance.

Elliot stared at her oddly.

MRS. KING

You believed that Franklin was
sending those message.

ELLIOT

He was. I found the phone in his
backpack.

Mrs. King laughs.

MRS. KING

I put the phone in Franklin's
backpack.

Elliot turns. His shovel armed.

ELLIOT

You what?!

But he's too late. Mrs King swings the pickaxe and it
connects. It plunges deep into Elliot's injured side.

Elliot screams out in pain, he drops the shovel then falls
into Bill's grave.

He lies at the bottom of the grave on the edge of
consciousness, the pickaxe protrudes from his side, next to
him a half buried Franklin.

Mrs. King stares over the edge.

MRS. KING

Like most beliefs yours had one
flaw. You say you were Bill's
closest friend, then you should
have known that Bill never
brought his cell phone with him
when he went camping. He said
there was no signal, that it was
useless.

She throws Bill's phone down at him.

MRS. KING
I don't think you'll find it very
useful where your going either.

She turns away.

Elliot stretches his fingers out to touch the phone as his eyes shut for their final time.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - MOMENT LATER

Mrs. King shovels dirt into the grave when a loud scream issues forth from the hole. Calmly, she sticks the shovel in the mound and looks over the edge.

A hand reaches out from the dirt. Franklin soon follows the hand. He sits up and moans.

Mrs. King shakes her head.

INT. HOSPITAL

It's a private room. Mrs. King sits next to a bed.

The occupant of the bed is bandaged quite thoroughly but we can tell who's underneath the bandages, Camille.

Mrs. King holds Camille's hand.

MRS. KING
You have a special visitor today.

CAMILLE
Elliot?

MRS. KING
No, not Elliot. Someone even more
special. Franklin!

Camille seems unenthusiastic. But when Franklin enters, with his bandaged head and he shyly walks over to the bed, Camille smiles.

CAMILLE
You have bandages just like me.

Franklin smiles too.

FRANKLIN
I always said we had a lot in
common.

CAMILLE
What happened to you?

Franklin is about to speak when we hear an unfamiliar RINGTONE. Mrs. King seems perturbed. She grabs her purse.

MRS. KING

Excuse me a moment.

She walks away from the bed, out of the room and into the

CORRIDOR

It's empty, one of the florescent lights flickers.

She reaches inside her purse and pulls out her cell phone. She presses a few buttons then she stares at the phone.

The small screen the inbox shows it's a message from BILL. When the message opens, it reads: IM RIGHT BEHIND YOU.

Mrs. King looks over her shoulder. Her eyes open wide. Her mouth forms the beginning of a scream.

THE END