

LADDER TO THE MOON

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**EXT. PARK — DAY**

KEN, 19, a scruffy but handsome wanna-be adventurer is walking towards a group of SLACKLINERS who are tricklining — a new form of slacklining where tricks are performed on the line.

He watches timidly as they do backflips and other impressive maneuvers.



FEMALE SLACKLINER

Want to try?

Ken freezes for a moment.

KEN

Um... Sure.

They walk over to a different slackline nobody is using.

Ken puts the weight of one foot on the line and his leg starts to shake uncontrollably. He realizes just how hard this is. He lifts his other leg to try to balance on the line but falls off right away.

In the background we see an experienced slackliner easily walking a much higher line.

FEMALE SLACKLINER

Keep trying, it takes a while to get it.

Ken tries a couple more times, but is unable to hold his balance for more than a couple seconds.

He notices one onlooker watching him with a judgmental smirk and decides that's his cue to call it quits. He walks away awkwardly.

FEMALE SLACKLINER

Later.

KEN

(Mumbles)

Bye.

The female slackliner hops onto the line and with an intense focus, begins to walk. MATCH CUT TO:

### **EXT. VARIOUS NATIONAL PARKS — DAY**

She continues walking the line, but the location has changed to a highlining rig 1000 feet above the ground.

Credits play over a MONTAGE of highlining in extraordinary places all over the world. A feel-good song helps emphasize the euphoria that these athletes are feeling.



As the credits end we PULL BACK TO:

### **INT. KEN'S ROOM — DAY**

Ken's computer is revealed and we see that the highlining footage is an online video that he's watching.

His room is covered with photographs of stunning landscapes and action sports feats. He is clearly fascinated by adventure culture; a world he is not a part of.

### **INT. KITCHEN — DAY**

Ken's father, JOHN, 45, cracks open a beer as Ken walks in. He stares at his son with his usual stern gaze. His hard ass vibe matches his burly, tough appearance. He looks like

he got one too many tattoos in his 20s and is now trying to disguise his past by playing the role of the responsible father.

JOHN

So...

KEN

(playing stupid)

What?

JOHN

You know what. Have you made a decision yet?

KEN

Nope.

Ken also grabs a beer from the fridge and cracks it open but his father takes it away and puts it on the counter.

JOHN

Well you know you have to notify the school that you're going by tomorrow.

KEN

Or not going.

John's deadpan stare intensifies but Ken seems unaffected, as if he's developed immunity to his intimidation tactics.

JOHN

And doing what instead?

Ken doesn't answer and instead puts a hot pocket in the microwave.

JOHN

Those taste way better in the oven.

KEN

Takes too long.

The tension builds as they stare each other down.

JOHN

You know you're lucky you got into that school.

KEN  
(chuckles)  
That's like the worst school in  
California. They don't even have a  
photography program.

JOHN  
So you're still into the  
photography thing?

KEN  
(frustrated)  
Ya.

JOHN  
I just know how you are. Every  
month it's something different.  
This month it's photography, next  
month you're going to want to be a  
DJ or something.

Ken knows he can't really blame his father for his lack of support. His mind is a scattered concoction of wild ideas that never get executed. If only he could think less and create more, he might be hailed as a creative genius. But for now he's just an unrealistic dreamer that never gets his work done.

The microwave beeps as Ken's seriousness is broken by some excitement.

KEN  
That's actually a good idea.

John looks at him like he's crazy. Ken grabs the hot pocket and beer from the counter then walks away smiling.

KEN  
I'm fucking with you.

JOHN (O.S.)  
(yelling from kitchen)  
Seriously you have to send that  
letter. No more waiting.

Ken shuts the door to his room and we CUT TO:

**INT. KEN'S ROOM – DAY**

EXTREME CLOSE UP of the spinning rainbow circle on Ken's frozen computer. We hold on it for several beats, feeling Ken's frustration as he stares at it impatiently.

In a flustered movement he leaves his desk to go lie down on his fluffy, bright orange rug. He grabs his DSLR camera, points it at his poster of Reflection Canyon, Utah.



He imagines himself in that environment, taking the photo. We faintly hear the wind and see his hair slightly blowing as his daydream takes over.

GRADUATION SPEAKER (O.S.)  
Imagine the life you desire on the  
peak of a distant mountain.

**EXT. HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION – DAY**

Ken is listening attentively to a commencement speech at his graduation.

GRADUATION SPEAKER (CONT'D)  
Whenever life gets confusing and  
you have to make difficult  
decisions, stop and ask yourself –  
will this choice take me towards  
or away from the mountain? As long  
as you keep walking towards the  
peak, everything will be all  
right.

Inspired by this advice, Ken stops paying attention to the speech and dives into his own thoughts. This happens often. Just the slightest nudge from his imagination causes him to slip into a world of fantasy.

GRADUATION SPEAKER (CONT'D)  
 (almost inaudible)  
 But just to be clear, all right  
 doesn't mean easy...

As the speaker's voice becomes too muffled to understand, Ken drifts off further into a hypnotic state.

He visualizes standing in front of a long, winding path leading to a massive mountain.



His classmate's clapping at the end of the speech breaks the moment.

Ken's best friend PIERCE, 19, a typical Californian care free surfer kid, leans over to whisper in his ear.

PIERCE  
 We're getting so shitfaced  
 tonight.

#### **EXT. BEACH BONFIRE — NIGHT**

A group of people, who obviously had too much to drink, take off their clothes and run naked into the ocean. Ken and his friends are sitting by the bonfire watching in amusement.

Pierce notices Ken eyeing an attractive girl who is sitting alone texting.

PIERCE

You going to make a move?

KEN

On Courtney? Ya right.

PIERCE

Come on man, who cares. This might  
be the last time you see her.

Ken hesitates for a moment then works up the courage to approach her.

KEN

Excuse me ma'am, there's no  
texting allowed on the beach.

Courtney looks up at Ken annoyed. She clearly doesn't appreciate the joke.

COURTNEY

I'm sorry this is kind of like a  
private conversation.

She continues texting.

KEN

Okay...

Ken accepts failure and ungracefully walks back to his friends.

Pierce's older brother ANDY, 27, welcomes him back with a friendly pat on the back. Andy looks like a more put together, mature version of his brother. His contagious smile and compassion puts everyone around him at ease.

ANDY

Don't worry Chache, it's about to  
get a whole lot easier in College.

PIERCE

Speaking of which, did you decide  
if you're going yet?

KEN

Not yet but I need to submit my  
enrollment letter tomorrow.

PIERCE

So what are you thinking?

(beat)

Dude, you better go. We're going to tear it up.

KEN

Ya, I don't know.

ANDY

Well you know what people say to do if you can't make a decision. Just flip a coin, because once it's in the air you'll know which side you hope it lands on.

Ken smirks, clearly liking the idea.

KEN

My dad's pushing hard, he really wants me to go.

PIERCE

Damn, so I guess you have to go. I wouldn't mess with that dude.

Pierce and Andy laugh but Ken is in serious mode.

KEN

Sometimes I think he just wants to be able to say he has a son that graduated college. Where he's from college is like the Holy Mecca. The key out. He was always super supportive and told me I could do anything I wanted in life, until I told him I'm not sure college is for me. He thinks it's that I'm not motivated, but that's not it. I want to succeed just as much as everyone else, I just don't think college is the best path to get there.

PIERCE

So what are you going to do instead?

As Ken is about to answer, Pierce interrupts him.

PIERCE (CONT'D)  
And don't say photography.

Ken pauses to re-think his answer. He decides to hide his emotions. Figuring its intel he'd rather not share in this moment.

KEN  
I don't know.

Ken's voice moves from a place of insincerity to a more confident tone.

KEN  
But I know it doesn't feel right going to college when I have no idea what I want to major in.

PIERCE  
Stop overthinking it! Just go party your ass off for 4 years like everyone else. College is where you figure it all out, you have a blast and you even get a degree in the process.

KEN  
Ya, I guess so.

PIERCE  
And nobody knows what they want to major in. I have no idea either. You figure it out when you're there.

KEN  
And what if you don't? You just choose something random then get stuck in that for the rest of your life?

ANDY  
Ya, pretty much.  
(Beat)  
All right this is how I see it. Everyone is climbing some sort of ladder. Trying to advance themselves and get somewhere. But most people are climbing towards a

place they don't even want to be in. Because it was a good-looking ladder. It seemed sturdy and there's a nice reward at the end. But that doesn't mean it's YOUR ladder. YOUR ladder is all sketching looking and falling apart. You can't even see where it leads. But when you stand underneath it and look up, something inside you says - just go. And that's when this crazy, overwhelming doubt takes over.

PIERCE

So who cares then? Why do you want to climb YOUR shitty ladder?

Andy pauses for a couple beats to think about this.

ANDY

It's like that 2pac line,  
(rapping)  
"I don't want it if it's that easy."

They chuckle then watch as Courtney struts by.

ANDY

(to Ken)  
Okay for example if Courtney walked up to you right now.

We see Courtney seductively walking over to Ken as Andy speaks.

ANDY (CONT'D)

And was like, "Hey... my parents are out of town want to come over?"

Courtney says this line at the same time as Andy. They pause to imagine this scenario actually happening.

ANDY (CONT'D)

Actually never mind that would be pretty awesome.

They all laugh.

ANDY (CONT'D)

It would be pretty awesome BUT it would be way more awesome if you made it happen yourself. If it was a challenge.

PIERCE

I see what you're saying but honestly I don't think I'd care.

ANDY

Trust me man, it's a big difference. Okay, like I had a great job out of college, I was making good money but something didn't feel right. I really wanted to build something on my own. I wanted to be an entrepreneur. And this is back when saying you're an entrepreneur was cool. Now it just means you're a wanna-be rich guy. So that's what I did. I got off the path of least resistance and started climbing my ladder.

PIERCE

And now you're paying the price for it.

Andy smiles then nods.

ANDY

(confidently)

I'm definitely struggling but I don't feel like a fish in a bucket anymore. I feel like a fish in the open ocean. I have the satisfaction of knowing that I'm trying to do what I believe I was put on this earth to do. So being rich or poor, failing or succeeding, doesn't matter as much as it used to. I'm content knowing that the future is full of possibilities. And what I have to offer is not going to waste.

**EXT. SMALL TOWN – MORNING**

A garbage truck's mechanical arm is lifting and dumping trash, disturbing the early morning peace.

An off tempo piano melody is heard in the background then we HARD CUT TO:

**INT. KEN'S ROOM – MORNING**

Ken slams his window shut cutting out the noise of the garbage truck. He looks distorted because we see him through a clear fish bowl in the other side of the room. In the out of focus foreground we see a goldfish swimming in circles.

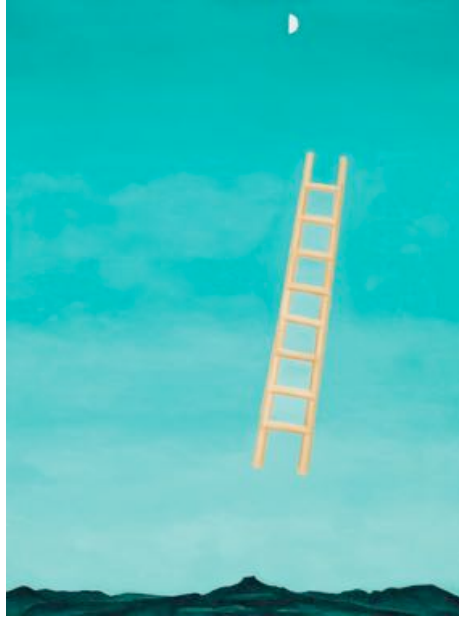
Ken sits down and continues teaching himself how to play the keyboard through YouTube instructional videos. A catchy tropical house piano melody plays as Ken unsuccessfully tries to repeat it. After several attempts he gets frustrated and gives up.

He stares at the magazine cutouts of adventure photos, which cover his wall. He tears off a photo of the same mountain he visualized during the commencement speech. He turns it over and on the back writes – *Explore the world & make a living through what I love.*

He sits down on his orange rug and places the photo next to his enrollment letter for college.

He then picks up a coin, stares at both sides for a beat and then flips it. After it lands he doesn't look at which side it landed on, instead he pauses to think.

In the background we see a poster of the Georgia O'Keefe painting *Ladder to the Moon*. It's a ladder suspended in the air floating between the earth and the half-full moon.



Ken abruptly snaps into action and opens his laptop. We see an EXTREME CLOSE UP of the *one-way* option box when purchasing a flight ticket.

The mouse slowly lands on the box and as soon as a click is heard we CUT TO:

**INT. PLANE — DAY**

A MONTAGE of the trip to Reflection Canyon, Utah starts with Ken looking out a plane window as he slowly drifts through cartoon-like clouds.

We HEAR an up-beat, melodic song highlighting Ken's excitement.

**EXT. RURAL STREET — DAY**

Ken makes a deal to buy an old S.U.V. then sets up a cozy sleeping area in the back. He tapes the photo of the mountain on the roof so that it will be the first thing he sees when he wakes up.

**INT. HIGHWAY — SUNSET**

Ken drives down an open road, stretching as far as the eye can see. In the horizon is a subtle hint of orange, just enough to announce the coming sunset.

He feels like a fish in the open ocean, he can go anywhere and do anything he wants.

**INT. CAR — SUNRISE**

Ken wakes up in the back of his car, which is parked on the edge of a cliff overlooking Utah's majestic canyons. Covered in pillows and blankets, he takes a moment to admire the scenery.

**EXT. REFLECTION CANYON, UTAH — DAY**

Ken is hiking through the narrow crevices of Labyrinth Canyon. His hands glide through the gold-amber walls as he stares up at a thin opening into the sky.



He struggles to climb up one of the slots and then finally emerges above Reflection Canyon. The music ends and we hear the natural sounds of this unique environment.

Exactly like the poster in his room, A vivid green river twirls around the bright orange granite islands. He stands there in awe, elated that he has finally arrived at the place he's been fantasizing about for years.

Ken pulls out his camera and starts taking photos. He notices there is a person on the peak of one of the islands. He's intrigued because he hasn't seen any other hikers all day.

Without much hesitation, he begins swimming through the river that separates them then climbs up the rock island.

Soaking wet and out of breath he approaches JESS, 26, a natural beauty with a calm aura. She is also still wet from swimming in the river and appears perfectly content with letting the sun dry her off.

JESS

Hey there.

KEN

Hey sorry, I hope I'm not interrupting, you look like you're having a moment of clarity right now.

JESS

(smiles)

That's okay. I'm Jess.

Ken sits on a small rock below Jess and stares up at her sparkling, bright green eyes. Hypnotized by her honey-blond hair blowing in the wind, he almost forgets to respond.

KEN

I'm Ken.

(beat)

You live around here?

JESS

I live everywhere I guess you could say. Just been traveling for a while.

Despite the blinding sun behind Jess, Ken can't take his eyes off her. The conversation stops but the silence is not awkward. They both seem comfortable connecting without the aid of words.

Jess breaks the silence.

JESS (CONT'D)

Well I started traveling to get inspired to write. But that didn't really happen and I got tired of forcing it. So I stopped. But then I would feel guilty when I did nothing.

KEN

(sighs)

Yep, I know what that's like.

JESS

You ever feel like the best is always yet to come?

KEN

Yes, definitely. Like you're always falling short of something. Trying to get somewhere but never quite arriving.

JESS

Exactly. I've felt that my whole life. Like I had this incredible vision for my future and I spent every second trying to get there. Always feeling like I'm 10 steps behind. And now I just don't care anymore. I threw away my to-do list and decided to just kind of float around for a while.

KEN

So how's that working out for you?

JESS

(lights up)

It's been awesome.

(beat)

Actually I think that the life I always dreamed of would have never been as amazing as my life right now.

They exchange intimate glances. Their connection feels too intense for Ken so he stares away.

KEN

So how do you make it happen? Like you obviously need money to be able to travel all the time.

JESS

Okay don't make fun of me.

(beat)

I'm one of those Instagram adventure girls.

KEN

Oh shit, no way. Okay you have to break this down for me.

JESS

It's pretty simple, I travel around with super talented photographers and post photos of myself in incredible places doing adventurous things. That got me a ton of followers and everyone wants access to them so brands started hiring me to create content for them.

KEN

That's so freaking cool, what a crazy time we're living in.

JESS

(giggles)

Yep.

KEN

I'm actually a photographer myself, my camera is across the river.

JESS

Oh nice, well I'm heading over to a Highlining Meet in Moab tonight. You should go and I'll introduce you to my photography friends.

KEN

(holding back excitement)

Ahhh... Hell ya.

JESS

Great.

Jess gets up and starts jogging down the hill.

KEN

Where you going?

JESS

(yelling back)

Swimming!

Ken watches as she dives into the river and swims in perfect form to the other side. He takes a moment to watch her, thinking damn she's awesome.

A calm musical MONTAGE begins as they hike back together.

**EXT. WAHWEAP MARINA — EVENING**

As they arrive back at the parking lot, Jess makes a call.

JESS

Hey, I'm at Wahweap.

(beat)

Okay thanks, bye.

She hangs up as they approach Ken's car.

KEN

So I take it you have a ride to Moab?

JESS

Actually I haven't figured that out yet. That was just my friend that lives around here, I promised her we'd catch up before I leave.

KEN

Okay, well I was going to explore a bit before I head out so I can pick you up later if you want?

JESS

Cool, that would be perfect.

KEN

All right, what's your number?

JESS  
310-559-4584

Ken plugs it in then pauses.

JESS (CONT'D)  
You forgot my name, didn't you?

Ken nods with an embarrassed smile.

KEN  
Yep.

JESS  
That's okay I have no idea what  
your name is either.

KEN  
(relieved)  
Okay, good! It's Ken.

JESS  
Okay I promise I'll remember that.  
I'm Jess.

KEN  
All right Jess, I just texted you.

JESS  
Are you cool with the share  
location thing? That way we can  
find each other easily without  
having to send a million texts.

KEN  
(sarcastically)  
Nothing creepy about that.

Jess laughs for a second then waits for a serious answer.

KEN (CONT'D)  
Sure, that's fine.

Jess hits share location on both phones and then walks  
away.

JESS  
Later Ken.

Buzzing with excitement, Ken stares at her leaving.

**EXT. HORSESHOE BEND — SUNSET**

We SEE aerials of Horseshoe Bend, a turquoise river circulating around a deep bright orange canyon. From high above, the abstract rock formations appear unworldly. As if on the day that god created them he got blindingly drunk and went a little crazy with a box of crayons.



Ken is standing near the edge of the cliff taking photographs.

**EXT. EMPTY HIGHWAY — NIGHT**

All sound stops as we see a dark, desert highway. Ken's car abruptly disrupts the peace as it speeds by loudly. It appears as if the car is heading towards the Moon, which is rising right above the road.



**INT. KEN'S CAR — NIGHT**

Jess looks ahead, entranced by the simplicity of the two bright headlights. Ken notices her tranquil state.

KEN  
Hey, no falling asleep! I need  
someone to talk to.

JESS  
Okay, okay. Um, lets see.

Jess tries to think of something to say.

JESS  
So you got any tattoos?

KEN  
Just this little guy.

He pulls down his shirt to reveal a small tattoo of wifi-signal bars right above his heart.

JESS  
Come on, are you serious with  
that?

KEN  
Well it makes a lot more sense if  
you know what it means but now I'm  
never going to tell you.

JESS  
Okay fine, I'll be nice.

Ken gives her a — *ya right* face.

KEN  
It's a reminder to go to the  
places where my head can receive  
the signal my heart is trying to  
send to it.

Jess holds back a grin and nods.

KEN  
What? Too cheesy?

JESS  
(sarcastically)  
No, not at all.

KEN  
Come on, you said you were going  
to be nice!

JESS  
Kidding! It's okay, I got a kind  
of cheesy one too.

Jess pulls up her sleeve and shows Ken a tattoo of a small  
rectangle.

KEN  
What's that?

JESS  
It's a gravestone dash. The dash  
between birth and death. It  
represents our entire lives.  
(beat)  
That short little line is all the  
time we get.

**EXT. MOAB, UTAH – SUNRISE**

The sun is rising over a small town sandwiched in-between  
Arches and Canyonlands National Parks.

Ken and Jess begin hiking up the twisted sandstone  
landscape.

Ken pauses to stare back at the town then pulls out his  
phone.

KEN  
Go ahead I'll catch up, I have to  
make a call.

JESS  
Okay.

Ken nervously waits for an answer as the phone is ringing  
but it goes to voice mail.

JOHN (VOICE MAIL)  
 You've reached JSC electric, leave  
 a message and I'll get back to you  
 as soon as I can.

KEN  
 Hey it's me. Wanted to let you  
 know that I'm safe and everything  
 is fine. Sorry for kind of  
 disappearing.

(beat)  
 I just want you to know that I'm  
 not running away. This isn't about  
 me escaping, this is about me  
 succeeding. Okay, talk soon.

**EXT. HIGHLINING MEET — DAY**

Adventurers of all sorts are gathered on a plateau high in  
 the mountains. People are highlining, BASE jump, barbecuing  
 and relaxing on hammocks.



As Ken arrives, he is taken back by the contagious positive  
 vibes. He passes by a group of BASE jumpers as they jump  
 off a cliff next to several photographers documenting the  
 action.

JESS  
 (yelling)  
 Ken!

Ken turns to see Jess standing with JANE, 27, an outdoorsy  
 type with child-like freckles and animated expressions.

KEN  
 What the hell is this place? This  
 is crazy.

JANE

Welcome to Moab. I'm Jane.

Jane reaches out for what looks like a handshake but is actually a hand grab then pull in for a hug. Ken looks surprised but happy to receive a pleasant welcoming.

KEN

Hey, I'm Ken.

JESS

Jane is pretty accomplished in the adventure photography world so she's definitely the person to talk to.

KEN

Nice, I'm just starting out so any advice would be greatly appreciated.

JANE

Where have you been shooting recently?

KEN

I got some great shots at Horseshoe Bend last night.

JANE

Nice, can I check them out?

KEN

Like right now?

JANE

Ya! Why not?

Ken nervously pulls out his camera and shows Jane the photos on his flip-screen viewer. As she studies them, Ken is distracted by Jess leaving to go greet an older, good-looking guy.

Jane hits a button on the camera to bring up the photo specs.

JANE

Okay you always want to shoot in RAW. You need as much information

as possible to enhance tones and colors in post.

Ken looks a bit bothered, thinking that he might be coming off as an amateur.

JANE (CONT'D)

And usually for landscapes you want to maximize the depth of field so your entire scene is in focus from front to back. I usually set my aperture at f/22 then focus one third into the scene.

Ken is becoming increasingly agitated by the criticism. To make matters worse, he looks over at Jess who now appears to be having a flirtatious conversation with this unknown man.

JANE (CONT'D)

But I'd say the biggest piece of advice I have is to capture something unique from a fresh angle. Set trends instead of following them. There are thousands of photos of Horseshoe Bend, you have to make sure that yours stand out.

KEN

Right, of course.

Jane notices Ken's grim reaction to her advice as she hands him back his camera.

JANE

But looking good Ken, keep it up.

JANE'S ASSISTANT

Hey Jane, Jones is going free-solo.

JANE

All right, lets do this.

Jane quickly pulls out her camera as everyone's attention shifts to the highlining rig.

JONES, 34, a professional highliner, is about to attempt his first walk across the line without being strapped to a harness. The line is rigged from one cliff to another, 700 feet above the ground.

As Jones mentally prepares for the walk on the other cliff, the tension intensifies.

JANE  
Grab the 300mm.

Jane's voice no longer has that joyful undertone as she and her assistant work fast and efficiently to set up.

ASSISTANT  
Got it.

Staring at their collection of lenses, Ken feels unprepared with his bare bones set up.

The chaos of the preparation comes to a sudden halt as Jones is about to take the first step onto the line.

Everyone is completely still, fixated on him as he begins to walk. The cameras start snapping, capturing Jones slowly making his way to the midpoint.

Ken notices that all the photographers are shooting from a similar perspective and sees an opportunity to get a fresh angle. He shoots right next to the end of the line so the entire slackline is seen in the shot.



Suddenly everyone gasps as Jones begins to lose his balance. A couple people can't handle watching and turn

away. Jones managed to regain his balance and arrives safely to the end of the line where Ken is standing.

ASSISTANT

(to Jones)

Holy shit man, that was intense.

Jones is shaken up and barely reacts to his peers as they welcome him back with hugs and high fives.

Most of the photographers stopped shooting but Ken keeps documenting Jones' mixture of anxiety, shock and excitement.

Through the camera's lens, Ken feels connected to his intensity.

ASSISTANT

(to Jones)

You all right?

Jones doesn't answer.

JESS

He's fine, just give him a minute.

As everyone begins clearing away to give Jones some space, Ken walks over to Jane who is reviewing her photos.

JANE

Please tell me you caught that.

KEN

Oh ya, I think I got some great shots.

Ken reviews his photos as Jane looks over his shoulder.

JANE

Damn, that's a sick angle. See that's what I'm talking about when I say do something different.

Ken is beaming with excitement as Jane praises him.

JANE (CONT'D)

Focus looks a bit soft on Jones though. Keep perfecting it, you only get so many moments like that so you want to be prepared.

Ken's smile fades as he takes a closer look at the photo.

KEN

Right. Okay.

As Jane leaves, Ken notices Jones sitting alone on the edge of the cliff staring at the line he just walked.

JANE'S ASSISTANT (O.S.)

(to Jane)

Damn, that's the shot right there.

The assistant's voice fades into the background as Ken watches Jones sitting completely still. He appears perfectly content, indulging in gratification.

Ken tunes out his surroundings and enters a dream-like state.

JANE (O.S.)

(barely audible)

That's perfect. I'll post that tonight.

Ken looks down at his camera and views his photos again. They now appear to be completely out of focus. Ken stares at them for a beat then without any emotion tosses his camera off the cliff.

We see a CLOSE UP of the camera violently smashing into pieces as it lands then HARD CUT TO:

JESS

You ready?

Ken snaps out of the daydream and turns to see Jess, who is waiting for a response. He looks down to see that his camera is in his hand.

JESS (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

KEN

Ya, of course. Ready for what?

JESS

To get out of here.

Jess's eyes have a hint of seduction, which takes Ken by surprise. He tries to keep his cool.

KEN

Sure. I could use a drink.

**INT. MOTEL — NIGHT**

We see a CLOSE UP of a beer being cracked open.

Jess and Ken are relaxing on the bed watching *Guys and Dolls*, a bizarre documentary on men who are obsessed with their high-end sex dolls.

MAN IN DOCUMENTARY

There she is. She's still  
sleeping.

Ken and Jess stare in disbelief as the man wakes up his sex doll and initiates a conversation. A close up of the dolls vacant face is a bit too much for Ken.

KEN

Okay I'm done with this.

He reaches over for the remote and turns off the TV. Jess doesn't react and is still staring at the blank TV.

KEN (CONT'D)

Sorry that was way too weird for  
me.

Jess doesn't respond and has the same empty facial expression that the sex doll had. It takes Ken a moment to realize she's playing a joke on him.

KEN (CONT'D)

Oh hell no, you better stop that  
shit.

Jess doesn't break character and remains motionless.

KEN (CONT'D)

Okay fine.

Ken unzips his pants and starts to crawl on top of her. They burst into laughter as she pushes him away.

JESS

(laughing)

Oh you like that kinky shit?

KEN  
You started it.

As the silliness fades, their expressions turn serious. Ken feels an irresistible desire to kiss her. Jess feels a similar magnetic pull towards him. Vibrating with anticipation, they hold back for a beat, waiting to see who breaks first.

Finally, Ken grabs the side of her neck and kisses her passionately. Despite wanting to continue, Jess pulls back before things escalate.

She starts examining his Wi-Fi tattoo a little closer.

JESS  
So where are the places?

KEN  
What places?

JESS  
The places where you have a good signal.

Ken thinks for a beat.

KEN  
My Mom used to take me camping at the Sierras back when she was around. Like, real camping in the backcountry, miles away from anyone else.

As Ken pauses to reminisce, Jess appears like she has something to say but is holding back.

KEN (CONT'D)  
I remember we'd go on these long hikes and she'd always get us lost. Like lost in a good way, I wasn't scared or anything.  
(beat)  
She would always wear this neon purple, puffy 90s jacket. It was kind of like a beacon of light, as long as I followed it, I felt safe.

(beat)

Oh and I was obsessed with taking photos on her flip phone. Remember the razor?

JESS

Hell ya I remember the razor!

KEN

Then one day she surprised me and bought me this camera.

Ken grabs his camera from the side table and starts playing with it.

KEN (CONT'D)

But that was a long time ago, I haven't seen her in forever.

JESS

Why? Where is she now?

Ken is caught off guard and hesitates.

KEN

Actually, she's in the bathroom.

Jess laughs then realizes Ken doesn't want to get into it.

KEN (CONT'D)

It's funny, right now I feel like I have a perfect signal. Like I know exactly what I need.

JESS

What's that?

Ken stares up at the white ceiling, feeling like it's a blank canvas where he can create anything.

KEN

Just to finally release these wild ideas that are always circulating in my head.

(beat)

To build a bridge between where I am and where I want to be.

JESS  
 (playfully)  
 Hmm, That sounds fun. Can I come?

KEN  
 Of course.

JESS  
 No, for real. I want to help. It  
 sounds like an adventure.

KEN  
 (appreciative)  
 Okay.

JESS  
 Just promise me one thing.

KEN  
 What?

JESS  
 Let's never hide.  
 (beat)  
 Let's shine a light on what makes  
 us unique.

#### **EXT. WOODS — NIGHT**

Through Ken's POV, we see him switching on a flashlight, illuminating the forest ahead. He's standing by himself outside of a tent in the middle of the night.

He hears a ruffle behind him and quickly shines the light in that direction.

KEN  
 (mumbles to himself)  
 This is some Blair Witch shit.

Ken waits timidly, watching for movement. He is startled by a strange groan and turns to shine the light in that direction. But there doesn't seem to be anything there.

KEN  
 I wish it was morning already.

Suddenly, night becomes day, as if a light switch was turned on. Ken looks around confused then turns his flashlight off.

KEN  
 (whispers)  
 What the fuck.  
 (beat)  
 I'm dreaming.

Ken tests this newfound ability.

KEN (CONT'D)  
 I wish it was night.

Again his wish comes true and day becomes night.

He hears the sound of curtains being pulled open and quickly looks in that direction as we HARD CUT TO:

**INT. MOTEL — DAY**

Jess opens the curtains to reveal the bright morning sun.

JESS  
 Wake up! It's a perfect day, lets  
 go create some magic.

KEN  
 (slow and groggy)  
 I think I just had a lucid dream.

JESS  
 Enough dreaming, it's almost  
 11:00, lets go real lifeing!

Jess jumps on the bed and grabs her phone from the counter.

JESS  
 Let me see what's around here.

Ken also grabs his phone and we go into a series of screen CLOSE UPS as he starts an Instagram account. He posts Jones' free-solo highline as his first photo.

JESS  
 Okay, check this out. It's called  
 Angels Landing.

Jess shows Ken a picture on her phone of a sketchy path with a 3000-foot drop on both sides.

KEN  
 Come on, seriously?

JESS  
Yes seriously, I did it a month  
ago it's not that scary.

Ken is obviously uncomfortable with the idea.

JESS (CONT'D)  
What? Scared of heights?

Ken doesn't respond.

JESS (CONT'D)  
Wow, okay I wasn't expecting that.  
So we're definitely doing it.

KEN  
There's no way I'm doing that  
hike.

**EXT. ANGELS LANDING — DAY**

Ken is staring at Jess walking up a narrow trail with a massive drop on either side. He's frozen in fear and unable to continue.



JESS  
Come on, you got it.

Ken starts to walk cautiously, fully aware that one wrong step could cost him his life. Because of this awareness, his steps are shaky and filled with hesitation.

He leans over to look down then quickly retreats, feeling an overwhelming rush of panic. Jess sees this and walks back towards Ken.

JESS  
Give me your hand.

Ken starts walking down the path towards Jess and reaches for her hand. In the moment they touch, he feels a powerful energy and is instantly filled with courage. At the same time, Jess feels an immediate loss of confidence, as if his fear transferred to hers.

Jess remains uneasy throughout the rest of the hike. Until they reach the peak and all the tension finally dissolves. They sit calmly, admiring the vast valley below.

KEN  
I can't believe this is real.

Jess is engulfed in her own thoughts and doesn't respond.

Ken photographs her taking in the surreal landscape. He is in flow, capturing the moment in his own unique way. Satisfied with the results, he sits back down with Jess.

JESS  
Can I tell you something?

KEN  
What?

JESS  
That was the first time in my life  
I was scared of heights.

Ken finds this very interesting and thinks about what it might mean.

We cut to a music MONTAGE of Angels Landing Aerials. We then drop down to see Jess and Ken hopping from rock to rock along a river as they hike down.

The cheerful mood abruptly comes to an end when Ken slips and drops his camera into the river.

KEN  
(shocked)  
Oh shit.

He quickly steps in the water to retrieve it and nervously starts to inspect the damages.

Jess is staring on nervously as the visibly damaged camera won't turn on. Ken removes the memory card and dries it off on his shirt.

KEN

Let me see your camera.

Jess quickly hands him her small digital camera and he inserts the card.

JESS

Is it reading it?

KEN

Nope.

Jess is surprised to see that Ken doesn't seem too upset. He then continues walking as if nothing happened.

JESS

Did you back up the photos?

KEN

No, but it's fine.

Jess is weirded out by his lack of emotion but is not quite sure what to say. So she says nothing and follows him down the trail.

**INT. KEN'S CAR — EVENING**

There is an awkward silence as Jess and Ken drive down a dirt road. After a couple beats Jess finally speaks.

JESS

So Jane and some other friends are going out for some drinks if you want to go.

KEN

That's okay, I'm tired but I can drop you off.

JESS

(concerned)

Okay.

They pull up to a dive bar in a desolate town nearby and Ken waits quietly for Jess to get out.

JESS  
Why don't you come in for one  
drink?

Ken is annoyed by her persistence. He forces a smile then  
nods.

KEN  
Okay.

**INT. DIVE BAR — NIGHT**

Jess and Ken enter an old, rundown bar packed with  
eccentric locals who seem very amused by their presence.

They greet several of the people from the highlining meet  
including Mark, the good-looking guy Jess was flirting  
with.

JESS  
Ken, this is my good friend Mark.

KEN  
(low energy)  
Hey, how's it going?

MARK  
(equally unenthusiastic)  
Hey, what's up?

Mark barely acknowledges Ken's presence and shifts his  
attention to Jess.

MARK  
(to Jess)  
So where the hell have you been?  
How come I never see you anymore?

JESS  
Shut up, you just saw me  
yesterday.

Feeling like he's not a part of the conversation, Ken  
leaves the group and walks to the bar.

KEN  
(to bartender)  
Jack and Coke please.

As the bartender makes the drink, Ken notices someone left behind a half full cocktail at the bar. He looks around to see if anyone is looking then quickly picks it up and drinks it fast.

When the bartender brings him his drink he chugs it with the same recklessness.

JANE  
(yelling)  
Hey Ken get over here, we're doing shots.

Ken returns to the group and Jane hands him a shot.

JANE  
(overly excited)  
All right, this goes out to another successful shoot. It was a blast, we killed it, got some great shots and now it's time to share them with the world.

As everyone cheers, Jess watches Ken staring at the group restlessly. He takes the shot then walks outside and Jess follows.

**EXT. DIVE BAR — NIGHT**

JESS  
(frustrated)  
Hey!

Ken turns around and stops to look at her.

JESS (CONT'D)  
Where are you going?

KEN  
I think I should leave.

JESS  
Why? What's wrong?

KEN  
I'm sorry, I'm not really the person you think I am.

JESS  
What are you talking about?

KEN

I'm not really a photographer.  
(beat)  
I have no idea what I'm doing.  
And I'm sick of pretending like I  
do.

JESS

So you're giving up?

KEN

Isn't that what you did?  
(beat)  
Couldn't get inspired so stopped  
writing and convinced yourself  
that you're satisfied with just  
floating around. Never really  
accomplishing anything.

Jess is taken back by his harsh words.

JESS

Not everyone is obsessed with  
getting somewhere in life and  
always working towards something.  
Some people are okay with just  
enjoying the ride.

KEN

Ya, but I don't think you're one  
of those people. I think you're  
just as obsessed with it as I am.  
That's why you like being around  
me so much and want to help me. So  
that you can vicariously feel the  
joy of succeeding without having  
to risk failure.

Jess looks hurt and takes a step back. Ken realizes he went  
too far.

KEN (CONT'D)

Hey.  
(beat)  
Sorry, I shouldn't have said that.

JESS

It's okay, you're probably right.

Jess reaches out for his hand in the same way she did during the Angels Landing hike. Ken accepts the peace offering and grabs her hand. They walk inside together.

**INT. DIVE BAR — NIGHT**

KEN  
I'm going to the bathroom.

JESS  
Okay.

Jess walks over to the rest of the group. Jane sees her approaching and notices she looks a bit down.

JANE  
You okay?

JESS  
(tensely)  
Ya, I'm fine.

MARK  
Hey Jess, come here for a second.

Mark walks away from the group and Jess reluctantly follows.

JESS  
Where are we going?

MARK  
Just come here.

Mark turns around at a dark corner of the bar then aggressively grabs Jess's waist and kisses her.

At the same time Ken walks out of the bathroom and sees them kissing. Shocked by this he quickly turns away and walks in the opposite direction.

The kiss only lasts a couple seconds before Jess pulls away angrily.

JESS  
(yelling)  
What are you doing?

MARK  
Kissing you.

Jess is creeped out by Mark's behavior and walks away.

**EXT. DIVE BAR – NIGHT**

Ken is standing outside, still stunned by what he just saw. His emotion builds to a breaking point. He snaps into action and b-lines for his car then drives off.

Jess frantically looks around the bar for Ken. When she can't find him she goes outside and sees that his car is gone.

**INT. KEN'S CAR – NIGHT**

Ken is driving recklessly down a one-lane, two sided highway.

He hears a text message beep and looks down at his phone to read it. It's from Jess and reads – *Where are you??*

A loud horn startles Ken and he quickly looks up to see two blinding headlights heading straight at him. He veers off the road barely missing the other vehicle and comes to a complete stop.

Shaken up, he realizes he's too drunk to drive. He crawls to the back of the car to his sleeping area where he finds a half empty bottle of whiskey.

He takes a couple swigs while looking up at the mountain peak photo taped on the roof.

**INT. KEN'S CAR – MORNING**

We cut to the mountain peak photo but it's now shining brightly from the morning light.

Ken wakes up in rough shape. As he begins remembering last night's event, he becomes increasingly upset.

He desperately tries to find water around the car. He finally finds a bottle but it's empty.

Frustrated and disoriented he works up the strength to drive to a gas station.

**INT. GAS STATION – DAY**

Ken puts down a water jug, gum and a sandwich on the counter.

CASHIER  
That's \$9.45.

Ken opens his wallet and sees that he doesn't have any cash. He hands the cashier a credit card.

CASHIER  
It's not going through, you got another card.

KEN  
(puzzled)  
Okay, hold on one second.

**EXT. GAS STATION - DAY**

Ken steps outside to make a phone call. As the phone rings he paces back and forth hoping for an answer. He notices his hands are shaking which makes him even more anxious.

JOHN (ON PHONE)  
Hey Ken.

KEN  
(relieved)  
Hey Dad.

John doesn't respond and Ken tries to think of what to say.

KEN (CONT'D)  
Dad, I need your help. My card isn't working for some reason.

**INT. KEN'S ROOM - DAY**

We cut to Ken's fish tank where his goldfish is lying dead. John's voice is heard from the other room.

JOHN  
I don't know what to tell you.  
(beat)  
I think it's best if you take care of this one yourself.

**EXT. GAS STATION - DAY**

We see an EXTREME WIDE SHOT of Ken standing in the desert with no other people in site. He continues speaking on the phone, pacing back and forth but the dialogue is not heard.

By Ken's body language, it's apparent that the conversation is not going well.

Ken hangs up the phone then stands motionless for a beat.

We cut to a CLOSE UP of Ken's phone as he types in Covina College on google maps. The ETA says 8 hours and 22 minutes.

#### **INT. GAS STATION - DAY**

We see a close up of pre-made sandwiches inside the gas station market. Ken discreetly grabs one and sneaks out the store without paying.

#### **INT. COLLEGE PARTY - NIGHT**

A stylistic, slow motion MONTAGE of college debauchery begins. We see beers being funneled, sloppy make outs and speakers vibrating. There's a strange mix of facial expressions; some ecstatic, some nauseated, some seductive and some just confused.

The MONTAGE comes to an abrupt stop as Ken enters. The party has died and all that's left are people passed out in awkward positions. Ken dodges empty beer bottles and half eaten pizza as he makes his way through the house.

KEN

Hello?

PIERCE (O.S.)

Over here.

Ken turns the corner to see Pierce rolling a joint on his desk.

PIERCE

Chache! I can't believe you're here, this is awesome.

Ken tries to reciprocate his energy.

KEN

What's up man. I missed ya.

PIERCE

You just missed the craziest party.

KEN  
I can see that.

Ken is eyeing a half-eaten burrito on Pierce's bed.

PIERCE  
Go for it Chache, that's all you.

KEN  
Nice, I'm starving.

Ken grabs it and takes a big bite.

KEN (CONT'D)  
This is actually really good.

PIERCE  
Hell ya it is. Come on, let's go  
out back and smoke this.

Pierce stumbles through the house to the back porch. Ken follows while finishing the burrito.

**EXT. BACK PORCH — NIGHT**

Pierce fidgets as he struggles to light the joint. Ken looks at him concerned, knowing that joints are usually his forte. Pierce returns the same worried look. Something seems off between them.

They both say the same thing at the same time.

KEN AND PIERCE  
What?

The awkwardness is broken with a short laugh.

KEN  
What's up with you? You're not  
being yourself.

Unsure what to say, Pierce avoids the question. He finally manages to light the joint and takes a big drag.

PIERCE  
I saw your Instagram post. That  
shit looks amazing.

KEN  
Thanks man.

Pierce takes another drag then stares off into the sky.

PIERCE  
Political science.

KEN  
What?

PIERCE  
That's my major.  
(beat)  
And honestly, I don't even know  
what that is.

Ken stares at him for a beat holding back a smile. Pierce's serious expression transitions into a silly smile. Ken lets out a laugh and they start to feel connected again.

PIERCE (CONT'D)  
Okay so for real man. I wish I  
could do what you're doing. Just  
going out into the world in search  
of something bigger.

Pierce appears as if he's struggling to find the right words.

PIERCE (CONT'D)  
You know what I'm saying, just  
doing something different.

KEN  
Ya? What happen to just go to  
college and partying your ass off  
for 4 years?

PIERCE  
I was trying to convince you to  
come with me! I know it's super  
selfish but I think I didn't want  
to see you doing what I really  
wanted to do.

Ken appears like he's now the one holding something back.  
Peirce waits for his response.

KEN  
Well... You want to switch?

PIERCE  
(surprised)  
Why? Not going so well?

Ken grabs the joint and takes a drag, trying to decide how much he wants to reveal.

KEN  
I broke my camera the other day.

PIERCE  
Oh shit, for real?

KEN  
Ya, but it's kind of weird...  
(beat)  
Right after it happen I felt relieved.

PIERCE  
Umm, yep that's weird.

KEN  
I think it's because it means I don't have to find out that I'm not good enough.

PIERCE  
(aggravated)  
You always do this! I think you should find out. Give yourself the chance to get good at something. If it doesn't work out that's okay, you'll find something different. The point is to do what you think is right for you and giving it everything you got.

KEN  
True.

PIERCE  
Failure is better than regret.  
(beat)  
Right?

Ken takes another big drag then releasing all his tension with a long exhale.

KEN  
I'm just sick of everything being  
so unpredictable. Imagine if you  
had control over everything in  
your life.

PIERCE  
Well that's something you earn not  
something you're given.

KEN  
Yep, I guess so.

PIERCE  
Welcome to the real world.

KEN  
Ya, I don't like it.

PIERCE  
So, what are you going to do now?

KEN  
I have no idea.

**EXT. KEN'S HOMETOWN — NIGHT**

We see several static shots of Ken's neighborhood.  
Everything looks dreary and uninspiring.

**INT. KEN'S CAR — NIGHT**

Ken stares at his house but can't quite bring himself to go  
inside.

He puts his hand on the door handle to get out but changes  
his mind. He instead starts the car and drives away.

**EXT. PARKING LOT — NIGHT**

Ken pulls up to an old abandoned parking lot. He finds a  
dark corner to park in then turns the car off and crawls to  
the back.

He stares up at the mountain peak photo. He then looks over  
at his broken camera and feels a hint of motivation  
brewing.

He snaps into action and grabs an empty jar and a sharpie.  
He writes on it - *Camera Repair Fund*.

We see a quick MONTAGE of Ken cleaning his car, buying mini-water bottles then on an app in his phone, applying to drive for Uber.

**INT. KEN'S CAR — NIGHT**

Ken feels excited as he pulls up to a young man standing on the side of the road. He rolls down the passenger window.

KEN  
Hey, are you Tom?

TOM  
Yep.

Tom gets into the car and they drive for a couple blocks.

TOM  
Right here is good.

Ken is surprised because the ride lasted only a minute.

KEN  
Oh, okay.

Tom gets out and Ken sees that he made \$1.04. He doesn't know whether to be annoyed or amused.

KEN  
(to himself)  
Okay...

A new ride request pops up and he accepts it.

Ken pulls up to two attractive women, JANET and AMBER, both 24, who look like they're having an intense conversation. They're dressed to impress with glamorous hair, lots of makeup, tight dresses and high heels. Something straight out of a Maxim magazine.

They get inside the car without even looking at Ken.

JANET  
(to Ken)  
I put the address in, did it pop up?

KEN  
Yep, got it.

Ken begins driving and they continue their conversation.

JANET  
(to friend)  
So ya, it was so weird. Like, I  
had full control over everything.

AMBER  
That's crazy.

Ken eavesdrops on their conversation while staring at them from the rearview.

JANET  
Like all the limitations of the  
real world didn't exist and I  
could do whatever I wanted.

AMBER  
So what'd you do?

Ken can't take his eyes off of Amber, who looks like the type of woman he's always fantasized about.

JANET  
That's the thing, I got so excited  
that I just woke up.

AMBER  
Well can you do it again?

JANET  
Not really, it's hard. Like,  
seriously though, it was so cool.

Ken looks intrigued by their conversation.

#### **EXT. BUSY STREET – NIGHT**

We see a CLOSE UP of tattooed hands requesting an Uber on a cell phone. Ken's car pulls up and a man quickly gets in.

#### **INT. KEN'S CAR – NIGHT**

Ken is shocked to see that the man is his father. John is equally surprised since he was sure Ken was out of state.

An obnoxious horn of a car trying to pass breaks the moment. Ken quickly pulls out of the way.

KEN

Did you put the address in?

JOHN

What do you mean?

KEN

The address. Just type it in where it says destination.

JOHN

Just take a right.

KEN

It's like a million times easier if you just put the address in.

John doesn't answer. Ken gives up and starts to drive.

JOHN

(yelling)

Right, right, right!

KEN

(calmly)

Nope, missed it. See? That's why you put the address in.

Ken stops at an orange light even though he clearly could have made it. John is irritated by this.

They sit in silence for the entire length of the red light which seems like an eternity.

As they start driving again, Ken realizes he's going to have to initiate the conversation if they're going to have one.

KEN

So I'm sure you'll be happy to hear that my camera broke.

JOHN

Take this right. Where is it? I'll take a look.

KEN

Under the seat behind me.

Ken takes a right while John picks up the camera and starts to inspect it.

JOHN

Okay, so let me guess, you had a bump in the road and gave up?

KEN

Well maybe if I had a more supportive father...

JOHN

(interrupts)

I spent the last 10 years saving for your college fund so don't say I'm not supportive.

Ken takes a deep breath, trying to control his emotions.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I know you. You need instant gratification and if you don't get it then you give up. That's what happened right?

Wanting to avoid an argument, Ken sarcastically gives in.

KEN

Yep, you got it.

JOHN

Did you really think it was going to be easy?

KEN

Where am I going?

JOHN

Just keep going straight, a couple more blocks. You're just like your mother, thinking you can escape to some adventure wonderland and everything is going to be perfect.

(beat)

Take this left then pull over.

Ken pulls over and waits for his father to exit.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
At least you're smart enough to  
come back.

John gets out and Ken is left feeling defeated. He suddenly remembers something.

KEN  
(yelling)  
Hey dad.

John stops walking and turns around.

JOHN  
What?

KEN  
Can you give me a 5-star review?

John sneers then keeps walking.

**EXT. ABANDONED PARKING LOT – NIGHT**

We cut to the star filled sky. MICHAEL, 44, a lucid dream expert, is heard giving a YouTube tutorial video.

MICHAEL (O.S)  
There's another world out there.

We see a WIDE SHOT of Ken's car in the middle of an empty parking lot. Everything is dark except the windows which are glowing with red light.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
A world where you have the ability  
to construct your life exactly the  
way you want it. You can have  
everything you desire instantly.

Inside the car we see that the red light is coming from Ken's laptop. He is completely absorbed in Michael's words which are spoken with a full-bodied, vigorous voice.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
The key to initiating a lucid  
dream is realizing you're in a  
dream. If you can prove to your  
brain that you're dreaming then  
you become lucid, or aware, and as  
a result you can alter your dream

world. You can prove it to yourself by doing reality checks. Like for example jumping up in the air and seeing if gravity is working normally. Or try sliding your thumb through your hand. Yes, seriously! Okay, so you're probably thinking, how am I going to remember to do that while I'm dreaming? The answer is to get in the habit of doing it all the time. Even if you're positive you're not dreaming. You'll be surprised, sometimes you'll do the thumb test and it'll slide right through. And in that moment you can begin creating your reality.

(beat)

We create the path where our minds wander.

The video ends and we cut a CLOSE UP of Ken's laptop screen where he's reading about Michael in the description. He sees that he offers one-on-one Lucid Dream classes.

He closes the laptop and goes to sleep with his thumb touching the palm of his hand.

#### **EXT. PARK — DAY**

Ken finds himself walking in the same park where he saw the slackliners a couple of weeks earlier.

Through his P.O.V., we see him staring at an old ladder placed up against a wall.

His attention shifts to the slackliners. He walks over to watch them perform complex tricks on the line.

Ken notices that they seem to be moving a touch slower than real time. It's a clear indication that he might be in a dream.

He stares down at his hands and notices that his thumb is pressed against his palm. Looking back up, he sees that one of the slackliners is looking straight at him with a puzzled expression. We hold on his face as Ken pushes his thumb through his hand. Although we don't see this, we know

it happened from the horrified expression of the slackliner.

SLACKLINER 1

What the fuck!

In this moment, Ken knows he's in a dream and feels a rush of excitement. This buzz is so strong that it causes him to wake up.

**INT. KEN'S CAR — MORNING**

Ken quickly looks at his hand to make sure there's no hole in it. Relieved that it's back to normal, he rests his head back and processes what just happened.

**EXT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE - DAY**

Ken rings the doorbell then looks around at the strange cacti surrounding the front porch.

Michael opens the door, greeting Ken with a pleasant smile. He's too clean cut to be called a hippie but certainly possesses a hint of mystic. He looks like the type of man that has some secrets you'd be lucky to hear.

MICHAEL

(whispering)

You must be Ken, come on in.

KEN

Hey, thanks for seeing me on such short notice.

MICHAEL

Of course, it's my pleasure.  
Follow me to the back yard where we  
can talk, there's no talking  
allowed inside the house.

KEN

(puzzled)

Oh, okay.

Walking through Michael's eccentric house, Ken stares at the bizarre paintings and colorful pills that seem to be scattered at every corner.

They pass by a zen-like meditation room with the door slightly open. Ken catches a glimpse of three people

sleeping and another person sitting on a chair staring at them.

As they exit the house, Michael turns around to see Ken appearing a bit uncomfortable.

MICHAEL

That's where we do our studies, I know it looks a bit strange at first.

KEN

Interesting.

They sit on a set of bright red cushioned chairs in front of a round, tiled table.

Ken looks around at the unique plant life around him. He makes his way back to Michael who, to his surprise, is staring at him dead in the eyes. He appears utterly serious, as if whatever is about to come out of his mouth is going to be incredibly insightful.

MICHAEL

I love moss.

Ken holds back a smile, not really sure how to respond. Michael continues to stare at him with the same intensity.

KEN

Okay...

MICHAEL

I've been weaving moss into cushions every night. I'm re-doing my living room.

(beat)

Like in my dream world that is.

KEN

Oh, okay. That makes more sense.

MICHAEL

You have strong hands.

Ken looks down at his hands, not really sure why he thinks they appear strong.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

So I'm not sure what level you're at, we'll get to that, but just so you know when you're creating your world its important to build with your hands. I mean you could just skip that and snap whatever you want into existence but it will be unstable and likely to disappear the next time you're there. For example, take the time to cut some wood and build a canoe if you want to explore a lake.

KEN

That's good to know. I don't think I'm quite on that level yet though, I've had only two Lucid Dream experiences and my problem is that I get so excited in the moment I realize I'm dreaming that I wake up.

MICHAEL

Yes, of course. It's incredibly exciting when you first experience an almost laughable sense of control.

Kens discomfort has faded and he's now fully engaged.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Okay so you did a reality check and it failed. You know that you're dreaming. Chances are you're going to want everything at once. But if you get really anxious or happy, the dream will start dissolving and you'll wake up. The key is to stabilize your emotions, take it slow and know that you can stay there for as long as you want. Rub your hands together. Rubbing hands stabilizes. Touching things and savoring their texture stabilizes. Tasting things stabilizes. The only thing you need to do is remember you are dreaming.

**EXT. PARKING LOT – EVENING**

As Michael's voice continues, we cut to Ken driving back to the parking lot where he's been sleeping.

MICHAEL (O.S.)

If you want to achieve something specific in a dream, find a clever way of asking for it from your dream characters. They're essentially your subconscious trying to help you adapt to a limitless world. So asking a dream character for flying lessons is much easier for your brain to accept than just taking off like Superman.

Ken parks the car then gets ready to go to sleep.

MICHAEL (O.S.)

When you dream you experience a multisensory world just as rich as the world you are experiencing right now.

Ken is calm and focused as he places his thumb on his palm then slowly closes his eyes.

**EXT. MICHAEL'S HOUSE – DAY**

We cut back to Michael passionately describing the world he loves so much.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

You see, hear, feel, taste and think just as you are when you're awake. The crucial difference is that the multisensory world you experience while dreaming originates internally rather than externally.

**INT. KEN'S CAR – NIGHT**

Ken finds himself driving Janet and Amber, the Uber passengers from the other day. The drive starts similarly to the way it did in real life, the only difference is that everything is seen through Ken's P.O.V.

JANET  
(to Amber)  
It was so weird. Like, I could  
control everything.

AMBER  
That's crazy.

As Ken merges onto the highway, Janet looks at the rearview and sees that Ken is staring right at her. She continues talking to Amber while fixated on Ken, as if she's staring into his soul.

JANET  
Like all the limitations of the  
real world didn't exist and I was  
free to do whatever I wanted.

Suddenly Janet crawls up to the driver's seat and sits on top of Ken so that they are face to face.

KEN  
(nervously)  
Hey, what are you doing?

Still driving in full speed, Ken looks over her shoulder to make sure he's staying in his lane. Without missing a beat, Janet continues her explanation of her Lucid Dream experience.

JANET  
Like it's all your creation.  
There's nothing external, no laws  
of society or physics get in your  
way.

Ken is now in a state of panic as he struggles to keep the car on the road. Janet forcefully grabs his face and pulls it directly in front of hers so that he can't see the road ahead.

JANET (CONT'D)  
(agitated)  
Don't you get it, there's no  
traffic here. You can relax,  
there's no danger.

Despite not being able to see the road, Ken starts to relax. With the realization that she got him, Janet also eases up.

She gives him an obvious, kiss me now look but Ken seems more interested in Amber, who is sitting calmly in the back. He admiring her tranquility as she stares out the window.

KEN

What's your name?

AMBER

Amber.

JANET

Do you want her?

Amber looks at Ken through the rearview, waiting for his answer.

JANET (CONT'D)

You can have her if you want.

(beat)

You'll get married, have 3 perfect kids and travel all over the world.

Ken snaps out of the moment and again becomes aware that he's driving a moving car on the highway. He frantically tries to look at the road but Janet again stops him.

JANET (CONT'D)

(angrily)

Stop! There's nothing ahead.

There's no destination. You have arrived.

This statement is so intense that it causes Ken to wake up. He lies motionless, feeling like his world had just been turned upside down.

#### **EXT. SUBURBAN STREET — DAY**

We see a MONTAGE of aerials pointing straight down at Ken's car as he drives around town. This is intercut with the car icon on the Uber app as he picks up and drops off several passengers.

Ken is constantly checking the time throughout the day, feeling upset that it seems to be moving so slowly.

**EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT**

As the day is coming to an end, Ken is sitting in a lawn chair by his car doing more Lucid Dream research.

He sees that Jess is trying to call him and he hesitates to pick up. He ends up ignoring the call and continuing his research. A voice mail notification pops up and he listens to it.

JESS (ON PHONE)

Hey it's me. I think I know why  
you kind of disappeared so it's  
all good I'm not mad. I just  
wanted to see how you're doing and  
maybe meet up soon, so call me  
back.

Ken is too involved with his Lucid Dream obsession and doesn't seem to care too much.

It's a beautiful night so he decides to sleep outside. He wraps himself up in a sleeping bag and looks up at the sky.

We cut to his P.O.V. and see thousands of sparkling stars illuminating the night.

**INT. KEN'S HOUSE - DAY**

Ken's head turns to the right and he's suddenly in his bedroom laying on his fluffy orange rug.

We cut to an EXTREME CLOSE UP of his fingers running through the wool, creating a loud but pleasant ruffling sound. His calm movements suggest that he's in a tranquil state with heightened senses.

Ken then makes a fist and bangs on the floor, creating an unexpectedly deep boom sound which vibrates through his entire body. Staring at his hands continuing to vibrate long after the boom, he becomes aware that this is a dream.

In this moment, he knows that all the possibilities of his imagination can now be experienced. But instead of immediately jumping in on the opportunity to live out his fantasies, Ken stays completely absorbed in the mundane detail of moving his hands.

In one swift, confident movement he rolls over the rug and spreads his arms as we seamlessly cut to Ken wingsuiting.

**EXT. MOUNTAINS - DAY**

Still in his P.O.V., we see Ken dodging trees and cliffs as he zooms through mountain crevices. His fear of heights is gone and replaced with a sense of invincibility.

His parachute opens and he takes in the extraordinary landscape around him.

**EXT. PARK - DAY**

Ken lands in a beautiful city park. He stares over his shoulder after hearing a familiar voice. About a hundred feet away he can see Janet and Amber sitting on a park bench. Despite the distance he can hear every word they're saying loud and clear.

JANET

Your main objective is to be  
everything he thinks he wants. His  
idea of perfection.

Ken walks towards them while continuing to listen.

JANET (CONT'D)

But you can't just give it to him.  
You have to make him feel like he  
made it happen himself.

AMBER

(distracted)  
Hold on.  
(beat)  
I think he can hear us.

Still about fifty feet away, Ken can see Janet suspiciously glancing over at him.

JANET

I'll see you later.

Janet hugs Amber goodbye and quickly walks away as Ken approaches.

Amber pretends to be unaware of Ken's presence. He nervously mumbles the first thing that comes to his mind.

KEN  
Hot day huh?

AMBER  
Yep.

Discouraged by her lack of enthusiasm, Ken is tempted to walk away. But then he remembers that he is in control of this interaction, of their surroundings, of everything.

He stares up at the sun and suddenly it shines brighter. We see an EXTREME CLOSE UP of one drop of sweat dripping down Ambers forehead.

She stares up at him for the first time, liking that he's finally taking control. The sun continues to shine brighter and she starts to overheat.

AMBER  
(calm but authoritative)  
Stop.

A chilly gust of wind hits Amber's face and she feels relieved.

Ken looks to the right and sees his orange rug and keyboard laying on the plush grass.

KEN  
Can I play you something?

AMBER  
Sure.

Ken sits on the rug and examines the keyboard keys before beginning to play. Amber sits close to him and waits for him to play.

He begins to play the same song he struggled to learn weeks earlier, except now he plays it flawlessly.

Craving his full attention, Amber pulls his hands away from the keyboard but the music continues to play. The song picks up tempo as new instruments are introduced. As it hits the crescendo, Ken softly kisses her. A tingly sensation is flowing up their bodies, intensifying by the second.

Ken pulls back to stare at Amber, as if he's checking if she's really there. She looks back at him, yearning for more affection.

The sun shines brighter and brighter on her face until Ken can barely see her. Blinded by the rays, he rubs his eyes and when he re-open them, he sees the morning sun above him.

**EXT. PARKING LOT – MORNING**

Unlike the last time he woke up from a Lucid Dream, Ken feels upset. As if he just left a world of freedom and now he must return to his cage.

**INT. KEN'S CAR – DAY**

We see an EXTREME CLOSE UP of the low gas light turning on as Ken is driving. He's not happy about this.

**EXT. GAS STATION – DAY**

Ken grabs the cash from his camera repair fund jar and uses it to pay for gas. As the tank fills up he waits impatiently, bored by the dullness of real life.

We hear Ken's voice in an off-screen conversation with Pierce.

KEN (O.S)  
I think I was in love.  
(beat)  
It might have been the happiest  
I've ever been. It's like a dream  
broke my heart.

**INT. KEN'S CAR – DAY**

Ken appears lifeless as he sits in traffic.

KEN (O.S.)  
It was weird when I woke up I was  
like, no way, that couldn't have  
been a dream. It felt like I had  
been robbed.

**INT. PIERCE'S BACK PORCH — DAY**

KEN (CONT'D)

It's like some sadistic kind of  
nightmare where it doesn't end  
when you wake up, it begins.

Pierce and Andy stare at Ken like he's crazy. Ken realizes  
that this all probably sounds a bit odd.

PIERCE

Okay so you're living in your  
truck and obsessed with dreaming?

KEN

Well, it doesn't feel like  
dreaming. It's just...

Pierce and Andy continue staring at Ken concerned as he  
struggles to find the right words.

KEN (CONT'D)

(to Pierce)

It's like what we talked about,  
having full control over  
everything.

PIERCE

Dude, listen to yourself.

ANDY

Ya, I'm with Pierce on this one,  
you should be careful. Like I know  
you, you were always the guy that  
if given 3 wishes, your first wish  
would be that you have unlimited  
wishes. And this sounds like that  
type of place.

KEN

So? What's bad about that?

PIERCE

Because it's not real.

KEN

What's the difference if it feels  
real? Like it bugs me out how real  
it feels.

PIERCE

And what's up with the photography thing?

Feeling attacked, Ken changes the subject.

KEN

I don't know, what's up with the Political Science thing?

PIERCE

Actually, I kind of like it.

KEN

(doubtingly)

Really?

PIERCE

No for real, it's pretty interesting.

KEN

Nice man.

(to Andy)

And what about you? What's new these days.

ANDY

Great, things are really lining up. Got some great opportunities this month.

Andy intentionally doesn't go into details. He's still hung up on what's happening with Ken.

ANDY (CONT'D)

All right for real though man. You know that voice in your head that tells you, *Stop!* Whenever you're doing something big and important? Something that scares you. That resistance is a green light disguised as a stop sign.

KEN

I'm sorry man, can we not do this? I really don't want to be a dick but I'm not in the mood for an inspirational speech right now.

Andy is more worried than offended.

PIERCE

I don't know man it sounds like  
you need some structure, maybe you  
should consider joining me here.

KEN

Not all of us can be fancy  
political scientists like you.

The tension is broken by a short laugh that quickly  
dissolves into an awkward silence.

**EXT. PARKING LOT – NIGHT**

We see an EXTREME WIDE SHOT of the dark parking lot with  
Ken's car in the middle. The red light coming from the car  
windows is turned off then we cut to Ken's eyes closing.

**EXT. THE WILDERNESS – DAY**

Through Ken's P.O.V. we see a vast wilderness. He stares  
down, revealing that he's standing on a slackline suspended  
1000 feet above the ground.

He holds perfectly still, maintaining complete balance. He  
then walks the line fearlessly and arrives on the other  
side with ease.

As he turns to look back at the line, he notices that every  
time he blinks, a camera flashing sound is heard. Realizing  
that his vision has become a lens, Ken turns his head  
again, focuses in and out by dilating his pupils then  
blinks to snap a photo.

He does this several more times then pulls out his phone  
and sees that the photographs have loaded onto his  
Instagram page. He watches the likes accelerating rapidly.

He looks back up at the mountains, feeling like someone is  
watching him. On a distant peak, he sees the silhouette of  
a woman. He zooms in with his eyes and sees Amber looking  
flawless. She looks like a superhero striking a pose  
without even trying. He takes one step and is transported  
to her.

AMBER

I missed you.

Ken is fixated on Amber's glowing eyes which are reflecting the sunset behind him. He turns around to catch the last little speck of sun as it disappears into the horizon. When he looks back at Amber, she is much further away as if the setting sun is taking her with it.

AMBER

Where are you going?

KEN

Nowhere. Hold on.

AMBER

Stay with me.

Ken quickly turns back to face the sunset, trying to force the sun to come back up.

A bit of light starts to rise up again but quickly dips back down as Ken loses his control over the environment. He stares back at Amber who is even further away now.

AMBER (CONT'D)

Don't wake up.

Ken turns around again and sees that the sun is long gone and replaced by the half-full moon. He closes his eyes, aware that he doesn't have the ability to stay asleep.

#### **INT. KEN'S CAR — MORNING**

The moment Ken's eyes open he snaps into action. He grabs the remaining money in his camera repair fund jar then drives to Michael's house.

As soon as Michael opens the door, he can see that Ken is desperate.

KEN

Hey, I'm really sorry to just show up like this but wondering if you can fit me in for a session?

MICHAEL

(concerned)

Of course, come on in.

**EXT. MICHAEL'S BACK PORCH - DAY**

We see a CLOSE UP of a broken antique clock hanging in Michael's back porch. Ken stares at it, admiring the stillness of time.

He shifts his attention to Michael as he sits with him around the tile table.

KEN

I need to find a way to stay lucid  
longer.

Michael matches Ken's seriousness as he gets ready to speak.

MICHAEL

So the dreams are very pleasurable  
I take it?

KEN

Yes. It's almost unfair how  
incredible they are. The only  
problem is that they end too fast.

MICHAEL

Lucid Dreams can be  
extraordinarily pleasing. To the  
point where people frequently  
consider their dream world  
experiences as the best of their  
lives. Now be honest with  
yourself.

(beat)

How do you feel about that?

KEN

I think that's fine.

MICHAEL

It's all about intention. The  
mission is to gather what you've  
learned from the dreams and apply  
it to your life. To learn your  
secrets, your truth. Then use that  
knowledge to better yourself.

KEN  
(disinterested)  
Yes, of course.

Ken agrees in the hopes that Michael will get to the point faster.

MICHAEL  
Okay I'm going to tell you a bit about what we do here. But first, there's a couple things you need to know. First off, to our brains, dreaming of doing something is equivalent to actually doing it. This is why dreams seem so real. To the brain, they are real. Because of this the events you experience while asleep can sometimes produce effects on your body.

(beat)  
For example, if you're out of breath in a dream, sometimes you pant while sleeping.

Ken seems unconcerned by this information and is annoyed by Michael's long pauses.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
The second thing is that sleep paralysis is very common in our practice. It's a state where certain brain receptors are turned on while you're still sleeping, making you feel awake but unable to move. It happens because our bodies don't allow movement as a defense mechanism, preventing us from acting out our dreams. So you'll feel paralyzed. It can be quite terrifying because it feels endless. If your mind starts slipping into a dark place then just remember that it won't last forever.

KEN  
Okay, got it.

Ken's laid-back attitude towards this information troubles Michael. Despite this, he decides to continue.

MICHAEL

Now I am developing a Lucid Dream formula with a team of experts that promotes a hyper REM stage. It can be very intense and not for the faint hearted. Self-induced lucidity is still in the early stages of development but having said that, I've been taking the pills for months and had some unforgettable experiences. The pill activates the neurotransmitter ACh, which is known in the scientific community as the lucid dreaming neurotransmitter. It's been proven to cause conscious, controlled dreaming when activated. It also has a high dose of Benzos to prolong sleep time.

KEN

Can I try them?

MICHAEL

Well no, actually that would be illegal but we are in the early stages of FDA approval.

KEN

What about just one pill and I'll give you a full analysis of my experience.

Michael is skeptical but tempted by his offer.

MICHAEL

All right, I'm going to give you half a pill.

Michael opens up his briefcase, takes out the pills and carefully cuts one in half. He hands it to Ken then turns around to lead him to the door.

MICHAEL

Immediately after you wake up I want you to record the entire experience. Everything that happened and how you feel about it. The good and the bad.

As Michael walks away, Ken smoothly grabs several pills from the container and puts them in his pocket.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Make sure you're prepared for an intense experience. Even just half a pill is quite potent.

**INT. KEN'S CAR — NIGHT**

Without any hesitation, Ken takes one of the pills then lies down and checks his Instagram account.

He sees a post from Jess announcing that she's writing an adventure children's book. He's glad to see this and likes the picture.

Feeling a bit sedated, he puts his phone down and stares at the mountain peak photo above him.

**EXT. THE WILDERNESS — DAY**

The actual mountain in the photo is seen through Ken's P.O.V.. He's standing in the beginning of a long winding path towards it.

Suddenly, Jess passes Ken then looks back to see if he's following her. With a rush of excitement, he follows her up the steep incline.

Ken feels a magnetic pull towards the mountaintop, which is peeking out from a layer of puffy clouds.

JESS

It's not real.

Ken doesn't answer or take his eyes off the peak.

JESS (CONT'D)

I'll show you.

AMBER

Wait.

Ken stops abruptly and turns around to see Amber standing at the base of the mountain.

AMBER (CONT'D)

Come back.

He's tempted to go back to the woman he's been longing for but at the same time he has a burning desire to continue towards the peak.

He looks up and sees that Jess has already gained a large lead.

AMBER (CONT'D)

I have a gift for you.

Amber offers Ken a large box. He takes one step and finds himself standing right next to her. He opens the box to find a world globe.

AMBER

Spin it.

Ken spins the globe. When it should be slowing down, it starts accelerating in speed.

Amber gives Ken the — *you know what to do* look. He puts his finger down on the globe and they are instantly transported to that place.

**EXT. RAINBOW MOUNTAIN, PERU — DAY**

Ken scans his surroundings, feeling like he just landed in a different planet. He's seen many photographs of this place but it's even more mesmerizing than he thought.



He looks down and sees that his finger is still on the globe. When he removes it, he is immediately sent back.

**EXT. THE WILDERNESS — DAY**

Amber spins the globe again and Ken places his finger down to stop it.

**EXT. AFRICA — DAY**

Ken finds himself standing in front of Mt. Kilimanjaro. A Giraffe slowly passes by as he takes in the wondrous landscape.



Again, Ken is back as soon as his finger is lifted.

**EXT. THE WILDERNESS — DAY**

Still through his P.O.V. we see a MONTAGE of Ken appearing in various places he's always fantasized about visiting.

**EXT. PARKING LOT — NIGHT**

The last time Ken spins the globe he appears in front of his car in the parking lot.

AMBER

Why do you always come back here?

Ken slowly walks around the car, noticing it's many scratches and dents.

KEN

I wish I didn't have to.

AMBER

You don't.

Amber quietly opens the door to the car, revealing Ken sleeping peacefully. As he stares at himself, Ken thinks of how nice it would be to sleep forever.

AMBER (CONT'D)

I want you to stay here with me.

KEN

How?

Amber quietly steps inside the car, grabs a pillow and places it firmly on Ken's face. As he watches her press down harder, it becomes harder for him to breath.

He stumbles away from the car, trying to escape the situation but it only gets worse. He falls down to his knees and gasps for air.

A loud thumping noise is heard. Ken stares back at the car and sees a woman banging on the window. Even though he's too far away to see who it is, Ken knows it's his mother because she's wearing her neon purple coat.

The banging is getting louder and louder as it vibrates everything around him.

Just as he's about to pass out from a lack of oxygen, Ken wakes up to a cop banging on the window. Completely disoriented and out of breath, he rolls down the window.

COP

(aggravated)

Can't sleep here.

KEN

(mumbling)

Okay.

COP

This is private property. You're not supposed to be here.

KEN

Okay okay, got it.

Still catching his breath, Ken looks around in a daze.

KEN (CONT'D)

What time is it?

COP  
It's 5.

KEN  
A.M. or P.M.?

COP  
(concerned)  
P.M.  
(beat)  
Are you okay?

KEN  
Ya ya, I'm fine. Really sorry  
officer.

As the cop walks away Ken counts with his fingers how many hours he slept.

KEN  
(to himself)  
14, 15, 16, 17.  
(beat)  
Holy shit.

**EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD — EVENING**

The sun is setting over rolling hills, which are covered in burnt pine trees.



Ken is driving alongside them on a steep mountain side road when he receives a text from Jess. He picks up his phone to read it.

**INT. JANE'S CAR — DAY**

Jane is driving down a similar mountain road. Jess, who is sitting next to her, stares at her phone waiting for a reply.

JANE

You know staring at it isn't going  
to make him text back.

Jess smirks then puts her phone down. Her movement is matched with Ken's movement as he placing his phone down.

**INT. KEN'S CAR — DAY**

As Ken thinks about whether he should text back or not, the car suddenly stops accelerating.

KEN

No way.

He pulls over and frantically starts looking for his spare fuel container. He finds it but it's empty.

KEN

Fuck!

He looks around trying to figure out where he is. As he shifts his head to the right, the movement is matched with Jess's, who is also outside of the car looking around.

**EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD — EVENING**

Ken and Jess's movements continue to sync as we cut back and forth between both of them setting up tents. When he picks up a pole, she snaps it to the frame. When she zips the cover, he continues the motion.

Jess stares off into the hills as if she's aware some sort of anomaly is taking place. Ken stops assembling the tent, also recognizing that something strange is happening.

He dismisses this notion and goes to the car to grab the tent cover. He notices his camera case in the backseat is open. He quickly grabs it to look inside and finds that his camera isn't there. He drops the case in disbelief, realizing that it must have been stolen by one of the Uber passengers.

Ken is devastated. He feels no hope, just emptiness as he hits a new low.

He notices the bright orange pill bottle lying on top of the mess he's created in the back of his car. Without giving it much thought, he reaches for it and swallows three pills.

We cut back to Jess who is still staring off into the distance. We cut to a CLOSE UP of her phone as she tries to text Ken again. She types - *Hello?*

Jess lights up as we see three little dots pop up showing that Ken is typing.

We cut back to Ken who is now inside the tent thinking about what to write. The pills are rapidly affecting his ability to think straight. His eyelids slowly drop as he fades into sleep.

Jess gets annoyed after the three little dots disappear. But her frustration turns into hope as she remembers that they are still sharing locations.

She quickly checks the map and sees that Ken is not too far away.

#### **INT. KEN'S ROOM - DAY**

Through the P.O.V. of a camera viewfinder we see Reflection Canyon, Utah. The camera drops, revealing that it's the poster in Ken's room.

Ken walks towards it and tears off the photo of the mountain peak which is hanging next to the poster.

ANDY

Ready?

Ken looks to the right and sees Andy standing there with full mountaineering gear. His fur-trimmed Gortex jacket is soaking wet, as if he just came back from a blizzard.

KEN

Where we going?

Andy points at his hand, which is still holding the mountain peak photo.

ANDY

There.

Ken stares down at the photo in his hand. The focus shifts to the spiked boots and pickaxe that he now seems to be holding.

He takes one step forward and lands on a bed of unbelievably soft, vivid green moss.

**EXT. MOSS FIELD – DAY**

Ken lifts his head to see that he's following Andy up a gentle incline.



He was expecting a treacherous environment where every step is a struggle but there doesn't seem to be any hint of danger there.

**EXT. THE MOUNTAIN PEAK – DAY**

As they reach the top of the hill, Ken looks at the other side at the impossible climb leading to the point he's standing at. Even though he took the easy way up, he's made it to the mountain peak.

Ken wonders what the point of all the gear was as they take it off piece by piece.

ANDY

Come on, I'll show you around.

They turn the corner to find a quaint little house overlooking a strikingly beautiful turquoise lake.

**INT. DREAM HOUSE - DAY**

They walk inside and see a wall of framed photographs taken at all the wonders of the world. Taking a closer look, Ken can see his signature at the bottom of each photo.

He continues walking through the house, observing a row of plaques lying next to an impressive camera collection.

He quickly turns around after hearing what sounds like his own voice in the next room.

DREAM KEN

(to Amber)

Hun, can you grab the mixer?

AMBER

Yep, got it.

Ken discretely peeks into the kitchen and sees himself grabbing beers from the fridge. He appears slightly older but more attractive and put together. As if age somehow fixed all his imperfections.

Ken quietly follows himself through the house then outside to the backyard.

**EXT. THE MOUNTAIN PEAK - DAY**

There he sees Andy laughing with Pierce as he works the grill. On the other side of the yard his parents are sharing a hammock, admiring the lake below.

Dream Ken hands John a beer.

DREAM KEN

Mom, you want one?

KEN'S MOM

It's fine, we'll share it.

Ken observes them from a distance in disbelief.

As he looks around at the perfect house, the pristine surroundings and all the people he loves laughing, Ken realizes that this is it. Everything he's ever wanted.

AMBER  
He's arrived.

Ken turns around to see Amber sitting next to Janet on a bright red swinging bench. They are quite far away but like in previous dreams, he can clearly hear their conversation.

JANET  
Where?

AMBER  
Right there.

Ken can see Amber point at him and Janet turning to stare.

AMBER (CONT'D)  
Andy brought him.

JANET  
(tensely)  
Okay. That's fine. Maybe this is good.

AMBER  
It's not.

Ken is distracted by his father's conversation with the dream version of himself which is heard over Amber's voice.

JOHN  
(to Dream Ken)  
You know I'm proud of you right?

DREAM KEN  
Ya, I know Dad.

JOHN  
I'm sorry I ever doubted you.

Ken notices that the dream version of himself doesn't seem to be feeling any emotion as he listens to his father's praise.

AMBER  
(to Janet)  
That's not going to work. Look at him.

Feeling confused and overwhelmed, Ken quickly walks towards the house.

PIERCE  
(excited)  
Hey hey, there he is!

Ken blows right past Pierce without responding. Pierce's smile fades fast. He seems disturbed by this as he watches Ken enter the house.

**INT. DREAM HOUSE - DAY**

Ken locks the door to the bathroom and stares at himself in the mirror.

It feels painfully uncomfortable. Seeing himself unhappy in his quintessential life is too much for him to handle.

He splashes water on his face.

KEN  
(to himself)  
Wake up!

Nothing happens.

He tries closing his eyes in hopes that when he opens them he'll be awake but again, nothing happens. He gives up and walks to the living room.

Ken is startled after seeing Amber, his parents, Pierce, Andy and Michael all sitting perfectly still on the couch. They stare at him as if there is something deeply wrong.

MICHAEL  
Sit down.

The tension builds as Ken sits. There is a long eerie silence before Michael finally continues.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)  
We're all here because we want you to be happy. This place exists to satisfy your every desire. The thing is, it's your creation, a result of your thinking. Which can be problematic. After all it's not realistic to only have good thoughts. But you need to remember that whether they're good or bad, they steer us.

We're still in Ken's POV so can't see his reaction but judging by the way everyone is looking at him, it's not good.

AMBER

We're all here to make this as pleasurable as possible for you.  
Tell us what you want.

Ken thinks for a beat then slowly begins to back away. Amber feels rejected and follows him into the bedroom.

She locks the door behind her, switches off the light and undresses. Her body looks abnormally perfect as she seductively moves towards him.

Ken is finding it hard to resist her allure. He surrenders to the moment and allows her to kiss him. His tension dissolves as passion takes over.

Feeling like he has to have her now, Ken rolls over on top of Amber and continues to kiss her. After a beat he pulls back, realizing that she has become lifeless.

KEN

Amber?  
(beat)  
Are you okay?

He gives her a gentle shake but she is completely motionless. She looks just like the high-end sex dolls in the documentary he saw with Jess. Freaked out by this he quickly backs away from the bed.

In this moment everything around him begins to change. The room darkens, the wooden floor becomes soft and the ceiling fan sounds more like a helicopter rotor.

Ken starts to hyperventilate. He leans on the door trying to catch his breath and notices in tiny print the word *Air* on the light switch.

Remembering that Amber switched it off, Ken tries to turn it back on but he has lost the ability to move.

The ceiling fan is now spinning uncontrollably fast, shaking the entire room, as it gets more and more powerful.

**EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD — DAY**

The chaos cuts out abruptly as we cut to an EXTREME WIDE SHOT of Ken's tent and car. The only sound we can hear is increasingly heavy panting coming from inside the tent.

Cutting to a closer shot, we can see Ken convulsing in his sleep through the tent's screen opening.

**INT. DREAM HOUSE — DAY**

Back inside the dream, Ken is laying in the same position as he continues to suffocate.

We faintly hear a voice.

JESS

Ken?

**EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD — DAY**

Inside the tent, Ken's breathing stops and his head falls to the side.

After a beat the zipper opens and Jess entering the tent.

JESS

(frantic)

Ken? Are you okay?

She tries to wake him up but he's not responsive.

JESS

Ken! Wake up.

Jane enters the tent.

JESS

(to Jane)

Help me.

JANE

Grab his legs.

Jane and Jess carry Ken to the car then speed off.

**INT. DREAM HOUSE — DAY**

Ken is still lying down on the floor in the bedroom of his dream house when a doctor walks inside the bedroom and switches on the light.

He bends down and calmly starts to examine Ken.

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM — DAY**

Ken and the doctor are in the same position but the location cuts to a hospital room where Ken is strapped to various tubes and pumps.

**INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM — DAY**

John's leg shakes nervously as he's sitting impatiently in the waiting area. He quickly stands up as the doctor enters the room.

DOCTOR

Hi John.

JOHN

Hey, any news?

DOCTOR

Your son had an episode of Sleep Apnea. It's a sleep disorder where the brain fails to signal the muscles to breath. It's caused by a disturbance in the respiratory control center. Normally an attack this strong would cause him to wake up, but it looks like he was heavily sedated. The lack of oxygen was so severe that it caused his brain to swell, which is why he's now in a coma. And as you probably know, how long a coma lasts can vary greatly so it's very hard to say when he will wake up. But your son was very lucky, he made it to the hospital just in time. I apologize I don't have much time but if you have any questions I'll be happy to answer them later today. You can go see him now if you'd like.

JOHN  
Okay, thank you.

John walks inside the room and puts down Ken's camera on the counter.

JOHN  
(to Ken)  
Fixed your camera.

Ken is still unconscious and doesn't react.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
I wanted to surprise you.

We cut to Jess nervously approaching the room.

JESS  
Sorry, I don't mean to interrupt.

JOHN  
Not at all, I'm John, Ken's father.

JESS  
I'm Jess, nice to meet you.

JOHN  
Thank you so much for bringing him in.

JESS  
Yes, of course.

JOHN  
Sorry, I don't really know what to say.

JESS  
You don't have to say anything.  
Just if you could please keep me posted on his condition?

Jess writes down her phone number on a piece of paper and hands it to John.

JOHN  
Yes, of course Jess.

**INT. DREAM HOUSE – MORNING**

Ken is still lying on the floor in the bedroom, looking like he's sound asleep.

A friendly voice is heard.

TYLER (O.S.)  
Damn sleeping looks so nice. I'm  
jealous.

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM – NIGHT**

TYLER, 33 is lying in a hospital bed next to Ken, unable to sleep. He is covered in bandages and casts, appearing like he broke every bone in his body. He seems way too cheerful considering his circumstances.

TYLER (CONT'D)  
(jokingly)  
You look like an angel. Really  
buddy, a real life angel.

**INT. DREAM HOUSE – MORNING**

Ken slowly begins waking up as he hears Tyler's voice. First thing he notices is the gentle rotation of the ceiling fan above him.

TYLER (O.S.)  
I could probably join you and pass  
out right now but these new pills  
they got me on feel so good I  
don't want to waste it.

Ken looks around the room trying to figure out where the voice is coming from.

TYLER (CONT'D)  
I gotta tell you buddy, I think  
you're the best roommate I've ever  
had.

Ken slowly gets up and starts to follow the voice which seems to be coming from outside.

**EXT. MOUNTAIN PEAK – MORNING**

Ken scans the mountains in front of him and spots a man walking in the distance.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Not to mention you're a great listener. So much so that I'm going to tell you a story. A true story.

Ken begins walking towards the man and the voice slowly becomes clearer.

TYLER (CONT'D)

A story about a super cool guy who might have fallen off a cliff by accident. But let's not get too ahead of ourselves. It starts when he left everything behind to go live in the wilderness.

Ken is now only about a hundred feet behind the man. He watches him go inside a tent, which lies on the edge of a vast canyon.

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM — NIGHT**

Tyler's playfulness fades into a serious expression as he continues the story.

TYLER (CONT'D)

He traded concrete walls for nylon. And could carry everything he owned on his back. People called him a homeless man.

**EXT. THE WILDERNESS — MORNING**

Ken watches the man making coffee then sitting on the edge of the cliff enjoying the sunrise.

TYLER (O.S.)

They think of a home as a house, with a microwave and plumbing and a TV. But he never felt more at home than he did when he ended his time spent in the city, wrapped in the security of his families' wealth. He had everything but for some reason he was always desperate. Bored by predictability. Until even the

things he loved the most lost  
their charm.

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM — NIGHT**

TYLER (CONT'D)  
You know what I mean?

Tyler looks over at Ken who isn't showing any sign of life.

A catchy but repetitive song starts to play.

TYLER (CONT'D)  
I never hated my life or anything,  
it just got old. Like the repeat  
button got stuck on a song I used  
to like. I heard it all day  
everyday until I became numb to  
it. I thought of it as the  
familiar melody that protects me  
from the countless horrible songs  
that could play next if I hit  
shuffle.

The repetition of the song finally gives way to a new  
melody.

TYLER (CONT'D)  
But when I heard the echoes of a  
new song in the distance, my  
curiosity took over.

**EXT. THE WILDERNESS — DAY**

Ken is now closer to the man and we can see that it's  
Tyler. He's staring off into the horizon in a calm,  
reflective state.

TYLER (O.S.)  
I want to reach for something that  
I'm not sure I can grasp. To live  
where I have less control, less  
balance, less security, but more  
passion, more surprise, more  
challenge and more possibility.  
(beat)  
To live where I'm breakable.

Ken watches Tyler struggling to start a fire. After many failed attempts it finally catches.

TYLER (O.S.)

It was one of the most difficult things I've ever done but only in looking from the other side, I can see now how simple it really was. I was terrified and alone and colder and wetter than I'd planned, but still happier than I'd ever been.

Tyler is having a hard time figuring out how to cook dinner.

TYLER (O.S.)

Everything was difficult. Like everything. But there was something about the struggle that brought me back to myself.

Tyler finally sits down to eat. Even though the food doesn't look very appetizing, he looks surprisingly satisfied.

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM — NIGHT.**

TYLER (CONT'D)

(lights up)

I climbed thousands of pitches of trad, bathed in mountain creeks, built bonfires and highlines and found the most radiant friendships. As if I was discovering human beings for the first time.

**EXT. MOSS FOREST — DAY**

From a distance, Ken follows Tyler as he hikes through a dense forest. Golden beams of light peak through the moss covered trees, creating waves of heat as he walks through them.

TYLER (O.S.)

I could sense that there is risk ahead. I'd ask myself, why am I

here? Why not relax in the  
comfortable life that I was given?

Through Ken's POV, we see an EXTREME WIDE SHOT of Tyler approaching the bottom of a massive cliff. He stops and stares up, contemplating his next move.

TYLER (O.S.)  
I guess it's because I knew that  
what lies ahead has answers to  
much more important questions.  
Questions like, what do I want to  
become? And am I capable of  
becoming that?

Tyler begins a dangerous climb up an almost vertical rock wall.

TYLER (O.S.)  
The further I went, the more  
evident the truth became. Without  
challenge my pursuits are  
meaningless.

Ken is distracted by a bright purple dot on the peak of the cliff Tyler is climbing. As it starts to move Ken realizes it's a person. He makes his way closer to find that it's his mother. He knows this because she's wearing that purple 80s jacket she always used to hike with.

TYLER (O.S.)  
Then everything changed.

A deep boom is heard.

TYLER (O.S.)  
I fell rock climbing and decked  
from 40 feet, shattering my spine.

We cut to a series of nature WIDE SHOTS accompanied by faint echoes of Tyler yelling for help.

TYLER (O.S.)  
The thing about exploring your  
limits is that sometimes you find  
them.

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM — NIGHT**

Tyler stares at his casts and bandages, showing no emotion.

TYLER (CONT'D)

It felt like the world reached out and stole what little freedom I manage to carve out for myself. There's a Mexican saying I keep repeating to myself, Quisieron enterrarnos, pero se les olvidó que somos semillas. They tried to bury us but they forgot we were seeds.

(beat)

I spent the following week in and out of consciousness, in and out of surgery, unable to eat or drink or even sit up. You probably know how that is.

Tyler looks over at Ken who is still motionless.

TYLER (CONT'D)

But I'm very lucky. By the thickness of a dime I wasn't paralyzed and doctors say I'll walk again.

We see static shots of the TV, stained ceiling tiles and left over hospital food.

TYLER (CONT'D)

The past couple of months I've lived here, laying flat on my back. But despite the ceiling I've stared at every day and the bed and food and television, I have never felt more homeless.

(beat)

I'm going to find my way back home.

Right after this line, we see a CLOSE UP of Ken's hand make a slight twitch.

#### **EXT. PARK — NIGHT**

Ken is still following his mother who is leading him towards the old ladder in his hometown park. He recalls seeing it in past dreams.

He stops in front of it and looks up. Hundreds of miles past the end of the ladder, Ken can see the half-full moon. From his perspective it appears as if the moon is hanging right at the end of the ladder.

He looks around for his mother but she seems to have disappeared into the darkness.

He cautiously takes the first step up the ladder and almost instantly it lets out a loud squeal then snaps. Ken drops to the ground feeling discouraged. He grabs the other steps with his hands to test their strength and they seem sturdier.

After some hesitation, he puts his weight on the second step. It makes the same squealing noise but doesn't break.

Ken carefully makes his way up the ladder, getting more and more anxious as he rises.

He finally reaches the top to find himself in a moon-like landscape.



He spins around in a circle, taking in the unworldly scenery. He abruptly stops after sees a person lying down about 50 feet in front of him.

As Ken gets closer, he can see that it's himself sleeping. He looks down at himself knowing what he must do. Ken reaches down to gently shake his shoulder.

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM — DAY**

Ken's eyes slowly open. First thing he sees is his camera lying on the counter. Still too weak to react in any sort of way, he just stares at it confused.

**INT. WAITING AREA — DAY**

Jess is sitting in the waiting area across the hall from the hospital room.

She turns to see John frantically exit the room and approach the doctor. She can't quite make out what is being said but from John's excitement, she knows something has happened.

John and the doctor quickly walk back inside the room and Jess follows.

DOCTOR

Hi Ken. Can you hear me?

Jess stands in the entrance to the room watching. Ken isn't speaking back and the doctor is blocking him so she's nervously waiting to find out if he's reacting.

The doctor finally moves to the other side, revealing Ken's face. Jess is relieved to see that he's awake.

In this moment, Ken notices Jess standing by the door. As the doctor continues to examine him, he can't take his eyes off her.

**EXT. PARK — MORNING**

The sun is rising over Ken's hometown park as a slackliner is setting up a line. More people start arriving, greeting each other with friendly smiles and silly secret handshakes.

We see Ken heading towards them just like he did the first time he saw the group. He appears healthy and walks with a confident stride in his steps.

Just like he did in the past, he watches them performing impressive tricks on the line.

FEMALE SLACKLINER

Hey I remember you.

KEN

Hey. Nice to see you guys are  
still here.

FEMALE SLACKLINER

Oh ya, we're here every weekend.

She notices Ken eyeing a line nobody is using.

FEMALE SLACKLINER (CONT'D)

Want to give it another shot?

KEN

Ya, sure.

Ken puts the weight of one foot on the line and like the last time, his leg starts to shake. He lifts his other leg but can't hold his balance long enough to take even one step.

He makes several more unsuccessful attempts but this time he doesn't seem to be bothered by this. In fact, he's happy about it.

After a couple more tries, he finally is able to hold his balance for more than a couple seconds. The excitement of this progress turns into a calm focus as he takes his first controlled step on the line.

THE END