

The Rapist and The Murderer
Brandon Paul Salinas

SCENE I

The entire show takes place in the living room of a secluded house. Travis lives here. His wife and kid have recently moved out, so the place has the empty look of a newly-shelled home. Empty spaces where family portraits should be, no sign of femininity. He hasn't cleaned his home in a while. But he's not a shitty slob, either.

We can see the living area and the kitchen. The living area has a couch and two chairs. One of the chairs is a simple, wooden chair. It looks old and heavy.

The kitchen has some liquor. There are two doors in the room - one to the outside world and one to Travis's bedroom and bathroom.

Travis enters, flips on the light. Ryan follows. Ryan carries a small carry-on bag.

TRAVIS

This is it.

RYAN

Nice.

TRAVIS

Thanks. The couch doesn't fold out, so you'll just have to try not to fall off. I'll get you a blanket. Help yourself to a drink or something.

Travis heads into his bedroom offstage. Ryan goes into the kitchen. He peruses the liquor selection, settles on Scotch, pours himself one.

RYAN

You want something?

TRAVIS (O. S.)

Sure. Whatever's fine. I don't much care at this point.

(Ryan pours Travis some Scotch as well. Ryan's cell phone rings.)

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RYAN

- Hey, babe. What are you doing up so late?
- Yeah, I miss you, too.
- I've only got a few more days, though. I fly back on Sunday.
- Yes, I am at the hotel.

Travis enters with the blanket and throws it on the sofa.

RYAN (CONT'D)

- Yes, I am forcing myself to sleep the full seven hours.
- All right.
- Okay, I have to go to bed, too.
- Good night. Hey, um... I love you.
- Good night.

TRAVIS

Your wife?

RYAN

Yeah.

(Ryan takes a drink)
Good Scotch.

TRAVIS

Thanks. So, what's with the seven hours thing? Insomniac?

RYAN

I haven't been sleeping too well the last few months. I travel a lot for my job. So, when I'm out of town she calls me all the time to make sure I'm sleeping.

TRAVIS

Sounds like a good woman. Takes care of you.

RYAN

She's the best thing in the world.

TRAVIS

So, you'll have to give me Kevin's new address. I didn't realize he had moved. He always pulls that kind of shit. Moves with no warning.

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TRAVIS (CONT' D)

Gets some girl pregnant and doesn't tell anyone. Gets married and doesn't tell anyone.

RYAN

Yeah, you know Kevin.

TRAVIS

I still can't believe you know the guy. I haven't talked to him in five years. Fucking coincidence.

RYAN

Listen, thanks for letting me crash here.

TRAVIS

It's a long drive back to your hotel. And you don't want to get picked up by the cops when you're not in your own town. Believe me, it's a fucking hassle.

RYAN

Speak from experience?

TRAVIS

Wish I didn't.

RYAN

What'd you do?

TRAVIS

Well, I uh... Ah hell, why not. About a year ago I was married to this woman, Jennifer. And I was... I was seeing this chick named Melanie. Seventeen years old. Yeah yeah, I'm an asshole. Believe me, I know this already.

RYAN

You get busted for statutory?

TRAVIS

Oh no. No. Seventeen's legal in this state. No, I had been seeing her for a couple months. Jennifer didn't know anything about it. I worked with Melanie. She was my secretary.

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RYAN

You're kidding me. Guys really boff their secretaries?

TRAVIS

Not me. Not anymore. I had to go down to San Antonio for a business trip. At least, that's what I told Jennifer. I took Melanie with me. Jen didn't know Mel was going. So, we get down to San Antonio and Mel and I hit the Riverwalk. We're checking out the bars and stuff. She's 17, so I'm buying her drinks. We were in this one bar and this guy walks up to me, does that weird backwards head nod thing. He looks like some punk frat fuck or something. He's got this big-ass smile. He's asking me who I am, where I'm from, all that. And he asks Mel, too. Asks her name and whatever. He's kind of creeping me out, so I was trying to get us away from the guy, but he's pretty persistent. Then he asks Mel how old she is. And as soon as he did that, I knew what was up. Cops. Threw us both in jail. Her for PI, me for Contributing.

RYAN

That sucks, man.

TRAVIS

That ain't even the worst of it. The shitty part is that I know, the whole weekend I'm in this metal box, I know that this is how Jennifer is going to find out that I'm cheating on her. But of course, you never admit defeat. I had a plan. Contributing is a Class B here in Texas, so I knew I was getting fucked. I was going to get some probation, court dates, classes, fines, whatever. My plan, though, was to give them the wrong address, so all my shit would get mailed to my buddy, Wes. I was determined not to let my wife find out anything.

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TRAVIS (CONT'D)

But, of course, life sucks and I'm a dumbass. Wes lives in an apartment complex and the post office won't drop any mail in his box addressed to someone whose name isn't posted on the box. So, the mail went back to the San Antonio judicial system, they ran my driver's license, and the stuff made it to my house anyway. So Jen found out, she left me, sued me, and now I've got no money.

RYAN

Well, hey, man, you convinced me. I'll stay off the streets.

TRAVIS

Fucking cops, man. I hate those fuckers. I really do.

RYAN

My dad's a cop.

TRAVIS

No shit.

RYAN

No shit.

(beat)

Nah, I'm kidding.

TRAVIS

Ah, you fucker. You fucker. Man, I do shit like that all the time. You know, you make a joke about someone's mom only to find out she's dead or has cancer or something. You just feel like a jackass. I knew this kid in high school. Ah, Christ, this is terrible. This kid was in my woodshop class. They mixed all the grades up in that class, so I was a senior and this kid was a freshman. Anyway, it was like halfway through the year when he walked in one day with this weird gangsta limp, you know? And he was this skinny little white kid, so I thought he was just another wigger putting on airs.

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TRAVIS (CONT'D)

So I made fun of him, called him out in front of everyone for trying to act like the black kids. And he got all red and said no, it wasn't an act. It was real. He was born that way - one leg four inches shorter than the other. And man, that little freshman kid fucking cried. And I felt like such an ass, let me tell you.

RYAN

Oh no, you're kidding.

TRAVIS

God, I wish I was. I still feel like shit when I think about that.

RYAN

Did you ever apologize to him or anything?

TRAVIS

No. No, I didn't.

RYAN

I had the same kind of thing happen to me a few months ago. This girl I knew from college found my number on the internet. She called me up, we caught up on old times. She dated this guy back in college that I just hated. His name was Scott Parmer. Oh man, I hated him. Anyway, right before we graduated, she married that guy. So we were talking and I asked her, "How's your husband? Is he still an asshole?" Turns out he'd died. Two weeks earlier in a car accident. Now she's a widow with two kids and a car payment. And oh man, I just wanted to curl up and die.

TRAVIS

Shit happens, Ryan. Shit just happens.

(raises his glass in a toast)

To making an ass of yourself.

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CONTINUED: (6)

RYAN

To making an ass of yourself.

They clink glasses and drink.

TRAVIS

So, what's her name?

RYAN

Huh?

TRAVIS

I'm sorry. Your wife.

RYAN

My wife?

TRAVIS

Yeah.

RYAN

Janet.

TRAVIS

Nice name.

RYAN

Yeah.

TRAVIS

So, we spent all that time at the bar talking about Kevin, I didn't get to find out too much about you. Which suddenly strikes me as odd, seeing as I'm letting you crash at my place.

RYAN

Don't worry about me. I'm safe.

TRAVIS

Shit, I ain't worried. You seem all right. So tell me something. What's your job? Why do you travel so much?

RYAN

I sell this defect-tracking software crap. It's a state-based, user-configurable bug-tracking tool.

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TRAVIS

Sounds like fun. So, you have customers all over the country. You fly to these potential clients, give them a demo or something, take them out for drinks, make a shitload of money et cetera, et cetera.

RYAN

Well, all but money part. It's not very good software.

TRAVIS

So, who's your client out here?

RYAN

Venturity.

TRAVIS

Never heard of them.

RYAN

They're new.

TRAVIS

Ah.

RYAN

So, tell me about you. How long have you lived in Texas?

TRAVIS

Oh, I've been here all my life. My plan was to take off when I graduated college, but... well, Jennifer got pregnant. So, I went ahead and stayed. We got married.

RYAN

You have kids.

TRAVIS

Just one. She's eight. She lives with Jennifer, but sometimes I get her for the weekend. Real smart little girl. She's already reading novels. At eight. Not little kid books. Stephen King and shit. Man, when I was eight, I was picking my nose and eating it. I wasn't reading Salem's Lot.

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RYAN

Sounds like a good kid.

TRAVIS

She's pretty incredible. You got kids, Ryan?

RYAN

No.

TRAVIS

Just don't want them?

RYAN

My wife can't have them

TRAVIS

Oh. I'm sorry, man. I hate that: good people - people who'd make good parents - and they can't have children. Then you see all these deadbeat fucks spurting out babies like there's no tomorrow and leaving them to fend for themselves. It's not fair.

RYAN

Yeah.

TRAVIS

I volunteer with kids. Kids whose dads ran out on them, or sometimes their mothers. I help them with their schoolwork - or just make myself available to talk to them about whatever. And it fucking kills me, man, to see how every bad thing in their lives is because their parents are shit. That's why I hate so much that I can't see Hailey like I'd like to. I can't be a dad to her anymore. I don't want her to turn out like these kids I work with. I just hate it.

RYAN

My dad ran out on us when I was six. He was heavy into drugs and stuff. I didn't see him for ten years. Didn't even know where he was. When we found him, he was in prison. God, I hated that man.

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TRAVIS
My dad, too.

RYAN
What?

TRAVIS
My dad went to prison when I was a kid. They could have been cell mates.

RYAN
Did you catch that waitress?

TRAVIS
Huh? Oh. Oh, the one at the bar, right?

RYAN
She was something else, huh? Tits. Legs.

TRAVIS
Yeah, she was pretty nice.

RYAN
Bet you'd like to hit that shit, right?

TRAVIS
(noncommittal, laughs a bit)

RYAN
Yeah, she's your type, right?

TRAVIS
Hey, man. All women are my type.

RYAN
Yeah, I bet. But this chick. She's the kind you go for, huh?

TRAVIS
I dug her.

RYAN
Man, what you could do with her.

TRAVIS
I'm sure I could think of some things.

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CONTINUED: (10)

RYAN

Yeah. I was thinking about asking her home tonight.

TRAVIS

And your wife?

RYAN

Fuck it. What she doesn't know...

TRAVIS

I don't know, man. I think the waitress was more into me than she was into you.

RYAN

But that's part of the thrill, isn't it? When they don't want it? But you give it to them anyway?

TRAVIS

(wary)

Right.

RYAN

Huh. I'm empty. Mind if I grab another?

TRAVIS

No. Go right ahead.

RYAN

Need a refill?

TRAVIS

Sure, sure. Actually, I got to take a piss real quick. Be back in a sec.

Travis exits.

Ryan refills Travis's glass. He pulls a small container from his pocket. He pours a powder from the container into the glass. He stirs the powder into the drink. He pockets the container, then waits for Travis.

RYAN

Feel better now?

TRAVIS

Much. Thanks for the refill.

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RYAN

Thank you.

TRAVIS

No problem. Any friend of
Kevin's...

They drink.

RYAN

So what's it like? Jail.

TRAVIS

It sucks.

RYAN

You get in any fights out in "the
yard?"

TRAVIS

It's county jail, man. Not prison.
You get no yard in county. No
weight room. No showers. Hell, we
didn't even have bars. Just four
metal walls. The door was solid,
with one tiny window in it. Being
cooped up in that tiny little
space, I would have given anything
just for some damn bars.

RYAN

So, is that what was so bad? The
claustrophobia?

TRAVIS

No. Not even. I'm not really all
that claustrophobic. No, what
sucked was the fact that I couldn't
tell time. See, when you get
arrested, they take everything away
from you. Your clothes, your
shoes, underwear. Even your watch.
So, you're stuck in this metal room
and they've given you no
information. You have no idea if
you're going to be there for one
day, or two, or three. And even if
you did, it would do you no good.
Because you have no goddamn idea
what time it is.

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RYAN

There are no clocks?

TRAVIS

No, they keep clocks out of the cellblock.

RYAN

So, why was that such a big deal?
The time thing.

TRAVIS

You just have no fucking clue what's going on anymore. You're stuck in this little two-man cell with three other guys - and they stink - and you have no idea what's coming next. And even if they told you you were getting out at 1:30 or something, you'd have no way of knowing how far away that is. I can't feel a minute, you know? Without a clock, I have no way of knowing if I've been there for minutes or hours. It's like sitting through eternity.

RYAN

Imagine what it must have been like for our dads, then. You spend a lot longer than a night in prison.

TRAVIS

Yeah.

Travis takes a drink. Travis yawns.

RYAN

Feeling tired?

TRAVIS

A little wonky, yeah.

RYAN

You've been drinking.

TRAVIS

Yeah. Yeah, I guess.

RYAN

Pretty nice place you have here.
It's pretty secluded.

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CONTINUED: (13)

TRAVIS

Yeah, I like it. Nothing but trees and the wind. I can't stand neighbors. Nosy old fucks who can't leave you to your own business.

RYAN

Yeah, I hear you.

TRAVIS

So tell me about your wife.

RYAN

What do you want to know?

TRAVIS

I don't know. How did you meet?

RYAN

At work. I asked her to dinner, we started dating, and a few years later, we were married.

TRAVIS

What do you love most about your wife? I mean, I don't want to sound gay or anything.

RYAN

No, it's cool. I don't mind. The thing I love most about Janet... her eyes. When she's happy, she beams.

TRAVIS

What does she look like?

Ryan takes a drink.

RYAN

Tell me about Jennifer.

TRAVIS

Not much to tell. We were in love. Now we're not. You know, you break up with someone when you're young and they're gone from your life forever. But we have Hailey. So if I want to see my girl, I have to deal with the ex-wife.

(MORE)

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TRAVIS (CONT' D)

And she is not a forgive and forget kind of person, I tell you. But I'd do anything if it means I get to keep in touch with Hailey.

RYAN

(during this speech,
Travis begins to nod off.

Ryan doesn't mind.)

You really seem like you've been trying to do the right thing by her - your daughter, I mean. You fucked up with your wife. I have to say that. But I admire that you're trying to be a father still. You could have just left - like my father, like the fathers of all those kids you work with. But you didn't. And I respect that, Travis. I really do.

Travis yawns a long, loud yawn.

RYAN (CONT' D)

You look tired.

TRAVIS

I feel tired.

RYAN

Feeling a little leaden there?

TRAVIS

Yeah. Shit. My legs are asleep.

RYAN

What was the name of the high school you went to? Kevin told me it had some weird name.

TRAVIS

Huh? Oh. Garlic Vine. I'm not kidding you, man. Mascot was some little girl in a foam garlic bulb outfit.

RYAN

Really. Our mascot was a badger. I used to think that was so lame. Badgers. Then this friend of mine got attacked by one over in England.

(MORE)

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RYAN (CONT'D)

They're vicious little critters,
man. Had to get a skin graft and
everything.

Travis's head starts to nod. He abruptly perks up.

TRAVIS

Sorry. Just feel... so damn tired
all of a sudden.

RYAN

What kind of car did you drive in
high school? Travis. When you
were in high school, what did you
drive?

TRAVIS

I... um... big.

RYAN

Like a truck?

TRAVIS

Van.

RYAN

Did you play sports?

TRAVIS

No. I think I was kind of a loser.

RYAN

You were one of the all black kind
of guys, weren't you?

TRAVIS

Yep.

RYAN

Your ten year graduation is this
summer, isn't it? Isn't it,
Travis?

TRAVIS

Tired. Very tired.

RYAN

Yeah. Yeah, I'm sure you are.
Okay, look at me. Look at me.
Travis. Look at me. You're tired
because you've been drugged, okay?
I drugged you.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (16)

RYAN (CONT' D)
Your limbs are asleep and in just a
few moments you'll lose
consciousness. All right?

TRAVIS
What? Who are you?

RYAN
Sleep well, Travis.

Travis looks at Ryan. He is unable to speak.

Travis slowly passes out.

Ryan leans back in his chair, gazes at Travis's sleeping form. He grabs his bag, opens it. He pulls out a pair of latex gloves, puts them on. He picks up the two glasses, the bottle of Scotch, and anything else he has touched. He places them in the bag.

Ryan opens Travis's knife drawer, removes a long, thin boning knife. Sets it down near his bag.

He picks Travis up and places him in a wooden chair in the center of the room, facing the audience.

Ties Travis up.

He notices a clock in the room, positioned where Travis would be able to see it were he awake. Ryan grabs the clock and places it behind Travis.

Ryan takes a seat.

Lights fade out.

SCENE II

TRAVIS
(groans)

Lights fade in.

Travis is awake now, groggy.

TRAVIS (CONT' D)
What?
(groans)

Travis notices Ryan.

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TRAVIS (CONT' D)
What... what the hell, man?

Ryan takes a sip from his drink. He has switched to water.

TRAVIS (CONT' D)
What's going on?

RYAN
Hello, Travis. How do you feel?

TRAVIS
Kind of shitty.

RYAN
Understandable.

TRAVIS
You want to untie me, Ryan?

RYAN
Not particularly, no.

TRAVIS
You want to tell me what this is about then?

RYAN
Not just yet.

TRAVIS
How'd I get in this chair?

RYAN
I drugged you, Travis.

TRAVIS
Oh. What'd you do that for?

RYAN
I'm not going to tell you.

TRAVIS
Yeah. You said that already.

RYAN
Yeah.

TRAVIS
I hoped you'd forgot. So -

(CONTINUED)

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RYAN

Shut up, Travis. Don't say another word or I will kill you. Huh. Never said that to anyone before.

Ryan sets his drink down. He places a small table in front of Travis. He pulls implements of torture out of his bag and sets them on the table one by one. He has a quilting needle, an iron, a hammer, a ball gag, and a power drill.

TRAVIS

Wait wait wait. What are you... What is all this?

RYAN

I said I'd kill you if you said another word.

Ryan picks up the knife.

TRAVIS

Help! Help me! Someone please! Call the police! Call them now, god damn it! Call the fucking police now!

Ryan simply sits and stares.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

Help me, god damn it!

RYAN

Calm down, Travis.

TRAVIS

Shit! Shit!

RYAN

Calm down.

TRAVIS

Somebody please fucking help me!

RYAN

No one can hear you, Travis. You said so yourself. Just calm down.

TRAVIS

What the fuck? What is all this shit? What are you going to do to me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

RYAN

I'm not sure yet. See, I've imagined this night for a long time. Planned it out, even. But right now, I'm a little...

Ryan puts the knife down.

RYAN (CONT'D)

...well, I guess I'm a little nervous.

Ryan picks up the hammer.

TRAVIS

Please, Ryan.

RYAN

I will tell you this much. I came here tonight to torture you, Travis. I'm going to hurt you. Very badly and for a very long time.

TRAVIS

Who are you?

RYAN

I'm Ryan. I already told you that.

TRAVIS

Why are you doing this to me?

RYAN

It's all a question of ethics. Morals. Duty. Can a man do what he is supposed to? Can I do what I know I have to?

Ryan stands up, walks behind Travis. Travis tries to get a look at Ryan but can't.

TRAVIS

What are you doing, man? What the hell are you...

Ryan raises the hammer. His plan is to crush Travis's forearm. Travis can't see what Ryan is doing. Ryan is gauging where the hammer is going to fall.

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CONTINUED: (4)

TRAVIS (CONT' D)

Ryan, please. Just tell me what's wrong and I'm betting we can work this out, okay?

Ryan loses his nerve.

TRAVIS (CONT' D)

Ryan? Come on, man. Please.

Ryan gets his nerve together. He quickly walks forward and kneels next to Travis. He grabs Travis's arm. He holds Travis's hand steady.

TRAVIS (CONT' D)

No! No! No!

He slams the hammer down on Travis's arm. Travis screams.

Ryan sits and watches Travis as he sobs, wails, thrashes about, and generally acts like a man who just got his arm smashed in two. Travis eventually calms down and becomes relatively quiet.

Ryan walks to the table. He picks up the knife. He places it on Travis's upper arm and cuts him. He picks a spot a little lower on the arm and does it again. He does this a third time.

Ryan backs away. Travis screams. Ryan drops the knife. He retches. He runs offstage and vomits.

Ryan enters. Travis sobs lightly.

TRAVIS (CONT' D)

What sort of fucking person are you?

RYAN

Shut up, Travis. You have no right to ask that question.

TRAVIS

What did I do to you? Is it Kevin? What does he -

RYAN

Shut the fuck up! I don't know Kevin.

TRAVIS

What do you want?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

Ryan hits him on the back of the head.

RYAN

Do not speak to me, Travis.

Ryan walks into the kitchen. He turns on the stove. He picks up the quilting needle and lays it on the stove.

TRAVIS

What are you -

RYAN

I told you not to speak to me.

TRAVIS

Listen, listen. Please just listen to me. If you leave, if you just walk out of here and leave, I won't tell anyone about this, okay? No one will ever know about this. Please, man. Please. You don't have to do this.

RYAN

Do you know, I trained for this? Two years, Travis. Two years ago I decided to do this. Strange, isn't it? Knowing that for the last two years some man you didn't even know was planning to torture you.

TRAVIS

You trained?

RYAN

You don't just learn how to do this sort of thing from reading books, you know. You have to practice. I have a place that Janet doesn't know about. Far from home. I practice there. On animals. Animals from humane shelters. Animals in the paper. Strays. I learned on them.

TRAVIS

What did you do to them?

RYAN

I burned them. I smashed them. I cut them. All the same things I'm going to do to you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

TRAVIS
Did you kill them?

RYAN
Needle's almost ready, Travis.

TRAVIS
I have a daughter. You know this.
Please don't take me away from my
daughter.

RYAN
She still has a mother.

TRAVIS
Don't take me away from her. You
know what it's like to grow up
without a father. Don't do this to
her.

RYAN
Travis, Travis. What makes you
think I'm going to kill you?

TRAVIS
Look, man. I'll do anything you
want. Anything you fucking want.

No answer from Ryan.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)
Please!

RYAN
Needle's ready, Travis.

Ryan's phone rings. He checks the Caller ID.

RYAN (CONT'D)
Shit.

He walks to Travis. He pulls the ball gag off the table and
puts it in Travis's mouth. He answers the phone.

RYAN (CONT'D)
- Hey, baby.
- No, I'm just reading. What are
you doing up so late?
- I'm sorry. I hate when you have
bad dreams.
- Yeah, I wish I was there, too.
- It'll be okay.
(MORE)

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RYAN (CONT'D)

Just drink some water. Maybe watch
some TV. You'll be out before you
know it. And you'll be fine.

- I love you, too.

- Good night, baby. Good night.

He hangs up the phone. He takes off the ball gag and goes
back to his needle. He slowly wraps his hand in a towel.

TRAVIS

Sounds like you love her.

RYAN

Stop talking, Travis.

TRAVIS

She doesn't know what you're doing
out here, does she? What are you
going to tell her? When you get
home. What are you going to say
you did out here?

RYAN

DO NOT SPEAK TO ME!

TRAVIS

Well then fucking gag me again!

RYAN

(grabs Travis's face)

No. I want to hear you scream

Ryan heads back into the kitchen. He picks up the needle and
holds it over his hand, testing the heat.

TRAVIS

Why me, huh? What did I do to you?

RYAN

(he stands right behind
Travis, needle in hand)

Stop talking, Travis.

TRAVIS

I don't know you, man. I've never
even heard of you. What the fuck
is this about?

RYAN

Travis, listen to me.

TRAVIS

Who in the hell are you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (8)

RYAN

Listen to me, Travis. Travis, be still. You ever study cops? Their tactics? You always hear about these criminals who get arrested and then confess to their crimes. Like they just got arrested and suddenly had some 180 change of heart or something. Well, it doesn't take much studying before you find out how that sort of thing happens. The typical guilty confession is rarely born out of guilt.

Holds up the needle.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Cops use all sorts of pressure tactics to get those confessions. Threats. Coercion. Sometimes torture. The cops in Uzbekistan place needles under their victims' fingernails.

TRAVIS

Oh god.

Ryan kneels in front of Travis. He slowly but firmly takes Travis's hand and holds it in place. All the while, Travis is shouting at him to stop.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

No. No, no, wait a minute. No no no no no NO!

Ryan inserts the needle under Travis's fingernail. We fade to black. The screams linger in blackness for a bit. Then they go out.

SCENE III

Lights up. Ryan wraps Travis' hand in gauze.

TRAVIS

Thanks.

RYAN

Sure.

Ryan finishes with the gauze.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Travis cries. Ryan watches. Travis composes himself.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Feel like there's no way out,
Travis? There isn't.

TRAVIS

Who am I to you?

RYAN

I have an uncle. Arthur. He was a
soldier in Vietnam

TRAVIS

What the hell does your uncle have
to do with me?

RYAN

Be quiet. Listen. When my uncle
was in Vietnam, he went on patrol
one night. His whole platoon found
a spot far from base and set up
camp. They were going to wait
there until the next day and then
head back. My uncle was writing a
letter to his wife when they were
attacked. The bullets came from
everywhere. Grenades. Fire. He
saw his best friend die right in
front of him. It didn't take long
before his entire platoon was
killed. Everyone but him. He was
out of bullets when the enemy
entered his camp. They found him,
stripped him, beat him. The
soldiers tortured him all night
long. He thought he was going to
die. It was during this torture
when they cut off his leg. They
left him out there in the jungle to
die. But he survived. Uncle
Arthur suffers from post-traumatic
stress now. You know what that is?
Shell shock. It happens when you
go through something so terrible,
so mind-bendingly frightening that
your brain literally rewires
itself. Some chemical kicks into
overdrive and never stops being
produced. You are physically a
different person after this event
than you were before.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RYAN (CONT'D)

One symptom of this disorder is the classic Vietnam flashback. Something triggers a living memory of the event that caused the disorder. It can be anything. A sight, a sound, a smell. My uncle can't go outside at night. The moon. The sound of wind through the trees. He freaks out. And I don't mean he gets sad and remembers the ambush and wishes it never happened. What I mean is that he actually relives it. He actually believes that he is back there. On the ground with his dying friends. Losing his leg and terrified of death. And anyone who happens to be with him? He loses their faces. Instead he sees the faces of those Vietnamese soldiers who tortured him and left him to die in that jungle. It's a horrible way to live. Constantly afraid. Never knowing when something will trigger another episode. And there is nothing anyone can do to cure it. He will be this way for the rest of his life.

TRAVIS

You're not making any sense. What does this -

RYAN

There are three types of people who suffer from post-traumatic stress. Soldiers are the most commonly known. Our society thinks they suffer from it more than anyone else, but they don't. Victims of torture also suffer from post-traumatic stress. But they're not the number one group, either. The one group of people who suffer more from this affliction than all the soldiers and torture victims throughout all of history are women. More specifically, women who have been raped. Raped by men who gave no thought to what they were doing.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

RYAN (CONT'D)

Who only wanted to have a good time, to watch a woman beg. Watch a woman cry. Men with no idea that what they were doing was going to change a woman's life forever. Do you know any men like that, Travis? Do you know any men who would do that to a woman?

TRAVIS

Who are you?

RYAN

Think about your mother, Travis. Think about your ex-wife. Think about your daughter. Imagine what you would feel if some man did that to your daughter. Broke her brain. Made her afraid for the rest of her life. What would you do, Travis? What would you want to do to that man?

TRAVIS

Please. You can't... Who are you?

RYAN

I met Janet Corelli five years ago. We worked together. We dated for two years and then got married. She told me about you a few months after we met. I held onto that for a long time. This knowledge of what you had done, what you had taken from her. It ate me alive, as it had already done her, as it continues to do to her. Finally, I couldn't take it anymore. I decided to find you. And so I'm here.

TRAVIS

You've got the wrong guy. I don't know what -

RYAN

Stop it, Travis. Just stop it. I know it's you. She told me your name. She told me what high school you went to, what you drove, who your friends were. I know it was you. Stop denying it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

TRAVIS

Okay. Yes, I dated Janet Corelli in high school. But I never... We never... We had a good relationship. I never hurt her.

RYAN

You raped her. Repeatedly.

TRAVIS

We had sex.

RYAN

I think we have different definitions of sex, Travis.

TRAVIS

We had sex, and she consented to sex, and she got upset with me afterwards, but when we actually had sex, she was into it. She said yes.

RYAN

It was not sex! It was rape!

TRAVIS

You weren't there. You don't fucking know.

RYAN

You think she lied to me? You think Janet has carried this with her for thirteen years for the fuck of it? You raped her, Travis!

TRAVIS

I might have pressured her. Maybe I pressured her. But I never hurt -

RYAN

You raped her!

TRAVIS

I didn't do that. I didn't -

RYAN

You raped my Janet!

TRAVIS

She was my girlfriend.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

RYAN
Stop fucking denying it.

TRAVIS
I didn't... I didn't mean to-

RYAN
YOU RAPED HER!

TRAVIS
I was fifteen years old, man! I
was fifteen fucking years old! I
did some stupid shit. I know I
did. If I could take it back, I
would, but I'm fucking sorry.

RYAN
She was fourteen. How old is your
daughter, Travis?

TRAVIS
Please. Please. I was a different
person.

RYAN
No. You were not. You are not.
You are the same. This is the same
skin. This is the same mind. You
are the person who did this to her.
You are the person who broke my
Janet. Do you know that she cries
every day, Travis? Do you know
that we can hardly even have sex?

TRAVIS
I'm sorry.

Ryan grabs the drill from the table.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)
Jesus.

Ryan spins the drill.

RYAN
And because of that... well, that's
why I'm here.

Lights out. In black, we hear the drill and we hear Travis
scream

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

If you're going to take an intermission, now is the time to do it.

SCENE IV

In black, sounds of Ryan vomiting offstage. The sounds continue a few moments, then die away.

A beat.

RYAN (O. S.)
I can't. I can't do this. I have
to... I can't do this. Shit.

Lights come up on Travis. He is passed out. Ryan is offstage.

Slowly, Travis wakes. He looks up, looks around as much as he can. He is in great pain.

TRAVIS
(he struggles to get the
words out)
You there?

No answer.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)
Where... where are you?

Ryan enters. He pours himself a drink.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)
How long have we been here? Are
you going to kill me?

RYAN
We'll see.

TRAVIS
You can't stomach it, can you?
What you're doing to me. You can't
do it.

RYAN
I can stomach this.

TRAVIS
Then what were you doing in there?

Ryan does not answer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TRAVIS (CONT' D)

Are you going to kill me?

Ryan does not answer.

TRAVIS (CONT' D)

What do you hope to gain here, Ryan? What do you think this is going to accomplish? You think you're going to end Janet's pain? You think she's going to thank you for this?

RYAN

Are you trying to talk me out of this, Travis? Are you asking me to stop?

TRAVIS

No, I... Well, yeah. I would sort of like you to stop.

They share a laugh.

TRAVIS (CONT' D)

I'm sorry, Ryan.

RYAN

Please.

TRAVIS

No. Listen. Listen to me. When I was fifteen, when I knew Janet, my life was pretty fucked up.

RYAN

Was it now?

TRAVIS

My dad was in prison. My mom was a goddamn junkie. She... She beat me. Do you know what that's like? To be fifteen years old and get beat by your forty-year-old mom? I was a loser. Everyone picked on me. Everyone hated me. I did horrible in school. Life really kind of sucked, you know?

RYAN

This doesn't help, Travis.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TRAVIS

Janet was the only person who was nice to me. She treated me really well. She loved me. And I loved her.

RYAN

So you raped her. Yeah, I get that part.

TRAVIS

Listen. Everyone hated me. Everyone told me I was shit. I believed I was shit. And she was so beautiful. And so wonderful. And everybody loved her. And I was just so jealous. I didn't know how to deal with it, how to let myself be happy. I just wanted her to pay attention to me. Only to me. I didn't want her to talk to those other people. I didn't want her with any of those other boys. I didn't want her to have sex with anyone else because she was mine and I loved her and I just wanted to be with her forever.

RYAN

And so for two weeks, you came to her house every day and you raped her. I already told you, Travis. I heard this part.

TRAVIS

I'm not trying to make excuses. I'm just trying to tell you that what I did kills me inside. Every time I think about it. I know I hurt her. I hurt her more than anyone deserves. And it fucking kills me.

RYAN

What the hell was that, anyway?

TRAVIS

What?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

RYAN

Two weeks. You raped her in her own home every day for two weeks. How did that happen?

TRAVIS

You don't know?

RYAN

I don't ask Janet questions about it.

TRAVIS

Then how can you know what happened? How can you make the decision to come into my home and torture me if you don't even know what happened?

RYAN

What did you do to her for two weeks? What was it? Tell me. Tell me what happened.

TRAVIS

We... The first time it happened... It... The Homecoming dance was a few days away. The Principal had already banned me from it. I'd pulled a knife on some kid so I wasn't allowed to go. But Janet was nominated for... Christ... for the Homecoming Queen. And so she was still going. And this friend of hers asked her to go with him and she said yes. She asked me if it was okay and I said it was, so she said yes. But then I started thinking. I started thinking maybe this guy was gonna try something, you know? And he was popular and all the girls had a thing for him and I just... I thought she might... you know... I thought she might fuck him. And... Shit.

RYAN

And what?

TRAVIS

I...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

RYAN
Tell me, Travis.

TRAVIS
No.

RYAN
Tell me or I will hurt you again.
You're going to end up telling me
anyway.

TRAVIS
I wanted to be her first. So I
went to her house. Her parents
didn't get off work until real
late. We were in her room talking.
I told her that she'd better not
sleep with that guy, and she said
she wouldn't, and I told her I
loved her and I wanted it to be
special for both of us, and she
told me she wanted to wait. And I
started kissing her. And I... and
then it happened.

RYAN
What happened?

TRAVIS
What do you mean, what happened?
Why are you here?

RYAN
Tell me what happened. I want to
hear you say it.

TRAVIS
I started to take her shirt off and
she said no. I took it off anyway.
I held her down. She didn't fight
much, but she kept telling me no.
And she cried. I thought because
she wasn't fighting me that it was
okay, that she was letting me. But
she was crying so much. I thought
maybe it just hurt, you know? I
always heard it hurt for a woman
her first time. And I guess that's
what I kept telling myself. And
when it was over, she told me to
leave. And so I left.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

And I never cried as much as I did
when I got home that day.

RYAN

How did this happen a second time?

TRAVIS

Please, Ryan.

RYAN

How did this happen a second time?

TRAVIS

She... she didn't want to talk to
me anymore. She told me to stay
away from her. But I came back the
next day. I told her I was sorry
and I loved her and I couldn't
stand to be away from her. And we
both cried and held each other.
And then it happened again. And
she didn't fight again. She just
cried and said no. After a few
days, she stopped saying no. By
the end of the second week, she
wasn't even crying anymore.

RYAN

Were you rough with her?

TRAVIS

I never hit her.

RYAN

No. When you raped her. Were you
rough with her?

TRAVIS

I don't know. I guess, yeah.
Yeah, I guess I was.

Ryan puts his head in his hands.

RYAN

She didn't fight you.

TRAVIS

No. No, she didn't.

RYAN

She didn't push you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

TRAVIS

No.

RYAN

Didn't hit you.

TRAVIS

No.

RYAN

Oh, God. What the hell am I doing here?

TRAVIS

(sees an opportunity)
I mean, I felt bad about it. Of course I did. But she never fought back. So I have to think that maybe she did want to have sex with me. She just didn't want to say it.

RYAN

She's so broken.

TRAVIS

People hold onto things. I don't know why they do it. Memory heightens the intensity of our emotions. Hell, sometimes we make up shit that didn't even happen.

RYAN

She cries all the time.

TRAVIS

Maybe she just wishes she hadn't done it. Maybe she just feels bad after the fact.

RYAN

She sweats at night. She shakes. She has nightmares.

TRAVIS

Maybe it's not me. Maybe it's her, Ryan.

Ryan looks at Travis.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

RYAN

No. I have to trust her. I love her. And if she's as messed up as she is, then I have to believe her. Of course you see it the way you see it. You're the rapist. And no matter what you say happened, I have to believe what she says, the way she acts. No, you do deserve this.

TRAVIS

No, Ryan. I don't. No matter what happened back then, I don't deserve this. This, what you're doing now... this is fucked, Ryan.

RYAN

Are you Christian, Travis?

TRAVIS

What?

RYAN

Are you Christian?

TRAVIS

What the fuck does that have to do-

RYAN

Please just answer my question. Are you Christian?

TRAVIS

Goddamn it, Ryan, listen to me.

RYAN

Answer the question. Are you Christian?

TRAVIS

Ryan, just listen to me.

Ryan strikes Travis across the face.

RYAN

Your life is mine to do with whatever I will. Answer me. Are you Christian?

TRAVIS

No. I'm not a Christian.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (8)

RYAN

You don't believe in any kind of God?

TRAVIS

No. No, I don't believe in God.

RYAN

How do you think we got here, Travis? On this planet?

TRAVIS

Ryan, what are you talking about?

RYAN

You will answer my questions, Travis. I don't want to hear any more of your shit. How did we come to be?

TRAVIS

It's an accident. It's all just a chaotic fucking accident.

RYAN

Then what is the point to all of this? Why are we here?

TRAVIS

There is no point. It's all just random shit. We have what we have and we have to make the most of it while we're here. That's all.

RYAN

Do you believe in right and wrong, at least? Do you believe that there is some moral order to this world?

TRAVIS

Please, Ryan. Please stop this. I have a daughter -

RYAN

Answer the question, Travis. Do you believe that a moral order exists by which we should live our lives?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (9)

TRAVIS
(unconvincing)
Sure. Of course.

RYAN
Tell me the truth, Travis. Stop
placating me.

TRAVIS
No. No, I don't. Morals are just
rules that we make up.

RYAN
See, I have to disagree with you
there. There is order to this
world. There are moral rules that
we all have to abide by. And these
rules existed long before you or I
were born.

TRAVIS
Morals are nothing but a framework
for control.

RYAN
Morals provide order to our
society, yes. But where did they
come from? We didn't just make
them up. They are in us. Hard-
wired. Biological. They tell us
how to live. They tell us how to
treat each other. If morals were
simply rules created by a society,
then why does every society have
the same ones? No society allows
you to murder. No society allows
you to hurt children. Cruelty is
simply against our nature as human
beings.

TRAVIS
Against our nature? Look at what
you've done to me.

RYAN
There is right and wrong, good and
evil. Those who commit evil cannot
go unpunished. When you foul this
world with your misdeeds, it is up
to someone else to set things
right, to punish you for what you
have done.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (10)

TRAVIS

You can't help Janet. I regret what I did to her. I regret it every day. But nothing that you or I do here tonight will change what happened. I don't know why I did what I did, but I wish to God I could take it back.

RYAN

There is a debt you have to pay, Travis. That's why I'm here.

TRAVIS

I believe that what I did was wrong, evil if you want to call it that. But there is no great moral balance to this world. You cannot undo what I did.

RYAN

I have to believe in something bigger than us. I have to believe in right and wrong. That you can't just do what you did and walk away unpunished. The world can't work that way. It just can't.

TRAVIS

You're talking in circles, Ryan. You're not listening to me. You can't help Janet! Not like this.

RYAN

I don't expect you to understand, Travis. I really don't. One day I will tell Janet what I did here. And I think it will help, in some small way, to set her at ease. To know that you felt what she felt. I believe that will help.

TRAVIS

I am a father, Ryan.

RYAN

Don't beg, Travis.

TRAVIS

Listen to me. I am a father. I was a husband. I am a son, a brother, an uncle.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (11)

TRAVIS (CONT' D)

But when I look in the mirror,
that's not what I see. When I look
in the mirror, I see a rapist. And
if you do what I think you're going
to do, then you'll never be able to
live with yourself. You'll never
be just a husband or a father or
even a man. You'll be just a
murderer.

Ryan pulls a knife from out of his bag. He stabs Travis in the chest.

Lights out.

SCENE V

Lights up. Travis is tied to the chair again. The knife sticks out of his chest. He has trouble breathing. Ryan enters from the bathroom with some gauze.

TRAVIS

Please... please take this thing...
take it out of me.

He pulls the knife out of Travis's chest. Ryan immediately puts pressure on the wound. He quickly wraps gauze around it to keep the bleeding in.

RYAN

Not yet, Travis. Hold on.

Ryan finishes with the gauze.

RYAN (CONT' D)

The first time I ever noticed that
something was wrong with Janet, we
had been dating for three weeks.
We spent a lot of time together.
We were never apart. But she
didn't want to have sex. Kept
telling me she wasn't ready yet. I
figured she was a good Christian or
something. But eventually, she
changed her mind. Said she was
ready. We were at her house.
Dinner. Wine. It was a great
night. After dinner, she took me
to her bedroom. We undressed. And
we... I was on top of her. Her
eyes were closed.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RYAN (CONT'D)

She was so beautiful. I touched her face and her body tensed. Her eyes popped open. And she looked at me like I was someone else. She screamed. She hit me. She shoved me away. And she cowered in the corner, wrapped up in a blanket. It took her a bit, but after a while she recognized me again. She looked around the room as if it was all new to her. You see, she had a flashback. Just like my uncle. She looked at me and I wasn't me. She looked at me and I was you. She saw your face on mine. It's not like we can't have sex at all now. But every time we do, I have to wonder whether or not you're going to pop up in her mind.

TRAVIS

I'm sorry.

RYAN

Yeah. I never even met you and you destroyed my ability to have sex with my wife.

Ryan stands. He pulls a gun from his pocket.

TRAVIS

No! Wait! Wait!

He puts the gun to Travis's head.

RYAN

Good bye, Travis.

He simply stands, holding the gun. Travis holds his head as far from the gun as he can get it.

TRAVIS

(incredibly fast,
panicked, grasping at
straws)

Don't do this, man. Don't do this! Think about what this will do to you. Think about my daughter. Your wife. What will Janet think? What will she say when you tell her you killed me? She won't ever forgive you, Ryan. I don't care what you think;

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TRAVIS (CONT' D)
she'll never fucking forgive you.
Don't you do this, Ryan! Please
don't fucking do this!

Ryan waits a beat before he lowers the gun. He turns away, sets the gun down.

Ryan walks to the bag. He pulls out an iron. He plugs it in.

During Travis' speech, Ryan unbuttons Travis' shirt and exposes his chest.

TRAVIS (CONT' D)
Did Janet ever tell you about the
time I kicked the shit out of Sean
DuBose? Did she? There was this
football kid. Always picked on
her. He'd grab her ass in the
hall, pass her drawings of his cock
in class. Call her up all the time
and make fucked up noises. That
kind of shit. He did this for a
long time before she met me. When
I found out about it, I went up to
him in the cafeteria and I beat the
fuck out of him. I kicked his
goddamn teeth out. I broke his
fucking arm. She ever tell you
about that?

RYAN
No.

TRAVIS
You know what she did to me after?
You know what she did?

RYAN
What?

TRAVIS
She told me she never wanted to see
me again. She was scared of me,
Ryan. She left me.

Ryan picks up the iron. Holds his hand near it to test the heat.

TRAVIS (CONT' D)
She'll do the same thing to you,
Ryan. This isn't right and you
know it.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

TRAVIS (CONT'D)
No fucking way would she let you do
this if she knew why you were here.
No fucking way!

Ryan presses the iron against Travis' chest.

Lights out.

SCENE VI

In black, we hear Travis scream a long, painful scream. His screaming breaks down into sobs as the torture ends.

The lights come up. Travis's shirt is open. His chest is covered in a burn wound. Ryan unplugs the iron.

Ryan picks up the picture of Travis's family.

Ryan pulls out a lighter and sets the picture on fire. He lets it burn on a table where Travis can see it.

RYAN
Nice picture.

TRAVIS
She'll never forgive you. Like she
never forgave me. She'll be
terrified of you.

RYAN
That wasn't quite the same thing.

TRAVIS
It's exactly the same.

RYAN
Grabbing someone's ass at school is
a little different than raping a
fourteen-year-old girl.

TRAVIS
I don't want to lose my family.

RYAN
I thought you already lost your
family.

TRAVIS
I don't want to lose my little
girl. Please. Please don't take
her away from me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RYAN

I'm not doing anything to her.

TRAVIS

God damn it, man. I'm a different person. I work with kids now. You know this.

RYAN

You think that outweighs what you did to Janet?

TRAVIS

I help these kids. I'm the only adult they know who gives a shit.

RYAN

You know, Janet doesn't expect me home for days. We're going to be here a long time, Travis.

TRAVIS

Please, Ryan.

RYAN

You will stay here until I kill every last shred of hope and dignity you have. I am going to destroy you like you destroyed Janet.

TRAVIS

Stop. Please. Please, stop.

RYAN

I'm sorry. I can't. It wouldn't be right.

TRAVIS

God damn you. You talk about right and wrong - justice - but this isn't right and you know it.

RYAN

You son of a bitch. You fucking goddamn well know it is.

TRAVIS

I know what I did was wrong. I know it was. But I never... I never did anything like this.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RYAN

This is exactly what you did to her.

TRAVIS

I didn't tie her up. I didn't burn her. I didn't tell her I was going to kill her.

RYAN

Are you saying that rape is not as bad as what I'm doing to you here? That when you ripped her fucking virginity from her, you didn't scar her like I'm scarring you now?

TRAVIS

I did what I did out of stupidity and jealousy. I didn't mean for her to hurt like she does. I didn't know it would do to her what it did. But you... you want to talk about right and wrong? Good and evil? You are evil. I never thought there was such a thing, but I see it in you, you fuck. You think you're fucking justified.

RYAN

I am!

TRAVIS

No, you're not! You're just another sick, broken man! A man with no control of the world! A man who has to destroy to be at peace! A man who can't deal with the fact that life is shit, and that's just the way it is. This whole fucking world is shit, and all we can do is pick up the pieces. You can't make it right. You can't make her fourteen and pure again. You can't do anything to give her back what I took from her. There's no eye for an eye. There's no great moral justice. You are not God. You're just a broken man - like everybody else. You are broken. Just like me.

Ryan chokes Travis.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

RYAN

No! I am not like you! I'm not!
I'm not! I'm not! There is an
order to this world! There is
justice and right! This is just!
This is right! THIS IS THE WAY THE
WORLD SHOULD BE!

After several seconds of struggle, Travis dies.

Ryan's phone rings. He answers.

RYAN (CONT' D)

- Hey, sweetie.
- No, I can't sleep either.
- Yeah.
- Yeah, I know.
- I hate that you have nightmares.
I wish I could make them stop. I
wish I could make it all better for
you.
- I love you, Janet. I love you
more than anything.
- You're the most wonderful thing
in my world, you know?
- Yeah.
- Yes.
- Good night, Janet. I'll see you
soon.

He hangs up the phone. He stands. He packs his bag. When he is ready to go, he pulls a can of spray paint from his bag. He sprays "RAPIST" on the wall behind Travis so that we can see it over Travis's head.

Ryan sets down the can when he is done. He walks over to the dead man. Ryan takes off one of his gloves. He puts a hand on Travis's cheek. Then he puts the glove back on, picks up his bag, and exits.

END