

THE NAGUAL

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FADE IN:

TITLE:

20 YEARS AGO

BELLINGHAM, WASHINGTON

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

A tall girl, pretty as a model, and an older Native American man run breathlessly through the trees in the POURING RAIN.

JULIA AZUETA (17) slips and falls and JUAN AZUETA (40), her father, helps her to her feet.

Hurries her forward to a break in the trees when the BLARE of a train's horn suddenly pierces the night.

A Union Pacific FREIGHT TRAIN coasting by, all black and ghostly in the diffused moonlight and relentless rain.

Juan and Julia tear after the train.

Catch it and board, climbing in through an open door on one of the stock cars.

INT. STOCK CAR - NIGHT

Both father and daughter drop to the floor, totally spent. Lie there and breathe when...

A WITCH-LIKE FIGURE SAILS

out of the trees and lands on the STOCK CAR ROOF... THUMP!

JUAN

springs to his feet and runs to the door. Tries to close it but the BROKEN ROLLERS are stuck to the track.

THE SHADOWY, WITCH-LIKE FIGURE

Climbs down from the roof onto the side of the car.

Moves like a spider along the louvers, her frightful dark shape visible through the gaps.

JUAN

Backs away from the wide-open door. Pulls out a wad of cash from his jean jacket and hands it to Julia.

JUAN

Here, take it.

JULIA
No, Dad, no--

JUAN
Take it, I said!

Juan stuffs the cash in Julia's coat. Grips her shoulders.

JUAN (CONT'D)
Listen to me, mija. Get away from
here. Go as far as you can. Run!
Hide! And whatever you do, don't
ever look for me. You hear me,
NEVER look for me!

Juan takes off a BLACK EAGLE'S TALON strapped around his
neck and moves Julia behind him.

The witch-like figure coming closer to the door, her claw-
like nails CLICKING on the louvers.

JULIA
Oh, Daddy!

Juan grips the talon, steels himself.

Goes to the door.

When the woman leaps onto him in a flash and they both fall
off the train.

JULIA (CONT'D)
NOOOOOO!

Julia rushes to the door and looks back at her dad.

JUAN AND THE SHADOWY WITCH-LIKE WOMAN

Rolling as one down an embankment.

Juan coming out on top, TALON RAISED... stabbing again and
again. A PURPLE MIST spewing from the woman's wounds.

Forming a cloud around Juan.

JULIA

Watches the image of her father recede from sight, growing
fainter and fainter until he's finally lost from view.

She turns away and slumps down to the floor, devastated.

Hot tears parting the dust on her cheeks.

A TITLE OVER BLACK:

PRESENT DAY

FADE IN:

EXT. TRAILER PARK - NIGHT

A car with LOUISIANA PLATES turns into a small trailer park, passing a sign:

RAGIN CAJUN TRAILER PARK

Following the car we pick out one of the trailers - a '95 Airstream Excella 28, a bus-like mobile home with polished aluminum coachwork.

A young man inside peels back a curtain and peeks outside.

INT. JULIA'S TRAILER - NIGHT

SAM AZUETA, alias GARCIA (17) is at the window looking outside. His mom, JULIA AZUETA, alias GARCIA (37) just steps away cooking in the tiny kitchen.

Sam is tall and dark, half-black; a shy, sheltered young man.

Julia, still with fashion model looks, seasoned now, wiser and maternal, a woman of serenity, intellect and action.

JULIA

Is that her?

SAM

No.

Sam lets go of the curtain and turns.

JULIA

Relax, Sam. I'm sure I'm going to like her.

Sam half-smiles, not so sure.

MOMENTS LATER

Sam opens the door for MAYA JACKSON (19), Native-American, cool, confident, beautiful, and dressed to show it.

MAYA

Hi, Sam. I'm not late, am I?

SAM

No, no, come on in, perfect timing.

Maya steps inside and gives Sam a kiss. Turns to Julia.

MAYA

Hi!

Julia, a bit taken aback by her teen-aged son's extremely sexy girlfriend, forces a smile.

LATER

The three of them eat dinner, the clink of silverware on plates resounding like church bells in the awkward silence.

JULIA

So, Maya, how old are you?

Maya stops eating and looks at Sam.

JULIA (CONT'D)

It's okay, I know you're older than Sam. I just want to know if I should offer you wine.

MAYA

Oh, I just turned nineteen. I'm what...

(checks with Sam)
sixteen months older than you?

SAM

Seventeen.

Maya turns to Julia and smiles.

MAYA

Yeah. But no thank you, no wine for me, I'm driving.

Sam looks at his mom for a sign of approval as if Maya had passed a test. Julia just fills her own glass and drinks.

EXT. JULIA'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Sam sits with his arm around Maya outside the trailer.

MAYA

She hates me.

SAM

No she doesn't.

MAYA

She hardly said two words all night.

SAM

My mom's just like that. Really, you're fine. I just think she was surprised at how pretty you are.

MAYA

Did you tell her what I do?

SAM

No.

MAYA

Good. Don't.

SAM

She won't care.

MAYA

That's what they all say. Believe me, she'll care.

SAM

Hey, what do you mean "that's what they all say"? How many boyfriends have you had?

Sam tickles Maya and she LAUGHS.

MAYA

Lots and lots! Millions!

INT. JULIA'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Julia sits on her couch with her wine listening to the LAUGHTER outside. Ponders it knowingly and smiles.

INT. BEDROOM - JULIA'S TRAILER - NIGHT

A nightstand clock clicks to 3:10 A.M.

Julia sleeping, fitfully, having a nightmare. She bolts up. Puts her head in her hand, troubled.

Lights and MUSIC from a neighbor's party come through the blinds.

MOMENTS LATER

Julia opens the fridge and sheds light on the kitchen. Pours herself a glass of water. Drinks it and checks on Sam...

Sound asleep in a fold-down bed at the other end of the trailer.

Half-under the covers, his long legs hanging over the undersized bed.

Julia adjusts Sam's blanket. Looks around the small space that amounts to his room.

A plaque with Army medals and a photo of his father in his Green Beret uniform on the wall above Sam's head. The same green beret worn in the photo hung from the bedpost.

Julia studies her boy's handsome face - not so much of a boy anymore.

BEEP! BEEP! The sound of a truck's horn takes us to

INT. JULIA'S BLACK 2017 F150 - DAY

Julia tapping her horn, peering out the windshield for Sam who emerges from the trailer carrying a gym bag.

SAM

(entering)

Okay-okay-Mom, easy on the horn!
What do you wanna' do, piss off the neighbors?

Julia throws her arm across the seat and backs up the truck.

JULIA

You're going to be late. And if our loud meth-head neighbors want to party till four then they can get up at seven.

Julia LAYS ON THE HORN once more then drives away, getting a CHUCKLE out of Sam.

EXT. AVENUE - LOUISIANA TOWN - DAY

Julia's truck cruises down the road.

INT. JULIA'S TRUCK - SAME

Sam rolls down the window and feels the wind on his face.

Julia looks over at him and it's in her eyes - he is the light of her life.

After a time Sam turns to Julia.

SAM

You never said what you think of Maya.

JULIA

She's very pretty.

SAM

And?

Julia weighs what to say.

JULIA

Mature. I think she's a very mature young woman.

SAM

Too mature for me?

JULIA

I didn't say that.

SAM

But it's what you think.

Julia just drives, lets it sit.

SAM (CONT'D)

She wants me to go camping with her.

JULIA

Oh. When?

SAM

Tonight. She wants to pick me up after work.

Julia notes the gym bag at Sam's feet.

JULIA

Sounds fun. Where're you going?

SAM

Tug Lake.

JULIA

She has a boat?

SAM

No. She's going with some friends. They're all gonna' rent one.

There is a moment here where Sam wrestles with a decision and Julia awaits the outcome.

SAM (CONT'D)

You think I should go?

JULIA

What do you think?

SAM

I don't know.

JULIA

Have you met her friends?

Sam shakes his head "no".

JULIA (CONT'D)

Just do what feels comfortable.
Okay, Sam? I'm sure she'll
understand.

Sam smiles at his mom then looks again out the window, his mind on something other than the passing urban sprawl.

EXT. NORTH SIDE CYCLES - DAY

DOUG KEOUGH (40) a tall muscular biker with a moustache, tattoos and a knife on his hip, works in the open garage.

Julia and Sam arrive in the truck and he waves hello.

INT. JULIA'S TRUCK - DAY

Sam picks up the gym bag between his feet.

JULIA

What have you got there?

SAM

Clothes, swim trunks.

JULIA

So you're going to go?

SAM

Yeah, I'll go. Maya said they'd pick me up after work and go straight to the lake, so I won't see you till Sunday.

JULIA

All right, go ahead, have fun. But no drinking and driving. Okay? Not even a boat.

SAM

I don't drink, Mom.

JULIA

Well you can if you want. You're a young man. Just be responsible.

SAM
I'm not legal.

JULIA
Yeah, so? Neither am I.

SAM
Thanks, Mom. See you Sunday.

Sam gets out and walks into the GARAGE passing Doug who sets down his tools and approaches the truck.

DOUG
Mornin', Sam. Hey, do me a favor
and start on that Harley over there.
The guy wants it by noon.

SAM
Okay. I'll get right on it.

Doug comes up to Julia's truck.

JULIA
Hey, handsome.

Doug leans on the open window and gives her a kiss. Julia tweaks his bushy mustache.

JULIA (CONT'D)
When are you gonna' shave this thing,
it tickles.

DOUG
I thought you liked tickling.

JULIA
Not under my nose.

Doug smiles and takes a moment to admire his girlfriend, Julia as taken with Doug as he is with her.

JULIA (CONT'D)
(glances at Sam)
How's he doing?

DOUG
He's fine, he learns fast. Already
does a great detail. He's a good kid.

JULIA
You two getting along?

DOUG
Yeah...
(MORE)

DOUG (CONT'D)

(glances at Sam)
He's still in his shell but cracks
are forming.

JULIA

Oh hey, Happy Birthday.

DOUG

That's not 'til tomorrow.

JULIA

Yeah, I know, but I have a present
for you, a surprise.

DOUG

I hate surprises.

JULIA

You won't hate this. Sam's going
camping for the weekend with his new
girlfriend so I've got the place to
myself. I thought I'd have you over
for dinner. How's that for a present?

DOUG

Sounds great, but why not my place,
there's more room?

JULIA

What's the matter, you don't like my
tin can? C'mon, we're always at
your place. This time it's my dinner,
my kitchen, my treat. All right?

DOUG

Sure, okay.
(checks Sam)
So Sam's got a girlfriend.

JULIA

Yep, first one, and she's drop-dead
gorgeous.

DOUG

Good for him.

JULIA

I don't know about that, she's a
little... worldly.

DOUG

What's the matter, afraid she's gonna'
take away your little boy? They all
grow up sometime.

JULIA

Yeah, I know. I just want him to be careful.

DOUG

What for? Where's the fun in that?...
I'll see ya' tonight.

Doug gives her another kiss then backs away from the truck and Julia waves and drives off.

EXT. AVENUE - LOUISIANA TOWN - DAY

Julia turns onto the main thoroughfare and cruises along. Passing a 1995 WHITE F150 on the other side of the median.

JUAN AZUETA - THE NAGUAL

At the wheel.

Juan's older now, over sixty, with long gray hair. Gone is any semblance of Julia's loving father, replaced by a man with a dark interior - a NAGUAL (nah'wahl) or sorcerer, a black-hearted member of a venomous breed.

The Nagual checks out the small Southern town as he drives. The eagle's talon around his neck and a leather pouch on the seat beside him - his medicine bag.

His PHONE CHIMES.

He pulls it out and checks a text:

CRAWFISH BAR 10 AM

EXT. STREET - LOUISIANA TOWN - DAY

The Nagual walks down a sidewalk in a rough part of town. Stops and looks across the street at a rundown bar.

A sign out front with a smiling crawfish clutching a beer.

INT. CRAWFISH BAR - DAY

A sweaty fat slob of a PRIVATE EYE (40s) sits at a table in the otherwise empty bar nursing a highball.

An OLD BARTENDER, the only other animate object in the place, preps his bar, scooping ice from a bucket onto some beer.

The Nagual enters and stops in the doorway, letting his eyes adjust to the dimly lit room.

Private Eye looks at the Nagual and moves out a chair.

CLOSE ON:

Photographs in a Manila folder, surreptitious shots of Julia and Sam in her truck and outside their trailer.

The Nagual perusing the photos that are part of a report.

PRIVATE EYE

I finally tracked her down about a week ago. After what happened in Maine she got real clever, that's why it took so long to find her. Now she's constantly on the move, never stays anywhere for more than a few months, and she keeps changing her name. Goes by Julia Garcia now. Changed your grandson Sam's name too. She homeschools him and teaches online, lives in a trailer so she can leave at the drop of a hat.

The Nagual holds up a photo of Julia and Doug at a cafe.

NAGUAL

Who's this?

PRIVATE EYE

The boyfriend, name's Doug Keough. He's got a motorcycle shop out on Lebleu Road. He's legit now, but he's done time, used to belong to one of the local biker gangs, the Renegades, along with his twin brother. I'd give him a wide berth if I were you.

The Nagual gives the photo of Doug a second look, nods stoically, then takes an envelope from his jean jacket and lays it on the table.

Private Eye picks it up and flips through the cash inside.

PRIVATE EYE (CONT'D)

Do I need to count it?

The Nagual just stares at the fat sweaty man.

Private Eye wipes his brow with a handkerchief then opens a briefcase and puts the money inside.

When he does the Nagual deftly slips a pinch of green powder into Private Eye's drink.

PRIVATE EYE (CONT'D)

Well, I guess that settles it then.

Private Eye polishes off his drink, picks up his briefcase and stands. Looks at the Nagual, curious about something.

PRIVATE EYE (CONT'D)

You know there's just one thing here
I don't quite understand. Don't
mind my asking but why are you so
hellbent on finding your grandson?
It's her kid. If she wants to raise
him on her own, what's it to you?

NAGUAL

The boy has my blood.

The Nagual's response is more of an accusation than a statement of fact and it gives Private Eye the creeps. He smiles awkwardly then makes a beeline for the door.

After he's gone, the Nagual's gaze turns to the empty glass.

EXT. CRAWFISH BAR - DAY

Private Eye steps outside and looks up at a sky of Stygian darkness. Rushes over to his car through a sudden DOWNPOUR.

INT. PRIVATE EYE'S CAR - DAY

He ducks into an older Cadillac DeVille. Lays the briefcase on the seat and opens it, checking the money again.

EXT. BACKWOODS ROAD - SWAMP - DAY

Private Eye drives out of town through the pouring rain, peering through the overloaded wipers.

He travels deeper into the swamp.

Takes a turn down a tree-lined road then becomes disoriented.

He pulls over and opens his glove box. Takes out a map from under a gun.

Gets his bearings. Then pulls a U-ey and quickly brakes.

The rain-blurred shape of a man suddenly there in the road.

PRIVATE EYE

(mutters)
What-the-hell?

Private Eye waits a moment then BEEPS the horn.

PRIVATE EYE (CONT'D)

C'mon, get out of the way!

He BEEPS again but the man won't move so he rolls down his window and sees it's the Nagual.

PRIVATE EYE (CONT'D)

Hey, what are you doing out--

He stops mid-sentence and stares in disbelief as the Nagual walks toward the car, GROWING TALLER as he comes, elongating like a stretchy-man with incredibly long arms that nearly touch the ground.

The freaked-out Private Eye throws the car in reverse.

Whips it around and floors it.

THE 8 CYLINDER SEDAN

Flies down the rain-soaked road, splashing through puddles.

PRIVATE EYE

Driving like a man possessed.

Eyes darting. Hands tight to the wheel.

He opens the glove box.

Fumbles for his gun and drops it on the floor.

Looks up at a sudden bend in the road.

Spins the wheel.

Whips around the turn.

And runs into the Nagual again, now nearly TEN-FEET-TALL.

The terrified Private Eye slams the brakes.

Turns the car.

The back tires sliding off the road. Spinning in mud.

The huge blurry figure comes toward him through the rain.

Private Eye reaches for the gun, but only manages to push it away with his fingertips. He bolts up.

Throws the car in reverse.

Wheels it around and speeds off the other way.

The Cadillac fishtailing down the road through the downpour.

Around another bend.

And straight into the HUGE MAN again. His impossibly long arms reaching out for the car.

Private Eye clenches his jaw. Floors it. And drives straight into the man, BAM!

The big car CRUNCHES to a halt. Glass shattering. Airbags deployed.

Private Eye pinned between the crumpled dash and the seat.

THE NAGUAL

Standing at the side of the road in the pouring rain. The wrecked Cadillac bent around a tree at the edge of a STREAM.

The Nagual walks up to the car. Reaches in through a blown-out window and takes the cash from the briefcase.

The bleeding, dazed Private Eye slumped over the wheel gazing at the Nagual through a mist of white smoke.

The Nagual moves away from the car that teeters on the edge of the murky stream. The RAIN POURING DOWN.

Loosening the earth under the wheels.

Sending the old Cadillac sliding down the embankment into the stream where it vanishes under the caramel-colored water.

The Nagual calmly observes its passing then turns and walks off through the rain.

INT. MAYA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Maya lingers in bed half under the sheets gazing dreamily at a photo of Sam on the nightstand.

Someone KNOCKS softly on the door.

MAYA

It's open.

ASHLEY LUM (18) a petite, bright-eyed brunette opens the door and pops her head in.

ASHLEY

Hey, Maya. Better get up if you want to go camping, it's almost two.

MAYA

Okay, thanks.

ASHLEY

So is your new boyfriend coming?

MAYA
Yeah, I think so.

ASHLEY
Oh cool, I can't wait to meet him.
Hey, I picked up some Kona coffee.
Do you want some?

MAYA
No, but save me some orange juice.

ASHLEY
I already did. I hid it where no one will
ever look - behind the dish soap.

MAYA
Is anyone else up?

ASHLEY
Rob, of course, he's already loading
the van. And I heard Mister America
doing his push-ups. So if you don't
want to wait for the bathroom you
better hurry.

Ashley shuts the door and Maya lies there a moment thinking.
A black and white cat jumps up on her bed and she pets him.

MAYA
Good morning, Zeb.

INT. HALLWAY - MAYA'S HOUSE - DAY

Maya pads down the hall in shorts and a tank-top when GENO
MIGNOLE (20) a muscular, Alpha male comes out of a door at
the end of the hall and suddenly races her to the bathroom.

Maya winning, shutting the bathroom door in his face.

GENO
(bangs the door)
Shit! That's twice this week!

KITCHEN - LATER

Maya sits at a table eating a breakfast of orange juice and
yogurt. Ashley nearby doing dishes, gazing out a window at
the driveway where her boyfriend...

ROB LEARY (18) a lanky, unkempt guy wearing glasses, loads
camping supplies into the back of an old VW van.

ASHLEY

Look at him, he's like an ant, he never stops moving. God, it gets on my nerves...

(looks back at Maya)

Especially in bed.

Maya looks out at Rob placing cases of beer in the van.

MAYA

Rob's nice, Ash, and he's really into you.

ASHLEY

(lamentably)

Yeah, I know.

MAYA

Hey, c'mon, remember, it's what's inside that counts.

ASHLEY

No, it's what's inside me that counts.

The two friends LAUGH.

BROOKE SCHRAG (21) a stacked, blonde, quintessential stripper with a cosmetic addiction walks in and goes to the fridge.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

Good morning, Brooke.

BROOKE

What's so good about it?

(opens the fridge and turns)

All right, who drank the last of the orange juice!

Maya, with her back to Brooke, drains her glass. Brooke looks at Maya as the guilty party then storms out of the kitchen.

BROOKE (CONT'D)

Fuckin' roommates!

Maya and Ashley look at each other and SNICKER.

EXT. OFFICE - DOUG'S GARAGE - DAY

Doug waits on the phone at his desk, frustrated, a "Blue Screen of Death" on the crashed computer in front of him.

Sam walks in from the garage carrying his gym bag.

SAM

Hey, Doug. I got everything put away so is it okay if I take off?

DOUG

What time is it?

SAM

Almost five.

DOUG

Yeah, all right. I'll see you Monday. Hey, good job today.

SAM

Thanks.

(re: computer)

Are you having any luck with that?

DOUG

No, it's a nightmare.

SAM

Who's that, tech support?

DOUG

Yeah, supposedly. I found the company's number online, but for all I know it's from a fake web site. Now they've got me on hold.

SAM

Just remember if they ask for money it's a scam.

ONLINE SCAMMER ON PHONE (V.O.)

Sir, are you there?

DOUG

Yeah, I'm here.

Doug gives a thumbs up to Sam who waves goodbye and leaves.

ONLINE SCAMMER ON PHONE (V.O.)

Thank you for your patience, sir, but I am sorry, in order to help you with this it will require advanced troubleshooting and for that there is a charge of ninety-five dollars. Would you like to proceed?

DOUG

Yeah, sure. Why not? Just hold on a sec', let me grab my gold bars.

(MORE)

DOUG (CONT'D)
Okay, now open your mouth...
(looks at the phone)
HERE THEY COME!

WHAM! Doug slams down the phone.

EXT. DOUG'S GARAGE - DAY

Sam sits outside gazing up at a gray overcast sky, picks up his bag and stands when the old VW van pulls in off the street.

INT. VAN - DAY

Maya looks out at Sam from the third row seat.

MAYA
There he is.

Ashley, sitting beside Rob in the second row seat, views Sam then turns to Maya.

ASHLEY
Oh my God, Maya, he's gorgeous.
Where'd you find him?

Brooke, in the front passenger seat, looks up from filing her nails to check out Sam.

BROOKE
Where else? At the club.

MAYA
We met at the mall. I don't date
guys from the club.

Geno, at the wheel, chimes in.

GENO
You hooked up with me.

MAYA
That's different, you work there.
And I wouldn't call our one date
"hooking up". All we did is go to a
movie.

BROOKE
Yeah, stupid. And don't talk about
dating other women in front of me,
I hate that.

Brooke goes back to filing her nails and Geno mocks her, pantomiming her words: "*I hate that*".

Maya taps Rob on the shoulder.

MAYA
Hey, let me out.

ROB
(rolling a joint)
Hang on, I'm almost finished.

Rob licks the papers then slides open the door. Takes in a great view of Maya's shapely ass as she exits the van.

Ashley elbows him.

ASHLEY
Don't look!

ROB
What? It's right there. What do you expect me to do?

Maya walks up to Sam and greets him with a kiss. Leads him back to the van.

MAYA
(entering)
Hey, everyone, this is Sam.

A chorus of AD LIBBED GREETINGS assail Sam: "*Hi!, Hey, Sam, Howzit, brah,*" etc.

SAM
Hi.

Sam tries to enter the van but Rob puts out his arm.

ROB
Hey, wait a minute. You got your cell?

MAYA
No, he doesn't, Rob. I told him it's a no cell phone weekend. And what does it matter, there's no service out there anyway.

SAM
Yeah, I left it at home.
(raises his hand)
I swear.

Rob drops his arm and Sam gets in the 3rd row seat with Maya. Rob fires up the joint and offers it to Sam.

ROB

Well, bro, welcome to the Magical
Mystery Tour. Wanna' hit?

SAM

No, that's all right, I don't smoke,
but thanks.

ROB

Sure, man, no problem, just more for me.

Rob takes a hit and turns back in his seat. Sam looks over
at Maya who smiles and takes his hand.

EXT. DOUG'S GARAGE - DAY

The van pulls out on to the street and speeds away.

Doug, closing up the garage, watches it go. He pulls down
the garage door. Locks it then goes back to his office.

INT. OFFICE - DOUG'S GARAGE - DAY

Doug takes some cash from a register then lowers the blinds
when the phone RINGS.

DOUG

Hello, North Side Cycles.

CUT BETWEEN: Julia in her TRAILER and Doug in the garage.

JULIA

Hey, it's me.

DOUG

I'm just closing up. I'll be there
in ten minutes.

JULIA

Sam get off okay?

DOUG

Yeah, he just left.

JULIA

Were they drinking?

DOUG

Not that I could see. But come on,
stop worrying, he's a good kid. Let
him have some fun.

JULIA

I know, I'm just being a mom.

DOUG

You can take "being a mom" a little too far, you know. He's gotta' get out of the nest someday.

JULIA

You think I'm too protective?

DOUG

It's not what I think that matters.

Julia takes a moment to consider Doug's advice. Changes tone.

JULIA

Hey, what do you want for dessert, peach pie or chocolate mousse?

DOUG

How 'bout just you.

JULIA

Yeah, and how would you like that, a la mode on the couch or back in the bed?

DOUG

How 'bout we start in the bed and see where we end up.

JULIA

Why don't we. C'mon, handsome, get over here. Hurry up.

DOUG

I'm on my way.

Doug sets down the phone and takes keys off the desk when the office door opens and an old man walks in - the Nagual.

He halts in the doorway and stares at Doug.

DOUG (CONT'D)

Can I help you?

EXT. CEMETERY - TWILIGHT

A white granite headstone rises out of a sea of grass, one of hundreds of graves arrayed across the cemetery.

The Volkswagon van passes by in the distance, traversing the green landscape under a gray belt of gloom.

INT. VAN - TWILIGHT

Sam gazes out the window at the abodes of the dead, his own ghostly reflection staring back at him from out of the glass.

ASHLEY
 (turns around)
 So, Sam, what high school do you go to?

Sam, stirred from a reverie, takes a moment to answer.

MAYA
 Sam's not from around here. He and his mom travel a lot so he's homeschooled.

ASHLEY
 No. Seriously? What are you like really religious?

SAM
 Not especially.

Rob turns and looks back at Sam.

ROB
 Hey, I'm religious. I'm a devoted member of the S-B-R-R church.

ASHLEY
 S-B-R-R? What's that?

ROB
 (holds up a joint)
 Sex, drugs and rock-n-roll, babe.

ASHLEY
 There's no B in that? What's the B for?

ROB
 The B is for...
 (searches for an answer)
 BABE, babe.

Ashley turns from her hopeless boyfriend.

GENO
 (into the rearview mirror)
 Hey, Sam, do you play sports, football or anything?

SAM
 No, I'm not into sports.

Geno looks side-eyed at Brooke and bends his wrist in an effeminate manner to indicate what he thinks of Sam.

INT. JULIA'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Julia lights a candle on a table set for two.

Opens a small oven and checks a roast.

Looks at a clock - 6:35.

Picks up her cell phone and calls Doug.

CUT IN: DOUG'S OFFICE. His cell phone RINGING on his desk.

Julia hangs up, puzzled.

RESUME Doug's cell phone RINGING one last time, going still.

Doug nearby lashed to a chair. Head drooped. Eyelids heavy. A fine yellow powder all over his face.

DOUG'S EYES

Are bloodshot, drugged.

He rolls his head deliriously. RECALLS glimpses of...

The Nagual blowing the yellow powder in his face.

The room swirling. All the lights refracted and colorful.

The wicked face of the Nagual coming in and out of view, everything in trails like an acid trip.

END DOUG'S RECALL.

THE NAGUAL

Pulls a knife from his belt and walks up to Doug tied to the chair. Grabs him by the hair and calmly cuts off Doug's ear.

Doug barely reacting, so deep is he under the fog of the drug.

The Nagual wraps up the ear and puts it in his medicine bag.

Stanches the blood then takes out a needle and thread and starts stitching the wound.

EXT. TUG LAKE - NIGHT

The Volkswagon van descends an access road to the large dark lake where a cloud-veiled full moon hangs over the horizon.

EXT. BOAT RENTAL SHOP - TUG LAKE - NIGHT

The van pulls into the parking lot of the isolated shop, the shopkeeper's car the only other vehicle in sight.

INT. BOAT RENTAL SHOP - NIGHT

A big gray tom cat lies on a counter.

Geno, with Brooke, puts down a credit card and pets the cat.

A wiry OLD MAN behind the counter eyes the young couple skeptically then rings up the sale.

He pulls keys off a rack then holds them back from Geno.

OLD MAN

You know I don't really like rentin' boats at night. You sure you've been out there before?

BROOKE

Yeah, lots of times. And there's a full moon tonight. We'll be fine.

OLD MAN

All right, just be careful.
(hands the keys to Geno)
It's the first slip on the left.
You can't miss it. But no drinkin' while operating the boat. Understand?

GENO

Oh no, sir, of course not. We're Quakers, we don't drink.

Geno and Brooke saunter out of the store, Brooke unable to contain her LAUGHTER.

The Old Man watches them go then pets his cat.

OLD MAN

Quakers, my ass, arrogant punks if you ask me. That's all this country produces anymore.

EXT. DOCK - TUG LAKE - NIGHT

Geno and Brooke join the others waiting on the dock with their supplies: coolers, tents, beach chairs, cases of beer, etc.

GENO

All right, load it up. Let's go!

TWIN MERCURY MOTORS

RUMBLE to life.

A BEECHCRAFT 150 Pleasure Boat pulls away from the dock, a trail of white foam in her wake.

INT. JULIA'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Julia sits on the couch with a glass of wine watching TV, preoccupied with concern and anger about Doug.

She picks up her phone and calls Doug again. Hangs up. Puts on her coat and opens the door.

Startled by the dark shape of a man outside the trailer. Julia GASPS! And the man steps into the light.

JULIA

Shit, Doug! You scared the hell out of me. Where've you been? I was just coming to look for you.

Doug turns and reveals a bandage over his left ear.

JULIA (CONT'D)

What happened?

DOUG

I caught a tree branch riding my bike. Sorry, I shoulda' called.

MOMENTS LATER

Julia pours a drink and hands it to Doug. He takes it and the bottle of bourbon on the counter and heads for the couch. Julia looks after him, concerned.

She joins Doug on the couch and tucks up beside him.

JULIA

You want dinner? You must be hungry.

DOUG

No, I'm good.

Doug drains the glass and pours himself another drink, clearly shook-up about his "accident".

JULIA

What did the doctor give you?

DOUG

Nothing. I didn't go to the hospital.

JULIA

Why not?

DOUG

Look, don't make a big deal out of it. All right? It's not that bad.

Julia looks at the large bandage covering his ear, not entirely convinced.

JULIA
Your bike okay?

DOUG
Yeah, it's fine.

Doug drinks and Julia just sits with him for a time. After another drink Doug relaxes a bit. Looks at Julia and smiles.

DOUG (CONT'D)
You never know what a fuckin' day's gonna' bring, do ya.

JULIA
No, baby, we don't.

Julia takes Doug's arm and lays against his shoulder. Doug looks down at Julia's head, chokes up and stares into space.

HIP CONTEMPORARY MUSIC plays over the scene and takes us to

TUG ISLAND AT NIGHT

To campfire smoke rising toward a full moon and canopy of stars.

A radio BLARING OUT the song. Three tents around the fire. Beach chairs, coolers, stacked tree branches for firewood.

The group of friends in a semicircle in chairs or lounging on blankets, their faces aglow in the dancing light of the fire.

Geno and Rob chug beers seeing who can be first to finish. Rob GAGS and spills beer down his shirt. Geno wins and crunches his can... BUURPPP!

BROOKE
That's so gross. I swear, Geno, you act like you're twelve years old.

GENO
Twelve? No way, at least fourteen. I was still a virgin at twelve.

Geno and Rob, already buzzed, CRACK UP.

ASHLEY
Hey, do you think there's anyone else on the island?

ROB
Did you see any other boats?

ASHLEY

No.

ROB

Then there's no one else here. We could run around naked if we wanted to.

GENO

Yeah, I bet you'd like that, wouldn't you, running around with your little ass hanging out.

ROB

Bite me, bud.

GENO

Hey, weren't you a swimmer, Rob? Didn't you wear one of those little Speedos? Did you bring one of those?

BROOKE

I wouldn't talk, Geno. You put on one of my panties once.

ROB

(laughs)

Oh yeah, I can picture that, the big tough jock wearing a little panty.

GENO

Shut up. I put it on as a joke.

BROOKE

Yeah, but what did you do when I left the room?

Brooke grins at Rob then gets a beer from a cooler.

ASHLEY

Ah, come on, you guys, this stuff is so old. Can't you find something more mature to talk about?

Geno turns to Ashley.

GENO

Okay... BURRRPPP!
(belches in her face)
How's that?

Maya looks at Sam who appears sidelined by her friends' banter.

MAYA

Wanna' go for a walk?

EXT. WOODS - TUG ISLAND - NIGHT

Maya and Sam walk down a dark trail through the trees.

SAM

Where're you taking me?

MAYA

It's right over here. C'mon.

EXT. COVE - TUG ISLAND - NIGHT

Maya and Sam emerge from the woods into an idyllic cove with calm shimmering water and a great view of the full moon.

SAM

Oh wow, this is nice.

MAYA

I thought you'd like it. I used to come here a lot when I was younger. I was in the Girl Scouts and every summer we came out here to camp.

They sit down on the beach.

SAM

You were a Girl Scout?

MAYA

Yeah. What?

SAM

Nothin'. It's just that your motor runs pretty hot for a Girl Scout.

MAYA

Yeah, well I'm not so much of a girl anymore. Or didn't you notice.

Maya kisses Sam then leans against him and they're quiet for a time, stilled by the serenity of the lake.

MAYA (CONT'D)

I can remember sitting here a long time ago on a night just like this thinking how beautiful it was. I used to imagine that one day I'd share it with someone I loved.

Sam looks in her eyes, kisses her. The two lovers make out, Sam really heating up. Suddenly Maya pulls back.

MAYA (CONT'D)

Hey, let's go swimming. C'mon, the water's warm.

SAM

I don't know.

MAYA

C'monnn.

Maya gets up and strips down to her underwear then walks into the water. Sam waiting, admiring her breathtaking body.

Maya dives into the water and Sam hurries out of his clothes and runs in after her.

INT. BEDROOM - JULIA'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Julia and Doug lie asleep in bed.

JULIA'S EYES

Moving back and forth under her eyelids, dreaming, reliving a terrible day from her past.

FLASHBACK (DREAM)

RAIN. An old blue trailer lies out in a meadow deep in the BELLINGHAM WOODS, draped in the shadows of an expiring DAY.

A white 1995 Ford F150 pulls up and parks.

Juan Azueta (40) Julia's father, steps out of the truck and takes his tool box from the bed. Approaches his home through the rain.

At the trailer door he stops and turns, senses something.

Juan looks out over the meadow at the heavy forest that surrounds his home and does a double-take on an

OLD NATIVE AMERICAN WOMAN

Among the trees, a perfectly motionless witch-like figure with a mass of frizzy gray hair.

JUAN

Glares at her like a defiant opponent, his dark eyes shaded with dread and hate.

INT. JUAN'S TRAILER - NIGHT

JULIA (17) cooks dinner over a stove, glances over her shoulder as her father walks in.

JULIA

Hey, Dad. Perfect timing. I got home early from school so I got started on dinner, my fabulous beef stew without the beef. It's ready...
 (tasting it with a spoon)
 only I think I burned it.

She takes the stew off the stove and turns to her dad who sets down his toolbox and stares solemnly at his daughter.

JUAN

Get your things.

Juan's words have all the effect of Medusa's head. Julia freezes, stone-still, tears welling up in her eyes.

JULIA

(breathes out)
 No... no, Dad, not again.

Julia SOBS and Juan rushes to her side.

JUAN

I know, mija, I know. C'mon, don't be afraid. We have to hurry.

INT. JUAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A drawer is yanked out of a desk, two packs of hundreds taped to the back.

Juan stuffs them in his jean jacket then bolts out the door.

JULIA - IN HER BEDROOM

Throws clothes in a bag. Zips it up.

Starts to leave then stops and takes a photo off a mirror, a picture of her with her father that she puts in her shirt.

She dashes from the room.

MEETS HER FATHER AT THE FRONT DOOR

Juan motions for Julia to be quiet then shuts off the lights.

Cracks open the door and peeks outside at the steady rain, THUNDER and lightening in the black dome of the sky.

EXT. JUAN'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Juan and Julia make a run for the truck.

Scramble inside and start it up.

And the old Ford takes off through the rain, its back tires kicking up mud.

INT. F150 - ESCAPING - NIGHT

Juan jams the truck in gear and guns the V-8. Peers out at the road through the overworked wipers and pooling rain.

Julia turns in her seat and checks behind them.

JULIA
C'mon, Dad, go! Go!

THE F150

Tears down the FOREST ROAD.

Weaves around a turn, headlights sweeping the trees.

Landing on the Old Woman at the side of the road.

Julia SCREAMS!

JULIA (CONT'D)
NOOO!

Juan steps on it and drives straight at the woman.

Who leaps out of the way with all the nimbleness of a goat.

The truck speeds past her and skirts the trees. Branches SCRAPING the window.

Juan pulls back on the road and Julia looks behind them.

Nothing there but the HALO OF LIGHT that surrounds the truck, and the pitch darkness beyond it.

Suddenly the Old Woman leaps out of the dark into the light, BOUNDING after the truck like some kind of bizarre kangaroo.

JULIA (CONT'D)
She's coming, Dad! SHE'S COMING!!!

Juan floors it and whips around a turn.

The Old Woman in pursuit, bounding into the light behind the speeding truck. There one moment, gone the next, appearing and vanishing like a strobe effect as she chases after them.

Each time she sails in from out of the dark she lands closer to the truck... closer and CLOSER until she finally leaps through the pouring rain and lands in the bed.

She rushes the cab. SMASHES her fist through the glass and grabs Julia's hair.

JULIA (CONT'D)

DADDY!!!

Juan steers with one hand and reaches back with the other.

The Old Woman pulling Julia out of her seat.

Juan sees a turn. Whips around it.

And the Old Woman is flung out of the bed into the trees.

An hysterical Julia falls back in her seat.

JULIA (CONT'D)

(crying)

Oh God, Daddy! Oh God!

Juan speeds down the road.

Negotiating turns and shifting gears.

When from out of the darkness behind the truck comes the Old Woman again, bounding after them at an amazing speed.

CLOSE ON: HER EVIL FACE

set in a grimace, her eyes filled with hate.

JULIA

grabs her dad.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Faster, Dad! FASTER!

Juan looks back at the woman then again at the road when a

HUGE STAG leaps into their path.

Juan cranks the wheel.

But hits the deer.

That SMASHES into the windshield.

THE F150 CAREENING OFF THE ROAD

Plowing through the brush until it SLAMS into a tree and CRUNCHES to a halt.

A DAZED JUAN AND JULIA

Stagger out of the wreck and take off through headlight beams filled with smoke and rain.

Straight into the path of the Old Woman who SCREECHES and lunges at Julia.

Juan grabs the Old Woman and throws her off his daughter, takes Julia's hand and escapes into the woods.

Hurries her forward to a break in the trees when BAAANNNTTT! the BLARE of a train's horn suddenly pierces the night.

And JULIA BOLTS UP IN BED. Ending the FLASHBACK-DREAM.

Julia takes a moment and breathes. Looks at a clock.

3:05 A.M.

She lies down and goes back to sleep.

INT. BEDROOM - JULIA'S TRAILER - DAY

The bedside digital clock flips to 7:00 A.M.

Julia rolls over and blinks from the bars of sunlight streaming through the blinds.

She puts on coffee in the KITCHEN. Empties the trash and takes the bag outside.

EXT. JULIA'S TRAILER - DAY

Drops the bag in a trash bin behind the trailer when a friendly tomcat appears at her feet.

She bends down and pets him.

JULIA

No fish bones today, handsome. Sorry.

Julia looks up at

The Nagual, suddenly there, holding a bloody knife and SAM'S SEVERED HEAD!

Julia SCREAMS. Bolts up IN BED. Sweating. She looks through the dark at the nightstand clock: 3:15 A.M.

Falls back, exasperated.

EXT. SWAMP - DAY

A tow truck winches the P.I.'s car from out of the swamp, sludge and brown water pouring out of every seam in the frame.

SHERIFF LEROY DICK (40s) wearing a Smokey the Bear hat, stands on the stream bank observing the vehicle recovery.

Sheriff Dick is stern but honest, civil but not friendly. A man who knows his best days are behind him and doesn't much care.

A burly TOW TRUCK DRIVER approaches him, weaving through EMERGENCY PERSONNEL and vehicles that cover the scene.

TOW TRUCK DRIVER

Where do you want me to drop the car?

SHERIFF

Take it to our yard. It's evidence.

TOW TRUCK DRIVER

Where's that? I just got this job.

SHERIFF

You got a GPS, don't ya? Use it, look it up.

Tow Truck Driver hands him an invoice and the Sheriff signs it.

TOW TRUCK DRIVER

(reads the signature)

Sheriff Dick?

SHERIFF

Yeah. What?

TOW TRUCK DRIVER

That's appropriate.

Tow Truck Driver walks off and the Sheriff goes to a young DEPUTY in his car talking with dispatch on the radio.

SHERIFF

Got anything?

DEPUTY

(to dispatch)

Roger that. Hold on.

(to the Sheriff)

It looks like this guy was a private eye out of Phoenix. He registered with our office a week ago working a missing persons case.

SHERIFF

Who was he after?

DEPUTY

He didn't say. Didn't want our help either. We found some footprints next to the stream and this was on the floor.

The deputy holds up an evidence bag with the gun.

DEPUTY (CONT'D)

So unless this guy was fishing with bullets, I'd say someone else was here. And these were in his pocket.

He hands the Sheriff another plastic evidence bag with several wet photos of Julia and Sam.

The Sheriff checks it out, turns the bag over.

"*Julia Garcia 1268 Casanova Road*" written on the back of one of the photos.

INT. JULIA'S TRAILER - DAY

Julia works at her desk in sight of Doug still asleep at the far end of the trailer beyond an open bedroom door.

On a shelf beside her are volumes on Aztec and Mesoamerican Studies, including works on Shamanism, Folklore and Myths.

Julia takes out a book entitled:

"Toltec and Aztec Sorcery"

Opens it to a chapter on:

"NAGUALS"

She flips through the pages, picking out strings of words:

"Naguals are powerful sorcerers in Mesoamerican cultures..."

"...they can tap into a spiritual realm that enables them to defy the physical laws of our world."

Julia turns to a COLORFUL DRAWING that shows a Nagual being chased through a jungle by conquistadors on horseback.

CLOSE ON: The Nagual soaring through the air with a cluster of LUMINOUS TENTACLES extending out of his torso, reaching fifty feet ahead of him onto the trail, pulling him along.

On a facing page a sub-heading reads...

"Nagual Powers"

Julia runs her finger down a list of powers:

"Shapeshifters..."

"The Possession of Animals..."

"Control of the Manitous (or Spirits) of Objects and Plants..."

"Masters of Spells, Potions and Charms..."

"Inhabiting Dreams..."

Julia stops on this phrase and reads...

"The appearance of a Nagual in a dream can often mean that the person has been targeted by a Nagual, or that the sorcerer will soon enter their life."

Julia snaps the book closed. Frightened. Comprehending a danger. She puts the book back on the shelf.

Looks at a PHOTO on the wall, the one picture of her father she managed to save.

She stares at it and thinks. Looks at other photos:

She and her deceased husband ELLIS in his Army uniform.

Sam at different ages.

FOCUSES on a photo of she and Ellis next to FIVE-YEAR-OLD SAM on his little bike out in a park. REMEMBERS that day.

EXT. PARK - DAY - FLASHBACK

Fall. The colorful glory of New England in autumn.

Julia (25) sits on a blanket under a chestnut tree bathed in a golden light that clarifies her beauty.

ELLIS, late 20s, and SAM (5) on a nearby bike path that runs through the trees. Ellis taking the training wheels off of Sam's small bike.

Julia goes to them with mild concern.

JULIA

Ellis, you sure you want to do that?
He's only five.

ELLIS

Ah, he'll be all right. He's ready.
These just get in the way.

Julia is not so sure. Little Sam looks up at her.

FIVE-YEAR-OLD SAM

I'm a big boy, Mama. I don't need
trading wheels.

JULIA

(touches Sam's cheek)

I know, baby. Mommy just wants you to be
safe.

ELLIS

(removes the last wheel)

All right Sam, c'mon, get up here.

Ellis helps Sam onto the bike.

ELLIS (CONT'D)

Okay, you ready? Now pedal hard.

Ellis gives the bike a shove and little Sam pedals for all
he's worth. He takes off wobbling at first but then
straightens out and heads down the path.

Ellis turns to Julia and smiles.

ELLIS (CONT'D)

I remember when I first learned to ride
a bike. It was great. I felt like a
cowboy on his horse with the whole world
open to me.

Julia watches Sam.

He tries to turn and the bike tips over.

Julia starts to go to Sam but Ellis detains her.

ELLIS (CONT'D)

Hang on, he's got it.

Sam gets the bike upright and takes off again.

Julia smiles at Ellis then looks again at

Her little boy riding off through the trees, taking his first
big step out into the world.

The sound of a CAR PULLING IN marks the END OF THE FLASHBACK
and brings JULIA out of her reverie.

She looks out at the sheriff's car pulling up to the trailer.

EXT. JULIA'S TRAILER - DAY

A concerned Julia meets the Sheriff who steps out of his car carrying the bag of photos, adjusting his hat.

SHERIFF

Mornin' ma'am. Are you Julia Garcia?

JULIA

Yeah. Why? What's this about? Has something happened to Sam?

SHERIFF

Is Sam your husband?

JULIA

No, my son.

SHERIFF

I'm sure your son is fine, ma'am. This isn't about him. I'm here regarding a Mr. Nick Behrens. Does that name ring a bell?

A relieved Julia shakes her head.

JULIA

No.

The Sheriff takes the private eye's driver's license from his pocket and shows Julia.

SHERIFF

Have you ever seen this man?

JULIA

I don't think so. Who is he?

SHERIFF

A private detective. We pulled his car out of the swamp this morning with him in it. He had these with him.

He hands Julia the bag of photos.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)

We think someone hired him to investigate you. Did he ever contact you?

Julia looks over the photos in the sealed bag:

- *One of her coming out of a grocery store.*
- *Another of her and Sam outside their trailer.*

Dismay flashes in Julia's eyes at the sight of the photos. She hands them back and puts up a front for the cop.

JULIA

He never spoke to me. And I don't know why anyone would be taking my picture.

SHERIFF

You sure you've never seen him? These private eyes are clever fellows, ex-cops, a lot of them. He may have posed as someone else just to get close to you - a delivery man, someone looking for directions. You sure he never made contact?

JULIA

I'm sure.

SHERIFF

How about someone who might be looking for you, know anything about that?

Julia does and it shows in her face.

JULIA

No... No one's looking for me.

The Sheriff doesn't buy it and that shows too.

SHERIFF

Are you married, Ms. Garcia? Got an ex-husband who might want to track you down?

JULIA

My husband's dead, he was killed in Iraq.

SHERIFF

I'm sorry to hear that. I lost a nephew in the same stupid war. WMDs my ass.

Julia meets the Sheriff's attempt at rapport with a blank stare.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)

How 'bout an old boyfriend? You're an attractive woman. Got anyone in your past who might be looking for you, any enemies?

JULIA

No, I told you no one's looking for me. I have no enemies, no angry ex-lovers and I'm not running from the mob. And I have no idea why this asshole was taking my picture. Maybe he's a creep stalking me, or maybe he was hired by one. But this sort of thing happens to women all the time and I've got more important things to worry about, like paying the bills. So if you don't mind I'd like to go back to work.

SHERIFF

Okay. Fair enough, ma'am. Sorry to bother you.

The Sheriff turns to go but then pauses at his car door.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)

Oh, by the way, what is it you do?

JULIA

I'm a teacher.

SHERIFF

Yeah. Where?

JULIA

I teach online for small colleges.

SHERIFF

So you work from home?

The Sheriff takes in the trailer.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)

Kind of a mobile lifestyle, isn't it? House on wheels, take your job with you wherever you go.

JULIA

Yeah. What of it?

SHERIFF

The what of it, ma'am, is that I wouldn't want you to pack up and leave town until this matter is resolved. Understood?

JULIA

I thought this was a free country.

SHERIFF

It was yesterday. Today you're up
to your neck in a possible homicide.
I'd stay put if I were you.
(tips his hat)
Have a nice day.

The Sheriff gets back in his car and drives away.

**HERE ENDS MY WEBSITE EXCERPT OF THE NAGUAL. IF YOU WOULD
LIKE TO READ THE SCRIPT IN ITS ENTIRETY REACH OUT TO ME AT
johnkroyan@gmail.com. THANK YOU FOR CHECKING OUT MY WORK. I
HOPE YOU ENJOYED THE READ.**

John Royan