The Remnants

Character bios

**JOSH** is 30. Before this all happened, he was a font designer. He has a way of speaking that makes him seem sardonic, even when he’s being completely sincere. Wallace dubbed him “The Professor,” which has stuck.

**NORMAN** is also 30’s. He was an administrative assistant at a downtown law firm (not a paralegal, thank you). He’s obsessed with reality television, and is having a hard time distinguishing survival from Survivor. He’s obsessed with maintaining his role in the group.

**CHAS**, 20, was a greeter at Abercrombie and Fitch. Lazily athletic, and charming despite (or because of) his lack of deep thoughts. He wants to start a band, but can’t sing, and plays no instruments.

**WALLACE** is in his 50’s, combining the bulk of Ving Rhames with the gritty wisdom of Morgan Freeman. His business cards say “life coach,” but he made his living selling vintage firearms at gun shows. He’s quite knowledgeable in a few fields (guns, plumbing, Thai prostitutes), but often expounds at length on topics he has no idea about.

**GWEN** is in her early 40’s. She was a production manager for TV and commercials, and a recovering alcoholic. Prone to snap judgements. She’s good at keeping things running, even if she pisses off everyone in the process. She’s been with Wallace for five tumultuous years.

**MIA**, 25, was a waitress at an acclaimed restaurant on Beverly. Possessing her own unique style, she was a favorite of trend-watchers, who frequently interview her and Polaroid what she’s wearing. She has an Amélie vibe, where she tries to help people without their knowledge.

Friday, January 4, 2008
EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET IN EAGLE ROCK – DAY

CRICKETS, BIRDS and distant dogs HOWLING -- but no city sounds at all.

A parked car sits with all four doors open. There’s an unlikely amount of dust and dirt on all the windows -- with a fresh “X” marked on one.

In the background, we see a hillside duplex. Motion in upstairs window as curtains are drawn shut.

INT. DUPLEX LIVING ROOM – DAY

Not just messy, but abandoned, with a distinct layer of dust on every surface. The light outside is blue-white: Los Angeles in winter.

JOSH pulls the curtains so no one can look in. He then heads deeper into the house.

On one wall, we see an abandoned painting project: the Grand Canyon.

INT. KITCHEN – DAY

Josh kneels before an open pantry, pulling out canned goods and loading them into a backpack. He has a 9mm tucked in his back waistband, and a child’s walkie-talkie on his belt.

He finds a canister of Pringles, and checks under the lid -- it's unopened. Score.

NORMAN (O.S.)

Josh! We!

JOSH

We what?

NORMAN appears at the doorway, giddy as teenager who just discovered masturbation. He's carrying a white Nintendo, its controller dangling.

NORMAN

Wii!

JOSH

Wow.

NORMAN

I know, right? These were so hard to get. There were lines, and

(MORE)
rainchecks, and EBay. Remember EBay?

JOSH

I do.

He stands.

NORMAN

I wonder how much this is worth now?

JOSH

Well, considering the collapse of civilization, and the economy, the lack of electricity, and with it the means to play a videogame...the death of any potential buyer or seller -- the fact that there are now more Wiis than there are people to play them -- I'd say the demand curve has pretty much flattened. Its only worth is as a cultural signifier for a lost age. And in that way, it's priceless.

Not the answer Norman wanted. Fortunately, at that moment, CHAS enters from the outside door. He's carrying his rifle across his shoulders, like James Dean or Jesus would.

NORMAN

Chas! I got a Wii!

CHAS

Sweet! How much you want for it?

Off Norman's satisfied look, we...

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN / DINING ROOM - DAY

Chas and Norman talk Wii, while Josh finishes reverse-grocery shopping the cabinets.
CHAS
The house on Blue Hill has a generator.

NORMAN
Wallace won't let us use it. He says it attracts them.

CHAS
He thinks everything attracts them.

NORMAN
I know. I'm sick of pooping in a bag.

Chas shoots a look to Josh. Norman catches it.

NORMAN (CONT'D)
What? What!

CHAS
We stopped doing that weeks ago.

NORMAN
You guys are free-pooping?
(no answer; realizing)
You guys are flushing?!

CHAS
Don't tell Wallace.

JOSH
Tell Wallace. My bowels are not his business. Who's checking the fridge?

ANGLE ON the refrigerator, the only thing that hasn't been opened yet. Hearing no volunteers, Josh reminds them...

JOSH (CONT'D)
I did the last three.

NORMAN
I did the one with the turkey. The turkey was bad.

CHAS
Why are we even checking fridges anymore? There's not going to be anything eatable.
NORMAN
Batteries. Some people keep
batteries in the fridge.

Realizing he basically just volunteered, Norman pinches
his nose shut. Grabs the door handle, ready to yank.

One...

Two...

Suddenly, a SQUEAL and STATIC. A voice on the walkie-
talkie.

WALLACE (ON RADIO)
Wallace to White Devil. Wallace
to White Devil, what's your 20,
over.

JOSH
(to the others)
We shouldn't let him pick names.
(on walkie)
We're at 211. Ready to move in
five.

NORMAN
(whisper)
Tell him we got a Wii!

Chas waves him down.

WALLACE (ON RADIO)
Any S.O.L.?

INT. A DIFFERENT HOUSE - DAY

CLOSE ON WALLACE.

JOSH (ON RADIO)
No sign-of-life, but I found
Pringles. Jalapeño.

WALLACE
Regular or fat-free?

JOSH (ON RADIO)
Regular.

WALLACE
That's a good chip.
He looks up as GWEN stands in the doorway. Her glare could stop a kitten's heart. He releases the "talk" button.

WIDER, we see that Wallace is in a bathroom, sitting on a toilet. He's busted.

GWEN
Really, Wallace. Really?

Furious, she storms away. Calling after her...

WALLACE
Squattin' ain't flushin'! It's the water that attracts them. They hear it in the pipes.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

NORMAN
Solar! That's what we need. Ed Begley Jr.'s house could run a Wii, thank you very much.

CHAS
Where does he live?

NORMAN
On TV.

In the background, we see a dark shape move past. Spooky.

NORMAN (CONT'D)
He had this reality show on HGTV about how smart he was and how his wife didn't appreciate him. He gave Helen Hunt a green audit. It sounds dirty but it wasn't.

Josh glances to Chas, who follows his gaze over to a reflection. Something moving, slowly.

A beat.

NORMAN (CONT'D)
I think he lived in the Valley. Near Bill Nye, the science guy.

With a nod, Josh and Chas both turn, drawing weapons and aiming at the outside door.

CHAS
Freeze em up!
Too late. The dark shape is revealed to be a young woman, who is now sprinting away like prey.

Norman SCREAMS, startled.

JOSH
Freeze em up?

CHAS
It sounded different in my head.

Josh and Chas chase after her.

EXT. BACKYARDS - DAY

Mia is way ahead, sprinting across a backyard. Back at the house, Chas yells to Josh:

CHAS
I’ll circle. You go over.

With that, Chas veers off, headed for a gate leading to the street.

JOSH’S P.O.V.

The next backyard is empty. She’s either hiding, or already gone. He runs down the steps.

CHAS RUNS DOWN AN ALLEY

between two houses.

JOSH SLIDES DOWN A SLOPE,
tumbling at the end. He stands up and immediately stops. Something is wrong. His hand goes to his left leg, where a thin line of blood soaking through his cargo pants. He touches it with his hand. Looks at his finger.

This is a mistake.

It sends him reeling. He drops, about to pass out.

Mia emerges from a hiding place. Keeping her distance, cautious...

MIA
Are you alright?

JOSH
(ashen)
I’m not good around blood.
As he falls forward, we...

RUSH CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL EXAM ROOM - DAY [4 WEEKS AGO]

Wearing a HELVETICA t-shirt and a bandage on his wrist, Josh looks up as a busy HOSPITAL PSYCHIATRIST enters, making notes on the chart even before he speaks.

Sitting across from him...

PSYCHIATRIST
Can you tell me why you're here, Josh?

JOSH
I fainted.

PSYCHIATRIST
It says on your chart you tried to kill yourself.

JOSH
I'm not good around blood. I guess I passed out before I cut deep enough.

PSYCHIATRIST
Do you want to hurt yourself now?

JOSH
No.

PSYCHIATRIST
Why not?

JOSH
Is that a dare?

PSYCHIATRIST
I need to know if you're a danger to yourself or others.

JOSH
No. I mean, I'm a pretty positive person, considering.

PSYCHIATRIST
Considering..?
JOSH
Is it normal for an otherwise healthy person to try to kill himself?

PSYCHIATRIST
We try not to talk too much about “normal.” It’s not helpful.

JOSH
But I was normal. For me. I’ve been me for 30-plus years. And suddenly, something changed.

A beat.

PSYCHIATRIST
Have you been thinking about the Grand Canyon?

Josh looks up, unsettled. How could this guy know?

JOSH
Every second of the day.

PSYCHIATRIST
Tell me.

JOSH
I was going to get a bunch of people to roadtrip. Not this weekend, but...

PSYCHIATRIST
Next Tuesday.

JOSH
(freaked)
And then, I dunno, I started wondering why I suddenly had this urge, this compulsion to go. And then I grabbed a knife. Only it wasn't me. It was something else inside of me that wanted me dead. That's crazy, right? I'm crazy.

PSYCHIATRIST
No. I think you’re just ahead of the curve.

Off Josh's concerned expression, we come...
INT. DINING ROOM - LATER

Josh is sitting on the table in his underwear, keeping his eyes averted while Gwen cleans up the scrape on his leg.

Wallace is watching over her shoulder.

WALLACE
You need more Bactine.

He shakes up a can to spray.

GWEN
That's Pam.

WALLACE
Brands don't matter.

IN THE DINING AREA,

Chas watches as Norman tries to tie Mia to a kitchen chair. It's awkward, because Norman seems very reluctant to touch her.

CHAS
Have you never tied a girl to a chair before?

NORMAN
No!

Chas takes the rope from Norman and gets to work.

MIA
You really don't have to. I came willingly.

NORMAN
The thing is, Mia, you seem really nice. But the last nice person we met out here, two in the morning he went...

Norman does an impersonation of something approximating a vampire yeti.

GWEN
(yelling over)
Stan was never nice.

CHAS
(to Norman)
He made fun of your weight.
NORMAN
Not in a mean way, though.

MIA
Look. I'm not one of them. If I could prove it to you I would.

Wallace approaches. Leans down to look her right in the eye. Sniffs her.

CUT TO:

11 EXT. BACK YARD - DAY

The crew of five have an impromptu meeting.

WALLACE
She wasn't frightened of me. That means she's one of 'em.

NORMAN
Maybe she likes big, Black men. Gwen does.

JOSH
I vote yes. She'll die out here by herself.

CHAS
Dotto.

JOSH
"Ditto."

GWEN
You both just want to sleep with her.

JOSH
No. CHAS
So? What, you and Wallace are the only ones who get to boink? We've got a world to repopulate.

NORMAN
(mostly to himself)
Hook-ups always hurt the tribe.

CHAS
Can you even have kids anymore, Gwen?

Yup. He said it. Icy...
GWEN
I count two votes "yes," two votes "no." Norman?

NORMAN
I don't want to be the swing vote. I abstain.

GWEN
Can't abstain. Gotta vote. And remember who saved your life when Stan went all Jurassic Park.

WALLACE
Gettin' dark. Gotta move.

The pressure on Norman is intense. It's not hard to see how this will resolve.

JOSH
Alright. New deal. We keep her here for three days. If she's normal after that, she's in.

GWEN
You're going to leave her tied to a chair?

JOSH
Chas and I will trade watch.

Good enough for Wallace...

WALLACE
White boys wanna die, not my worry.

With that, Wallace heads back in. Gwen follows, frustrated.

Josh and Chas rock-paper-scissor. Josh wins, sending Chas inside with Norman.

NORMAN
(low)
Are we taking the Wii?

CHAS
Don't let Wallace see it.

Josh is left alone.
INT. LIVING ROOM - DUSK

Josh finishes untying Mia.

MIA
It's weird. You see these apocalyptic disaster movies, and there's always some brilliant scientist to explain what's going on. Why the dinosaurs are mutating. Why the asteroid's going to hit New York, and how we can stop it.

JOSH
The Jeff Goldblum character.

MIA
Exactly. But then the apocalyptic disaster happens, and Jeff Goldblum is super-dead. I mean, I don't know if the world got invaded, or if it was something we made ourselves...

JOSH
Nano-technology from the future.

MIA
Really?

He takes a seat across from her.

JOSH
I have no idea. Something I thought of last night. Pringle?

He pulls the canister out of his backpack.

MIA
Like I could fight the fever.

He gives her a stack of chips. They're delicious.

For the first time, Mia notices the Grand Canyon mural on the wall.

MIA (CONT'D)
Did you go?

JOSH
No. You?
She nods. She can't talk about it. She shouldn't have brought it up. She fights the tears welling up in her eyes.

MIA

Sorry.

Josh brushes a Pringle crumb off her lip. She smiles.

Off their eyes, we...

CUT TO BLACK.