

INT. LARGE 3-CAR GARAGE - DAY

A large, haphazard pile of boxes sits at the center of the garage. Next to it is an open ladder, with a pink and purple bedazzled backpack lying next to it.

YOUNG GIRL (O.S.)  
Don't fall!

LARRY, early 40s, slumps in an office chair staring at a PHONE in a pink bedazzled case. He's wearing a teal bathrobe that's too small for him and has a bandage on his head with blood seeping through.

YOUNG GIRL (O.S.) (cont'd)  
(from the phone)  
Just keep calm!

LARRY'S POV OF THE PHONE

The video on the phone shows Larry standing precariously on a paddle board in the ocean. REBECCA, early 40s, blonde, stands nearby, also on a paddle board. She chuckles as Larry struggles to keep his balance.

REBECCA  
Told you this wouldn't be easy.

LARRY  
I'm going to head back.

YOUNG GIRL (O.S.)  
We're almost there!

The Young Girl pans quickly to an island in the distance, then back to the adults.

YOUNG GIRL  
You can do it! Youtube and I  
believe in you!

REBECCA  
C'mon, Larry. You made it this far.

Larry sighs, and starts to paddle towards the island. A small wake creeps up, and hits the little trio. The camera shakes briefly, but the Young Girl keeps her balance. Larry doesn't.

LARRY  
Whoa. Whoa!

He totters, then topples into the water. Rebecca and the Young Girl start laughing.

YOUNG GIRL  
C'mon, get up, Dad.

END POV

Larry taps the phone, silencing the video. Tiredly, he sets the phone down on a desk in front of him, and picks up a piece paper. It is purple with a border of lilies and ivy running around its edge. In feminine handwriting it reads:

"We've taken your wife and daughter.

If you want to see them again, you will transfer one million dollars to the below account:

Account#43829502K2 Routing#98212822392"

DO NOT contact the police or FBI.

DO NOT tell anyone about us.

WAIT for our call.

DO NOT LEAVE THE GARAGE.

WE WILL KNOW.

Larry lets the note fall to the desk and buries his face in his hands.

BZZZT

Larry looks up. The noise is coming from Larry's robe. He reaches into a pocket and pulls out a teal phone. The caller ID shows "BLOCKED NUMBER." He answers the call.

LARRY  
Hello?

YOUNG GIRL (O.S.)  
Dad!?

LARRY  
Oh my god! Liz! Are ok? Where are you?

LIZ (O.S.)  
I'm...I'm ok.  
(beat)  
I want to go home, Dad. Please just do what they want so we can--

There is a rustling on the other side of the line.

BLOCKED NUMBER (O.S.)  
Hello, Larry. Did you get my note?

It is a woman's voice, heavily distorted.

LARRY  
I don't have a million dollars. I'm  
just a safety analyst.

BLOCKED NUMBER (O.S.)  
I know. But you can get it.

LARRY  
You won't let me leave the garage.  
How am I supposed to do that?

BLOCKED NUMBER (O.S.)  
You know people with access to  
money. And you have leverage.

LARRY  
I don't know who you think I am,  
but you're wrong. Just, please,  
bring my family home.

BLOCKED NUMBER (O.S.)  
I know exactly who you are, Larry  
Ambrose. And I know who you work  
for.

LARRY  
What's that supposed to mean?

She sighs.

BLOCKED NUMBER (O.S.)  
You want your life to go back to  
normal, right?

LARRY  
More than anything.

BLOCKED NUMBER (O.S.)  
Then use your brain. Get creative.  
I'll be in touch soon.

She hangs up. For a moment, Larry just sits there. As he  
does, the sound of a memory plays in his head.

As he does, a memory replays in his mind.

WOMAN (V.O.)  
*Let go of me!*

*There is the sound of a man and woman grunting, and a rustling noise.*

LARRY (V.O.)  
*You can't do this!*

*The struggle stops momentarily, followed by a meaty THUMP.*

Larry shakes himself out of it, and opens a banking app on his phone. There is \$723 in his checking and \$3000 in his savings. He shakes his head, and closes the app.

He opens the dialer on the phone, and enters "911." He stares at the numbers, then looks up at the backpack lying still near the ladder. He erases the numbers and opens his contacts. He scrolls to "Nate." Larry takes a deep breath, and hits dial. After a couple of rings, Nate answers.

NATE  
Hey, You! What's going on?

LARRY  
Thanks for picking up. I wasn't sure...How's, uh, how's everything? How's Gina?

NATE  
Of course I picked up! Gina's doing great, sold one of those mansions in Canyon Gate. You can imagine the size of the commission. We're all doing good. How about you guys?

LARRY  
We're fine.

NATE  
Good.  
(beat)  
Say, I finally watched some of Liz's youtube videos. She's pretty funny. You sure she's not adopted?

LARRY  
Nate, I need a favor.

NATE  
Of course. What is it?

LARRY  
We need to borrow some money.

NATE  
Ok.

LARRY

We made a bad investment. Borrowed against the equity in the house. We missed some payments...

NATE

How much?

LARRY

Lots. How much could you loan us?

NATE

A few thousand.

Larry is silent.

NATE (cont'd)

Maybe as much as twenty.

LARRY

We need a million.

NATE

A million! You couldn't get that kind of...what's going on?

LARRY

Please. We need it.

Nate is quiet for a long beat.

NATE

Are you feeling ok?

Larry glances at the ransom note in front of him. "DO NOT tell anyone" glares back.

LARRY

I'm fine. I'm sorry, I shouldn't've called.

NATE

Are you at home? Maybe I should come by.

LARRY

No! We're heading to the store, I gotta go. Tell Gina hi.

Larry hangs up quickly. He watches the phone time out, and go dark. It doesn't light back up. Larry lets out a shaky sigh, then starts to go through his contacts again. He gets to the end, and puts the phone down in frustration.

He turns in the chair, and takes in the rest of the garage. His eyes fall on the stack of paper on the ground. He hears the voice of the kidnapper.

*BLOCKED NUMBER (O.S.)*

*And I know who you work for.*

Quickly, he gets up from the office chair and picks up the stack. The top pages have been crinkled and one is ripped. Larry flattens out the top sheet. It's a coversheet stamped with an official seal showing that it was filed with the City of Ridgeford Planning Department. Larry flips through the packet, stopping on a page with the heading:

Meadowlark Parkway Bid Document 34 of 122

Fenwick Construction

Safety Analysis & Recommendations Summary

Larry scans down the page. It's full of line items and numbers. At the bottom is a bolded line that reads:

"Total Estimated Safety Provision Cost: \$150,630."

There are two signature lines below the total. One for "ARNOLD FENWICK, CEO" and the other for "GREGOR HARRIS, City of Ridgeford Planning Department." Both are signed.

Larry turns to the next page. It's identical to the other "Safety Analysis & Recommendations Summary" sheet. Except... at the bottom of this second sheet, the bolded line reads:

"Total Estimated Safety Provision Cost: \$100,998."

This second sheet is also signed by Arnold Fenwick and Gregor Harris.

Larry sets the stack of bid documents on the desk, and scrolls through the contacts on his teal phone. He stops on "Arnie Fenwick." He pauses for a moment, then hits call. The call rings a couple times, then Arnie picks up.

ARNIE (O.S.)

Becca?

LARRY

Arnie, it's me. I need your help.

ARNIE (O.S.)

Um...sure. What do you need?

LARRY

I-- If there were any other way to do this...the initial payment for Meadowlark Parkway just cleared, right? It's around a million and a half?

ARNIE

Sorry, I can't talk company finances with you. What's this about?

LARRY

Meadowlark. The two different bids.

ARNIE (O.S.)

What?

LARRY

The fraud.

ARNIE (O.S.)

I don't know what you're talking about, but this conversation is over.

LARRY

If you hang up, the next call I make is to the Contractor's Board.

Arnie is silent, but he doesn't hang up.

ARNIE (O.S.)

What do you want?

LARRY

Where does the company bank?

ARNIE (O.S.)

Wilmore Credit Union. Why?

LARRY

How close are you to one?

ARNIE (O.S.)

About five minutes. But--

LARRY

I need you to head there.

ARNIE (O.S.)

I'm not going anywhere until you give me a reason.