

"WORTH" (working title, formerly 'Trust')

screenplay by

Jerod Brennen

and

Nic Barker & Patrick Waring & Jock Blakley

story by

Jerod Brennen

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323.863.6398

jerod.brennen@gmail.com

nicbarker@fastmail.fm

patrick.waring@live.com.au

INT CAR - NIGHT (CITY/SUBURBIA)

A car, a weathered old beater with its headlights ablaze, drifts through city streets at night.

In the driver's seat is KYLE (early 20's). Both hands on the wheel, he stares menacingly into the night in front of him. His mouth is turned to a scowl.

Next to him is CASSANDRA (early 20's). She looks tired, and somewhat frail.

She turn to Kyle, nervous and unsure.

CASSANDRA

Sure this is the quickest way?

Kyle reaches down with one hand and switches on the radio. Music blares, cutting off Cassandra.

Cassandra sinks back down into her seat. She turns away without protest.

The car drifts through the city streets to the tune of the radio.

INT. CAR - DAY (RURAL ROAD)

Kyle drives the weathered beater, his fingers wrapped around the steering wheel in death grip. He drags on his CIGARETTE as it burns closer and closer to the filter.

Cassandra sits silent in the passenger seat. She watches the world pass by her window, lost in thought. She tosses a sideways glance at Kyle, then looks away.

Trees loom over either side of the road. Kyle eases the car to the left, trading the paved road for a road less traveled.

EXT. RURAL ROAD - DAY

The car eases down the road.

The car rolls to a stop beneath some trees, hidden from sunlight and from prying eyes.

KYLE

Gonna check.

Kyle climbs out. He tosses his cigarette to the ground. Cassandra stays seated in the car.

(CONTINUED)

Kyle moves to the rear of the car. He opens the trunk and stares inside.

Inside the trunk, ERIKA (early 20's) lies bound and gagged. She stares up at her captor with absolute hatred. She SCREAMS against her gag.

Kyle stares at her coldly.

Cassandra takes a water bottle from the passenger seat, and takes it towards Erika in the trunk.

As Cassandra is about to lean over to give Erika water, Kyle puts an arm out and stops her.

Cassandra stops, and looks at Kyle. The man shakes his head, before gesturing with his head for Cassandra to move away.

Cassandra shoots a quick, sympathetic look at the terrified, bedraggled Erika, before retreating from the trunk.

Kyle looks back at his prisoner, staring into her scared, wide eyes. He shuts the trunk quickly.

CUT TO BLACK

TITLE CARD

EXT. RURAL ROAD - DAY

Kyle paces. Cassandra leans against the car.

CASSANDRA

You okay?

No response.

CASSANDRA

You sure you could handle this-?

KYLE

Shut it.

Kyle shoots a glare at Cassandra, putting his hand up to silence her.

Silence.

Cassandra shakes her head disapprovingly, not intending for Kyle to see her.

Kyle throws down his cigarette and GRABS Cassandra with both hands.

(CONTINUED)

KYLE

You got something to say?

Cassandra flinches, intimidated.

He digs his fingers into her shoulders, but she doesn't cry out. Kyle stares her down, breathing deeply for a few seconds, before pushing her away.

CASSANDRA

(nervous)

What about the... the note?

KYLE

(irritated)

I already told ya, notes mean fingerprints! Gotta be a call.

CASSANDRA

And what, he'll call the cops.

Kyle turns to Cassandra, with an annoyed "get off my back" expression.

KYLE

He won't.

CASSANDRA

You sure you can make this work?

Kyle stops pacing. He looks at Cassandra.

KYLE

Do you think I'd be fucking do it otherwise? YOU came to ME with this, remember?

They get back into the car, ignoring the dull THUMPS coming from inside the trunk. The car drives away.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Kyle sits in the driver's seat of the car, engine not running. The car sits in a darkened corner of a large gravel motel carpark, surrounded by a building comprised of motel rooms.

Cassandra appears with the ROOM KEY. She walks past Kyle, who starts up the engine of the car. The car's headlights blare in the darkness.

Kyle drives the car across the carpark, following Cassandra, who is illuminated by the headlights.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Kyle tosses Erika on the floor. She screams against her gag. Cassandra flinches at the sound. Erika screams again.

Kyle produces a KNIFE. He holds the knife an inch from her eye.

Erika stops screaming.

Kyle drifts the knife down from Erika's face to her body. Slowly it passes her neck. Erika anticipates the impending pain and closes her eyes, crying.

Kyle touches the knife against Erika's neck, and Erika opens her eyes, staring at Cassandra pleadingly.

Cassandra quickly averts her gaze from Erika, turning and looking out the window.

Kyle lunges his other hand at Erika's body, reaching an inside on her jacket, and pulling out Erika's mobile phone.

He removes the knife, and stands, scrolling through Erika's mobile phone contacts until he reaches 'DAD'.

He presses dial, and holds the phone up to his ear.

Cassandra turns from the window and walks over to Erika, bending down to her level.

Kyle moves over to the window as someone answers the phone.

VOICE

What is it, Erika? I'm busy.

KYLE

Fifty thousand dollars, and your daughter comes home.

VOICE

(calm, collected)

Who is this, what's your name?

Kyle is taken aback, he stutters.

KYLE

I'll be waiting in the Forrest Grove parking lot tomorrow night at 12. At 12:05, I'm gone.

Whilst Kyle is talking, Cassandra is hunched over Erika, wiping sweat and blood from her brow. The two exchange a glance.

(CONTINUED)

VOICE
You done this before?

Kyle is again taken aback.

KYLE
No friends, no cops.

CUT TO:

INT. MANSION - NIGHT

In a posh mansion, a middle-aged man stands by a window on a landline phone, listening to Kyle's every word. We do not see his face.

CUT TO:

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Kyle hangs up the phone. Cassandra is looking at Kyle, concerned.

CUT TO:

INT. MANSION - NIGHT

The man on the phone turns away from the window, revealing his face. He is KENNETH (mid 50's), Erika's father.

Kenneth hears the hang up tone, and takes the phone away from his ear, a bemused, stern expression on his face.

CUT TO:

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Kyle exhales as if relieved. He produces his wallet and tosses a five dollar note on the bed. He glances at Cassandra, who stands up from where she was on the ground with Erika. Cassandra looks concerned.

KYLE
We're good... now he's just gotta show.

CASSANDRA
I've told you, I've seen this guy, fifty grand won't mean shit to him.

(CONTINUED)

Kyle walks over to Erika.

He stands over her, relishing his power over her. Erika refuses to look away, trying not to show an ounce of fear.

Kyle bends down and removes Erika's gag.

KYLE

Must be nice coming from that kind
of money...

ERIKA

He's got money... not sure he
thinks I'm worth it.

This catches Cassandra and Kyle off guard. Kyle turns to Cassandra, startled.

CASSANDRA

You're his daughter!

ERIKA

I'm his property. He'll pay... just
not for me.

CUT TO A QUICK FLASHBACK SHOT OF ERIKA AND KENNETH FIGHTING,
AND ERIKA GETTING THROWN OUT OF THE HOUSE.

Kyle glances to Cassandra, then back to Erika.

KYLE

You'd better hope he does.

Kyle turns to Cassandra.

KYLE

Go get your stuff from the car.

Cassandra looks from Kyle to Erika. Erika stares into Cassandra's eyes, as if pleading for her to stay.

KYLE

Cass!

Cassandra snaps from her glance, and looks back to Kyle. She leaves the room.

Kyle turns back to Erika.

Erika is wincing, thoroughly intimidated by Kyle.

He wraps his fingers in her hair and pulls her head back. She winces from the pain.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Cassandra opens the car boot, and unzips her suitcase. Pulling away a jumper, she reveals a gun. Cassandra looks at it knowingly for a few moments, then puts the jumper back over the top. She pulls the suitcase out of the boot, and closes the trunk.

CUT TO:

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Kyle puts Erika's gag back on, and starts to pull her up by the hair when the door opens.

Cassandra stands in the doorway with her suitcase. She looks at Kyle sternly.

Kyle releases Erika, then stands. Kyle wheels around.

KYLE

Shut the damn door.

Cassandra stares down Kyle more for a moment, picking up her water bottle from a bedside table. She then crosses the room, bends down, and is about to pull down Erika's gag and give her water when Kyle grabs her by the wrist.

KYLE

Come here.

Kyle pulls Cassandra over to him, and against her struggles throws her on the bed. He climbs on top of her, kissing her neck. Cassandra struggles.

CASSANDRA

Kyle, don't-

Kyle forces Cassandra down and keeps kissing her neck.

Submissive but in deep discomfort, Cassandra, looking pained, looks at Erika sitting on the floor. The two look at each other, as if asking the other for help. It is a sympathetic and pleading look both ways.

CUT TO:

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

The sound of a door knocking wakes Cassandra from her sleep.

Kyle is lying next to her, shirtless and fast asleep. Erika is also asleep, hunched over in the corner, the gag still bound around her mouth.

The knocking continues. Cassandra shakes her head, rising from the bed, and moving towards the door.

Kyle wakes, and shares a nervous look with Cassandra.

He mouths "Who is it?" to her.

Cassandra turns to the door.

CASSANDRA
Who is it?

The voice of a BELLHOP answers.

BELLHOP
Got ya brekkie!

Cassandra looks at Kyle, who is wide eyed. He makes a cutting gesture across his neck.

CASSANDRA
We're not hungry!

There is a tense silence.

BELLHOP
No worries.

Kyle and Cassandra exhale. They both look over at Erika. Kyle is about to get up, when Cassandra puts a hand out to stop him.

CASSANDRA
I got it.

CUT TO:

INT. MOTEL BATHROOM - DAY

Erika is tied down in the bathroom of the motel room. Cassandra loosens Erika's gag, and feeds her water.

(CONTINUED)

CASSANDRA
It's alright, not long now.

A little bit of water spills out of Erika's mouth.

Cassandra lets out a light laugh.

Erika looks at her for a few seconds. Cassandra is still grinning a little bit.

The corners of Erika's mouth bend up slightly, a faint smile appearing on her face.

CASSANDRA
You're alright.

Kyle appears in the doorway.

KYLE
Don't talk to her.

Cassandra stands up, startled.

KYLE
Get out.

Cassandra glances briefly at Erika sympathetically, then walks straight past Kyle.

Kyle sleazily looks at Cassandra's behind as she leaves. He then bends down to Erika, and looks her in the eyes.

KYLE
I'm about to find out if you're worth it.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - EVENING

Kyle gets into the car, windows wound down. Cassandra peers in through the driver's side window.

CASSANDRA
See you in two hours.

Kyle starts the engine. He backs out quickly.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Kyle drives his car into the empty parking lot. He drives around for a few moments, scouting out the location. Eventually, he finds a dark corner of the carpark and parks his car there. The clock on the dashboard reads 22.30

CUT TO:

The clock reads 12.02. Kyle is sitting in the driver's seat of his parked car, looking out the front windscreen. He is waiting patiently.

A LUXURY CAR enters the parking lot. It stops adjacent to Kyle's car, illuminating him in its headlights. Kyle steps out of the vehicle, and stands in front of the luxury car.

The luxury car's headlights don't go off. The car's engine revs. For a moment, it feels as if the driver might run Kyle down.

The car slips into park, and the headlights die with the engine. There is a moment of inaction, as Kyle stares at the immobile car. The door opens. Kenneth steps out of his car, marching from his car towards Kyle.

KENNETH

Alright fuck wit, she's in the car?

KYLE

(taken aback)

You brought the money?

Kyle takes a couple of steps back as Kenneth continues to charge.

KENNETH

You got her in the boot don't you,
you low life mother fucker!

KYLE

Relax man, where's the money?

Kyle can see that he's not in control of the transaction.

KENNETH

Teach you to steal from me!

Kenneth reaches into his jacket and pulls out a handgun.

KYLE

Wait, what the fu-

(CONTINUED)

BANG! Kenneth shoots Kyle in the head at point blank range, sending the young man reeling to ground, dead.

Kenneth puts the gun away, then bends down to Kyle's body trying to find keys.

KENNETH

I don't do handouts.

Kenneth pulls Kyle's keys out of the dead man's pocket, then walks over to the battered old beater. He opens the trunk, and finds it empty.

Kenneth, angry, closes the trunk.

KENNTH

Shit!

Kenneth throws away the keys in anger, then returns to Kyle's body.

He searches him again, finding the motel key.

He examines it, reads the address, then walks back to his car. The car drives away, and there is silence.

Kyle lies lifelessly in the middle of the carpark.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Kenneth, driving, wipes blood off his forehead and stares menacingly out the front windscreen of the car. He is angry, fired up.

CUT TO:

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Cassandra stands by the window. She looks at her watch.

Her expression is of slight surprise and anxiety - Kyle is late.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Kenneth pulls off the highway into the Motel Car Park.

He picks up the motel key from the passenger's seat, looking for the room number - '16'. He begins to scan the room numbers from his car as he slowly hovers by.

He sees it - Room 16.

Kenneth speeds the car up slowly and pulls up around the corner of the building.

He gets out of the car, crosses the parking lot, and slowly approaches the door for the room. Kenneth is very mindful of his surroundings - Constantly looking around, carefully listening for every sound.

Kenneth sidles up to the door. Slight sounds of scuffling are heard coming from inside.

Kenneth reaches out and rests his hand on the door knob. He takes a moment. He turns the knob and plunges in to the room.

BANG. Kenneth falls on his back having been shot at pointblank range in the chest.

Erika is seen holding the smoking gun sitting on the ground right in front of the now open door.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Erika is stunned, struggling to comprehend what has just happened.

CASSANDRA

What the fuck is he doing here?
Shit, Shit, Shit.

ERIKA

It wasn't sposed to be you...

CUT TO:

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - EVENING

A jump back in time to a few hours prior.

Kyle gets into the car, windows wound down. Cassandra peers in through the driver's side window.

(CONTINUED)

CASSANDRA
See you in two hours.

Kyle starts the engine. He backs out quickly, and drives away.

Cassandra moves quickly into the motel room. She unties Erika's gag and binds, gives her a gun, then the two begin frantically packing Cassandra's suitcase.

CUT TO:

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Cassandra quickly grabs the same suitcase sitting on the bed. Erika is still in the same position, stunned.

CASSANDRA
The money might still be in his car...

Cassandra goes to leave. She notices that Erika has not moved.

CASSANDRA
Erika, we gotta go. Erika!

ERIKA
(to Kenneth)
You weren't 'sposed to be here, dad.

Cassandra marches over to Erika, grabs the gun from her, and drags her out of the hotel room. Erika, still in shock, stares at her dying father as she's dragged along. Cassandra shoves her along.

CASSANDRA
Go to his car, I'll get the keys.

Erika continues to the car, she looks over her shoulder; Kenneth's dead body on the ground. She stops.

ERIKA
I wasn't worth it dad? Do you hate who I am that much?

CUT TO FLASH BACK:

KENNETH IS SHOUTING, TWO FEMALE HANDS HOLD EACH OTHER IN THE FOREGROUND. THE HANDS BELONG TO ERIKA... AND CASSANDRA.

(CONTINUED)

CUT TO:

Cassandra points the gun towards Kenneth's head; standing over his dying body. She kneels down to his level. She begins to search his body for the keys to his car. She finds them.

CASSANDRA

Where's the money? In the car?

Kenneth, gargles his own blood, still holding on to his pride till the end.

KENNETH

I don't.. do... handouts.

Kenneth weezes his last breaths and dies. Cassandra stands up, and leaves the body with haste. Knowing that Erika and her really need to get moving. Cassandra pulls Erika away from the door.

Kenneth lies lifelessly in the doorway.

Cassandra and Erika flee across the motel carpark.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Cassandra is driving, Erika in the passengers seat. Erika is lonesomely looking out the window. She turns her head to Cassandra.

ERIKA

Now what do we do?

Cassandra does not answer. She just drives.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

The car drives into the night, heading towards a glowing city in the distance.

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END