

INT. BEDROOM - PRE-DAWN

The room is dark. There are figures under covers, dreaming deeply.

A man, in his late 40s, is serene in his slumber. This is JOHN. He is thick in the way that an early-morning, toasted egg and bacon sandwich makes you.

The alarm clock over his shoulder, on the bedside table, whilst expressing early in numbers, begins to scream 'WAKE UP'.

JOHN, abruptly awakes, acutely aware of the body next to him.

He silences the alarm clock and checks that his partner hasn't stirred.

She is a beautiful, only ten years past being gorgeous. This is JULIE.

JOHN slips out of their bed and begins getting his work clothes on.

He overalls cover all of his flannelette shirt and he slides into well-worn boots, but doesn't lace them.

He reaches back to the bedside table and grabs something leaning against the clock.

He places it on the inside of the coveralls.

He tip-toes out the room, gently letting the door find its frame.

TITLE: A THOUSAND PILLS AGO

INT. LOUNGEROOM - PRE-DAWN

JOHN finds a chair in the lounge and gets about fixing his shoes.

He lurches forward, his back letting him know all his age and strain. But it is too much.

He struggles backwards, holding his back and side, comforting an old wound that has decided to remind him it is still around.

He tries to lean forward again, to finish his shoes, but he can't quite make it.

He looks around for something to help him. He finds a long shoehorn.

He takes the shoe off, does the laces up and forces his way into it, using the horn to assist him.

INT. KITCHEN - PRE-DAWN

JOHN's plastic lunch box sits on the kitchen counter. The kitchen has seen better days. It was made for a cook, but hasn't had one make use of it in some time.

Robotically JOHN makes his way around the kitchen, finding the bag of white bread.

He chops up a tomato into thick slices.

He places fat pieces of ham on top of the bread before laying the tomato and ending with a square-cut slice of processed cheese.

He slots the plastically-sealed sandwich into the lunch box, alongside a chocolate-flavoured yogurt and a banana before covering it with the lid.

He washes the items he used and the coffee cup.

His hands are strong but aged, the skin cracked. He turns the wedding band on his finger around. It has been there a long time and bulky fingers are thick around it.

He exits the house the same way he exited their bedroom. Without a sound.

EXT. JOHN'S HOUSE - PRE-DAWN

Birds are barely waking up and JOHN is getting in his late 80s Ford.

The car slides down the driveway without being turned on. JOHN expertly turns it down the street, letting the momentum carry him away from the house before turning the engine over. We barely hear it start. He drives past their house.

EXT. FREEWAY - DAWN

JOHN is driving along a multi-lane freeway, his window down, a quiet look on his face. The radio is playing a 70s ballad and he is staring off into the distance, many years before now.

EXT. FACTORY - MORNING

JOHN's car drives into the entrance of the factory as the sun is coming up. The carpark isn't empty, but there is a lot of space for the soon-to-arrive workers.

JOHN exits his vehicle and trudges towards the large factory doors. It is dramatically unaesthetic. Industrial in the way soldering metal should be. It functions to mass produce.

INT. FACTORY - MORNING

Several JOHN-shaped men are moving around a corkboard, and JOHN moves in behind them. They are checking the listings for jobs, times, allocations.

JOHN spies his way through the board, finds his listings and signs himself on to a clipboard on the edge of the crowd.

INT- FACTORY - MORNING

JOHN turns on the large machine, slips on the heavy gloves, the thick plastic eye protection, the hard-hat resting under his arm, and begins to work.

He works a piece of metal into a certain shape. It is both finite work and large-scale production.

He finishes the piece, moves it to a large pile of the same pre-fabrications.

He gathers another raw piece and begins the process again.

INT. FACTORY - MORNING

The sound of metal being shaped rings out. Many other men, growing many other piles.

JOHN has finished another large fabrication. He places it on the pile and rubs his aching back and then down to a knee.

He reaches down into his small carry bag.

He pushes aside his lunch box and digs out some pain medication.

He spills the last two pills out of the container.

He swallows without water and a relief comes over his face.

He slowly lifts another sheet of metal and pushes it under the machine.

INT. FACTORY - LATER THAT MORNING

A whistle sounds.

JOHN slams the large button on the machine and it grinds to a halt.

He reaches down and picks up his carry bag and wanders away from his station.