

ARACHNOPHOBIA

Screenplay

by

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Story

by

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Revisions

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ARACHNOPHOBIA

AL EXT. VENEZUELA - RAINFOREST - DAWN

AL

A long, narrow boat makes its way up the Orinoco River, surrounded on both sides by dense foliage. The jungle is an apparition of nature. It shrieks a cacophony of hideous sounds. In the boat are two Indians and JERRY MANLEY, a freelance photographer who's not at all at home in the jungle. The boat makes a long, sweeping turn in front of three thundering, waterfalls and continues into shore.

31 EXT. LAGOON - DAY

31

As the boat runs up on shore, one of the Indians hops off and pulls it onto the sand. Manley disembarks as photographic equipment is unloaded behind him.

1 EXT. BASE CAMP - DAY

1

Jungle boots followed by mud caked sneakers desperately trying to keep up. Two MEN striding through muck. Green, dripping foliage -- rotting timber. The rain forest floor. Also -- tents, crates equipment -- and a sense of bustling, frantic activity. In the immediate distance the THWAK-THWAK-THWAK SOUND of helicopter warming up.

MANLEY (V.O.)

(stumbling)

Dr. Atherton, I presume. Hey, hey, wait up. Not so fast.

(X)

ATHERTON (V.O.)

(ignoring him)

We're in a hurry, Mr. Manley. Just leave your personal things here and bring your equipment. We're going right up. This is Miguel Higuera - Jerry Manley.

(X)

MANLEY

Sorry I'm late. I've been laid up in Caracas for a while with a fever. If you want to know the truth, I'm not over it yet.

(X)

INTO FRAME

(X)

JAMES ATHERTON, 38, associate professor of entomology at Berkeley. Ambitious, aggressive, some would say too adventuresome -- He wants that full professorship. He's dressed for the jungle. JERRY MANLEY is not.

CONTINUED

1 CONTINUED

Besides the mud caked sneakers, he wears blue jeans, Hawaiian shirt, a photographer's canvas vest and a baseball cap. A CAMERA bag is over his shoulder, A camera in his hand and two more draped over his other shoulder. He's amiable, slightly sarcastic -- not quite the fool he appears to be. The jungle is not a place he likes to be. He sweats profusely as he runs along, trying to keep up with Atherton.

ATHERTON

Be sick on your own time Mr. Manley. I want close ups of all the specimens, and coverage of the surrounding Tepuis.

MANLEY

The what?

ATHERTON

Tepui. It's Indian for mountain, where species have survived in isolation for millions of years.

MANLEY

Any man eating dinosaurs?

HIGUERAS

Only Atherton. Fewer than half the tepuis haveen explored. You're in luck, we're hitting a brand new one today.

MANLEY

Anyone ever get lost?

ATHERTON

Legend says, that men who climb to the "rain desert", never return.

(grinning)

Don't worry, we "small game hunters", don't climb, we fly.

2 THE HELICOPTER

Up ahead. Men bustle around it, loading supplies and equipment in the EARLY MORNING LIGHT. Manley sees two native INDIANS sitting in the copter. They have a distinctly shaped tattoos on each forehead.

MANLEY

These guys friendly?

ATHERTON

I hope so. He's our guide. Stick close and he'll show us the way down.

(X)

(X)

ANGLE ON MANLEY

He gives him a thumbs up.

3
thru
4

OMITTED

3
thru
4

4A ANGLE ON

4A

The chopper rises and climbs high above the rain forest below.

4B ANGLE ON

4B

Leaning back, Manley puts out an arm to steady himself.

4C ANGLE ON

4C

A huge black ANT on the door of the copter near Manley's hand.

ONE OF THE INDIANS

Veintequatros!

4D ANGLE ON

4D

Manley, startled, doesn't understand the warning shout. Atherton reaches out and calmly sweeps the ant towards the open bay door before Manley can react. Too slow, Manley snatches his hand away from the door.

ATHERTON

Twenty four hour ant.

MANLEY

They bite?

ATHERTON

They can kill you, Mr. Manley -- in sufficient numbers.

HIGUERAS

So do some of the frogs here. Don't touch any.

MANLEY

Great...

4E EXT. SKY OVER RAIN FOREST - FIRST LIGHT

4E

The chopper flying, carrying them up to the tepui -- an island in the sky.

4F THE TOP OF THE TEPUIS

4F

Float thousands of feet above thick, white clouds.

4G INT. CHOPPER

4G

ATHERTON

Why shouldn't something so new and wonderful lie in such a country? And why shouldn't we be the men to find it out?

(pauses)

Arthur Conan Doyle - 1912.

(X)

MANLEY

You seem to have a severe case of "Tepui fever" Dr. Atherton.

(X)

Atherton, not amused, leans forward to study the map.

ATHERTON

This is where we're going.

CONTINUED

4G CONTINUED

4G

Manley leans forward to study the map. It's a satellite survey of the tepui. An odd looking section has been circled by Atherton.

ATHERTON

We'll land here, then walk. It's a sinkhole. Years of streaming water tears the rock away.

4H ANGLE ON HELICOPTER

4H

We move upward, climbing higher and higher across overgrown ledges along the immense wall. From cracks and holes in the wall water gushes out under high pressure as if from a huge burst water pipe. Even from the top, from the edge of the plateau hidden in the clouds, the water pours down.

4I ANGLE ON MANLEY

4I

Manley leans out the bay doors taking pictures. Atherton gazes into the bottomless pit of the tepui sinkhole.

ATHERTON

At least 2000 feet deep, It's very dark at the bottom. You'll need flash equipment

The chopper begins its descent toward a rock clearing.

5 OMITTED

5

6 EXT. TEPUI RAIN FOREST

6

The chopper pulls away leaving Atherton, the Indians, Manley and Higuera. Higuera and the Indians carry equipment on two-man pack frames. Atherton hefts a backpack. One of the Indians motions that he wants to be left behind. Higuera speaks with him.

They make their way painfully over a rocky landscape. Moving is torture, their boots cling to the wet morass that quickly obliterates their footsteps.

7 THE MEN

(X)
7

Work their way down the edge of the crater. As they start their descent, Atherton points out a fan-shaped plant to Manley

CONTINUED

7 CONTINUED

MANLEY

All right, lets forget about the fact that no one mentioned poison ants, poison frogs. But a 2000 foot drop? Come on!

ATHERTON

Don't worry, Mr. Manley. The equipment goes down here, our guide will show us the quick way.

ATHERTON

Stegolepis. Edible, and nutritious enough to survive on for weeks.

(X)

Manley wiping his brow.

MANLEY

I'll pass. Plants, they your specialty?

(X)

ATHERTON

Insects, and identifying new ones.

(X)

MANLEY

Just what the world needs, more bugs.

(X)

CONTINUED

7 CONTINUED (2)

ATHERTON
(pleasantly)
What's your specialty, Manley?

MANLEY
... football.

The Indian stares, they pass him.

ATHERTON
(to Indian)
Que pasa?

MANLEY
What's with him?

ATHERTON
This is far as he'll go.

MANLEY
What?

8 DEEPENING GLOOM

MIST clings to moss. Leaves drip MOISTURE. Darkness creeps up the rock wall. What can be distinguished of the landscape darkness seems to have come out of a nightmare. The men stop. There's something different now, they all sense it. Atherton carries a small device that registers temperature and humidity levels. It beeps.

ATHERTON
Amazing. Air temp just went down another ten degrees in the last two hundred meters. Not far now - down there.

Manley is now aware of it. It's gotten so quiet. There is a fear of getting lost here. Pervasive. The men move forward and down.

9 NEAR THE BOTTOM OF THE CRATER

Manley, taking pictures, doesn't realize he's fallen behind the others. The camera flash throws it's sudden, out-of-place illumination. Not paying attention, he steps backward into a large spider web. He starts, tries to untangle himself, when something falls in front of his face. It's a parrot, quite dead, caught in the same sticky, silvery gossamer. With a yell, Manley struggles to get the clinging strands off of him. Higuera calls from up ahead. (X)

CONTINUED

9 CONTINUED

HIGUERAS
Manley...you alright?

MANLEY
What was that? Get it off me! What
is it?

HIGUERAS
Just a parrot. Be careful, you're
too big for us to carry out.

MANLEY
Thanks for your concern.

HIGUERAS
Vamanos.

MANLEY
Vamanos this!

Higueras continues on after Atherton. Manley pulls the
sticky stuff off his clothes. He stares a moment at the
dead bird. He parts the branches revealing a large complex
web. Sunlight plays off the dewey strands making it appear
almost like gold thread.

9A OMITTED

9A
(K)

9B ANGLE ON MANLEY

9B

He takes several quick pictures. Then turns and hurries
after Higueras.

10 OMITTED

10

11 REVERSE ANGLE

11

The movement on the path stops. A dark shape, black,
breathing - irridescant. The extreme Close Up of a face.
A spider face. Suddenly it moves, brushing aside large
leaves. Just a glimpse. We don't see the body of the
spider, it's eight angular legs move swiftly - a fleeting
impression of something malevolent.

11A
thru
13)

OMITTED

11A
thru
13)

14 EXT. - RAIN FOREST - SINKHOLE FLOOR - A SMALL CLEARING 14

In the meager light, Atherton, Higuera and the Indian asst. have finished setting up equipment beneath the canopy of the towering tree. Manley sits on a rotting log, sweating now and feeling ill.

MANLEY

What's it do anyway?

ATHERTON

Ever throw a large fire cracker in a pond?

MANLEY

Maybe when I was a kid. Why?

ATHERTON

What happened?

Atherton is in his element. Manley, feeling ill, struggles with Atherton's childlike questioning.

MANLEY

All sorts of things floated to the surface.

ATHERTON

Exactly. Everybody ready?

Atherton turns on the igeba - Suddenly the air is filled with smoke as it rises in the tree. Atherton turns off the igeba.

ATHERTON

Prepare yourselves.

MANLEY

For what?

ATHERTON

Pictures, Mr. Manley, pictures!

Insects start to fall. Bouncing off his baseball cap and camera. Manley bats them away. Atherton is filled with a sense of anticipation.

The funnels fill with insects.

The "rain" stops. Higuera and the Indian begin collecting specimens. Manley begins to move in closer for a picture of an insect, he hesitates, then turns to Atherton.

CONTINUED

14 CONTINUED

14

MANLEY

What's that?

ATHERTON

I think it's a new species of butterfly. We'll call it Photius Manlii.

He holds the beautiful blue irridescent butterfly to the light. Suddenly, behind him a metallic THUMP. Something large hits a funnel. Atherton turns as two more hit funnels nearby. Atherton's eyes grow wide with excitement. He drops the butterfly.

He and Manley go over to the funnel.

ATHERTON

(tremendously
excited)

Extraordinary - Higuerras, look at those markings.

(X)

Manley blanches.

ATHERTON

Don't just stand there.

MANLEY

Are you sure it's dead?

ATHERTON

Yes....quite dead.

Atherton moves on to another of the spiders.

15
thru
16

OMITTED

15
thru
16

17

MANLEY

17

Delicately, he moves toward the dead spider -- trying not to tremble. Focusing...about to shoot -- when the spider convulses, then rears back. Manley yells in fright, kicks over the cone, then instinctively stomps on the spider, crushing it.

13 ANGLE ON THE SPIDER

13

From high above. Manley crushing the spider on the ground.

19 ANGLE ON ATHERTON

19

He grabs Manley's arm and whips him around.

ATHERTON

What do you think you're doing?!

MANLEY

It was alive.

ATHERTON

Don't be ridiculous.

HIGUERAS

Professor!

Atherton turns toward Higuera. He has put one of the fallen spiders in a specimen jar.

HIGUERAS

No esta muerto.

ATHERTON

(stunned)

That's not possible...They should be dead.

Atherton takes the jar from him, stares in disbelief. The spider bumps against the glass, going for his hand.

ATHERTON

(staring at the spider - almost to himself)

Very aggressive...

He turns to Higuera and shouts directions.

ATHERTON

We'll take two back alive and preserve two.

He means kill them. Atherton uses alcohol to suffocate them. We see this from a LOW ANGLE below his hand which rests on the lid of the jar. His other hand partially obscures the dying spider.

MANLEY

Are you sure that's gonna do it?

ATHERTON

This stuff would kill an elephant.

CONTINUED

19 CONTINUED

19

MANLEY

(X)

Millions of years, then we came
along.

19A LOW ANGLE ON MANLEY

19A

Who now sits wiping his brow, the fever and the shock of
the nights events have been too much for him. He stares
at Atherton suffocating the spider, it's slow death seeming
to calm him.

(X)

20 ANGLE ON SPIDER

20

He watches Manley watch Atherton kill the spider. the
spider almost seems to tense with pain at the sight of the
other spider's death. IT doesn't like seeing member of its
species killed. AND then IT'S MOVING -- It races down the
tree trunk, A multi-legged nightmare.

(X)

COPY

- 21 THE MEN 21
Loading the equipment, preparing to leave. Higuera and the Indian hoist the pack frame to their shoulders and begin to head out the way they came. (X)
- 21A OMITTED 21A
- 22 ANGLE ON THE TEPUI FLOOR 22
Leaves rustle in pursuit of the men leaving. (X)
- 22A ANGLE ON ATHERTON AND THE INDIAN 22A
It races up to the pack frame the men are carrying. Then LEAPS UP grabbing onto it. We see one of ITS legs disappear up under the frame.
- 22B OMITTED 22B
- 22C ANGLE ON SPIDER CLOSE ON THE JUNGLE FLOOR 22C
The rainforest floor moving by below as this large spider is carried out with them.
Atherton and Manley -- walking by -- fail to notice. The body of the dead TAPIR, it's head partially cocooned, slumped across the rotting log.
As they pass by, we see the legs and then the spider, like the ones we just saw. It crawls over the top of the Tapir.
- MANLEY (V.O.)
What do these eat that makes them
so big?
- 23 OMITTED 23
- 24 INT. BASECAMP - DAY 24
Manley stands, taking in the beauty of the tepuis in the distance. He's flushed, feeling still another new wave of fever.
- 25 ATHERTON 25
Is in his outdoor lab. His specimen jars around him, is carefully dissecting one of the dead spiders.

CONTINUED

25 CONTINUED

25

ATHERTON
(murmuring to
himself)
Incredible...

MANLEY (V.O.)
What is?

Atherton looks up. Manley stands over him.

ATHERTON
The spiders, they have no
reproductive organs. Almost like
worker bees or soldier ants. (X)

MANLEY
If these are the soldiers I'd hate
to see the generals.

ATHERTON
(smiling)
How are you feeling?

MANLEY
Like hell. This fever's killin' me.

ATHERTON
You don't look so good. Get some
Rest.

Manley nods. He turns to see Higuera as he upends a large
bag. Dead insects by the score spill out onto a sheet.
Manley shakes his head in dismay - scientists. He moves
away.

26 OMITTED

26

27 EXT. BASE CAMP - TENT - DAY

27

The two Indians set down the second, loaded pack frame a
short distance away from the tent opening.

Manley enters FRAME and sits on the cot and puts the meter (X)
in his bag.

27A CLOSE ON

27A

One leg, then two -- as IT climbs out from under the pack
frame.

173 MANLEY

173

Takes a pill and reaches for his canteen. Drinks. He shivers.

ARA

0015

27C	CLOSE	27C
	SOMETHING leaves wide spaced tracks in the soft sand. Eight of them. SOMETHING MOVES quickly through the tall grass approaching Manley's tent.	
27D thru 27E	OMITTED	27D thru 27E
27F	MANLEY	27F
	Takes off his shoes, shivers, stretches out. Pulls the blanket about him.	(X)
27G	ITS POV	27G
	It WAITS -- until Manley closes his eyes, going to sleep. IT moves in. ITS POV PANNING the length of Manley's body as IT moves. Manley's arm, and HAND exposed. Right arm inside blanket.	(X)
27H	MANLEY	27H
	Rolls and adjusts the blanket. Eyes closed. Sweating.	
27I	NEAR MANLEY	27I
	The spider's legs just disappear under the rumpled blanket.	
27J	OMITTED	27J
27K	ON MANLEY'S FACE	27K
	As he's aware of something.	
27L	A BULGE	27L
	Moving fast, racing up Manley's leg	
27M	MANLEY	27M
	kicks, frightened, and lifts the blanket -	
28	ANGLE ON	28
	Ruby eyes gleam. Green fangs glisten.	

28A ANGLE ON 28A
 Manley's face -- seeing the horror -- reaches down to ward
 it off--

28B CLOSE ON 28B
 The spider's fangs sink into Manley's arm, drawing blood.

28C ANGLE 28C
 Whump! Manley recoils from the bite. A horrible stunned
 moment. Manley tries to scream -- a beat -- then WHAM --
 ITS neurotoxins slam into him like a freight train. His
 jaw CLENCHES -- LOCKS -- as he convulsed -- his eyes bulge
 -- he can't believe this thing did this. His hand grips (X)
 the cot.

28D IT'S POV 28D
 It retreats. Watching Manley convulse. Holds its ground.
 Crouches. POV lowers. Manley tries to scramble away --
 but his body won't work. Its neurotoxins work well.

28E ANGLE ON 28E
 Manley's face convulses. Higuera's enter, sees Manley. (X)

28F
 thru 28F
 28I OMITTED thru
 28I 28I

29 INT. - ATHERTON'S TENT CAMP DAY 29
 Atherton is just about to dissect one of his new spiders
 when a voice shatters the quiet.

HIGUERAS (O.C.)
 Senor? Senor? Professor! (X)
 Atherton bolts and runs.

29A OMITTED 29A

30 INT. MANLEY'S TENT - DAY 30
 Atherton enters tent, bends over Manley. (X)

CONTINUED

30 CONTINUED

30

HIGUERAS

Esta muerto, the fever.

Manley is trying to speak, eyes bulging with effort, no sound. Atherton reaches for the water bottle, brings it to Manley's lips. A thin ribbon of blood flowing from the corner of his mouth where he's bitten his tongue. Atherton suddenly turns to Higuera.

Manley's dead. Atherton, shocked, lowers him to the ground.

31
thru
33

OMITTED

31
thru
33

34 EXT. THE CAMPSITE - DAY

34

A shaken Atherton looks off at the distant Tepuis. Manley lies in a makeshift coffin. Atherton, dressed for travel. (X)
Higuera is standing near him.

ATHERTON

What a shame. I liked him. Have
we notified his family? (X)

HIGUERAS

I contacted the American consulate. (X)

ATHERTON

OK, seal him up. (X)

34A
thru
36

OMITTED

34A
thru
36

37 ANGLE ON

37

The spider climbs onto the side of the coffin. We see two of its eight legs appear on the rough wood. Over the wooden edge we see two of ITS trailing feet disappear inside the coffin with Manley's body. (X)

38 ANGLE ON

38

Atherton and Higuera come back with the lid, place it on top -- and the Indians nail it shut.

38A EXT. CAMPSITE 38A
Indians carry coffin to boat, followed by Atherton. (X)

39 EXT. CANAIMA AIRSTRIp - DAY 39
At the edge of the Jungle.

40 INT. CUSTOMS HUT - DAY 40
South American OFFICIALS. Atherton with the paperwork.
An official scribbles on the release. On his face the
official look of regret. He sighs. (X)
Hands the death certificate back to Atherton.

41 EXT. - THE AIRSTRIp - DAY 41
Atherton watches as the coffin is loaded into the dark,
yawning cargo bay of a Bi-plane.

42 THE AIRPLANE 42
Accelerates down the runway.

43 EXT. CANAIMA CALIFORNIA - AERIAL SHOT - DAY 43

A small, aging but pristine village. Church steeple against dappled trees. Town square. Rambling homes trailing off into the distance.

44 EXT. MORTUARY PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON 44

A hearse pulls up, parks. IRV KENDALL, the down undertaker, and his Assistant off-load and bring it inside. (X)

45 INT. KENDALL'S MORTUARY - DAY 45

Irv sets down the ham and swiss he was demolishing and calmly removes the casket's lid. (X)

45A ANGLE 45A

The resident dog leaps up and snatches the cheese out of the sandwich. Then the resident cat makes off with the ham. (X)

45B BACK TO SCENE 45B

Irv doesn't notice -- he's staring, shocked, into the casket. Finally he crosses to the phone. Checks a number, and dials. In professionally grave-but-reassuring tones: (X)

IRV

Yes, hello. This is Irv Kendall... Are Henrietta or dick available to come to the phone? (X)

(beat, then carefully)

Dick -- hello. Sorry to pester you in this already difficult time, but...I know we'd agreed on an open coffin. But -- well we should maybe consider. Because...well because... (X)

As he speaks, he drifts back to the casket and looks down.

IRV

I'm not sure how they work down in South America, Dick...But let's just say their preservation methods apparently differ from ours, and... (X)

46 WHAT HE SEES 46

Jerry Manley's corpse looks chewed. And drained -- of blood and moisture.

47 IRV

turns away from the awful sight.

IRV

Of course you're welcome to come
down and decide for yourself, Dick,
but...

48 ANGLE

48

We glimpse IT as IT climbs out of the casket. IT's shadow as IT webs down to the mortuary floor. OS:

IRV'S VOICE

But in this already difficult time,
I'm...really not sure I would do
that.

IT moves toward the stairs and the sun's rays streaming down..

48A EXT. MORTUARY - AFTERNOON

48A

ANGLE ON the doggy door. First Irv's dog comes racing out. Then the cat tears ass through the flapping rubber door. (X)

Then we see the first of ITs forelegs, as IT emerges.

49 EXT. PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON

49

A blast of warmth and light. Suddenly, disorientation. Sky/sun/ground/trees, building swirling below.

50 WIDE ANGLE ON

50

A BLACKBIRD flies high, wings beating toward distant trees. Something in its beak...something it thinks is edible.

51 THE BIRD

51

suddenly freezes in the air, dead...dropping like a stone, through the branches of a large tree, onto the ground in front of - (X)

52 EXT. FRONT YARD - AFTERNOON

52

A MAYFLOWER TRUCK is parked in the driveway of a big old two-story house. Movers are unloading furniture. Now a mother and daughter pull up in a station wagon, followed by father and son in a BMW. (X)

The new family has arrived. The head of the household is DR. ROSS JENNINGS, mid-30's, mild-mannered, dryly humorous...As he parks, the family silently gazes at the house. The trauma of moving -- and there's so much to do.

First the kids climb out: Shelley, 8, and Tom, 7. Tom sees his softball fall out of an upended carton, and roll away... (X)

CONTINUED

EC CONTINUED

EC

He hunts for his ball in the tall grass. Feeling around on all fours...quite near where the dead bird and IT landed! (X)

MOLLY steps out of the station wagon. Early 30's, attractive, bright, determined to make this work. Now Ross is standing at his wife's side. (X)

ROSS

(shouts)

Okay, kids, go stake out your rooms. (X)

Shelley dashes for the house. Tom jumps up, chases her in. (X)

MOLLY

Ross, smell that air.

CONTINUED

32 CONTINUED

33

Ross inhales -- and has a sneezing allergy attack. Then he grins at her - just kidding. He starts toward the house, but Molly holds him back.

MOLLY

Let's just -- before we discover what valuables broke in the move, and that the breakfront doesn't fit in the dining room...let's just chant, twice - We did the right thing. We did the right thing.

ROSS

For the kids.

MOLLY

For us. For all of us.

ROSS

(nods)
Goodbye crime. Goodbye grime.

MOLLY

Right.

She takes his hand, they start toward the house.

ROSS

Goodbye culture. Goodbye friends.

MOLLY

Ross, this entire town is yours. You're the doctor. Can there be a more respected figure?

ROSS

Respect is fine, but actually I've always wanted to be feared.

Suddenly he notices that a Mover is casually lifting several wooden cases from the truck.

ROSS

Whoa -- careful with that!

He lifts a bottle of wine from the top case, examines it.

ROSS

Whew. Good.

(slightly
embarrassed)

Don't want to agitate the sediments.

Molly takes this opportunity to pick up a few stray items and start into the house. Ross replaces the wine.

CONTINUED

52 CONTINUED (3)

53

ROSS
Chateau Margaux. Hundred
twenty-seven bucks a bottle.

MOVER
Tasty, huh?

ROSS
At that price, who can afford to
drink it?
(then)
It goes in the basement.

The Mover nods, then walks away from Ross as though he were
slightly crazy.

ROSS
(happily murmurs to
himself)
I mean the cellar. "The wine
cellar".

He looks at the cellar's storm doors. Makes a mental note.

ROSS
Gotta get a big padlock. Protect
my investment.

Now, from OS, we HEAR Tom scream.

(X)

TOM'S VOICE
Dad!

Tom comes racing out of the house and collides with Ross.

(X)

ROSS
Whoa! What is it?

(X)

TOM
Behind one of the boxes! Dad a
spider!

(X)

ROSS hesitates a beat. Then quickly pulls himself
together.

(X)

TOM
(continues)
It came at me. It was ugly! And
bigger than this:

He shows, with his hands, the huge dimensions of the
spider.

CONTINUED

52 CONTINUED (4)

52

He leads Tom back into the house.

(X)

ROSS

Okay, okay, calm down. Now, let's find that spider...and let's find your mom, to take care of that spider.

(X)

53 INT. HOUSE - AFTERNOON

53

They enter, and Tom leads his dad toward the boxes, Ross becomes noticeably more nervous.

ROSS

(calling)

Honey...we're in the living room...We need you to kill a spider...

Shelley comes dashing downstairs.

SHELLEY

Killing a spider --! cool!

Molly enters from the den, brushing dust off her hands.

MOLLY

It's bad luck to kill a spider in a new house.

Ross visibly shrinks from the boxes as Tom rummages, looking for the hideous thing.

ROSS

You just made that up, didn't you, dear?

Molly fearlessly advances, with a piece of paper towel. She throws her husband a pitying glance. Lightly pats his arm.

(X)

MOLLY

Okay... Everything's okay...where is it?

(X)

TOM

Here!

54 ANGLE - THE SPIDER

54

It's a pretty big, brown one -- but certainly not IT!

55 BACK TO SCENE

55

As Molly gently picks it up in the paper towel:

MOLLY

Poor thing. It's much more scared
of us than we are of it.

By the look on Ross' face, we shouldn't be so sure. Molly
moves toward the front door, the kids following.

SHELLEY

Let's give it a home in the barn!

MOLLY

Good idea, Shel...

Ross is behind the kids. He looks like he's going to
faint.

56 EXT. BARN - AFTERNOON

56

In f.g., LOW ANGLE, we glimpse IT's legs as IT crawls into (X)
the barn. Then CAMERA RISES as the family approaches, Ross
bringing up the rear.

TOM

Mom, how come you're not afraid of
bugs, like Dad is?

ROSS

I'm not afraid. Of all bugs. Just
--

He clears his throat and nods, queasily, at the paper
towel.

57 INT. BARN - AFTERNOON

57

The Jennings enter. The barn is jammed with old lumber,
tires, furniture, and junk. There's a hay loft, a molding
pile of hay beneath it. Sunbeams cut through the gaps in
the roof and walls, leaving most of the barn in shadow.

As Molly kneels, releasing the spider, Ross feels the need
to reassert himself as family head. Sternly:

ROSS

Kids - careful of rusty nails!

SHELLEY

Dad - chill out.

58 INT. HOUSE - THAT NIGHT - WITH ROSS AND MOLLY 58

As they move from Shelley's room to Tom's room, checking on their sleeping kids.

ROSS

(quietly)

Except for that incident with that
-- tarantula...today wasn't as
hellish as I'd anticipated.

MOLLY

Poor Ross...does every spider look
like a tarantula to you? (X)

ROSS

No. Some look like black widows... (X)

Molly covers their restless son with a blanket. Then they tiptoe out of his room, and down the hall, into:

59 INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT 59

It's dark, but there's a full moon out -- and by its light we can see that they haven't quite moved in here yet, but all the right boxes are lined up, and there are sheets on the bed. Molly goes straight to the window and throws it open...we HEAR a symphony of CRICKETS. As she gazes out at the glorious sky, Ross crosses, to join her here. (X)

ROSS

Sure you won't miss being in the
thick of things?

MOLLY

With all those stars winking at us?
And those crickets singing? We are
in the thick of things -- of natural
things, a whole universe... (X)

ROSS

I mean work. Strokes from the boss.
Christmas bonuses. Office politics,
caffeine, adrenaline...

Molly finally moves from the window. Plugs in a lamp, and starts pulling things from a box, laying them on the bed.

MOLLY

When I realized my idea of success
was freedom from stress, not
power...and that I'd never get that
at work, no matter how much I earned
-- that was the turning point.

Ross starts to help Molly unpack.

CONTINUED

59 CONTINUED

59

ROSS

Comforting to know that one of us
isn't concerned about money.

MOLLY

We'll be fine. Between my severance
and all your potential patients,
we'll be fine. When're you meeting
with Dr. Metcalf?

ROSS

Monday. The old coot passes me the
torch at ten sharp.

(X)

Suddenly he stops and turns to his wife.

ROSS

We can unpack in the morning. I
have one bottle of Napoleon brandy,
in the basement...

(corrects)

The cellar...

He starts out, she stops him. She appreciates the
sentiment but -

MOLLY

Ross, I'm exhausted.

ROSS

It's bad luck not to make love the
first night in a new house.

He reaches for Molly. They embrace.

MOLLY

You just made that up, didn't you,
dear?

They begin to make love.

60 INT. BARN - SAME TIME

60

The big brown spider crawls into a shaft of moonlight,
still trying to get oriented in its new environment. When
-- a pair of forelegs grabs the spider. Now IT enters
frame. A struggle ensues. But IT isn't fighting with the
brown spider. Just like the Jennings, IT's mating.

CUT TO:

61 EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - MONDAY MORNING

61
(K)

A quaint two-story building in town. TIGHT on the plaque
that reads Samuel Metcalf, General Practitioner.

CONTINUED

0019

61 CONTINUED

METCALF'S VOICE (V.O.)
I have terrific news. At least for
my patients, I think it's
terrific...

62 INT. DR. METCALF'S OFFICE - MORNING

Ross sits across a desk from SAM METCALF, Canaima's
crusty know-it-all GP for three generations. Janice, Sam's
nurse, exits the office.

METCALF
Though my wife is less than
thrilled.

This is puzzling. Ross leans forward.

ROSS
What's that, Dr. Metcalf?

METCALF
I've decided to postpone retirement.

Ross's reaction is a non-reaction -- as though he hasn't
registered what Metcalf just said.

METCALF
I don't know for how long, but --

ROSS
-- But --

Oblivious to Ross' mounting horror, Metcalf continues.

METCALF
But when I thought really hard about
it, I realized - There's only one
thing left to do after you retire.
And I've seen too many friends do
that very thing -- just six months,
a year after they gave up their
professions.

ROSS
But you -- When we spoke just four
months ago, you assured me --

Metcalf restates, with a hint of impatience, now.

METCALF
I'm not ready to retire, Doctor.
And if my wife can't rush me onto
it, you sure as hell can't either.

He offers Ross a dry, craggy smile.

63 EXT. METCALF'S OFFICE - MORNING - FIVE MINUTES LATER

63

Ross exits, dazed. And sees that his car is being ticketed!

ROSS

-- Excuse me --

The beefy young Sheriff, LLOYD PARSONS, barely glances up from his pad.

PARSONS

Gotta feed the meter, pard'ner.

ROSS

Yes well I -- I'm just leaving and --

PARSONS

Little late, though, huh?

Ross is in no mood.

ROSS

I do have medical plates.

PARSONS

Oh right. You're that new doctor.

ROSS

Ross Jennings.

PARSONS

Sheriff Parsons...You're a Yale grad, I heard.

(X)

ROSS

That's right.

PARSONS

Well it's just a school, isn't it?

He hands Ross his ticket. Now, from OFF-SCREEN, we HEAR:

OLDER WOMAN'S VOICE

That's quite enough, Lloyd Parsons.

64 ANGLE ON MARGARET HOLLINGS

64

Feisty, spry, late-60's. She snatches the ticket from Ross and begins to tear it into little pieces.

MARGARET

A young doctor comes to Canaima, and you write him a parking ticket?

CONTINUED

64 CONTINUED

64

PARSONS

What're you doing, Miz Hollings?

MARGARET

What the whole town ought to be doing.

She tosses the scraps of paper high into the air, so that they shower down around Ross. She smiles at him.

MARGARET

Consider this your ticker-tape parade.

Ross is embarrassed, but amused -- even a little moved.

ROSS

Thank you.

PARSONS

That's littering, Miz Hollings.

The Sheriff is down on his knees, collecting the scraps. Margaret ignores him, addresses Ross.

MARGARET

Lloyd's been a bully since the fifth grade. I oughta know, I held him back. Walk me to my automobile?

They proceed down the block, leaving Sheriff Parsons kneeling on the sidewalk. Margaret hooks an arm in Ross'.

ROSS

Thanks for that swift intervention. How'd you know who I was?

MARGARET

We're neighbors. Gave you a standing ovation when you arrived. Between you and me, Sam Metcalf only recently gave up leeches.

(X)

ROSS

He also recently gave up retirement.

Margaret nods. Like everyone else in this little town, she knows everything.

ROSS

We moved down from San Francisco with the understanding that I'd inherit all his patients. Now I have none.

CONTINUED

64 CONTINUED (2)

64

They've reached Margaret's Bronco. She stops. Smiles.

(K)

MARGARET

No, Dr. Jennings. You have one.

CUT TO:

65 INT. MOLLY'S STUDIO - NOON

65

She's unpacking stuff for her nice new life as Ross enters.

MOLLY

Look at this -- the light! On the sunniest day in the city we didn't get light that just -- bathes you...

There is an easel, a framing table darkroom equipment...As she happily picks out the perfect place for everything.

MOLLY

Maybe they'll give me a show in town. Don't they do that in little towns? In the town hall? "Molly Jennings: A Retrospective". Course I'll need to take some pictures first --

And now she notices the funny look on Ross' face. She stops fluttering around the room and looks at him. What?

ROSS

There's good news and bad news. Should we go in reverse alphabetical order and start with good?

Molly nervously nods.

ROSS

I'm seeing my first patient this afternoon. A great old dame. Lives just up the road.

MOLLY

Terrific. And the bad news --?

Ross looks out the window down onto the back yard, where Tom and Shelley are playing.

ROSS

She's my only patient.

MOLLY

-- Today?

CONTINUED

65 CONTINUED

Ross turns away from the window, back to Molly.

ROSS
Metcalf changed his mind. He's not ready to retire.

MOLLY
What?

ROSS
He panicked, I think is what it is. He's decided that if he retires he'll lose his zest for life and die within forty-eight hours, or something --

MOLLY
But he told you...we looked in fourteen different towns! We bought a house, you rented an office...What're we gonna do?

ROSS
Kill him?

MOLLY
(blinks, then)
I've got my FAX machine. I'll work part-time from here. A phone and a FAX machine, it's all I need. Call my old clients, tell 'em I'm available part-time. Even with half my commiss --

Ross takes Molly's shoulders. Firmly, holding her gaze.

ROSS
We're gonna be fine. Like you said.

MOLLY
With one patient?

ROSS
Maybe I'll get lucky and all of her systems are ravaged by disease... like having seven patients in one.

CUT TO:

66 INT. ROSS' EXAMINING ROOM - THAT AFTERNOON

66

Ross has just finished examining Margaret Hollings. He helps her sit up, on the exam table, trying hard to sound cheery.

CONTINUED

66 CONTINUED

ROSS

You're fit as a fiddle. Not a damn thing wrong with you.

MARGARET

(as she dresses)

Oh, Dr. Jennings...I'm sorry.

ROSS

Sorry? What did you think? I was hoping you were ravaged by disease?

MARGARET

What bout my high blood pressure?

ROSS

You have above-normal systolic pressure. That's far less dangerous than a diastolic elevation. And yours is well below a level that requires treatment.

MARGARET

Then I don't need these?

She fumbles in her pocketbook and brings out a bottle of pills, which Ross takes a look at.

ROSS

No.

He chucks the pills in the garbage. Trying to be polite:

ROSS

I guess Dr. Metcalf isn't aware of the difference between the two types of hypertension.

MARGARET

(as she hops off the table)

I already told you - Dr. Metcalf isn't aware of the difference between his ass and a hole in the ground.

Ross laughs out loud. He leads her out of the office.

MARGARET

But Canaima folks're comfortable with him. Wasn't always so, though...

67 EXT. ROSS' OFFICE - AFTERNOON 67

As Ross walks Margaret over to her Rambler:

MARGARET

When he first hit town, just after the war, everyone was terribly standoffish.

ROSS

Really? How'd he overcome that?

MARGARET

He threw a party. Invited the whole town. If Sam Metcalf was half as good at medicine as he is a public relations...

She climbs into her car. Ross watches as she pulls out and starts down the street. Then stops, in the middle of the intersection. Sticks her head out the window.

MARGARET

That's it! Next month, when the afternoon are cooler...we'll throw you a party!

ROSS

We will?

He's wearing a bemused smile as Margaret drives away.

CUT TO:

68 EXT. JENNINGS HOUSE - THAT AFTERNOON 68

The kids are playing on the front lawn. Molly is wandering around the grounds, camera around her neck, snapping the occasional photo. Now she approaches the barn.

69 INT. BARN - AFTERNOON 69

Molly swings open the barn door. Dust floats golden in shifts of sunlight...She hesitates, then carefully steps inside. Looks around...looks up...and then gasps at -

70 A WEB 70

Intricate, fascinating, glistening in a shaft of sunlight. (X)

71 BACK TO MOLLY

Smiling with pleasure. The gasp was one of awe. She lifts the camera and starts clicking off shots.

Now she finds the ladder to the loft. Carefully climbs it, hoping to get a better angle. Halfway up she focuses, shoots -- but she's out of film. A sigh of disappointment, and then she descends the ladder.

72 HIGH ANGLE

Molly takes one last wondering look up at the web, and then exits the barn. We hear the HISS. She doesn't.

MOLLY'S VOICE (V.O.)

...So, your one patient...Is she a walking health hazard?

73 INT. KITCHEN - EARLY SUMMER EVENING - STILL LIGHT

The Jennings are enjoying an Italian supper.

ROSS

I couldn't even find a wart on her.

MOLLY

Great. So what do we do...?

ROSS

We enjoy the fact that, since we no longer live in San Francisco, we no longer must refer to this as "pasta".

He sucks in a forkful of linguini.

TOM

Skinny spaghetti!

ROSS

Attaboy!

He glances over at Molly, far too worried about finances to find this funny.

ROSS

On the bright side, Margaret -- my tragically healthy patient -- has offered to throw us a Get To Know Dr. Jennings party. One cup of punch with the handsome new GP and the good people of Canaima will see the light, abandon mean old Doc Metcalf and --

CONTINUED

73 CONTINUED

MOLLY

Well, it's a sweet gesture.

ROSS

I thought so.

The kids have cleaned their plates. Shelley waves out the kitchen window, at --

74 OUTSIDE THE WINDOW

A GIRL, about Shelley's age, but a bit more of a tomboy.

75 BACK TO SCENE

Shelley is already halfway out the door, Tom following.

SHELLEY

Can we go play with Bunny?

MOLLY

I want you both in before dark.

The kids go racing out. Ross looks at his wife - "Bunny"?

MOLLY

Bunny Beechwood. She popped over this morning. A neighbor. Seems nice...

(X)

Ross watches the kids disappear. He can't help but smile.

ROSS

Whattaya bet they're gonna go chase fireflies or something?

76 EXT. HOUSE - STILL LIGHT

76
(X)

Bunny leads the charge.

BUNNY

Wanna blow up a bullfrog?

Shelley looks game. Tom isn't so sure, but he tags along.

77 BACK TO THE KITCHEN

77

As Ross clears the table and Molly starts washing dishes:

CONTINUED

77 CONTINUED

ROSS

"The country"... "Neighbors"... I
gotta admit... If we don't starve to
death here, it's all kinda -- cute.

MOLLY

(laughs, agreeing)
Got some great shots in the barn
today. If my camera picks up the
web with half the detail my eye
did...

Hefting an armload of dishes, Ross freezes.

ROSS

"The web"?

MOLLY

Our little spider made himself a
hell of a home. Even you'll
appreciate --

Ross dumps the dishes in the sink.

ROSS

I don't think you understand, Moll
- I have --

MOLLY

-- a terrible fear of spiders. I
know that. Which is why you should
force yourself to come look at the
web.

ROSS

"Look at the web"?

MOLLY

And see it for the extraordinary and
beautiful creation it is.
Therapy... to work through this
irrational f...

ROSS

It's not irrational. My fear
derives from a very specific
incident.

MOLLY

Of course, darling.

ROSS

I was two years old --

CONTINUED

77 CONTINUED (2)

MOLLY

Nobody remembers anything from when
they were two.

ROSS

(adamant)

It's my first memory.

Molly takes his hand and leads him out of the kitchen, to -

78 EXT. HOUSE - MAGIC HOUR

She is gently bringing Ross down to the barn.

ROSS

I was in my crib. I'd just woken
up from a nap -- I opened my eyes
-- and there it was. Probably just
a daddy long-legs --

He involuntarily shudders at the recollection, and the
name.

ROSS

But it seemed just huge, and it came
crawling through the bars of the
crib, and it touched my bare leg -
I was just wearing a diaper -- all
my limbs just froze, in fear. As
though I was paralyzed. I couldn't
stop it as it crawled along my naked
skin, I distinctly felt all of its
legs --

His throat is actually constricting as he relives this.
And they're at the barn now, and Molly is opening the barn
door.

ROSS

Then up to my face, and the feeling
of utter helplessness, of being
explored by this alien thing --

79 INT. BARN - MAGIC HOUR

Almost entirely in shadow now. Ross and Molly are dwarfed
and silhouetted in the big barn doorway.

ROSS

I mean, can you blame me for being
a spiderphobe?

Molly leads him in.

MOLLY

Arachnophobe.

ROSS

Whatev...

He trails off. He sees the web -- and it is oddly
beautiful...

ROSS

Hunh.

CONTINUED

79 CONTINUED

79

MOLLY
Impressive, isn't it?

(X)

ROSS
Molly...I think you spared the
eight-legged Frank Lloyd Wright.

(X)

Molly laughs. And Ross moves forward, toward the ladder --
tentatively, but with more than a trace of determination.

ROSS
...Therapy, right?

MOLLY
What courage...my hero.

He starts climbing.

ROSS
(softly, like a
mantra)
Therapy.

Molly watches, pleased.

80 WITH ROSS ON THE LADDER

30

Fear and anticipation mingle, as he climbs. Higher.
Closer to the web. Calling her encouragement.

MOLLY
See? You still have full use of all
your limbs...

Closer, higher. And now, toward the top, Ross pauses. His
smile freezes, as he finally glimpses -

81 THE BOTTOM OF THE WEB

81

Half-devoured mouse carcasses, cocooned insects...

82 ROSS

82

Suddenly looks like he's going to be very sick. And then -

33 ANGLE

30

A rotten wooden rung gives way! Ross grabs at the ladder, desperately trying to regain his balance --

-- Ross --! MOLLY (OS)

CONTINUED

33 CONTINUED 33

-- as the whole ladder shifts, jarring the loft platform and

34 SOMETHING 34

comes flying down on a web strand right at Ross. It's --

35 A SNAKE 35

Dead, rotting, its head in a hangman's noose of webbing! (K)
It bounces off Ross' horror-stricken face, then dangles there -- jerking slightly, as though it were somehow still alive!

36 ROSS 36

screams and falls, into the moldering hay below.

37 BACK TO SCENE 37

Molly, who is screaming right along with him, helps Ross out of the hay - then they both go racing out of the barn, like two little terrified children, SCREAMING all the way.

37A NEW ANGLE - FROM THE LOFT 37A

As the Jennings run out we PULL BACK, to REVEAL in f.g.

Small, grey spiderlets climb out from a white silk egg sac.

VARIOUS VOICES (VO)
Canaima welcomes you!

CUT TO:

38 EXT. MARGARET'S LAWN - LATE AFTERNOON (A MONTH LATER) 38

A lovely, cool, late summer afternoon. Vintage SINATRA wafts from a boom-box on loan.

Kids play on the periphery; the town's social power circle gathers around the hor d'oeuvres to greet the Jennings.

We recognize Margaret, and Sam Metcalf, here with his prim but pleasant wife, EVELYN.

CONTINUED

33 CONTINUED

METCALF

I've done some checking on you,
Ross.

Metcalf's tone sounds stern. Now he addresses the group.

METCALF

When I'm finally ready to throw in
the towel, Dr. Jennings is your man.
By all accounts, a fine physician.

Ross and Molly summon wan smiles. Metcalf pops a
cheeseball in his mouth, takes in the party and gives a
mellow sigh.

METCALF

This brings back memories. Right
after the war, when I moved to
Canaima, the whole town threw me a
party.

EVELYN

No, Sam...you threw yourself a
party.

Metcalf glances with irritation at his wife. Then back to
the Jennings.

METCALF

Now that was a party.

So saying, he takes his wife's hand and moves on. Molly
leans into her husband.

MOLLY

(whispers)
Now that is an asshole.

89 WITH ROSS - FIVE MINUTES LATER

39

Circulating. Now a big, friendly fellow is standing here.

FRIENDLY FELLOW

Mayor Bob Blacknell. Canaima
welcomes you.

Ross puts out his hand to shake, but the Mayor is busily
unbuttoning his collar. Now he pulls his shirt away,
exposing a very large, ugly birthmark on his collarbone.

MAYOR

Think I should have this removed?

Ross reaches into his pocket.

CONTINUED

39 CONTINUED

39

ROSS
(Pleasantly)
Here's my card, come see me at the
office.

MAYOR
Oh no -- Sam Metcalf's my doctor.

Ross shrugs. Gives the birthmark a quick appraisal. Then

ROSS
Sure hope he gets all of it.
The mayor stares at Ross as Ross walks away, smiling.

90 ANGLE - MOLLY

90

is stuck with the BEECHWOODS: Strapping dad, HENRY; his
strapping teenage son with matching buzz-cut, BOBBY; his
strapping teenage daughter, BECKY; and his wife, EDNA.

They all watch Bunny directing the Jennings children in
play.

HENRY
What's Bunny showing them?
Henry squints. Finally he figures it out. He smiles.

HENRY
Green Beret hand-to-hand combat
techniques.

MOLLY
Oh.
She turns to the Beechwoods' older kids.

MOLLY
(making
conversation)
So...Becky...have you thought about
what you'll major in at college?

BECKY
Gym.
Henry grins, proud.

HENRY
It's in the genes...Bobby here's
the Titans' star quarterback.
(MORE)

CONTINUED

90 CONTINUED

90

HENRY (Cont'd)
Taught him to throw a football
before he could walk. I coach the
team.

MOLLY
Ah -- nepotism, eh?

Henry looks blank. His wife helps out.

EDNA
Actually we're Baptists.

Molly manages a polite (though slightly dazed) smile.

(X)

91 OMITTED 91

92 INT. BARN - LATE AFTERNOON 92
CAMERA SLOWLY RISES up to the loft platform.

93 ON THE PLATFORM 93
A freshly killed CRICKET in the f.g. Now IT's foreleg
sweeps the dead cricket toward -

94 ANGLE 94
The spiderlets have grown up! They're a new breed, with
the distinctive waspish shape and markings of the father.
IT is feeding its offspring, as though to nourish them for
a strenuous mission ahead.

95 OMITTED 95

CUT TO:

96 EXT. MARGARET'S HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON 96
Ross and Molly have reconnoitered at the punchbowl.

ROSS
(with a gentle
smirk)
There's punch. Didn't I say there'd
be punch?

CONTINUED

96 CONTINUED

96

MOLLY

That's what you said.

Ross pours a cup for Molly, one for himself. They sip -- then gasp! Now Margaret is standing here. Grinning.

MARGARET

Pace yourselves. That's my high octane, no-knock premium blend.

ROSS

Whoa Margaret...

96A INT. JENNINGS BARN - SAME TIME

96A

ANGLE on the ladder -- and suddenly the spiders are crawling single-file down a post...

(X)

(X)

ANGLE on the pile of moldering hay -- and now spiders appear on its summit, and begin to descend...

(X)

97 EXT. JENNINGS BARN - LATE AFTERNOON

97

LOW ANGLE on the barn doors...and here come the spiders! In little columns, like crack soldiers, fanning out in several directions.

(X)

(X)

98 BACK TO THE PARTY - AWHILE LATER

98

The Jennings are now paired off with Irv Kendall, and his wife BLAIRE. The Kendalls have stayed very close to the hors d'oeuvres, which they are happily inhaling.

(X)

(X)

IRV

Nobody comes up to a mortician at parties and says, "Irv, y'dont think I might be dead, do ya?" Must drive you nuts, trying to dip a Dorito while somebody shows you his growths...

BLAIRE

How do you handle it?

ROSS

I mention that, until quite recently, my wife was a successful stockbroker.

A beat -- then Irv turns to Molly.

CONTINUED

98 CONTINUED

99

IRV

Say, what do you think about this
new Artificial Intelligence lab just
went public, up in Palo Alto --

Before Molly can answer, everyone's attention is seized.

CONTINUED

98 CONTINUED (2)

98

WOMAN (OS)

(loud, slurred)

Why shouldn't I have another?

Angle on a woman - late 50's, blowsy, and crooked. She's just poured herself another cup of that high-octane punch. Her concerned HUSBAND is trying to get her to set it down. (X)

WOMAN

No! I'm thirsty.

She defiantly downs half the cup.

Like the rest of the guests, the Jennings are trying not to stare. The Kendalls turn away too.

IRV

The Manleys. Their son recently passed away. (X)

MOLLY

That's awful. How?

IRV

Not sure. He was a photographer... caught something on some scientific expedition in Venezuela. (X)

Now HENRIETTA MANLEY tipsily challenges the uneasy guests. (X)

HENRIETTA

Have you lost a son? I'll stop right now for anyone who ever lost a son...

A chill passes over the party as Henrietta drains her cup. Then lurches back to the punchbowl for a refill.

HENRIETTA

And nobody'd tell me how, or even let me see him t'say goodbye...
What's happening to this town?

99 ANGLE PUNCHBOWL TABLE

99

The first of the spider soldiers has arrived! We watch it crawl up the table leg, then scurry across the tablecloth
--

100 BACK TO SCENE

100

Finally Mr. Manley takes an arm and Margaret takes the other -- in the process, she gently extracts the empty cup from Henrietta's grip and tosses it onto the punchbowl table --

(X)

101 THE CUP

101

lands, upside down, on the spider.

(X)

(X)

With everyone's eyes on Henrietta, nobody notices that the cup is moving -- apparently by itself -- across the table.

Now the cup topples, onto the grass.

102 OMITTED

102

(X)

103 BACK TO SCENE

103

The Jennings and Kendalls watch as Henrietta, in b.g. now, bursts into tears and Margaret consoles her and helps her into her Friend's car, as the Friend gets behind the wheel.

IRV

I had to recommend a closed coffin.
The body looked chewed up, drained
-- like some vampire'd had a go at
it.

104 OMITTED

104

(X)

TIME CUT:

105 THE PARTY

105

is finally over. The Jennings say goodnight to Margaret.

(X)

MARGARET

I wager you made enough friends
today to break Sam Metcalf's
deathgrip.

(X)

CONTINUED

105 CONTINUED

105

ROSS

It was wonderful, Margaret. I can't
thank you enough.

MARGARET

Nor I you, for freeing me from those
damn pills. With my system clean,
I feel I could compete in a
triathalon.

ROSS

On the basis of your checkup, I'd
tend to agree.

The Jennings drift to their car. The Kendalls are the last
to leave. One final meatball each. Margaret trills at (X)
them.

MARGARET

Irv? Blaire? Can I get you a (X)
doggie bag?

She's kidding. But the Kendalls smile and nod, dead (X)
serious.

So Margaret turns and goes up the front steps into her (X)
house, to get them a doggie bag.

106 OMITTED

106

106A LOW ANGLE - A SPIDER
follows her in.

106A

CUT TO:

106B EXT. JENNINGS BARN AND HOUSE - NIGHT - LATER

106B

A wide angle of the house and barn. A cricket is loudly (X)
CHIRPING.

A beat later, the cricket suddenly stops, in MID-CHIRP. (X)
The abrupt silence is unnatural, and not a little
unnerving.

CUT TO:

107 OMITTED

107

108 INT. MARGARET'S LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

108

We watch as, in b.g., she puts out the cat for the night. (X)

MARGARET

(X)

Happy hunting, Felix. See you in
the morning.

Now, she enters, in her pajamas, with a glass of milk. (X)
Sets the milk down on the side-table, in front of a framed
photo of her late husband.

CONTINUED

108 CONTINUED

108

MARGARET
(to the photo)
I never touch the stuff myself.
(then)
Just fooling.

(X)

She picks up the milk, drinks it, settles back on the sofa with it. TILT UP.

(X)

108A ON THE WALL

108A

Just above her, we see a large, dark, moving shadow -- it ominously shifts and expands as Margaret sips, oblivious.

108B ANGLE - SIDE-TABLE

108B

The spider is hiding inside the lampshade!

108C MARGARET

108C

Between sips of milk -

MARGARET
(tenderly tells the
photo)
You'd've had too much punch, and
been the life of the party.

She drains the glass, and sets it down on the side-table. Then, with her palm, lightly places a kiss on the photo.

Then rises. Pulls the chain of the lamp, to turn it off -- and as she does, the spider suddenly

(X)

CONTINUED

108C CONTINUED

108C

drops down from the chain on a single thread onto her wrist.

The room -- and THE SCREEN -- goes BLACK.

CUT TO:

109
thru
113 OMITTED

109
thru
113

114 EXT. JENNINGS HOUSE - NEXT MORNING

114

They've done some painting and pruning these past few weeks. PUSH IN ON the cellar's open storm doors, heavy-duty padlock clearly visible.

115 INT. BASEMENT - ROSS

115

has finally finished assembling a wine-rack, from a kit of course

ROSS

Ta-da.

He sets down his screwdriver on a utility counter just below a rechargeable flashlight, stored in its socket.

ROSS

For my next trick...

Then picks up his Ramset. Brings it over his head, to afix the wine-rack to the ceiling. Fires. And --

115A INSERT - THE NAIL

115A

shoots right through the ceiling, as though the ceiling were made of cottage cheese, not wood.

115B INT. KITCHEN

115B

Molly hangs up the phone, seeming concerned. Tommy plays with toy cars on the floor. Suddenly breaking through the floor, comes a nail, blocking the car's path.

115C BACK TO SCENE

115C

Astounded, Ross taps another part of the ceiling with the Ramset -- and fires again.

115D ANGLE * MOLLY

115D

She lifts her foot just as the nail comes through the
floor

(X)

Ross!

MOLLY

(X)

116 INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

116

Ross comes in, sweaty and upset.

ROSS
I could've killed one of you! The
nail just went straight up --!

Molly examines the nail which had come through the floor.

ROSS
It's all rotten down there! My wine
cellar. Probably crawling with
termites...Christ, I'm surprised
we haven't fallen through the floor!

MOLLY
(vaguely)
I'll call the exterminator.

ROSS
You're rather casual about the death
of my dream.

Molly sympathetically pours Ross a glass of juice. As he
gulps it, she reveals what's troubling her.

MOLLY
I've been trying to reach Margaret
to thank her for last night. The
line's been busy all morning.

ROSS
Then I guess she's gabbing. Old
ladies are known for gabbing, right?

Molly gives Ross a "please -- I'm worried" look.

CUT TO:

117 EXT. ROAD - MORNING - WITH ROSS

117

He briskly walks toward Margaret's house, in the distance.
At first, he's a little miffed - Why am I bothering? But
halfway there, a queer sense of foreboding overtakes him.
Suddenly, without knowing quite why, Ross breaks into a
trot --

117A EXT. MARGARET'S HOUSE - MORNING

117A

As Ross approaches, he hears a harsh GRATING sound. Now he sees that Margaret's cat is SCRATCHING at the screen door.

On the walkway, he stoops to pick up her still uncollected newspaper.

Then, on the porch, scoops her agitated cat into his free arm and holds it close to him.

ROSS
(murmuring)
Good kitty...

The cat calms down. But Ross doesn't. Squinting through the screen door, he sees -

117B INSERT - A LIGHT

117B

has been left on, in the kitchen.

117C ANGLE - THROUGH THE SIDE WINDOWS

117C

Still cradling paper and cat, an increasingly apprehensive Ross is now peering through a living room window. He sees -

117D THE PHONE

117D

on the floor, receiver lying two feet away.

117E BACK TO ROSS

117E

as he moves to the next window. Squints in. And sees -

117F MARGARET'S FOOT

117F

Bare, still, and sticking straight up.

SMASH CUT:

113 TWO CARS

113

are parked together - a patrol car and Irv Kendall's
hearse. WIDEN. We're in -

(K)

119 EXT. MARGARET'S PORCH - NOON

119

Ross stands here, dazed and disbelieving. Dr. Metcalf and
Sheriff Parsons confer a few feet away. Detached.

PARSONS

So whattaya think, Doc?

METCALF

Heart attack. Bound to happen
sooner rather than later. She had
a history of high blood pressure.
Even with the pills I'd put her on
--

ROSS

I took her off them.

Metcalf glares. Stunned and indignant.

METCALF

What right did you have to do that?

ROSS

(evenly)

She came to me. As a patient. I
examined her --

METCALF

And you didn't see that she was
hypertensive?

ROSS

Her diastolic reading was normal.
Her systolic elevation was below
160. If you've stayed current, you
know that's not considered --

METCALF

(bristles)

This is a very serious matter young
man.

Margaret is carried out, between Ross and Metcalf, on a
stretcher. Both men stare at the body.

METCALF

You may well have killed this lovely
woman.

CONTINUED

119 CONTINUED

119

ROSS

I don't think so. She was in fine
shape. I want an autopsy.

METCALF

Never.

CONTINUED

119 CONTINUED (3)

119

ROSS

She was my patient.

METCALF

And mine, for forty years. God knows Margaret wouldn't want to be butchered. Nobody in this town would want that for her...you come from a big city, where people don't care about each other. I don't expect you to understand, Doctor.

Sheriff Parsons dopily nods, in agreement with Dr. Metcalf. Metcalf turns to him.

METCALF

Give it here, Lloyd. I'll sign the death certificate myself.

PARSONS

I'm satisfied if you're satisfied.

He hands Metcalf the documents. Metcalf expeditiously scribbles.

METCALF

A little advice, Doctor. If you're ever going to fit in, in Canaima, you'd better learn to be sensitive to the feelings of the good people here.

ROSS

(snaps)

Sorry that I'm more interested in medicine than public relations.

In response, Metcalf starts for his car. At his back.

(X)

ROSS

Cardiac victims don't usually bite their tongues in half, Doctor. It's as though she went into tetanic convulsions. Until I know why, this case isn't closed.

As he climbs into his car, Metcalf pauses.

(X)

METCALF

You're damned right it's not closed. I believe that you may be guilty of medical malpractice. I intend to pursue the matter to its conclusion.

CONTINUED

119 CONTINUED (3)

119

He slams the car door and drives away. Ross just stands there. Sheriff Parsons is smirking at him.

CUT TO:

120 EXT. TOWN CEMETERY - TWO DAYS LATER

120

An appropriately gray day. Irv and his Assistant are at their hearse. Half the town was gathered for Margaret Hollings' funeral. As the crowd disperses, Henry Beechwood -- the football coach -- approaches Ross (with Molly). Quietly, though not as quietly as Ross would like:

HENRY

I understand she was your patient.
Your only patient.

Angered, Ross is about to say something nasty, but:

HENRY

Come by the gym tomorrow, at three.
Just a mile down the road from you.
I'll throw some business your way.

Ross takes a breath. Manages a smile.

ROSS

Thanks, Henry.

CUT TO:

121 INT. JENNINGS HOUSE - THAT NIGHT

121

ANGLE up the stairs on Molly in the doorway of her sleeping daughter's room. She dims the light, then tiptoes down to:

122 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

122

Molly pauses, in the doorway. Watching Ross disconsolately pour from a bottle of Beaujolais. Now he looks up, sees her. She sits down beside him. And sips, from his glass. (X)

ROSS

Little young, isn't it?

MOLLY

The wine?

CONTINUED

122 CONTINUED

122

ROSS

The wine's in diapers. No, Margaret. To die, at sixty-eight. That's ten years below the life expectancy of a Caucasian female, did you know that?

Molly puts a hand on Ross' arm.

MOLLY

Ross, you're a fine doctor. I'm sure you knew exactly what you were doing when you took her off those pills --

ROSS

Like I knew what I was doing when I chose this town? With the country doctor from hell? Or this fine house? Which is rotting from the ground up?

MOLLY

I'm taking care of that in the morning.

ROSS

Well Margaret's still gonna be dead in the morning.

He pours himself another glass of wine. Drains it.

ROSS

And I still want to know what killed her.

SMASH CUT:

123 CLOSE - INSECT

123

Enormous. Wild, bloodshot eyes, drooling jaws, razor-sharp mandibles. We PULL BACK, revealing -

124 EXT. PICK-UP TRUCK - NEXT DAY

124

As it pulls up in front of the Jennings house. The "insect" is a fanciful emblem painted on the side of the pick-up, marked Bugs Be Gone. McClintock Infestation Management.

(X)

Now DELBERT MCCLINTOCK steps out of the pick-up and starts toward the house with a bit of a swagger. He's a big man for whom exterminating is a crusade; he takes a fierce pride in his state of the art hardware. If he were just a little more competent...

(X)

125 INT. KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

125

Delbert stops in the doorway. Squints. Sniffs, as though he could smell the little varmints.

DELBERT
Termites, huh?

MOLLY
That's what my husband thought.

DELBERT
-- He's an expert in these matter?

(X)

MOLLY
Well...no.

DELBERT
Didn't think so. Glad you called me. No room for amateurs in this game.

126 INT. BASEMENT - AFTERNOON

126

Molly leads Delbert down the stairs. Halfway down, he stops dead. He whips out a stethoscope. Places it against the wall. Listens, and makes soft "hmm" sounds, like a doctor.

MOLLY
What is it?

DELBERT
Hard to say for sure. Would anyone object if I tore down this wall?

MOLLY
I would.

DELBERT
False alarm, then. Lead on. .

127 ANGLE FURNACE - FIVE MINUTES LATER

127

Delbert is using the flame from the furnace-lighter to see behind the furnace. (X)

DELBERT
(solemnly)
You got humidity down here, from being close to the river. Guess you know that moisture and a nice steady temp are Miami Beach for your basic termite.

(X)

(X)

CONTINUED

127 CONTINUED

127

He notices a can of commercial insecticide stored on a shelf here, and chuckles at the pathetically inadequate product.

MOLLY

Oh-oh. How bad is it?

Delbert turns back to her. He hates to admit it, but -

DELBERT

Didn't find a one. Go figure.

MOLLY

Then -- why is all the wood rotting?

DELBERT

I'll tell you why. Bad wood.

MOLLY

Well so...what should we -- do?

DELBERT

Tear out the bad wood. Put in good wood.

He makes his way around the wine cases. Peers inside.

MOLLY

My husband thought this'd make a good wine cellar.

DELBERT

I collect beer cans myself.

He starts back up the basement stairs, Molly following.

DELBERT

Got a rare '74 Miller Lite.
Misprint on the label. Only a
hundred or so cans in circulation.
Your husband just might want to take
a gander.

(X)

MOLLY

I'll pass it along.

128 EXT. HOUSE - AFTERNOON

128

Delbert is precariously balanced up on a ladder, prying at something under the second-story eaves...a nest.

DELBERT

Wasps!

CONTINUED

128 CONTINUED

123

MOLLY

Oh no.

Delbert chips the nest free. It looks somewhat decayed.

DELBERT

Gone now, though.

He can barely hide his disappointment. As he climbs down:

CONTINUED

128 CONTINUED (2)

123

DELBERT

But they'll return. Bet on it. So before they do, let me recommend a program of preventive fumigation.

He pronounces it "foomigation".

MOLLY

"Preventive foomigation".

DELBERT

(grins)

See, in relation to the insect world, I'm a bit like the god of the Old Testament. I'm cruel. Vengeful, even. But my rates are reasonable.

MOLLY

(trying to understand)

Yes, but - how can you..."foomigate" what isn't here?

Delbert thinks this over for a bit.

DELBERT

It's very hard to explain this to a non-professional.

Molly politely smiles, gently takes Delbert's arm, turns him around and steers him back to his pick-up.

MOLLY

I'll bet.

CUT TO:

129 INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYM - SAME TIME

129

Ross and Henry Beechwood cross the gym together.

(X)
(X)

HENRY

I know what a blow losing Margaret was for you. People keep score, and you're only as good as your last game. Hell, I oughta know.

(X)

ROSS

I appreciate your concern, Henry.

CONTINUED

129 CONTINUED

129

HENRY

I want you to enjoy Canaima. Clean
water, fresh air and, 'stead of
police sirens wailing all night,
y'got crickets. Crickets up the
wazoo...

(X)

Ross thinks about this for a moment. And realizes.

(X)

ROSS

Actually I haven't heard any
crickets, lately, now you mention
it.

(X)

..CONTINUED

129 CONTINUED (2)

129

HENRY
(stops, realizes)
Actually I haven't either.

(X)

Now they round the corner together, and enter -

130 INT. LOCKER ROOM - AFTERNOON

130

Standing before Ross and Henry is a long line of embarrassed teenage boys, wearing only BVD's and athletic socks.

HENRY
Okay, Titans! Drop your jocks and grab your socks. The doc wants to hear you cough!

Twenty shorts hit the floor.

(X)

CUT TO:

131 EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - AFTERNOON - LATER

131

Most of the Titans are out on the field, scrimmaging.

Others wait their turn in the stands, along with assorted girlfriends and other spectators. Henry Beechwood stands on the sidelines, berating his team.

HENRY
You're not Titans, you're turkeys!

132 ANGLE - BEHIND THE GRANDSTAND

132

A medium grey spider crawls along the top tier. Stops, right behind --

133 ROSS

133

Unfortunately he has nothing better to do. He sits alone up here, watching.

134 BEHIND THE GRANDSTAND

134

Fortunately the spider spins a single thread, and webs down to the next tier. Now he's right behind --

135 TWO GIRLFRIENDS

135

Apple-cheeked blondes. They giggle, blissfully unaware that death lurks mere inches and seconds away. Now one of them feels something! She reaches back, and scratches her butt.

136 BEHIND THE GRANDSTAND

136

Just an itch. The spider is spinning again. Now he drips down to the ground.

137 OUT ON THE FIELD

137

Another botched play. Henry mercilessly rides his team.

HENRY

That supposed to be a banana out?
Looks more like a banana split!

(X)

The squads regroup. A HALFBACK grumbles a swear word, just a little too loudly.

HENRY

McGrath, I heard that expletive.
Hit the showers. And wash your
mouth out.

He turns to the stands.

HENRY

(shouts)
Miller! You know these patterns?

138 ANGLE - "MILLER"

138

TODD MILLER, a scrawny senior, is sitting on the bench. Behind him, in the bleachers, are two more adorable GIRLFRIENDS. Miller shouts back.

(X)

(X)

MILLER

Better'n the back of my hand!

CONTINUED

138 CONTINUED 138
Girlfriend #1 turns to Girlfriend #2.
GIRLFRIEND #1
But not the palm.

139 INSERT - MILLER'S HELMET 139
The Girlfriends GIGGLE, OVER, as the spider crawls into the helmet an instant before Miller picks it up.

140 MILLER 140
straps on his helmet as he runs out onto the field.

141 THE TITANS 141
Divided into two squads. As the quarterback counts off --

142 MILLER 142
feels something funny inside his helmet. He "scratches" at the hard plastic, and now the ball's in play! Miller runs out and executes a perfect "dive right," still vainly "scratching" at his helmet -- then catches the long bomb and is immediately tackled and buried and in a small pile.
Gradually all the Titans get up from the pile and limp away. Except for Miller. He's still lying there. One, two beats.

143 BACK TO SCENE 143
Henry Beechwood and several Titans approach.
HENRY
Give 'em air boys. Give 'em air. (X)
You alright Miller?

144 CLOSE - MILLER'S HEAD 144
Henry rolls Miller over to give him some air. (X)
The spider is on the ground, where Miller's helmet had been. It immediately gets squashed under the cleats of... (X)

145 A CONCERNED TITAN 145
who's staring, stunned at his vacant-eyed teammate.

146 BACK TO SCENE

We CRANE UP as Henry squats down over his fallen player.

HENRY
Holy shit...Doc!

Ross is already off the stands and racing to Miller's body. He gives futile mouth-to-mouth as Girlfriends and Titans stream over and gather in a stunned, silent circle.

MINISTER'S VOICE (V.O.)
Dearly Beloved...

We DISSOLVE to an almost identical configuration -- but instead of a playing field, we're in -

147 EXT. CEMETERY - AFTERNOON - TWO DAYS LATER

It is raining. Instead of teammates, there are Mourners gathered, and poor Miller is in a pine box.

TIME CUT:

The funeral having ended, the grieving citizens of Canaima slowly move toward their cars. Irv and his Assistant are in their usual position at their hearse. Dr. Metcalf hears the questions of a small clutch of anxious parents. He shrugs.

METCALF
...From what I heard, it wasn't a very hard tackle...I only wish I knew ...You see, Dr. Jennings examined him last.

148 ANGLE - ROSS

He overhears. He was just helping Molly into the BMW. He quickly crosses to the driver's side and ducks in, avoiding the stares of the anxious parents.

149 EXT. JENNINGS HOUSE - AFTERNOON

The sky is darkening, and an unseasonal wind is starting to kick up.

Ross and Molly pull in. As they climb out of their ~~sedan~~ ^{car}, they look tired and depressed. Shelley and Tom are sitting on the front porch, waiting for them. The kids look under strain as well.

Ross tries to be strong. As he approaches.

CONTINUED

149 CONTINUED

149

ROSS
Why so gloomy?

The kids trade looks. Neither wants to speak up. Finally:

CONTINUED

A R A

0058

149 CONTINUED (2)

149

SHELLEY

Bunny Beechwood says that everyone's
calling you "Doctor Death".

Ross looks like he's been slapped.

MOLLY

Well that's just silly, Shelley.

TOM

(blurts)

And they say you wanna cut the
people up into little pieces --

MOLLY

Tommy --

Ross sits on the porch, between his kids, and explains.

ROSS

It's called an autopsy, Tom. It's
not a pleasant thing...but sometimes
it's the only way to find out what
happened to a person.

He sighs, and gazes off in the direction of Metcalf's home.

ROSS

But some doctors who should know
better just won't accept that...

CUT TO:

150 EXT. THE METCALF'S HOUSE - THAT NIGHT

150

Tall trees blow in the cool breeze. As we PUSH IN through
the Metcalfs' bedroom window, we HEAR, OS:

METCALF'S VOICE

...but some doctors who should know
better just don't accept that --

151 INT. THE METCALFS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

151

Metcalf (in boxers, t-shirt, socks and Rockport walking
shoes) is briskly walking in place, on his treadmill..

METCALF

-- their big city methods don't sit
well in a small town.

Evelyn is in bed knitting or reading. She mildly reminds (X)
her stubborn husband:

CONTINUED

151 CONTINUED

151

EVELYN

Both Margaret and that poor boy did
seem to be healthy...a bit odd
don't you think...Sam

(X)

152 TILT DOWN

152

There is a large spider under the bed.

153 BACK TO SCENE

153

Metcalf dials in a time or a calorie count. (Something
with the LED) He places his walkman headphones over his
ears to drown out Evelyn.

(X)

METCALF

If I autopsied everyone who died of
a heart attack, I'd be run out of
Canaima so fast...

(X)

EVELYN

Poor Sam. You still think life is
a popularity contest.

Metcalf doesn't respond to this.

(X)

154
thru
158B

OMITTED

154
thru
158B

158C

THE SPIDER

158C

moves from under the bed and crawls along the edge of the machine, to where Metcalf's legs are. Pauses. Then jumps, at his bare calf! (X)

And overshoots! Lands on the moving belt, and is swept back between Metcalf's feet...then under the machine, and then up again on the belt, again through Metcalf's feet and then loses its grip, and is hurled onto the carpet! 8

EVELYN'S VOICE

You're not jealous of our new young doctor, are you?

(X)

METCALF

(looking at her;
irritated with the
headphones on)

(X)

What!

(grumbling; yelling
over the head
phones)

Now I've lost my rhythm.

158D BACK TO SCENE

158D

EVELYN

Sam, you're yelling. Come to bed.

(X)

Metcalf crankily switches off the machine and pulls off the headphones. Steps off the treadmill and starts for his bedside, to remove his shoes.

158E CLOSE - SPIDER

158E

For cover, it darts into one of Metcalf's slippers.

158F BACK TO SCENE

158F

Metcalf tugs off his walking shoes and socks.

METCALF

I need to shower.

He stands, starts for the bathroom. His wife warns him.

EVELYN

Tile's cold.

Metcalf sighs - yes dear. Then slides his feet into his slippers. Takes one step.

METCALF

Damn!

He pulls his left foot out of the slipper.

EVELYN

-- What's wrong?

Metcalf, stunned, just stands there on one leg, like an old stork.

METCALF

Some damn thing bit me.

158G CLOSE - SLIPPER

158G

As the spider darts out and scurries away, into the shadows.

159 BACK TO SCENE

159

Evelyn, climbing out of bed, sees the fleeing spider.

EVELYN

Oh my god! A spider.

159 CONTINUED

159

METCALF

A spider? Felt like a damn cougar!

And then the toxin slams into his nervous system -- his arm flies up to his chest.

METCALF

Damn. Damn -- I'm having a heart attack.

(X)

Now he sinks to the floor. He's hyperventilating. Sweating profusely. Evelyn has sprung out of bed; she's by his side, panicking --

EVELYN

Sam! What should I do!?

CONTINUED

159 CONTINUED (2)

159

METCALF
(grinding teeth)
Call an ambulance. And Jennings
--

(X)

He doubles up in pain, starts to convulse --

160 INT. ROSS AND MOLLY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - A MINUTE LATER

160

They were just undressing for bed. Ross grabs the phone.

ROSS
Hello? Yes, Mrs. Metcalf -- Yes!
Of course! You're just down the
road --

He's grabbing at his shirt, pants.

ROSS
Stay calm! I'll be right there!

He hangs up the phone, and virtually flies out of the room.

MOLLY
What's going on?!

Molly races after him, out to.

161 INT. STAIRS - ROSS

161

Dressing as he runs downstairs. He calls back to her.

ROSS
Metcalf -- he's having a seizure!

He disappears out the door. Molly murmurs to herself.

MOLLY
Thank god you didn't examine him
this morning.

CUT TO: |

162 EXT. THE METCALFS' HOUSE - BACK DOOR - NIGHT - LATER

162

(X)

A brisk, breezy summer night. Police cars, an ambulance.
MILTON BRIGGS, a no-bullshit kind of guy, pulls up in his
car, marked County Medical Examiner. As he climbs out,
Sheriff Parsons intercepts him.

PARSONS
Milt, this wasn't necessary.

CONTINUED

162 CONTINUED

163

BRIGGS

I'll be the judge of that, Lloyd.

Briggs starts for the house, Parsons follows. On the back porch, Briggs turns back to Parsons.

BRIGGS

Wait out here. Guard the house or something.

Parsons stops dead, an obedient dog. Briggs enters.

CUT TO:

163 CLOSE - METCALF'S MOUTH

163

There is blood at the corner of his clenched lips.

BRIGGS'S VOICE (V.O.)

Was he alive when you got here?

164 BACK TO SCENE

164
(X)

Metcalf lies sprawled at the foot of his bed, eyes wide.

ROSS

No, he'd been dead maybe five minutes. Whatever it was, was abrupt and acute.

Ross and Briggs stand a few feet away, surveying the body.

BRIGGS

What's your guess? Massive coronary or cerebral hemorrhage?

ROSS

His wife says that he was bitten by a spider just before he seized.

(X)

A beat, and then Briggs smiles.

BRIGGS

Oh, right -- Sam told me about you. You're the new hotshot MD who won't accept anyone else's diagnosis.

ROSS

(defensive)

I'll accept it if I agree with it.

CONTINUED

164 CONTINUED

164

Brigg's smile becomes a few degrees warmer.

BRIGGS

Good.

Encouraged, Ross crosses to Metcalf's corpse. Squats down.

ROSS

I'd like to show you something.

Briggs approaches. Hunkers beside Ross, who's pointing at

165 CLOSE - METCALF'S BIG TOE

165

On the tip, two red dots: tiny puncture wounds spaced close together -- the width of a large spider's mouth.

ROSS'S VOICE (V.O.)

I believe that's a spider bite there.

166 BACK TO SCENE

166

Briggs squints at the bite.

BRIGGS

I'll buy that.

(as he rises)

But I rather doubt that's what killed him. In 20 years I've seen only one spider-bite fatality and that involved a black widow and a one-year-old child.

He starts out of the bedroom, Ross following.

(X)

BRIGGS

No, my guess is that Sam over-exerted himself. Did you check the treadmill setting? The dial was up near max.

(X)

(X)

167 INT. METCALF HOUSE - WITH BRIGGS AND ROSS

167

In b.g., the kitchen, Evelyn Metcalf is being comforted by her three grown daughters. Ross lowers his voice as he and Briggs come down the stairs and pass by the adjoining dining room.

(X)

CONTINUED

167 CONTINUED

167

ROSS

You may be right. I know the
spider thing sounds crazy. I just
want the chance to definitively rule
it out.

(X)

168 EXT. METCALF HOUSE - BACK DOOR - NIGHT

163

The two men exit and Briggs waves to the waiting medics -go on in.

ROSS

I'd like a full autopsy: tissue samples, blood toxicology, the whole nine yards.

Parsons has overheard. He's suddenly between them, foaming.

PARSONS

Now wait just one second --

BRIGGS

Shut up, Lloyd.

Sulking, the Sheriff backs off. Briggs returns to Ross.

BRIGGS

You'll get Evelyn's permission, of course.

ROSS

Of course.

Briggs abruptly turns and grabs a blanket out of the back of the parked, open ambulance. He drapes it around Ross, underdressed in only a shirt.

(X)

BRIGGS

You feel that wind? There's a cold front moving in.

(X)

Ross nods, vaguely. He looks at the blanket covering his shoulders and then up at Briggs.

(X)

ROSS

Thanks.

(X)

BRIGGS

You have to take care of yourself now. You're the town doctor.

(X)

Ross nods, a bit numb. He didn't want it to happen this way.

CUT TO:

169 EXT. GROUND LEVEL - BARN - SAME TIME

169

As though to confirm Ross's foreboding, we see IT's forelegs...moving an egg sac to a warmer new location.

170 ANGLE

170

IT squeezes through The Jennings' flush-to-the-ground basement window, that's been left open less than two inches.

As the last of its hairy legs disappears inside, we HEAR.

ANXIOUS MOM'S VOICE (V.O.)
They'll have to be removed, right?

CUT TO:

171 INT. ROSS' EXAMINING ROOM - NEXT DAY

171

A LITTLE GIRL sits on the table, mouth wide open, waiting with her mom for the doctor's verdict.

Ross is done looking down her throat. He shakes his head.

ROSS
We're going to treat the
inflammation with antibiotics.

Mom looks relieved, but surprised.

MOM
When my son had this, Dr. Metcalf
put him right in the hospital.

(X)

As Ross writes out a prescription:

ROSS
Well...until fairly recently,
tonsils were thought to be useless.
First sign of infection, yank 'em.
Now we realize their presence helps
the immune system.

He hands over the scrip, leads Mom and Daughter to the door.

LITTLE GIRL
(tragically)
I don't get to have ice cream?

MOM
I'll buy you a double-scoop on the
way home!

She throws a grateful glance at Ross as he opens the door
to -

172 INT. ROSS' WAITING ROOM- AFTERNOON 172

Packed with Canaimans of all ages and physical complaints
-- Ross has inherited a thriving practice!

Molly is trying to work around them, hanging a few of her
framed photos in an attempt to spruce up the office fast.
She and Ross trade quick, private smiles.

ROSS
(brightly)
Who's next?

CUT TO:

173 EXT. ROSS' OFFICE - LATE AFTERNOON 173

He finally exits, escorting his last patient, after what
has clearly been a full day.

CUT TO:

174 EXT. CANAIMA PUBLIC LIBRARY - MAGIC HOUR 174

Ross pulls up, hops out. As he enters we HEAR -

LIBRARIAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
We have a few books about spiders.
Wait here, I'll get them.

(X)

175 INT. LIBRARY - MAGIC HOUR 175

A modest small-town library. Ross waits at the Information
desk. Now the Librarian returns with the books, including
Charlotte's Web.

ROSS
(amused)
Thanks. But I already have this
one.

(X)

176 INSERT - BOOK 176

It's Charlotte's Web, by E.B. White.

CUT TO:

177 INT. JENNINGS KITCHEN- NEXT MORNING

177

Molly clears the breakfast dishes as Shelley and Tom
noisily play with some new toy from their cereal box and (X)
Ross knots his tie in a soup-spoon's reflection, as he
tries to get somewhere over the phone -- and over his wife
and kids.

CONTINUED

ARA

0016

64
(X)

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177

CONTINUED

177

ROSS

Well then can you transfer me to
your science library? Thank you.

While he waits, we see the toy - a black rubber spider,
that sticks to any surface. As Tom and Shelley stick it on
each other, Ross tries hard to ignore them. Back into the
phone.

ROSS

Yes, I'm looking for research on
domestic spiders and fatal shock
reactions in human bite victims.

He listens. Then, growing impatient.

ROSS

Okay, then transfer me to your
medical library. Thank you.

While he waits, Shelley sneaks over and plants the rubber
spider right on Ross' wrist!

Ross moves with his free hand to swat it off -- but his
hand freezes in midair!

His look asks Shelley - "Why did you do that?"

SHELLEY

It's for your own good, Dad. Touch
it.

ROSS

(between clenched
teeth)

Remove it.

Shelley instantly obeys. Ross resumes breathing.

ROSS

(into the phone)

Yes, I'm looking for...

As Ross repeats his spiel, Tom asks Molly.

TOM

Mom, are there really killer spiders
in Canaima?

MOLLY

I sure don't think so, honey.

She gives Ross an unhappy glance and points to her watch,
to signal - you'll be late for work.

178 EXT. JENNINGS HOUSE - MORNING - LATER

173

As Ross starts the car, Molly is at the driver's window.

MOLLY

Honey, do you think this -- "theory" of yours might just be a product of of your own arachnophobia? And that you're needlessly spooking the kids?

ROSS

Maybe. Meanwhile, make sure they don't play near that old barn.

MOLLY

Oh Ross...

He pulls out. Molly watches him go, shaking her head. Then she turns around -- and sees Tom running toward the barn, to catch a frisbee that Shelley just threw.

CONTINUED

178 CONTINUED

173

MOLLY

Kids, would you please play in the house?

SHELLEY

Why?

Molly's in no mood to explain.

MOLLY

It's gonna rain.

TOM

When?

The sky is quite clear.

MOLLY

(sighs)

Sometime...

CUT TO:

179 INT. ROSS' WAITING ROOM - MORNING - LATER

179

He enters. The room is as crowded as it was yesterday. But today there is a middle-aged, ultra-competent receptionist-nurse, JANICE, maintaining order. As Ross crosses to her:

ROSS

Sorry, Janice -- I promise to be on time from now on.

(then, quietly)

And I promise to treat you as well as Dr. Metcalf always did.

JANICE

(tight smile)

Frankly I was hoping for better.

180 INT. EXAMINING ROOM - MORNING - LATER

180

Ross is about to bring his stethoscope to the chest of an old man who's perched on his table, when the phone RINGS.

ROSS

Excuse me.

(he picks up)

Dr. Jennings

131 INT. MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

131

Milton Briggs holds the phone in one hand and a sheet of lab results in the other.

BRIGGS

Okay, hotshot, are you sitting down? According to preliminary data, Sam Metcalf died as the result of a minute amount of an as-yet-unidentified toxic substance in his blood stream. My office isn't ruling out accidental poisoning, deliberate poisoning...or even killer spiders. At the moment it looks like a heart attack (cardiac arrest) to me, but I'll support whatever you'd like to do.

(X)

182 INT. ROSS' EXAMINING ROOM - SAME TIME 182

Ross nods, feeling simultaneously vindicated and even more concerned.

ROSS

Thanks, Milt. I understand your position, but I'm going to ask that these bodies be exhumed. I've got to be sure.

(X)
(X)

He hangs up, then turns back to his patient. He brings the stethoscope to the old man's chest. We HEAR a strange rhythmic, almost throbbing HUMMING sound.

CUT TO:

183 INT. MOLLY'S STUDIO - SAME TIME 183

Molly is here framing a new photograph. The HUMMING sound originates in this room, and it's distracting her. With mounting irritation, she turns to its source -

184 HER FAX MACHINE 184

Spitting out yet another esoteric article (a stack of them has already accumulated beneath the machine). Hideous close-ups of spider fangs and poison sacs and mandibles...

185 MOLLY 185

She reflexively shudders. Tries to get back to work.

PARSONS VOICE (V.O.)

Are you out of your mind?

CUT TO:

186 INT. POLICE STATION - LATER THAT MORNING 186

Lloyd Parsons is behind his desk. Standing. And fuming.

Ross is standing in front of the Sheriff's desk. Very calm.

ROSS' VOICE

Slowly and once more Lloyd. I want Margaret Hollings' and Todd Miller's bodies exhumed.

In case Parsons isn't familiar with the term "exhumed":

CONTINUED

136 CONTINUED

136

ROSS

Dug up.

PARSONS

Hey, you start pulling citizens out
of the ground that should be
enjoying their eternal rest, all
those patients you lucked into will
disappear so damned fast --

ROSS

Lloyd, I'll just get a court order.
Milton Briggs is on my side.

A beat, then Parsons sits. Beaten.

PARSONS

This is a bad business, Mr. Big City
Doctor. A very bad business.

ROSS

No shit. (No kidding - T.V.)

(K)

136A EXT. JENNINGS HOUSE - NIGHT

136A

As Ross pulls up, he's startled to see Molly helping Shelley into another car. Ross jumps out, perplexed and anxious.

ROSS
What's going on?

There is a whole different mood here at home, one of happy calm. Molly smiles at Ross.

MOLLY
I promised Shelley she could spend the night with Bunny.

It takes Ross a moment to reorient to the spirit of normal life. Now he sees Bunny and Shelley, giggling in the back seat, and the strapping Becky Beechwood at the wheel.

BECKY
We'll take good care of her, Dr. Jennings.

She starts up the engine.

ROSS
-- Wait.

Ross leans into the open driver's window.

ROSS
There may be spiders around that can be very dangerous. I want you girls to be aware of this. If you should see one, don't try to kill it or capture it. Just run. Understand? Run.

The little girls giggle some more - but nervously, now. Becky nods at Ross, in the very nice way you'd nod at a paranoid schizophrenic.

BECKY
We'll do that, Dr. Jennings.

She drives away. Molly pats Ross' shoulder.

MOLLY
You've had a long day, haven't you?

ROSS
Very.

186B EXT. THE BEECHWOODS' HOUSE - NIGHT 186B

All seems peaceful at the Beechwood home as we slowly PUSH IN on Bunny's upstairs bedroom. We HEAR:

BUNNY VOICE (V.O)
The...eensy...weensy...

186C INT. BUNNY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 186C

The girls, in cute pajamas, sit surrounded by Bunny's dolls and stuffed animals. Trying their best to scare each other.

BUNNY
...spider --

Both girls burst into uncontrollable giggles -- and Shelley, as she shakes, tips a doll onto its back.

BUNNY
Went up the water spout...

186D THE DOLL 186D

Its eyelids pop open, so that it stares up, wide-eyed, at

186E A SPIDER 186E

scurrying across the ceiling, to the overhead light, right above the girls.

BUNNY
Down came the rain and washed the
-- spider out --

Both girls SCREAM, in a blend of terror and delight.

186F BACK TO THE DOLL 186F

it seems to be staring up in horror, now, at --

186G THE LIGHT FIXTURE 186G

Gossamer is being spun. A strand is lowering to the floor. (X)

186H BACK TO THE GIRLS 186H

It's Shelley's turn. She leans close to Bunny.

CONTINUED

136H CONTINUED

136H

SHELLEY
(whispers)
Little Miss Muffett sat on a tuffet
Eating her curds and whey...

More SCREAMING.

136I ON THE WALL - THE SHADOW

136I

of the spider, as it slowly descends on a strand.

SHELLEY'S VOICE
Along came a...spider...and sat down
beside her --

The loudest screams yet.

136J BACK TO SCENE

136J

The door flies open. Becky is standing here.

BECKY
If you girls don't settle down, then
Shelley can't stay over anymore.

136K OMITTED

136K
(X)

A136L ANGLE - SHADOW

A136L

The spider quickly scurries back up the strand!

BUNNY'S VOICE
We can't sleep.

(X)

B136L BACK TO SCENE

B136L

SHELLEY
We keep scaring each other.

BECKY
Why don't you two sleep in my bed
for while.

Becky takes hold of one girl's hand each.

(X)

BUNNY
What about you?

CONTINUED

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CONTINUED

B186L

Shelley has picked up a doll, for security -- the doll (X)
that has the strand of web attached to its head!

BECKY

I'm going out. I have a date.

As they leave, Shelley unknowingly trailing web, the (X)
spider starts scurrying back down the strand, toward the
doll!

BUNNY

You have a date?

Just as the spider is about to reach the doll and Shelley (X)
-- Shelley shuts Bunny's bedroom door, severing the web.
The spider lands plop on the floor. And Shelley is spared.

CUT TO:

186L
thru
187

OMITTED

186L
thru
187

188

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATE THAT NIGHT

188

It's late, dark, almost creepily still. Everyone is asleep but Ross, who's pouring over the papers that flooded in via FAX today, from universities and research institutes across America ... highly technical papers, filled with repulsive diagrams and unintelligible statistics.

Ross grimly underlines pertinent passages, and murmurs to himself as he makes notes.

189

ANGLE - ON THE WINDOW LEDGE

189

Adjacent to Ross. A small, dark shape, moving ... its identity not discernible in the pale moonlight.

190

BACK TO ROSS

190

As he jots down the name of another entomologist, and his affiliation, on a legal pad.

191

BACK TO SMALL DARK SHAPE

191

Still waiting. And then it suddenly hops, right onto ---

192

ROSS

192

Who nearly jumps out of his chair and out of his skin as the thing lands in his laps! And now he sees that it's -

193

A CRICKET

193

A harmless, frightened-looking cricket that somehow wandered in here.

194

BACK TO SCENE

194

Ross gently scoops the cricket into his palm and holds him up, in the light.

Ross is not only thankful it's not a you-know what, he's delighted to actually lay eyes on one of these.

ROSS

(softly)

So tell me where are all the other crickets? What happened to them all?

CONTINUED

194

CONTINUED

194

Indeed, the night is forbiddingly quiet. And so is this cricket. Ross sets him down on a coffee table and returns to his research.

195

INSERT - ROSS NOTES

195

Standing out amid the scribbled phrases and experts' names is one name that comes up again and again. Ross takes his pen and connects this name, each time it appears and reads:

ROSS

"James Atherton. Stanford University".

196

BACK TO SCENE

196

Ross rises, with a sense of purpose. He's found his expert, now he can get some sleep. He straightens out his notes.

ROSS

Goodnight, cricket. Take care.....

197

ANGLE COFFEE TABLE

197

But the cricket is already gone.

A197A

INT. BEECHWOOD HOME - MORNING

A197A

Henry Beechwood, morning paper in hand, stands in the hallway in his bathrobe. He knocks on the closed bathroom door.

BECKY (O.S.)

May I have some privacy, please?

HENRY

There are other people in this house, young lady?

Silence. Henry knocks again.

B197A

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

B197A

Becky, also wearing a bathrobe, is staring at herself in the mirror, checking for blemishes. (X)

BECKY

Dad? Go away!

Henry glares at the door.

(X)

EDNA
(calling from
downstairs)
Use the one down here, Henry!

(X)

Henry moves toward the stairs, grumbling to himself.

Becky is in the shower, soaping her back, enjoying the hot steamy water...and we TILT UP.

There is a web above her, extending from the wall to the shower head. Now:

D197A

BECKY

D197A

vigorously shampoos her hair. And an elbow dislodges-

E197A

THE WEB

E197A

where it connected to the shower head, so that it is now swept into Becky's hair, into the suds, she's zestily massaging this horrible web against her scalp... and then

F197A

THE SPIDER

F197A

who spun this web, now very pissed off, jumps onto Becky's head--of course she can't feel it as it angrily scurries, avoiding her strong fingers... Now it's perched out on a hank of hair that hangs forward, like a pompadour, and as --

G197A

BECKY

G197A

brushes back the hank, the spider plops down on her nose. Becky freezes. But before it can bite her-

H197A

THE SPIDER

H197A

is washed down Becky's body in a slow-motion mini-waterfall!

If you thought the little girls' screams were loud before --and they were--the BLARE that big Becky produces is surely enough to wake the dead!

I197A INT. HENRY'S BATHROOM - SAME TIME I197A

The coach is on the pot, reading Sports Illustrated. Now he sighs.

HENRY
Never a moment's peace.

J197A INT. BECKY'S BATHROOM - BECKY J197A

had jumped out of the shower and is standing in the middle of the bathroom, dripping wet, stark naked, a basket-case.

K197A ANGLE - DRAIN K197A

As, unseen, the spider crawls out.... and up the water spout!

L197A BACK TO SCENE L197A

Now the bathroom door flies open. When naked Becky sees not only her mother, but her father and brother standing there--she screams even louder.

CUT TO:

M197A EXT. BEECHWOOD HOUSE - LATER THAT MORNING M197A

Delbert's truck pulls to a stop in front of the house.

197A INT. BECKY'S BATHROOM - DAY 197A

Delbert, suited up for action, waves his asbestos glove for Henry Beechwood's benefit. Henry looks unimpressed.

CONTINUED

197A

CONTINUED

197A

DELBERT

See, you need an asbestos glove. Doomsday weapon in Delbert's war on creepy-crawlies. I coat it with PD-4, the insecticide with an enviromental conscience. It's biodegradable, organic, and you oughta see the tiny beasties twitch when they so much as sniff the stuff.

He drops down and starts feeling behind the toilet. Henry shuts the bathroom door for privacy, and tells Delbert-

HENRY

There's a rumor going around town that some kinda spider killed Sam Metcalf, maybe Margaret ... maybe even my Titan.

DELBERT

Doubtful, Henry. There was a case in Florida where one of my colleagues bumped into a nest of black widows...

197B

BEHIND THE TOILET

197B

There's a spider here alright. But he's expertly avoiding Delbert's glove. Even seems to be enjoying himself.

DELBERT'S VOICE (OS)

Sustained a dozen bites, and lived.

197C

BACK TO SCENE

197C

Henry looks dubious. Delbert straightens back up.

DELBERT

Course he permanently lost control of his bodily functions.

He gives the bathroom a last visual inspection.

DELBERT

No spiders here.

As they exit --

DELBERT

But I'm gonna hunt down the alleged arachnid, Henry ... And I'm gonna spritz em from here to eternity...

CUT TO:

198 INT. KITCHEN - NEXT MORNING

198

The usual breakfast brouhaha. A bleary Ross strains to be heard over kids and dishes being cleared.

ROSS
(into the phone)
I need Dr. Atherton's extension.
Or if you can transfer me --
thanks...

Molly is thoroughly fed up with Ross' new fixation.

MOLLY
(waiting to be
connected)
It's eight-thirty. Nobody's gonna
be there yet.

ROSS
If he's half the fanatic I think he
is, he will be.

Molly rolls her eyes.

ROSS
(into the phone)
Yes. Dr. Atherton?

He smiles at Molly, "what'd I tell you?"

INTERCUT Atherton in.

199 INT. STANFORD RESEARCH LAB - SAME TIME

199

Atherton sits in front of a large terrarium that takes up an entire wall. He was busily working as the phone RANG.

ATHERTON
(continuing to work)
Atherton. How can I help you?

ROSS
Yes, this is Ross Jennings -- I'm
a general practitioner -- and I have
a problem that may be
spider-related, and you seem to be
the foremost authority on the west
coast...
(hastily adds, lest
he offend)
Or any coast...

Atherton waits for Ross to get on with it -- even gets some more work done as he listens (we don't hear).

CONTINUED

199 CONTINUED

199

ATHERTON

(finally)

Doctor -- Jennings? Look - Every so often there is a health scare in some little town somewhere. An unexplained outbreak. And spiders make convenient culprits. Men mistrust any creature with more than four legs. We've all heard the myths, the horror stories...

He rises and drifts over to the opposite end of the lab.

ATHERTON

But did you know that on every acre of your town there live an average of fifty to sixty thousand spiders?

This is a fact Ross would have been happier without knowing. He listens, fighting nausea.

ATHERTON

And did you know that each spider eats about a hundred insects per year?

At the far end of the lab, in a separate habitat, are the two South American spiders that Atherton brought back alive. Heavy mesh coverings keep them safely captive. Atherton watches them with an intense interest bordering on devotion, as he continues.

ATHERTON

That adds up to at least five million insects consumed per acre, annually. Consider, doctor, that man might find the planet uninhabitable without spiders.

ROSS

Dr. Atherton? I have nothing against spiders.

Molly glances at him, liar.

ROSS

But there've been three deaths in my town, and I'm afraid there'll be more. If you could just lend me your expertise for an afternoon -- we're not all that far, a town called Canaima --

ATHERTON

"Canaima"?

CONTINUED

199 CONTINUED (2)

199

ROSS

You know it?

ATHERTON

Well the name is familiar...

But Atherton can't think why. Nonetheless Ross' urgency has made an impression. He sighs.

ATHERTON

Let me see what I can do. Where are you exactly?

Ross gives Molly a thumbs-up.

ROSS

Thank you, Doctor.

200 INT. OUTER LAB - A MINUTE LATER

200

Two young Assistant Professors play a spirited fooseball game amid the sinks and vivisection tables.

Now Atherton emerges from his lab. He clears his throat. The game immediately ceases. The young professors look sheepish.

ATHERTON

Collins, are you equally busy tomorrow?

CUT TO:

200A INT. BEECHWOOD UPSTAIRS HALL - LATE MORNING

200A

Precariously balanced on a creaking chair, Delbert reaches up, opening the ceiling trap to peer into the attic crawl space. Like a miner, he has a searchlight built into his hard-hat.

200B ANGLE - IN THE CRAWL SPACE

200B

Delbert squints. He sees nothing.

DELBERT'S VOICE

Hmm...Crawl space's clean too.

(X)

He lowers the trap back down. We HEAR, muffled, through the ceiling -

CONTINUED

77-78A
(X)

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200B CONTINUED

200B

HENRY'S VOICE
So what do we do?

200C HOLD

200C

Now we see what Delbert never sees. A pair of spiders
clings to the top of the trap door.

200D
thru
200L
OMITTED

200D
thru
200L

A201 INT. BEECHWOOD UPSTAIRS HALL - LATE MORNING

A201

DELBERT
I'll answer that in two words, Henry
-"Preventive Foomigation".

Henry shrugs.

HENRY
(sighs)
You're the expert.

Delbert grins -- damn right I am.

B201 EXT. BEECHWOOD HOUSE - LATE MORNING

B201

Delbert steps out of the house, to get the "foomigation"
equipment from his pick-up. Then freezes --

Right there, on the front step, is a medium-sized spider!

Now the spider spots Delbert -- starts to race off --

Delbert's quicker -- there's a can of insecticide hooked
to his belt, and before the spider can find a hiding place,
Delbert is squirting the hell out of it. Finally he stops,
satisfied.

And the spider starts to crawl away.

Delbert's never seen anything like it. His eyes bug out
and his heel comes down, stomping the thing into
nonexistence.

He collects himself. Starts for his truck again.

DELBERT
(murmurs)
Better uncork my private stock.

CUT TO:

201 EXT. CEMETERY - NEXT DAY

201

Briggs, Ross and Parsons watch as several Grave Diggers work to remove a coffin from the ground. In the b.g. another coffin has already been removed. Irv Kendall and his Assistant stand by. Nobody is happy, but Parsons looks miserable.

202 ANGLE - A TAXI CAB

202

pulls up. CHRIS COLLINS, the Assistant Entomology Professor, gets out. Not thrilled to be here.

203 SCENE

203

Ross approaches. This couldn't possibly be.

ROSS

Dr. Atherton?

COLLINS

Chris Collins. One of his assistants.

He puts out his hand. Ross shakes, clearly disappointed.

COLLINS

Atherton's extremely busy these days. He recently discovered a new species of spider...To us, it's a big deal.

ROSS

Well I hope you can help. We're going to be examining some bodies.

COLLINS

(queasy smile)

Hey. Sounds like a blast.

SMASH CUT:

204 A SHEET

204

is pulled off a corpse -

BRIGGS VOICE

We're looking for bite marks.

205

INT. KENDALL'S MORTUARY - LATE AFTERNOON

205

In a very grim basement room. Ross, Briggs and Collins are standing over Metcalf's body. In b.g., Margaret and Miller are laid out. Collins fights to maintain his composure...

ROSS

Like this one.

He points out the mark on Metcalf's toe and ankle. Collins leans down. Gives an involuntary shudder. Ross sympathetically places a hand on Collins' shoulder.

ROSS

A spider did this -- right?

COLLINS

(shrugs, uncertain)
I'm not sure. I think so, but anyway, even at several times the potency of Latrodectus ---

ROSS

(from his reading)
The black widow?

COLLINS

Right... even then, it'd take more than one bite to kill.

He keeps his distance as Ross and Briggs each inspect a body.

COLLINS

So I have to assume that this man's death and the spider bite -- if it is a spider bite -- are coincidental.

Ross and Briggs don't respond --- they're busy with their gruesome tasks. Now, from OFF SCREEN :

IRV'S VOICE

Hey guys how's it going?

CONTINUED

205 CONTINUED

205

Irv Kendall stands here, munching from a bag of potato chips. Now he gazes with melancholy at Margaret's body.

IRV

Poor Margaret. She was a good wife,
good teacher, good neighbor.

Then sighs, profoundly sad, as he remembers.

IRV

...Excellent cook.

(then)

Anything you want, just shout.

COLLINS

I want some fresh air.

He starts for the door behind Irv, who exits -- when,
behind him -

ROSS

Chris?

Ross has located the bite marks on Margaret's wrist and
arms. Collins reluctantly crosses, to inspect.

ROSS

You still think it's a coincidence?

COLLINS

(concedes)

These could be spider bites. The
tissue surrounding the bites is
macerated...

Ross looks thoughtful -- something Collins just said has
rung a bell. But before he can put two and two together.

BRIGG'S VOICE

Found 'em.

Briggs points, on Miller's body, at:

BRIGGS

One mark on his neck. One behind
the left ear.

Collins doesn't cross to look this time. Instead,
quietly:

COLLINS

I need to make a phone call.

CUT TO:

206 INT. ATHERTON'S LAB - TWO MINUTES LATER 206

In contrast to the earlier scene, Atherton is now lost in thought as the phone RINGS. Finally he answers.

ATHERTON
...Dr. Atherton.

Atherton listens for a few beats. INTERCUT COLLINS in.

207 INT. IRV'S KITCHENETTE - SAME TIME 207

Parsons and Irv are here, in b.g., but they're busy eating. Collins speaks privately to his superior.

COLLINS
...So I think you'd better come down here, right away.

There is silence on the other end. Then:

ATHERTON
I'll be there tomorrow. I'd like you to stay, Chris... Find me a specimen.

COLLINS
I'll try.

He hangs up.

208 EXT. PARKING LOT - EARLY EVENING 208

As Ross heads for his car, he tells Collins:

ROSS
Sheriff here'll run you out to a nice motel and bill the town. Tomorrow we'll meet at the Metcalf house and find one of our nonexistent spiders.

PARSONS
(sputters)
Hey I'm no damn chauffeur -- I got law and order to maintain! Why can't you drive 'em, Doc?

CONTINUED

208 CONTINUED

208

ROSS

Milt and I're going to see Mayor Bob. The Mayor's gonna go on local radio, and TV...he's gonna warn the town.

It's the first that Briggs has heard of it, but he likes the idea. They hop into their cars.

PARSONS

(shouts))

You're gonna panic everybody!

BRIGGS

You're damn right.

Ross peels out, Briggs behind. A beat.

MAYOR'S VOICE (V.O.)

This is very interesting.

CUT TO:

209 INT. MAYOR BOB'S HOME - EVENING - LATER

209

Mayor Bob has sat Ross and Briggs in his comfy living room. In the kitchen, in b.g., his wife is setting the table. The mayor is sipping a beer. Ross and Briggs were presumably offered beers, but declined. They search his face for signs of sincerity, as he muses:

MAYOR

Very, very interesting.

BRIGGS

So, you'll -- make an announcement?

MAYOR

That's something I'm gonna look into, Milt. Very carefully.

ROSS

It would need to be done quite soon. We can help you write it, if you --

MAYOR

That would be helpful. And I thank you for offering. Whether or not I can take you up on that offer, is dependent on a host of other factors.

BRIGGS

Like -- what?

CONTINUED

209 CONTINUED

209

MAYOR

(shrugs)
I have to get into that with my
people. ASAP. Just know that you
two are now very much in the loop.

From the kitchen, Mrs. Blacknell calls:

MRS. BACKNELL

Bob? Supper time.

MAYOR

(to Ross and Briggs)
Oops. Supper time.

He's up, and beckoning his guests to get up too.

MAYOR

Shouldn't you boys be home with your
families?

BRIGGS

But we really ought to --

As Mayor Bob leads Ross and Briggs to the door:

MAYOR

Families. When you get down to it,
they're what makes a town worth
saving.

210 EXT. MAYOR BOB'S HOUSE - NIGHT

210

Ross and Briggs cross to their cars, dizzy from the
snowjob.

BRIGGS

He's a "kinder, gentler" mayor, huh?

ROSS

(murmurs to himself)
I hope his birthmark grows.

211
thru
213

OMITTED

211
thru
213

214 INT. TOM'S ROOM - NIGHT - LATER

214

Molly has just pulled the blanket up over her sleeping
son's shoulders. As she fondly pats him -- Ross backs out
(belly down, wielding a flashlight) from under Tom's bed.
Somberly nods at Molly -

CONTINUED

214 CONTINUED

214

ROSS
(whispers)
All clear.

Molly responds with an indulgent smile.

CUT TO:

215
thru
231B

OMITTED

215
thru
231B

232 INT. JENNINGS HOUSE - SAME TIME

232

Silence. Molly is asleep. Ross lies there, wide awake on this still, moonlit night. His gaze anxiously flicks around the room. Then his eyeballs freeze - he's spotted something.

233
thru
234

OMITTED

233
thru
234

234A ON THE ADJACENT WALL

234A

A spider. Motionless. Poised to strike.

234B BACK TO ROSS

234B

as he slowly reaches for the magazine on his night-table...rolls it up...slides out of bed...and then, with great trepidation, pads across the bedroom -- to the spider...

With a sudden, perfectly aimed swipe, he WHACKS it.

Half-awakened by the sound, Molly moans, and rolls over.

234C ON THE WALL

234C

The spider is still there, still intact. Because it's not a spider -- it's a picture hanger.

234D REACTION - ROSS

234D

He feels both foolish and relieved. But is suddenly aware of a light yet ominous TAP-TAP on the window pane. Then -

234E AGAINST THE OPPOSITE WALL 234E

The headlights from a passing car project the silhouette of spider-legs, furiously waving -- thus enlarged, they look like huge, grotesque tentacles --

234F ROSS 234F

whirls, freaked! Nervously approaches the window, to be certain it's shut tight -- rolled-up magazine at the ready, in case it's not...and now he sees -

234G OUT THE WINDOW 234G

The "tapping tentacles" are merely twigs off the branch of a tree just outside.

234H BACK TO ROSS 234H

Feeling like an utter dork now. He starts back for the bed -- then stops dead, drops to a crouch. Up goes the magazine over his head, like a bludgeon about to come down, on -

234I A SPIDER 234I

slowly moving across the floor. It stops, its legs wave...

234J ROSS 234J

Heart pounding, he edges closer -- to what he now sees is

234K A DUSTBALL 234K

blown along by an air-vent. He picks it up, then flicks away. This is ridiculous.

234L INT. DEN - LATE NIGHT 234L

Ross, insomniac arachnophobe, sits opposite the TV, rapidly flicking the channels with his remote. INTERCUT ROSS AND:

234M THE TV 234M

Here's what's on: A commercial for Raid. The announcement: "On tomorrow's Current Affair, a look back at death of Spider Sabitch." The Incredible Shrinking Man, the scene in which the hero battles a spider. The

CONTINUED

234M CONTINUED

234M

announcement: "Stay tuned for Dragnet with Jack Webb." A commercial for L'Eggs. The announcement: "Tomorrow at Nine, the network premiere of Cocoon." The '50's sci-fi classic Them, about giant ants.

234N BACK TO SCENE

234N

Ross intently watches the scene in which the good guys fight the big insects with flamethrowers.

CUT TO:

235 EXT. THE METCALF'S HOUSE - NEXT MORNING

235

Ross and Briggs pull up, get out of their respective cars. Ross starts to say hello, but yawns instead.

Now Lloyd "I'm no damn chauffeur" Parsons arrives, with Collins. The Sheriff looks grumpy. He pulls out the Metcalfs' housekeys, and opens the front door.

ROSS

Perk up, Lloyd. If we find the spider that did this, you can arrest him.

236 INT. THE METCALFS' HOUSE - MORNING

236

Eerily empty and still. As they enter, Ross suggests -

ROSS

Milt, why don't you cover the living room. Chris, check the dining room. Lloyd, take the kitchen. And I'll, uh...oversee the operation. Sort of -- coordinate...

Fine. The men fan out accordingly. We follow Parsons into

236A INT. METCALF KITCHEN

236A

Lloyd goes straight to the pantry, pulls out the Cheerios. Makes himself comfortable at the kitchen table and starts helping himself to toasty oat-i-os. Dry, out of the box.

237
thru
239
OMITTED

237
thru
239

ARA 001

87A

WS REV. 1/22/90

237
thru
239

OMITTED

237
thru
239

239A EXT. METCALF HOUSE - BACK PORCH - LATE MORNING

239A

Ross, taking a breather outside, finds Collins -- who's found a web between the house and the projecting cellar doors. Immediately, Ross feels weak-kneed.

(K)

ROSS

What is all that crap?

The web is heavy with repulsive bits and pieces of who-the-hell-knows what. Collins kneels. Studies.

CONTINUED

239A CONTINUED

239A

COLLINS

Leftovers. I'd guess mostly cricket parts -- wings and legs.

Ross blinks at the web, then at Collins.

ROSS

...We haven't heard any crickets in Canaima, these past few weeks...

Collins and Ross share an uneasy glance.

240 INT. METCALF KITCHEN - SAME TIME

240

Parsons is still at the kitchen table, stubbornly unhelpful, munching Cheerios. He brings out another handful...

241 CLOSE ANGLE

241

There's a spider in and among them!

242 PARSONS

242

drops the Cheerios on the kitchen table, backs his chair up two feet and BELLOWS in fear and surprise. The spider just sits there.

243 BACK TO SCENE

243

The others rush in. Collins sees right away that -

COLLINS

It's dead.

He flicks at it. Fortunately, he's correct.

BRIGGS

What could've killed it?

Ross glances at Parsons, still goggle-eyed and unable to speak.

ROSS

The shock of seeing Lloyd?

CUT TO:

244
thru
247

OMITTED

244
thru
247

248

INT. METCALF DEN - ROSS AND COLLINS

248

Briggs is seen in b.g., on hands and knees, inspecting the cracks in the floorboards. Ross, by contrast, is fecklessly lifting an inch of rug with the toe of his shoe. Collins has noticed a painting on the wall. He stares.

ROSS

Couldn't we just pack up the dead spider and get out of here?

Collins laughs, as he slowly moves toward the painting.

COLLINS

Why? God's little vampires give you the willies?

He takes hold of the bottom of the painting's frame. And then he hears:

ROSS

-- Why'd you use that word?

Surprised, Collins turns to see Ross looking suddenly pensive.

COLLINS

"Willies"? I just meant --

ROSS

Vampires. Why'd you call them that?

COLLINS

(shrugs)
Spiders drain their victim's fluids... just a joke.

But Ross isn't laughing as Collins turns back to the painting.

ROSS

This trip of Atherton's...to find new spider species...? Where did he go?

COLLINS

Venezuela.

(X)

He pulls the bottom of the painting away from the wall, and --

248A

ANGLE - PAINTING

248A

As a spider leaps at him --

248B BACK TO SCENE

248B

Collins jumps clear. Now the spider is on the carpet -- (X)
poised...

Ross instinctively backs away. Very softly, without taking
his eyes off the thing -

ROSS
Is...that...one of 'em?

COLLINS
I'd say it's a damn fine suspect.

He feels behind him, finds a large crystal ashtray. The
spider seems to be watching this with enormous interest.

COLLINS
Would you step toward it --?

ROSS
Chris I'm...scared to death of 'em.

COLLINS
We all are. But our brains secrete
a neurotransmitter that helps us
deal --

ROSS
I...don't have that particular
neurotransmitter.

COLLINS
Yes you do.

Ross steels himself. Takes a reluctant step toward the
spider. Which abruptly turns to him and -- Collins
quickly drops the bowl over it, trapping the spider. It
furiously lunges against the glass.

Ross and Collins shudder.

CUT TO:

249
thru
258

OMITTED

249
thru
258

A258A EXT. STREET - LATE AFTERNOON

A258A

As Atherton's car pulls up. Parks.

(X)

90A
(X)

WE REV. 2/8/90

258A INT. ROSS' RECEPTION ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

258A

Atherton enters. And is nearly ambushed by Ross, who's been anxiously waiting for him.

ROSS
Doctor Atherton? Ross Jennings.

ATHERTON
Did you find me a specimen, doctor?

ROSS
Yes. And then I paid a call to the town mortician. Several months ago there was a corpse...Irv had never seen anything like it. The body was desiccated, totally drained of blood.

Atherton shakes his head. What's this got to do with anything?

ROSS
Irv agreed that if a big enough spider spent a long enough time working on that body...

ATHERTON
(puzzling)
So...you think...?

ROSS
I think I know why you've heard of Canaima.
(beat)
This was Jerry Manley's hometown.

Atherton looks stunned. Blinking, he acknowledges:

ATHERTON
He was our photographer...he died in camp -- of fever, we assumed.

Atherton reads the look in Ross' eye.

ATHERTON
I know. One should never assume.

ROSS
I think one of your Venezuelan spiders hitched a ride here in Manley's coffin.

Atherton takes a breath. Collects himself.

CONTINUED

258A CONTINUED

258A

ATHERTON
That sounds like a reasonable
hypothesis, Doctor.

(X)

As he starts into Ross' examining room:

(X)

ATHERTON
Now let's pray that you're wrong.

(X)

258B
thru
258C

OMITTED

A R A

258B
thru
258C

259 INT. ROSS' EXAMINING ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

259

ANGLE ON scalpels, tweezers, magnifying cup, glass cutting
board and other tools of the dissectioner's art.

PAN TO:

260 THE SPIDER

260

It's been placed in an old, empty fish tank. Heavy mesh
has been fastened over the top.

ATHERTON VOICE (V.O.)
It looks like a relative of the
Olias, but it's quite a bit bigger.

261 ANGLE - ATHERTON

261

has arrived. In a somber, all-business mood. He lightly
taps on the glass with a finger. The spider lunges.

ATHERTON
This isn't a good sign. We've got
to test the strength of its venom.

262
thru
264

OMITTED

262
thru
264

265

ANGLE ON

265

The flash of scalpel, deflty cutting.

266 OMITTED 266

267 CLOSE ANGLE 267

Three green sacs mounted near the fangs.

ATHERTON VOICE (V.O)
The fangs, the injectors, are
disproportionately large... three
huge poison sacs.'

267A ANGLE - AHTERTON 267A

Atherton carefully inserts the hypodermic syringe into one
of the sacs, withdrawing its contents.

ATHERTON
Judging by the fangs and the
resevoirs... I'd estimate a
deliverable dose would be 1/4 c.c.

He injects 1/4 c.c. of the toxin into one of his mice.
Briggs watches closely. Ross watches uneasily.

ATHERTON
(educating Ross and
Briggs)
In a venomous bite both the type of
toxin and the amount injected
determines the effect. That... and
where the bite is. It may paralyze
or it may kill.

Atherton sets the mouse back down in its cage. The mouse
blinks, runs around, then suddenly squeaks. It falls over.
Normal one minute, it's dead the next. A small amount of
blood appears at it's mouth. Ross sees it.

Atherton stares straight ahead. This is not what he
wanted to see.

ROSS
Look, I'm no expert but I'd guess
this toxin is fatal at a fraction
of that dose.

ATHERTON
You'd be right.

268 BACK TO SCENE 268

Atherton walks purposefully back to the dissecting area
He peers through the microscope. After a moment, he frowns.

268

CONTINUED

268

ATHERTON

They have no sex organs.

(x)

Collins is surprised by this information.

(x)

COLLINS

That would make them like drones,
or soldiers. It's typically seen
in highly organized insect societies
-- bees or ants -- but I've never
seen it before in spiders.

(x)

ATHERTON

I have..

(x)

ROSS

Venezuela, right?

(x)

ATHERTON

This is a desendent, alright.
Somehow a South American male must
have mated with a common house
spider, and produced a very deadly
strain.

(x)

CONTINUED

268

CONTINUED

268

ROSS

But if it has no sex organs then it can't reproduce, right?

ATHERTON

Yes -- and its accelerated growth and specialization suggests that its life cycle is probably quite short.

COLLINS

We already came across a dead one.

ATHERTON

Good. That's the silver lining in this situation.

BRIGGS

Now let's discuss the cloud.

Atherton grimly takes a breath. Then -

ATHERTON

In their own ecosystem, the species I discovered is at the top of the food chain, interdependent with one another -- conscious, even. They radiate from the central nest in a web-like pattern and dominate the entire area. In their original habitat they were contained by geography. That's not true here.

Behind them, the door opens. Sheriff Parsons leads Delbert McClintock inside. Nervously addresses Atherton.

(X)

(X)

PARSONS

Excuse me...Professor, this here's our town exterminator. He believes he came across one of the offending spiders only yesterday.

(X)

Delbert grins at Atherton.

DELBERT

Delbert McClintock, infestation management. Always a pleasure to meet a colleague.

He thrusts out a hand.

ATHERTON

Did you bring the spider?

(X)

CONTINUED

268

CONTINUED (4)

268

Atherton shakes his head, deeply despairing. A beat.

DELBERT

I think this might convince 'em to
cease and desist.

Delbert raises his hand INTO FRAME--he's now wearing his
asbestos glove. He winks at a bemused Atherton.

DELBERT

Asbestos. Drenched in PD-4.

Then wriggles his glove in the entomologist's face.

DELBERT

The five fingers of death.

Meantime Ross has picked up the phone.

While he's waiting, he explains -

(x)

ROSS

Irv owns the mortuary. Where the
infestation must've originated. If
we can get in there and destroy the
original male.

ATHEROTN

(perks up)
-- and/or the primary nest --

Only problem is-

ROSS

Damn, It's busy.

PARSON

Wheel of Fortune, Doc, Irv and
Blair always take the phone off the
hook during Wheel of Fortune.

ROSS

(hanging up)
Then let's get the hell over there.

Collins, Delbert and Briggs follow to the door. Atherton
remains behind. He picks up the phone.

CONTINUED

268 CONTINUED (2)

268

DELBERT

Actually, it's probably still on the
bottom of my shoe.

(X)

He looks.

DELBERT

(unfortunately)
Y'can't really tell what it is
anymore.

(X)

He shrugs -- sorry.

(X)

DELBERT

So what're we spritzing, and where?

(X)

Atherton manages a wan smile. Turns back to Collins and
Ross.

ATHERTON

The male has created soldiers. It
has probably produced a new queen.
The new queen, when mature, will
eventually create reproductive
offspring. If that happens, this
town might be nothing but dead.
Then the next town. And so on.

ROSS

(hushed)

What would it take to stop all this?

CONTINUED

268

CONTINUED (4)

268

Atherton shakes his head, deeply despairing. A beat.

DELBERT

I think this might convince 'em to
cease and desist.

Delbert raises his hand INTO FRAME--he's now wearing his
asbestos glove. He winks at a bemused Atherton.

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-- and/or the primary nest --

Only problem is-

ROSS

Damn, It's busy.

PARSON

Wheel of Fortune, Doc, Irv and
Blair always take the phone off the
hook during Wheel of Fortune.

ROSS

(hanging up)

Then let's get the hell over there.

Collins, Delbert and Briggs follow to the door. Atherton
remains behind. He picks up the phone.

CONTINUED

268

CONTINUED

(5)

268

ATHERTON

I'm calling the Department of
Agriculture, to alert them to what's
happening here.

(x)

As he dials, he tells Parsons.

(x)

ATHERTON

You'll bring me over to the
mortuary.

(x)

PARSONS

(enough is enough)
I'm the sheriff! Not a ch--

(x)

One quick " shut up, Lloyd " look from Briggs, and Parsons (x)
sinks back down.

269
thru
272

OMITTED

269
thru
272

273 EXT. ROSS' OFFICE - NIGHT

273

Ross and Collins follow Delbert to his pick-up. Briggs
heads for his car. (X)

BRIGGS

I'm going to Mayer Bob about
quarantining the town. And this
time I'm not asking, I'm telling. (X)

CUT TO:

274 EXT. THE KENDALLS' HOUSE - EVENING

274

Drifting out of the windows, the SOUND of a TV COMMERCIAL.

275 INT. KENDALLS' KITCHEN - NIGHT 275

Irv pulls a pouch of popcorn from the microwave. Pours the popcorn into a serving bowl. Turns away from it to call -

IRV
Blair? Real butter or fake butter?

276 CLOSE - SERVING BOWL 276

As a spider crawls into the popcorn bowl.

277 INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING 277

Blair is watching Wheel Of Fortune with the sound way up. Irv enters; snuggles up next to her on the sofa. They dig into the popcorn and hoot along to the show.

CUT TO:

278
thru 279 OMITTED 278
thru 279

279A EXT. DELBERT'S PICK-UP (MOVING) - SAME TIME 279A

As they speed toward the Kendalls' house.

ROSS' VOICE (V.O.)
The nest...what'll it be like?

279B INT. DELBERT'S PICK-UP (MOVING) - NIGHT 279B

Ross and Collins anxiously stare ahead. Delbert steers with his ungloved hand. The five fingers of death are held high, wriggling in anticipation.

COLLINS
If you found it, you'd know it. The room'd be dark. Moist. There'd be a musty smell. You'd see an egg sac.

Delbert has to get his two cents in.

(X)

(X)

(X)

CONTINUED

279B CONTINUED

279B

DELBERT
Like your basic egg sac.

(X)

COLLINS
(ignoring
elaborates)
White, cocooned, pulsating...about
the size of a baseball...

(X)

Ross nods, trying to remember all this.

CUT TO:

280 INT. ROSS' EXAM ROOM - NIGHT

280

Parsons watches Atherton -- who paces, clutching the phone.

ATHERTON
Yes I expect you to interrupt your
boss' dinner party. Thank you.

He slams down the phone.

CONTINUED

280 CONTINUED

280

ATHERTON
They'll be "getting back" to us.
Damn it, I should be at that
mortuary --

(K)

He exits, accompanied by Parsons into -

281 INT. ROSS' RECEPTION ROOM - ATHERTON

281

is almost out the door when something stops him cold.

282 ANGLE - MOLLY'S PHOTOGRAPHS

282

The ones she took, and framed, and hung a few weeks ago.
Pictures of San Francisco. A house. Kids on the lawn.
A barn. Inside the barn, a web.

A large web, with a distinctive, intricate pattern.

283 BACK TO SCENE

283

Atherton blinks. Then turns to Parsons.

ATHERTON
Do you know where this is?

PARSONS
Sure, it's the old Daniels place.
Ross Jennings bought it.

ATHERTON
Take me there.

CUT TO:

284 EXT. KENDALL HOUSE - NIGHT

284

Ross BANGS the front-door KNOCKER. Delbert POUNDS with his
ungloved fist. Clearly no match for the BLARING TV.

Collins tries the door -- it's unlocked. Ross shrugs.

ROSS
Canaima welcomes you.

They hurry in.

285 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

285

Vanna is APPLAUDING a winner. The studio audience is also APPLAUDING. The Kendalls are watching the tube, still snuggled up together on the sofa. Ross and Collins enter.

ROSS

Irv. We have an emergency --

286 ANGLE - THE KENDALLS

286

Their eyes are wide open, but --

QUICK PUSH IN, to reveal a bubble of blood at the corner of Blaire's mouth. And then a spider crawls out of Irv's nose.

287 SCENE

287

As Collins, Delbert and Ross back out of the den, horrified:

(X)

DELBERT

...I'll get us into the mortuary.

(X)

CUT TO:

288 OMITTED

288

289 EXT. JENNINGS HOUSE - NIGHT

289

As Parsons' patrol car pulls up, Atherton leaps out. He's grabbed Parsons' powerful police-issue flashlight, and he's carrying the large collecting jar he brought with him.

Parsons gingerly follows Atherton to the barn. By contrast, the professor approaches with purpose and confidence.

He swings open the barn door. Slowly sweeps the flashlight's beam, looking for something. Finding it.

291 ANGLE - THE WEB 291

Up on the loft... with its distinctive, intricate patternx

291A BACK TO SCENE 291A

Starting at the web, Atherton tells the Sheriff -- calmly but emphatically.

ATHERTON
We've found it. Please go to the
mortuary and round up my assistant.
And that exterminator.

Parsons is only too glad to get out of here. As he backs towards the patrol car.

PARSONS
I'll do that. Meantime you wait out
here, sir. I can't be
responsible

Atherton smiles at him - just do as I ask. A beat, and the Sheriff has taken off.

Now Atherton enters the barn, collecting jar in hand.

292 INT. BARN 292

Atherton now sweeps hhis flashhlight some more, all across the barn's floor.

A292A AHERTON'S POV A292A

The beam picks up the tiny reflective eyes of a handful of soldier spiders, watching.

B292A BACK ON ATHERTON B292A

He's not interested in soldier spiders.

ATHERTON
(softly)
Where are you?

He moves toward the ladder, then starts to climb to the loft.

292A

ON THE LOFT - REVEAL

292A

Behind the first web, there is a huge web, simultaneously hideous and beautiful, extending way up into the rafters. The lower portion is heavy with captive prey. Atherton murmurs.

ATHERTON

My, my... you've been a busy boy....

292B

CLOSE - IN THE WEB

292B

A cocooned grasshopper hangs, upside down.

292C

BACK TO SCENE

292C

But Atherton's intent gaze has wandered up to the silken thread called the "tripwire", which vibrates when something is caught in the web, signaling the spider in his hideout above. Very lightly, with the flashlight, Atherton taps the wire.

ATHERTON

(whispers)

Supper's here.

292D

CLOSE - TRIPWIRE

292D

CAMERA TRAVELS up the tripwire's length, as we hear:

ATHERTON'S VOICE

Come and get it.

Then lands on:

292E

IT

292E

in the shadows -- we see only It's huge, blood red eyes. But rather than come down the tripwire. IT creeps elsewhere.

292F

ATHERTON

292F

Still gently jogging the tripwire with the flashlight. In his free hand, he clutches the jar. When it dawns on him that IT isn't coming... not down the tripwire, anyway.

With a sudden gasp of forboding, Atherton whirls and sees:

262G

IT'S EYES

262G

The hideous thing is eyeball with Atherton.

292H

EXT. BARN - NIGHT

292H

We HEAR Atherton's SCREAM. Then the sound of loose boards (x) and flashlight falling from the loft -- the light twirls, crazily. Then utter, deathly silence.

293
thru
311

OMITTED

293
thru
311

CUT TO:

311A

EXT. MORTUARY - NIGHT

311A

TIGHT on the WINDOW that Delbert busted to break in here, as we watch Ross, Collins and him cross and exit, discouraged. Delbert picks shards of broken glass off his asbestos glove.

ROSS

The nest had to be in there. Where else could --

DELBERT

-- Wait a minute.

He's squinting through the broken glass, into the mortuary. Ross and Collins trade excited looks as Delbert reaches his arm through the window. Then pulls out -- one of Irv's jelly donuts, left on the counter. He takes a big bite. While he's chewing:

DELBERT

It'd been in there, I'd've found it. Finding nests is what I'm all about.

He moves to his pick-up. Collins follows. He has an idea!

COLLINS

Delbert - do you have a map of this town?

Delbert reaches into the glove compartment. As he pulls out a map of Canaima:

DELBERT

You thinkin' of buyin' here?

ROSS

(realizes)

What Atherton said...the spiders --

Collins nods, as he hurriedly unfolds the map.

COLLINS

-- radiate out from a central nest.

He pulls a pen from his shirt pocket, pushes it at Delbert.

COLLINS

Where was Irv's house? Mark it!

By the light of the open car, Delbert does as Collins says.

COLLINS

And the old guy...the doctor --?

CONTINUED

311A CONTINUED

311A

ROSS

Metcalf?

He takes the pen from Delbert, circles the spot.

COLLINS

The football player --?

ROSS

Died on the football field. Behind
the high school...

DELBERT

(marking it)

That'd be right here. Hey this is
fun.

COLLINS

What about the first victim, what
was her name?

ROSS

Margaret.

311B INSERT - MAP

311B

As Delbert marks the Hollins house. There are four
circles now. Collins connects them, forming a diamond.

COLLINS' VOICE

Okay, in the middle, there...is that
the mortuary?

311C BACK TO SCENE

311C

Ross stares at the map. In a dull voice:

ROSS

...No. It's a house.

COLLINS

Well who lives there?

ROSS

I do.

312
thru
317

OMITTED

312
thru
317

318

INT. DELBERT'S PICK-UP (MOVING) - NIGHT - A MINUTE LATER

318

Delbert, Collins and Ross speed down the dark country road.

ROSS

The barn! Of course! It's the
barn! My god. Molly! The kids!
I'm an idiot -- this whole time -- the
nest is in my goddam barn!

DELBERT

I frankly doubt that, Doc. Your
basic spider'd find your old barn
a tad breezy this time of year. In
that respect, spiders're a bit like
you and me. No, the nest's not it
in the barn.

Ross is trying to control himself.

ROSS

(between gritted
teeth)

Just drive please.

319
thru
321

OMITTED

319
thru
321

A322

EXT. KENDALL MORTUARY - SAME TIME

A322

Parsons is standing at the front door of the dark,
closed - up mortuary. Patiently knocking (he'll be here for
an hour).

PARSONS

Hello in here? Delbert? Anyone?
yoo - hoo ?

322

EXT. JENNINGS HOUSE - NIGHT

322

Delbert's pick up hurtles down the driveway. He, Collins
and Ross hop out.

ROSS

I'm getting my family out. Destroy
whatever's in the barn.

DELBERT

Could we barter this one, Doc? I
bring up this purplish phlegm when
I -

Ross doesn't hear - he's grabbed Collin's wrist.

ROSS

Chris - there may be a spider in the
house.

Ross' expression says "help me" . Collins, not knowing
where to go, looks at Delbert.

DELBERT

Are you licensed to be present at
a Level 4 "foomigation"?

Collins turns back to Ros.

COLLINS

Let's go .

Ross and Collins hurry toward the house. Delbert turns
towards the barn.

323 OMITTED 323

324 EXT. BARN - NIGHT 324

He enters. He is surprised to see -- a flashlight, still on, lying there. Surrounded by boards that have apparently fallen from the loft above.

DELBERT
(anxious)
Hello?

There is no answer. Super - cautiously, Delbert steps in and begins the search.

A324A INT. BARN - SAME TIME A324A

Delbert spritzes a soldier here, a soldier there.

DELBERT
Got one. Got two...

He raises the spray - gun to his lips, blows away "smoke".

With the flashlight in one hand, he starts to climb the ladder. Halfway up he stops --- a fallen board is resting on a rung. Sa Delbert pushes it aside --

324A ATHERTON'S HEAD 324A

swings down, INTO FRAME -- it was resting on the top of the board! It's wrapped in a silky helmet -- a cocoon. Spiders are busily crawling in and out of it. The thing undulates with their movement.

325B WIDEN 325B

As Delbert hurries back down the ladder, we see that. Atherton is suspend in the giant web, upside-down, like the grasshopper he'd seen.

325C BACK TO SCENE 325C

Delbert swallows his disbelief, then switches into search and destroy mode. Addressing the barn's spider population.

DELBERT
(with a tight Dirty
Harry smile)
Alright, you little bastard - let's
see whos uglier, you or me.

And then he starts spraying the hell out of the old barn.

325
thru
337

OMITTED

325
thru
337

338

INT. ROSS' HOUSE - SAME TIME

338

Ross and Collins enter slowly, cautiously. Trying hard to control his fear for his family

ROSS
.....Honey? Moll?

Molly's reply, from the den, sounds reassuringly relaxed.

MOLLY'S VOICE
Ross ? We're in here.

Ross and Collins trade glances. So far so good. They move towards the den, scanning every surface.

No spiders.

Now the family comes into view. They're on the couch, the TV on. Ross approaches. We hear the VOICE of Alex Trebek.

TREBEK'S VOICE
... Stay tuned for the final jeopardy.

339

INT. DEN - NIGHT

339

Molly looks up from the book she was reading to Tom. Now we can see that she's a little annoyed at Ross.

MOLLY
I expected you home for dinner. I was worried, I called the office --

340

ROSS IN THE DOORWAY

340

His eyes dart around the room. He stops dead.

341

WHAT HE SEES

341

A spider on the drapes. Another on the wall.

342

BACK TO SCENE

342

Tom looks up at his father.

TOM
Hi! Dad!

Ross takes measured, deliberate steps into the room.

342

CONTINUED

342

ROSS

I want you all to get up very slowly
and move toward the door.

SHELLEY

But Dad, the show's not o---

A spider crawls across the TV screen. Shelley SCREAMS.

ROSS

Go!

He's helping them up, and pushing them toward the door --
toward Collins, who guides them out of the den.

There are three spiders on the TV screen now, all raised
up and poised to jump. Ross kicks it over, on the way (x)

342A

ANGLE - BEHIND THE TV

342A

On the wall, a geometric pattern of -- something. Now the
"pattern" scatters. Spiders.

343

INT. LIVING ROOM

343

Ross herds the family toward the front door. But where (x)
there were none a moment ago now -- a half dozen spiders
patrol the door and door handle, blocking their escape.

ROSS

upstairs. (x)

A spider drops from the ceiling onto Ross' jacket. He (x)
swats his hand against the inside lining, knocking it off.

ROSS

We'll climb down from, the roof. (x)

344

LOW ANGLE

344

We just see shoes and socks as Ross moves his family to the
stairs. Now a spider advances under a chair, for Shelley's
bare leg! But between the spider and Shelley is a
mousetrap under that chair--and K-THWACK! Two halves of
one spider!

345 BACK TO SCENE

345

Collins and the Jennings run up the stairs.

Spiders follow.

More drop down through cracks in the old ceiling...

346 INT. UPSTAIRS BATHROOM

346

All five breathlessly pile in here, and Ross slams the door behind them! Collins notices the small gap under the door.

CONTINUED

346 CONTINUED

346

COLLINS

They'll come in under there!

Ross and Collins grab bath-towels and kick them tight under the door. Then Collins takes a breath, and turns to Ross' terrified family.

COLLINS

Hi. I'm Chris.

RACK FOCUS, right behind him, as --

--two spiders rattle loose the escutcheon! Emerge, and race down to the tile floor. (X)

Molly drops a towel on the floor over them both and pounds, crushing one ... Ross smashes the other.

Collins stuffs a wad of toilet paper in the keyhole. And -

-- neither sees the third spider, racing across the back of Shelley's t-shirt, hurrying toward her bare arm. Nobody but Tommy. Frightened, repulsed -- he just can't make contact with it. So he reaches for Ross' can of Edge, and squirts!

The spider drops to the floor, entombed in a glob of shaving gel.

Collins throws open the bathroom window, and peers onto the roof just below.

COLLINS

All clear. C'mon!

Ross hoists Shelley; Molly does the same with Tom. Both kids are lowered out the window, onto.

347 EXT. ROOF - NIGHT

347

MOLLY

Down the trellis, hon.

Shelley starts climbing down, then Tom. Molly follows suit.

348 INT. BATHROOM - ROSS AND COLLINS

348

hear little THUDS as spiders hurl themselves at the door.

ROSS

Go.

CONTINUED

348

CONTINUED

348

He helps Collins out the window. Is about to follow... but he has to take care of one more spider at his heels, first! He kicks it -- it lands on the bottom part of the door. Ross kicks it again -- with such force that the lower panel of the door comes away, and a horde of spiders stream in!

349

EXT. JENNINGS HOUSE - COLLINS

349

starts to scamper down the trellis when it comes away with (x) a crunch, folding under the weight of the grown man. He hits the ground with a thud. Molly rushes to him. He can't move.

Shelley and Tom SCREAM. Point at ---

350

ANOTHER SWARM OF SPIDERS

350

coming for the helpless Collins... and then suddenly they stop.

351

COLLINS

351

turns to see the source of the sudden glare that has (x) stopped the spiders in their tracks.

352

EXT. DRIVEWAY - DELBERT

352

Silhouetted by his pick-up's headlights, behind him. Jazzed by his mop-up operation in the barn, he saunters forth, fresh insecticides cannisters strapped to his back ... the arachnid Angel of Death. A spray - gun cradled in his arms. Bloodlust in his eyes. The big man is now bigger than life. He aims.

DELBERT
Rock and roll !!!

CUT TO:

ARA 0016

111A

WS REV. 1/22/90

353 INT. BATHROOM - ROSS

353

Crouched on top of the sink now. From up here he can see the broken trellis ... meanwhile the spiders are coming up the sink's pedestal for him ... Ross has no choice but to wildly leap, to hurl his body through the air at the door

--

354 INT. HALLWAY -- ROSS

354

comes crashing through the upper part of the door -- flying clear of the spiders, doing a graceless somersault and then he's up and limping down the hall -- grasping the bannister for support ... but there's.

355 A SPIDER

355

lying in wait, on the bannister, and.

356 ROSS

356

violently flails his arm, to throw it off -- which sends him careening backward against the railing ... which splinters, then tears away ...

Ross is falling. He carries a piece of bannister with him as he topples fifteen feet to the first floor, below!

Then he crashes right through the rotting floorboards, into.

357 INT. CELLAR - NIGHT

357

Where he lands in his stacked cases of wine -- scattering some bottles, breaking others. Terrified, Ross is still windmilling his arms to beat away all the spiders he just knows are covering him.

But there are no spiders. On his body, or here in the basement. A beat, and Ross catches his breath. Takes inventory. A gaping hole above. Some light coming through ... dust particles ... otherwise, all is very very peaceful. His ragged breathing the only sound.

Ross tries to rise. Can't. His ankle. He tries to crawl toward the stairs. The pain is blinding.

And then he hears a faint skittering sound. Ross pauses. Sharply inhales. Looks around him. Sniffs. And realizes.

ROSS

Dark...moist...musty smell.

(X)

He swallows. Delbert was right. Ross numbly murmurs..

ROSS

The nest. It's here.

More scurrying. From where? Ferocious concentration, as Ross squints into the shadows. He throws the hunk of

CONTINUED

357 CONTINUED

357

bannister at what is perhaps the source of the sound -- it strikes some rotting boards across the room. They fall away.

Ross hobbles forward. His head bumps something -- he flinches --but it's only the overhead bulb, swinging ... Ross turns it on. Glaring light casts long shadows. And now Ross sees.

358 BEHIND THE ROTTING WALL

358

A huge, silken, white egg sac. Full. As described. And (X)
full.

359 ROSS

359

stares, horrified. And then, oblivious to the ache in his ankle, he hobbles back across the cellar. A bottle lies on the floor, unbroken. Ross picks it up.

ROSS

(moans)

...my one Napoleon brandy.

But he knows what he must do. Then painfully crawls back. Cracks the neck of the bottle against the floor, then douses the egg sac with the brandy.

360 ANGLE SAC

360

As it writhes.

361 BACK TO SCENE

361

Ross spots the furnace-lighter. Clicks it, and ignites the sac. The flame burns blue and hot as unborn spiderlets die.

Calming a bit now, Ross backs away. Then he glimpses something that startles him -- and he falls, knocking over the can of insecticide with a startling CLATTER, landing on a rusty shovel. He grabs it, desperately. Staring

In the dancing light from the bulb swinging overhead, Ross sees something coming out from behind the rotten boards, fleeing the flames. Something new.

Ross' stomach turns as it crawls out.

362 ANGLE SPIDER

160

Not one of the medium grey "soldier" spiders. Not the original South American. Slightly smaller, with different markings.

363 BACK TO SCENE

363

ROSS

... the queen.

It doesn't come at Ross. Instead it races up the concrete cellar wall. Trying to get to the basement window -- still open a crack -- and beyond. If it does ... (X)

Ross staggers over, tries to raise his shovel. But -- his arm won't move, won't obey! He rasps at it. (X)

ROSS

No --! Don't freeze up on me now! (X)

Straining he wills the "paralyzed" arm back to life -- and slams the shovel against the wall, right on target. (X)

But when he pulls the shovel away, he sees just two severed legs glued to the wall! The queen squeezed into a crack in the cement!

Ross stares disbelieving. And almost fails to notice -- (X)

-- as the queen emerges from another crack, just inches from the open basement window.

With only an instant to spare, Ross swings again -- and this time he smashes it, a mess, all over the wall.

ROSS

... Therapy.

Then he sits back. Drops the shovel. Exhales. (X)

364
thru
365

OMITTED

364
thru
365

366

EXT. JENNINGS HOUSE - SAME TIME

366

Molly is helping Delbert with the ladder from his pick-up...As they race back-around to the wall where the bathroom is.

MOLLY

... hang on, Ross, hang on ...

She SHOUTS up at the window, as Delbert unhooks the ladder.

MOLLY

Ross, we're right here --!

Then, panicked, turns back to Collins -- he's sitting on the grass cradling a broken arm ... the kids are comforting him.

CONTINUED

366 CONTINUED

366

MOLLY

Why doesn't he answer?

As Delbert slowly starts to Climb.

DELBERT

I'll get him down. No extra charge.

367 INT. BASEMENT - SAME TIME

167

Ross can faintly HEAR them, outside -- especially Molly, who keeps loudly CALLING for him.

But Ross knows he's okay, and that it's over now... with a little smile on his face slightly twisted from the pain, manages to drag himself over to the cellar doors. Tries to push them open, but...

(X)

ROSS
...shit. Padlock.
(weakly calls)
Honey...?

Nothing. He rattles the doors some more. Then, frustrated, turns away. And -

(X)

368 SOMETHING

368

swoops, HISSING, toward Ross' face on a strand of webbing! Ross just sees it coming, and rolls away, crashing through wine cases! Then turns back -- where? What? Suddenly sees.

369 ACROSS THE CELLAR

369

In the shadows, the red ruby eyes. And now to Ross' horror IT emerges, into the light, forelegs first ... long. sickeningly long. Mandibles. Green fangs. The eyes, lit up with hate ... Its full size apparent now. The body almost 6 inches across, bigger than a man's fist

370 ROSS

370

Confronted with his ultimate nightmare, he clumsily crawls toward his new, never-used nail-gun. Hefts it, uncertain. Points, and squeezes the trigger. Nothing. Desperate, he reaches for the manual, and hurriedly leafs through it -- but it might as well be written in Latin! Meanwhile -

(X)

371 IT

371

crosses some dusty wine bottles. Closer now.

372 BACK TO SCENE

372

Ross throws the manual at it.

(X)

ROSS
"Lethal Weapon" my ass!

CONTINUED

372 CONTINUED

372

The manual strikes one of the stacked wine cases and
knocks over a bottle. It cracks. (X)

Wine pours out! And IT reacts as if the wine were acid!
IT scurries, HISSING. (X)

CONTINUED

372 CONTINUED (2)

372

Seeing this, Ross lurches to a broken case of wine. Throws another bottle. IT dodges, angrily CHATTERING, as the wine sprays. Ross grabs another bottle to throw. A brief pause, as he notices the label. Chateau Margaux.

ROSS

Ah, shit.

(X)

-- and then, SHRIEKING, IT comes at Ross again! A ball of hair moving at the speed of light! Screaming fury, into the CAMERA LENS, filling the FRAME!

Ross blindly swings the bottle like a little bat. And hits a homer -- SPLOCK!

373 IT

373

Flies across the cellar, strikes the wall, then lands. And now, rattling with rage, scurries into a corner and turns, to face its enemy

374 BACK TO SCENE

374
(X)

Ross heaves the bottle -- IT easily sidesteps. But the bottle shatters, and IT doesn't escape the wine -spray. A HISS that is at least half-scream.

ROSS

(rasping whisper)

(X)

I know how you feel.

He's reaching into the wine case, pulling out bottles and throwing them as fast as he can.

375 IT

375

scurries, bottles breaking all around IT, wine spraying.

376 ROSS

376

with a last bottle. He'd better hold on to it.

Silence now. Ross peering into the shadows.

CONTINUED

376 CONTINUED

376

ROSS
Where is it.
(trying to stay
calm)
Easy now ...Ross...
(losing it)
Where are you?

(X)

377 BEHIND ROSS

377

IT drops down. Silently hangs there, over Ross' shoulder,
bobbing at the end of one of its incredible strong threads.

(X)

(X)

378 ROSS

378

notices ITS shadow, long on the wall. Whirls, as --

--IT lands on the front of his shirt. Holds on. Ross
grabs IT with both hands, trying to keep IT from biting his
neck! He's eye to eye with the hideous thing --

379 CLOSE ON

379

Ruby eyes, green dripping fangs --

380 BACK TO SCENE

380

And then Ross rips IT off him, by the back legs, but --
-- IT nicks Ross' hand as Ross pulls it away, throws IT.

381 IT

381

lands and quickly rights itself, ready to attack again.

382 ROSS

382

looks down, with alarm, at his hand.

383 CLOSE ON 383
an ooze of green venom -- no red mark, no bite. Softly.
ROSS
... Didn't break the skin.

384 BACK TO SCENE 384
But Ross collapses, nonetheless. Prone, helpless...

385 CLOSE ON 385
A single drop of green venom drips down ITS fangs, and hits
the cellar floor.

386 ANGLE ROSS 386
He lies there...unable to move his limbs! Raw terror in
his eyes. It's happening again! Total hysterical (X)
paralysis...just like in his crib, when Ross was two...!

387 IT 387
slowly starts across the cellar floor. Moves up the wall
next to Ross ... Then out onto the ceiling above him.

388 ANGLE ON 388
Ross' exposed neck. The target for the killing bite.

389 IT 389
slowly starts down. And then, as it swoops --

390 ROSS 390
suddenly sits up -- fake-out! The aerosol can of
insecticide in one hand, furnace-lighter in the other.
CLICK. and the insecticide can is suddenly a
mini-blowtorch!
The can is quickly exhausted, but not before the fire-spray
catches IT head-on. This worked in Them, and it's working
now.

391
thru
392

OMITTED

391
thru
392

393 IT

393

bursts into a ball of SHRIEKING FLAME! Racing, rolling away, crazily carooming off the walls ...

... In its death throes, IT is setting the basement on fire.

394
thru
396

OMITTED

394
thru
396

396A EXT. JENNINGS HOUSE - NIGHT SAME TIME

396A

Molly spots the smoke, billowing up through the basement's padlocked storm doors. She vainly tugs on them. SCREAMS.

MOLLY

Ross! What's the combination!?

396B INT. BASEMENT - SAME TIME

396B

ROSS

(X)

(shouts)

10 - 19 - 4 --

But suddenly Ross has to deal with a more pressing matter, as - IT comes at him one last time, a superheated kamikaze from hell. (X)

MOLLY'S VOICE

(X)

(frantic, muffled)

What's the last number?!

ROSS

(X)

NINE!

As he grabs the nearest weapon -- that damn nail-gun, that didn't work before so why should it work now, but it's the only thing within reach, and he hardly has a nanosecond to aim it, so he just instinctively points and squeezes and -- (X)

--THWACK! A twelve-penny nail drives into IT's guts and sends the awful thing flying across the room, where it is pinned against the wall.

Dead. Finally. A twisted, impaled, immolated corpse.

Ross blinks at IT. And ten at the nail-gun.

CONTINUED

396B CONTINUED

396B

ROSS
(murmurs)
Thank god.

And then HEARS, from above -

MAN'S VOICE
Don't mention it.

396C
thru
396D

OMITTED

396C
thru
396D

397 A PAIR OF STRONG ARMS

reaches INTO FRAME, dragging Ross out of the smoke and flames.

397
(X)

397A ANGLE - CELLAR DOORS

397A

Thrown open now. A grunting Delbert -- with Molly lending a hand -- extracts Ross from the basement inferno.

(X)

398 OMITTED

398

399 EXT. JENNINGS HOUSE - NIGHT - LATER

399

Firefighters, police cars, medics, even a Ku-Band van from local TV station KNMA.

CONTINUED

399

CONTINUED

399

Delbert stands in the driveway, exhausted but triumphant, surrounded by dead spiders and admiring Canaimans.

A dazed Ross stands a few yards away on the lawn, surveying the spider corpses with Collins.

ROSS

Amazing ... the big galoot killed all the spiders.

COLLINS

Not all.

Ross shoots a troubled glance at Collins - "what do you mean"?

COLLINS

The ones he didn't nail are dead or dying. An abbreviated life cycle....

Ross sighs, releived.

ROSS

Like Atherton said.

COLLINS

But if you hadn't killed the queen.

He doesn't finish the thought. Niether wants to think about "what if". Suddenly Mayor Bob has commandeered Ross.

MAYOR BOB

Ross, let's reassure the citizens of Canaima that this crisis was averted.

Arm around Ross' shoulder, the Mayor is steering him toward the TV van. Milton Briggs shrugs at Ross. Sorry about this.

ROSS

.... Some other time.

MAYOR BOB

C'mon ... we're both " people people". aren't we.

400

ANGLE - PARSONS

400

is in the middle of a long, in-depth interview with KNMA.

CONTINUED

PARSONS

After securing the scene at Jennings' barn, I quickly proceeded to outlying areas, where I visually verified that the arachnids were indeed expiring.

The Mayor brushes Parsons aside. Sun - guns are thrust in his and Ross' face. Questions are thrown at Ross; Ross doesn't hear them... he's looking OFF SCREEN.

MAYOR BOB

(covering, to
camera)

When Ross and I first liaised on this emergency, I thought to myself, "This people have placed their trust in me. How can I best serve the people? " (x)

Ross shrugs the Mayor's arm and limps out of camera range....

.... over to his wife and kids, intently watching the blaze. He squeezes Tom's arm, pats Shelley's head. To his wife.

ROSS

Hey, if it all goes up... how 'bout something sorta... pre-postmodern?

MOLLY

How 'bout moving back to San Fran?

ROSS

Moving? Moll, I like it here.

400 CONTINUED (2)

400

MOLLY

(shocked)

But everything you thought, was
true. All your worst fears were
justified --

Ross puts a finger up - Quiet. Listen. She does.

(X)

MOLLY

...a cricket?

(X)

401 ANGLE - ON THE GRASS

401

A cute little cricket hops INTO FRAME. A beat, and then
we see soemthing else ENTER FRAME from above - Delbert's
"gun".

(X)

402 BACK TO SCENE

402

Delbert looks at Ross and Molly - May I?

Ross and Molly shake their heads - you do, and you die.

(X)

Delbert shrugs, holsters his weapon.

(X)

Then everybody turns back to the Jennings house, and Ross
draws his wife and kids close, and even though the damn
house is still burning...everything is going to be fine.

(X)

THE END