

DEAD AND BURIED

Adaptation

by

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Based on Original Screenplay

by

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PROPERTY OF:

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FADE IN:

EXT. DESERTED BEACH - TEXAS - DAY

On the Gulf of Mexico, one hundred fifty miles south of Galveston. Threatening clouds darken the afternoon sky.

EXTREME CLOSE-UP: SKULL OF A BIRD

It is grotesque, nasty looking; not really recognizable as the remains of a dead seagull.

CLOSE-UP: LENS OF 35mm NIKON CAMERA

The PHOTOGRAPHER is waiting until he gets just what he wants. He snaps, then moves the camera aside. He's in his early 30's, and rather homely.

LONG SHOT FROM BEHIND THE PHOTOGRAPHER TOWARD THE WATER

We see the photographer sitting in the sand, photographing the BIRD-SKULL. After a few beats, a GIRL walks into the foreground. She stands with her back to us.

GIRL
(a friendly drawl)
Hi.

The photographer turns around.

PHOTOGRAPHER
Hi.

ANGLE ON HER

The Girl's in her early 20's, very attractive. She's dressed in cutoff jeans and a halter top.

GIRL
What're you taking pictures of?

ANGLE ON HIM

He's a little shy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PHOTOGRAPHER

Well, driftwood, mostly. And some seagull tracks; and that dead seagull over there. The sort of boring stuff you see in Popular Photography.

VARIOUS ANGLES

GIRL

I've been watching you. You really work at it, don't you?

PHOTOGRAPHER

(he gets up)

I've got patience. Not a whit of talent, but I got patience. And lots of film.

GIRL

You a professional photographer?

PHOTOGRAPHER

No, but I'm trying. That's why I'm here. Getting up a portfolio. If I get enough fantastic pictures of driftwood and seagull tracks, then the oil companies will be convinced I can take fantastic pictures of flanges and valves and things.

GIRL

(points off to right)

I saw some driftwood down that way.

PHOTOGRAPHER

So did I. I probably photographed every piece of driftwood for two miles in that direction.

GIRL

Then let's try down the other way.

TRUCKING SHOT: FAVORING PHOTOGRAPHER

GIRL

Are you from around here?

PHOTOGRAPHER

I'm from St. Louis. I'm on vacation.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GIRL
Are you staying in Clifton?

PHOTOGRAPHER
Yes.

TRUCKING SHOT: FAVORING THE GIRL

GIRL
That's where I live. I came
down here to the beach about,
oh, six months ago and loved,
just loved this beach so much
I decided to stay. I mean,
I was a waitress in Galveston.
I might as well be a waitress
in Clifton, especially if it
meant I could spend any night
I want to out here on the beach,
which I do about every third
night. Are you here by yourself?

PHOTOGRAPHER
Yeah. Nobody to bring with me.
You know.

GIRL
Listen, do you want some coffee?
I guess you could say it's late
enough in the morning for a beer.
I've got both over at my tent.
It's back the other way, up in
the dunes.

PHOTOGRAPHER
Okay. I guess I can let the
driftwood down this way go, and
concentrate on interesting wind
patterns in the sand.

LONG SHOT OF TWO WALKING ALONG BEACH

Dialogue continues voice-over.

GIRL (v.o.)
I hope you like Shiner beer.
Lots of people don't, but it's
all I drink.

PHOTOGRAPHER (v.o.)
Shiner's fine with me. Anything.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GIRL

Didn't I see your van back down
the beach? Isn't it the red
Chevy?

PHOTOGRAPHER

No, I got a VW.

GIRL

Something I've always wondered.
Where do men keep their car keys
when they're wearing bathing suits?

PHOTOGRAPHER

Well, I got mine in that little
pocket on the front with the
button on it. Where do girls
keep theirs?

GIRL

(smiling)

I'm not telling you.

CUT TO:

EXT. DUNES ABOVE BEACH - DAY

He's outside the tent she has set up in the dunes. He opens
a pop-top beer can. He looks through the open flap at the
Girl, wondering how to start something.

INT. TENT - DAY

She opens pop-top. She looks up and smiles. She steps outside.

EXT. DUNES

He swigs beer. Several beats.

PHOTOGRAPHER

How about letting me take your
picture?

GIRL

I thought you'd never ask.
I love having my picture
taken. What do you want me
to do?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PHOTOGRAPHER

I don't know. There's not a single way you can pose a girl in the sand dunes that hasn't been done before. Climb up there on that dune and maybe the wind will blow your hair around.

WIDER SHOT

GIRL

There's too much salt in it for it to move.

She climbs a dune. Strikes a pose.

GIRL (cont'd)

How's this?

GIRL'S POV TOWARD PHOTOGRAPHER

PHOTOGRAPHER

Not bad.

(starts shooting)

Wish the wind would come up.
Turn a little to your side.

MEDIUM CLOSE-UP: GIRL

GIRL

Have you ever done any nudes?

TWO SHOT

He continues to click away.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Never have.

GIRL

It's supposed to be every woman's secret desire to be photographed in the nude.

PHOTOGRAPHER

I've heard that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GIRL
Why haven't you?

PHOTOGRAPHER
Taken any nudes? Well, if you
want to know the truth, I've
never had the guts to ask any
girl to take her clothes off.

CLOSE-UP: GIRL

Three beats.

GIRL
So ask.

CLOSE-UP: PHOTOGRAPHER

He can't believe his luck.

PHOTOGRAPHER
You really want to?

MEDIUM CLOSE-UP: GIRL

In answer she suddenly strips off her halter.

WIDE ANGLE TOWARD PHOTOGRAPHER

The Girl, in foreground, has her back to the camera.

PHOTOGRAPHER
(to himself)
Son of a bitch!

He backs up a little and looks around to make sure they're
alone. Then he walks back toward the Girl, still not entirely
believing what's happening.

ANGLE ON PHOTOGRAPHER

PHOTOGRAPHER
With my luck I'm probably going
to run out of film about halfway
through this, but don't let that
bother you.

He starts snapping pictures.

ANGLE ON GIRL

She strikes a mock calendar pose.

GIRL

How's that?

ANGLE ON PHOTOGRAPHER

PHOTOGRAPHER

(delighted)

That's...just fine. The most amazing thing is, I had a dream exactly like this, when I was fourteen.

Looks down, adjusts camera settings.

PHOTOGRAPHER (cont'd)

I don't think I'll ever want to take pictures of driftwood again.

Looks through his viewfinder again. Suddenly he takes his camera down.

ANGLE ON PHOTOGRAPHER

PHOTOGRAPHER

Uh, listen, there's a guy behind you.

HIS POV TOWARD GIRL

A MAN is standing behind the Girl, silhouetted against the overcast sky. He has a strange vacant look on his face. It is frightening.

CLOSE-UP: PHOTOGRAPHER

PHOTOGRAPHER

Don't you think you'd better,
uh ---

Abruptly he looks to one side.

ANGLE FROM HIS SIDE, LOOKING PAST PHOTOGRAPHER

A WOMAN is standing in the dunes. She's middle-aged.

POV GIRL TOWARD PHOTOGRAPHER

A SECOND MAN is standing behind the Photographer.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Hey, who are these people?
Do you know who these...

He spins around, sees the man behind him. The first man starts toward the Photographer.

PHOTOGRAPHER (cont'd)

What's going on...?

He runs to the Girl, grabs her by the arm.

PHOTOGRAPHER (cont'd)

We'd better get out of here!

TWO SHOT

The Girl reaches out and savagely grabs the Photographer by his other arm.

CLOSE-UP: GIRL

Her face has gone empty.

CLOSE-UP: PHOTOGRAPHER

Surprise and fear.

LONG SHOT

The Photographer breaks away and makes a run for it toward the ocean, dropping his camera. He evades the man who was behind him, but as he nears the open beach, a THIRD MAN leaps from behind a dune and drags him down.

VARIOUS ANGLES

The others fall upon the Photographer. He struggles. They pin him against the sand.

ANGLE UP AT GIRL

With his own camera, SHE TAKES THE PHOTOGRAPHER'S PICTURE.

CUT TO:

TRACKING SHOT

The attackers carry the Photographer back into the dunes.

PHOTOGRAPHER

What are you doing? Help...

Somebody help. Please...Please...

POV PHOTOGRAPHER (HAND HELD)

They are approaching, sitting by itself in the sand, a bright new five-gallon can. It's the kind with a handle often used to package chemicals. There is something written on the side in bold letters. We are still too far away to make out what it says.

REVERSE ANGLE: PHOTOGRAPHER

Being carried toward the can. He is almost up to the can (where CAMERA is now).

LOW ANGLE

He sees something about the can, something that agitates him more than he already is. He begins SCREAMING LOUDER, and THRASHING HYSTERICALLY.

CLOSE-UP: PHOTOGRAPHER'S FACE

Utter terror.

PHOTOGRAPHER

No! No!

CLOSE-UP: SIDE OF CAN

It reads: BATTERY ACID.

LOOKING UP FROM INTERIOR OF CAN

The screaming Photographer's face is now DIRECTLY OVERHEAD. The ACID VAPOR FUMES RISE into camera lens.

LONG SHOT - THE GROUP

The attackers and the Photographer are seen in the CORNER OF FRAME. The figures are such, that we can't make out exactly what they are doing to him--just HOLDING the STRUGGLING BODY prone OVER the CAN.

In the FOREGROUND, the WAVES lap pleasantly over the sand.

FADE TO:

TITLES: STARK WHITE LETTERS ON BLACK. ABSOLUTE SILENCE.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

EXT. TEXAS STATE HIGHWAY 63 - NIGHT

It's raining. A police car is parked on the shoulder, its light swirling against the night. Behind it is an overturned Volkswagen. Further down the highway is a wrecking truck.

INT. POLICE CAR

DAN GILLIS, a Sheriff in his mid-30's, is talking on a two-way radio.

DAN
(into mike)
Hello, Betty. Hello, Betty.

ANGLE ON DASHBOARD

BETTY
(on two-way)
Unit one, go ahead.

ANGLE ON SHERIFF

DAN
Betty, we're still out here on the State 63, waiting for G. William Potter to show up with that meat wagon. You did get the funeral home, didn't you?

BETTY
Ten-four, unit one. I reached the funeral home half an hour ago. Mr. Potter said he'd come just as soon as he could, only he has a service this evening and he doesn't have anybody to drive the ambulance out to where you are.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAN

Well, you'd better call him again, Betty, and tell him it's getting pretty wet out here and it's a long drive back to Clifton. Thanks.

BETTY

Unit one clear?

DAN

(exasperated)

Yes, Betty, unit one clear.

TWO SHOT ACROSS DAN TO

A wrecker driver, HARRY, leans on the other side of the patrol car. His head and body are covered by a yellow rubber so' wester and hat.

DAN

Betty and her toys. There's nobody else to talk to on that damned police channel and she can't even call me by my first name. TV cops shows do that, Harry.

HARRY

(wet and not really interested)

Yeah, I guess so...

DAN

(seeing approaching lights in rear vision mirror)

That's probably Potter now.

HARRY

No hurry -- this guy's definitely gone. Wait until you really get a good gander at his face.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Dan pulls a poncho over his shoulders and gets out of the patrol car. He walks over and takes a closer look at figure hanging inside the overturned VW. Quickly he turns away.

DAN

Oh, Jesus!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Harry looks toward the approaching lights.

HARRY

It is that bastard Potter.

An ambulance lettered with "Potter Funeral Home: pulls off the highway. A man gets out and walks toward the wreck. Dan goes to meet him.

TWO SHOT: DAN AND POTTER

POTTER is middle-aged, balding. He has hard eyes.

DAN

What are you doing sneaking up here like that? What's that siren for?

POTTER

Sirens wear out, you know. I don't have city taxpayers to purchase a new one. Why should I blow my siren for a DOA?

DAN

You took your time getting here. Much longer and you'd have to bury him in the car.

POTTER

Busy, just busy, Sheriff. I'm just about a one-man operation tonight. My so-called assistant has an algebra exam tomorrow.

They get to the wreck and Potter bends down and looks in the window.

DAN

Look, Potter. If you could act like Clifton's coroner for a moment, what would you say the cause of death was?

Potter is on his knees next to the overturned car.

POTTER

(still flippant)

Right offhand, I'd say it was complications arising from pneumonia, and perhaps a touch of food poisoning.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Harry kneels down next to Potter and looks in.

HARRY
(shocked)
Hey! His eye fluttered!

ANGLE FROM INSIDE CAR

Potter, upside down, reaches into frame. He tries to take a pulse beat from a dangling hand.

POTTER
I'm afraid this man is still
alive.

DAN
Alive!? Christ, that's impossible!

He pulls Harry up.

HARRY
Run and get your cutting torch.
We've got to get him out of
there.

Harry sprints toward his wrecking truck. Potter stands.

POTTER
(quietly)
What a pity. I was looking forward
to rebuilding that face.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET - CLIFTON - NOONDAY

Typical lunchtime movement on the sidewalks of a small Texas city of about ten thousand inhabitants.

INT. CLIFTON CAFE

Dan is having lunch with Harry and two men, a farmer and an accountant, PHIL and HERMAN. Herman wears a calculator in his shirt pocket.

PHIL
Found out who he was yet?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAN

Not yet. I think I'm going to let the state boys worry about that.

HERMAN

(the accountant)

Happen outside your jurisdiction?

DAN

No, it's just he didn't have identification. They're better equipped for that sort of thing in Austin.

HERMAN

(still calculating)

His wallet and ID must have burned in the fire.

DAN

No, it wasn't that. Funny thing was, his body and head weren't burnt at all. Just his face.

PHIL

He have his face in the gas tank?

Dan winces at Phil's effort at humor, and stops eating.

PHIL (cont'd)

Dan, ol' buddy, for that fancy salary the city of Clifton pays you, and for all that money the State spent getting you educated ...why can't you find some clues?

HERMAN

Then you wouldn't have to call in outside help.

HARRY

C'mon now boys, you better not ride Dan too hard. He just might leave town. We're lucky to have this boy. Just last Sunday, in the paper, I was reading about the problem rural areas are having with all the children growing up and going off to college and then not bringing their skills back to home.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HERMAN

I don't know about that. I sent my boy off to Texas Tech and he came back knowing how to grow his hair long.

HARRY

Here's this boy, he's got a master's degree in criminology...big towns like Houston and Dallas just dyin' to get him, and he comes back to his own home town to help the folks out.

DAN

You're right. You're lucky people.

PHIL

Yeah? How come you ain't put up no speed traps out on Highway 63? And why ain't you got a big beer gut stickin' out over your gunbelt like old Sheriff Parker had?

DAN

(indicates Meal)

I'm working on it. If you'd just stop asking me for answers.

A WAITRESS comes over and fills the coffee cups. There's a break in the conversation.

CLOSE-UP: WAITRESS

She is the GIRL WHO SEDUCED THE PHOTOGRAPHER. Here she is open-faced and natural.

CLOSE-UP: HARRY

HARRY

(serious now)

Could the hospital give you any idea when that guy might come to?

MEDIUM CLOSE-UP: DAN

DAN

(beat)

They're not sure he will.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

This is greeted with a self-conscious silence, by the men.

WAITRESS
(with a natural concern)
My God. That's terrible.

The waitress, having finished refilling their cups, routinely clears off the table next to the men.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOWIE STREET HOTEL - DAY

It's a four story, nondescript building of 1920's vintage. The patrol car pulls into a diagonal parking slot.

INT. SMALL HOTEL OFFICE - DAY

The Hotel owner, BEN, at desk. Dan enters.

BEN
How ya doin', Dan? What can
I do for you?

They shake hands. Dan remains standing.

DAN
Just checking on something.
Had anybody lately who left
without paying?...Or just --
disappeared?

BEN
(thinks)
There is a guy who checked in
here yesterday. Said he was
goin' to be here a couple of
days. He hasn't checked out
and I haven't seen him or his
car since. But I noticed this
morning his suitcase is still
here.

DAN
What's his name?

BEN
(sheepishly)
I don't bother much with Regis-
trations anymore.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAN
(wearily)
I guess we'd better go check
his things.

BEN
(fearing the worst)
Oh, God.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR - DAY

Dan follows Ben along rows of doors. Ben looks grim.

BEN
I hope nothing happened to
him while he was checked in
here. It's a jinx...sort of
thing that scares off your
business. Kill the tourist
trade.

Ben stops at a door, inserts key, opens door; Dan goes in.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Dan is sitting on the bed, the man's belongings piled next to him. The suitcase is all but empty. He is just about finished going through the things, looking for an identification.

Ben sits in a chair, across from him, continuing to look worried.

DAN
(frustrated)
Can't find anything here.
(beat)
Might be a salesman...lot of
photography brochures.

BEN
(dawning on him)
'Fer Chris Sakes! Ask your
wife -- she knows him.

DAN
(taken back completely)
My wife? What do you mean?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEN

Well, I just remembered --
The maid, Edna Jo, she said
your wife dropped over here to
see him yesterday. Yeah, that's
right.

A pause. Ben realizes suddenly he might have said the wrong thing.

DAN

(covering)

Thanks, Ben...I'll ask her when
I get home. It's not that urgent.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SHERIFF GILLIS' HOUSE - TWILIGHT

The Gillis home is a modest two-story frame house, with screened in front porch. The patrol car swings into the driveway and stops.

INT. DAN'S HOUSE - TWILIGHT

JANET, Dan's wife, is putting some just-ironed things away in drawers. She hears the car door slam, looks out through the window, and waves, then goes back to the ironing. She's a pretty girl in her late twenties.

After a few beats, Dan enters. His tension is obvious.

JANET

(her smile fading)

Oh-oh...

Dan is taking off his gunbelt and hat. He does not smile.

JANET (cont'd)

You look pretty grim....anything
else bad happen today?

DAN

(looking at her
levelly)

I don't know...

(flatly)

Who's this guy at the hotel
you know?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANET
(slightly surprised)
Oh. George LeMoir...why?

DAN
I think he might be the guy
who was smashed up in the
car wreck.

JANET
(shocked)
Oh, no.
(beat)
Are you sure? You said there
wasn't any identification.

DAN
Not completely.
(beat)
But, where do you know him
from?

JANET
Oh, he sells photography equip-
ment to the school. His car
was acting up yesterday, so I
had to go over to the hotel
during my lunch hour, to look
at his brochures.

Dan looks relieved, but tries not to show it. He picks up
another facet of the conversation.

DAN
You know you really shouldn't
work on your lunch hour...
(beat)
In fact, you shouldn't really
have to work at all. As Grandpa
used to say, women should be
barefoot and pregnant...

MEDIUM CLOSE-UP: JANET

JANET
You're going to have to help me
out with part of that.

DAN
By getting you fired?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANET
(softly)
That's not the part I had in
mind.

The CAMERA PANS DOWN to her feet. She slips out of her shoes. She moves toward him, opening her housecoat.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DESERTED FREIGHT YARD - NIGHT

Out of the shadows, the CAMERA SLOWLY EMERGES, and moves in close on one of a number of dilapidated buildings.

The CAMERA moves in through a window.

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

There is debris -- newspapers, empty cheap wine bottles, shoes -- on the floor. It's devoid of anything of value. As if it knew exactly where to look, the CAMERA goes through another empty room filled with trash, down a hall, turns sharply left and tilts down to see an ARM, its owner not visible because of the door frame. The arm is completely motionless, thrown out across the floor.

INSERT CLOSE: ARM

There is a TATTOO on it: a RED HEART split apart by a LIGHTNING BOLT symbol, with the word "RUBY" under it.

Several beats, then the arm stirs, very slowly. Now, the fist clenches and the arm -- and presumably the rest of its owner -- extends in a delicious stretch.

CAMERA moves into the room to see that the arm belongs to an OLD DERELICT, who's been sleeping on the floor. (Probably in a drunken stupor.) He has several days "growth" -- not really a beard...just a scraggily mess.

He rousts himself and walks through the warehouse, the CAMERA TRACKING him.

EXT. DESOLATE TRAIN YARD - NIGHT

The wino EMERGES out of the WAREHOUSE, and into the night air. He stands there glancing around stupidly, for a few beats. There is not another living soul in sight.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He starts up the block, meandering. He stops again, just one or two buildings up the street, where he removes a whiskey bottle from his pocket, takes a swig from it, and leans up against that building. He is leaning up against a WINDOW FRAME -- but there is no glass in the window -- just the empty frame. The glass has been broken out long ago.

INSERT CLOSE: ARM OF WINO

With the distinctive TATTOO.

WIDER ANGLE

He takes another swig.

Without warning, ANOTHER MAN appears out of the shadows, approaches the derelict, and, using a cheap flash camera, takes his picture.

The wino and the man stare at each other for a beat, wordlessly. Then:

WINO
(muttering, slurred)
What the hell was that for?

The man does not respond, just continues to stare at the wino, strangely.

The wino is still leaning up against the empty window pane. Shockingly, an ARM shoots out through the empty window pane, WRAPPING ITSELF AROUND THE WINO'S FACE, and PULLING HIS HEAD BACK; THE OTHER ARM shoots out, flashing a KNIFE, and in one SWOOPING MOTION, SLITS THE WINO'S THROAT, from ear to ear. (We may not see the incision, but we know unmistakably: the knife is coated with blood.)

Then, the wino is DRAGGED IN THROUGH THE WINDOW, from behind, and disappears completely into the darkened building.

The man who took his picture, has watched impassively, without so much as a flicker of expression; he now enters the building the wino was dragged into.

Through the doorway, we see his photo-camera FLASH again as he snaps another picture of the wino, lying there in the darkness.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MORTICIAN'S COSMETOLOGY ROOM - DAY

CLOSE: PANNING SHOT MORTICIAN'S EQUIPMENT

Curious and rather ominous items, such as: the surgical tools used for embalming, jars of chemicals, etc.

SOUND HEARD is from a television soap opera, in the next room.

CLOSE-UP POTTER: CONCENTRATING

We tilt down to see that he's working on the corpse of an elderly lady, MRS. COLLINS.

When the theme song of the soap opera comes on, Potter hums along with it.

WIDER ANGLE

JIMMY, Potter's teenage assistant, speaks on the intercom.

JIMMY (v.o.)

Mr. Potter...

POTTER

I'm busy, Jimmy.

JIMMY (v.o.)

Yes sir, I know, only it's Sheriff Gillis and he says he needs to talk to you.

POTTER

Ah, Jimmy, he says he wants to talk to me. In truth, he's in pursuit of an immodest amount of that curious weed you and your schoolchums find so fascinating and of which, rumor hath it, you are the city's leading merchant. Let him in, and fear not. I shall never tell that you keep it in the reposing room, under a stiff.

JIMMY (v.o.)

Yes, sir.

CLOSE-UP: POTTER

He concentrates on his work, humming along with a singing commercial.

WIDE SHOT TO INCLUDE DOOR

Dan enters.

VARIOUS ANGLES

POTTER

Good afternoon, Sheriff. I hope you don't object to my using you for a little light-hearted banter with my assistant.

DAN

He probably didn't think it was so light-hearted. I caught him one time with some grass.

POTTER

Never say I'm not an equal opportunity employer.

Dan has stopped well back from the surgical table.

DAN

I let him go. It was only a matchbox full, and he wasn't dealing. He's a good kid, you know.

Dan picks up a morticians journal while Potter continues to hyperverbalyze.

POTTER

Certainly. However, a minimal conversationalist. But then I probably shouldn't complain, he's the only person I could find in this town whose attitude toward congress with the dead has progressed past 1590 A.D.

Dan looks up.

POTTER (cont'd)

And before you lapse into your home-town chauvanist posture, let me agree with you in advance that yes, people back home in Providence, Rhode Island have the same attitude toward the mortuary science..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAN
Yeah, I'm sure.

Dan begins to leaf through the magazine.

POTTER
Forgive my preoccupation, but
Mrs. Collins here was a little
more difficult than I anticipated.

TWO SHOT DAN AND POTTER

DAN
How could Mrs. Collins be any
trouble? She died in her sleep.

POTTER
Lividity, officer. Mrs. Collins
passed into rest a good ten hours
before her demise was noted. She
was lying face down when she died.
In the elderly, especially in the
face, the blood vessels in the
epidermis are very fragile. With
all that extra blood, they became
distended and burst. Mrs. Collins
looked as though she'd been in a
fist fight.

DAN
So you put on a lot of makeup?

POTTER
Lots of makeup would only be
appropriate for the final viewing
of a streetwalker. The deceased
was, I believe, a retired music
teacher.

ANOTHER ANGLE DAN AND POTTER

DAN
(just a hint of sarcasm)
Congratulations.

CLOSE-UP: POTTER

Smiles.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POTTER

(rambling on)

Oh, officer. The tricks I've played. This is child's work. I've replaced missing eyeballs with sawdust and glued the lids together. I've used bent aluminum combs for dentures. I've used the back part of the deceased's scalps when they had no front part and I've folded one hand over wadded-up newspaper because the other hand had no fingers.

CLOSE-UP: DAN, WIDEN TO INCLUDE POTTER

Dan, who doesn't want to hear all this, looks up from Casket and Sunnyside, and interrupts.

DAN

Is this you? You write this column? Cosmetology Corner?

POTTER

(nodding)

A star in my profession, known but to my colleagues and a few lay necrophiles who subscribe for deak pleasure.

Dan turns the page. Something is too much for him. He puts down the magazine, looking at Potter in ill-concealed disgust.

POTTER (cont'd)

You find all this obscene? Barbarous? Mrs. Collins, is that barbarous?

INSERT

Potter stabs scalpel into Mrs. Collins' leg.

CLOSE-UP: POTTER

POTTER

Is that obscene?

INSERT

He stabs again.

ANGLE TO INCLUDE POTTER AND CORPSE

POTTER

Now, Dan. I had hoped that you would have somewhat of a more professional attitude in these matters. This

(indicates corpse)
is even poor fertilizer. But as sentiment, it's invaluable. The mortician is matchmaker between the bereaved and the very last look he'll have of his loved one. That last memory, the last meeting must be serene and natural. What can you remember in a sealed box? A sealed casket is the obscenity. It's the death of memory. The cosmetologist gives birth. I make souvenirs.

SOUND: a whirring noise.

LOOKING DOWN FROM OVERHEAD

A super-8 movie camera is mounted over the embalming work table. Dan looks up at it.

TWO SHOT DAN AND POTTER

POTTER

A super-8 movie camera. I am recording the more wondrous of my techniques and preparing a film lecture series for mortuary science schools. Mrs. Collins, I think, can now be pronounced a success.

(into intercom)

Jimmy, let's move it out.

(beat)

Now...precisely, what is it I can do for you, Dan?

ANOTHER ANGLE

DAN

(glad to get to
what he came for)

I'm not sure. I just want to get your professional opinion on a hunch I've got.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POTTER

Hunch?

DAN

Yeah...

(hesitant)

I'ts kind of flimsy, but...

(beat)

From what you saw out at the crash site, is it possible the guy we fished out of that wreck, could have been hurt somewhere else...in some other way? And put into the car, so it would look like an auto accident.

POTTER

(considering this)

Anything's possible, Dan...but I don't have any real basis for --

JIMMY (v.o.)

(on intercom,
interrupting them)

Is Sheriff Gillis still there?
There's an emergency phone call for him.

POTTER

Still here, Jimmy. Sheriff Dan you can take it there.

Potter indicates extension. Dan goes to it.

CLOSE-UP: DAN ON PHONE

DAN

Yeah?...

(beat)

What? What in the hell is going on here? I'll be right there!

(he starts to hang up,
but something else
is said to him)

He is? Tell them I'll be at the hospital in half an hour. Right after I check out what you've found at the freight yard.
(he hangs up)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAN
(quickly, as
he dashes out)
I want you to think about that
theory I gave you. I'll talk
to you about it later.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

MEDIUM CLOSE-UP: PATIENT

On bed, is swathed in bandages. ONLY ONE EYE IS UNCOVERED,
and it is CLOSED. We see the back of a nurse in the fore-
ground, and DOCTOR VANDENBURY on the other side of the bed,
talking to the nurse.

DOCTOR
Just give him fifty cc's now,
Nancy -- I'll be back within
an hour.

We cannot see Nancy's (Nurse) face.

NANCY
Yes, Doctor.

WIDER ANGLE

Door to right opens and Dan sticks his head in and knocks
quietly.

DOCTOR
It's alright, Dan -- Come in.

Dan comes to the bedside; the nurse goes out of frame.

TWO SHOT

Dan and Doctor standing next to the bed.

DAN
They told me he came out of the
coma. How is he?

DOCTOR
It's touch and go. We might
pull him through, but...even
if we do, there's not much the
best plastic surgeon can do.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAN
(somberly)
Yeah, I know...

DOCTOR
You saw him. His entire face
is one charred mass. And the
right eye. I'm afraid that's
lost.

Dan grimaces. They move back from the bed.

ANOTHER ANGLE

DAN
Is there any possibility I
could talk to him -- even
briefly?

DOCTOR
Dan, I'm afraid...

He breaks off and steers Dan out of the room.

TWO SHOT: CORRIDOR

They come through the door and into the hall.

DAN
I've got to find out what the
hell really happened. He hasn't
muttered anything, has he?

The Nurse passes them, going into the patient's room. Her
face is not seen. Only the Doctor glances at her.

DOCTOR
. Excuse me, Dan...

WIDER ANGLE

He sticks his head through the door behind them.

DOCTOR
Nancy, just 50 cc's now.

NANCY (distant v.o.)
Yes, Doctor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Doctor turns back to Dan, his chain of thought broken momentarily.

DOCTOR

Now. What? Oh yes. No, not a thing. And I'll tell you, Dan, even when he does talk, I'm afraid he'll be difficult to understand.

CLOSER ANGLE

DAN

Understand?

DOCTOR

Well, you see...he has no lips.

CUT TO:

HOSPITAL ROOM

We PAN close over the bandaged body of the victim. Tubes extend from all parts of his body. We stop on the one eye that isn't bandaged. The eye moves, then flutters open.

POV VICTIM

Fuzzily, vignetted by the bandages partially covering it, the eye sees the ceiling of the hospital room. Nancy suddenly leans into the field of vision. We also see her face for the first time: one of the ATTACKERS that shoved the hospital victim's face into the acid.

CLOSE-UP: EYE

It widens in terror.

CLOSE-UP: BANDAGED HAND

It weakly struggles against the traction in which it's held.

CLOSE-UP: AREA OF MOUTH

Movement beneath the bandages.

CLOSE-UP: NANCY

She's excited that the patient is now trying to communicate. She strokes the forehead.

NANCY

Well, I'm glad to see you're feeling better. You had a close call. But you're going to be all right. Just lie still; you're in traction. I'll go get the doctor.

WIDER SHOT

She moves toward the door. The telephone rings. After hesitating, looking back at her patient, she answers it.

CLOSE-UP: NANCY

Her face goes impassive. She listens a moment, NODS HER HEAD IN AGREEMENT, then puts the receiver down beside phone. She moves toward the bed.

POV PATIENT

Nancy moves toward him. Her step is almost mechanical, somnolent.

CLOSE-UP: TERRIFIED EYE

CLOSE-UP: STRUGGLING ARM

CLOSE-UP: LEG, THRASHING

EXTREME CLOSE-UP: EYE

MEDIUM SHOT TO INCLUDE DOOR

Dan and Doctor enter.

DOCTOR

Well, Nancy, has he shown any signs of --
(breaks off)

CLOSE-UP: NANCY

She is utterly impassive.

TILT DOWN TO PATIENT

FAST ZOOM IN AND FAST ZOOM OUT ALTERNATING BETWEEN CLOSE-UP AND LONG SHOT OF PATIENT'S FACE. (Twice)

The sight is grotesque.

But because of the CAMERA'S RAPID MOVEMENTS in and out, we are not able to focus on the shot too clearly. They are almost subliminal, half-second shots. An INSTRUMENT of some kind has been stabbed into the patient's eye and on into his brain.

MEDIUM SHOT DOCTOR AND DAN

DOCTOR
(total horror)
Sweet Jesus!

DAN
(weakly, sickened)
Oh God...

CAMERA PANS, tight shot, across room as dialogue continues.

DOCTOR (v.o.)
She looks catatonic.

DAN (v.o.)
Is he dead?

CAMERA has reached: TELEPHONE, which dangles off hook; PAN DOWN the cord to the wall jack.

SOUND: segues to telephone filter.

QUICK CUT TO:

CLOSE-UP ANOTHER TELEPHONE CORD

CAMERA moves up it, across receiver, up earpiece cord and into

EXTREME CLOSE-UP, EARPIECE AGAINST EAR

The following dialogue is on the phone filter, and a little fainter.

EXTREME CLOSE-UP: EARPIECE AGAINST EAR

DOCTOR (v.o.)
Yes...he's dead. She put it
right through to his brain.

DAN (v.o.)
Nancy. Nancy! She's not hearing
anything. My God, why?

DOCTOR (v.o.)
I'm afraid you won't get your
answer from her.

DAN (v.o.)
Do I put her in jail or can you
keep her here?

DOCTOR (v.o.)
We've no way to restrain violent
patients here, and she may turn
violent. Again.

DAN (v.o.)
I guess I'd better put her in
jail until I can get her to Austin.
I'd better call Betty.
(pause)
She was using the phone.

SOUND: still through filter, but becomes louder as Dan shouts
into phone.

DAN (cont'd) (v.o.)
Hello? Hello! Is there anybody
on the line?

Phone receiver leaves ear. A loud "CLICK" is heard.

DISSOLVE:

INT. JAIL CELL - DAY

CLOSE-UP: NANCY

She's still catatonic. PULL BACK SLOWLY to reveal she's
sitting, still in her BLOODY NURSE'S UNIFORM, in a jail cell.

SLOW DISSOLVE:

EXT. SERVICE STATION - TWILIGHT

LONG SHOT: PATROL CAR

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Dan is sitting there in his prowler car. An attendant is walking around the front of the car.

He takes Dan's credit card, and walks off to the station's office, disappearing inside.

MEDIUM CLOSE-UP: DAN IN CAR

He is making some notes on papers he holds on his lap. He looks up for a moment in meditation, and spots something in his rear-view mirror. His eyes narrow as he studies what he sees in the mirror.

EXTREME CLOSE-UP: MIRROR

MAN sitting in car behind him, is reflected.

Dan gets out of his car and approaches the Man sitting there.

DAN

Hello, Mr. Haskell.

HASKELL

Good evening, Dan.

DAN

(hesitant)

Uh...I just wanted to get some information from you...That guy that...died in the hospital a few days ago -- George LeMoir. The school bought photographic equipment from him, I understand.

HASKELL

(a confused look)

I don't know what you're talking about.

DAN

(tense)

You don't buy photographic equipment from George LeMoir?

HASKELL

Not only do we not buy it from him, we don't buy such equipment at all.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAN

(beat)

Is it possible this is a trans-
action you don't know about?

HASKELL

(pompous)

I know everything that is done
at the school -- I am the
principal.

DAN

(somewhat shaken)

Yeah...Thanks, Mr. Haskell.

He walks back to his car, as if in a dream.

The Attendant is wiping Dan's windshield, as Dan gets in
his car.

CLOSE-UP: ATTENDANT'S FACE SEEN THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD

The Attendant is, unmistakeably -- the Photographer who
was KILLED in the hospital scene!!.....the "so-called"
George LeMoir!

(NOTE: It should be remembered that neither Dan nor hardly
anyone else in town could recognize the Photographer, since
almost no one saw his face before it was disfigured -- except
the attackers (and Dan's wife and the hotel owner.)

He finishes chamoising the windshield, picks up his clip-
board that has Dan's gas receipt attached, and leans over
into the car. He looks at Dan and smiles.

ATTENDANT

(returning his
credit card)

You're Sheriff Gillis.

Dan doesn't respond.

ATTENDANT (cont'd)

(handing him the
gas receipt to sign)

My name is Freddie. Figured since
I'm new in town, I'd better intro-
duce myself to the law.

(smiles)

I'd rather come to you, than have
you come to me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Dan signs the receipt, numbly; still absorbed and shaken, by his conversation with the school principal. He hands the attendant back the clipboard with the receipt and starts up the engine.

ATTENDANT (cont'd)
(cheerily)
Adios.

Dan drives off.

INT. DAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Dan is at the kitchen table, sitting with a cup of coffee, watching Janet very intently. She has her back to him as she stands at the sink, rinsing off and stacking the supper dishes. She's humming.

After a bit:

JANET
Oh. We had another locker check today. I think what Paul Haskell likes most about being principal is being able to have locker checks. Barbara Ann Ellisor said that somebody stole her transistor radio. So right in the middle of fourth period, we had a locker check. Didn't turn up. Students aren't supposed to have radios at school anyway, so she had a lot of nerve. If I had caught her with it, I'd have stolen it.

MEDIUM CLOSE-UP: DAN

Janet in background, getting no response from Dan (in foreground). She heads off into the hall, far background.

JANET (v.o.)
You're sure you don't want to go to PTA tonight? You know how much fun I have. Why deny yourself a little pleasure.

He doesn't respond. She returns, carrying her handbag.

JANET
Dan! Danny!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAN

Hmmm?...No, I can't. I have to go out on patrol here pretty soon.

JANET

I really didn't think you'd want to go...baby, I was just giving you a hard time. What's the matter?

DAN

Nothing.

JANET

Something is.

Pause. Dan suddenly decides to come out with it.

DAN

Janet, I was talking --

He changes his mind.

DAN (cont'd)

Look, nothing's the matter. I'm sorry. Things have been tough lately.

TWO SHOT

JANET

My God, yes. Poor Nancy. She still hasn't said anything?

He shakes his head dumbly.

JANET (cont'd)

It's horrible...

(beat)

Well, I've got to go.

(notices something in her bag)

Oh. Will you see G. William Potter anytime soon?

DAN

I might. Why?

JANET

I've got some film here my students made. They're making a western. I figured it would

(More)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANET (cont'd)
be a good way to teach themselves about narrative. G. William said he'd develop it for me. He's got a Dark Room.

DAN
When did you see G. William?

JANET
Around.
(she studies him
for a long moment)
Are you mad or something?

DAN
No.

JANET
Do you love me?

DAN
Yes.

Janet looks a little upset, but decides not to pursue it any further. She picks up her bag, heads for the door.

JANET
Well. I should be back fairly early.

DAN
Okay.

She leaves. Move in on Dan and hold for a moment. He still hasn't touched his coffee.

CUT TO:

EXT. DAN DRIVING PROWL CAR - NIGHT

DAN'S POV

He's moving down Clifton's dark streets. Every now and then, he points his car spotlight into an alley. He comes upon the High School. People are leaving the auditorium and getting into their cars. Dan pulls in, gets out of the car and walks up to some people talking outside the auditorium.

THREE SHOT

PETE
Hello, Dan. What's doing?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAN

Hi Pete. Is Janet still here?

PETE

Dan, I don't think she was here tonight. Joyce, did you see Janet Gillis here tonight?

JOYCE

No, and I was looking for her, too.

DAN

Well, she said she might not come to PTA. She was thinking of taking in a movie instead. Well...Okay. Good night.

Several "good nights" in response. Follow Dan to front seat of prowler car where he sits for a moment. Finally, he pulls away.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS - NIGHT

DAN'S POV FROM FRONT SEAT PROWL CAR

He is going through some back streets. He suddenly sees something.

SWISH PAN TO SEE

Janet's car turning down a side street at right angle from the direction Dan's going. (At least, it is the exact same model and color as Janet's car.)

Dan cranes his head, trying to confirm what he's seen.

He gets his eyes back on the road ahead too late to see a pedestrian, crossing directly in front of him.

QUICK CUTS

The prowler car, just as Dan has turned his head back to road, HITS THE PEDESTRIAN with an unquestionably fatal force.

CLOSE-UP: DAN

He is stunned. Widen and follow as he gets out of car and runs to fallen pedestrian.

LOW ANGLE

Dan bends over the fallen pedestrian, whose face is turned away from him. Dan stands. Turns, walks in a daze back toward car to radio in.

CLOSE-UP: DAN

Something catches his eye. His face is covered with a look of revulsion.

CLOSE-UP: GRILLE OF PROWL CAR

A fragment of HUMAN ARM AND HAND is wedged in grillework of car.

FROM INSIDE OF CAR TOWARD DAN

The pedestrian has gotten up and is CHARGING Dan from behind. He KNOCKS DAN DOWN onto hood of prowl car.

INSERT

The pedestrian REACHES in' the frame and WRENCHES the ARM FRAGMENT FROM THE GRILLE.

WIDE SHOT

While Dan is recovering from the blow, the pedestrian runs away.

SERIES OF SHOTS

Down the street, through backyards, from one pool of street-light to another, Dan chases the man.

Toward the end of the sequence, Dan's looking for the man in a closed service station.

He draws his gun, as he walks about the darkened station.

MEDIUM SHOT: CAMERA'S POV DAN'S BACK

HAND-HELD: CAMERA MOVES TOWARDS DAN'S BACK giving the feeling someone is CREEPING UP on him.

MEDIUM CLOSE-UP: CAMERA'S POV DAN'S BACK (HAND HELD)

The UNSEEN CREATURE is very close to Dan's back now.

SOUND of ear shattering "clang" is heard.

Dan spins instantly and has pointed the gun toward the camera now.

A trash-can has been knocked over right next to Dan -- and the CAT who knocked it over (by jumping off a concrete fence, at eye-level height) scurries away...having been frightened by the noise it created itself.

Dan turns back in the direction he was originally peering -- sees nothing. He stands, glancing around the station, with no evidence of anything present, except the night noises (crickets, etc). Finally, he holsters his gun, and walks back toward where he left his car.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CAFE - DAY

Dan walks in the door; he looks very weary. Phil, Herman and Harry are having coffee at one of the tables.

PHIL

'Lo, Dan.

DAN

(pre-occupied)

Hi.

(at counter, to
waitress)

Lois, I'll have a hamburger
all the way and a cup of coffee.
To go.

She nods, and goes off to put in the order. (NOTE: She is the same waitress whom we know seduced the Photographer on the beach.)

PHIL

Dan, you sure found a terrible
way to stay busy.

HERMAN

That's for damn sure. That's
still hard to believe. Has
Nancy said anything yet, Dan?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAN
(somber)
Not a thing.

HERMAN
(shaking his head
slowly)
Hard to believe...hard to believe.
(beat)
As if the shape that guy got into
the hospital, wasn't bad enough.

PHIL
You know, that's two people who
died violently in Clifton in
four days? You realize that, Dan?

DAN
There's not a reason on earth to
believe they had anything to do
with each other.

HARRY
Well, they was both murders, Dan.

HERMAN
Yeah. And who would want to slit
the throat of an old bum passing
through town?

PHIL
Who would want to slit anybody's
throat?...A psycho, that's who!

HARRY
Not necessarily...I mean, with
the other guy, there could've
been some kind of motive.

DAN
(instantly interested)
What makes you say that?

HARRY
Well...a traveling salesman --
isn't that what you said he
turned out to be? On the road
a lot...some of these guys get
to taking up with someone's wife --
guy finds out about it, and --
blooey!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAN
(blowing up)
What the hell is that supposed
to mean?

HARRY
(taken aback)
Nothing. Nothing...just a
"fer-instance", Dan.

The others are also amazed by Dan's outburst. There is an embarrassed silence. Herman orders another cup of coffee. Dan calms down.

Herman's coffee is poured by waitress, and he reaches for the sugar and cream. Only then, do we -- and Dan -- see that he has a cast on his arm.

When Dan notices the cast, he starts becoming very intense again.

DAN
(to Herman,
suspiciously)
How'd that happen?

HERMAN
Fell off my garage roof, fixing
it.
(beat)
Like ta' broke my neck, instead
of my arm.

Dan says nothing, just stares at Herman, very intently.

Girl (waitress) arrives with Dan's burger, and hands it to him in a bag.

He pays, and leaves, without a word. The others stare after him strangely after he exits.

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Dan is on the phone. He still looks very bad -- depressed, and harried at the same time.

(CONTINUED)

INT. POLICE GARAGE - DAY

Dan is kneeling down, carefully examining the front bumper of his prowl car.

EXTREME CLOSE-UP: BUMPER

Dan's hand comes into frame, wielding the small silver tool; it scrapes some substance off the bumper, into the glassine envelope.

This process is repeated in several different spots on the bumper.

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Dan is on the phone again.

DAN

...since we have no lab facilities here and I don't want to wait for the mailing time to Austin.

(beat)

I need to know if any of the particles contain traces of human skin...I scraped them off the front of a car that -- may have been involved in a...hit and run.

(beat)

I'll drop it off there at the hospital, sometime today.

(beat)

Thanks, Doc.

He hangs up.

WIDER ANGLE

He opens his desk drawer, takes out a file, and begins studying the paper inside. Without taking his eyes off the paper, he gropes for a cup of coffee that has been sitting beside him, finds it, takes a gulp, continues intently studying the paper.

The door opens and someone sticks in his head, calls Dan's name. The someone is BEN, the owner of the Hotel Dan visited earlier in the film.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEN
Dan! Dan!

DAN
Yeah, Ben...come on in.

MEDIUM CLOSE-UP: BEN

He looks to be in worse condition than Dan has been lately; he's frantic and very frightened.

He stands there, looking at Dan -- as if he doesn't know how to start telling him what he has to. Dan senses this.

DAN
(gently)
What's wrong, Ben?

BEN
Look -- that guy...the one you came to see me about last week -- that...died after the car wreck.

DAN
(alerted)
Yeah?

BEN
(stammers)
He's...I just saw him.

DAN
(mildly irritated)
What do you mean, you just saw him?

BEN
He's over at Norman's Conoco Station -- pumping gas.

DAN
Ben -- if he's dead --

BEN
(cutting him off)
You go over there and take a look.

DAN
I never saw his face.
(beat)
But, obviously, it's just a guy who looks like him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEN
(very agitated)
It's the same guy! The same
guy!
(beat)
I was standing right next to
that man, and that's him!

DAN
(trying to humor him)
Ben...

BEN
Ask your wife!

Dan looks at him, the strained look on his own face, intensifying now. Hold a few beats.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS - TWILIGHT

Dan and Janet are riding in her car, him driving. They arrive at Norman's Conoco Station; Dan pulling in.

JANET
(trying to see
the gas gauge)
I just put some in this morning.

DAN
Oh...it needs oil, I think.

They are parked by the pumps, but no attendant is in sight. They wait.

TWO SHOT DAN AND JANET

Janet looks casual, relaxed; Dan tight, tense. He taps the steering wheel with his open palms, nervously.

CLOSE-UP: DAN

He peers out, looking for the attendant. The wait increases the strain on him.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Dan honks his horn. Finally, an attendant appears, coming out from the lube rack service area. We can't quite make out his face.

He approaches closer...yes; it's him: "George LeMoir" -- if that's his name. At least it's the Photographer we saw in the film's opening scene.

ATTENDANT

(friendly)

Hi. Help ya?

Dan is too busy studying Janet's reaction to respond.

MEDIUM CLOSE-UP: DAN

Studying Janet, intently.

MEDIUM CLOSE-UP: JANET

Smiling, unconcerned.

THREE SHOT: ATTENDANT, DAN AND JANET

ATTENDANT (cont'd)

(friendly, but
insistent)

Folks? Can I help you?

DAN

(snapping out of it)

Oh! Yeah...Put in a quart,
thirty weight.

ATTENDANT

Right.

The attendant goes about his business, under the hood.

Dan looks at Janet. She smiles sweetly back at him.

There has not been a flicker of recognition between Janet and the attendant.

CLOSE-UP: DAN

He looks thoughtful.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROADSIDE - ANGLE PARALLEL TO HIGHWAY - DAY

A YOUNG GIRL, very pretty, dressed in Levis and an Army fatigue jacket, leans again a roadsign that says:

"CLIFTON 3 (arrow points straight ahead)
GALVESTON 145 (arrow points right)"

WIDER ANGLE

A crossroads is in the background. She sticks out her thumb as a car approaches, but no luck. A car approaches from the opposite direction, so she hurries across the road and tries it. No luck. She crosses back to lean against the sign again. The next car stops. It's a battered pickup. The girl runs to it.

INT. TRUCK CAB

MEDIUM CLOSE-UP: MAN'S BACK

The driver seen from the back only, wears what appear at a glimpse to be dirty workman's clothes.

MAN (v.o.)
You sure you wanna ride with
me? How do you know I'm not
a dirty old man?

MAN'S POV. THE GIRL

GIRL
(smiling prettily)
I'll chance it.

She darts over to her backpack, scoops it up, and returns with it. She tosses it into the rear of the truck, then, hops into the front seat, alongside of the man.

The truck pulls off, leaving dust in the CAMERA'S LENS.

INT. TRUCK CAB

TWO SHOT: GIRL AND DRIVER

We can now see the Driver's face -- it looks only vaguely familiar.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRIVER

How far are you goin'?

GIRL

How far are you going?

DRIVER

I'm going to Austin to pick up a couple of calves I got to butcher today...But first I got to stop at my place up the road a piece. You wanna go on with me to Austin? That'll put you there by the Interstate and it should be plenty easy for you to get some rides to wherever you wanna go. You goin' back to Houston?

GIRL

Didn't come from Houston. Not going there either.

DRIVER

Not goin' anyplace in particular?

GIRL

No place in particular.

DRIVER

Ought to think 'bout stayin' a spell in Clifton. Damn sure rather live in a nice little town like this than a big city full of robbers and dope fiends.

The girl makes no response other than to nod her head abstractly, humoring him.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Driver points up ahead, to the right.

DRIVER

That's my place.

THEIR POV LOOKING OUT WINDSHIELD

It's the only building in sight -- the rest of the area is completely deserted.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRIVER (cont'd)
You know anybody who hunts
deer in this part of the
country?

GIRL
I make it a point not to.

LONG SHOT

The truck is now pulling into a driveway. It is a rundown house -- looks like it hasn't been lived in for awhile.

ANGLE FROM INSIDE TRUCK

As the truck continues to move further into the long driveway -- very slowly now, we pass by a very large meat locker plant.

DRIVER
If you hear of anybody, you
tell 'em to bring them car-
casses to Junior. Ain't nobody
who'll dress venison for a
better price than me.

We are almost at the very rear of the house now, and we see a sign there that reads:

"Custom Butchering"

LONG SHOT

The truck now is pulling into the ramshackle garage (adjoining a shed).

LOW ANGLE: SIDE OF TRUCK - SLOW ZOOM IN

The man's arm extends out from the driver's side window. Only his arm can be seen:

It has the exact same tattoo on it, that the murdered wino had.

(NOTE: Few of us would have placed the clean-shaven face of this Driver as being the same one belonging to the scraggly-bearded wino seen earlier in the film.)

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ROADSIDE - NIGHT

LOW ANGLE GIRL'S LEGS AND FEET

Lying on a slight slope, as the rest of her body lies in a ditch, her face, out of view.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PHONEBOOTH - NIGHT

Dan is talking into a receiver, his car outside with its red-light flashing. The ditch is in the background.

DAN
(into phone, deadly)
Potter -- another one...same
pattern. Face disfigured. Get
out here.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Dan and the same doctor we saw in the early part of the film, are standing outside PATHOLOGY LAB doors.

DOCTOR
...and I've got the report
right here.
(beat)
Are you sure this is the sub-
stance you scraped off the front
bumper of a car?

Dan nods affirmatively.

DOCTOR (cont'd)
(looking at Dan
carefully)
You couldn't have it mixed
up with another piece of
evidence?

DAN
No way.

DOCTOR
(puzzled)
Well -- then, it just doesn't
make sense...But I checked it
three times -- and it keeps
coming out the same.

(More)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOCTOR (cont'd)
(beat)
Yet, it's impossible.

DAN
(afraid to ask)
What?

DOCTOR
Some of the substance does
contain particles of human
flesh -- but...
(beat)
It's skin that has been
preserved with formaldehyde
-- it appears to have been
dead for several weeks.

Dan looks very shaken -- white as a sheet.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DEN - DAN'S HOUSE - DAY

Dan is tensely going through some drawers in a cabinet.
He can't seem to find what he is looking for, and becomes
progressively more strained.

He walks into the other room where Janet is sitting.

DAN
I had some shells in the den
drawers. Did you see them?

JANET
Shells?

DAN
Bullets.

JANET
No...God knows, I don't use
them.

Dan is silent at this remark; just goes back into the other
room, and continues searching, opening drawers.

A small drawer he has opened and glanced into, he starts to
close, when something in it, catches his eye; he stares at
what's there...it's a book.

INSERT: CLOSE-UP - BOOK

The Title reads:

"WITCHCRAFT, VODOOISM AND ZOMBIES"

CLOSE-UP: DAN'S HAND

As he withdraws the book, and examines it. There is a marker in it.

He turns to the page where the marker is.

EXTREME CLOSE-UP: PAGE

There are three lines on it encircled in red, as follows:

...which ancient folklore has,
Zombies can only be made of
persons dying by a violent
death."

MEDIUM CLOSE-UP: DAN

He closes the book, and stares at its cover again.

JANET (v.o.)
(yelling from other
room)
I found your bullets...they're
in the little kitchen drawer --
where you left them.

Dan revolves his head to look towards room her voice came from, but he does not move; he still holds the book.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DINING ROOM - DAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Janet and Dan are eating quietly.

DAN
(casual)
Didn't you used to do alot of
reading about Occultism...
Witchcraft, the supernatural;
that sort of thing?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANET

Yes, but not for pleasure.

(beat)

I did my Master's Thesis in Graduate School on the treatment of Sixteenth Century suspected witches.

(beat)

Why do you ask that?

DAN

(shrugs)

I thought I saw you reading a book on it lately.

JANET

I am. I'm brushing up...I'm giving the kids in school a lecture on it. Kids love these creepy things -- keeps them from getting bored with my class.

DAN

You never got into that with the kids at school before -- why suddenly now?

JANET

(defensive)

I just thought of the idea.

(beat)

The kids are fascinated by it, and I know a little something about it.

(beat)

You act like I'm a prime suspect you're grilling.

There is a long pregnant pause.

DAN

I'm sorry...

(beat)

I'm under a lot of pressure.

JANET

I'm taping the lecture with my recorder...if you're that interested, you can listen.

(beat)

Speaking of the kids at school, did you give that film of theirs to G. William to develop last week?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAN
Film?...Oh...no...I forgot.

JANET
(concerned)
You didn't lose it?

DAN
No...no. I'm not sure where
it is this minute, but I have
it. Probably down at the office.

JANET
Oh, Dan...Those kids worked hard
on that film.

DAN
I'll take care of it.

CUT TO:

EXT. DRUGSTORE - DAY

Dan's car pulls up in front of drugstore. He gets out,
walks around to trunk of the car, and opens it.

INSERT: CLOSE-UP DAN'S TRUNK

EXTREME CLOSE-UP: ROLL OF FILM

In trunk. Dan's hand reaches in, and grabs it.

CUT TO:

INT. DRUGSTORE - DAY

Dan is standing at the back end of the store, at one of the
sales-counters, talking to the elderly DRUGGIST.

DAN
Remember, Ernie -- this is
police business...nobody is
to know you're developing
this for me --
(beat)
Not even my wife, if she happens
to come in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ERNIE
(conspiratorilly)
Yes, siree...

DAN
Wednesday, you say?

ERNIE
I'll have it by then.

DAN
Okay. See you.

Dan leaves. Ernie stares at the film roll, curiously.

CUT TO:

INT. MORGUE - DAY

MEDIUM CLOSE-UP: POTTER - LOW ANGLE LOOKING UP

He is looking at something just past the camera, intently.

WIDER SHOT FROM BEHIND POTTER

He is looking into the open body storage drawers. After looking a moment, he reaches in and picks up the body. His body conceals the corpse's face, but from the hair and jeans we see it's that of the girl hitchiker. FOLLOW Potter as he carries her into the embalming room.

SERIES OF SHOTS

In CLOSE-UPS we see Potter preparing the corpse. He does it slowly and -- is it our imagination -- sensually?

Potter inserts needles, turns on pumps and fills the corpse with embalming fluids.

DISSOLVE TO:

SERIES OF SHOTS

SOUND: JOHNNY CARSON SHOW IN BACKGROUND

Potter goes to work with his cosmetology tools and materials. He applies makeup to the girl's body. In extreme CLOSE-UPS we see him rebuilding the girl's face. Toward the end of

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

the sequence we see the girl's full face. It is waxen, looks like a death mask and should look as though it were never living flesh.

ANGLE TO INCLUDE ENTIRE TABLE

There is a look of growing excitement on Potter's face. Move in very slowly to CLOSE-UP on Potter. We see that his face has become twisted, and sweat glistens. He is staring into the corpse's face intently.

ANGLE TO INCLUDE ENTIRE TABLE

Potter slowly bends over toward the corpse, out of the frame. Hold on empty air for one quick second as we:

DISSOLVE TO:

SAME NIGHT - COSMETOLOGY ROOM

The room is in darkness -- but we can see easily, by the moonlight.

The CAMERA is about three feet off the ground, PANNING the room. As it continues to PAN, and comes across nothing, our fears increase. It is a very spooky place, at night in the dark, this house of the dead. We are sure something is going to happen, but we don't know what.

NOW, coming into frame, FEET FIRST, LYING there, exactly on level with the camera, are the feet of a DEAD BODY. CAMERA CONTINUES TO DOLLY IN, VERY SLOWLY, but exactly on same level the body is; we can't see the face, because camera has not moved close enough to the head yet.

SUDDENLY: 'THE BODY SITS STRAIGHT UP INTO THE FRAME!

It's the girl hitchiker. Her eyes are closed. Now, the EYES OPEN. The face is completely blank, looking into CAMERA.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DESOLATE ROAD - NIGHT

It is the outskirts of Clifton, a '74 Pontiac is driving along the deserted highway.

INT. PONTIAC

A couple in their thirties, rides in the car. She is drinking something out of a dixie cup.

MAN

(weary)

I could use a drink of that.

WOMAN

Okay...I just want another sip and you can have the rest of it.

(beat)

Want me to drive for a while?

MAN

No, no...I'm fine.

The woman takes another drink out of the cup, and holds it out to him. Without taking his eyes off the road, he reaches his hand out for it. She places the cup in his hands -- but since he's taking it "blind", his grip is not secure, while she releases hers. The cup drops and splatters on the seat, and some of it spills on his lap.

The woman squeals and the man brakes the car immediately, pulling it off the side of the road.

LINDA (WOMAN)

Oh, I'm sorry, Ronnie!

RONNIE

(under his breath)

Christ...

(beat, sighs)

It's alright -- it's only lukewarm...give me something to wipe it with.

She opens up the glove compartment, takes out several napkins, and hands them to him. He goes about cleaning up the mess.

Now, he goes to start up the car again -- it won't start. He tries it several times; nothing.

RONNIE

God-damn it! What a time for it to do this again.

(beat)

Same thing happened last week -- now it won't start for a long time.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LINDA
I think you flooded it.

RONNIE
(irritated)
No, that's not it. There's
a loose wire in the starter...
When it stalls, you have to
let it lay for a while; then
it will finally kick over
again.

LINDA
(looking around at
the desolate countryside)
Where are we?

RONNIE
I saw a sign a few miles back
that said "Clifton".

LINDA
Well...I guess all we can do
is wait here until it starts
up again.

RONNIE
That could be an hour!

He spots something out of the window, rolls it down and stares.

RONNIE (cont'd)
There's a house just a little
ways over there.
(he glances at
his watch)
It's not too late -- maybe we
can borrow their phone to call
the auto club.

They get out of the car and head toward the HOUSE which is
about a hundred yards away.

LINDA
Thank God for that house --
it's the only one I can see
for miles around.

RONNIE
(growing more irritated)
I hope to hell they're home.

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERTED HOUSE

Ronnie and Linda have reached the house and are walking up the entrance way.

(Although it is night, we will probably be able to recognize that this is the same house where the wino-truckdriver took the girl hitchhiker.)

MEDIUM LONG SHOT: CAMERA'S POV RONNIE AND LINDA

There must be a sinister "feel" to this shot -- as if some UNSEEN PRESENCE is WATCHING them.

The house is completely darkened -- no lights on anywhere. Now they find out why: there is a sign on the front lawn (which they could not make out from a further distance, in the dark) that reads: "For Lease", with a telephone number and name of rental agent.

RONNIE

(exasperated)

Oh, no! This is all I needed...

All I needed!

(beat)

When it's the only house for miles.

LINDA

(glances around the surrounding empty landscape, helplessly)

Listen...why don't we do this:

Let's see if we can get inside.

And sleep here tonight.

Ronnie makes a face.

LINDA (cont'd)

I don't feel like sitting in the car for an hour waiting for it to start.

RONNIE

It might start in ten minutes.

I said it could take an hour.

LINDA

You've been driving a long time anyway. You really should rest, honey...and I'm kind of tired too. I don't think I could drive now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RONNIE

But...breaking into a stranger's
house -- in the middle of the
night...it's Breaking and Entering.

(beat)

With our luck the cops will find
us -- and we'll be spending the
night in jail.

LINDA

Oh, c'mon! Don't be such a stiff.
It'll be fun. No one's going to
find us, out here in the middle
of nowhere.

RONNIE

(weakening, sighs)

Okay, but I'm not breaking a
window...Only if we can find
one that's open.

They start walking around the house, trying windows.

They have no luck until -- upon reaching the back of the
house they see a patio there, that has French Doors -- and
one of the doors is standing wide open.

LINDA

(spotting the door)

Oh, neat!

RONNIE

(suspicious)

Why would they leave the door
wide open like that?

LINDA

The agent was probably showing
the house today and forgot it.

They walk over to the French Doors, and enter.

CAMERA TRACKS WITH THEM

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

They stop a few steps inside, and try to glance around, but
their eyes are not accustomed to the dark yet. (The only
thing they can make out is that there is furniture in the
house.)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RONNIE

Wait here for a second. I'll find a light switch and see if the juice is turned on.

LINDA

Be careful -- don't knock anything over.

Ronnie gropes forward into the darkness. Linda turns her back to the camera and goes over to the French Doors and closes them. While standing there at the doors, something seems to catch her attention, through the glass, in the distance. She stands there for several moments peering out through the glass, trying to catch another glimpse of it.

Finally, she turns and looks back into the room once again. She can't see Ronnie -- he has disappeared into the darkness.

She starts groping forward herself...she walks about ten feet, very slowly, when: SHE BUMPS INTO SOMEONE. She jumps back in fright, with a gasp.

RONNIE

What the hell is the matter with you?

LINDA

You scared me!

RONNIE

There's only two of us here.

LINDA

I thought I saw something outside.

RONNIE

You're just getting the creeps... I found a switch and there's no electricity.

LINDA

Let's open all the drapes, so we can see a little.

RONNIE

Yeah.

They walk around opening all the drapes when suddenly there is a KNOCK heard at the front door. They freeze.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RONNIE (cont'd)
Oh-oh!...I told you the cops
would catch us.

LINDA
(strained: calls
out loud)
Who's there?...

No response.

RONNIE
(even louder)
Yes?...Who is it?

Silence.

RONNIE (cont'd)
Don't open it!...There's some-
thing wrong. Or they would
tell us who they are.

He hurries over and locks the French Doors, through which
they came.

RONNIE (cont'd)
(whispering)
We know the front door and the
windows are all locked.

Now, walking by the window, on the side of the house are
SEVERAL DARK SILHOUETTES. They are not walking stealthily
or with any attempt to conceal themselves -- just shuffling
ominously along.

The silhouettes pass by two more windows, and are now almost
up to the French Doors, which Ronnie has locked.

LINDA
(very frightened)
Who are they?...What's happening?
Why don't they say anything?

Ronnie has run to the center of the room, and holds Linda
in his arms.

RONNIE
(whispering
extremely quietly)
Sshhh...don't make a sound.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The silhouettes try the French Door handles, and discover that they are locked. Without warning, one of the figures SMASHES HIS HAND DIRECTLY THROUGH THE GLASS DOOR, REACHES HIS HAND INSIDE THROUGH THE JAGGED GLASS, UNLOCKS THE DOOR HANDLE, AND THROWS THE DOOR OPEN.

Ronnie and Linda shrink back, against the far wall. Two or three of the silhouettes stand there in the doorway, looking at them.

Linda is almost starting to cry.

LINDA
(to the intruders)
We just had some car trouble...
and we thought we could spend
the night here...we saw the
house was empty...

The silhouettes start shuffling forward into the house. We can see now that there are about five or six of them.

Instantly, Ronnie grabs Linda by the hand and pulls her along with him as he charges over to the front door, opens it, and: THERE IS ONE OF THEM STANDING RIGHT AT THE DOORWAY -- WHO REACHES OUT.

But the INTRUDER'S REACH is lethargically slow, and -- with a lightning fast movement -- RONNIE HURLS the HEAVY DOOR CLOSED in the intruder's face.

Linda stands there horrified. Ronnie looks desperately around the room for some other possible avenue of escape -- but the creatures are between them and any other door to an adjoining room. But now he spots a STAIRWAY, to their right, which they can probably just about get to before the creatures reach them.

He yanks Linda with him and bolts up the stairs, easily out distancing the slow moving creatures. Inexorably, they move up the stairs after the couple. Now, we have more opportunity to study their faces (seen through the moonlight). We will, no doubt, recognize several of them to be people that we know are dead: the GIRL HITCHIKER, the WINO, GEORGE LEMOIR, etc.

Ronnie and Linda have locked themselves into an upstairs bedroom. In addition to the lock on the door, they are now also BARRICADING IT, using chest-of-drawers and the bed. Now, the zombies have reached the door of the room that the couple are locked in; they try the door and find it is locked.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

On the other side of the door, the couple have just finished barricading it, and now Ronnie looks out all of the windows in the room to see if there is any possible way down to the ground...there is none. He assesses the drop to the ground: it's about thirty feet; even if they preferred that to the zombies, they would probably break one of their legs, and the zombies would get them anyway. Suddenly, there is an excruciatingly loud BANGING on the bedroom door.

Outside the door, the zombies have procured a large table and are using it as a battering ram, to SMASH DOWN the door.

Inside the bedroom, Ronnie notices a small bathroom adjoining the bedroom. (The door to it is slightly ajar, so we can see it's a bathroom.) He hustles into it, looks out the very small window in there. There is a TRELLIS EXTENDING up from the ground, All the way up the side of the building; it runs right alongside the small bathroom window.

The SMASHING ON THE DOOR CONTINUES, as Ronnie races back into the other room, grabs Linda by the arm, and leads her into the bathroom. Then, he locks the bathroom door, with them inside the small room. (Even so, all during the following conversation, the SMASHING SOUND can still be heard in the background.)

RONNIE

(guides Linda to
window)

Out the window! There's a
trellis you can reach from
it, and climb to the ground.

Linda peers out the very tiny window. (It barely looks
big enough for them to squeeze through.)

LINDA

I'm afraid I'll fall reaching
for the trellis.

RONNIE

(fanatical)

No you won't! It's a short
reach.

LINDA

What if the trellis breaks?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RONNIE
We've got to chance it!

QUICK CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

MEDIUM SHOT: DOOR

Just as it is SPLINTERING OPEN COMPLETELY, and provides the zombies access to the bedroom. (The group of them are easily able to PUSH the chest-of-drawers and the bed aside.)

QUICK CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Linda is just squirming through the tiny window.

QUICK CUT TO:

EXT. WINDOW OF BATHROOM - NIGHT

Sitting on the sill, with the upper half of her body extended out the window, Linda is easily able to reach the trellis.

She grabs it, and with Ronnie helping her from inside, she hoists herself completely onto the trellis -- and begins climbing down it.

But now, the zombies are SMASHING at the bathroom door.

Ronnie starts squeezing through the tiny window -- it's very tight...he gets his upper torso through -- and is stuck!

The bathroom door is starting to splinter.

Ronnie squeezes for all he's worth -- and gets the lower half of his body through too.

QUICK CUT TO:

EXT. WINDOW OF BATHROOM - NIGHT

Ronnie is now sitting on the sill -- but his legs are no longer stuck. He grabs the trellis, and swings himself onto it, now hastily starting down it. (Linda has already reached the ground, and waits for him.)

QUICK CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

That door BREAKS down too, and the zombies LURCH INTO THE BATHROOM. They go to the open window and look out it.

QUICK CUT TO:

EXT. GROUND BY TRELLIS - NIGHT

Ronnie has just reached the ground, and he and Linda TEAR OFF, like mad.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Ronnie and Linda are just reaching their car.

RONNIE
(out of breath)
It might start now.

LINDA
Might?...Oh God!

They hop in the car.

EXTREME CLOSE-UP: IGNITION OF CAR

Ronnie's hand inserts the key and turns it...the motor sputters a couple of times.

PULL BACK TO WIDER ANGLE

RONNIE
I think it's gonna kick over.

REVERSE ANGLE LOOKING INTO CAR THROUGH FRONT WINDSHIELD

as Ronnie feverishly turns the key and pumps the pedal. Linda looks in the direction they came from -- to see if any zombies are coming after them.

SHOCKINGLY, a GROTESQUE FIGURE POPS UP OUT OF THE BACK SEAT OF THE CAR, BEHIND THEM.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

It's a FEMALE ZOMBIE; (Ronnie and Linda haven't seen her yet) and she loops a cord around Ronnie's neck, and starts STRANGLING him from the back seat.

Linda screams at the top of her lungs. Ronnie gags helplessly -- unable to reach the girl in back seat -- or at least to get a grip on her with flailing arms.

With a burst of hysterical strength Linda seizes the zombie by the hair and yanks with all of her might... But a LARGE CLUMP of it's HAIR PULLS LOOSE from it's scalp -- and the creature is freed from Linda's grasp. But this few seconds is just enough so that the zombie is thrown slightly off balance, from it's STRANGLEHOLD -- enabling Ronnie to get his fingers of one hand underneath the cord around his throat. With the pressure off his windpipe, he is able to turn partially, and SEIZE the zombie with one arm.

As he holds her in a hammer-lock, he shouts to Linda:

RONNIE
Open the back door!

Linda throws open one of the doors (it's a 4-door) and Ronnie with Linda helping, HEAVES the thrashing creature out of the car -- and SLAMS the door shut, locking it. They hastily lock all the other doors.

Ronnie goes back to starting the car. He pumps the gas pedal furiously and the motor SPUTTERS erratically.

The female zombie is coming back at them now. She has a ROCK -- and drapes herself over the hood of the car and begins SMASHING on the windshield with the very large rock.

The windshield is starting to SHATTER. Now, seen COMING INTO VIEW ARE SEVERAL MORE ZOMBIES -- but still a good distance away (about forty yards).

The "Shatter" on the windshield is spreading in a spider-web effect; until GLASS CHIPS start FLYING OFF -- from the pounding. Linda is screaming hysterically now. Ronnie's face contorts in tension as he frantically works on starting the car -- and it seems to be KICKING OVER -- ALMOST CATCHING now.

A small HOLE is now appearing in the WINDSHIELD -- it is rapidly ENLARGING.

The ZOMBIES APPROACHING are MUCH CLOSER now.

INSERT: CLOSE-UP: IGNITION

It GRINDS as MOTOR SPUTTERS.

SUDDENLY, the motor CATCHES and STARTS UP!

They PEEL OUT, roaring away from the group of zombies which had just reached the spot where the car was.

However, the zombie that was pounding on the windshield is still with them -- she's still sprawled on the hood, as the car roars along. Her face PRESSES UP against the WINDSHIELD and STARES IN at them, GARISHLY.

Ronnie SWERVES the car SEVERELY -- and the zombie CAREENS OFF THE HOOD. The car rockets on.

INT. CAR

Ronnie and Linda are still trembling, but relief is flooding through them.

LINDA

(moaning softly)

Christ...Christ-Almighty...

Who are they? What are they?

Ronnie doesn't even bother giving a rhetorical response; he just keeps his eyes glued to the road and drives like a son-of-a-bitch.

LINDA (cont'd)

(weakly, still
completely shaken)

We should stop in a couple miles, at a phone booth, and report this...to the police.

RONNIE

You crazy?!...There could be more like them in the vicinity.

(beat)

I'm not stoppin' till I get a thousand miles from here.

They WHIZ past a BILLBOARD, which we HOLD ON as their car disappears into the horizon.

The billboard reads:

"Move to Clifton...
And Really Live."

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SCHOOL CORRIDOR - DAY

Dan is walking through the halls. He comes across a male TEACHER who recognizes him.

TEACHER

Hey, Dan...your wife's Datsun
on the blink again? Why don't
you sell that thing?

Dan is so wrapped up in his fears and problems, that he hardly hears the man. He reacts only instinctively.

DAN

What? Yeah...yeah.

MAN

She said for you to wait in her
office. She'll be ready to go
at 3:30.

Dan wanders on, without acknowledging it.

CUT TO:

INT. JANET'S OFFICE AT SCHOOL - DAY

Dan sits at Janet's desk. He patiently waits for her.

His eyes fall upon a TAPE RECORDER on desk. He glances furtively up at door, then switches on tape.

He starts and stops it several times, pushing it to "FAST FORWARD", apparently he's looking for something. Finally he finds it:

CLOSE-UP: RECORDER

JANET (v.o.)

-- for witches in the 16th
Century was to pull them
apart with horses...

SOUND: "ughs" and giggles from the children.

Dan's hand in the frame, as he switches the machine to "FAST FORWARD" again. Then "PLAY".

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANET (v.o.)
 -- because voodoo is basically
 a religion, and requires belief
 and conversion for its practices
 to...

"FAST FORWARD" again. Then "PLAY".

JANET (v.o.)
 -- murdering strangers to take
 them...

Dan stops the tape and rewinds a bit. Then plays again.

JANET (v.o.)
 -- despite what you may have
 seen on the late show, they
 don't always walk around like
 Bela Lugosi.

SOUND: Giggles

JANET (cont'd) (v.o.)
 Even though they are convention-
 ally dead, zombies are capable of
 very closely imitating the living..
 If, of course, their master desires
 it. One thing zombies are very
 handy for is for going out and
 collecting other zombies. Or,
 rather, zombies-to-be. There are
 reports -- not substantiated but
 then not discredited either --
 of a certain village in central
 Peru whose residents included a
 substantial number of undetected
 zombies.

CLOSE-UP: RECORDER

JANET (v.o.)
 They assisted their master's by
 roaming about the mountains mur-
 dering strangers -- who were taken
 back to the master, and by him
 resurrected as slaves. This was
 all brought to an end, I understand
 by the Peruvian organized labor
 movement.

SOUND: SHRIEKS OF LAUGHTER

CONTINUED:

Dan shuts off machine. He sits there, thinking.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DRUGSTORE - DAY

Dan is at rear sales counter, talking to same elderly druggist with whom he left the roll of film.

ERNIE (DRUGGIST)

...so, try me Friday.

(beat)

Sorry...but there was nothing
could be done about it.

DAN

Okay, Ernie...But I need it
badly.

ERNIE

It'll be ready by then, for
sure.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Dan is sitting at his desk, when the door opens, and Potter enters. Dan looks up.

DAN

(tense)

From the tone of your voice
when you called, I take it
this is official police busi-
ness.

This probably the only time we have ever seen Potter looking
really grim.

POTTER

I'm afraid it is, Dan.

The two of them stare at each other for a beat, neither saying
a word; finally:

POTTER (cont'd)

I hardly know how to begin, Dan...
Except to say, I should have come
to you earlier.

(More)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POTTER (cont'd)

(beat)

But I couldn't bring myself to.

DAN

(the strain just
keeps getting
worse for him)

What is it, Potter?

POTTER

(looking off)

Dan...

(finally looks
at him levelly)

Bodies are being stolen from
their graves...fresh corpses.

DAN

(beat; grimly)

How long has this been happening?

POTTER

A couple of weeks.

DAN

Why didn't you report it?

POTTER

If word got around -- that the
loved ones final resting place
was not so final -- people would
cease to bury people in the Clifton
Cemetery.

(beat)

And I would be out of business.

(beat)

I have a substantial investment
in that place. I couldn't even
sell it, if this news leaked out.

Dan nods wearily.

POTTER (cont'd)

It's my life savings, Dan.

(beat)

It's not my fault -- what's
happening.

Dan just stares at him, without saying a word.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POTTER (cont'd)

Dan...

(beat)

There is something else -- something very insubstantial -- but which I feel compelled to tell you, nevertheless.

LONG PAUSE.

POTTER (cont'd)

It's your wife, Dan.

DAN

(extremely intense)

My wife?...

(beat)

What about her?

POTTER

She's been acting very strange, lately.

DAN

(hoarse)

What do you mean?

POTTER

She said she's doing some lecture for her students -- exploring Occultism, Black Masses, Voodooism.

DAN

(flatly)

She is.

POTTER

(ignoring this)

She asked me about the bodily condition of certain people at the Time of Death.

(beat)

I didn't pay too much attention, at first...a couple of weeks ago.

(beat)

But when the bodies began disappearing...

(beat)

I suspect her of stealing them.

(beat)

I'm sorry, Dan.

MEDIUM CLOSE-UP: DAN

The nightmare won't end.

DAN
(anguish)
Give me a few days...I may
be able to shed some light
on this.

Potter nods "yes" grimly, and starts to leave.

DAN
(calling after him)
Potter...
(beat)
You believe in the dead coming
back?

POTTER
(long pause)
I haven't given it much thought.
(beat; wryly)
In my profession it's a rather
unpleasant thing to think about.

DAN
It is in anybody's profession.

POTTER
(thinks)
You don't mean you believe those
missing corpses were brought back
to life...and just walked away
themselves?

There is a long pause.

DAN
I don't know what I believe,
Potter.

CUT TO:

INT. BAR - NIGHT

It is a small bar adjoining the small hotel that Ben owns.
At the moment it is mostly deserted; at a booth in the
corner, having drinks, sit Dan and the Doctor that we have
seen him with earlier in the film.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOCTOR

(looks at his watch)
I can't talk long -- I'm due home.

DAN

Yeah...Well...I...
(he flounders)

DOCTOR

(sees he's having trouble)
What is it, Dan? Tell me.

DAN

(beat: plunging right in)
In your professional opinion, is there any way whatsoever to... to -- reanimate people after they have died? And to get them to walk around?

DOCTOR

It depends upon your definition of "died"....I had one patient, who, for over four and a half minutes --

DAN

(cutting him off)
I mean for days. Weeks.

DOCTOR

(looking at him, strangely)
No, of course not.

DAN

Doc...certain things are happening that can't be explained -- any other way.

DOCTOR

(patiently)
Dan -- it's impossible to bring anybody back that's been dead for a period of days.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAN

You remember what you said
when you finished examining
that particle of human skin
you checked for me?...On the
suspected hit-and-run.

DOCTOR

I said the skin had been dead
for weeks -- and preserved in
formaldehyde.

(beat)

But I don't know what it would
be doing on the front bumper
of a car.

DAN

(another tact)

Do you remember what you said
about Nancy, after -- she stabbed
that patient?

DOCTOR

I said she was catatonic -- but
catatonic is a long way from dead.

DAN

(beat)

Corpses have been disappearing
from their graves...Potter made
an official report.

DOCTOR

(taken aback)

If that's true, it's very dis-
tasteful. But I promise you --
they are not being restored to
life.

(beat)

Probably being stolen by some
sort of -- Satanist's Cult. Or,
God knows what.

DAN

So there is no way there could
be anything even remotely
resembling a --

(beat)

zombie.

DOCTOR

I sometimes wonder, Dan.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Dan looks at him sharply.

DOCTOR (cont'd)
 We're all getting to --
 remotely resemble zombies.
 (beat)
 We watch the tube -- night
 and day...We buy what it tells
 us to...We've become anesthe-
 tized to violence, because we
 see it on TV -- in the movies --
 in the newspapers everyday.
 (beat)
 We stay in marriages that have
 been dead for a long time.
 (staring at Dan, now)
 What is a zombie, Dan?

CLOSE-UP: DOCTOR

He continues to stare at Dan, questioningly.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

MEDIUM CLOSE-UP: DAN

Sitting at his desk; in front of him a report he has been
 working on. His eyes are red, from crying.

REVERSE ANGLE - DAN OVER SHOULDER SHOT

SLOW ZOOM IN OVER HIS SHOULDER into:

CLOSE-UP: .OFFICIAL LOOKING REPORT

It is a printed Police-Form: we continue to MOVE IN CLOSER
 on it to:

EXTREME CLOSE-UP: REPORT

A printed heading reads:

"INVESTIGATIVE REPORT ON"

(CONTINUED)

CONTI_UED:

And below that is a line denoting a BLANK SPOT on which Dan has WRITTEN BY HAND:

"Janet Gillis"

SOUND: Phone ringing.

MEDIUM CLOSE-UP: DAN

He picks up phone.

DAN
(into phone, weakly)
Gillis...

INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION WITH TRAIN DEPOT MANAGER

SAM
Sheriff, this is Sam over at the Depot...You know that deceased girl we was supposed to ship to her family, in Beaumont, for burial.

DAN (v.o.)
Yeah...what about it?

SAM
Well...
(beat)
I think you better come on over here.

CLOSE-UP: DAN

DAN
(chilled)
I'll be right there.

He gets his hat and hurries out the door.

CUT TO:

INT. STORAGE ROOM OF TRAIN DEPOT - DAY

Dan and Sam, the Train Depot Manager are in the midst of a conversation; In foreground is a COFFIN.

TWO SHOT DAN AND SAM

SAM

...and I'm just not authorized to ship anything this heavy, COD. It's over the allowable limit. Somebody has to pay for it in advance...and when I called Potter he wasn't in.

(beat)

If we delay anymore, we'll miss today's train.

(beat)

Somebody has got to take the responsibility. I don't want it.

DAN

We'll have to delay it till tomorrow.

SAM

Damn! I hate to hold a body like that overnight. Just seems like it ain't right.

DAN

You say it's heavier than was anticipated?

SAME

Sure is. That's damn heavy wood that casket is made of -- I've shipped them before -- never had one near this heavy.

(beat)

I don't know what Potter is usin', these days.

CLOSE-UP: .DAN

Thinking.

MEDIUM CLOSE-UP: DAN

As he walks over to the Coffin.

He bends down and studies a METAL LABEL screwed into the Coffin.

CLOSE-UP: LABEL

It reads:

"Ordered Closed -- Coroner,
City of Clifton"

TWO SHOT DAN AND SAM

Sam has walked over to where Dan was examining the Coffin;
Dan now standing.

DAN
Hold it here and don't call
Potter again. I'll take the
responsibility.

As Dan hurries off, Sam calls out after him.

SAM
(worried)
Sheriff -- how long you think
we'll have to keep it here?

Dan is gone without answering.

CUT TO:

EXT. POTTER'S MORTUARY - DAY

Dan is just arriving at the entrance. He goes inside.

CAMERA TRACKS DAN, as he enters.

INT. POTTER'S RECEPTION ROOM - DAY

Dan looks around. No one in sight. He CALLS OUT Potter's
name; no answer. He walks through a partition door into
the back area.

He glances around -- no one present. He does not call out
Potter's name again, but continues to walk through the
place.

He quietly opens another door he sees.

DAN'S POV: LOOKING INTO ROOM

He sees Jimmy, Potter's young assistant.

Jimmy's back is to Dan -- he doesn't know that Dan is observing him.

DAN'S POV: JIMMY (HAND HELD)

As Dan walks closer to Jimmy's back. Jimmy is standing at Potter's cosmetology cabinet.

Now we are CLOSE ENOUGH to Jimmy to observe that HE IS USING POTTER'S FLESH-COLORED COSMETOLOGY PAINT, TO COVER A LARGE BRUISED AREA ON HIS ARM.

DAN

Jimmy! What the hell are you doing?

JIMMY

(startled)

Nothing!

DAN

You got a bruise that bad, you'd better have a doctor take a look at it.

JIMMY

(rattled)

No..it's all right...

(beat; awkwardly)

I gotta go now...

He grabs his school books and leaves.

Dan stares after him, suspiciously. Then he turns and looks over at Potter's cosmetology cabinet.

He walks over to it, and removes from shelf the bottle of FLESH-COLORED COSMETOLOGY PAINT that Jimmy was using.

SLOW ZOOM INTO EXTREME CLOSE-UP: COSMETOLOGY BOTTLE

CLOSE-UP: DAN'S FACE

As he looks at the bottle and thinks.

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Dan is reading over a message that he has composed on a Telex machine.

INSERT TELEX MESSAGE

It reads:

"Records Division Police
Department, Providence,
Rhode Island Request
Immediate check if record
arrest or conviction of
G. William Potter. White
male approx 50 yrs, 6 ft
180 lbs. Present occupation
funeral home owner. Resident
here since approx spring 1970"

MEDIUM CLOSE-UP: DAN

Dan goes through a brief moment of indecision, then puts the tape in the Telex, dials the number and begins sending the message.

CUT TO:

INT. DRUGSTORE - DAY

Dan walks in and goes over to Ernie, the druggist.

DAN

Ernie, you promised I'd finally
get that roll of film from you,
today.

ERNIE

(amiably)

Righto! Righto! It's ready.

Ernie goes back behind the counter, brings forth the roll and gives it to Dan.

ERNIE (cont'd)

That's \$15.40...everything's
going up.

(he smiles good
naturedly)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

As Dan gets out his wallet and pays Ernie, CAMERA TILTS down so that we can see Ernie's hand -- which is below the counter...where Dan cannot see it.

CLOSE: ERNIE'S HAND

The FLESH seems to be ROTTING, in a rather large area.

MEDIUM CLOSE-UP: DAN AND ERNIE

Dan pays, and Ernie gives him his change -- we might notice that Ernie uses only his "good hand" in dispensing the change.

ERNIE

Sorry it took so long.

Dan is too preoccupied for politeness and leaves hastily with the roll of film.

MEDIUM CLOSE-UP: ERNIE

He smiles his amiable smile as he watches Dan go out the door.

CUT TO:

ANGLE FROM INSIDE PROWL CAR

Betty's voice is heard coming through the two-way radio.

BETTY (v.o.)

Unit one...unit one...

Dan, coming from drugstore, hurries to answer the two-way. He tosses the box of film on the front seat as he takes the microphone up.

DAN

Hello, Betty, what's up?

BETTY (v.o.)

Unit one, got a message on the Telex from the Providence, Rhode Island, records division. Said the message you requested would be transmitted in ten minutes.

DAN

I'm on my way.

CUT TO:

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Dan comes striding in and hurries over to the Telex machine.

ANGLE LOOKING UP AT DAN

Dan leans down and reads off the Telex machine, which is typing out a message.

INTERCUT DAN READING AND CLOSE-UP MESSAGE BEING TYPED

Message reads:

"Police Dept
Clifton TX
Subject G. (Gammera) William Potter
dismissed 10 Oct 69 as Chief Patho-
logist, Providence, City of. Evidence
indicated subject made unauthorized
use of dead bodies in County Morgue.
No-billed by Grand Jury. Censured
and ejected by Rhode Island Medical
Society 30 Nov. 69. Subject left
RI shortly thereafter.

When Dan finishes reading the copy, he pulls the carbon off the machine and puts both the carbon and the original in his pocket. Then he rushes out the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAIN DEPOT - DAY

Dan hops out of his prowl car just in time to see a freight train moving out from the depot.

CLOSE-UP: .DAN

Looking concerned as he watches the train pull off. Then, he charges off, into the station.

CUT TO:

INT. DEPOT MANAGER'S OFFICE - DAY

Dan comes barreling in. Sam is startled.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAN
(out of breath)
You kept that body like I told
you, didn't you?

SAM
Yeah...but I don't like it.

DAN
How is that coffin sealed up?

SAM
Non-reversible screws.

DAN
Got a sledge-hammer around here?

SAM
(shocked)
Sledge-hammer?! Are you crazy?

DAN
Yes or no?

SAM
We got one...but you sure you
know what you're doin'?

DAN
Just get it.

CUT TO:

INT. STORAGE ROOM TRAIN DEPOT - DAY

CLOSE-UP: SLEDGE-HAMMER

PULL BACK TO WIDER ANGLE

To show Dan gripping the sledge-hammer; he stands right
next to the coffin. He raises the sledge-hammer over
his head and begins SMASHING IN the lid of coffin.

MEDIUM SHOT: SAM

His head shakes in disbelief.

LOW ANGLE

Dan continues smashing, then stops and begins to pull back some of the wood.

CLOSE-UP: HOLE IN COFFIN

A LOG is exposed inside. About the diameter of a telephone pole, the log is obviously the replacement for a body.

CLOSE-UP: DAN

Reacting.

MEDIUM SHOT: DAN AND SAM

Dan drops the sledge-hammer, and tears out the door.

Sam looks more carefully and sees the log too.

CLOSE-UP: SAM

His jaw drops; he is totally dumbfounded.

CUT TO:

INT. DAN'S CAR - DAY

ANGLE PASSENGER SIDE

FILM ROLL BOX is big in foreground, on Dan's car seat, as Dan is seen jumping into the driver's side of seat, and peeling the car out.

CUT TO:

INT. POTTER'S RECEPTION ROOM - DAY

The camera is panning slowly around it. As it goes past the front door, the door opens and Dan enters. He is attempting not to be heard.

Now Dan proceeds to search the funeral home. The camera teases us into thinking that something is going to leap out at him, but nothing does.

CAMERA FOLLOWS DAN

He continues around the funeral home. There is an increasing feeling that Potter is evading Dan from room to room, unseen. Finally, after looking around the embalming room, Dan turns and walks past stationary camera; he's obviously given up.

Ten beat pause as we faintly hear Dan close the outside door. Nothing moves. Suddenly one of the CORPSE DRAWERS SHOOTS OPEN -- and POTTER is seen INSIDE it.

He climbs out of the drawer; we can't really be sure whether he is now a ZOMBIE, or just HIDING in the BODY-STORAGE-DRAWER.

CUT TO:

INT. PROWL CAR - LOW ANGLE RIDER'S SIDE - DAY

Dan is driving and thinking furiously. He stops at a stop light. Suddenly his head jerks around and down. He is staring at SOMETHING on the car seat. His hand reaches DOWN PAST the CAMERA, then brings something INTO FOCUS just in front of the lens. Dan looks at it intently. It's the FILM ROLL BOX.

HIGHER ANGLE OF ABOVE

Dan fumbles the film out of the box and UNSPOOLS a BIT off the reel, HOLDING IT UP TO THE LIGHT. After a few beats, he still can't see anything, and he's beginning to tangle the film. He throws the film back down on the seat.

LONG SHOT (EXTERIOR)

Dan makes an illegal turn and squeals his tires down the street.

CUT TO:

INT. DAN'S KITCHEN - DAY

Dan bursts through the door, film in hand, calling out.

DAN

Janet! Janet...you home?

No answer.

FOLLOW DAN

He goes through the house, looking for Janet. When he is satisfied that she's out, he goes to a closet and takes the projector into the living room, puts it on a table, plugs it in. He is preparing to show the film on the far wall. He threads the machine, and his movements become slower, full of dread. With a decisive motion, he turns on the projector.

PROJECTED IMAGE

Film leader.

CLOSE-UP: DAN

Anticipation.

PROJECTED IMAGE

It's crude super-8 footage, poorly exposed, badly focused, badly developed.

Janet is seen walking with Herman. (The guy we saw in the cafe with a cast on his arm -- but there is no cast now)

The CAMERA is on HIGH ANGLE as if it were shot from the upstairs window, from somebody's house. The back entrance to the house is on the side of building so that the "HOME MOVIE CAMERA" is still able to follow Janet and Herman as they walk by and head toward this back entrance; we see them from the rear: Janet sensually PUTS HER HAND DOWN INTO THE BACK OF HERMAN'S PANTS. Then the two of them disappear into the house.

Now the CRUDE IMAGE shows a couple MAKING LOVE under blankets. The object of the photography is not pornography, but rather a simple record of the event and its participants. The man is Herman, but from this angle his body conceals the face of the woman. Now the "HOME MOVIE CAMERA" moves so we can see the face of the woman: It's JANET.

The "HOME MOVIE CAMERA" comes in closer so we can see JANET'S face better; although her body is replying to love making, her face is UTTERLY IMPASSIVE.

CLOSE-UP: DAN

His face is contorted with anguish.

NOW BACK TO PROJECTED CRUDE IMAGE

Now there is a new startling development on the crude image -- which occurs as the couple are in the midst of intercourse:

The man's back to the camera, he apparently has just reached orgasm, when, SUDDENLY, JANET REACHES HER ARM AROUND HIS BACK, weilding a large BUTCHER KNIFE (which she has lifted from the nightstand) and PLUNGES IT SQUARELY INTO HIS BACK.

He LURCHES in agony; she PLUNGES THE KNIFE AGAIN; and yet a THIRD TIME. BLOOD SPILLS from his mouth, onto Janet.

NOW TO NORMAL SCREEN

Dan who has been watching all this, is retching.

CUT TO:

INT. POTTER'S RECEPTION ROOM - DUSK

Dan KICKS OPEN the front door from the outside. He has his PISTOL DRAWN and his face is crimson. He bellows:

DAN
Potter! Potter!

He rages throughout the funeral home.

DAN (cont'd)
(shouting)
What did you do to her, Potter?
Potter!

And into the embalming room; Potter is there. He is smiling.

POTTER
Good evening, Constable.

DAN
What did you do to my wife?

POTTER
Janet Gillis...my crown jewel...
my very first. My seedling.

DAN
(frantic)
Where is she?

Potter begins, moving around the embalming room, turning on several Super-8 projectors. The walls become a nightmare of murder and mutilation as the films show the zombies at

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

work. There are also sequences showing Potter rebuilding mutilated corpses and resurrecting them.

POTTER

Some months back, I found
your wife.

(beat)

....in her car, in Harris
Creek.

(beat)

She was dead. She had drowned.

DAN

You're out of your mind.

POTTER

It was the weekend you were
alone fishing up there; she
was going to surprise you by
meeting you.

DAN

She couldn't of been dead.

POTTER

She was dead alright...like
George LeMoir after Nancy was
through with him...and the man
you ran over in your car. He
was already dead when you hit
him.

DAN

(he's crumbling)

Tell me how you do it?

POTTER

I pulled her car out of the
creek and --

DAN

How do you make her to those
things?

POTTER

-- I brought her back here --

DAN

(looking at the screens)

It's NOT HER!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POTTER

-- and she was so perfect; no bruises, no cuts.

DAN

It can't be her.

POTTER

-- so I decided she would become my masterpiece, and I worked on her so carefully, I took so much more time than later, with the others --

Dan holds his head, covering his ears.

DAN

No...no...

POTTER

The others will fall apart in a week if I don't touch them up; but Janet, she could go three weeks, a month --

DAN

(bellowing)

It's a nightmare!

POTTER

-- and then Janet -- and the new ones -- would help me bring in others...Janet especially because she is so beautiful, and her body so perfect --

DAN

But, she was alive, or I would have known.

POTTER

I gave most of my friends a little of their lives back, but Janet, my prize, I gave back almost all --

DAN

(staring at
screens again)

How could she be dead?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POTTER

I gave her back fear and sex
and love and going to the bath-
room and sitting on the beach
at night; because I wanted her
to be perfect. The others are
tools, but Janet -- Janet is a
painting.

DAN

(staring at him
in horror)

Why are you doing all this?

POTTER

Because I'm dying myself...I
found how to restore life...
but not how to preserve it. I
couldn't solve the problem of
decay -- or I wouldn't have to
die.

(beat)

To experiment, I needed fresh
corpses. And I couldn't afford
the luxury of waiting for them --
I am what the medical profession
refers to as, Terminal.

DAN RAISES his PISTOL:

DAN

I can kill you, now!

POTTER

You will try to kill me, Dan,
and you will come very close...
But you won't.

(beat)

You've been a moral man all
your life. If you kill me,
you're taking the law into
your own hands. You're murdering
me -- and you become what I am.

Dan, trembling, points the gun at Potter -- but he is
unable to keep it aimed. Dan works at aiming the gun with
both hands.

But he can't bring himself to fire.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POTTER

Oh, Constable, come...Perhaps
you need motivation.

Suddenly, Janet is there. The final nightmare: she reacts only to Dan, casually, as if he were coming home to her at the end of the day. She continues over all the other dialogue.

JANET

Hello, baby. How did it go today? Listen, you would not believe what went on at that high school today...Mr. Haskell had another locker check.

DAN

Janet...Janet!

JANET

(rambling on)
...ten minutes before lunch,
everybody had to hit the halls
and stand next to their lockers...

Dan stares up at the mutilations on the screens.

DAN

(reviled)
How could she not remember those
things she did?

POTTER

Because she's dead, Dan. The
dead have no memory...except
what I give them.

JANET

So...What would you like for
dinner tonight?....

POTTER

She only appears alive.

DAN

NO! SHE IS ALIVE!

DAN SMASHES A BOTTLE on a counter, and savagely PUSHES the
JAGGED EDGE AGAINST JANET'S ARM.

JANET

(unperturbed; rambling)
You can have anything you want,
if you don't mind fixing it your-
self.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And JANET DOESN'T BLEED. Dan stares at the neat wounds in her arm, in disbelief; then looks up at Janet's face.

JANET
(rambling)
If you want me to fix it, you
have your choice of minute
steak...

He raises his gun.

DAN
Baby...please die.

HE SHOOTS HER. The bullet TEARS THROUGH HER and OUT HER BACK, with a gout of whitish material. Except for JERKING with the impact, SHE TAKES NO NOTICE.

JANET
(rambling)
-- or pork chops, or beef
stroganoff --

ANOTHER GUN SHOT

JANET
(rambling)
-- the last of which, I must
warn you, comes out of a
package.

DAN SWINGS THE GUN AROUND to POTTER.

EXTREME CLOSE-UP: POTTER

There is a look of ecstasy on his face.

POTTER
Yes!

TWO SHOT

DAN SHOOTS POTTER IN STOMACH.

CLOSE-UP: POTTER

He lies on the floor, bleeding, a smile reaching through the pain.

TWO SHOT LOW ANGLE

POTTER AND DAN

Dan has collapsed in the foreground, in anguish. Janet looks at Dan's face, which is averted from the camera; her face is still in a torpor, but a little humanity glows through. With the motion of an automaton, she reaches down and takes his hand.

JANET
(faintly)
Dan...bury me.

Dan breaks down completely.

DAN
(sobbing)
Oh...my God...

A beat. Now Dan tries to regroup himself -- to maintain his sanity, even. He struggles to his feet.

DAN (cont'd)
(desperate)
We'll leave. We'll get away
from him.

Dan lurches along, taking Janet with him, through the embalming room.

JANET
Bury me...please...

Dan stands there, holding Janet, an AGONIZED EXPRESSION ON HIS FACE.

Several beats go by, and....he has made his decision.

As he exits with Janet, there now seems to be more purpose in his gait -- although he looks just as grim.

HOLD A BEAT on the embalming room.

CLOSE-UP: EMBALMING TABLE

A BLOODSTAINED HAND REACHES into the frame, GRASPS the edge of the table. POTTER is PULLING HIMSELF UP.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODED AREA - NIGHT

Dan's prowler car has just driven off the road into this secluded area. Dan gets out, wearily goes to the trunk of the car.

He opens it and rummages around looking for something; finally he locates what he was looking for:

CLOSE-UP: SHOVEL

It is one of those small portable kind.

MEDIUM CLOSE-UP: PASSENGER SIDE OF CAR

THE DOOR OPENS SLOWLY...and Janet emerges, looking deathly.

MEDIUM SHOT: DAN AT REAR OF CAR

He is staring at the shovel he holds. Now, Janet comes into frame. He looks up at her, then back at the shovel.

CUT TO:

INT. EMBALMING ROOM - NIGHT

Potter now has himself on his embalming table; with great effort, he reaches over to a counter and fumbles with his box of cosmetics. He takes a tube of foundation base, squeezes some in his hand and applies it.

He has no mirror, and works by touch. He applies rouge to his cheeks. The effort is like a little girl playing with makeup. He puts on lipstick.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

In an even more deeply secluded area, where they have come by foot, Dan has partially dug a grave; he continues to dig. Janet watches.

CUT TO:

INT. EMBALMING ROOM - NIGHT

Potter, finished applying the makeup, smooths his hair back. His HAND REACHES OUT, in EXTREME CLOSE-UP: follow

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

it through the air to see it come to rest on the NEEDLES of the BLOOD EVACUATION MACHINE.

Potter's hand moves over the evacuation machine, FINDS THE SWITCH, TURNS IT ON.

Long, long pause as he sits there hesitating before he can bring himself to reach for the embalming needles.

Then Potter pulls the NEEDLES TOWARDS HIMSELF, to a spot just below his rib cage.

Potter PLUNGES BOTH NEEDLES INTO HIMSELF, up toward his heart -- and arches his back with the pain...as BLOOD begins to COURSE THROUGH THE TUBES.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

LOW ANGLE LOOKING UP

Dan is looking down past the camera, SHOVELING DIRT. He stops and stares.

REVERSE ANGLE

TOTALLY BURIED, EXCEPT FOR HER FACE AND ONE ARM IS JANET.

For an instant, the torpor leaves Janet's face and she looks at Dan.

CLOSE-UP: DAN

His eyes focus on her...He can't bring himself to shovel the dirt over her face.

CLOSE-UP: JANET

A look of contentment comes over her. With a sweeping motion of her arm, she pulls dirt in over her face.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Dan is sitting there in his car where it was parked in the woods; his head bent down leaning on the steering wheel.

CUT TO:

INT. EMBALMING ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE-UP: POTTER'S COSMETOLOGY KIT

The camera explores its contents, and begins to wander over the details of the embalming room. Then, very slowly, moving up into the frame -- sitting up into the camera -- is POTTER.

His eyes are heavy-lidded and the makeup that he applied slipshod, only makes him look more grotesque than a normal dead person would; his face has the COMPLETELY VACANT ZOMBIE-LOOK.

Then, unexpectedly:

He SMILES into the camera, sinisterly...The effect is blood-curdling.

CUT TO:

INT. DAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

He sits there with his head in his hands, in the darkened house.

QUICK CUT TO:

EXT. DAN'S FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

CLOSE-UP: DOOR

A DEATHLY WHITE HAND comes into frame, and knocks on door.

Beat...the WHITE HAND KNOCKS AGAIN.

QUICK CUT TO:

INT. DAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Dan hears the knock, lethargically rises, and trudges listlessly to answer the door.

HAND HELD: DAN'S POV APPROACHING DOOR

Dan gets closer and closer to front door; finally arrives there and pulls it open.

MEDIUM CLOSE-UP: DAN'S POV SHADOWY FIGURE ON FRONT PORCH

We can't make out who it is yet, until:

Dan turns on porch light.

Now bathed in light, we see the man is: the elderly druggist (Ernie).

ERNIE

Dan, I got somethin' for you.

DAN

(very weakly)

Oh. Ernie...what is it?

ERNIE

(hands Dan a box
he has been carrying)

Some more film.

Dan is thunderstruck; he stiffens; his face hardens.

DAN

What are you talking about?

ERNIE

Potter left it with me to
develop -- said to deliver
it to you.

DAN

(the hair rising on
the back of his neck)

When? WHEN did he leave it
with you?!

ERNIE

Couple days ago...but it wasn't
ready till now.

Dan snatches the film from Ernie and shuts the door in his face.

MEDIUM CLOSE-UP: ERNIE (EXTERIOR)

He just stands there for a few beats, staring quietly at the door. CAMERA TILTS DOWN.

CLOSE-UP: ERNIE'S SLEEVE

The SLEEVE IS EMPTY -- no hand protrudes.

QUICK CUT TO:

INT. DAN'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

He has the project set up and is preparing to show the new roll; he trembles so much that he can hardly go through the procedure. Finally, he is ready and puts out the lights.

PROJECTED IMAGE

Film leader.

Now the picture starts: two people are driving up in a battered old pick-up.

The crude image gets closer, by hand-held jerky movements and we can now recognize the face of the person on the passenger side. It is the girl hitchiker we saw earlier. She is opening the truck door frantically and trying to run away. But SEVERAL PAIR OF HANDS seize her and drag her over towards someone. We can make out the faces of some of those doing the dragging: Predominant in the foreground among these faces are the WAITRESS, and NANCY, the nurse both of whom we saw earlier in the film; and young JIMMY.

The girl hitchiker and people forcing her finally arrive at the someone waiting, whose face is blocked; but we do see; he has a CORD in his hands. He WRAPS IT AROUND THE NECK of the girl hitchiker and begins STRANGLING her.

Now the "HOME MOVIE CAMERA" shifts angle so that we can see the face of the someone who is doing the strangling. Hand-held, jerkily, it moves in closer and closer -- until by the time the girl's lifeless body has fallen limply to the ground -- there is absolutely no mistaking it: the person DOING THE STRANGLING IS DAN HIMSELF!

MEDIUM CLOSE-UP: DAN (NORMAL SCREEN)

The Dan watching this in horror, BRINGS HIS HAND UP in front of his face...the FLESH on it has BLACKENED.

FADE OUT:

RUN CREDITS

END