

ELEVATOR MEN

by

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FADE IN:

MAIN TITLE SEQUENCE -- BLACK -- TITLES ROLLING -- THEN...

TWO HANDS -- Bound together by rope, scraping a small HOLE through dirt and rock. Frantic. Fingers bleeding.

BLACK -- MORE TITLES -- THEN...

THAT HOLE -- Bigger now. Fingers bloodier. And then: a discovery. A SILVER KEY. Inexplicably buried here. The hands grasp for it greedily.

BLACK -- MORE TITLES -- THEN...

SAME HANDS -- Still tied together. Climbing now. Awkwardly. Up a high tower of staggered cinder blocks.

The hands belong to a YOUNG WOMAN, 25, in a tattered dress. She pulls her body upward with the heaving strength of desperation. That key clamped between her teeth.

BLACK -- MORE TITLES -- THEN...

Before we get another glimpse, we HEAR an animal's CRY. High and shrill. Slightly lilting. Unmistakably predatory.

THE WOMAN -- She hears it too. Knows what it means. She can't help but glance down. And now we see we are --

INT. INDUSTRIAL PLANT -- DARK

From our high vantage point, we make out what seems to be a dozen or so very tall MEN IN BUSINESS SUITS. They move through the shadows of the industrial equipment in loose hunting formation. We can't get a good look at them.

The "MAN" at the head of the formation rears back and gives another sharp CRY. Instantly, the others break ranks and FAN OUT around the plant, moving with unsettling AGILITY.

The woman climbs faster. Up towards a high catwalk circling the perimeter of the room. The catwalk leads around to a small ELEVATOR.

BLACK -- MORE TITLES -- THEN...

A NARROW SLIT OF A PUPIL -- Almost lost in a reddish eye. The eye angles to the side like whoever it belongs to has cocked his head. Then, the pupil DILATES EXPLOSIVELY.

THE LEADER -- Rears back with another CRY. Percussive. Instructive.

THE OTHERS -- In the same breath, they're moving as one towards the cinder blocks.

BLACK -- MORE TITLES -- THEN...

THE WOMAN'S HANDS -- Pressing the "Call" button for that elevator repeatedly. Beckoning it to come.

BLACK -- MORE TITLES -- THEN...

ELEVATOR DOORS -- Open. Revealing a long, dark CORRIDOR with a STEEL EXIT DOOR at the other end. The woman TAKES OFF out of the elevator, SPRINTING towards that exit door.

BLACK -- MORE TITLES -- THEN...

THE EXIT DOOR -- She's made it. Looks around for the place to use that silver key. But it's not that kind of LOCK! There's only a SCANNER like you would use to SWIPE a KEY CARD of some sort. She HAMMERS the door. It stands firm. Then finally, resigned, she STOPS. She TURNS.

THE MEN -- Are right there in the shadows. More than tall, they are oddly LONG. Stretched limbs. We still can't quite see their faces. Just a hint of ghoulish features.

THE WOMAN -- Slides down against the door. Surrender.

THE LEADER -- Steps towards her. EXTENDS an arm.

THE WOMAN'S NECK -- Caressed by two spindly FINGERS. Moving to her carotid artery. They PRESS against it. Like a doctor taking a pulse. Finally, they move up to her cheek. Scooping a single tear. Gently. Delicately.

THE TEAR -- Lying on that freakish finger. A refined TONGUE pushes out through jagged TEETH and TASTES the tear. We remain close on his mouth as he forms the words --

LEADER
Perfect. Perfectly done.

THE WOMAN -- Dazed. Watching this. But now she notices something. Someone. One of these "men". Her eyes widen in recognition. Then narrow in betrayal. She whispers...

WOMAN

You said I was *strong*. Stronger than...

ABRUPT BLACK -- MORE TITLES -- AND FINALLY...

STEEL EXIT DOOR -- We are looking at it from the far end of the corridor. Like when the elevator doors first opened.

From this LONG ANGLE, we can still just about see the men in suits. They are on all-fours now, surrounding what is presumably the body of the girl. They jockey for position, snapping their teeth at one other, then splaying out and lowering their heads again. Even through the shadows, there is little doubt what they are doing...

They are FEEDING.

BLACK -- END MAIN TITLES.

FADE TO:

INT. DARK BEDROOM -- NIGHT

JENNIFER PRESS, 28, lies asleep in bed. We watch her for a moment, breathing gently.

Then, seemingly unprovoked, her eyes SNAP OPEN. They shift to the alarm clock next to the bed: 3:57 AM.

JENNIFER

(murmured)

... Please not now, Lily.

She waits. Listening for something. But all is quiet. And just as she's nodding off again...

The WAILING begins.

Sounds like it's coming from the next room. Not an infant. A small child. A girl. Louder now.

Her eyes OPEN again. Another prayer unanswered.

And then she's up and moving FAST. Grabs her robe on the way out the door and into --

INT. DARK LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Even in the dark, we can see this is no mansion. Scattered toddler toys on the thinning carpet.

It's just a few barefoot steps past an old, lop-sided television and into --

INT. DARK KITCHEN -- CONTINUOUS

The wailing continues as she yanks open the refrigerator door, LIGHTING the small kitchen.

Inside the fridge: Kirkland and generic brands and a small, yellow WASHCLOTH.

In one practiced motion, Jennifer grabs the washcloth and WHIRLS, shutting the fridge door with her hip.

On her way out of the room, her hand SHOOTS OUT and HITS the "START" button on an old counter-top microwave.

It WHIRS to life, counting down from 30 seconds. Part of a ritual we don't yet fully understand.

INT. DARK GIRLS' BEDROOM -- NIGHT

A tiny room. Probably a converted office. But it's definitely the source of the crying.

Jennifer slides past a CRIB and reaches into a LITTLE GIRL'S BED pushed right up next it, scooping out --

LILY, 5, bathed in SWEAT. In the clutches of a nightmare.

Still moving quickly, she carries Lily out of the room, sneaking a look into the crib where a second girl, DORA, 2, is somehow, miraculously, still DEAD ASLEEP.

INT. KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Jennifer cradles Lily in the flickered LIGHT of the whirring microwave. Blots her cheeks with that cold washcloth.

JENNIFER

Shhh. Wake up. You need to wake up all the way, sweetie.

For the first time now, we get a good look at Jennifer. Young for a mother of two. Tired. But still a fighter.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

That's it. Shhh. Just a dream.
You're doing great, Lily.

But Lily's not doing that great. Still HEAVING with sobs.
Still not fully awake.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Nightmare's over. All is good.

Finally, Lily's crying subsides. Her eyes begin to focus...

LILY

... thirsty.

Right on cue, the microwave clicks off and BEEPS. Jennifer opens it and grabs a little plastic kiddie CUP inside.

JENNIFER

It's very warm. Just sip it, Lily.
Slowly.

Finally quiet, Lily allows her mother to help her with the warm milk.

INT. GIRL'S BEDROOM -- A FEW MINUTES LATER

Jennifer holds a groggy Lily with one arm, using the free arm to strip the pee-stained sheets from Lily's bed.

LILY

I want to lie down.

JENNIFER

Shhh. Dora is sleeping.

With practiced strength, she shifts Lily in her arms as she reaches for a fresh set of sheets folded next to the bed.

Dora, in her crib, still sleeps soundly.

INT. LAUNDRY AREA -- NIGHT

Jennifer loads the soiled sheets into an old washing machine. She struggles with an enormous carton of Kirkland laundry detergent, filling the lid-cup halfway.

She then fills the rest of the lid-cup with tap water from the basin, diluting the soap, stretching the dollar.

INT. JENNIFER'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

It's 4:25 AM now. Still time to grab a few hours rest.
Jennifer sheds her robe and climbs back into bed.

But as she lies down, an unseen FIGURE already on the bed
JUMPS right on top her. Jennifer gasps. Startled.

It's Dora, the two year-old. Out of her crib. Wide awake.

DORA
(like a monster)
Ghrhaaa!

JENNIFER
Dora! You almost gave me a heart
attack, sweetie.

DORA
Ghraaaa! Chase?

JENNIFER
No Dora. Mommy doesn't play chase.
Remember?

DORA
Hide seek?

JENNIFER
In the morning. It's not morning.

DORA
When?

JENNIFER
When there's no more dark.

Dora considers this information. Then GROWLS again,
pretending to bite Jennifer's leg.

Jennifer gives in. Lifts Dora up so they are face to face.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
Are you a mean growling monster?
Or are you a nice giggle monster?

DORA
No tickle! Me mean!

Jennifer starts TICKLING Dora anyway, then blows ZERBERTS on
her tummy. Dora fights her, giggling. Loving every minute.

Jennifer smiles too. But so much for getting more sleep.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- JENNIFER'S HOUSE -- THE NEXT MORNING

SUNLIGHT shines through the windows. In the light of day, the house seems even tinier.

Dora scrambles by, CHASING Lily around the room, waving a scrap of BLUE BLANKET. This is Dora's ubiquitous "Baba."

Lily is shrieking but this morning it's with laughter. Her nightmares long forgotten.

Jennifer watches them from the kitchen, talking quietly on the phone...

JENNIFER

Fifteen percent of children age two to six? ...Get them every night?

(listens; then)

I know. 'Night Terrors.' But the fact that there's a name for them doesn't make them suddenly go away.

For some reason, Jennifer is wearing a cheap-looking POOFY PURPLE DRESS along with a CROWN. Some kind of costume.

As she talks she multi-tasks. Straightening up, packing a diaper bag, getting a KNOT out of a little saddle shoe with one free hand.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

I get it, Doctor Scanlon, but how do I help her to outgrow them?

The girls gallop by her as she moves into the living room, SEARCHING under the furniture. She's looking for something.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, Doctor, that's my other line. I need to take this. Just hold on. I'm so sorry.

Still searching for whatever it is, Jennifer clicks the phone, adapts a tone of voice we haven't heard from her yet.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Where are you, Alan...? I didn't say noon. I said ten, hoping to God you'd be here by eleven.

LILY

Mommy is that Daddy?

Seeing she's got an audience now, Jennifer tries to smile and make this conversation sound as pleasant as possible...

JENNIFER

I can't wait... Cause I have to be somewhere. It's too late now. I'm taking them with me. Bye, Alan.

Jennifer turns off the phone and stands up. Then, she sees what she was looking for peeking out from under the couch. It's an oversized, Purple Princess MAGIC WAND prop.

Jennifer allows herself a breath, then remembers she's still got the doctor on call waiting. She fumbles with the phone.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Doctor Scanlon? Hello?

She's lost him. She lowers the phone, doesn't miss a beat...

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Okay, girls! We are leaving in one minute. One minute warning!

The girls race by her, screaming. Not looking up.

INT. MAZDA -- ON THE FREEWAY -- DAY

Jennifer drives AGGRESSIVELY in an old DENTED Mazda Tribute. The girls are sitting in the back in CAR SEATS.

She's playing upbeat MUSIC for the girls on the car's radio. Perhaps "Three Is A Magic Number" from Schoolhouse Rock.

Jennifer consults driving directions written on her DAILY PLANNER. Then sneaks a glance at the Mazda's FUEL GAUGE: the needle is barely above EMPTY.

Gunning for an opening, she cuts off a TRUCK with a neat, little maneuver. The driver HONKS angrily at her.

She discretely flips him off, while directing the girls' attention out the opposite window to...

JENNIFER

How many branches do you suppose that tree has? Looks like a lot!

EXT. WEALTHY SUBURBS -- DAY

The old Mazda speeds through the suburban streets. Much nicer than Jennifer's neighborhood.

The car suddenly veers off, pulling into the driveway of a large FAMILY HOME.

A group of about THIRTY GIRLS, all Lily's age, are running around the lawn. A few of them notice Jennifer's dress and crown and dance over, circling the car excitedly...

LITTLE GIRLS
Purple Princess is here!/ Look!/
It's Purple Princess!!!

INSIDE THE CAR. Lily eyes all those girls nervously.

LILY
(whispers)
Mommy. Dora and I don't know any
of these girls.

JENNIFER
Well they seem very nice.

LILY
But we're supposed to be with
Daddy. We weren't even invited.

JENNIFER
There's a rule though, which is
that Purple Princess can bring any
two guests she wants to her party.

LILY
But how do we know they're not
mean?

JENNIFER
Because I've scoped out the
situation with my keen princess
powers. And I've ascertained that
nobody here at this party is mean.

LILY
(giggles a little)
You're silly, Mommy.

Jennifer smiles at her daughter. A nice moment.

Then she glances over at what are presumably the birthday
girl's PARENTS, heading towards her, checking their watches.

Definitely not happy. Maybe even a little mean.

EXT. FAMILY HOME -- LATER

Jennifer leads the girls in "Happy Birthday" as MOM and DAD
carry out the cake.

She sneaks a glance at Lily & Dora. They seem shy but fine. They look so cute, Jennifer discretely pulls out her cellphone and snaps a candid PHOTO of them. Just as --

A GIRL WITH BANGS tugs on Jennifer's dress.

GIRL WITH BANGS
Purple Princess, are you wearing
grey sweatpants under your dress?

JENNIFER
Good observation. Yes I am.

GIRL WITH BANGS
Why?

JENNIFER
Because it's no fun being a
princess if you're...
(mock shivering)
... freezing to death!

The girl with bangs CRACKS UP laughing. High comedy to her.

Meanwhile, MOM hands out pieces of cake to the girls. Lily waits her turn, then, super politely asks...

LILY
May Dora and I have roses on our
pieces, please?

SUBURBAN MOM
Maybe we should make sure that the
girls who were *actually invited* get
roses on their pieces first? Do
you think that's fair?

Jennifer looks over, horrified and helpless. Lily's lips tremble a moment. But then, out of nowhere...

LILY
Okay, in that case I'd like a
booger on my piece.

A HUSH falls over the girls, all eyes going WIDE. Then...

GIRL WITH BANGS
Me too. I want a booger.

ANOTHER GIRL
I want two boogers on my piece.

THIRD GIRL
I want poopy on my piece!

And just like that, Lily's the hit of the party. Jennifer holds back a smile as the girls discuss the merits of pairing various scatological forms and functions with birthday cake.

But then, Jennifer sees Mom's EXPRESSION. Immediately...

JENNIFER

Okay, who's ready for the Purple
Princess puppet show?!?

She gives the mother an apologetic look as the girls all CHEER and run towards a make-shift purple pavilion.

EXT. MAZDA -- FAMILY HOME -- AFTER THE PARTY

Lily & Dora are in their car seats. Jennifer has broken down the puppet pavilion and is loading it back into her trunk.

The Suburban Mom approaches her...

SUBURBAN MOM

So do purple princesses receive
gratuities?

JENNIFER

Absolutely.

SUBURBAN MOM

(a "joke")

How about ones who show up late
with potty-mouth daughters?

JENNIFER

Especially them.

Suburban Mom reaches into her wallet, pulls out a crisp TWENTY. Jennifer eyes the bill.

SUBURBAN MOM

Um. Do you have change?

JENNIFER

I don't. I'm sorry.

Jennifer closes the Mazda's trunk as the woman rummages in her wallet. Finds a crumpled FIVE DOLLAR BILL...

SUBURBAN MOM

Here you go.

Jennifer accepts the five dollars graciously. Looks the woman right in the eye.

JENNIFER

Thank you very much. I really appreciate it.

SUBURBAN MOM

No problem.

JENNIFER

And thank you for your flexibility with my daughters. There was a last minute complication and not a lot of options. That's why I was behind schedule. It was very generous of you and your husband to allow them here today.

The woman closed-lip smiles at Jennifer, possibly a bit shamed by this exchange. Probably not though.

Jennifer turns and climbs into her car. She is all DIGNITY wrapped inside a poofy purple dress.

EXT. GAS STATION -- LATE AFTERNOON

The Mazda is parked at a SERVICE ISLAND.

Jennifer stands in front of the pay machine, trying to FEED IN that crumpled five dollar bill from the birthday party.

JENNIFER

Come on, come on...

No luck. It keeps SPITTING OUT the bill. She's going to have to do this transaction in person.

Jennifer glances over at the CASHIER STATION. It's about 100 feet from the car.

She looks back at Lily & Dora, both ASLEEP in their car seats.

A mother's dilemma: she doesn't want to wake them up, but she also doesn't want to leave them alone in the car.

A bit guilty, she takes a step towards the cashier station. Then a few more. She looks back. The girls are fine.

But now, a LINCOLN NAVIGATOR pulls up to one of the islands, BLASTING music. It's ECLIPSING her view of the Mazda.

Jennifer hesitates, making a decision, and --

INT. MAZDA -- GAS STATION -- MOMENTS LATER

Jennifer has Dora tucked under one arm. Now she reaches in and DEAD-LIFTS the sleeping Lily with the other.

It's actually a pretty impressive display of STRENGTH. Lily STIRS a bit as she lifts them up.

JENNIFER

Shhh. We just have to buy some gas. Go back to sleep.

EXT. GAS STATION -- A MOMENT LATER

A sleeping child over each shoulder, Jennifer heads to the cashier window.

But now, a long LINE of people has sprung up. Jennifer steps into the line, trying not to jostle the sleeping girls.

She waits there patiently as the GUY at the very front takes his time picking out lottery scratchers.

CLOSE ON: THE MAZDA'S FUEL GAUGE

Only a fraction above where it was before. Still hovering near EMPTY. Jennifer eyes it warily as she pulls into --

EXT. LITTLE DRIVEWAY -- JENNIFER'S HOUSE -- EVENING

Jennifer gets out of the car and, once again, dead-lifts Dora. Then Lily. Quite a work-out.

JENNIFER (O.S.)

I'll do Purple Princess. I'll do Chloe The Clown. I'll do Magical Melanie. I'll even do Jeannie Trampolini. No, I learned it...

INT. KITCHEN -- JENNIFER'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Jennifer is in her bathrobe now, talking quietly on the phone. She multi-tasks as usual: eating a piece of bologna while placing that yellow washcloth back in the fridge.

JENNIFER

...I can juggle now. And I've been practicing all the tricks from the kit... the rope, the rings... I got first aid certified last week.

She pours milk into a kiddie cup, puts it in the microwave.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
Just please, Susie... I just need
more work. I really do.

For a moment here, just a moment, we see how close Jennifer
is to losing it. But then, some good news...

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
No, of course it doesn't have to be
kids. I'll do flat catering.

She pulls out her planner. Opens it to the monthly calendar.
We see she's got her work schedule written in here plus all
bill payment deadlines with cellphone bill marked in RED.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
Saturday? I'm working a double at
the restaurant. Alan's taking the
girls for the night.
(listens; confused)
No, I'm done by then. Isn't that
kind of late for a cocktail party?

But she's already writing it down...

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
No problem, I'll be there. White
pants, button down? Got it.
Thank you, Susie, this is a...
great start. Good night. Thanks.

As Jennifer hangs up the phone, a SOUND directly outside the
open kitchen window startles her.

It's like a loud, impatient WHINE. Jennifer peers out the
window to see a --

RUMPLED STRAY DOG. Sitting on the grass several feet below
the window. He looks up at Jennifer expectantly.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
You're late tonight, big guy. I
almost went to bed.

She tosses him the rest of her bologna. The dog devours it
in one gulp and looks up again, pleading for more.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
What do I look like? A buffet?

The dog whines again, then runs off. Jennifer looks after
him for a moment. Then SHUTS the window.

EXT. SIZZLER -- WAREHOUSE MALL -- NIGHT

One of those giant outdoor MALL COMPLEXES with huge warehouse stores like Home Depot. Among the numerous chain restaurants dwelling here are a CHUCK E. CHEESE and a SIZZLER.

INT. SIZZLER -- NIGHT

Jennifer is in a tacky waitress uniform, clearing a table and pocketing some soggy dollar bills somebody left as TIP. She calls over to DAVE, a nerdy but sweet, college-age waiter who is busy MOPPING UP a section of the restaurant.

JENNIFER

Dave, my love. You mind closing?

DAVE

Sure. You got a date?

JENNIFER

Catering gig. A cocktail party.

DAVE

A cocktail party? Fancy. Hey, you know where that term originated?

JENNIFER

Thanks Dave. I really appreciate it. I still have to go change.

She disappears into a back area, not waiting for his reply.

DAVE

(calls after her)

See, they used to stick rooster tail feathers in mixed drinks. Like before little umbrellas.

(no response; to himself)

What's that? You're incredibly impressed I know that? We should celebrate with a *cocktail* of our own? Why that's a terrific idea!

EXT. GAS STATION -- NIGHT

Jennifer's wearing catering whites. She's fixed herself up a bit. It's the first time we've seen her with make-up.

She's back trying to feed some of her tip dollars into that gas machine. She SMOOTHS OUT a bill and INSERTS it.

After a hopeful moment, the machine SPITS IT right back out.

INT. MAZDA -- OFFICE PARK -- NIGHT

Jennifer consults the address on her daily planner as she pulls into an upscale, corporate-style CAMPUS.

A SIGN reads "C D S" with a hi-tech, criss-crossing LOGO. She regards it for a moment when a sudden LOUD RAPPING on her car window takes her by surprise.

VALET

Here for the party, ma'am?

JENNIFER

Oh! I'm not a guest. I'm working.

VALET

We'll still take the car.

JENNIFER

Um. Does it cost anything?

VALET

Just a smile.

Jennifer smiles as she steps out of the car.

VALET (CONT'D)

(re: the Mazda's dent)

You know your vehicle has some existing damage.

JENNIFER

Believe me, I know.

VALET

You should get that taken care of. Don't want it to rust out.

JENNIFER

First I gotta keep it gassed. Then I'll worry about making it pretty.

VALET

Hear that.

(hands her a claim ticket)

Up and around. Third building to your left.

Jennifer starts up the winding WALKWAY. Several two-story BUILDINGS separated by neatly kept LAWNS. Very quiet. For such a big place it's not particularly well lit.

Jennifer gets her bearings and continues walking towards a central STRUCTURE -- architectural glass and steel.

INT. CENTRAL BUILDING -- CAMPUS -- NIGHT

A tasteful, big money party is in full swing. Wealthy, corporate TYPES. Abstract art on the walls.

Also several flat screen MONITORS are positioned around the room. They're all playing some kind of corporate promo reel.

SERVERS in white circle the room with trays of appetizers and, of course, champagne. Jennifer is among them...

JENNIFER

(serving food; big smile)

It's Steak Tartare served on a light, wanton crisp...

Tray empty, she heads towards the back of the room when one of the television monitors catches her eye...

ON THE MONITOR -- A perfect, smiling FAMILY on bikes complete with a DOG at their side. The DAD rides near the MOM and kisses her on the cheek. The kids chuckle. The dog barks.

NARRATOR (ON MONITOR)

... CrossTech Discovery Systems.
Crossing new technologies with
timeless virtues.

ON MONITOR -- The family FADES into that "C D S" logo as the reel resets, starting with images of an INDUSTRIAL PLANT.

Jennifer snaps out of it and turns away, nearly CRASHING into an ATTRACTIVE MAN. He's got quick reflexes and manages to SWING his champagne glass to avoid any spilling.

JENNIFER

Oh my God. I'm so sorry.

MAN

Don't be. I enjoyed it.

JENNIFER

Oh... Good. Hey, we'll do it again sometime then.

MAN

Definitely. It's a date.

Jennifer blushes. Then turns and continues towards the back of the room, allowing herself a pleased little smile.

INT. SERVICE KITCHEN -- CENTRAL BUILDING -- NIGHT

Jennifer and a few other servers are restocking their trays when an officious EVENT PLANNER walks in...

EVENT PLANNER

People! We got a broken glass in the other building. Who's on dustpan duty?

The other servers immediately make themselves scarce. Jennifer sucks it up...

JENNIFER

I guess that would be me then.

He hands her a dustpan and whisk broom.

EVENT PLANNER

Have you been to the game room yet?
(pointing)
Go through these doors. Then it's back, past the fountains. If you get locked out the code is easy, just: pound, one, two, one, three.

JENNIFER

Um. Do you have any rubber gloves or anything?

EVENT PLANNER

It's glass. Not nuclear waste.

He turns on his heels, on to the next crisis. Jennifer looks after him. Then heads towards the rear doors.

EXT. BACK AREA -- CAMPUS -- NIGHT

Jennifer moves past a large, modernist FOUNTAIN. A handful of GUESTS are back here drinking and talking.

A smaller BUILDING lies further back. She heads towards it as a BREEZE blows some stray cocktail napkins into the air.

Jennifer steps off the path to GRAB them. As she stoops for the last one, another gust of wind lifts it out of reach.

She finally corners the runaway napkin against a large tree...

JENNIFER

(snatching the napkin)
Gotcha.

INT. GAME ROOM -- CROSSTECH CAMPUS -- NIGHT

A "recreation" type room complete with wet bar, pool table, and more abstract, Ernie Hudson style art on the walls.

JENNIFER

Clean-up detail. Anybody in here?

Jennifer steps inside. Apparently, everybody has cleared out. She walks around, looking for the broken glass.

As she approaches a sitting area, she hears the distinctive CRUNCH beneath her feet. She found the mess.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Aha!

Jennifer kneels, sweeping the shards of glass into the bin.

She's right under a stylized PAINTING of a basketball player: rail thin with absurdly long arms & legs, leaping for a dunk.

Jennifer notices a remaining shard of glass has found its way into the small opening UNDERNEATH a couch. She tries to fit the broom in there... it's too thick and won't go.

She flattens her body out and slips her hand under the couch, fishing for it. Suddenly, she WINCES and draws her hand back... BLOOD already appearing on her index finger.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

So stupid.

Ever the trooper, Jennifer SUCKS off the blood then sticks her hand in there one more time. Her expression turns puzzled as she withdraws her arm to reveal she is now holding --

A MONEY CLIP

In awe, Jennifer inspects the neatly folded \$100 bills. No doubt, this is gas money for the next two years.

Instinctively, she lifts her head and *glances around*. But the place is still empty. Just her and the art on the walls.

She regards the cash, biting her lip. Looks around one more time... then shoves the money deep into her front pocket.

She stands, gathering up the broom and dust bin, then PAUSES, reaches back into her pocket and PULLS OUT the money clip again. Examining the cash. Debating. Then...

MAN (O.S.)

Hey!

Jennifer freezes, dropping the money clip back on the floor.
A DRUNK MAN is standing in the doorway...

DRUNK MAN
You've got my money!

He totters towards her.

JENNIFER
Yeah... I just... I didn't...
(beat; then picks up clip)
This belongs to you? That's great.
It was under the couch. I was just
about to turn it in to my manager.

The drunk man squints at her for a moment. Then, abruptly,
he throws his arms around Jennifer for a big HUG.

DRUNK MAN
Thank you! Thank God for wonderful
people like you. What's your name?

JENNIFER
(still in his embrace)
Um. Jennifer. Thank you.

DRUNK MAN
Jennifer, you smell delicious.
What's that scent you're wearing?

JENNIFER
Um. It's most likely Prell-Two-In-
One. Sir...?

He keeps hugging her. Now, it's turning a bit AWKWARD.
Jennifer tries to extricate herself. But he's not letting go.

DRUNK MAN
Shh. Shh. I am so happy right
now. I got my money. I got my
health. I got my Jennifer.

Jennifer wrenches away from the hug and steps back. But he's
already pushing towards her.

JENNIFER
Sir, I'd like to go back to the
party.

DRUNK MAN
(stares at her; creepy)
Well, I'd like to lick your skin.

JENNIFER

Okay, this is inappropriate behavior now. If you continue this you will deal with consequences.

DRUNK MAN

You know what I think. I think inappropriate behavior is you taking my god damn money. I think you will get consequences.

He's backed Jennifer into the wall. She's pinned against that painting.

DRUNK MAN (CONT'D)

But I can be a good sport. I'm willing to overlook things. Are you willing to overlook things?

VOICE (O.S.)

Tim Hurt, you drunken, pathetic man...

Drunk Man backs up, REVEALING the attractive guy from before.

ATTRACTIVE GUY

Please tell me you're not badgering the wait-staff again.

He says this lightly, a smile on his face. But Tim (the drunk man) has changed his tune considerably...

TIM

Ray! Hey! This isn't... this is just a friend of mine. This is Jennifer. She found my money clip.

RAY

Great. That's just great.

(to Jennifer)

I'm Ray. I work with Tim. It's a pleasure to meet you, Jennifer.

JENNIFER

... Nice to meet you.

RAY

So, now that we're all friends, what say we head back to the party? Resume the festivities?

Tim is starting to look very concerned...

TIM

I'm really a little drunk. Nobody should probably know... how much I've had to drink.

RAY

I think that decision is probably up to Jennifer.

Jennifer realizes that both men are looking at her, waiting for a response. *How big a deal is she going to make of this?*

JENNIFER

Oh! Well, I'm not gonna tell anybody. None of my business.

RAY

What's there to tell? Tim, you were just here giving Jennifer a large cash reward as a thank you for finding your money clip, right?

TIM

... Right.

Tim takes out that money clip and pulls off three \$100 bills. He thrusts them at Jennifer. She's not sure what to do.

RAY

You don't take that I will. He's got to learn his lesson somehow.

JENNIFER

(accepts the cash)

Well, a... large cash reward is a welcome thing. Thank you... both of you. This is really unexpected.

RAY

Hey, we'll do it again sometime.

JENNIFER

(smiles)

Definitely. It's a date.

RAY

It definitely is.

He returns her smile. Watches as Jennifer pockets the money.

EXT. BACK AREA -- CROSSTECH CAMPUS -- NIGHT

HIGH ANGLE -- Almost as if we're watching from the trees as Jennifer & Ray walk back to the main building.

They're definitely getting along. Chatting and laughing. Ray offers Jennifer a sip from his champagne glass.

JENNIFER

... I'm not judging here. But it seems to me like you work for the bad guys.

RAY

Crosstech's not the bad guys.

JENNIFER

"New technology with timeless virtues?" Creepy video with white-bread zombie family? And, not to give you flack about this, Ray...

RAY

No, I can take it...

JENNIFER

Has anybody ever pointed out that your corporate logo looks kind of like a swastika?

RAY

(laughing)

Now that you mention it.

JENNIFER

I get it. You work for "The Man."
You are "The Man."

RAY

We're not entirely man-like.

Another one of those loose cocktail napkins blows by in the breeze. Ray reaches out a hand and CATCHES it adroitly.

JENNIFER

So what's one useful, non-Haliburton-ie thing you've done?

RAY

What do you mean?

JENNIFER

Give me an example of a new technology with a timeless virtue.

RAY

Well, you know when you go to the eye doctor, he puts in those drops? The ones that dilate your pupils?

JENNIFER

You mean the ones where you have to wear those crappy plastic shades and have blurry vision for the rest of the day. You make those?

RAY

Not those. Last month we patented a new drop that un-dilates the pupil. Shrinks it back instantly. So you *don't* have blurry vision.

JENNIFER

You serious? That's not bad. I mean it's better than some hideous kind of nerve gas or something.

RAY

Oh, we're working on that too.

JENNIFER

And what's your role in all of this? Executive eye drop squeezer?

RAY

Not anymore. Now I just do acquisitions.

JENNIFER

Acquisitions?

But now they've gotten close to the main building. A BLONDE MAN calls out to them...

BLONDE MAN

Ray, they're looking for you. Boss man's doing his executive toast in the green room.

JENNIFER

Ooooh. Are you in trouble?

RAY

Routinely.
(calling back to the man)
I'll be right there.

He sizes Jennifer up for a moment. Then leans in, WHISPERS something into her ear. Looks at her for an answer.

Jennifer thinks for a moment. Then, before she can stop herself, NODS her head ever so slightly -- yes.

Ray smiles. Pleased with this. Then he hands her his champagne glass and heads over to join the blonde man. The two of them walk over to another set of SIDE DOORS. Ray SWIPES a KEY CARD to open them and the men disappear inside.

Jennifer stares after him. Takes a big gulp of champagne.

EXT. VALET STAND -- CROSSTECH ENTRANCE -- NIGHT

The Valet pulls up in Jennifer's Mazda. He holds the door for her as she gets in, carrying big bags of leftover food.

Jennifer drives a few blocks, scanning the streets for something. Then she sees it: a BLUE MERCEDES is waiting, pulled over with its lights on. Inside is RAY.

He waves. Then pulls out, making a "follow me" gesture.

INT. MAZDA -- WINDING HILL -- NIGHT

Jennifer follows Ray, listening to MUSIC. Perhaps that Schoolhouse Rock CD is now on "Unpack Your Adjectives."

Definitely a little nervous, she drums along to the music on her steering wheel: "It was a hairy bear... it was a scary bear... we beat a hasty retreat from his lair."

EXT. MAZDA -- RAY'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Ray's Mercedes pulls into the driveway with Jennifer right behind him. Ray gets out of his car and walks over to her.

JENNIFER

Um. I beg your pardon, but I believe you whispered of a "little place" where we could get a drink.

RAY

Right?

JENNIFER

This isn't a place. It's a house.

RAY

It's my place.

JENNIFER

It's also not little.

RAY

You got me. Bait and switch. Now come on in. I promise I'll behave if you want me to.

JENNIFER

(getting out of the car)

Um. It's been a while for me, but I suspect I'm supposed to make this more difficult for you...

But now Jennifer notices, Ray's eyes have wandered to the back seat of her car and the two empty CAR SEATS.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Just noticing those?

RAY

Yes. I guess I am.

JENNIFER

Still want me to come in?

RAY

Not until you tell me their names.

JENNIFER

Lily and Dora. Lily is five years old. Dora is two. I'm also broke. I wait tables at Sizzler. And I dress up like a purple princess and entertain at kids' birthday parties.

On a roll now, Jennifer keeps going...

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Also, I have no family to speak of. So there's nobody to help out except a flaky ex-husband. And this, right now, is like my only free time. Ever. So I'm probably willing to do something stupid. Even if you never call me again.

RAY

My kind of girl.

He laughs as he closes her car door and leads her up the walk towards his house.

INT. RAY'S HOUSE -- LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

Jennifer and Ray enter the house. A classy bachelor pad. Leather sofa and other tasteful furnishings.

RAY

This is it. Welcome, Jennifer.

JENNIFER

Not too shabby. Whatever you're "acquiring" for them... they must think it's pretty important.

RAY

How about I acquire us some wine? Any preferences?

JENNIFER

Surprise me.

RAY

I'm sure I can do that. Have a seat.

He EXITS, leaving Jennifer alone. She doesn't sit down right away. Instead, she paces around the living room.

Outside a bay window is a lovely VIEW, looking down on the Crosstech campus.

JENNIFER

Hey, you know you can see your work from here! Ray?

No response. Jennifer continues looking around.

Above a mantel, a framed painting of a grinning "FISHERMAN". He's STRETCHING OUT his arms to a distorted length with the caption: "I ONCE CAUGHT A FISH THAT WAS THIS BIG."

Kind of a strange image. As Jennifer steps towards it she COLLIDES with a small METAL STAND next to a chair.

The impact upsets a VASE that was on the stand. It starts to fall. Last minute, Jennifer CATCHES it. Sets it back.

Depleted, Jennifer moves back to the couch and finally sits down. Waits there for a minute. Fidgets. After a moment...

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Ray?

Nothing. Jennifer glances down at the coffee table. Notices a distinct WOODEN BOX with strange MARKINGS sitting on top.

Curiosity piqued, Jennifer reaches towards the box just as -
A HAND. Touches her shoulder. Jennifer JUMPS and turns to
see Ray there, holding a glass of wine.

RAY

Whoah! Easy there.

He hands her the wine and sits down next to her.

RAY (CONT'D)

Were you calling me? I was down in
the cellar. You like Viognier?

JENNIFER

I'm sure I do.

(sips)

It's great. Really... fruity.

RAY

Everything okay? You seem nervous.

JENNIFER

What? Oh, yeah. I just... this is
a really nice place you got here,
Ray.

RAY

Thank you.

JENNIFER

You got a view and a wine cellar
and a coffee table with coffee
table type... paraphernalia,

RAY

You sure everything is okay?

JENNIFER

Yeah. Yes. It's just...

(decides; then)

See, with my girls I have like this
radar. Hard to describe. Like
"spider sense" but for moms.
I wake up right before they wake
up. I'll know when they're sad.
Or in trouble. I just kind of
know.

(beat)

Don't think I'm rambling again.
I'm going somewhere with this...

RAY

I'm sure you are.

JENNIFER

Anyway, around the time my ex left, I realized I don't have any radar for myself. Nothing. I mean, I'm flying blind. And that sometimes makes me a little nervous. Especially in... new situations.

RAY

You know, I have that. Radar, instinct... Whatever you call it.

JENNIFER

I thought it was a chick thing.

RAY

For me it's like a voice. I actually had it tonight. When I first saw you...

JENNIFER

When I was getting groped in that game room?

RAY

What? No. Not then. When you crashed into me. It... spoke up.

JENNIFER

What did it say?

RAY

It said you were a good person. Sweet. And that you were *strong*. Stronger than... you knew.

(beat)

It said I should meet you.

JENNIFER

You think I'm strong?

RAY

I'm certain of it.

JENNIFER

I did do track in high school.

RAY

A runner? I like runners.

Ray SMILES and moves towards her, kissing her. Pushing her gently down onto the couch.

FADE TO:

INT. SIZZLER -- DAY

White fabric SMEARED with RED.

Jennifer is using a white RAG to mop up spilled KETCHUP. She then MUSCLES UP a big tray LOADED DOWN with dishes, drops it off in the KITCHEN and proceeds on to a BACK ROOM where --

A HUGE BOUQUET OF FLOWERS sits on a table. Puzzled, Jennifer steps over to inspect them. An attached CARD reads simply:

JENNIFER. GLAD YOU HAD THE FREE TIME. R.

A bit breathless, Jennifer stands there limply. It's all she can do to look away from the beautiful arrangement.

Dave, the young waiter, passes by holding that mop again...

DAVE

Hey, flower girl! Just who in the heck is "R."?

JENNIFER

Dave, I'm disappointed in you. I thought you knew everything.

DAVE

Almost everything. I know enough to warn you about guys who sign cards with their first initial. That's like criminally pretentious.

Jennifer smiles as Dave moves on with his mop. Then she sneaks another delighted look at those amazing flowers.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- JENNIFER'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Jennifer is tidying up when two HEADLIGHTS pull into the driveway. She walks outside to greet a Ford Explorer.

ALAN, 30's, too old to be dressed like a stoner, drives.

Lily and Dora are in the back. They're a bit worse for wear. Looks like chocolate SMEARED on their faces and shirts.

JENNIFER

Hi Dora! Hi Lily! How was your weekend?

She reaches in to help Dora and Lily out of their car seats.

LILY

Mommy, I don't feel healthy.

JENNIFER

Okay, we'll get you straightened out. Say goodbye to Daddy. Then go get ready for bed. Hurry, hurry so we have time for a story.

She waits for the girls to say their good-byes and scurry into the house with their little suitcases. Then...

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

You're an hour late. And why weren't you picking up your cell?

ALAN

Lily wanted ice cream.

JENNIFER

I'm sure she did. That doesn't mean you have to give it to her.

ALAN

Is this going to be a fight, Jen? Cause I am so not in that head space right now.

JENNIFER

(after a moment)

Neither am I. Call me tomorrow. We'll work out another time.

She turns back to the house. Alan calls after her...

ALAN

Hey! When did you fix the car?

JENNIFER

What?

ALAN

Your car. The dent is gone.

Jennifer looks over at her Mazda. Sure enough, that ugly dent is just plain GONE. The car looks good as new.

ALAN (CONT'D)

You're garnishing my paycheck and you have the money for body work on that piece of crap?

JENNIFER

... I suppose I do.

Annoyed, Alan backs out of the driveway. Jennifer stands there a moment, watching him leave. Puzzled but pleased.

INT. GIRLS' BEDROOM -- JENNIFER'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Dora is asleep in her crib. Jennifer lays on the bed with Lily, quietly finishing up a STORYBOOK...

JENNIFER

*... And they trotted from town,
telling ticklish tales and sharing
secret smiles.*

Lily's eyes have CLOSED. Jennifer silently gets to her feet, until --

LILY

Mommy?

JENNIFER

Shhh. Dora is sleeping.

LILY

Daddy screamed at me yesterday. He said I was annoying him.

JENNIFER

Daddy and Rochelle have a new baby. That can be a lot of work.

LILY

I know.

JENNIFER

He was probably very tired and a little cranky. He didn't mean it.

LILY

Still. It's almost never okay to scream.

JENNIFER

I think that's very wise.
(kisses her; stands up)
Now go to sleep.

LILY

Mommy?

JENNIFER

Shhh. Yes, Lily?

LILY

I saw a dog tonight. A scary dog. He was right outside the kitchen window.

JENNIFER

Honey, I told you about him. He's just a stray. He won't hurt you. He goes around begging for scraps.

LILY

He wants to eat me.

JENNIFER

He doesn't want to eat you.

LILY

He does. He told me. He said, 'I want to come in there and eat you!'

JENNIFER

You misunderstood. He was actually saying, 'I want to come in there and meet you.'

LILY

He was?

Jennifer nods. Lily GIGGLES, liking this conversation now...

LILY (CONT'D)

Maybe he was saying, 'I want to come in there and go potty.'

JENNIFER

Shhh.... Always with the potty.

She kisses Lily again and heads towards the door.

INT. KITCHEN -- JENNIFER'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Jennifer is finishing up the nightly ritual. Yellow washcloth in fridge. Milk in microwave. Timer set to 30.

On her way out of the room, she sneaks a look out the kitchen window. That rumped dog is right there, staring back.

JENNIFER

You be nice to my daughters.

The dog WHIMPERS a bit, not liking her tone. Jennifer tosses him a half-eaten granola bar and SHUTS the window again.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- JENNIFER HOUSE -- NIGHT

Jennifer picks up a few scattered toys and SWITCHES OFF the LIGHTS just as she hears a SOUND.

It takes a minute to figure out where it's coming from.
Somebody is TAPPING at the front door. Quiet but insistent.

Jennifer looks around for a weapon. Sees only a Fisher Price toy vacuum cleaner. It's better than nothing. She grabs it like a club as she OPENS the door to reveal --

Ray. He smiles. A bit sheepish but still charming.

RAY

(re: vacuum cleaner)

You can stand down. I'm unarmed.

JENNIFER

Ray! What are you doing here?

RAY

May I come in?

Jennifer opens the door wider and motions for him to come in.

RAY (CONT'D)

(not moving)

That's a yes?

JENNIFER

Yes. Of course. Come on.

Ray now enters and closes the door.

RAY

Your girls are asleep?

JENNIFER

Just barely. Why did you come here? I would have... cleaned up.

RAY

See, the thing is, Jennifer... last night wasn't enough.

He watches her reaction.

RAY (CONT'D)

I hope that doesn't freak you out.

JENNIFER

I'm not freaked out. Maybe a little overwhelmed. The flowers at work. The dent on my car. And now you're here. I don't even, really... understand.

RAY

You told me where you worked. So the flowers were easy. The party company had your home address on file. I smooth-talked them. I know a guy with a van and one of those dent sucker-outer thingies. He owed me a favor. And, like I said, last night wasn't enough.

Jennifer looks at him for a long moment. Then...

JENNIFER

Last night was unbelievable.

RAY

I know.

JENNIFER

Either it's been a really long time or you're incredibly talented.

RAY

Probably both.

JENNIFER

We can't wake up the girls.

RAY

We won't. Lily and Dora, right?

JENNIFER

Right. Very good.

She stands up and heads into her bedroom...

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Well, are you coming?

He smiles. Steps over to join her.

INT. JENNIFER'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

She and Ray lie intertwined in her bed, half-asleep.

JENNIFER

(whispers)

Where did you come from?

RAY

Does it matter? I'm here.

JENNIFER
(she tilts her head)
Oh. Uh oh.

RAY
What?

Jennifer holds up a finger, now fully awake. Then, on cue, we hear Lily start WAILING from the next room. She sits up.

JENNIFER
They're called "Night Terrors."
Kids Lily's age can get them. I
need to go wake her up.

Jennifer slips out of bed. Puts on her robe.

RAY
You knew she was going to do that.
How did you know?

JENNIFER
Like I said. "Spider sense" for
moms. Wait here. I'll be back.

INT. KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Jennifer, yellow washcloth in hand, STARTS the microwave.
Then she heads towards the girls' room, running SMACK into -

RAY

JENNIFER
Ray! I told you to wait in the
bedroom.

RAY
I know. I couldn't do it.

JENNIFER
The girls can't see you here.

RAY
But I'd like to be their daddy. I
want to be your purple prince.
I'll bring you all up to live with
me in my castle in the clouds.

He's somehow different now. His posture. His speech. The
pupils of his eyes are narrowing into SLITS.

JENNIFER
Ray? Now you are freaking me out.

RAY
(re: girl's bedroom)
I wouldn't go in there, Jennifer.
You'll be sorry.

As Lily's WAILS continue from the bedroom, Jennifer steps around Ray. His arm EXTENDS out freakishly, blocking her.

JENNIFER
What are you doing?

She manages to push him away and OPENS the door to --

INT. GIRL'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

In the darkness, Jennifer can barely make out three of those MEN IN SUITS. They're HUNCHED and CONTORTED on Lily's bed like lions over a downed gazelle.

She stands there horrified and speechless as they FEED like beasts on the small body pinned underneath them.

Then, one of the "men" looks directly at her. We can't quite see his face but his eyes glow RED in the dark as he REARS UP to FULL ELONGATION with that lilting, animal CRY.

INT. JENNIFER'S BEDROOM -- MORNING

Jennifer WAKES up from this NIGHTMARE. It takes her a second to get her bearings.

She's alone in bed. But there's a NOTE on the night table:

THOUGHT I SHOULD LEAVE BEFORE MORNING. WHEN CAN I SEE YOU AGAIN? R.

INT. GIRL'S BEDROOM -- A FEW MINUTES LATER

Jennifer peeks into the room, checking up. Both of her girls SLEEP completely SOUNDLY in their respective beds.

Jennifer smiles to herself as she watches them breathing lightly in blissful slumber.

She is still holding Ray's note. She reads it over one more time. Then folds it neatly and places it in the pocket of her robe. Her nightmare forgotten.

INT. MAZDA -- STREETS -- DAY

Jennifer drives less aggressively. The girls are in back, buckled into their car seats.

They all sing along sillily as Schoolhouse Rock plays the triumphant anthem, "Interjection!"

INT. BANK -- TELLER STATION -- DAY

Jennifer stands with Lily and Dora as she hands the TELLER two of the three \$100 bills from the other night.

JENNIFER

For deposit.

(re: the third bill)

And can I get twenties for this one?

EXT. MAZDA -- MAILBOX -- DAY

Jennifer pulls the car over next to a mailbox. Drops in quite a few little, bill-sized envelopes. Breathes a big sigh of relief.

INT. SUPERMARKET -- DAY

Dora sits in the shopping cart as Jennifer pushes it down the aisles. Lily runs over with a COUNT CHOCULA cereal box.

LILY

Mommy, can I have this? Please?

JENNIFER

Okay. Put it in the cart.

Lily's eyes get very wide. Clearly this wasn't the answer she was expecting.

LILY

Really? It's not on sale.

JENNIFER

I know. If you really want it...

LILY

I really want it! I really, really want it!

Lily drops the cereal in the cart and does a happy little dance.

EXT. SERVICE ISLAND -- GAS STATION -- DAY

Lily and Dora wait in their car seats as Jennifer FEEDS those crisp twenties into the pay machine.

One by one, they SLIDE INTO the slot smoothly. No problems.

CLOSE ON: THE MAZDA'S FUEL GAUGE

The needle now indicates the tank is COMPLETELY FULL.
Jennifer eyes it victoriously as she pulls into --

EXT. LITTLE DRIVEWAY -- JENNIFER'S HOUSE -- EVENING

Jennifer gets out of the car. Dead-lifts a sleeping Dora.
Then Lily. Heads into the house, a spring in her step.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- JENNIFER'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Jennifer, Lily, and Dora have used blankets and pillows to
construct a kind of FORT in the middle of the room.

All three of them sleep soundly. Cuddled together. Three
half-eaten bowls of Count Chocula on the floor next to them.

JENNIFER (O.S.)

Alan, are you two minutes away or
are you ten minutes away?

INT. LIVING ROOM -- JENNIFER'S HOUSE -- ANOTHER EVENING

Dora and Lily's little suitcases are by the door. The girls
race by them as they CHASE each other around the room.

Jennifer is wearing a new dress! She looks FANTASTIC. She
checks herself in the mirror as she talks on the phone...

JENNIFER

They don't need presents. They
just need you here on time.

Jennifer notices a PRICE TAG poking out from under the collar
of that dress. She shoves it back down out of sight.

LILY

Presents! We're getting presents!

Both girls jump around CHEERING with even more energy.
They're really wired. Jennifer whispers into the phone...

JENNIFER

Please, just come directly here.
You can take them by Rite-Aid to
pick something out. You'll have
the whole weekend.

LILY

Rite-Aid toys stink!

Lily then SCREAMS and runs away as Dora barrels towards her,
growling and playfully stabbing at her with a pencil.

Jennifer hangs up the phone and GRABS Dora, LIFTING her up.

JENNIFER

Dora! Earth to Dora! We do not
play chase with pointy, wooden
objects! That is *dangerous*!

Dora is still growling and giggling uncontrollably. She
drops the pencil. Then, without any warning, she --

THROWS UP

All over Jennifer and her new dress.

EXT. MAZDA -- RAY'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Jennifer walks up the driveway to Ray's front door. She's
now wearing much-less-sexy slacks and a blouse.

Ray opens the door. Looks a little disappointed...

RAY

I told you I wanted some leg.

JENNIFER

Long story.

He kisses her on the cheek. Appraises her. Then...

RAY

You need wine.

JENNIFER

Lots.

He beckons her inside, looks around at his front yard for a
moment, scanning for something... then CLOSES the door.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- RAY'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Jennifer sits alone on that leather couch, sipping a glass of wine. Starting to relax.

JENNIFER
(calling out)
Dinner smells wonderful.

RAY (O.S.)
It's another few minutes. Unless
you like it exceptionally rare.

JENNIFER
I can wait. You sure I can't help?

RAY (O.S.)
Just relax. Let the wine work.

Jennifer takes another sip of wine. Looks around. Looks down at that odd wooden box on the coffee table.

To open or not to open. It *is* right there on the table. Finally, curiosity gets the better of her. She reaches out and OPENS the latch --

Immediately a mess of PLASTIC CHIPS spill out of the box and onto the coffee table.

Jennifer looks at one of the chips. It looks official. From the "SUNSET PARK CASINO." It's also in the amount of \$1,000.

Jennifer's eyes get wide. She immediately starts SCOOPING the chips back into the box.

Just as she closes the latch... a familiar lilting CRY from somewhere outside the house. Still some distance away.

That's when Ray appears at the doorway...

RAY (CONT'D)
Dinner is served.

INT. RAY'S HOUSE -- DINING ROOM -- NIGHT

A lovely candle lit dinner. Jennifer slices into a beautifully prepared lamb chop.

JENNIFER
This is *so good*.

RAY
Thank you.

Jennifer notices Ray is picking at his plate, sipping his wine. Not really eating.

JENNIFER

You don't like your own cooking?
Cause I'll eat it.

RAY

It's a little early for me. I'm
still working up an appetite.

JENNIFER

Ray, can I ask you something?

RAY

Of course.

JENNIFER

Why do you have like a hundred
thousand dollars in Sunset Park
Casino chips in a little wooden
chest on your coffee table?

RAY

You saw those?

(hesitates; then)

Well, about a year ago, I had
something of an issue in that area.
Was going down to the casino every
night. Ignoring my friends. My
job. Then, this one time, I was at
the roulette table. I hit a big
number. Giant pay-off. I didn't
even smile. Didn't even taste it.
I was just thinking about the push.
How much more I could win. That's
when I got up. Got the hell out of
there. Didn't even bother cashing
out. Figured I'd save the chips
for my wedding or something.

JENNNIFER

A change of heart. It can happen
when you least expect it.

RAY

I guess that's what it was. A
change of heart.

JENNNIFER

My ex would go to Sunset Park. I
followed him there one night. I
thought he was cheating on me.

RAY

Turns out he was just losing all your money?

JENNIFER

Oh no. He was cheating on me too. He would just head over to see her after he finished gambling. I was never certain how much of our money went to the Sunset Park Casino and how much went to "Rochelle." Only that there was none left.

RAY

Can I ask you something? Clearly, it's not easy for you right now. You ever feel like giving up?

Before Jennifer can respond... another CRY from outside. It's a bit louder now. Closer.

JENNIFER

Did you hear that?

RAY

Yeah. We have raccoons around here.

JENNIFER

That was a raccoon?

RAY

They're pretty big.

Another CRY. Answered by yet another CRY. Almost as if these "raccoons" are descending on the house.

JENNIFER

You should probably go out there with a hose or something.

RAY

If it keeps up I will. But you're avoiding my question.

JENNIFER

Do I ever feel like giving up? Honestly? No. I mean, every once in a while I think it would be nice to have some help. Just a little... boost. But then something happens that reminds me this is how it's *supposed* to be.

RAY

How it's supposed to be?

JENNIFER

Like a few months ago, DWP finally got fed up and turned off my power. And I was screwed. There was nothing I could do until my next paycheck. We were completely in the dark. Literally. So every night when the sun went down we would take our blankets and build like this protective "fort" in the living room. Have these camp outs with songs and stories. The lights came back on a week later. That night, both Lily and Dora started crying. They said they missed the fort. So now, once a week or so, we turn off all the lights and play the no-power game. It's like their "most favorite game ever." And it's pretty much the only time both of them sleep through the night.

She looks up at Ray who is glancing at her strangely.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

See? If we hadn't lost power we never would have discovered the "no power" game. That's how it was supposed to be. Call me an optimist. I believe in that.

As if to punctuate her sentiment, a sudden THUD on roof. More lilting CRIES. They are getting close.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Sounds like they got on the roof.

RAY

(distracted)

Yeah.

JENNIFER

So we gonna go out there? Hose down some furry ass?

RAY

(grabs her arm)

Come with me.

JENNIFER

Okay...

EXT. DRIVEWAY -- RAY'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Ray is leading Jennifer down the driveway. The CRIES are VERY LOUD and VERY CLOSE.

JENNIFER

Should we get like a flashlight or something? Might help.

RAY

Jennifer, listen to me: you need to leave right now.

JENNIFER

What? What are you talking about?

They arrive at her Mazda. Jennifer turns to face him.

RAY

You need to get in your car and drive away and never come back here. Don't even look in your rear view mirror.

JENNIFER

What? Why? Too much talking about my daughters? I thought you...

RAY

It's not what you think. It's my... colleagues. They'll be here. It won't be pretty.

JENNIFER

Your colleagues? What? I don't understand. What did I do wrong?

He looks at her like he wants to say more. But then his face hardens. He pushes her into the car and STARTS the engine...

RAY

Call it a change of heart.

This HITS Jennifer hard. She holds back TEARS as she backs out of the driveway and heads off down the street. Ray watches her go, her car disappearing into the night. Until --

THREE OF THEM

Land SILENTLY behind him! They've jumped from the roof.

It's only another quick glimpse, but it's more than we've seen of them up to this point.

We now get a sense of hideously LONG LIMBS distending from RAIL THIN torsos.

Seems like they might be about seven feet tall if they were standing upright. But they're not standing upright.

Sensing something behind him, Ray begins to TURN AROUND just as we go to --

INT. JENNIFER'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Jennifer, all by herself, puts a final blanket in place on one of those make-shift living room FORTS.

She crawls inside the tent and sits there. Huddled on the floor. Alone. Miserable. Still in her blouse and slacks.

She's trying so hard not to cry. After all, she's been dumped before. What was she expecting anyway?

But still they come. Wrenching SOBS. She fights each and every one of them.

FADE TO:

INT. JENNIFER'S HOUSE -- THE NEXT MORNING

Jennifer is home alone. The house is lifeless. She slowly changes into her poofy purple princess outfit.

She catches sight of that giant bouquet of flowers Ray sent her. A week old but they're still in pretty good shape.

A little sign next to them reads: MOMMY'S FLOWERS! SNIFF BUT DON'T TOUCH!

Underneath the letters somebody, clearly Lily, has drawn a picture of a STICK FIGURE sniffing (not touching) a rose.

Jennifer looks at the bouquet. Still sad. Also... confused.

EXT. JENNIFER'S DRIVEWAY -- DAY

In full purple princess regalia including the wand, Jennifer climbs into her Mazda. Then pauses. Gets out again.

She steps over to the place on her car where that dent used to be. Smooth now. As if it had never been there at all.

Lost in thought, Jennifer runs the pointy tip of the wand along the area of the vanished dent.

EXT. FAMILY HOME -- DAY

Another little girl's birthday party is in progress. Lots of kids running around the lawn.

Jennifer stands off by a tree in her purple princess outfit. She's on her cellphone, leaving some kind of message...

JENNIFER

... See I've been thinking about it, and if it wasn't me -- and you said it wasn't what I *thought*, and I thought it was me -- anyway, then I start to get concerned that you're in some kind of trouble. You were acting like maybe you were in trouble. But if it was me -- and I'm sure it was and that's fine -- then just tell me... just leave a message or something I won't pick up... and I'll totally leave you alone. I promise. I just want to know you're... okay. What can I say? I'm a mom. Through and through. Anyway... thanks.

She hangs up just as that Girl With Bangs from that earlier birthday party comes over.

GIRL WITH BANGS

Hi Purple Princess!

JENNIFER

I remember you! Hi there!

GIRL WITH BANGS

Who were you talking to?

JENNIFER

Why, Prince Charming of course!

GIRL WITH BANGS

You were? What did he say?

JENNIFER

Well, he's out slaying the dragon, but I left word on his voice mail.

This strikes Girl With Bangs as absolutely, hysterically funny. Jennifer can't help but smile a little.

GIRL WITH BANGS

... Did you tell him to be careful?

INT. JENNIFER'S MAZDA -- FREEWAY -- DAY

While driving, Jennifer is in the middle of leaving another message for Ray on her cellphone...

JENNIFER

... I know this is my second message, but I just have this feeling. And I know I told you how I get those and usually it's with my girls. But this time it's with you. I feel like something's wrong. And I know you said you had a change of heart... but I don't think you meant it. I keep playing everything out in my head and I don't think you meant it. Just please call me back.

Jennifer hangs up the phone. She drives along, listening to that Schoolhouse Rock CD lamenting, "I'm Just A Bill."

Making a sudden decision, she VEERS the car and heads towards the EXIT ramp. The GUY driving near her HONKS obnoxiously.

Jennifer, still in her princess outfit and crown, flips him a purple-painted middle finger and a "don't mess with me" look.

The guy turns back to the road. Avoids her gaze.

EXT. RAY'S FRONT DOOR -- RAY'S HOUSE -- DAY

Jennifer is KNOCKING on Ray's door. No answer. All the windows are DARK. But the blue car *is* in the driveway.

Finally, she turns and heads down the walk, back to her car.

INT. JENNIFER'S MAZDA -- OUTSIDE RAY'S HOUSE -- DAY

Jennifer starts the car. Pulls forward. Then stops again halfway down the block. She ANGLES her rear view mirror so she can keep OBSERVING the house.

INT. JENNIFER'S MAZDA -- OUTSIDE RAY'S HOUSE -- LATER

Jennifer checks her watch, starting to feel silly about all this. Then suddenly, a BLACK CAR zips into Ray's driveway. A MAN steps out and heads towards Ray's house.

Jennifer squints into the mirror to get a better look. Then she recognizes him! It's -

Tim Hurt! The creepy drunk man from the party!

Jennifer keeps adjusting the rear view mirror as Tim walks around to the back of Ray's house.

He returns just a few moments later, carrying SOMETHING under his arm. We can't quite see what it is.

Jennifer fumbles for her cellphone, holds it up to the rear view mirror and begins SNAPPING PICTURES of Tim.

Meanwhile, Tim opens his car door and puts in the item he was carrying. Then he PAUSES for a moment. Walks somewhere, out of the frame of the rear view mirror.

Jennifer TWISTS the mirror, trying to find him again. *Where did he go?*

As she continues to move the mirror, it suddenly SNAPS OFF of the windshield into her hand. She BROKE it.

She tries to stick the mirror back into place on the windshield but it looks like it's beyond repair.

Just then --

BANG! BANG! BANG! Tim is POUNDING on her passenger window! And he doesn't look too happy.

TIM
HEY! LET ME IN!

Jennifer FREEZES there, staring back at him.

TIM (CONT'D)
OPEN THE DAMN DOOR!

He's pulling at the door handle now... just as Jennifer LUNGES across the car to PUSH the lock down.

But she's too late. He's opening the door and starting to climb into the car, grabbing at her with his hand.

Freaked, Jennifer jams the car in gear and SCREECHES it forward. Tim loses his balance and FALLS out of the car.

Jennifer doesn't look back. She GUNS the engine and gets the hell out of there.

Tim gets to his feet. He's unhurt. He watches as she disappears from view.

... And then, discretely, he SNIFFS his hand.

INT. SIZZLER -- DAY

Jennifer is back at work, wiping down a table. Some joker left a ton of PENNIES as his tip.

Jennifer regards the coins for a beat, then uses her rag to sweep them into her apron pocket. Every last one. She heads into the --

BREAK ROOM

Dave, the waiter, is in here typing on a LAPTOP COMPUTER. Jennifer pulls up a seat next to him.

JENNIFER

You busy with that?

DAVE

Just another in a Sisyphean stream of term papers. What do you need?

JENNIFER

Remember I got those flowers last weekend?

DAVE

Mr. "R"?

JENNIFER

Mr. "R," right. He dumped me.

DAVE

That sucks. I'm sorry.

JENNIFER

I'm actually over it. I get it. Broke single mom. Say no more. But what's bothering me is he did it in this strange way. Something felt... wrong. So I've been trying to call him. And then I waited outside his house. And that's when I saw this guy who I know he works with at this place, Crosstech, go in there and I think take something. But I couldn't see what it was. So I took pictures with my phone and now I need your computer so I can get a better look.

Dave stares at her for a long, incredulous BEAT. Then, without another word, he pushes his chair away from the computer and hands her a USB cable from his bag.

She plugs the cable into her phone. Then into the computer. As she waits for it to boot she glances at Dave's paper.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
European History?

DAVE
It's my major.

JENNIFER
I have a liberal arts degree. Now
I dress up like a princess for
kids' birthday parties.

DAVE
Yeah. It's either that or law
school for me.

Suddenly, a big picture of Lily and Dora naked in a bathtub,
blowing SOAP BUBBLES and WAVING, POPS UP on the screen.

JENNIFER
Those are my daughters.

DAVE
They're cute. Be sure to download
that one to my hard drive so I can
be investigated by Dateline NBC.

Jennifer smiles, clicks past the candid of the girls at that
birthday party, getting to the ones of TIM at Ray's house.

JENNIFER
Is there a way to...

Dave's reaches around her and presses some keys, ENLARGING
the picture. And now it's clear what Tim was carrying: it's
that strange wooden BOX from Ray's coffee table.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
Hey, that's Ray's! That box
belongs to Ray. He's stealing it,
I think.

Dave continues ENLARGING the picture until the wooden box
fills the screen.

DAVE
Wait a minute... I know that box.
That's a Batoriova Chest. Those
are famous frickin' things.

JENNIFER
You're kidding, right?

DAVE

No. I wrote a paper on them last semester. There's only a few left in existence. If that thing is real, it's pretty much priceless.

JENNIFER

Priceless? He had it on his coffee table. It was filled with... casino chips.

Meanwhile, Dave has pushed in next to Jennifer, searching through pages on the computer. Finally, he brings up a PORTRAIT of an INTENSE MAN. Several of those same boxes of various sizes, filled with gold and treasure, surround him.

DAVE

See? Look! There they are. You're a little bit impressed, right? I finally impressed you.

JENNIFER

Who is this guy?

DAVE

Guillard Batoriova. He was a fifteenth century Slavic prince.

JENNIFER

Guillard?

DAVE

His family helped defend Hungary against the Ottoman Turks. But that's not why his boxes are so famous.

JENNIFER

Okay, so why are they so famous?

DAVE

To this day, Guillard Batoriova is in the Guinness Book of World Records as the most prolific serial killer of all time. Went through over a thousand people before they finally brought him to trial and executed him.

JENNIFER

Really? Shame. He's kinda sexy.

Dave clicks to another picture. It's a charcoal illustration of the same man... now looking corpse-like with JAGGED TEETH.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

There not so much.

DAVE

All those monster myths that rose to popularity later on in Europe - vampires, werewolves, zombies... they were all inspired by this guy. He was the original "ghoul."

JENNIFER

Ghoul-ard? Is that true?

DAVE

Before him it was just dragons and demons. Basic stuff. Then he comes along and you get the shape-shifters, the blood-suckers, the flesh-eaters, the night-walkers...

Dave clicks through a number of HORRIFYING, old drawings: that same man with LONG, DISTENDED LIMBS and CLAWS. In one of them, he's on an old-fashioned pulley-system ELEVATOR, descending into a DUNGEON filled with screaming PRISONERS.

DAVE (CONT'D)

(re: pictures)

The creepy thing is, these are based on actual descriptions of his only surviving victim. In my paper, I theorized that she was driven insane by her ordeal. Hence, the more monstrous and bizarre details.

JENNIFER

What's he doing in this one?

DAVE

I believe he's eating somebody. He liked to do that. Had all these crazy rituals. Torture. Mind games. Then... dinner time.

JENNIFER

And the boxes?

DAVE

Well, the story was, when they confiscated his belongings, not all of the boxes were filled with treasure.

JENNIFER

Don't tell me he kept...

DAVE

Leftovers. He apparently enjoyed snacking. Which is why they tried to destroy them all. Any remaining boxes are incredibly rare. And certainly worth stealing.

A bit at a loss, Jennifer unplugs her phone from the cable.

JENNIFER

Well. Sounds like it was a neat paper. Thanks for... helping.

Dave glances at her for a moment, then gets up his nerve...

DAVE

Look, Jennifer, I know I'm a little... younger than you. But, once you've come to terms with whatever this situation is, maybe we can meet up for coffee sometime?

JENNIFER

Great. I'll bring my daughters. They love coffee.

Dave doesn't have a witty retort for that one.

INT. SALES COUNTER -- DEPARTMENT STORE -- DAY

Jennifer watches as a SALES CLERK inspects that new dress. The one Dora threw up on.

SALES CLERK

... Well, there's a stain here. See that? It's pretty big.

JENNIFER

I know. I know there's a stain. That's why I'm returning it.

SALES CLERK

You didn't notice that stain when you bought the dress?

JENNIFER

If I had noticed the stain I wouldn't have bought the dress.

A LINE of impatient people is forming behind Jennifer now.

SALES CLERK

I just find it hard to believe
anybody would miss this stain.

But now, Jennifer's cellphone RINGS. The phone ID's the call
as coming from: "C.D.S." Jennifer looks puzzled. C.D.S.?
Then suddenly she REALIZES what this means...

JENNIFER

Hello?

Nothing. Just SILENCE on the other end.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Hello...? Hello...?

SALES CLERK

Ma'am? There's a line of people
waiting. Would you kindly...

Jennifer IGNORES the clerk. She ends the call then REDIALS
the incoming number. It RINGS a few times. Then...

VOICE MAIL

You've reached voice mailbox for
Ray Stark at Crosstech Discovery
Systems. Please leave a message or
press one for more options.

Jennifer hangs up. Dials the number again. Again...

VOICE MAIL (CONT'D)

You've reached voice mailbox for
Ray Stark at Crosstech Discovery...

Jennifer ENDS the call. Very strange. She now notices the
sales clerk is helping the next customer.

JENNIFER

Um. I believe I was returning this
dress.

SALES CLERK

I believe you forfeited your turn
when you made that phone call. You
can take your place in line and
I'll be happy to assist you then.

JENNIFER

(after a moment)

That just made your day didn't it?

SALES CLERK

Pretty much.

INT. JENNIFER'S MAZDA -- DAY

As Jennifer drives, her cellphone RINGS again. She immediately reaches for it.

Again the ID reads: "C.D.S."

JENNIFER (PICKING UP)
Hello? Ray? Can you hear me? Are
you okay?!? Do you need help?

That same SILENCE on the other end. Jennifer listens and listens. Finally, she hangs up.

Again she pushes the callback button. And again...

VOICE MAIL
You've reached voice mailbox for
Ray Stark at Crosstech Discovery...

In frustration, Jennifer HURLS the phone down onto the passenger seat.

It hits the rear view mirror (the one that broke off), SHATTERING the glass.

EXT. LIVING ROOM -- JENNIFER'S HOUSE -- DAY

The lopsided television is playing DEAL OR NO DEAL dubbed in Spanish.

Jennifer sits blankly. Checks her watch.

She glances over at her cellphone. Can't help herself. She punches up the "C.D.S." entry and presses SEND...

VOICE MAIL
You've reached voice mailbox for
Ray Stark at Crosstech Discovery...

Jennifer hangs up the phone. She looks over at:

THE TELEVISION SET -- a WOMAN has just learned her briefcase contains the million dollars. She jumps around, exclaiming in dubbed Spanish.

Jennifer picks up an old remote and SWITCHES the channel.

ON THE TELEVISION -- Rachel Ray. She's soaking a veal chop in a thick sauce and discussing the benefits of MARINATING.

Jennifer watches this for a moment. Then CLICKS OFF the TV. Checks her watch again.

EXT. JENNIFER'S HOUSE -- LATE AFTERNOON

Alan's Ford Explorer is here in the driveway. Jennifer is helping unload Lily and Dora with their little suitcases.

JENNIFER

Say goodbye to Daddy. Then we're going to go for a nice Sunday drive. Won't that be fun?

The girls run inside as she steps around to talk to Alan.

ALAN

They didn't get a lot of sleep last night. You might want to just take it easy for the rest of the day.

JENNIFER

You show up two hours late and you're giving me parenting advice?

ALAN

I'm just saying. They're pretty overtired. If I were you I wouldn't take them anywhere.

JENNIFER

But you're not me. You're a selfish loser with an incurable gambling addiction.

ALAN

... And you married me. So what does that say about your judgement?

JENNIFER

Go to hell, Alan.

She turns on her heels and heads towards the house.

INT. JENNIFER'S MAZDA -- CROSSTECH CAMPUS -- LATE AFTERNOON

Jennifer's Mazda pulls to a stop near the CROSSTECH sign.

Now BLOCKING the main entrance is a lowered sawhorse-style GATE which had been raised the night of the party. Jennifer pulls around to the side of the campus and PARKS.

JENNIFER

Anybody have to use the bathroom?
Mommy has to use the bathroom!

Jennifer looks back to see both girls are fast ASLEEP.

EXT. MAIN ENTRANCE -- CROSSTECH CAMPUS -- LATE AFTERNOON

Carrying her sleeping daughters, Jennifer walks towards the main entrance.

The place seems utterly DESERTED for the weekend as she squeezes past that gate and onto the campus.

EXT. MAIN PATH -- CROSSTECH CAMPUS -- LATE AFTERNOON

The path has a slight INCLINE. It's something of a work-out when you're carrying fifty plus pounds of offspring. But Jennifer hikes it like a trooper.

She heads over to the MAIN BUILDING where the party was held. Tries the front doors. They're LOCKED from the inside.

Jennifer hesitates. Then starts walking around to the BACK of the building.

EXT. MAIN BUILDING (REAR) -- CROSSTECH -- LATE AFTERNOON

Jennifer steps up to those REAR DOORS she used when she left the kitchen to go to the game room during the party.

Unlike the front doors, these ones are connected to a KEYPAD locking system.

Jennifer shifts her daughters to get a free hand, then types: "#, 1, 2, 1, 3" on the keypad.

The door UNLOCKS.

INT. MAIN BUILDING -- CROSSTECH CAMPUS -- LATE AFTERNOON

Jennifer navigates the dim KITCHEN. She passes hanging pots and pans, moving through to the GALLERY from the party.

All the party decorations have come down but, weirdly, the TV MONITORS are still up. Still playing that corporate promo.

The promo is displaying a MAP with little "C.D.S." icons indicating all their dozens of facilities across the U.S.

JENNIFER

(re: monitors)

Way to conserve energy, guys.

She crosses the gallery, heading towards --

INT. LOBBY -- MAIN BUILDING -- CONTINUOUS

She looks along the walls until she finds what she's looking for: a DIRECTORY DISPLAY which lists the NAMES and office numbers of all the building's residents.

She scans down it, locating: RAYMOND STARK - 329.

Jennifer heads over to the ELEVATOR, only to see an "OUT OF ORDER" sign plastered to the call button.

Not to be deterred, she heads down a hallway and over to a door marked STAIRS.

INT. STAIRWELL -- MAIN BUILDING -- CONTINUOUS

Jennifer TRUDGES up the three flights of steps with Lily and Dora over each shoulder.

INT. THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY -- MAIN BUILDING

Jennifer emerges from the stairs into a maze of secretarial cubicles, each one servicing a different perimeter OFFICE.

Jennifer walks through the hall until she finds a DOOR printed with the name RAYMOND STARK on frosted glass.

It's not locked. Jennifer pushes it open and steps into --

INT. RAY'S OFFICE -- MAIN BUILDING -- CONTINUOUS

Much like his house, it's sparse and tidy. A desk on the far end of the room. A sitting area with SOFA towards the front.

Jennifer gently RESTS the two sleeping girls down onto the sofa and goes over to the desk.

No computer. Just a phone. And a set of VERTICAL FILES. A trash can and a paper shredder sit to the side of the desk.

Jennifer thumbs through the files. They are in alphabetical order. Each one labeled with a different WOMAN'S NAME.

Jennifer's eyes narrow. She pulls out a file with the name "WENDY ADAMS" and opens it...

Inside is a candid PHOTO of an attractive WOMAN. *We may recognize her as the woman from the title sequence!* She's wearing catering whites and carrying a tray of food.

Also in the folder is a set of typed NOTES. General information about Wendy: her age, her address, her job. Also, facts about her health, her diet, medications, and a section marked "date begun" and "date concluded".

Hit with a thought, Jennifer replaces the folder and SKIMS through the rest. She finds it quickly. A folder labeled --

PRESS, JENNIFER

Inside is a CANDID PHOTO of Jennifer from the night of that cocktail party. It's her smiling at the valet outside.

There's a set of typed notes, including a list of her various jobs and a note that her kids are named LILY and DORA.

There is a "date begun" entry but "date concluded" is BLANK.

Also in the file is a business card for: DENT-NO-MORE... THE MOBILE MECHANIC.

A final item in the folder: that MONEY CLIP. The one she found under the couch. It's there with all those \$100 bills still folded neatly in half.

Jennifer just STARES.

Finally, she pulls off the money clip and DROPS all the cash, the picture, the card, and the notes back inside the folder.

She then reaches down and feeds the folder, with everything inside, including the money, into the paper shredder!

After a moment, she turns away. Her eyes falling on that sofa where she put the girls --

IT'S EMPTY NOW. The girls are no longer sleeping here.

Jennifer immediately glances around the room. Lily and Dora are nowhere to be found!

JENNIFER
(loud whisper)
Girls! Girls! Lily!

INT. MAIN BUILDING -- THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY

Jennifer is searching through the maze of cubicles, peering around cabinets...

JENNIFER
Lily and Dora, this is not a joke!
Come out here at once!

She HEARS something from UNDERNEATH one of the assistant desks. Like a CREAK of movement.

She WHIRLS and rushes over to the source of the sound. Then gets down on her hands and knees to look --

UNDER THE DESK. It's Dora's scrap of BLUE BLANKET. The one she's always carrying. As Jennifer reaches to grab it --

ARMS wrap around her head!

It's Dora. She's smiling and laughing. Happy as can be.

DORA

Gotcha!

JENNIFER

Dora! Where is your sister?

Dora GIGGLES, thinking this is a game of some kind.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Dora, Mommy isn't playing. Where is your sister?

DORA

Hide go seek!

INT. OTHER SIDE OF THE THIRD FLOOR -- MAIN BUILDING

And *here is Lily*. All alone. She does her best to stay quiet as she searches for a good hiding place. Noticing an open door, she enters into --

INT. EXECUTIVE OFFICE -- MAIN BUILDING -- CONTINUOUS

A spacious, well-decorated office suite. A MAN is in here. He's looking out the open window. Watching the SUNSET.

LILY

(whispers)

Hi.

The man turns to face us. It's the Blonde Man from the party. The one that called to Ray outside.

BLONDE MAN

(whispering back)

Hi.

LILY

I'm hiding.

BLONDE MAN

You are?

Lily nods.

BLONDE MAN (CONT'D)

Who are you hiding from?

LILY

My sister. She's two. I'm five.

BLONDE MAN

Well, pretty soon it will be dark out. You'll be able to hide a lot better then.

This makes sense to Lily.

BLONDE MAN (CONT'D)

You want to see a magic trick?

LILY

A good one? Or a dumb one?

The man takes a step closer to her and kneels. Then he GRABS his right index finger with his left hand and YANKS IT.

The finger gives a SNAPPING sound as it seems to EXTEND out to twice its normal size. Then, with the same sound, the man PUSHES the finger back to its normal length.

LILY (CONT'D)

(delighted)

That is so gross!

BLONDE MAN

I know!

LILY

Do it again.

BLONDE MAN

No.

LILY

Please?

BLONDE MAN

How about I show you something even grosser?

LILY

Grosser than that?

BLONDE MAN

Oh, much grosser.

Lily nods excitedly. Her eyes get very big as he grabs his entire RIGHT ARM with his left hand and PULLS...

INT. THIRD FLOOR -- MAIN BUILDING

Jennifer is carrying Dora, still searching for Lily.

JENNIFER

Lily! Lily!

And then she hears the SCREAM. She turns to the sound as Lily comes RACING around a corner.

LILY

Mommy! There's a monster coming!

JENNIFER

(scooping her up)

Lily that's not going to work.
You've been naughty and you know
it. You never run away from Mommy.

LILY

He's coming! When it's all dark
out he's coming for us. He told
me!

Jennifer sees the kid is *really scared*.

JENNIFER

Shhh. It's all right. You
probably just fell asleep. Had a
little nightmare.

LILY

Mommy, please! I WANT TO GO HOME!

Lily is crying. Practically hysterical with fright.

JENNIFER

Okay, okay. Relax, sweetheart.

Jennifer walks with the girls back over to the stairway door and PULLS it open.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

... But this is why you don't run
away from Mommy, okay?

INT. STAIRWELL -- MAIN BUILDING -- CONTINUOUS

Jennifer trudges down the stair with a daughter in each arm. The whole way down she tries to reason with Lily...

JENNIFER

You were hiding from your sister.
You fell asleep. And you had a
nightmare, honey. Just like at
home. There's no such thing as
monsters. Do you understand?

LILY

Hurry, Mommy!

JENNIFER

Lily are you listening to me?

As they head down the final flight of stairs towards the lobby exit door, Dora starts CRYING too.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Dora, your sister just had a bad
dream. There's no monster.

DORA

Where Baba? I want Baba!

At the very bottom of the steps, Jennifer now stops dead in her tracks.

LILY

Mommy, don't stop! We need to go
home!

JENNIFER

Calm down, Lily. We left Dora's
blue blanket up there.

LILY

NO WE CAN'T GO BACK UP THERE! I'M
GOING TO SCREAM!!!

JENNIFER

Lily. Calm down!

Jennifer looks back up all those steps. Then at her two crying daughters. Finally, she makes a decision...

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Dora, you're getting too old for
that filthy thing anyway.

DORA
No! I want baba!

LILY
I WANT TO GO HOME!!!

Both girls are shrieking hysterically as Jennifer EXITS through the lobby door.

We stay in the stairwell a moment longer.

Long enough to hear the now familiar LILTING CRY echo from the top of the stairs.

EXT. MAIN BUILDING -- CROSSTECH CAMPUS -- NIGHT

Jennifer makes her way back to the car. Both girls still CRYING in her arms. When, out of nowhere --

A LIGHT

Shines in her face, blinding her. It's a SECURITY GUARD.

SECURITY GUARD
Excuse me, Ma'am. Are you an employee here?

JENNIFER
Yes. Yes I am. And I'm in a hurry.

SECURITY GUARD
Do you have your badge? Sorry. I'm new. Don't know everybody yet.

JENNIFER
No. My husband works here. My daughters had to use the bathroom.

LILY
Mommy!

JENNIFER
(to Lily)
Shhhh.

SECURITY GUARD
Those are your daughters? They seem upset.

JENNIFER
They're overtired.

LILY
I'M NOT OVERTIRED AND I DIDN'T FALL
ASLEEP. THERE'S A MONSTER COMING!

And now, right on cue, the lilting CRY reverberates through the campus, coming from up by the main building.

JENNIFER
What was that?

SECURITY GUARD
That? Oh, they told me there's a
raccoon problem here. Ma'am, I'm
going to need your husband's name.

Jennifer starts walking rapidly towards the car again. The
guard falls into step behind her.

JENNIFER
Jean Trampolini. His name's Jean
Trampolini. He's a very important
person here.

SECURITY GUARD
Ma'am, if you'll please stop
walking away from me.

Jennifer whirls on him...

JENNIFER
Back off! Just back the hell off!
You touch me again and I swear I
will tell my husband things. Just
to screw with your minimum-wage ass
I will tell him. Now I want to go
to my car.

Cowed, the security guard stops and watches Jennifer as she
squeezes past that gate and onto the street.

SECURITY GUARD
(calling after her)
Jeez! I'm just trying to do my
job! Have some compassion, lady!

He watches her for a moment. Then another "raccoon" cry
SOUNDS OUT. This time, much closer.

SECURITY GUARD (CONT'D)
I knew this was going to be a
crappy gig.

He shines his light up the path. Starts walking towards the
sound...

INT. MAZDA -- OUTSIDE CROSSTECH -- NIGHT

Jennifer finishes buckling the girls into their car seats and steps in behind the wheel. Starts the car.

LILY

Mommy...

JENNIFER

*Shut up! Just shut up! I've had
just about enough of both of you!!!*

Jennifer pulls away from the curb and heads down the street. She gets to the freeway ramp and merges into traffic as both her daughters BLUBBER in the back seat.

And now, she starts to feel terrible too. TEARS start to roll down her cheeks as she drives in silence. Finally...

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

*Lily, I'm sorry. Mommy didn't mean
to snap at you.*

But Lily just sits there. Lips pressed together. Miserable.

DORA

Baba!!!

Jennifer rubs her forehead. Then makes a decision...

INT. CHUCK E. CHEESE -- NIGHT

The ANIMATRONIC "Chuck E. Cheese" BAND finishes "SINGING" their happy song as dozens of KIDS indulge in games and fun.

Jennifer sits at a table, watching Lily & Dora play Gopher Hunt (the one with the plastic sledgehammer).

Previous events mostly forgotten, Lily runs over.

LILY

*Mommy! We got fourteen tickets!
We're rich!*

JENNIFER

Wow! Good job, honey!

As Lily starts to turn back to the game, Jennifer touches her daughter's shoulder lightly...

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

*Lily, sweetheart. There's no such
thing as monsters. Okay?*

LILY

I know. I fell asleep and had a bad dream. I'm sorry I ran away.

JENNIFER

And I'm sorry I lost my patience. Now go play.

Lily goes dashing back to Dora who is waving the sledgehammer excitedly. Jennifer watches her go. Then she pulls out her cellphone, punches up the "C.D.S." incoming entry and pushes the DELETE key. The entry is ERASED.

VOICE (O.S.)

Special delivery from next door.

It's Dave. He's in his Sizzler uniform, carrying a plate with a burger and fries.

JENNIFER

You're a lifesaver. I never thought I'd be excited for our food... but this pizza taste like aspirin-flavored cardboard.

DAVE

... And fun. Aspirin-flavored cardboard and fun.

Jennifer takes a messy bite of the burger as Dave pulls up a chair next to her.

DAVE (CONT'D)

So. It's 8:30 on a Sunday night. What brings you back here to guilty parent-ville?

JENNIFER

Good call. I screamed at both of them.

DAVE

Nothing says "I'm sorry" like age-appropriate games and rides.

JENNIFER

And while I'm at it, I'm sorry I got snippy with you this afternoon. It's just... it's been a unique couple of days.

DAVE

Ah yes. Mr. R from Crosstech and his priceless box.

JENNIFER

I think it's safe to say he's a total creep.

DAVE

(same expression)

Here's me being shocked.

JENNIFER

I'm not even sure what completely twisted rich asshole game he and his company buddies were playing with me. It serves me right for being so desperate and pathetic.

DAVE

You didn't do anything wrong.

JENNIFER

Yeah I did. I was no better than any other chick who lets herself believe some magical man is just going to suddenly appear and whisk her up, up and away from all that is crappy.

DAVE

Do women still think that?

JENNIFER

We fight it. But we think it.

DAVE

Huh. Live and learn.

They both watch as Lily and Dora jump around waving more prize tickets ecstatically.

DAVE (CONT'D)

They have a lot of energy.

JENNIFER

They're getting Children's Tylenol with Codeine tonight. Mommy needs to sleep.

DAVE

Is that legal?

JENNIFER

Occasionally. Come on. I'll introduce you...

INT. JENNIFER'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

The house is mostly DARK. Jennifer, in sweats, puts away the bottle of Children's Tylenol while untying a KNOT in a yo-yo.

Her eyes fall on that big bouquet of flowers...

EXT. JENNIFER'S GARBAGE BINS -- NIGHT

Really a job for two people, but Jennifer manages to HEAVE the weighty bouquet into the trash. Heads back to the house.

After a moment she STOPS. Goes back to the trash. Reaches into the bin and rescues Lily's stick figure DRAWING of the person smelling (but not touching) the flowers.

She continues up to the house, stopping again by --

EXT. JENNIFER'S MAZDA -- CONTINUOUS

She walks over to the place where that dent used to be. Struck with an idea, she goes over to the side of the house. Searches around, coming up with a --

LOOSE BRICK

Jennifer takes the brick back over to the car and RAISES it above her head. Looks like she's going to THROW it at the car in an attempt to make ANOTHER DENT.

After a moment she LOWERS the brick. Drops it harmlessly on the driveway.

JENNIFER

Screw him.

... and with that, she heads back up to the house.

INT. JENNIFER'S KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Jennifer clears a spot on the fridge for Lily's drawing among the other pieces of kids' "art." Then walks over to --

INT. LILY AND DORA'S ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

She peaks into the room, watching them sleep. Just as she starts to close the door again...

LILY

... Mommy?

JENNIFER

Lily, shhh. You should be sleeping.

LILY

But I've decided something.

Jennifer walks over and sits down on her bed.

JENNIFER

What have you decided?

LILY

I'm not going to have nightmares anymore.

JENNIFER

You're not?

LILY

Nope.

JENNIFER

Well, good for you.

LILY

I know.

JENNIFER

How do you think you'll do that?

LILY

I just have to remember that the me
in the nightmare isn't the me
having the nightmare.

Jennifer looks at her daughter with that surprised pride we feel when our kid manages to connect with the ball.

JENNIFER

That's absolutely right.

LILY

See, the me in the nightmare can be in big trouble. But the me having the nightmare is fine no matter what. She's just asleep in bed.

JENNIFER

Please tell me you didn't have this epiphany at Chuck. E. Cheese.

Lily doesn't really understand this. But she knows it's kind of funny and she giggles a little.

LILY
You're silly, Mommy.

Jennifer smiles. She lays down next to Lily, stroking her hair. Lily giggles a little more, then closes her eyes...

INT. LILY AND DORA'S ROOM -- A WHILE LATER

Jennifer's eyes open. She looks around, disoriented. Then realizes that she must have fallen asleep in bed with Lily.

She steps out of the bed. Pulls the blanket a little higher over her sleeping daughter's shoulders.

INT. JENNIFER'S KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Jennifer places the yellow washcloth in its spot in the fridge. She takes out the milk to pour into that kiddie cup. Then, suddenly, she STOPS.

JENNIFER
I believe in you, sweetie.

Without pouring, she puts the cap back on the milk container and replaces it back in the fridge.

That's when she hears the SOUND outside the kitchen window.

It's that stray dog again. He seems agitated now, pacing around below the house, growling and whimpering.

She pulls a leftover MEATBALL out of the fridge and tosses it to him. But the dog IGNORES it, staring up at her pleadingly.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
You don't want a meatball? God,
you're fussier than my kids.

INT. JENNIFER'S LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

Jennifer turns out the LIGHTS and opens the door to enter her bedroom, when she hears it.

It's that same TAPPING sound as when Ray was knocking at her door a few days ago.

JENNIFER
You've got to be kidding me.

She strides over to the front door and pulls it OPEN...

But NOBODY is there.

Then, Jennifer looks DOWN. And there it is --

That same small WOODEN BOX from Ray's coffee table.

Innocently sitting there on her welcome mat. She looks at it for the longest time. Then slowly *kneels to OPEN it...*

And, once again, a mess of those \$1,000 Sunset Park Casino chips spill out and onto the porch.

Jennifer looks up and around. *What the hell is going on?*

Then she HEARS it. A CAR STARTING halfway down the block.

It's like a starter's pistol for Jennifer. Instantly, she's up and RUNNING down the block after the car.

And we can tell she did, in fact, do track in high school. Even in her BARE FEET she is FAST and pretty fluid.

She approaches the car, getting a GLIMPSE of its tail-lights as it pulls away and rounds the block.

Jennifer doesn't give up. She changes direction, HURDLING over a small fence and cutting through a series of YARDS.

She emerges out onto the next STREET just as that same car is pausing at the intersection.

We now see: it's a BLUE MERCEDES.

Jennifer races IN FRONT OF THE CAR, extended her hands onto the windshield, BLOCKING its path.

The driver is none other than RAY. He's still wearing what he had on the night of their aborted dinner. His face is bruised and cut in places. He looks exhausted.

RAY

Jennifer? What are you doing?

JENNIFER

Are you *serious*? Are you seriously asking me what I'm doing?

RAY

You shouldn't have chased me. You shouldn't be talking to me.

JENNIFER

What are you a *lunatic*? A *sociopath*?

RAY

Jennifer, please. Listen...

JENNIFER

I suppose now I'm supposed to try to cash those chips. Get told they're fake. You and your buddies have another good laugh at my expense. What the hell is wrong with you? What kind of *sicko-elitist-fucking-adolescent-bullshit* is this?

RAY

A lot. A lot is wrong with me. You have no idea. But, Jennifer, I couldn't do it this time. I couldn't let it happen to you.

JENNIFER

What are you talking about?

RAY

It's better if you don't know. I promise you, Jennifer, it's better. I can't erase anything I've done. But I can help you move forward. Those chips are real. I swear it.

JENNIFER

Move forward? Are you serious? You pick me up. You learn my kids' names. Then you kick me out of your house. You prank call me from your office. And now you're showing up at my house looking like shit and *giving me money*?

RAY

Wait a minute... you think I called you?

JENNIFER

I know you called me. Your company showed up on the caller ID. I was even *concerned*. I even went there. That's when I saw my lovely file. I saw all of those files for your little game or whatever it is.

RAY

Jennifer, Jennifer... I didn't call you.

JENNIFER

What?

RAY

This changes *everything*. I thought they'd just come after me. Leave you out of it. I thought I could trust Tim. Shit.

JENNIFER

Screw this.

Jennifer starts to walk away. Ray now comes after her...

RAY

Jennifer, you have to listen to me. You and your daughters are in unimaginable danger.

JENNIFER

Oh, this is so classy.

RAY

Leave tonight. Take that money. Buy plane tickets. Get as far away as you can from this place. Nobody can help you. Not even the police.

JENNIFER

(starting to cry)

What are you doing? What the hell are you doing? Stop it. This is so unbelievably horrible. Please. Ray. Stop it.

RAY

Jennifer, I swear to you this is for real. Take that money and go.

And, just at that moment, we hear the familiar LILTING CRY. Ray and Jennifer both turn to see --

THREE OF THEM. THE CREATURES, LIKE STRETCHED SHADOWS ON THE OTHER END OF THE STREET... BUT THEY'RE CLOSING IN FAST!

JENNIFER

What the hell is...

But now A FOURTH ONE LANDS JUST A FEW HOUSES AWAY. It's JUMPED down from the trees.

It REARS UP to full height as it steps towards Ray and bares its TEETH, giving us our first long look at one of them.

Over the years, they have evolved through lore into vampires, werewolves, zombies. We've turned them into pop icons like Dracula or Wolfman. Nosferatu may have come the closest. But none of them quite do justice to the pure, horrific TERROR that this ghoulish creature evokes. A gaunt, freakish seven-foot countenance that implies death and suffering and hatred and emaciated savagery...

All dressed up in a gentleman's suit.

RAY
(to Jennifer)
I'll try to lead them away. I'm
sorry. Please, you can start over.
Get away from here!

Ray takes off RUNNING. The creatures immediately pursue.

As they SPRINT after him, Jennifer can just make out their bodies stretching and ELONGATING as they switch from two legs to four without breaking stride!

Jennifer stands, still trying to make sense of this. Then she turns, RACING in the other direction back to her house.

INT. JENNIFER'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

ANGLE ON: THAT WOODEN BOX

JENNIFER holds it upside down over Dora's DIAPER BAG, filling the bag with all of those \$1,000 casino chips.

She then grabs a second BIGGER BAG. She rapidly moves around the house, GRABBING photos and other memories and stuffing them into it.

She runs into the kitchen. Grabs all the "art" currently being displayed on the fridge and tosses it into the bag.

INT. LILY AND DORA'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

With both the big bag of stuff and the diaper bag of chips strung around her arms, Jennifer picks up both Lily and Dora.

They remain passed-out ASLEEP, stirring only slightly.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- JENNIFER'S HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Jennifer walks rapidly towards the front door, carrying the two bags and the two girls. But then, we hear it...

VOICE (O.S.)
Pssst. Hey, Jennifer.

She turns and sees one of the CREATURES right there, standing by the bedroom! Upright like a freaky tall human.

GHOUL
Shhhh. Don't scream. You'll wake the babies.

Jennifer's yell of terror catches in her throat as she looks down at her two sleeping daughters.

GHOUL (CONT'D)
Very good. Good girl.

JENNIFER
What do you want with me?

GHOUL
I want to take you somewhere.

JENNIFER
Why?

GHOUL
So we can eat the shit out of you.

He takes a step forward. Jennifer backs up.

JENNIFER
Ray doesn't want you to hurt me.

GHOUL
As you may have guessed, Ray has recently become a liability to our organization.

JENNIFER
You should still... you should let me be.

GHOUL
I kept telling them I could do the job ten times better than him. I spotted you first. Strong but broken. Strangely dignified. Sadly hopeful. ... And still kind of hot. I knew what we had before anybody.

He's moving steadily towards her now. Jennifer continues backing up towards the kitchen.

GHOUL (CONT'D)

*You smell wonderful by the way.
Still using Prell-Two-In-One?*

And now we may see the resemblance. This thing is actually the drunk man, Tim Hurt.

JENNIFER

You don't have to do this. These are my daughters.

GHOUL

Oh, I know who they are. It's one of the reasons we like you so much. See, all those protective maternal hormones, they're pumping like mad into your blood stream right now. Mixing with the hope and heartache and shame and fury of this weekend. All slathered into a fighter's body like yours. Makes my mouth water just thinking about it.

JENNIFER

Just tell me you won't hurt them.

GHOUL

You're missing the point, Jennifer. It doesn't really hurt any more. Our preparation techniques have become so much more advanced.

He continues backing her up into the kitchen.

GHOUL (CONT'D)

Pure pain subdues the body but doesn't get you the soul. And at the end of the day it's like biting into a bruised peach. Still juicy but not quite perfect. Which is why I promise you, Jennifer, it is not going to hurt. That much.

With no place left to go, Jennifer SINKS DOWN against the kitchen wall, hugging the girls, and squeezing her eyes SHUT.

It's just at this moment that --

THE STRAY DOG

LEAPS into the house through the open kitchen window and UP at the THROAT of the creature.

Jennifer opens her eyes. Sees the creature momentarily diverted by the dog. As she stands, Lily starts to WAKE UP.

LILY

Mommy?

JENNIFER

Shhhh. Close your eyes. It's not morning yet. Go back to sleep.

Jennifer holds Lily so she can't see the creature as she makes a beeline for the front door.

INT. JENNIFER'S MAZDA -- NIGHT

CRIES in the distance grow LOUDER as Jennifer hastily buckles the sleeping girls into their car seats.

She races around to the driver's seat and STARTS the engine just as --

ANOTHER CREATURE

BURSTS OUT onto the street.

He spots Jennifer in the car and immediately gives CHASE.

Jennifer FLOORS the accelerator as she glances nervously down at that FUEL GAUGE: Once again, it's BARELY ABOVE EMPTY.

JENNIFER

God, please...

The Mazda reluctantly picks up speed. But these things are FAST. He's keeping up with her! And the Mazda simply won't go any faster.

The creature stays with her as she rounds corner after corner, doing everything to shake him from her tail.

Desperately, she tries to VEER the car right into him. The impact SHUTTERS the Mazda, DENTING IT in exactly the same place as before... but the hit *has no effect on the creature!*

With one hand on the wheel, Jennifer picks up her CELLPHONE and scrolls through the address book.

INT. DAVE'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Our friend DAVE sleeps on a couch with his computer on his lap and an open bag of Fritos. His CELLPHONE wakes him up.

DAVE

Hello?

INTERCUT:

Jennifer, driving wildly down suburban streets, the creature still on her tail. The girls asleep in the back seat.

JENNIFER

Dave! *They're real!* Those pictures? The guy? *They're real!*

DAVE

I know! That's what's so cool about them. They were actually used in court to convict him.

JENNIFER

No, you don't understand. Please, you need to...

DAVE

But check this out. I was just browsing online. I found an actual transcript from his diaries.

JENNIFER

... No, Dave, that's not what I...

DAVE

The reason he went through the whole thing with the torture and the mind games... he said it made them *taste better!* The range of emotions from love to despair to elation to defeat actually produced hormones which "flavored their flesh from the inside." Isn't that messed up?

JENNIFER

Dave! *I'm looking right at one!*

DAVE

Which one? The charcoal sketch where he's got his arms stretched out and he's going like "bhraaah!"

As Dave talks on, the creature gets AHEAD of Jennifer's car. She SWERVES suddenly to avoid him then regains control.

DAVE

You know, the really bizarre story isn't the trial but the execution. See they tried to kill him like ten different ways: poison, hanging, drowning... Nothing worked.

JENNIFER

They killed him? How did they kill him? Dave, how did they kill him?!!

DAVE

(eating a Frito)

They brought in a priest who plunged a sharpened wooden crucifix into his chest. The guy died just like that. That's where you get the whole thing about certain monsters hating crosses.

Running next to the car, the creature extends a freakish arm and SMASHES the glass on the driver's side window.

DAVE (CONT'D)

The accounts of his death make it sound all supernatural. His skin turned blue. He started convulsing. But you know what that actually means, right?

Jennifer SWERVES the wheel again as the creature reaches his hand into the car!

DAVE (CONT'D)

Those are the symptoms of somebody suffering from anaphylactic shock! Get it? It was the wood. Not the cross. The guy was practically indestructible... but he was *deathly allergic to wood!*

JENNIFER

Dave!

Jennifer switches the cellphone to camera mode and snaps a photo of the creature. As she fumbles to send it, the creature GRABS onto the steering wheel, causing Jennifer to drop the cellphone. It FLIES out the open window.

DAVE

I actually wrote a paper on misinterpreted allergic reactions of the middle ages. If you're interested, I can... Hello? Hello?

BACK ON JENNIFER:

Looking around the car, she notices that Purple Princess Wand peeking out from under the passenger seat.

With one hand on the wheel, she manages to grab the wand. It's definitely made of wood. Jennifer grips the wand so the pointy tip is facing the creature. Here goes nothing...

Using all her might, she rears back and JAMS the point of the wand right into the creature's long neck!

The creature goes down... RASPING and CONVULSING and FURIOUS!

Jennifer doesn't wait around to see what happens. She JAMS her shaking foot on the accelerator.

The old Mazda disappears off into the night.

FADE TO:

EXT. SUNSET PARK CASINO -- DAWN

The SUN is making its much-anticipated appearance as Jennifer's Mazda pulls down into the casino PARKING GARAGE.

Jennifer steps out of the car and, for the final time in our story, LIFTS her daughters out of their respective car seats.

She grabs the diaper bag full of chips and walks up towards --

EXT. MAIN ENTRANCE -- SUNSET PARK CASINO -- DAWN

A DOORMAN steps in front of Jennifer as she goes to enter the casino with her sleeping daughters.

DOORMAN

Excuse me, miss? Nobody under the age of twenty-one is...

Jennifer FLIPS him one of those \$1,000 chips. Catching it, the Doorman abruptly STEPS ASIDE and changes his tune.

DOORMAN (CONT'D)

... proud to welcome you to Sunset Park Casino. Best of luck to you.

JENNIFER

You too.

INT. CASHIER'S CAGE -- SUNSET PARK CASINO -- DAY

Jennifer absently plays with a box of Sunset Park Casino MATCHES as the CASHIER counts out STACKS of \$100 bills.

CASHIER

Looks like you had a pretty good night. Congratulations.

JENNIFER

Thanks.

Jennifer places the stacks of cash neatly back in that diaper bag as the cashier looks at Lily & Dora and comments...

CASHIER

I know it's not my business, but maybe you can put aside some of those winnings so you can get a baby-sitter next time. It'd be the right thing to do for your girls.

JENNIFER

... Thank you for that suggestion.

EXT. PARKING GARAGE -- SUNSET PARK CASINO -- DAY

Jennifer hurries through the parking structure, heading back to the car. Lily isn't just stirring now. She's woken up.

LILY

Mommy?

JENNIFER

Yes, honey?

LILY

What are we doing?

JENNIFER

We're going on an adventure.

LILY

Really?

JENNIFER

Uh huh.

LILY

Guess what?

JENNIFER

What?

LILY
I didn't have any nightmares.

JENNIFER
You didn't? Good job.

LILY
I know.

Jennifer approaches the Mazda, but then suddenly STOPS in her tracks. There are --

FOUR MEN IN BUSINESS SUITS. They're lingering near her car. Among them is the Blonde Man.

They no longer look inhuman... but it's clear what these guys are all about.

Jennifer abruptly CHANGES DIRECTION, heading back up to the casino.

LILY (CONT'D)
Mommy?

JENNIFER
Yes Lily?

LILY
I have to go potty.

JENNIFER
How bad?

LILY
Really bad.

JENNIFER
Okay, hang in there. We'll find you a bathroom.

LILY
I think you should probably hurry.

Now Jennifer spots another SUITED MAN, he's milling around the escalator, clearly looking for her.

Jennifer turns away, looking for another avenue of escape...

VOICE (O.S.)
Jen?

Jennifer turns to see Alan, her ex-husband. He's finishing up a cigarette and looking confused.

ALAN

What are you doing here? Why did you bring the girls?

LILY

Hi Daddy!

ALAN

Hi Lily-bear.

JENNIFER

Alan, I don't have time to explain. Where's your car?

ALAN

(pointing)

It's right over there.

JENNIFER

Give me the keys.

Jennifer can see the man at the escalator. He's heard two people talking and is starting to walk towards them.

ALAN

What? I'm not giving you my car keys, Jen.

JENNIFER

I'll give you ten thousand dollars, just give me the keys.

ALAN

Ten thousand dollars? Where are you going to get ten thousand dollars?

Jennifer reaches into that diaper bag and hands him a big stack of cash.

JENNIFER

Don't ask any more questions.

ALAN

I'm not just giving you my car. I'll drive you.

JENNIFER

Fine. We need to hurry.

They briskly walk towards his car, just as the escalator man looks up and SPOTS them. He quickens his pace.

LILY

Mommy?

JENNIFER

Shhh. Lily. Be quiet for one moment.

LILY

Are we finding a bathroom?

JENNIFER

(whispers as they walk)

Honey if you can stay very quiet and hold it for five minutes I will take you to Toys R Us and buy you any ten toys you want.

LILY

You will?

They approach Alan's Ford Explorer as a number of the men start to close in on them. Alan sees them there...

ALAN

Jen, what the hell is going on?

JENNIFER

I'll double that money if you just get us out of here.

ALAN

Are you in some kind of trouble?
Did you rob the casino?

JENNIFER

Alan, I swear to God I did not rob the casino.

As they get into the car...

ALAN

(re: the girls)

Get them in back. I'll start the car.

Alan gets into the driver's side as Jen hastily drops the girls into their car seats, throws in the diaper bag...

JENNIFER

You're doing great, Lily.

LILY

Mommy you forgot to buckle us up!

Jennifer sneaks a look behind her as she slams the back door and opens the passenger door, preparing to CLIMB IN.

The men are TOO CLOSE, already moving to surround them. They are not going to make it.

Jennifer makes a decision, climbs down from the car...

JENNIFER

Alan, take the girls and go.

ALAN

What?

JENNIFER

If I'm with you they'll hurt us all. Just go!

ALAN

(re: diaper bag)

You want me to keep an eye on that money?

JENNIFER

ALAN! GO!

He doesn't need to be told again. He FLOORS IT out of the parking garage as Jennifer immediately takes off, SPRINTING in the opposite direction.

The MEN IN SUITS give chase, RACING after her.

Jennifer WEAVES in and around the parked cars as the men FAN OUT, trying to get ahead of her and cut her off.

She's as nimble as she is fast, making a SHARP TURN to evade one of them.

Jennifer spots her MAZDA about 1000 feet ahead. It looks like none of them stayed behind to guard it.

She makes a bee-line towards the car, barrelling down a straightway between two ROWS of cars.

One of the men has gotten ahead of her though. He steps into view at the end of the straightway, BLOCKING her escape.

Jennifer makes her decision, lowering her shoulder and SPEEDING UP as she runs straight at him!

She HITS him like a linebacker, taking him down and landing on top of him.

She's up on her feet instantly, trying to run again. But the man is down but not out. GRABBING her foot. Not letting go.

Jennifer YANKS her leg free of his grip and, once again, jams towards the Mazda.

With a final BURST of speed she makes it to the car, leaping inside and turning the key in the ignition.

The ENGINE sputters to life for a minute... then DIES. She looks down at the fuel gauge: resting now on EMPTY.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Come on. Come on.

She turns the key again. This time the engine TURNS OVER and HOLDS.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Yes!

Just as she moves to put the car in gear, TWO HANDS GRAB HER from the back seat! One of the men had stayed behind inside the car.

Jennifer STRUGGLES to break free of his GRIP as more of the men arrive at the car, climbing inside.

She puts up a good fight but there are too many of them, PINNING DOWN her arms and legs.

MAN

We've never had one like this.

SECOND MAN

She's gonna be so much fun.

MAN

Can't wait.

Jennifer continues to fight as one of the men produces a small VIAL unscrewing the top to reveal it's an EYEDROPPER!

JENNIFER'S POV: The men grope with their FINGERS to PRY OPEN her eyes. The man with the eyedropper positions himself over her face and SQUEEZES the liquid into them. Instantly, her vision BLURS into --

BLACK

INT. INDUSTRIAL PLANT -- DAY

Still in BLACK, we hear the low, intense VIBRATION of industrial machinery.

We begin to focus on --

SUNLIGHT dwindling in through dirty glass. It's actually a small window located high above us. Also high above --

JENNIFER

She opens one eye. Then the other. Even that little bit of light from that far away window BURNS like acid. But she can't rub them, because --

Her body has been LOCKED upside-down into what can only be described as a part sacrificial ALTAR part medieval STOCKADE.

It's made of wood and it impedes any and all movement. It has those same MARKINGS as the box from Ray's coffee table. Clearly this thing was built by the same guy who designed the smaller boxes.

For good measure, Jennifer's hands and feet are bound together with ROPE.

And there she is on the FACTORY FLOOR, a very tiny, helpless figure surrounded by pipes and vats and other huge pieces of THRUMMING machinery.

Terrified, Jennifer's breath begins to get away from her. She's starting to PANIC.

But, as we know by now, Jennifer is a fighter. She CLOSES her eyes, gradually forcing herself to DEEPEN her breathing.

Better. She opens her eyes again.

Through still-blurry vision, she assesses her surroundings: the equipment, iron scaffolding, that high tower of cinder blocks, the catwalk leading around to the little elevator.

The floor is littered with rubble and loose bricks and scattered cinder blocks.

As Jennifer blinks again, she now becomes aware that there is a FIGURE walking rapidly towards her holding an --

AXE

Stepping up next to her, the figure RAISES the axe high into air above Jennifer's head...

The BLADE comes whistling down, missing Jennifer and lodging deep into the wood of that stockade.

A SOUND escapes Jennifer. Not a scream. Almost like a last GASP of a prayer from deep within her chest.

VOICE

Jennifer! You're awake.

The figure leans over her. It's Ray.

And he looks like he's been through the ringer. He's cut badly now and very bruised. His breathing seems labored.

He stares down at Jennifer, concern in his eyes.

JENNIFER

Ray?

RAY

I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. Just hold on. Don't move.

He brings the axe down again, SMASHING another part of the apparatus. But it's quite well built and Jennifer is still locked inside.

RAY (CONT'D)

There's not much time. It'll be dark in just a few minutes.

He brings the axe down a third time, splintering more of it.

JENNIFER

What is this place?

RAY

It's the on-site manufacturing facility. They also use it for... other things.

The axe comes down again, this time damaging the wooden device badly.

RAY (CONT'D)

They're going to hunt you, Jennifer. They're going to let you out and hunt you and kill you. That's why you're here.

JENNIFER

Aren't they looking for you too?

RAY

There's a thing they always do
before it starts. Like a ritual.
I knew there was a window of time.
I had to try.

He stops swinging the axe and begins using it to pry at the
wood which still harnesses Jennifer.

JENNIFER

What are they?

RAY

Part of something that's very old
and very wrong. They do
unspeakable things. And it's only
getting bigger and worse. I may
not be able to save myself... but I
can save you. I'm going to hold
them off for as long as I can.

And now he's managed to BREAK her free. He CATCHES her as
she starts to fall, her hands and feet still BOUND.

JENNIFER

Ray...?

RAY

Please. Listen really carefully.
(pointing)

There's a door over there. Way
over there. That's where they'll
be coming through. The minute it's
dark. Now, obviously, they won't
expect you to be loose already.

JENNIFER

Ray, my hands. Untie my hands.

RAY

I need to do your legs first. Just
in case...

He works at the knots of rope binding her legs.

RAY (CONT'D)

You've got to run as fast as you
can to the other side. Before they
see you. Once you get there you'll
have some cover. See?

Jennifer looks over to where Ray is pointing. We recognize
that CINDER BLOCK TOWER from the opening scene.

As she turns back to Ray, her glance momentarily falls on a loose CHUNK OF CONCRETE near the remains of the stockade.

RAY (CONT'D)

(re: cinder block tower)

See that? You can climb those and get to that walkway up there. It circles around to an elevator. The elevator will take you up from there. It will take you to a corridor. At the end of the corridor are doors leading outside. Do you understand?

JENNIFER

Yes.

RAY

Now right by that structure there's a pile of rubble. Hidden in there is a *silver* key. It will open the doors. Find the key before you climb the blocks. *That's your only chance. You need to get that key.*

He UNDOES the last knots of rope binding Jennifer's legs.

RAY (CONT'D)

Done. Thank God. Now I'll do your hands, I hope there's time to...

And that's when Jennifer swings around, SMASHING HIM IN THE HEAD with that chunk of concrete she was just looking at.

JENNIFER

Already did them.

Ray drops to the ground, stunned. Jennifer stands over him, her hands now free.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

A buried key? I'm supposed to dig around in the dirt for a buried key? How dumb do you think I am?

Dazed, Ray lies on the ground cradling his head...

RAY

Jennifer? What are you doing? There's no time. Please let me help you.

JENNIFER

I'm the Mom. Let me help you, Ray.
First I'll show you how to tie a
decent knot.

Jennifer uses that same rope to TIE Ray's legs...

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Now I'm going to ask you some
questions. And I know you're a
talented liar. So if there is any
doubt in my mind about the truth of
your answer I'm going to do
something like this...

She raises that chunk of concrete, targets one of Ray's
fingers and SMASHES it against the floor.

Ray GASPS in pain. That hurt. A lot.

RAY

Jennifer please stop. You're
wasting precious time.

JENNIFER

Okay, so if this is going to work,
(SMASHES another finger)
I need to see you break character
and admit you're one of them.
(SMASHES another finger)
So I'm going to keep doing this...
(SMASHES another finger)
... until you do.

RAY

Jennifer. I love you.

Without missing a beat, she changes position to start working
on his other hand.

Ray can't take it any more. He suddenly snaps to life as
we've never seen him, HISSING at her in a mixture of rage and
hate and pure, atavistic evil.

RAY (CONT'D)

*You little bitch! We'll kill you
slow. I'll make sure of it.*

JENNIFER

Good. That's much better. Very
charming.

RAY

You'll be alive the entire time.

JENNIFER

First question: My daughters. Did you or any of your friends go after them? Did you touch or hurt them in any way?

RAY

We will. Now we will. I'll find them. I'll show them what we did to their mommy...

That concrete block SMASHES DOWN on his left hand, shutting him up.

JENNIFER

So that would be a no.

RAY

You have no idea what you're starting.

JENNIFER

Second question. Are they really coming any minute? Or do you send them a signal when I'm good to go?

He just stares at her hatefully. She RAISES the block again...

RAY

... When it's night they'll be coming. We'll all be coming.

JENNIFER

So you only change at night? Dumb question. I'm sure if you could you would have by now.

RAY

Just stay right here asking me questions... Please...

JENNIFER

Does that elevator even work? Does it actually lead to a door?

RAY

The elevator leads to a door. The door is there. I swear it.

Jennifer looks down at him for a moment, thinking...

JENNIFER

Yeah, I believe you. That actually seems to fit with your stupid game.

(beat)

Now, how do I really open it?

RAY

You use the silver key. Then you're home free.

JENNIFER

Yeah, see everything up to this point leads me to believe that you guys don't play fair. So I'll ask one more time: how do I unlock that door?

RAY

You don't.

Jennifer prepares to smash him again... then gets a better idea. She reaches down and RIPS OFF his jacket.

She fishes around in the pockets until she finds what she's looking for. His WALLET.

Opening it, she sifts through it. It's filled with another thick stack of \$100 bills.

JENNIFER

What do you guys print these things or something?

Preoccupied with the wallet, Jennifer doesn't notice Ray as he reaches to GRAB his right arm with his left hand and starts to PULL...

Jennifer SIFTS through Ray's credit cards until she finds what she's looking for --

AN ACCESS CARD. Like you would use to SWIPE in a scanner. It's the same one he used earlier at the party.

It's got the official "C D S" logo on it along with Ray's picture.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

(re: access card)

Why do I get the feeling this might be so much more helpful.

She glances down. Only to see that --

RAY IS GONE.

She quickly GLANCES around the room.

But Ray seems to have darted somewhere OUT OF SIGHT.

Jennifer then looks upward at that --

HIGH WINDOW.

Some last, fragile strains of SUNLIGHT are rapidly dwindling into NIGHT.

Jennifer GRABS that axe that Ray used and finishes CHOPPING up the wooden apparatus that imprisoned her.

She then SIFTS through the splintered REMAINS, gathering up certain SHARP PIECES. Hefting them in her hand.

There's FOUR cylindrical PIECES of wood that are thick and sharp enough to do the job.

A NOISE at the other end of the facility floor causes Jennifer to FREEZE. It's --

THAT FAR DOOR OPENING

And, one by one, they MOVE THROUGH. Roughly a dozen of them, DRIFTING into that loose, hunting FORMATION they were in when we first saw them in the opening titles.

The LEADER rears back with one of those CRIES. We've heard them enough times now that we're starting to get a sense of the slight vocal nuances and their different meanings.

This cry is one of EXCITEMENT.

As the hunting formation moves deeper into the facility, they are MET by another one of them, LIMPING slightly. We see the resemblance. This particular ghoul used to be Ray.

And he looks really PISSED.

The Leader cocks his head quizzically and then, without a single word or sound uttered, REALIZES what has happened.

The LEADER lets loose with a BERSERKER'S CRY. It sends the others into a FRENZY as they break ranks and FAN OUT around the plant, seeking her.

We watch them as they hunt, SNIFFING the air for a scent, SCANNING the premises for any slight moment.

One of them, who we may recognize as the --

BLONDE MAN

Steps behind a big, noisy PIPE. He turns his head at a slight SOUND to his left. He sees --

A PIECE OF CONCRETE

Has just landed on the floor.

The once Blonde Man steps over to the concrete and extends one of those crazily long ARMS, snatching it up, bringing it to his face, and SNIFFING it.

He then CROUCHES, sniffing the place where it landed.

And that's when a HAND holding one of those WOODEN SPEARS, we saw Jennifer grab, comes up *BEHIND* him and --

PLUNGES THE SPEAR INTO HIS BACK!

The Blonde Man goes down with a SCREAM, which gets DROWNED OUT by the NOISE of the factory pipe.

He doesn't get back up.

ON ANOTHER PART OF THE FACILITY FLOOR

Another ghoul is creeping through the plant, moving his head at bizarre angles as he PEERS under equipment.

He ROUNDS a corner, disappearing from our field of vision.

Then, a second later, he COLLAPSES back into FRAME, dropping to the floor and not moving.

One of those wooden SPEARS has been embedded in his NECK.

ANOTHER GHOUL

Moves further and further into a more remote section of the facility.

JENNIFER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Psssst.

The creature WHIRLS around to see --

JENNIFER PRESS

And this, folks, is the big HERO SHOT of our single mom turned ass-kicker as she stands there glaring at the creature and hefting one of those WOODEN SPEARS...

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

(whispers)

*Didn't your mother ever teach you
not to play with your food?*

Not expecting this, the creature PAUSES long enough for Jennifer to HURL the spear directly at his chest.

With a THUNK, it LODGES right into his HEART. The creature stares at Jennifer, utterly perplexed, before dropping to its knees and falling onto its face. Dead.

She allows herself a small moment of satisfaction, until another CRY in the distance snaps her into motion.

And now we STAY with Jennifer as she SPRINTS to another part of the plant, pulling herself up on some piping to LOOK DOWN on the facility floor.

The Leader stands by that giant pillar of staggered cinder blocks, CRYING for the rest of them to join him.

Their plan is obvious. He is leaving some behind to circle the cinder block tower defensively while the others SWEEP the floor.

Jennifer's eyes move to that CATWALK, searching for another way up there.

There is a possibility:

- A giant piece of EQUIPMENT extends up to some high PIPING.
- The piping is within leaping distance of some kind of HYDRAULIC TOWER.
- The tower rises up to just underneath the catwalk.

She grits her teeth and begins CLIMBING UP the equipment.

Some CANNISTERS labeled "CAUTION: EXTREMELY FLAMMABLE" poke out from the body of the machine.

She uses them as foot and hand-holds.

A FORMATION OF CREATURES:

As they sweep the perimeter of the floor, gradually shrinking the diameter of their circle so as to draw their prey into the center of the room.

DIRECTLY ABOVE THEM:

Jennifer SHIMMIES across the piping leading from the equipment to that hydraulic tower.

Once on top of the tower, she JUMPS UP, grabbing the catwalk and MUSCLING herself up onto it.

There, about fifty paces away, is that --

ELEVATOR STATION.

Looks like she might make it after all...

SUDDEN CUT TO:

DISORIENTING SHOT --

After a moment, we realize the CAMERA is moving UPWARD RAPIDLY, ascending through some kind of ENORMOUS PILE of something dense and greyish.

After a seemingly endless journey, the CAMERA EMERGES to REVEAL we have just come up from an absolutely colossal --

PIT OF BONES

A truly horrific sight. The ones on top are still wet with human remains, swarming with maggots and other insects.

The CAMERA continues its ASCENT, stopping at --

A DOOR

It LOOMS over the pit, looking just slightly familiar to us.

The camera then MOVES THROUGH the tiny CRACK between the door and its hinge, taking us to --

INT. EXIT DOOR -- CORRIDOR -- CONTINUOUS

And now, our most awful suspicions are confirmed. This is the same door! The one our girl from the opening title sequence died trying to get through.

The one Jennifer is counting on.

It leads not to any kind of exit but rather to an open pit where they dispose of the remains.

And knowing this sad bit of information, we can now --

CUT BACK TO:

INT. INDUSTRIAL PLANT -- NIGHT

DING!

That familiar sound of an elevator arriving at its station pierces the dull thrum of the machinery.

Almost as one, the remaining creatures LOOK UP towards the catwalk just in time to see the elevator doors CLOSING.

The creatures turn back to one another and SMILE.

Then, in no particular hurry, the Leader steps over to a small patch of rubble and loose bricks.

Using his misshapen hands, he scoops away the debris revealing that silver key.

The Leader ignores the silver key, then removes one more brick to reveal: some kind of SWITCH built into the ground.

The Leader FLIPS the switch. Instantly --

A TRAP DOOR concealed in the wall behind the concrete blocks OPENS UP, revealing a stairwell inside.

Still taking their time, the creatures move into the stairwell and start up the stairs.

INT. "EXIT" CORRIDOR -- NIGHT

One by one, the creatures move in formation down the corridor, arriving at the familiar stretch between the elevator and the exit doors. One problem --

Jennifer is not here.

The Leader cocks his head. Then steps over to that elevator as it DINGS again to indicate an arrival.

The others get into position behind him as the elevator doors open to reveal --

One of those "CAUTION: EXTREMELY FLAMMABLE!!!" cannisters!

A SLEEVE we recognize from Jennifer's shirt has been twisted into the cannister and set ON FIRE like a FUSE on dynamite.

Also tucked into the place where the sleeve meets the cannister we recognize that Sunset Park Casino matchbook.

Resting on top of the cannister are various SHARDS and SPLINTERS of wood (made by breaking up that final piece).

The Leaders eyes narrow in REALIZATION just as the sleeve fuse burns down to the matchbook, setting it AFLAME.

An instant later --

THE CANNISTER EXPLODES sending the wooden shrapnel flying in every direction like a CLUSTER BOMB.

The Leader and many of the others GO DOWN, clutching their throats and CONVULSING.

INT. INDUSTRIAL PLANT FLOOR -- NIGHT

Having avoided the dead-end elevator, Jennifer, one arm bare now, RUNS back across the plant floor. Arrives at --

The far door. The one the creatures initially entered from. Jennifer races through into --

INT. PASSAGE -- CONTINUOUS

A high but narrow tunnel, leading steadily upward at a significant incline.

Jennifer moves through it as quickly as she can. She passes by a strange steel door with a BIOHAZARD SYMBOL on it.

She clocks the door but keeps on pushing forward.

INT. CAVE -- NIGHT

Jennifer rounds a corner, arriving at a section of tunnel that is BIGGER and HOLLOWED OUT.

It is also stacked, floor to ceiling, with something green and wrapped in PLASTIC.

She moves closer. Sure enough, it's \$100 bills. And now we're probably talking *hundreds of millions of dollars*.

Jennifer PAUSES in front of all that money.

INT. GAME ROOM -- CROSSTECH -- NIGHT

We recognize this place. It's where Jennifer went to clean up the broken glass and was first "saved" by Ray.

That large painting of the freaky long basketball player suddenly begins to MOVE.

It DROPS from the wall to reveal that it was CONCEALING an entrance to the secret tunnel.

Jennifer steps through the entrance and into the game room. Looks around. Gets her bearings.

She heads for the door, leading out to the campus.

But before she gets there, we SWING AROUND to the opening where that painting used to be --

A HEAD

POKES OUT of the tunnel entrance, observing Jennifer.

With a great LEAP, the CREATURE jumps out of the tunnel, landing IN FRONT of Jennifer, blocking the door.

CREATURE

Hi again!

The features, the voice, the behavior... we now recognize this one instantly as --

JENNIFER

Hi Tim.

CREATURE

(re: the game room)

*Funny how things come full circle,
isn't it?*

JENNIFER

Hilarious. Except last time I
didn't do this...

Jennifer grabs a POOL CUE off the rack on the wall and SWINGS it at his head.

Instinctively he raises an arm, blocking the shot and SNAPPING the cue in half.

He SMILES at his presumed victory and then POUNCES.

Jennifer holds the remaining part of the cue OUT STIFFLY in front of her, IMPALING him on its jagged point as he lands.

He convulses for a moment... and then goes LIMP.

Jennifer uses all her strength to PUSH him off and rise up once again.

EXT. CAMPUS -- CROSSTECH DISCOVERY SYSTEMS -- NIGHT

Bruised and battered and single-sleeved, Jennifer runs towards the main entrance gate, looking warily behind her.

We see him before she does. A FIGURE comes RUNNING at her from the side and TACKLES her to the ground.

Dazed, Jennifer looks up to see --

THE SECURITY GUARD

The same guy from before! He's looking down at her victoriously.

SECURITY GUARD

You!

JENNIFER

Sir. Please. They're coming.

SECURITY GUARD

Who's that? Your husband? Yeah, I looked it up. Nobody with the name Trampolini works here.

JENNIFER

They'll kill you.

SECURITY GUARD

Save it this time, lady. My minimum-wage ass isn't really interested in your hostility.

JENNIFER

Please...

The guard pulls out a pair of those zip-tie handcuffs and secures Jennifer's hands.

SECURITY GUARD

I guess this is what we call poetic justice, right?

And with that question still lingering in the air, a ghoulish HAND grabs the security guard by his neck.

It lifts him high into the air, CRUSHING his larynx and tossing him away.

We recognize this creature as Ray.

He steps over to the fallen Jennifer. Staring down at her with utter LOATHING in his slit-like eyes.

With uncanny speed, he picks Jennifer up by her neck and THROWS her several feet onto the PAVEMENT.

She lands in a sickening HEAP.

And before she can recover, he's pounced on her again, REACHING down towards her.

JENNIFER

Ray? One last thing...?

He doesn't even listen. Just picks her up by her shirt and THROWS her another several feet.

She SMACKS into the "C D S" sign, sliding down to it to the ground.

Now he approaches her again, coming in for the kill...

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Remember when you told me I was stronger than I know?

Ray now PAUSES for a moment, standing over her.

RAY/CREATURE

Yes, Jennifer. I remember.

JENNIFER

Well, now I know.

RAY/CREATURE

*I know you know. That's very good.
You deserve that much.*

JENNIFER

*I wonder how that's going to taste.
Maybe not so great?*

(beat)

Maybe a little salty?

The creature considers this. Then he leans closer to her...

RAY/CREATURE

*Used to be cattle were funneled
single file onto a conveyer belt
for slaughter. The cows could see
right ahead, plain as day, what was
to become of them. Each one died
shrieking and terrified.*

His face is inches away from her as he continues. A kind of intimacy here that belies the subject matter.

RAY/CREATURE (CONT'D)

Then they changed the design of the belt. Made it so it curved around in shrinking circles, ending in a kind of elevator. The elevator lifted the now oblivious cow up and into the blades. Not only was it more humane, some thought it actually improved the taste of the meat.

The creature is starting to salivate now, strings of drool dropping from his jaws and landing on Jennifer's face.

RAY/CREATURE (CONT'D)

But every once in a while there's a cow who isn't fooled. Who figures it out. They'll hear her shrieks as she goes around and around and finally... up. Then everything's quiet again. Back to business.

(beat)

*That's all you are, Jennifer.
You're a cow who figured it out.*

He appraises Jennifer, seeing if he's making an impact.

JENNIFER

(after a moment; gasping)

Are you calling me fat?

The creature's eyes narrow. Clearly he's not getting the response from her that he wants.

RAY/CREATURE

Yes, you're very brave. But after I'm done with you I'm finding Lily and Dora. And no fort made out of blankets is going to protect them.

(beat)

So tell me something Jennifer: is this how it was supposed to be?

Jennifer looks past him for a moment. Then, she manages a strange SMILE...

JENNIFER

Absolutely.

RAY/CREATURE

Fair enough.

(beat)

See you on the inside, Jennifer....

He BENDS towards her, opening his mouth, unlocking his JAW to reveal those hideous splintery TEETH.

Then he STOPS.

Just STOPS.

His eyes ROLL BACK in his head as FOAM pours from his mouth.

Lifeless, he drops to the ground, REVEALING --

A MOP

Is now sticking out of his back.

DAVE

Reaches down and pulls out the impromptu weapon, revealing the handle has been sharpened to a spear-like POINT.

DAVE

You know your cellphone pic really didn't capture their true essence.

He helps Jennifer to her feet. They stare down at the creature's corpse.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Is that Mr. R.?

JENNIFER

That's him.

DAVE

He should have sent you a bigger bouquet.

Jennifer makes a sound kind of like a laugh.

We slowly RISE to HIGH ABOVE them as they walk towards the campus entrance and slip past that gate.

Dave helps Jennifer into his crappy, dented car. Gives her a hand with the seat belt. Tosses the mop in after her.

He then gets behind the wheel. The engine comes to life. The car speeds away, leaving Ray and Crosstech behind.

FADE TO:

END CREDIT SEQUENCE -- BLACK -- CREDITS ROLLING -- THEN...

A HAND -- KNOCKS on a door. Jennifer waits there, standing next to Dave. She KNOCKS again.

Alan, Jennifer's ex, opens the door. Lily and Dora rush past him into Jennifer's arms. She scoops them up. Hugging them so tight.

Alan's gaze goes inside his house. We see that diaper bag full of cash sitting conspicuously on a dining room table.

But Jennifer and Dave just turn and walk away from Alan's house, heading to Dave's car with Lily and Dora. Alan stares after them, bewildered.

BLACK -- MORE CREDITS -- THEN...

\$100 BILLS -- Quite a few of them. Jennifer is giving them to a SALESMAN in a SUIT who expertly counts them out. Hands Jennifer some PAPERS. Shakes her hand.

BLACK -- MORE CREDITS -- THEN...

A BRAND NEW PRIUS -- Jennifer drives. The girls are in back in their car seats. They all SING along to "Conjunction, Junction." The FUEL GAUGE could not possibly be more FULL.

Suddenly, a speeding CAR cuts them off with a rude, protracted HONK.

Jennifer resists the urge to respond. But then notices --

DORA

Has pushed her hand out the window, *extending her tiny middle finger* at the offending car! A chip off the old block.

Jennifer's eyes GO WIDE with shock. Then resignation. No way to blame this one on Alan.

BLACK -- MORE CREDITS -- THEN...

A PURPLE PRINCESS BARBIE DOLL -- Lily points to it and Jennifer reluctantly puts it in the Toys R Us shopping cart along with nine other toys. Jennifer is making good on her promise.

BLACK -- MORE CREDITS -- THEN...

THAT LOPSIDED TV -- Is on CNN. Some kind of business analysis talk show...

COMENTATOR

... The real surprise is Crosstech
Discovery Systems which rallies ten
full points after suddenly closing
one of their plants in the mid-west
weeks ago for no apparent reason...

The cord on the television is UNPLUGGED as Jennifer carries the TV outside, passing moving boxes and suitcases on her way to the garbage bins.

BLACK -- MORE CREDITS -- THEN...

RAY'S WOODEN BOX -- Is opened, revealing Lily and Dora's various drawings and art pieces stored inside.

Jennifer has that stick figure picture of the girl smelling the flowers. She folds it neatly in with the others.

The she places the box on a lovely new coffee table as we hear BARKING from outside...

BLACK -- MORE CREDITS -- THEN...

THAT RUMPLED STRAY DOG -- Is BARKING happily, playing with Lily and Dora in a lovely back yard. The dog LIMPS slightly, but otherwise seems fine.

LILY

Here, Prince! Come on, Prince!
Good boy..!

Jennifer watches from the porch of the new house. She's untying a KNOT in a pair of little girl's sneakers.

She smiles as a third girl joins the game. We recognize her as the Girl With Bangs from those birthday parties. Looks like she and Lily have become friends.

BLACK -- MORE CREDITS -- THEN...

THAT BARBIE DOLL AGAIN -- Lily, in bed, cradles it in her arms as Jennifer finishes up a storybook and starts to stand up...

LILY

Mommy?

JENNIFER

Shhh. Your sister is sleeping.

LILY

How long has it been now?

JENNIFER

(part of a ritual)

Honey, you've been nightmare-free
for two months and seventeen days.

LILY

I told you I could do it.

JENNIFER

I never doubted it for an instant.

She starts to leave again...

LILY

Mommy?

JENNIFER

Shhhh. What Lily?

LILY

There's just one problem.

JENNIFER

What's that?

LILY

Well, last night I had a good dream
where I won a million dollars. But
the me *in* the dream knew the me
having the dream only had six
dollars. That's the problem. It
works both ways.

JENNIFER

Well, you may not have a million
dollars. But you've got other
things.

Lily looks at her. She's smart enough to know what Jennifer
is talking about...

LILY

(rolling her eyes)

I know, mommy.

Jennifer kisses her. Tucks the covers under up her chin.

JENNIFER

I know you know. Good night, Lily.

BLACK -- MORE CREDITS -- THEN...

A LAPTOP COMPUTER -- Dave sits on the couch, typing away on a term paper. He looks up as Jennifer enters, having just tucked the girls in. He's growing a little bit of a beard now and looks slightly more mature.

Still typing with one hand, he PATS the sofa for Jennifer to have a seat. She smiles and walks towards him.

BLACK -- MORE CREDITS -- AND FINALLY...

A WINDOW -- We watch Jennifer and Dave THROUGH IT as he works on his paper and she flips through her daily planner.

Then we PULL BACK from Jennifer's modest new home to REVEAL it is surrounded by a VERY HIGH WOODEN FENCE.

It's one of those fences constructed from thick wooden POLES laid out vertically.

The tip of each of these poles has been sharpened to a SPEAR-LIKE POINT.

We continue PULLING BACK from Jennifer's new house until finally we --

FADE OUT.