



GARDEN DISTRICT

by

Anthony Jaswinski

&

Luke Goltz

(Story by Anthony Jaswinski)

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Los Angeles

8548 Washington Boulevard
Culver City, CA 90232
(310) 253-7777

New York

107-23 71st Road, Suite 300
Forest Hills, NY 11374
(718) 275-1012

INSERT MONTAGE. VARIOUS YOU-TUBE CLIPS

Countless images of myths and mysteries. Some debunked others still considered "under investigation"...

The famed Patterson Sasquatch video...

The debunked "Surgeon's Photo" of Loch Ness...

Yuri Geller and his fake spoon bending....

The McMinvellie UFO photos that have never been explained...

The recent woolly mammoth walking through that Siberian river. Finally:

"THE PAULA CLIP"**IN AN UNSPECIFIED ROOM**

CONSUMER-GRADE CAMERA on PAULA (17). Runaway type, tracks on arms. Drugs or self-mutilation. Cowers in a folding chair in the corner.

Two unseen BLOGGERS are filming. For the record, Josh and David Frankel. Underground myth hunters famously known by their subculture as The Frankel Brothers.

DAVID (O.S.)

Paula, can you look at me?

Paula. Finally lifts her face. We gauge her eyes. Cold, sunken as stone.

DAVID (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Do you want something to eat?

PAULA

(breathless)

I want to go home.

(scared)

Want to see my mother.

Her eyes are dark. Pupils dilated.

DAVID (O.S.)

Paula. We're here to help you, okay?

PAULA

(to camera)

Turn that off.

JOSH (O.S.)
 We can't. We need to document your
 sessions, that was part of the deal.
 Right?

PAULA
Turn it off.

DAVID (O.S.)
 Josh, enough.
 (fakes turning it off)
 Okay. It's off.

DAVID appears in FRAME. Moves a little closer to Paula.
 Points at the CAMERA.

DAVID (CONT'D)
 See? It's off. Right, Josh?

JOSH (OS)
 Yup.

Paula pauses. Looks back to the ground. Hair in her
 face.

DAVID
 Now we're just gonna sit here and talk
 for a little bit, okay?

Paula shakes her head.

DAVID (CONT'D)
 Hey. You called us. You called us and
 we came here. Remember?

PAULA
 (shouts it)
I want to go home!

Looks back at them. Eyes have taken a scary, dark tinge.
 David turns to Josh who's still behind the CAMERA.

JOSH (O.S.)
 We should just take her there now.

Paula regards that. The aura of a scared, wild animal.

JOSH (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Dave-

DAVID
 Yeah, I know.
 (turns to Paula)
 (MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)

Listen to me. We're going to take you to a place where we can help you. Our sister, she's a doctor. Okay?

Paula, struck with fear. Shakes her head.

PAULA

No. You... you can't help me.

DAVID

We can, but you have to let us-

PAULA

You promised me you'd take me to see my mother, you-

DAVID

It's okay.

Goes to touch her.

PAULA

IT'S NOT OKAY.

She jolts up, knocking the chair over. Loud, crisp echo. Moves back to the dark corner.

PAULA (CONT'D)

They're coming back, they'll be here soon. You have to take me to my mother-

JOSH (O.S.)

For chrissakes.

JOSH suddenly appears in FRAME. Moves over to a boarded window.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Paula, look.

He starts to undo the board.

PAULA

NO!!!

DAVID

JOSH, STOP.

Josh fights the board, finally breaking it open. SLIVER OF LIGHT falls on Paula. She SCREAMS. Begins clawing at the walls. Slamming into it. Disturbing to watch.

DAVID (CONT'D)
 Josh, what the hell?!

Josh snaps up the CAMERA. Hands it to David.

JOSH (O.S.)
 Here, keep it rolling.

Josh comes into FRAME, moving closer to a cowering Paula.

JOSH (CONT'D)
 Paula. Paula, look. It's just sunlight,
 okay? Just sunlight.

He holds his hand into the shaft of light.

Paula shields her face from the sun. Trembling.

JOSH (CONT'D)
 You're having delusions, do you know what
 those are? It's not your fault.

DAVID (O.S.)
 Let's just get her in the car, man.

Josh puts up a hand. Chill.

JOSH
 (out of his league)
 It just means you're a little mixed up.
 You have your own way of seeing things.

Moves over to Paula, who's now practically convulsing.
 Face in her hands. Filthy hair in patches.

JOSH (CONT'D)
 Paula.
 (beat, begins singing it)
Hey, hey, Paula. I want to marry you.

David breaks a slight laugh.

JOSH (CONT'D)
 I know, I suck.

Paula reacts. Face still in her hands. Becoming
 emotional.

DAVID (O.S.)
 Is she crying?

JOSH
I think she's laughing. Didn't know I
was that bad.

Paula gives another emotional stutter. Maybe she is
laughing. Josh smiles small. Gently crouches down to
Paula. She's still trembling.

JOSH (CONT'D)
(a whisper)
Hey, it's just sunlight. It's just-

Paula lifts her FACE. BLOTCHED IN BURNS.

CAMERA NEARLY DROPS.

DAVID (O.S.)
JESUS.

Josh stumbles away as PAULA SCREAMS. ENTIRE BODY IGNITES
FROM THE SUNLIGHT.

JOSH
DAVE, GET AWAY-

Before he can-- PAULA LATCHES ONTO DAVID, DIGGING TEETH
INTO THROAT. SPRAY OF BLOOD ON WALL. LEAPS UP ONTO THE
CEILING.

CAMERA DROPS to the floor as Josh falls backwards.

The sound of Paula feeding, tearing David apart.

JOSH (CONT'D)
OH, CHRIST.

Tries to run away as PAULA'S BURNING FORM latches onto
him. His final, detached SCREAMS as the CAMERA SMASHES
AGAINST WALL.

CUT TO BLACK

***(Note: This film alternates between direct POV and 3rd-
person omniscient NON-POV and will be noted on slug
lines.)***

Beat.

INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL - NEW ORLEANS - DAWN (POV)

FOLLOWING two haggard FORMS through the early morning
baggage claim. Just came off a flight. CHRIS (20s).

Athletic west coast vibe. Eyes as blue as he is serious. LORI (20s). Pretty with the Seattle cap. More suburban, tinge of money and security.

The third is KYLE (22) behind the CAMERA. Techno-nerd. Freelance videographer.

Like The Frankel Brothers, this 3-person crew are underground myth hunters. Building their own growing fanbase on the internet.

KYLE (O.S.)

Did you know there's more missing persons here than in any other state?

CHRIS

(to Lori)

Did we get a car or a van this time?

LORI

Mini-van.

KYLE (O.S.)

The first vampire was a guy named Comte Saint Gerard. Dates back to the 1700s. And then he disappears for approximately 100 years and then this guy shows up, looks just like him, super rich, no one knows where or how he got his money and you know what his name was?

CHRIS

No, but you're going to tell me, aren't you, Kyle?

KYLE (O.S.)

Jacques Saint-Gerard. Same guy... they say.

CHRIS

(tired)

Scaaary.

INT. RENTAL VAN (MOVING) - DAWN (POV)

Kyle FRAMING sunrise on the New Orleans skyline. SUPERDOME.

KYLE (O.S.)

Let's go, Saints.

CHRIS

Fuck Drew Brees. Can't evade the pass-rush.

LORI

Watch it, you get your throat slit in this town for saying that.

Camera SHIFTS to Chris behind the wheel, rubbing tired eyes. Lori in passenger's.

KYLE (O.S.)

Get your throat slit, period.

CHRIS

(sarcastic)

Or bitten.

KYLE (O.S.)

(laughing)

Yeah, right.

LORI

You never know.

CHRIS

Lovely Lori, our eternal optimist.

LORI

You just can't categorically deny it. It's like saying there's no God.

CHRIS

(silently mouths it)

There is no God.

LORI

I feel sorry for you.

KYLE (O.S.)

Myth Chasers couldn't crack it.

CHRIS

Myth Chasers couldn't crack a fart, they suck as much as The Frankel Brothers.

LORI

Jealous much?

CHRIS

That's not jealousy, sweetheart, that's hatred.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
 There's only one true myth-hunting source
 -- that's your drum roll, Kyle.

Kyle makes a cheesy drum roll. Everyone in unison:

EVERYONE
The Force Is the Peoples' Source!

LORI
 Horrible tag line.

CHRIS
 Cue the tee!

Lori reluctantly shows her tee shirt. "NOFEARFORCE.COM"

CHRIS (CONT'D)
 No-Fear, baby. Shining the eerie light
 on the solid truth. 400,000 hits and
 counting.

KYLE (O.S.)
 Coming to a cable network near you.

CHRIS
 Much respect.

Gives Kyle a quick fist pump.

EXT. HOTEL - DAWN (POV)

50-unit Holiday Inn Express on the fringe of the French Quarter.

FOLLOWING Chris and Lori down the long exterior hall.
 Totes and luggage.

KYLE (O.S.)
 Interesting factoid: During the Middle
 Ages, they thought someone with
 Tuberculosis was a vampire because they
 coughed up blood. So they believed that
 vampires carried diseases. The word
 Nosferatu literally means-

CHRIS
 "Plague carrier." Kyle, you wanna throw-
 down with me, you gotta bring it.

KYLE (O.S.)
 I can bring it.

Lori smiles at him.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER (POV)

KYLE'S CAMERA. FRAMING Chris and Lori sitting on the bed, going through their laptops. Coffee in hand.

Luggage thrown into the corner.

LORI

I'm thinking we just let him talk most of the time. The way we did it with Jillian about the Arlo House?

CHRIS

Yeah, that's fine, but don't let him stray off the beaten path. Most'a these vampire cult kids are meth junkies. We wanna talk *Paula*, nothing else.

LORI

Shouldn't be a problem. That's what he said in the email.

Chris pulls up the website on his laptop.

CHRIS

A vampire named Gary, Jesus.

Kyle goes CLOSE. No-Fear Force website. 12,000 LIKES. Filled with UFO jPegs, disputed haunted houses, Lake George Monster, etc..

Chris is dragging the PAULA CLIP around their webpage.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Where we putting this bitch?

LORI

Give her the centerfold.

Centers the VIDEO WINDOW. Double-clicks it into motion. (Josh and David talking down Paula) You-Tube count is reaching 8.5 million.

CHRIS

Fucking Frankel Brothers. Can't chase down a real mystery so you fabricate your own. God, that fire looks bad. Nice fucking CGI, Josh.

KYLE (O.S.)

Some of the pixilations do look a little suspect.

Chris points to their website font.

CHRIS

Kyle, let's do something about the font here. We have two weeks to break this before pilot season. We're stealing that Bravo spot right out from under these clowns.

LORI

What if they really are dead?

Chris almost grins.

CHRIS

Then we definitely have the spot.

Kyle pans to the WINDOW. French Quarter and its wet streets. Nothing sinister or eerie about it. Mundane. A city beginning to awaken.

KYLE (O.S.)

This is nice.

CHRIS (O.S.)

Save the battery for the interviews.

AD on a bus stop: FRENCH QUARTER GHOST AND VAMPIRE TOURS, SCARY FUN!

CHRIS (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Camera OFF.

SLAM TO BLACK

TITLES: g a r d e n d i s t r i c t

EXT. BOURBON STREET - DUSK (NON POV)

Chris and Kyle watch the skin parade of tourists and drunkards. First look at Kyle, he's Chinese-American. Skinny. Awkward in that naive, never-been-kissed way.

Lori is pacing behind them. Phone to her ear.

Kyle takes random shots of chicks with his little hand held CAMERA.

CHRIS

That's probably the closest you've ever gotten.

KYLE

Porn's free now, I don't need the real thing.

Chris laughs a little because it is.

LORI

Stops walking. Writes down an address...

LORI (INTO PHONE)

Whatever makes you feel most comfortable. If you want us to stop, we stop... no, no, we're not going to exploit you. We want to... understand the process.

(listens, nods)

Great.

She clicks off. Looks at Chris and Kyle.

LORI (CONT'D)

We're on.

EXT. WATERFRONT - DUSK (NON-POV)

A coal barge slinks passed the waterfront hotels towing darkness behind it.

Lori, Chris and Kyle walk onto the waterfront looking for their man.

CHRIS

Did Myth Chasers already talk to this guy?

LORI

Never saw him on their segment.

KYLE

They probably turned down his request.

LORI

Beggars can't be choosers.

They get to the rail and look around.

LORI (CONT'D)

I think that's him. Over there.

She spots a guy who looks like a homeless version of Robert Smith sitting on a bench deep in the shade.

CHRIS

Hey, guy, The Cure called, they want their hair back.

LORI

Be nice.

CHRIS

I'm always nice.

(to Kyle)

Record everything, but be discrete. I don't want a riot like Coral Castle.

Kyle nods, turns his camera on as they walk over.

NEXT MOMENT - (KYLE'S POV CAM)

From a low-angle in Kyle's hand.

LORI

Gary? Hey, I'm Lori.

Gary doesn't say anything. Studies Chris and Kyle.

GARY

Who're they?

LORI

My co-workers. All three of us run the website-

GARY

You got any money?

His face is pale and ruddy. As he licks his lips for the cash, his FANGS make a brief appearance.

But there's something odd about them. They're manufactured. He filed down his own incisors so they're actually smaller than the others.

LORI

Um, yeah...

Lori looks at Chris, who begrudgingly digs some cash out of his pocket.

LORI (CONT'D)

May we put you on camera?

Gary is immediately off the bench, closing on the cash.

GARY

Whatever.

LORI

You just need to sign this.

Hands him a release form.

LORI (CONT'D)

It says you're allowing us to film you for any future media airing. I can give you a copy-

Gary says nothing, snatching the release from her. Signs it quickly. Hands it off.

GARY

You gonna pay me more?

Lori and Chris exchange a glance.

Chris peels through a twenty to get to a ten spot but Gary SNATCHES the twenty and heads off towards a street vendor.

CHRIS

Keep the change.

KYLE (O.S.)

I thought vampires couldn't eat?

They look over to see Gary wolfing down a pretzel under the setting sun.

CHRIS

Or be in the sun?

LORI

Seriously. You guys gonna do this the whole time?

AT THE BENCH - LATER - POV

Darker now.

Gary seems nervous. Leg tapping. Eyes twitching. Checking every face. Energy of a methhead.

LORI

We'll start with some background questions, is that okay?

Gary just shrugs.

CHRIS
How long have you been a vampire?

LORI
Chris!

Gary looks around.

GARY
Keep it down, man. It could get me killed. It's not the kind of thing you go around advertising.

CHRIS
Kind of like filing down your teeth.

Gary wrinkles his brow.

LORI
Are there others? Like you?

GARY
You talking about clans?

LORI
Yes, exactly. Cults.

GARY
No. Wrong fucking word. Cults are followers. Cults are people trying to be something they're not. My clan ain't no cult. No energy consumption bullshit. We don't hang out at The Covenant.

Chris writes this down.

LORI
How did you become one?

GARY
I was made.

LORI
By another vampire?

GARY
Duh. They're called fucking sires. I thought you guys were professionals.

CHRIS
(contentious)

We are. Our viewers need context though.
How did this sire find you?

GARY

They know when you're ready. You feel it
in your blood. Once you invite them in,
they can enter your dreams.

CHRIS

Really.

Gary nods. Gives a wary glance at the camera.

LORI

So you think vampirism is predetermined
by way of some sort of genetic marker?

GARY

A *what*?

CHRIS

You think you were born a vampire?

GARY

Totally.

Chris clears his throat. Has had enough of this...

CHRIS

Do you use drugs, Gary?

GARY

Sometimes.

CHRIS

Were you ever molested or experienced any
sort of severe emotional trauma as a
child?

GARY

No! What the fuck's that supposed to
mean?

CHRIS

A lot of times, when someone creates or
fabricates an alternative identity, it's
because they can't process a traumatic
event in their lives, so...

GARY

Whoa! I'm a vampire, not a fucking psycho!

LORI

He didn't mean anything. We're just trying to establish credibility.

CHRIS

Which brings us to the Paula Clip. You've seen it?

GARY

Of course. Everyone has.

CHRIS

(sarcastic)

In your vampirical opinion, is it real?

GARY

(selling it)

I'm real. That's bullshit. I'm your story. I've drank blood before...

CHRIS

Did you know her? Paula?

Gary hesitates.

GARY

I'm the vampire, man.

Lori and Chris glance at each other. Know where this is going.

CHRIS

So you don't know anything about... anything?

(gets up)

Let's go.

GARY

Dude, I know you're an asshole!

CHRIS

Yeah right, *I'm* the asshole and *you* got 20 bucks and a hotdog out of me.

Gary gives him the finger in painted black, trudging off.

LORI

Gary, wait!

GARY
 (heading out)
 EAT SHIT.

Disappears into the tourists.

Lori turns to Chris, angry:

LORI
 What are you doing?!

CHRIS
My job. We're here to debunk the myth.

LORI
 No, we're here to uncover the truth.

CHRIS
 Yeah, and the truth is that guy just cost
 us three fucking plane tickets, Lori.

LORI
 Hey, genius. Did it ever occur to you
 that if he's part of a legitimate cult,
 then there could be some overlay? Maybe
 his "sire" could have had more to say.
 Now we'll never know.

Chris thinks on that. Nods.

CHRIS
 You're right. I'm sorry, okay?

LORI
 Don't be sorry, be smart.

Looks down the empty alley Gary fled into.

CHRIS
 Okay, so let's go after him.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT (POV)

Bourbon street this is not. The alley angles away from
 the nightlife, into the shadows...

They hear a beat of drums somewhere in front of them.
 Some wild kids hollering.

NEXT CUT

They round a corner and stop. Catching their breath.

CHRIS
Goddamn, he's fast.

KYLE (O.S.)
Maybe he really is a vampire.

CHRIS
You're not helping, Kyle.

LORI
(spots it)
Okay, gross.

They see her looking down at something: dead pigeons.
Wings appear cut and torn.

KYLE (O.S.)
Ewww.

Chris comes in, crouches down.

KYLE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Voodoo, right?

CHRIS
Maybe Popeye's. Just snap it for the
website.

KYLE (O.S.)
Got it.

LORI
Not quite the tourist wrap BP puts out.
Where are we anyway?

Lori moves past the CAMERA. Looks around. It's dark,
foreign.

CHRIS
I don't know. What about that place he
said-- what was it--
(flips through his notes)
-- the Covenant. Look it up on your
phone.

KYLE (O.S.)
He said The Covenant was bullshit.

CHRIS
As opposed to what we just experienced?

LORI
 (checking her phone)
 You promised you'd be nice.

CHRIS
 Starting now.

SMASH TO:

INT. THE COVENANT - NIGHT - (NON-POV)

Death Rock assaults eardrums. Shakes the hundred year-old dust from the bricks and black-tarred I-beams of this cavernous pit.

Pulses of neon, day-glo light give it a 90s rave feel.

Crowd is cybergoth: lots of PVC, black fishnets, platform heels and leather. S&M posers in that androgenous dress code that keeps guys like Kyle guessing.

Lori and Chris sleuth through the bar. Head towards the back. They walk through the dance floor--

The neon pulses make everyone's eyes glow like weapons-grade plutonium.

The girls are club sexy. More than a few check out Lori.

Kyle is wide-eyed and nervous.

LATER

THREE ABITA BEER BOTTLES on the table.

Kyle is enjoying himself. Aura of recent Ivy grad.

KYLE
 What about that one? Guy or girl?

Chris looks at a Club Girl in Underworld black at the bar. Skinny jeans. Long hair. Lots of white make-up.

CHRIS
 You should go find out.

KYLE
 Really?

CHRIS
 Tell her you graduated Columbia, see if it matters anymore.

Kyle laughs. Pounds the rest of his beer. Gives Chris his CAMERA.

KYLE

Okay. I'm gonna to talk to her. I'm a fucking vampire.

CHRIS

You are a vampire.

Kyle, buzzed. Steels himself. Heads over to the Club Girl.

Lori checks her phone for new texts or messages.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Anything?

LORI

He's not answering his phone.

CHRIS

All right, it's official, you're making me feel like shit.

LORI

Good.

Chris turns on the CAMERA...

CHRIS' CAMERA POV

FRAMES Kyle in the crowd as he's on approach. He looks back at the camera, nervous grin painted on his face.

CHRIS (O.S.)

Holy shit, he's intercepting.

FOCUS ON Kyle as he swings around the CLUB GIRL in black. Leans against the bar. Suave and slightly cheesy.

CHRIS (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Classic Kyle. All we're missing are the Spock ears.

LORI

I'm gonna make a round.

Lori CUTS INTO FRAME as she heads for the dance floor.

CHRIS (O.S.)

Be careful, don't want to send a search party after you like that time with the Texas lights.

She gives a small smile. Heads out.

Suddenly, Kyle jumps back.

KYLE

What the hell?! She was a guy! When she grabbed my dick, I reached over and grabbed hers! It was a dude.

CHRIS (O.S.)

Cock-blocked.

INT. BAR - NIGHT - (NON-POV)

Lori walks around. Scopes out the crowd. Her gaze is corralled by a YOUNG WOMAN (20s) sitting at the bar, STARING RIGHT AT HER.

She has the look and feel of a runaway/junkie. Long black, straight hair. No pretensions.

NEXT MOMENT - AT THE BAR

Lori sits down.

LORI

Hi. I'm Lori.

Extends her hand. The girl takes it. Holds it softly and long enough to make Lori notice.

GIRL

Karen.

CUT TO:

CHRIS

Bartender sets a shot in front of him. A dark liquid.

CHRIS

You didn't put blood in there, did ya?

Bartender ignores his drunken snark. Never heard that one.

Chris smells his shot. Drinks it...

CUT TO:

LORI AND KAREN

Talking closely over the music.

LORI

He told us we could meet some more people here. People like him.

KAREN

Like what, liars?

(off Lori's reaction)

Gary's a wannabe. Ever since that internet clip, he's been making cash off the cattle coming down here to check it out.

LORI

How'd you know I was talking about Gary?

KAREN

Did you give him any money?

Lori sits back. Now knows she got played.

CUT TO:

CHRIS

At the bar. A few empty shots in front of him. A girl slides up to the bar. She's vamped out in red-velvet dress and fire-red hair.

Chris gives her a once over...

CHRIS

You look like a vampire.

GIRL

We don't say that word here.

CHRIS

It's cool. I'm one, too.
(learning the lingo)
Energy.

He shows his pearly whites. Snaps his teeth. Drunk.

Girl pauses. He's a goof but he's cute.

GIRL
You look familiar.

CHRIS
Maybe I'm famous.

GIRL
Are you?

CHRIS
You can say I have a fan base.

He points to her colored arm tats. East-Village crude.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Those are hot.

Girl absorbs his sincerity. Moves her hair back.

GIRL
Check this out.

She shows him her neck: 2 puncture holes.

CHRIS
Whoa.

He reaches out to touch it. His finger SMEARS THE MAKE-UP.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Hey, it's fake!

She SLAPS his face.

GIRL
Asshole!

Heads off. Chris still rubbing his cheek.

CHRIS
Chris Gear, No-Fear Force. Like us on
Facebook!

CUT TO:

KYLE

He's got his tongue down a vamp's throat. The girl pulls away, pushes his head aside and kisses his neck. Mutters some b.s. Latin incantation.

Kyle's loving it.

CUT TO:

LORI AND KAREN

Lori has her notepad out.

LORI

So you know about the Paula Clip.

KAREN

Of course. Ever since it went viral, anyone asking about it is persona non-grata down here. You know it's fake, right?

LORI

Yeah, well it's been hard to disprove. The two guys from the clip are still missing. Can't trace the URL.

KAREN

I'm sure that's what they want you to believe. Did you know them or something?

LORI

You can say we ran in the same competitive circles. My colleagues and I have a website that investigates these kinds of things.

KAREN

To prove they're real?

LORI

Or false. We just want to find the truth. And that clip, it's got a lot of people talking.

Karen thinks about that, scratches at the inside of her arm. Trying to decide if she likes Lori or not.

Lori notices puncture wounds or track marks. Hard to tell in this light. She takes a gamble and gently touches Karen's hand.

LORI (CONT'D)

Whatever you can tell me, even if it's
the smallest thing -- would really help
me...

Karen stalls. Something about the shy, tepid way Lori
carries herself intrigues her. Almost whispers it:

KAREN

You remind me of my sister.

She reaches out and touches the side of Lori's face.

Strange beat. Suddenly, a fight breaks out behind them...

CUT TO:

KYLE

Grabbing at his neck. Checking his hand for blood.

KYLE

What are you doing?! Fucking bit me!

The girl looks at him.

GIRL

So?

KYLE

HELLO. YOU PEOPLE AREN'T VAMPIRES.

Wrong thing to say in this place. A guy in black out of
nowhere. BELTS HIM ACROSS THE FACE.

The crowd descends into madness.

Kyle climbs onto the bar. Runs past Chris. Place turns
chaotic, visceral. Strobe effect everywhere.

CHRIS

C'MON.

Kyle dives off the bar and smashes out the door with FIVE
GUYS on his ass.

NEXT CUT (POV)

CAMERA pushes through the door only to stumble into the
FIVE GOTH PUNKS looking for Kyle. Scarier than you'd
think from this bunch.

Chris' FINGERS cover CAMERA real quick. See shots of street through his fingers...

CAMERA rights itself -- cuts down a dark street. PANS left and right searching for Lori or Kyle.

NEXT CUT - HALFWAY DOWN A NEW STREET (POV)

Locates the back of what looks like KYLE'S JACKET on someone facing away from the street.

CHRIS (O.S.)
Kyle? That you?

The Form's not turning around. Trembling in fact. Weird.

CHRIS (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Kyle--

KYLE SPINS TOWARDS THE CAMERA -- FANGED MOUTH.

KYLE
RAAAHHHH!

CAMERA HITS THE GROUND. GOES BLACK.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS (POV)

FRAMING Kyle laughing his ass off.

KYLE
Dude, you should'a seen your face!

CHRIS (O.S.)
Asshole. Where'd you even get those?

Kyle pulls out his fake fangs. Shows them to the CAMERA.

KYLE
From that chick who bit me at the bar.
Can you believe that? What a freak!

CHRIS (O.S.)
In this town, you should be so honored.
Where's Lori?

KYLE
She's not with you?

CHRIS (O.S.)
Must still be in the club.

Chris hands Kyle the CAMERA, stumbles drunkenly back towards the hotel.

KYLE (O.S.)
Wait. Where're you going?

CHRIS
Back to the room, hombre.

KYLE (O.S.)
What about Lori?

CHRIS
Little fireball can handle herself, believe me. You wanna go back in and do some more reconnoitering with the locals, be my guest.

Kyle PANS TO the fake teeth in his hand.

KYLE (O.S.)
No, not really.

He tosses them on the ground.

KYLE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Yo. Can you get rabies from a girl?

Kyle PANS UP TO Chris as we--

CUT TO BLACK

INT. HOTEL - LATE NIGHT (NON POV)

Chris is going over the Gary footage. Kyle watches late-night cable. Holds a Subway sandwich napkin over his neck, snacking on Pop Chips.

Sound of door unlocking. Lori walks in, energized by the night.

LORI
Hey, wow guys, thanks for bailing on me.

CHRIS
We didn't bail, we got separated. Kyle had an... altercation.

She looks at Kyle, still nursing his small cut. He just shrugs.

KYLE

They don't like it when you call them
fake.

CHRIS

Yeah, no kidding, cause they're all fake.

Chris crunches a beer can. Leans back with laptop mouse
in hand. Staring at the Gary interview. Tired and
defeated.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Seriously, what are we even doing here?
The Paula Clip, "Gary the Vampire"?

LORI

Chris, we're looking-

CHRIS

We're looking like Grade A assholes. And
hey, it's cool, I'm used to that. But I
don't like being made to look like an
asshole by an asshole.

Smacks the image of cheesy Gary wolfing down that free
pretzel. Wipes big hands over his red eyes.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

It's demeaning.

LORI

Chris-

CHRIS

We could'a used the same plane tickets to
fly to Utah and talk to that ex-military
guy.

(snaps fingers, trying to
remember the name)

Jorgey-

KYLE

Jorgeson.

CHRIS

40 years with Anomalous Materials. Area
51 still has relevance.

LORI

So does this--

CHRIS

Lori. Real or fake, The Paula Clip is totally played out, okay? No serious person with new information is going to talk to us.

He throws his mouse to the desk, done with the whole thing.

LORI

Someone already has.

Chris pivots. Gauges her. Kyle sits up.

LORI (CONT'D)

Look. I met a woman tonight. She says the clip was fake, but the girl on it wasn't. She knew her.

KYLE

Paula?

LORI

That's not her real name.

Chris glances at Kyle. Back to Lori.

LORI (CONT'D)

I'm serious. She told me she knew where she came from, where she was living. The clan she was with.

CHRIS

And she can prove this?

LORI

If we approach her in the right manner.

KYLE

Because she thinks she's a vampire, too.

LORI

Because I trust her. Call it woman's intuition.

Chris thinks about it.

CHRIS

I'd rather have substantiated facts.

LORI

Okay, here's our chance. She agreed to talk to us. On the record.

CHRIS

And how much money does she want?

LORI

Nothing. But you can't treat her like Gary.

CHRIS

You're asking me to lie down and play dead?

LORI

I'm asking you to have an open mind.

Beat. Chris looks at Kyle.

KYLE

We already paid this room in advance. Might as well play it out.

Chris calculates. Plops down on the bed. Shakes his head because he's giving in.

CHRIS

We're not giving her any money.

LORI

Hey. Real or fake, she might be able to help us break The Paula Clip. First ones to do it.

Chris thinks about that. Eyes penetrate the ceiling.

CHRIS

When is this interview?

CUT TO:

KNOCKS ON A DOOR

INT. LORI'S HOTEL ROOM - NEXT NIGHT (NON-POV)

Lori opens it and there's KAREN. Billabong surf hoodie and jeans. About as far as you can get from the requisite Goth. Looks more nervous than she did last night. Out of her element.

LORI

Karen. Thanks for coming.

Karen nods. Still stands on the threshold. An awkward moment. Lori realizes.

LORI (CONT'D)

Oh. Come in.

Karen walks in. Kyle is setting up the CAMERA on a small tripod.

Chris is at the table going through their website. Gets up to shake her hand:

CHRIS

Hey. Chris.

Karen just nods. Looks around the room, smoking a cigarette.

Chris gives a raise of the eyebrow. Sits back down.

Lori grabs her a chair.

LORI

You can sit here.

Chris regards her obvious REFLECTION in the mirror. Smirks a little to Kyle, handing Karen a cup for her ashes.

UP FROM BLACK - (POV)

Karen is front and center. No fangs, no possessed look. Real. Eyes dance around the room, settling on the LENS.

LORI (O.S.) (CONT'D)

The questions are very straight-forward.
You can elaborate as much as you'd like.
We'll cut everything later.

CHRIS

You just have to sign this release.

Hands it to her. Karen shakes her head.

KAREN

I'm not signing nothin.

CHRIS

It's okay, it just says-

Karen starts to get up.

LORI (O.S.)

Whoa, wait. No, it's okay. You don't have to sign anything.

CHRIS

Yeah, she does.

Chris gives her a hard look.

LORI (O.S.)

It's okay. Really.

Beat. Karen reluctantly finds the seat again. Lights a new cigarette off the old one.

Blows smoke into the lens. Waiting for the questions.

NEXT CUT (POV)

Karen in FRAME.

LORI (O.S.)

Subject Karen. October 12th, 2012. 8:17 pm. Lori Sutter and Christopher Gear conducting session.

KYLE (O.S.)

Marker.

Beat.

LORI (O.S.)

So, Karen. Can you tell us where you're originally from?

KAREN

Outside Gainesville, Florida. Town had more dogs than people.

LORI (O.S.)

You were an only child?

KAREN

I had a sister. I told you.

LORI (O.S.)

Had? Did she die?

This strikes Karen. Her eyes dip to the floor, chasing a memory that won't be caught.

KAREN

I don't know. I haven't seen her since I come here.

CHRIS (O.S.)
Do you mind telling us why you came to
New Orleans?

Karen glances at Chris, not sure she wants to answer.

LORI (O.S.)
Was your home life--

KAREN
--shitty.

Camera ZOOMS IN a little.

LORI (O.S.)
In what way?

KAREN
Every way.

Her expression remains stoic. As if she's recounting
someone else's story.

LORI (O.S.)
How long you've been with your clan?

She stabs her cigarette into the paper cup. Tries to
think.

KAREN
What year is it?

LORI (O.S.)
2012.

KAREN
5 years ago.

KYLE (O.S.)
You don't know what year it is?

KAREN
Time don't matter no more.

She stares at them. Then a quick glance at the door and
her vibe changes abruptly. It washes over her and she's
smoking again. Eerie.

CHRIS (O.S.)
You told Lori you knew this Paula. Was
she in the clan, too?

KAREN

(beat)

Yeah. But she wanted out. She was one'a the new ones. I didn't really know her too well.

CHRIS (O.S.)

So she was a vampire?

Karen doesn't answer. The aura of a woman in a hangman's noose.

CHRIS (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Karen. Are you a vampire?

She shifts to him. A soft, razor stare.

CHRIS (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Cause, hey. People can live their lives however the choose. I don't judge-

KAREN

You're judging me right now. Judging me with your eyes. Same way you're judging my reflection in that mirror.

Camera twitches, clearly catching Karen's reflection in the mirror.

CHRIS (O.S.)

I didn't say anything about your-

KAREN

Only the new ones don't cast right away. It comes back to you after you feed.

(shy, a mutter)

In case you wanted to know.

Beat.

CHRIS (O.S.)

I appreciate that. Seriously, I haven't heard that rule before-

KAREN

(blunt, tense)

This make you feel normal? Making other people feel abnormal?

CHRIS (O.S.)

(genuine)

I didn't mean any offense.

KAREN
 The hell you didn't.
 (to Lori)
 Are you with him?

LORI (O.S.)
 Chris is my colleague-

KAREN
 You know what I mean.

Quiets Lori.

CHRIS (O.S.)
 We used to be.

LORI (O.S.)
Chris.

CHRIS
 No. We're asking her personal questions,
 she deserves the same in return.

Karen absorbs this. A restrained hurt. Barely glances at
 Lori.

CHRIS (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Karen. I respect everything about how
 you choose to live your life.
 I really do. But we're running out of
 time and money here. We need to find out
 if that clip is real or not. If you have
any information, we'd really appreciate
 it.

Karen is looking away.

KAREN
 (a whisper, to herself)
 I didn't choose. Didn't choose.

Her eyes are now squinting. Caught in a corner. Nostrils
 begin to flare.

KAREN (CONT'D)
 I've gotta go.

LORI (O.S.)
 Karen, wait-

Karen's head snaps back to the door. As if she's hearing
 or sensing something that's scaring her.

KAREN

I shouldn't have come here.
I thought... maybe...

Karen looks at Lori.

CAMERA PANS over to Lori -- dialing in on that connection between the girls when...

A BLUR past the lens -- DOOR SLAMS. And Karen is gone. Scary fast.

CAMERA PANS back to Chris and Lori. They're a little shocked. Staring at the door.

CHRIS

How the hell-

LORI

You did it again, Chris.

CHRIS

Hey, I didn't say shit this time.

LORI

You didn't have to, it's like she said, your eyes said it all.

Chris, quietly blown away. Looks at Kyle behind the CAMERA.

CHRIS

You gonna help a brother out?

KYLE (O.S.)

Honestly, Lori, Chris was being cool, she's the one who brought up the mirror-

LORI

Yeah, cause both of you were staring at it the whole fucking interview--

Lori throws down her notes, sits on the bed. Puts arms over her head, frustrated.

CHRIS

Hey, it caught me off guard, okay. Everyone knows the reflection thing. But I didn't jump her shit. We have to be as cynical as we are optimistic, but I did not push her buttons.

Lori gets up and goes to the window.

LORI

It's like she was trying to get something off her chest. It just felt close, like she was about to give us something.

CHRIS

Or maybe we just got played again.

KYLE (O.S.)

I don't know. That was weird. She kept talking about a connection with you, Lori. Seriously.

Beat.

LORI

I felt it too.

CAMERA PANS to Chris kind of rolling his eyes.

LORI (CONT'D)

She was real. She believes in what she is, there was something about her.

CHRIS

All I know is we're 0 for 2. You still want to play this out?

Lori doesn't answer. Debating herself now.

KYLE (O.S.)

I'm shutting off, guys-

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NEXT DAY (POV)

CAMERA JUST TURNED ON. KYLE FOLLOWING Lori as she races for her PHONE ringing. Cheesy Pac-Man chomp.

Chris in BG, transcribing the video clip of Karen. Roy Rogers breakfast bags.

Lori picks up the phone. CALLER UNKNOWN.

LORI

(answers)

Hello. Karen, hi.

Quickly gestures Chris over as Kyle's FRAME gets closer.

LORI (CONT'D)

Look, I want to apologize about last night, we-

(listens, nods)

Really? No, yeah, we can meet you anywhere.

As Chris races for a pad and pen...

SMASH TO:

EXT. TROLLEY - DUSK (POV)

Banner on the side of the trolley: *The Joys of New Orleans.*

KYLE'S CAMERA. FOLLOWING Chris and Lori as they pass a historic sign: **GARDEN DISTRICT**

NEXT CUT

Kyle FRAMING old plantation "gingerbread" houses. Lining streets along with giant trees and floral gardens in front of each stately mansion.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DUSK (POV)

MOVING under the arching iron gate entering the famous: **Lafayette Graveyard No.1**

NEXT CUT

MOVING through the graveyard. Headstones are hundreds of years old. Beautifully carved and ornate.

Kyle stops at one...

Snails cover the head of a carved angel.

KYLE (O.S.)

(a whisper, to himself)

Awesome.

PANNING UP

To the stringy moss hanging from beastly sycamores bending arthritic over the graveyard fence.

Kyle's SNEAKER invades FRAME. Kicks at the whitish soil.

CHRIS

Dirt's like ash.

KYLE (O.S.)

From all the decomposing bodies.

TOUR GUIDE (O.S.)

You're exactly right.

CAMERA PANS to find a small tour group led by an eerie WOMAN/TOUR GUIDE who looks like Elvira's conservative sister.

TOUR GUIDE (CONT'D)

(for the tour)

The graveyard was first built in 1852 during an outbreak of yellow fever. They put it up here on the ridge so it wouldn't flood. During the Civil War, they started building these.

She puts her hand on a four-foot tall crypt.

TOUR GUIDE (CONT'D)

In order to make room, they would open the crypt a year and a day after the burial. Push the old bones aside and put in the new remains.

CHRIS

Isn't that a little unsanitary?

TOUR GUIDE

Some people believe that's why New Orleans is so haunted. They would open the tombs and just let the dead out...

She smiles strangely, comically at them. Moves on. Handful of TOURISTS follow with silly candles. Fanny packs and cameras.

Chris has to wipe a grin from his face.

NEXT MOMENT

Kyle's rolling some video on the last of tourists. As the group leaves, they REVEAL a LITTLE BLACK GIRL standing twenty yards away down a column of grave markers. Dressed in modern, tattered jeans and Dora the Explorer tee. Knit hoodie like Karen.

CAMERA ZOOMS IN. As a straggler passes through FRAME, she disappears.

KYLE (O.S.)
Did you guys see that?

LORI
What?

KYLE (O.S.)
A little girl. Right down there.

LORI
I didn't see anyone.

CAMERA STAYS on a creepy, half-crumbled, angel-headed crypt marker where the girl was standing...

NEXT CUT

Kyle FOLLOWING Chris and Lori down the long rows of coffins. With each step, the daylight's sucked out of the sky. A yellow dusk fading into grey twilight.

Kyle PANS AROUND, suddenly feels like no one's around. They're entirely alone. Moving around a corner.

The oldest cemetery in New Orleans just became the creepiest.

KYLE (O.S.)
Chris. The girl was looking right at me.

CHRIS
(to Lori)
Karen said the No. 1, right?

LORI
(calling out)
Yeah. Hello -- ?

CAMERA picks up ambient moonlight...

KYLE (O.S.)
She was right here.

They get to the end of the row -- all that's left is the HUGE TEN FOOT TALL CRYPT topped with the half-busted angel's head around a family crest...

They slowly walk towards it...

Tense beat.

Round the back and... nothing.

No girl. Just more crypts.

CAMERA PANS back around -- KAREN, HUGE IN THE FRAME.

Kyle nearly drops the camera.

LORI
(spooked)
Karen. Hey.

Karen, dark hoodie, just stares at her. Stoic as the statues around her. Finally:

KAREN
He said he'd meet with you.

CHRIS
He? Who's he?

She turns and walks away.

Lori follows, then Chris, then Kyle's CAMERA. Kyle PANS BACK to the graveyard. Nothing but lengthening shadows.

NEXT CUT

Trekking through some decrepit lots. Product of Katrina and the housing crash. Nature reclaiming. Camera MOVING through a broken-down wire fence. Finally revealing a cold VICTORIAN HOUSE.

It's abandoned, disintegrating into probate. Weeds and bushes grow up the foundation. A house both mundane and chilling. The Grey Gardens house.

And with every step closer, movement behind the curtains, past doorways.

A couple of ratty children peek out from around bushes. Barefooted and stricken. The tinge of poverty with no schooling or routine.

It's a house full of squatters. A family of renegades and runaways.

EXT. HOUSE'S FRONT YARD - NEXT CUT (POV)

Up the failing stairs that lead to the WRAP-AROUND PORCH. A few boards are missing. They have to watch their step.

Karen leads them down the long porch to the front door.

From somewhere, a BOOM BOX sounds off distorted club punk. KMFDM 20-minute distortion sets.

Hanging off the porch beams are birdcages. Every cage is SWINGING WILDLY on its chain -- full of LIVING BLACK BIRDS -- squawking and flapping spastically.

Chris realizes his breath is frosting.

CHRIS
(a whisper)
Christ. It's freezing.

They head inside the...

INT. HOUSE - DUSK (POV)

FIRELIGHT and INDUSTRIAL PUNK screaming from big cheap speakers which make it almost incoherent. Just a rage of sound.

CAMERA PANS to a...

LIVING ROOM

Where two or three TEENS are gathered around a dated 80s BOOM BOX. Heavy distortion blasting. On the couch, older kids, maybe 20s, stare silently at them.

A TEEN GIRL dances alone on drugs. The look of some nightclub Goth interloper. Blood smear from a nose bleed. Oblivious to it.

Whole thing has an unsettling Manson-Family squalor.

Follow KAREN.

The house is a labyrinth of rooms and hallways. All seem to be interconnected. Sheets hang down as makeshift walls. Everything is boarded-up and duct-taped.

HALLWAY - NEXT CUT

Karen leads them down a long hallway that gets longer with each step. No electrical power here. Just cheap candles and squatter graffiti. Death-toll code of Katrina from years past.

Walls have tacks in them, as though any pictures or mirrors have been removed.

As they near the hall's end, there's the cheat of light breathing under a doorway.

Karen opens the DOOR...

BEDROOM

LIGHT.

Ugly candles running along a bare shelf eight-feet up on the wall.

Ratty furniture, old as the city. Karen stands aside, REVEALING a man. Call him SETH. Sits on a ruined couch, partially covered in an ugly knit hoodie. Something undeniably creepy about him. Nothing overtly grim or supernatural. It's the quiet banality of evil. Convict aura.

His mundane ripped jeans and dark hoodie makes it all the more unsettling. Watches over THREE KIDS putting a huge puzzle together. Skyline of New York. Old 70s puzzle.

He points to a puzzle piece, face partially obscured in that knit hood.

SETH

There.

The kid realizes. Fits the piece together. It's like Lori's not even there. She swallows a breath.

LORI

Hi. I'm Lori-

SETH

I don't give a fuck who you are. Sit down.

They turn around and out of nowhere, there are THREE OLD WOODEN CHAIRS behind them.

NEXT CUT

CAMERA frames Seth. Hand-rolling a cigarette. Long, ugly fingernails like razors. Nothing Gothic or romantic about them.

SETH (CONT'D)

You're here sniffing out The Paula Clip. That's what they call it, yeah?

Some kid mumbles *Paula*.

CHRIS
You know who's behind it?

Seth says nothing.

LORI
Did you know her?

SETH
I know lots of girls. I know Karen. She knows you.

CAMERA PANS to Karen, fretful eyes. In the shadows, we SEE children darting around.

LORI
I don't understand.

SETH
Your nose is bleeding.

Lori regards this. Touches her nose. Kyle goes CLOSE with CAMERA.

KYLE (O.S.)
Oh shit, he's right.

Lori, spooked. Starts to rub blood away. The kids giggle. Some frantic whispers. Everywhere and nowhere. As though coordinating something horrible to come.

Karen, struggling with it. Finally leans into Seth. Whispers something in slang French. Then we barely hear:

KAREN
... for me, please... don't.

Seth absorbs this, head still down in his hoodie. Contemplating. Finishes his cigarette roll.

Whispers of the children beginning to concentrate.

Seth utters one word. Sounds like pig Latin.

Instantly, the whispers stop.

Camera PANS to Lori and Chris. On guard. Glancing back to find no children where there were once darting forms.

The aura of plans averted.

SETH (O.S.)

You.

Voice seems right next to us. Snaps Lori back to attention.

Camera FRAMES Seth. A quiet rage. We can never quite see his eyes.

SETH (CONT'D)

You fucking listen up. Today was your lucky day. You gonna take this message to the rest of your motherfuckers: forget about that bullshit clip. You don't write about this, you don't put nothing on no website. You don't go on no TV show. You don't ever come back here. If you come back... bad things happen.

He rises up. Facing Karen, who slightly cowers.

SETH (CONT'D)

Oui?

Karen. Barely nods. Mutters it as she ticks a nervous glance at Lori.

KAREN

Merci.

Seth turns to Lori. Hoodie blocks his eyes. We barely see the nose and mouth. Pale as hell.

SETH

You leave this city. You don't never come back.

CHRIS

Look, man, we just want to find out what happened to--

WINDOWS violently slap open. PUZZLE PIECES scatter like atoms across the floor. Abrupt and scary.

Kyle almost loses the CAMERA.

HAND tugs on his shirt. He PANS down to that one GIRL from the graveyard. Hair filthy and in clumps. Whispers something about drowning.

KYLE

(beat)

Uh, I'm sorry, I don't-

She SCREECHES. Inhuman sound.

ALL THE CANDLES GO OUT

We're plunged into darkness.

CHRIS
LORI?!

LORI
CHRIS?!

CHRIS
Where's the door?!

Kyle starts taking photos -- the FLASH sparks like a strobe as they find the door...

Run down the hallways -- one after another -- no lights in the whole house -- everyone is gone. Magic trick to end all others.

Kyle bumps into a door -- CARVED FROM FINGERNAILS.

CAMERA DROPS -- goes to BLACK...

NEXT CUT

UP FROM BLACK...

Frantic.

Running towards that pocket of MOONLIGHT falling through the open front door...

They stumble out the door -- PAN DOWN the long porch --

Those BIRD CAGES are now EMPTY. At the bottom of some of the cages are DEAD BIRDS. Petrified. Featherless as newborns.

One cage is a feast of maggots cleaning a carcass to the bone.

They run for the stairs. Lori steps down -- foot goes through the busted boards. Chris pulls her up. We see he too has a nose bleed. They jump to the bottom -- race off towards the street lights of the distant Garden District.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Are they coming? Do you see anyone?

CAMERA PANS BACK. Just an empty, dark house covered in dead moss.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
KYLE, YOU SEE ANYONE-

CUT TO BLACK.

Long beat.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT (NON-POV)

Chris sits on the edge of the bed, inhaling slowly, holding a handtowel over his nose. Controlling the slight bleed.

CHRIS
There had to be something in that fucking house. Asbestos, toxic bacteria. Something to give these bleeds.

Kyle, tending to his own nose bleed, checks the recorded footage on the CAMERA.

KYLE
The only other person with a nose bleed was that girl in the living room.

CHRIS
(shouting to the closed bathroom)
Lori, you okay?

No answer. Just the sound of the bathroom faucet working overtime.

Kyle hits a button on his camera. Eyes sink into confusion, frustration.

KYLE
What the hell.

CHRIS
What?

KYLE
It's wiped.

CHRIS
What are you talking about?

KYLE

We got the cemetery and that's it.

Chris throws down his towel. Angrily grabs the camera. Checks it for himself.

CHRIS

Goddamn it, Kyle, weren't you even recording-

KYLE

I WAS RECORDING.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT (NON POV)

SOUND of Chris and Kyle arguing in the next room.

Pink water in the SINK from the nose bleed.

Lori, slumped down at the sink. Silently crying. Just a release of tension. Terrified and cold on the inside. Wipes her eyes. Checks her nose again. No more blood.

Sudden wash of nausea. Feels the need to throw up. Races for the toilet.

Off the pitter-patter of water dropping into the red-water sink...

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT (NON POV)

The three of them are sitting together. Trying to think it through.

Kyle is studiously going through "The Paula Clip" on YouTube. Moment where she bursts into flames.

LORI

There was something about that place. It felt horrible.

CHRIS

We'll find the explanation.

KYLE

Dude. Yesterday, you were ready to book.

CHRIS

And I was wrong. Those assholes are hiding something and I wanna know what.

(MORE)

CHRIS (CONT'D)

A whole commune of self-delusional freaks. Kids to boot, field day for social services. This is bigger than a web seg. Hell, this is bigger than fucking cable-

LORI

Did you feel that house?

CHRIS

Yeah, it was cold.

LORI

It was more than that. He was going to do something to us. We should leave.

CHRIS

What? We finally get a real lead on the very story we're supposed to be investigating-

LORI

Forget about the goddamn story!

Lori, hasn't blinked.

LORI (CONT'D)

Those people in that house. What if they really are...

KYLE

Exactly.

CHRIS

Stop it. Both of you. Look at me.
There is no such thing as-

LORI

How do you know?! Maybe it isn't supernatural predisposition. Maybe Gary was right, it's some kind of genetic defect.

CHRIS

Okay, so now we're basing our facts on Gary?

(speaks clearly)

Lori. People keep myths alive because they refuse to accept the plausibility of the mundane and material. Myths and superstitions keep towns like New Orleans in business.

(points to the clip)

(MORE)

CHRIS (CONT'D)

See this? This is fucking CGI. The next Found Footage bullshit. It's not real. 20 years ago, I might have felt a shiver, but the internet has killed all possibility of the unknown. God bless it.

LORI

I don't care about the clip, I care about what happened tonight!

CHRIS

Nothing happened. Some junkies on food stamps scare us with their big, chilly house. Hey, I can run off and play hide-and-seek, too.

Lori fumes. Takes a breath.

LORI

You know what your problem is? You don't want to believe what's right in front of you.

CHRIS

Yeah, you're right. I'm the skeptic, you're the optimist, that's why this works-

KYLE

SHIT, LOOK.

Kyle stops the VIDEO CLIP where Paula's hanging off the ceiling.

KYLE (CONT'D)

I knew there was something about that room.

LORI

What are you talking about?

KYLE

Look.

(points to the room Paula burned in)

It's their house in the Garden District. That's the same living room, man. The window, the floor, look at those burn marks.

Lori and Chris lean in. Study the images.

CHRIS
Sonofabitch. He's right.

Chris turns to Lori. Off the sudden chill...

INT. POLICE STATION - NEXT DAY (POV)

Kyle FRAMING a dumpy little waiting area. Go CLOSE on Chris and Lori, standing at a front desk. Filling out investigation forms. DEPUTY DETECTIVE guides them through the process.

Kyle PANS to a WALL OF MISSING PERSONS. Countless DIGITAL PHOTOS and FLIERS. Suddenly spots a YOUNG WOMAN. Cheery St. Anne's high-school pic. Striking similarity to that GOTH GIRL WITH THE NOSE BLEED.

Off the mundane echo of office clatter...

EXT. GARDEN DISTRICT HOUSE - DUSK (POV)

Deserted and rotting in the sinking sun. Quiet as a graveyard.

Following Chris, Lori and TWO NOPD DEPUTY DETECTIVES in Men's Warehouse suits.

DEPUTY 1
Probate.

DEPUTY 2
Looks like it.

CAMERA swings UP. Catches a HUGE FLOCK OF STARLINGS moving in eerie, hypnotic patterns and waves. The aura of a coming storm.

INT. PARLOR ROOM - NEXT MOMENT (POV)

Chris motions for Kyle to follow him as the two Deputies begin checking out adjoining rooms.

CHRIS
They were here last night, I swear to God.

DEPUTY (O.S.)
(small echo)
Jeff, check the back.

CAMERA moves into an empty RECEPTION ROOM, save for a filthy sheet hanging like a makeshift wall.

Something is moving behind it...

Not human. Moves fast.

Chris reaches for the sheet...

RIPS IT DOWN. A BLACK BIRD sits on a pile of animal bowels.

Hanging from the ceiling are three skinned and gutted POSSUM CARCASSES. All that's left are their white, rat-like tails nailed to the ceiling.

The bird flies out of the window.

Kyle has to pull the CAMERA and nearly vomits. Runs out of the room.

NEXT CUT

Down the long HALLWAY to Seth's room. Kyle's CAMERA comes in as Chris and Lori are already here with the two Deputies.

CHRIS

She called him Seth.

DEPUTY

Seth "what"?

LORI

No one gave a last name.

DEPUTY 2

But you have this Karen on tape?

They both look to Kyle behind CAMERA.

KYLE (O.S.)

I got it, yeah.

DEPUTY 2

Ya'll be able to describe these people to a police sketch?

CHRIS

Sure.

CAMERA PANS to those SCATTERED PUZZLE PIECES on the floor. Covered in dust. Like they haven't been touched in decades...

INT. LIVING ROOM (POV)

CAMERA tracks the CEILING. Arguable BURN MARKS. Some old burn stains on the wooden floor.

Deputy 1 crouches down. Big sideburns. Tired and professional.

DEPUTY 1
Jeff, gimme that flash.

Deputy Detective 2 hands him a flashlight. Deputy 1 checks the burn stains. Uses the faint beam to track the progress of Paula's combustion. Follows it upwards to the ceiling. Appears to end at a smear depicting something skeletal, wing-shaped. Creepy as hell.

DEPUTY 1 (CONT'D)
We're gonna get Arson out here. I'm gonna need ya'll to come back to the station and give a statement. You okay with that?

CHRIS
Yeah.

Lori's quiet. Just looks at Chris.

DEPUTY 1
Ma'am?

Loud SMASHES. Jolt us all. CAMERA moves to the OPEN WINDOW. Same one Josh Frankel had removed that wood plank from in the Paula Clip. We SEE a handful of STARLING BLACKBIRDS slapping against the porch wood. Wings torn, unable to fly.

In a freak of nature, they smashed into the side of the house.

Off the creak of a rusted swing set...

Kyle's CAMERA suddenly whips to a FORM slumped over one of the swings. Swamp flies buzzing around a DEAD BODY. Gary's dead body.

KYLE (O.S.)
Oh shit.

Deputy spots it.

DEPUTY 1
Jeff, outside!

NEXT CUT

Kyle FOLLOWING Chris and Lori over to the TWO DEPUTIES. Already crouched down and checking the body with plastic gloves.

Quick flashes of Gary's ARMS. Puncture tracks from needles. Spent hypodermics beside him. The aura of an OD.

Lori covers her mouth, horrified.

CHRIS
OD?

DEPUTY 2
Stay back, back in the house.

Kyle goes CLOSE on Gary's throat. MORE punctures. The faint trace of multiple bite marks?

DEPUTY 1 SUDDENLY IN FRAME

DEPUTY 1
I SAID BACK!

EXT. HOTEL HALL - NIGHT (POV)

Kyle's CAMERA FOLLOWING Chris and Lori down the hall.

CHRIS
Four weeks for a toxicology report-- we could use that time... play it anyway we want for now. Use what we've got from Gary and Karen, the police report, cut it into something creepy--

LORI
No. This already *is* creepy. They told us to keep our mouths shut and then Gary shows up dead at the house. They know we talked to him.

CHRIS
Lori. The guy was a junkie. He died a junkie.

KYLE (O.S.)

Or maybe they just made it look that way.

CHRIS

Cool. Murder, whatever. That's good,
another angle we can play into.

Lori stares at him hard. Finally shakes her head. Looks at Kyle behind the CAMERA. Heads off to her room beside theirs.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Lori--

She inserts her plastic key. Looks at Chris.

LORI

He told us not to talk.

She heads in. Door shuts. Chris absorbs her fear. Looks back at Kyle.

CUT TO BLACK

Beat.

SOUND OF LORI SCREAMING

INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATE NIGHT (NON-POV)

Light clicks on. Chris and Kyle, just awoken. Groggy and disoriented.

SCREAMS coming from Lori's room next door. They fly out of bed...

EXT. HOTEL HALL - NEXT MOMENT (POV)

Kyle FILMING as Chris raps on the door.

CHRIS

LORI. LORI, OPEN THE DOOR.

Beat.

LORI (O.S.)

(terrified, crying)

Chris -- ?

CHRIS

Yeah, it's me. Open the door.

Bolt unlocks. Door opens on Lori. Tears down her cheek. Bed sheet wrapped around her.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
What happened? You okay?!

She looks at them both, still shaking.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NEXT MOMENT (POV)

Lori, somewhat recovered. Stands against the wall, far from the closed-draped window.

Chris gently tries to talk her out of her nightmare.

CHRIS
It was just a dream, okay?

Lori shakes her head.

LORI
She was here, she told me they're angry, they had to leave their feeding grounds. We should have never called the police.

CHRIS
Look at me.
(gently holds her arms)
It was just a dream. Karen's not here.

LORI
SOMETHING WAS HERE. They wanted to get in. But they... they have to be invited. They were at the window. I saw them. Oh, God.

CHRIS
It's okay, it's gonna be-
(realizes Kyle's filming)
KYLE, SHUT IT OFF.

NEXT MOMENT

Kyle's secretly FILMING the big closed drape. The rear window where Lori imagined the scratching.

In BG, Chris is whispering with Lori. Calming her down.

Kyle, trembling hand, very slowly extends his hand. Peels the curtain back. Suddenly REVEALS a thin, long scratch. Carved into the exterior glass.

KYLE (O.S.)
 (to himself)
 What the hell-

Kyle slowly pulls more CURTAIN AWAY. The one lone scratch is now joined by a THOUSAND MORE.

All carved hard and thick into the glass. Fingernail traces from both child and adult. Horrifying and real.

SCREAM jolts CAMERA. Kyle WHIPS to Lori, now spotting the slashes. SCREAMING. Chris, blown away.

CHRIS
 SHUT THE CURTAIN.

KYLE (O.S.)
 What the hell, man?!

Chris snaps the curtain closed. Off Lori's SCREAM:

INT. RENTAL VAN - MORNING (POV)

THROUGH WINDSHIELD

Kyle FILMING as Chris and the HOTEL MANAGER are talking in front of Lori's open room.

Lori watches from the passenger's seat, newly dressed. Nibbles her fingernail. Won't get within ten feet of that hotel room.

INT. MINI VAN - NEXT MOMENT (POV)

Chris comes to the door. Coffee-stained RUSH tee shirt. Motions for Lori to flip up the locks. She does and he enters. A slight unease between everyone.

CHRIS
 Okay. He admitted to a few cars getting broken into last night. Happens more than they'd like to admit. So, odds are some junkies were trying to get into rooms, too.

LORI
 Did he see the window?

CHRIS
 Yeah. He saw it.
 (off her growing anxiety)
 Lori. It's a poor city, people-

LORI
 DID HE SEE. THE WINDOW?

Beat.

I/E. RENTAL VAN - DAY - RAINING (POV)

Driving down an intersection. Crossing some impoverished highway sections. Lori, quiet and removed in passenger's.

KYLE (O.S.)
 Maybe they put it out.

Beat.

CHRIS
 Who?

KYLE (O.S.)
 The clan. Maybe they found the camera after Paula burned. Instead of destroying it, they put the video out.

CHRIS
 And why the hell would they do that?

LORI
 Protection.
 (believer)
The greatest trick the devil ever played was convincing the world he didn't exist.
 They put out a viral video-- in this day and age, no one wants to believe, so no one goes looking.

KYLE (O.S.)
 Except us.

Chris thinks about that.

NEXT CUT

Pulling into the POLICE STATION LOT. Lori swallows a breath. Suddenly puts a hand on Chris.

LORI

Stop.

Chris brakes. Lori shakes her head.

LORI (CONT'D)

Let's just go.

(off his confusion)

The police can't help. Let's just go.

CHRIS

Lori, we can't-

LORI

Yes. We can.

(turns to Kyle)

We can.

Chris looks at Kyle. A little false bravado, but feeling just as spooked. Shrugs.

KYLE (O.S.)

Whatever you guys say. I'm here... here for whatever. I mean... it's not worth all this.

Chris weighs it. Looks back to the station. Regards their luggage, ready to go. Final resolve.

CHRIS

Fuck it.

He throws the van into reverse. Backs out. Lori absorbs this. Tinge of relief. Eyes close. Open again.

Back on the highway. Driving away. No one speaks.

EXT. RUNDOWN HOTEL - DUSK (NON-POV)

Airport proximity.

Car pulls into the parking lot. There's a half-full pool catching leaves and waterskippers.

10 units. Cheap.

Everyone gets out.

Kyle looks over at the nasty pool.

KYLE

No slide.

It's a good joke, but no one laughs. Too shaken. Chris and Lori head into the office.

INT. ROOM - NIGHT

Kyle at his computer, going through Jpeg files.

Lori stands at the window. Looks back towards the glowing lights of New Orleans.

Chris at his LAPTOP, changing flights on Orbitz.

ECU: Departure 9:10 am. New Orleans to LAX

He walks over to Lori. Puts his arm around her.

CHRIS

9am, direct to Long Beach.

She nods. Embraces him. Chris looks out to the drab parking lot. Shuts the curtains.

KYLE

Something's wrong. I can't get on our site.

Chris and Lori react.

Chris comes over. Double-clicks. Gets that non-link URL message.

KYLE (CONT'D)

It's not coming up.

Chris mumbles something to himself.

KYLE (CONT'D)

Chris-

CHRIS

Sshh.

LORI

(spooked)

Did you try the scramble code?

CHRIS

There is no scramble code. There's not even a URL link.

KYLE

Just like the Frankel Brothers.

LORI
(a whisper)
That's impossible.

Off their silent fear...

LATER

Chris is asleep with Lori in the other bed. Still in their clothes.

Kyle watches TV. Battle Chefs of Whatever. Downed five Cokes. Afraid to sleep. Still trying to get their site up and running.

LATE NIGHT

CLOSE ON TV

Black-and-white 1922 F.W. Murnau's classic NOSFERATU. That distorted, sinister image of the old vampire rising from his grave. Still silent and creepy as all hell. As the violins rise in pitch...

Kyle jerks awake. Just the TV. Turns it off. Tries to go back to sleep. Closes his eyes and that's when he hears... the whimpers of a little girl.

He sits up. Looks at the TV. It's off. Goes to the door, puts his ear next to it... hears it again.

Slowly reaches for the doorknob... then stops.

Grabs his CAMERA...

CUT TO:

NEXT MOMENT (POV)

Kyle now FILMING.

Still hears the whimpering. A child in pain. He begins to reach for the door again...

Then thinks better. Goes to the window...

More crying. Then... scratching. Soft and tapping. More horrible than any loud bang.

He steels himself. THEN RIPS OPEN THE CURTAIN -- NOTHING.

No scratches at all.

PANS AROUND the parking lot, their car... NOTHING. A timid rain drizzle. Splatter of red neon.

Then RIPPLES in the pool catch his attention -- PANS OVER to find THE BODY OF THAT LITTLE GIRL FLOATING ON THE SURFACE.

NEXT CUT (POV)

Kyle's CAMERA rushes outside. Races to the pool... TO FIND NOTHING.

No Girl.

No ripples.

Just leaves and still water and that haunting pool light...

Kyle, frantic, takes some big breaths. FROST from his breath. Just like in that house. Tries to calm down.

Starts back to the room. Down the LONG HALLWAY. Gets to the door, which is now closed.

KYLE (O.S.)

Shit.

Searches for his key when he HEARS the whimpering again.

PANS LEFT... empty HALLWAY.

PANS RIGHT... LITTLE GIRL sitting on the ground, twenty yards out. Facing away from him. Crying. Drenched from the filthy pool water.

CAMERA begins to tremble.

KYLE (CONT'D)

Ha -- hello?

SOMETHING CLANGS behind him.

He spins. Just the ice machine. Cranks on.

AS KYLE PANS BACK --

GIRL RIGHT THERE, IN HIS FACE -- FLASH OF FANGS AND DEAD EYES!

CAMERA falls to the ground, shatters SOUND.

No screaming. No blood trails. All we SEE is Kyle's PARTIAL FORM speed-dragged into the darkness.

Then CAMERA beeps: ON LCD: *Sleep mode.*

CUT TO BLACK

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY (NON-POV)

(note: rest of film will play out NON-POV)

Lori wakes up. Looking right at Chris. He's lying completely still. Doesn't look like he's breathing.

She reaches out, holds her hand over his mouth...

Eyes close with relief. She sits up. Looks over at the other bed. Unmade. Kyle's gone.

Abandoned laptop with a UFO-bubble screensaver.

She looks around the room. Gets up. Notices the curtain is open. Hazy sunlight streams in. Makes her nervous. Remembers it being shut.

Walks over to the window, slides the curtain all the way open and looks closely at the glass... not a mark on it.

Looks at Kyle's bed, the closed bathroom door. Sound of a sink faucet.

She walks over to the bathroom door. Listens to the water.

LORI

Kyle?

Sink faucet suddenly stops.

LORI (CONT'D)

Kyle, did you get any sleep?

She gently opens the door. NO ONE THERE. Just a drop-drop from a faucet.

Now she's spooked. Stumbling back. Shakes Chris.

LORI (CONT'D)

Chris. Chris!

CHRIS

What?

LORI

Kyle's gone.

Chris rises up. Rubbing sleep out of his eyes.

CHRIS

What? Maybe he went to get breakfast.

LORI

No, something's... something's wrong.

Chris rises from bed, still in shirt and jeans. Opens the door. Looks outside: rented mini van's parked and cold. Puts some worry in his face.

CHRIS

Car's still here.

He grabs his phone. Makes a call to Kyle's number. Just rings and rings...

EXT. MOTEL - NEXT MOMENT

Chris walks outside. Looks around and that's when he sees it: KYLE'S CAMERA. Lying there at the front door like a cat's trophy.

He cautiously picks it up. Walks back into the:

INT. MOTEL - NEXT MOMENT

Chris running through the video. ALL ERASED.

CHRIS

Deleted. Nothing here.

Lori, growing restless. Starts going for her suitcases.

LORI

We have to get out of here, now.

CHRIS

What are talking about, we have to find Kyle-

LORI

NO. WE HAVE TO LEAVE.

Phone RINGS. Jolts them. Chris picks it up, checks the caller. Slight relief.

CHRIS

Kyle.

(answers)

Hello -- ?

Tense beat. Then:

KYLE (PHONE)

(filter)

Chris?

CHRIS

Kyle, where the fuck are you?

KYLE (PHONE)

Dude, I'm in Algiers.

Chris' stare goes sharp.

LORI

What's he saying?

CHRIS

Kyle, hang on.

Chris puts him on SPEAKER PHONE.

LORI

Kyle -- ?!

KYLE (O.S.)

Yeah. I fucking woke up at this bus stop in Algiers, man. I have no idea how I got here!

LORI

What do you mean-

KYLE (O.S.)

I mean I can't remember. I went outside last night, thought I saw something. That's the last thing I remember.

They absorb that.

LORI

Are you all right, are you hurt?!

KYLE (O.S.)

No, yeah, I'm okay. It's just... I'm a little freaked out. I need you to come get me.

Chris absorbs this.

EXT. RENTAL VAN (MOVING) - DAY

Chris and Lori drive across the river, into the flood plains and swamps of Algiers.

Leaving the city and the suburbs far behind.

Passing raggedy kids throwing rocks through half-broken windows on gutted sheds.

LORI

(softly)

He sounded scared.

CHRIS

He said he wasn't hurt.

Very quietly, Lori takes his hands in hers. The past between them coming back.

Lori turns to the rural landscape. Acres of abandoned tract homes. The swamps creeping across the pavement, reclaiming what's theirs.

LATER

Passing a dark gas station.

Abandoned. Two pumps are missing. The others caked with years of dust. Busted windows and piles of crates and garbage leaning against the walls.

LATER

Last strokes of sunlight.

Headlights shine on a road that gets smaller with each mile.

FINAL CUT

Pulling over onto the side of the road next to a small, forgotten bus stop. Now just a bench and half-a-wall. Relic from the segregation years.

LORI

Here -- ?

CHRIS

Yeah.

(points to the road)

Mile marker 41. Said it was an old bus stop.

They look around. Can't see anything. Sun well over the bogs now.

LORI

Call him again.

Chris grabs his phone, hitting Kyle's number. Just rings then goes to voicemail. Clears to the BEEP. As Chris goes to leave message-

A SLAM AGAINST THE WINDOW. KYLE.

Chris jolts.

Kyle, now wearing a tattered knit hoodie. Looking scared for a moment more. Then his fear curls into a grin. Softly taps the glass in friendly fashion.

KYLE

Dude, how many times you gonna fall for that?

They stare at him, confused. Kyle waves to Lori.

KYLE (CONT'D)

April Fools, Lori. Actually, it's October, but you get the gist.

CHRIS

(stunned)

What the hell you talking about?

Kyle throws his hands out.

KYLE

Hello. The Paula Clip, Frankel Brothers? It was all a prank. They're the ones who were outside our motel. They never thought we'd stick it out this long!

Lori realizes the strange absurdity.

LORI

You're telling me this is all a joke?

KYLE

It's sick, huh? Those freaks from the Garden District, the cops, they're all in on it. Gotta say, it's pretty genius.

LORI

That can't be, Gary's dead.

KYLE

Is he?

Lori, still trying to wrap her head around it. Kyle hides a laugh, can't stop grinning.

KYLE (CONT'D)

Guys should see your faces.

CHRIS

Asshole, you better not be fucking with us. You made us miss our flight-

KYLE

Asshole, you're not listening. We got the goods on the Frankel Brothers.

LORI

Where'd you get that towel?

Lori realizes Kyle's got a towel over his neck, zipped up in his knit hoodie.

KYLE

Gas station. Guys, it's cold-

LORI

That old gas station?

KYLE

Yeah, the Frankels are over there right now. Can you please let me in?

CHRIS

(looks at Lori)

Son-of-a-bitch, I knew it.

Chris drums the steering wheel. Cynicism finally validated.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
FUCKING KNEW IT!

KYLE
Chris, it's goddamn freezing, man, will
you please-

CHRIS
Get in, asshole.

Chris bumps up the power locks. Lori suddenly spots Kyle
in the side mirror: NO REFLECTION.

LORI
CHRIS, NO-

KYLE SMASHES RIGHT THROUGH THE GLASS.

Towel rips off to reveal GUTTED THROAT. Flashes FANGS as
he violently tears into Chris.

Lori SCREAMS, pulls Chris away. Accidentally hits the
radio. Hey, Paula eerily purrs on.

Chris, bleeding out, tries to fight him off with his hands
-- Kyle tears off one of Chris' EARLOBES. Blood spits on
Lori's face.

Lori SCREAMS, grabbing up the CAR KEYS from the ignition.
STABS KYLE IN THE LARYNX.

Kyle screeches like that vampyric child. LIFTS HIMSELF
INTO AIR. Terrifying and silent.

Chris holds his stump. Blood pumps down his arm.

CHRIS
Oh, Christ. CHRIST.

LORI
GO, GO!

CHRIS
HE HAS THE KEYS.

Lori realizes. Frantically digs through the glovebox for
an extra set.

Bloody CAR KEYS suddenly land on top of the car. Slide
down the windshield and stop on the hood. Dead quiet.

Lori and Chris stare at them.

Chris steels himself. Fights the pain. Takes a deep breath, opening the door. Quickly, frantically runs up to the hood, snatching the keys.

Moves back over. Horribly still quietness as he jams back into his seat, cranking the ignition.

DOOR FLIES OFF ITS HINGES. CHRIS SCREAMS, SUCKED-OUT OF THE MINI VAN.

LORI
CHRIS. CHRIS!!!

Flashing GLANCE of Chris being catapulted backwards by Kyle into the dark swamp pine. Claimed by the clan.

Lori, convulsing from terror. SCREAMS as NEW FORMS suddenly emerge from out the foliage. Blurry and obscured.

Last of adrenaline left in her, Lori jumps into the driver's seat. Fires the van into drive.

In BG, the FORMS beginning to FOLLOW. Running impossibly fast. Darting, animalistic.

LOUD BANGS on her van as unseen forces slam into the van's side. BACK WINDOW SPLINTERS. Lori SCREAMS.

Struggles to keep the van on the pavement.

Huge BANG on roof. Withered HAND comes down from the roof. More hands now on the WINDSHIELD. Tearing at it, scratching it apart with nothing more than FINGERNAILS.

Lori SCREAMS as the glass finally splinters. HANDS reaching in for her.

She swerves violently off the road. Seeing death. SLAMMING INTO A CYPRESS TREE.

SLAM TO BLACK.

Long, life-draining beat.

Then. Someone breathing.

Desperate but muffled breaths. More than one person...

UP FROM BLACK:

A DEEP DARK POOL OF BLOOD

Thick as candle wax. A drop hits it. Echoes through this big room.

INT. A BASEMENT - UNSPECIFIED

NON-POV is of a doorway, but it's UPSIDE DOWN. As if we're hanging by a spider's thread.

REVERSE ANGLE

LORI HANGING BY FEET AND LEGS

Mouth gagged. Looking dazed, loss of blood. Razor slashes on her arms and sides. Still in clothes, partially drenched in blood and sweat. Her breath frosts. Even though it's 74 degrees, it's like a meat locker.

Hum of space heaters, some gas-powered gennys.

Wrists tied together. Coming out of a blood-loss stupor. Eyes struggling to open. Rationalize the world around her.

Looks to her left. THREE OTHERS hanging like slabs of meat. One is the TEEN GOTH from the Garden District house. The high-school dropout who had the nose bleed. Cut up like Lori. Bleeding out.

Lori, filthy in mud and tiny razor slashes. Swallowing a hard breath. Looks to her right. FIVE MORE. Half of them, barely alive. Bleeding from slash wounds all about their bodies. Some ELDERLY, homeless.

Lori coughs from the nausea. Scans the rest of this BASEMENT AREA. Entire place is a dreaded maze of hanging bodies.

Then she hears something scary -- a drop of blood hit the ground just below her head.

She looks down and sees a pool of her own blood.

HUNDREDS OF FILTHY PLASTIC PANS and BINS. Things used to catch rain leaks. Collecting the BLOOD from the bodies.

Handful of SPACE HEATERS set around the place. Used to keep the skin tender.

Lori, spit-vomits. More awake now from the immediate horror.

This is how it works. You don't immediately kill the prey. You bleed it out and collect the lifeblood. You drain it, then eat the flesh. A brutal, ugly existence.

Lori. Breathes harder now. A quiet panic. Trying to think it out. Looks up at her bound FEET to SEE the rope hanging on a big meat hook.

She looks around, has to get out. Summons strength from a body 28% depleted of blood. Tries to reach up towards her feet but there's no way. Too exhausted. Too weak.

The MAN hanging to her right gives a final convulsion. Dies just like that. No drama or emotion. Bodily reaction to loss of blood.

Lori, tears and sweat running upside down. Patting into the bloody water. Looks once more at the dead man. Homeless type. Finally decides it to herself...

LORI
(breathless, stuttering)
Move. Move...

Beat. She reaches out to the dead man. Just barely too far away. So she starts to swing her body. Towards him. Wiggling her hips and arms...

Reaching out...

The ropes RUBBING HER ANKLES RAW -- squeaking across her flesh. A sound both horrible and mundane. A creaking pendulum.

She swings -- fingers clutching for a piece of his tattered shirt -- just misses...

Swings harder -- gets a hold of his shirt pocket -- it RIPS.

She mutters curses under her breath. Gets angry with herself. Swings away, then leans INTO the momentum -- pendulums across. SNAGS his shirt collar. It holds.

For a moment she's caught there, planked out, catching her breath. Savor a second of success.

Then she does it...

Starts clawing her way up his body. One bloody stitch of clothing at a time...

Finally gets her arms around one of his legs. Uses it as a base to heave her legs and hips upwards -- gets enough play to kick her feet off the hook.

AND SMASHES TO THE PANS OF BLOOD

Winces from the pain, but she's alive. In shock from the countless cuts on her arms and legs.

Viciously pulls the gag from her mouth. Kicks a pan away.

Unties her feet. Takes a deep, needed breath. Looks at the other bodies.

NEXT MOMENT

Lori stumbles over to the Goth Girl. Whispers in a terrified stutter:

LORI (CONT'D)

Can. Can you hear me?

She touches her pale body, hanging upside down in bra and panties. Feels her neck. Cups a hand over her mouth, sliding to the floor.

Like the rest, the Girl's just human fodder. Feed bags for the family.

Lori mutters to herself. We never know what. Wills herself back up. Starts off...

THE GIRL JOLTS BACK TO LIFE

Lori shudders. The Girl holds on a moment longer. Body convulsing. Foaming at the mouth. Spitting out blood and breath. Finally dies. Body swinging on the rope.

Lori falls back against the wall, nearly crashes down a space heater. Wipes tears and spit from her face. Chest pounding.

Off the lone creak of the Girl's rope...

NEXT MOMENT

Lori scampers to the closed door.

Listens but can't hear a thing. Struggles to open the door. Old and creaky. Finally, quietly jams it open.

Stares up at a set of STAIRS leading up towards weak light under a door.

Lori pauses. Looks back at the hanging bodies. Nothing left to save. She cups her mouth again. Stops herself from screaming or throwing up. Steps across the threshold. Shuts the door.

(For the purposes of this SCENE, there are no cuts. Entire sequence is one-sustained HAND HELD)

LORI MOVES UP THE STAIRS AS WE FOLLOW

Each step, a buffered creak. Blood loss causes some dizziness. Has to use the wall. Takes a frosted breath. As it's now GROWING IMPOSSIBLY COLDER. Getting closer to them.

Lori rights herself. Moves up the final three basement steps. Leans down. Studies the bottom crack of the door. Muted light but still no sound.

Trembling hand carefully grabs hold of the door knob. Twists and opens the door. Creaks a little. As she creeps through the threshold...

MOVING INTO A HALLWAY

Long and dark. Dead quiet.

She steels herself. Starts down the long hallway to another door.

Uses the ugly, cracked walls to balance herself. Moving along the hallway...

Stops. Hears something. TICK-TOCK of clocks. All different tones. She keeps going. Glances down at her BLOODY TOES. Leaving prints on the floor.

Forces herself to keep looking forward. Gets to the DOOR at the end of the hallway. Opens it. FOLLOWING her into...

A BIG MAIN ROOM

Old 50s ranch style.

Lined with COUNTLESS CLOCKS. All shapes and sizes. Metal and wooden. Old and new. No discernible pattern. Creepy as hell.

Some of them appear hundreds of years old. They all say the same time: 5:02 a.m.

Break of dawn.

Lori absorbs this. She's been out at least 10-11 hours. Looks around. The WINDOWS are all pasted over with hardwood, duct-tape or cardboard. Even then, some of it's spray-painted black.

Lori stumbles over to one, but it's nailed shut. Goes to another. Same. Some are even bolted.

She now understands the place. Their true hideaway. Lair. Somehow kept from the rest of the world for decades. She starts to panic. Scans for an exit. Everything's boarded thick.

There's a PARLOR DOOR at the other end of the room. Lori heads for it. Almost slips on some of her own blood. FOLLOWING her into the:

HALLWAY

This one has three DOORS leading off of it.

Lori takes a beat and goes to the first. Opens it cautiously, sacredly. Steps into a...

BEDROOM SPACE

... full of piles of stuff. Human possessions. Clothes. Wallets. Watches. Shoes, kiddie sneakers.

Mounds of discarded wheelchairs, ripped and stained catheter tubes. Lori builds the narrative. Homeless and sickly. Easy prey.

There's a BOARDED WINDOW. She sneaks over to it. Although it's sealed tightly, we SEE traces of dawn exposed around its perimeters.

Beat.

Lori turns around. Limpes over to a pile of WATCHES. Some are timepieces from the 18th century. Covered in dust, long stopped ticking.

Piles of clothes. Reaches out with a trembling arm. Holds up a grunt's jacket from the Civil War. Another is a little girl's dress from the same period.

Her hands shake. Impossible to fathom.

She grabs up a tattered, faded wallet. Opens it. Finds some paper money from the Bank of Paris. The date: 1785.

Lori drops it. Stumbles backwards. Trips over a PILE OF SHOES. COMBAT BOOTS from WWI. Tattered and grim.

Looks to another pile. Discarded kid's backpacks and some old 80s plastic lunch boxes. Old baby toys. Wooden dollies and carriages. Rusted and archaic. Countless limbs, wooden and plastic.

We suddenly make the whispers of CHILDREN. Coming from the adjoining room. Quaint music of an old LP player starts up, scratches and all.

Lori has to hold her breath. Closes her eyes. Opens them.

Starts over to the adjoining DOOR as we FOLLOW. Music getting a bit louder. We can now make the faint, grimly-innocent vocals of Annie Carson's famous 70s kiddie song, *Little Red Hen, Let's Count to 10!*

Lori tries the door. A French swing door. Barely cracks it open and looks inside...

AT A PACK OF FERAL CHILDREN

The ones from the Garden District. All huddled together in the corner. Like little things feeding or nursing on something.

LP player set on a decrepit chair.

Lori holds her hand over her mouth and nose. Terrified. Starts to close the door, then SEES it on the floor. A phone. Chris' iPhone. Cracked and broken.

A CHILD suddenly darts by.

Lori shuts the door just in time. Hunkers down. Goes frozen as ice. Realizes she can see through the partition slant.

Steels herself. Looks back into the room. Some of the children have now scattered, giving way to what they were huddled around:

CHRIS' BODY. Left in various clumps and sections. TOWELS to absorb the remains of blood. They're feeding on him.

Lori staggers against the wall. Holds back vomit. Tear burning down her face. Nearly faints. Heart pounding through her chest. Quietly spits out some nausea. Moving as quietly as she can back into the:

HALLWAY

Sounds of the children returning to their feed. Lori takes a safe moment to breathe. Stares down at her legs. She accidentally urinated through her jeans.

Holds her breath again. Hands shaking, breath frosting. There's ANOTHER DOOR. Afraid of what she'll find next but she has to find an exit. Self-preservation kicks in.

She limps to it. Takes a big breath. Opens the DOOR. Peering into the:

MASTER BEDROOM

Seemingly empty.

She walks inside. There's a HALF-OPEN DOOR at the far wall. Very possible exit from this hell.

So she starts across the room. Suddenly hears something horrible -- an animalistic growl. Not scary, but faint and slight. Peculiar. Growl of an animal in semi-state of hibernation.

She looks around. The room and its filthy, blood-stained bathroom are seemingly empty. No idea if it's real or in her head.

She draws another step. Less terrified now, more concentrated on getting to that door.

Suddenly steps in something sticky. Looks down to her bloody feet. Too dark to tell what it is.

Then she hears that growl again -- too close to ignore. Ultimately realizes the obvious horror.

Looks up at the high ceilings... as we PAN UP HAND-HELD...

A POD OF OBSCURE FORMS hang upside down. All wearing hoodies. Nothing holding them to the ceiling. The true, horrific depiction of vampyric sleep.

Her mouth opens, but all sound is drained by fear.

Entire body trembles as she stares at them. In the middle is the obscure form of SETH. Shuddering with the others. The sleep looks almost painful. Long SALIVA STRINGS dangle from their mouths like web threads, running down to the floor in various patterns.

Beat. Very slowly, Lori moves to the half-open door. WE FOLLOW AT HER SIDE.

Steps through into a...

FINAL HALLWAY

Shuts the door. Slowly releases the doorknob. Makes the smallest, slightest: CLICK.

In a house so dreadfully quiet, it's as clear and sharp as a church bell.

For a moment, she just stands there, waiting to die.

But no one awakens. Distant tick-tock of those clocks begin to buffer her quiet hyperventilation.

She stands against the wall. Shuts her eyes. Suddenly hears the faint mutter of crying. Opens her eyes. Realizes there's a LAST DOOR at the end of the hall.

She digs fingers into the wall, a cat afraid to leave the tree. But she has to keep going, survive this. Starts out as we FOLLOW. Moving painstakingly up to that door.

Crack through the door's bottom exposes clearest sign of dawn yet. Countless fingernail marks surround the door and nearby walls, as if illustrating the many who have crossed its threshold were dead set against it.

Lori reaches out, tries the handle. Twists the knob. Steps inside...

(END OF NO-CUT SEQUENCE)

INT. FINAL BEDROOM

Lori moves through. Dour eyes look upon the surreal...

In the center of the room sits a filthy mattress with BIG HEADBOARD, facing a window. A window that's boarded-up, save for one center strip. A foot-board of space for IMPENDING SUNLIGHT TO SHINE INTO.

We can even SEE the last stars twinkling in the sky, just now starting to give way to DAWN...

Lori, eyes reflecting hope, survival. Limpes towards it. Closer to the blood-stained MATTRESS. Steeling herself as the headboard gives way. And we realize the WOMAN bound to the mattress:

KAREN. Violently bound to its wooden frame like a drawn-and-quartered victim. Punishment for bringing them in.

Her THROAT and FACE are already showing faint peels. Lips and nose deteriorating from the increasing burn. Body trembling. When the sun is full intensity, it will burn a slit right through her throat and face.

Lori staggers.

Karen, one eye open. Crying from the pain. Dazed, finding Lori there.

KAREN
Cover... cover it.

Lori, tears down her face. Looking around.

KAREN (CONT'D)
Cover it!

LORI
NO. You're one of them!

Karen draws a breath. Body heaving.

KAREN
(breathless)
I asked him to spare you. You should have left. Should have left.

Lori regards this. Wants out, but feels strangely indebted to Karen.

Karen. Fighting death, the pain. Finds Lori's eyes.

KAREN (CONT'D)
Kill... kill me --

Lori, eyes widening. Looks at that boarded window.

Karen moans as parts of her SKIN begins to melt black. Finally SCREAMS THE DOOR SHUT.

So hard it jams it locked into the doorway.

NOISE from the other rooms. They've awakened. Lori shifts to it, eyes fearing her worst nightmare.

KAREN (CONT'D)
 (in pain)
 Piece of wood. Break a piece of wood.

Lori looks down to the MATTRESS. Wooden frame.

KAREN (CONT'D)
 NOW, THEY'RE COMING.

Lori reaches up and tries to pull off the chains binding Karen's hands to the headboard. She can't budge them. Tries the feet.

KAREN (CONT'D)
 (moaning in pain)
 Please...

Something HITS the door.

They're here.

Lori looks down to the bedframe. The leg extends -- she stomps it -- snaps the wooden leg off.

Lori fumbles up, holding the broken piece of wood.

KAREN (CONT'D)
 In the heart. Break through the ribs.
 (Lori shakes her head)
 YOU HAVE TO. Use it on him. You kill
 the sire, you kill them all.

Daylight beginning to fully emerge.

Karen's now beginning to smolder, singe from that one slit of emerging dawn. Eating away her skin. Exposing blackened, facial bone.

BODIES SLAMMING AGAINST THE DOOR. Horrible sound.
 FINGERS squirming through the wedged wood.

Lori looks at the door.

SCREECHING from children -- little fingers clawing under the door -- SHADOWS on the walls as they're rushing in.

KAREN (CONT'D)
 (burning alive)
 DO IT!

LORI

I CAN'T.

KAREN

NOW!!!

Lori SCREAMS, plunging the sharp wood into Karen's chest. Has to do it three times. Breaks through rib. Slashes her hand as she does.

Karen SCREAMS, IGNITING FROM THE STAKE. ENTIRE BED GOES ABLAZE.

FORMS rush through the doorway, covered in dark hoodies. Karen, pure energy and force. SMASHES HERSELF AND THE BED AGAINST THE DOORWAY Exorcist-style. Last furious strength sacrificed for:

LORI

Watching in utter horror as the room begins to burn. OBSCURE FORMS crawling onto the walls, some on fire from the blow-out.

Lori begins digging fingers into those nailed-in boards. As the forms scramble for her, she cracks one open. MORE DAYLIGHT SLANTS repel them away.

Lori pulls another BOARD. Enough to move through.

As UNSEEN FORMS race to claim her, she SCREAMS. Crashing through the WINDOW...

EXT. HOUSE - DAWN

SLAMMING TO THE GROUND OUTSIDE

Hits cold mud and dirt. Clothes partially smoldering from the fire. Scrambles up, still in pain. Sees the dark pines. Before she can start for them:

FORM IN DARK HOODIE GRABS HER

She SCREAMS as he pulls her down into the BASEMENT HATCH.

INT. BASEMENT

Lori crashes down the set of hatch stairs. Lands smack back in the hell of upside-down corpses.

FORM throws the smoking hoodie from his head to reveal Kyle. Face singed. Dark eyes. Vocal chords gone from Lori's key stab into his larynx. Once a young, shy kid. Just a horrible hiss of breath now. Crying. A thing in pain.

VISCERAL HAND-HELD AS HE GRABS HER BY THE HAIR

Throws her up against the wall. Lori SCREAMS, hitting the ground hard. SHOVEL beside her.

KYLE

Black eyes. Face a mixture of burn and blood. Moves the hanging bodies out of his way. FANGS surface as he goes to indulge and --

WHIP PAN: TO LORI

Having snapped up the SHOVEL. Smashes Kyle in the head with it. Stops him cold. Lori SCREAMS, wielding it again. Cracks Kyle in the face. He crashes to the ground as Lori begins jamming the ditch edge of shovel into his throat. Finally breaks through. So hard, the metal detaches from the wood.

She continues to stab it down. Even as her hands are bleeding from the woodslivers. Even as the SCREECHES of the clan draws nearer.

Lori, exhausted, finally reels back.

The sound of BOOTSTEPS heading down. Off her terrified eyes...

SMASH TO:

BASEMENT DOOR THROWN OPEN - NEXT MOMENT

DARK FORM OF SETH. The one true sire. Still covered in that hoodie. Moves aggressively down the steps. Obscure FORMS behind him, zig-zag in and out of FRAME. Some begin to crab-walk upon the walls, taking perimeter around the:

ENTIRE BASEMENT

Where the bodies hang like meat. Pans and tubs of blood spilled over from Lori's battle with Kyle.

NEW ANGLE

FRAMING Seth's back. Taking in the scene for a small moment. Fingers now 6, 7 inches long. Razor nails. Pulls hoodie from his head to reveal chalk-white, alabaster skin. Bald scalp, not a trace of hair. The chilling, grounded depiction of a true Nosferatu vampire.

Takes a mean step forward as FORMS race around the place. Taking angles. FOLLOWING him over to Kyle's corpse. Catching glimpses of his body. Seth reaches down. Picks up the man's head. Violently throws it against the wall.

Waits for some kind of reaction.

CUT TO:

LORI'S FACE

Hiding SOMEWHERE close. Behind SOMETHING, but we're not sure. Silent as the moon. Tears streaming down her face and --

FOLLOWING SETH

Absorbing the silence. Starts closer through the cluster of hanging corpses. FORMS moving against the walls. OTHERS at his side, ready to kill and --

LORI

Closes her eyes for a moment. Ready to commit and --

SETH

Takes another step. Feels her close. Catching slight glimpses of his face. More than mere fangs. Spider-saw teeth. Black eyes with no pupils. Stares at a CORPSE hanging upside down. Kicks a floor pan out of his way, grabbing at the corpse to reveal NOTHING BEHIND IT.

Cold beat.

RACK FOCUS: THE DEAD GIRL HANGING UPSIDE DOWN

LORI SCREAMS OUT FROM BEHIND HER!

CHARGES SETH, STABBING HIM WITH THE SHARP SHOVEL WOOD

Seth SHRIEKS. Horrifying sound. Sets off a chain-reaction of shrieks from his surrounding clan. BODY INSTANTLY IGNITES INTO FLAMES.

Grabs at Lori, trying to tear her apart. OTHERS grabbing hold of her from behind. They too begin to set ablaze. Seth, their sire. He dies, they die and --

LORI

Tearing away from the burning corpses. SCREAMS as she spots flashing shots of CHILDREN. Little balls of flame cock-roaching all over the ceiling. Dropping like dead moths to the floor.

Face singed from battle, Lori rushes up the hatch steps. Throws open the double doors, sending more light into the place. SHRIEKS from the burning forms chasing her.

Lori charges up the steps, clawing her way back outside. Off the SHRIEKS of the burning clan...

EXT. RURAL HOUSE - DAWN

HAND-HELD FOLLOWING LORI

Run-limps away from the house as fast as she can. Stumbling into the SWAMP PINES.

NEXT CUT

Racing through the sludge and muck as CHASING FORMS in b.g. burn and fall.

NEXT CUT

Lori limps hard. Trips over some umbrage. Crashes down an ugly incline. Smashes to a halt at the bottom of a swamp ditch.

Beat. The sound of the highway close by. She steels herself. Takes deep breaths. As she starts back up --

A BURNING FORM LUNGES ON HER

Seth. Now set ablaze. Fights to tear Lori apart with mutilated fangs.

Lori, SCREAMING from the burn. Throws him off. Falls back.

Seth. Just a burning mesh of scorched black. Convulsing, SHRIEKING on the ground.

Lori SCREAMS at the sheer horror. Grabs up a piece of swamp wood.

Seth reaches back out, still wanting to kill, to feed.
Lori, SCREAMING. Sends the piece of wood down --

SMASH TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAWN

SUN on a gleaming rise. A PETERBILT TRUCK in the distance. Rumbling its way up the long strip of lonely pavement.

INT. TRUCK CAB - NEXT MOMENT

TRUCKER at the wheel. 400 miles, working on two coffees. Sports AM on the radio.

THROUGH WINDSHIELD

Slowly reacts to the FORM OF A YOUNG WOMAN. Stumbling away from dense swamp pine. Up to the side of the road. Filthy in what appears to be muck and blood.

Trucker flags his hazards, pulling closer to the woman that is undeniably Lori.

EXT. HIGHWAY - LONG SHOT

Lori, hair in her face. Practically falls against the side of the truck. Trucker opens door. Races over to help her. Off the sun rising over the pines...

INT. TRUCK - NEXT MOMENT

Lori, covered in the Trucker's stowaway blanket. Head leaning against the glass. Face singed, still in shock.

Trucker mutters emergency code squelch into his handset. DISPATCH drones back.

Trucker puts the handset back. Glances at Lori.

TRUCKER

Miss? Miss, can you tell me your name?

Lori swallows a hard, slow breath.

LORI

(whisper)

Lori.

Trucker nods. Throws the rig down a gear.

TRUCKER

Okay, Lori. We're 4 miles away from meetin up with an ambulance. You're gonna be all right, honey.

Lori shows nothing. Fighting nausea. Dehydration. Trucker regards the many slashes in her arms and legs. Burn singses.

TRUCKER (CONT'D)

Just keep... keep that blanket on you, okay?

Lori. Bursts into tears. Has to cup her mouth from the horror.

Trucker, old and sympathetic.

TRUCKER (CONT'D)

Lean back. Breath in and out, nice and slow. Nice and slow. Lean back.

Lori follows his advice. Leans back. Exposes something new.

Trucker's eyes sharpen. Gives it a big glance.

TRUCKER (CONT'D)

Holy God, your neck.

Lori, so in a state of shock, hadn't even noticed. Pulls hair away to reveal a bleeding neck. TWO PUNCTURE WOUNDS from the final attack from Seth.

TRUCKER (CONT'D)

(panicked)

Okay. Let's put. Put the blanket over to stop that bleeding.

Lori, trembling. Leans into the PASSENGER'S SIDEMIRROR. SEES NO REFLECTION.

SCREAMS. Scares the Trucker.

TRUCKER (CONT'D)

MISS! MISS, IT'S OKAY.

Lori continues to SCREAM. Trucker quickly goes for the downshift.

EXT. HIGHWAY - SAME

RIG clumsily pulls off the side of the road.

INT. RIG

Lori, hysterical. Fighting to get out of the truck.

TRUCKER
MISS, WAIT.

LORI
GET AWAY FROM ME-

TRUCKER
MISS-

LORI
TELL THEM THEY'RE OUT THERE. TELL THEM
THEY'RE REAL.

Lori finally throws open the door, running out into the road. Blanket covering her body.

TRUCKER
MISS.

Throws open his door. We FOLLOW him out the rig. Putting hands out to Lori, SCREAMING on the open road. Primordial and disturbing.

TRUCKER (CONT'D)
Help is coming, just get back in the
truck!

Lori continues to SCREAM. BODY SUDDENLY IGNITES. Jolts the Trucker back.

Whine of AMBULANCE in the distance.

TRUCKER (CONT'D)
JESUS GOD.

Lori SCREAMS as the blanket begins to burn. She spins around in the rising sun. Eerily matches the image of Paula.

Trucker scrambles for his emergency extinguisher...

CUT TO:

TRUCK HOOD CAMERA POV

Security-installed. Patchy frame rate.

SHOWING the disturbing, burning image of Lori. Now totally on fire. Spinning in the middle of a highway.

CUT TO:

HOODIE CAM ON A YOU-TUBE CLIP

TOTAL SILENCE of Lori burning. Having become her own mystery. Joining the thousands of others. Seen by millions.

Off her final silent screams... the face going to fire...

CUT TO BLACK