

HEARTSTOPPER

A Serial Killer Romantic Comedy

by

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COLD OPEN:

INT. DIMLY LIT ROOM

Two figures sit at a small dinner table, illuminated by twin pools of light. Their faces are clear, but their bodies, for the moment, lurk in shadow. JD (29) is our leading man. He's a...nice guy. More on him later...

Across from him is JEAN-PIERRE (35). Snotty. Stiff. French. Very French.

JD

I just wanted to take a moment to say, I'm a really big fan of your work. Really. You are a magician with the violin.

JEAN-PIERRE

(terse)

Viola.

JD

Oh my god. I'm so...color me embarrassed. Look, I just wanted to clear the air and say, it's nothing personal.

Jean-Pierre lets loose a derisive snort.

JD (CONT'D)

But you guys have got to stop playing Beethoven's Fifth. It has to end.

JEAN-PIERRE

Ze Fifth is a classic. Our audience demands--

JD

No. They don't. Seriously. They hum along to the first eight notes, and after that, no one cares.

JEAN-PIERRE

On zis, we differ.

JD

(dark, deliberate)

It doesn't matter.

(MORE)

JD (CONT'D)

The bottom line is that when I hear
Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, I
cannot control what I do next.
That's why you're here.

We now see Jean-Pierre's predicament - he is duct-taped to
his chair. Immobile.

JEAN-PIERRE

Sacre bleu! You are ze crazy serial
killer zat has decimated ze
philharmonic!

JD

I know, and it hurts me. Not as
much as it's gonna hurt you. But
hey, I love you guys.
(draws an ENORMOUS KNIFE)
I'm a season ticket holder.

JEAN-PIERRE

You have killed my dear friends in
ze horn section, because you
disapproved of our programme?

JD

I know. I'm crazy. I just don't
know what to do about it.

He circles behind Jean-Pierre.

JEAN-PIERRE

(squinting in thought)
In a way I am glad zat, in my last
concert, I was able to evoke zis
overwhelming passion.

JD lifts the knife.

JD

You are taking this - So. Much.
Better...than that French horn guy.

He SLASHES THE KNIFE DOWN--

CUT TO:

CREDITS ROLL OVER A SERIES OF STILL PHOTOGRAPHS

We watch a series of photographs that capture JD's youth.
Cheerful music plays for this walk down memory lane...

SHOW AND TELL - a group of KIDS line up in an elementary classroom. They've brought a quirky assortment of objects for show and tell: old LPs, a croquet mallet, etc.

Panning down the line, we see TERRIFIED CHILDREN shying away from YOUNG JD, who stands at the edge, beaming, and holding...a dead squirrel. Eww.

HALLOWEEN - A GROUP OF TRICK-OR-TREATERS walk down the street. A WEREWOLF, a ZOMBIE, and...Young JD carrying a stunningly detailed decapitated head.

Later that night, in a graveyard - Young JD returns the very real decapitated head to a very real corpse

A BULLY runs through a high school quad, carrying JD's shorts. TEEN JD chases him, Spider-Man undies on display. Around him, his classmates laugh and point.

The same Bully HOPS through an empty field. His hands and feet have been tied together. Teen JD saunters behind him, carrying an axe.

Young JD holds out a dead cat, a hopeful look in his eye...

Zoomed out, we see a CUTE YOUNG GIRL running in terror away from this freak.

Teen JD holds out an actual HUMAN HEART, a hopeful look in his eye...

Zoomed out, we see a CUTE TEEN GIRL running away in terror.

Adult JD holds out a CHAINSAW, a confused look on his face...

Zoomed out, we see that he is standing over a GORGEOUS WOMAN'S CORPSE.

TITLE OVER PICTURE: HEARTSTOPPER

CUT TO:

EXT. NEWSSTAND - DAY

Adult JD stands at an old beaten-up newsstand, perusing headlines as an aging NEWSPAPER VENDOR looks on. PHONE BOOK KILLER STRIKES THE "Z" SECTION, QUEEN OF HEARTS PSYCHO: A 3-YEAR RETROSPECTIVE, SERVANT OF SATAN MUTILATES THREE.

...clearly this city is plagued by serial killers...

JD picks up the "Servant of Satan" paper, skims the article.

JD
This stuff is just revolting.

VENDOR
There are some crazy people out there.

JD
I know. I know. But why do they all work at newspapers?

VENDOR
What?

JD
This name: "Servant of Satan." It's always bothered me.

VENDOR
Hey, it sells papers.

JD
Why "Servant"? A Servant can quit. If Satan is coming at you, and he's got a big, pointy pitchfork, and he tells you to off somebody, what are you going to do?

VENDOR
Seek psychiatric help.

JD takes this very seriously, he leans in. Obviously this guy isn't getting it.

JD
A BIG, FUCKING pitchfork.

VENDOR
I wouldn't kill a guy.

JD
(shrugs)
I think it should be "Slave of Satan." Can I get a Milk Duds?

EXT. A STOREFRONT - DAY

JD'S HOUSE OF TAXIDERMISTRY, a sign proudly proclaims. Through a plate-glass window, we see a nearly empty storefront. JD leans on a cash register, paging through a MAGAZINE.

INT. JD'S HOUSE OF TAXIDERMY

He is surrounded by stuffed, dead animals. Bears, raccoons...an owl spreads its wings over his head. He lingers for a moment on an ad for a tropical resort: A GORGEOUS COUPLE smile and laugh, wandering down a beach.

JD
 (to a stuffed squirrel)
 They look happy, don't they, Pete?

EXT. SUBURBAN HOME - DUSK

The PERFECT Suburban Home. A tulip patch out front with tulips so healthy, the fuckers practically shine.

INT. SUBURBAN HOME

Pristine. Dust-buster charging on the wall. A mantle filled with a set of porcelain doodads that would probably break if you so much as looked at them funny.

We move through the halls, passing framed, pastoral artwork, into--

INT. SUBURBAN HOME, MELANIE'S STUDY

Chaos. Books, magazines, and loose-leaf papers serve as a carpet of sorts. Posters tacked up everywhere - Shephard Fairey, Pink Floyd, and, in a slip of taste, an Ozzy Osbourne poster that dominates the walls.

MELANIE CAMDEN (25, blonde) hunches over a laptop, typing away with an intense, manic energy.

KNOCK KNOCK.

MELANIE
 Come in!

RICH JOHNSON (26) pokes his head in. If you're a fan of Hugh Grant movies, you're a fan of Rich. Handsome, sensitive, considerate: he's everything a woman's supposed to want. The only thing that mars Rich is his hair, which is pulled back in an unfortunate PONYTAIL.

RICH
 Hi Pumpkin. Dinner's ready.

MELANIE

Okay. I'll be there in a minute.

Rich eyes the room, wary of, almost terrified by the disorder.

RICH

You know, sweetie, I'd be happy to tidy up in here one day while you're--

MELANIE

(RE: the floor)

What? You don't like my filing system?

RICH

(escaping)

Dinner's getting cold.

Melanie smirks as he withdraws. At least he's good-looking.

A police scanner SQUAWKS. It's hard to make out what the dispatcher is saying, but we catch "187"...

Melanie grimaces.

INT. SUBURBAN HOME, DINING ROOM - MINUTES LATER

A veritable feast adorns an overlong table.

RICH

But, I made lasagna. I thought you liked my lasagna.

Melanie clips a PRESS PASS to her lapel.

MELANIE

Gotta get paid.

RICH

I'll put it in the fridge.

Melanie makes her way out--

RICH (CONT'D)

Aren't you forgetting something?

Rich pats his cheek.

Melanie gives him a goodbye smooch.

MELANIE

I love you. You're making me late.

INT. JD'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM

JD enters, dragging Jean-Pierre's body. The head knocks into the door frame CRACK.

JD

(to the corpse)

Sorry. Sorry.

INT. JD'S HOUSE, CREEPY STAIRCASE

We've seen staircases like this before. Pardon the obvious description, but it's that staircase that leads into the creepy serial killer's basement. JD drags Jean-Pierre's body down the stairs.

INT. JD'S HOUSE, BASEMENT

JD hefts Jean-Pierre's body onto a work-table. In the background, we notice dim silhouettes of figures throughout the room. God only knows what those are.

JD raises a hacksaw to Jean-Pierre's neck--

A BUZZER SOUNDS.

JD lifts his saw menacingly. He presses the call button.

JD

(into intercom)

Who's there?

STEVE (O.S.)

(through intercom)

It's me.

JD

(suspicious)

More specific, please.

STEVE (O.S.)

(sarcastic)

It's the detective who's been gathering evidence on you for years. I thought, rather than bring a SWAT team, I would ring the doorbell.

JD hits the buzzer.

We hear footsteps coming down the stairs. STEVE BUNDY enters. Steve is middle-aged, laid back, but there's something about his face that just doesn't sit right.

JD
Hey.

STEVE
Hey.

JD
How's it going?

STEVE
It's going OK.

JD
You been busy?

STEVE
Just did my second rape/murder this week.

JD
(holds out fist)
Nice.

STEVE
(fist pounds)
Yeah. I'm really excited about this one.

JD
Oh?

STEVE
I put a lot of thought into it. I went for a victim who was a little taller than I usually go for. I felt like I was being a little creative, you know?

JD
Sure.

STEVE
Who's that?

JD
Viola player.

STEVE
 You've gotta be shitting me. The
 Fifth again?

JD shrugs.

STEVE
 Are they retarded?

JD
 I just don't know how many have to
 die.

INT. HAMBURGER HABIT - LATER

Steve and JD stand in line.

STEVE
 I mean, I don't want to talk your
 ear off, but I really stepped up my
 game. She wasn't even a C-cup.

JD
 I'm excited for you.

They get to the front of the line.

HAMBURGER HABIT CLERK
 May I take your order?

STEVE
 A number 3 with a root beer and a
 number 2 with a Coke.

HAMBURGER HABIT CLERK
 That'll be twelve-fifty.
 (holds out a playing card)
 We'll call your card when your
 order is ready.

Steve and JD stare at the card.

JD
 I'll take that.
 (grabs the card)
 Sonuva--

STEVE
 What's wrong?

JD holds up the card: Queen of Hearts. From the look on JD & Steve's faces, we can tell this is a significant card, though we don't yet know why...

HAMBURGER HABIT CLERK
Is this for here or to go?

JD pulls a GAROTTE WIRE out of his sleeve.

STEVE
(to Clerk)
To go.

EXT. DARK ALLEY - NIGHT

Rain gushes on a police barricade that abuts an inky-black alleyway. A POLICE OFFICER shouts over the sound of the hammering drops as Melanie scribbles on her reporter pad.

POLICE OFFICER
Dead twenty-something.

MELANIE
Woman?

POLICE OFFICER
Yup.

MELANIE
Raped?

POLICE OFFICER
Yup.

MELANIE
(sighs)
Anything at all that sets this murder apart?

POLICE OFFICER
(shrugs)
I think she might be a little taller than the usual. Kinda more, uh, flat-chested?

INT. DAILY GLOBE NEWSROOM, EDITOR'S OFFICE

Melanie bawls out her editor, TOM LASKY, who sits at his desk, polishing a Pulitzer Prize.

MELANIE

You have assigned me to the least exciting beat in the city.

TOM

You love this dark, serial shit.

MELANIE

Raped and murdered, raped and murdered, raped and murdered. That's not dark. It's vulgar. You know what I did yesterday? I xeroxed the article I wrote last week. You know why? Because it's the same fucking story.

TOM

Now I'm gonna have to dock your pay.

MELANIE

Jeff has the Phone Book Killer AND Servant of Satan. Can't I take one of those?

TOM

Jeff's territorial. And his wife's got him sleeping on the couch. You don't wanna mess with him. Look, if you somehow discover another serial killer, I'll let you cover him.

MELANIE

There aren't any new serial killers.

TOM

We've got a new murder every day--

MELANIE

New murders. Same psychos.

TOM

Not much I can do for you, then.

MELANIE

Okay, how about this - let me do a comparison piece. I wanna do a kill count.

TOM

Why the hell would you--

MELANIE

I think my guy would win. If I can't get quality, I'm gonna take quantity.

TOM

Melanie--

MELANIE

Or I go crazy from boredom, and then I get to write the story about the Newsroom Killer who left no survivors.

Tom buries his head in his hands.

INT. DAILY GLOBE NEWSROOM, BULLPEN

Melanie approaches JEFF WHITE. Immaculate desk, almost like he doesn't wanna spoil it with work.

MELANIE

Jeff, would you email me the dates of all the Servant of Satan and Phone Book kills?

JEFF

(snaps)
Melanie, I told you, I'm not giving you my--

Melanie KISSES HIM FULL ON THE LIPS. One of her hands lurks out of frame...

A FLASH from off-screen. Melanie pulls out of the kiss, business-like.

She checks her cell phone screen - a perfect shot of her sucking face with Jeff. She starts texting--

MELANIE

What's your wife's number, again?

JEFF

I hate you.

MELANIE

Send me the email.

INT. DAILY GLOBE NEWSROOM, MELANIE'S DESK

Melanie tallies off kills. She has print-ups of each of the serial killers - Phone Book Killer (6), Philharmonic Killer (8), Servant of Satan has too many notches to count. Wait a minute...Melanie squints at the papers. A theory is dawning...

She spreads all the print-ups across her desk.

MELANIE

Huh.

INT. DAILY GLOBE NEWSROOM, BULLPEN

Melanie snatches a calendar off the wall of Jeff's cubicle.

MELANIE

Mind if I borrow this?

INT. DAILY GLOBE NEWSROOM, MELANIE'S DESK

Melanie marks up the calendar with a sharpie. Different colors correspond to different killers. She flips through the whole year, a rainbow of hues cascading before her.

MELANIE

Oh. My. God--

INT. DAILY GLOBE NEWSROOM, EDITOR'S OFFICE

Melanie barges in, clutching the calendar like it's her personal ticket to success.

TOM

Christ, what now?

MELANIE

(beaming)

I'm gonna hand you the biggest story of your career.

TOM

Oh, the biggest story of my career.

(picks up Pulitzer Prize)

Let's see if Mr. Pulitzer thinks this is going to be the biggest story of my career. Hello, Mr. Pulitzer. Melanie thinks--

Melanie grabs the Pulitzer from Tom's hands.

MELANIE
Listen, okay?

Tom shrugs.

MELANIE
Forget about rapist dickwad for a second. Pretend he doesn't exist. Let's talk about the rest of them. All the other serial killers.

EXT. CLOCK TOWER - NIGHT

A FIGURE kneels behind the face of the clock. The full moon gleams down casting him in backlit shadow and illuminating his SNIPER RIFLE.

MELANIE (V.O.)
Have you noticed that none of the killers in our city mature?

We swoop down to the foot of the tower, where a pair of ACNE-FACED TEENS make out.

MELANIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
There's no escalation. No experimentation.

A BULLET CUTS straight through the heart of the Acne Boy.

MELANIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
That is without precedent.

INT. DESERTED WAREHOUSE

A PALE CORPSE lies on the cold, concrete floor of an abandoned warehouse.

MELANIE (V.O.)
All serial killers develop their rituals--

We see flashes of a BLOOD-SOAKED PAINTBRUSH scraping against the grey floor.

MELANIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
--refining their methods over time.

We pull up from the body. Another SHADOWY FIGURE daubs at the floor, crafting a massive symbol that radiates out from the corpse - fashioned from his own blood...

MELANIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
It's like all of our killers moved into town with a pre-packaged ritual. They're all working at the exact same level of perfection.

...it is an enormous, impeccable pentagram.

INT. DAILY GLOBE NEWSROOM, EDITOR'S OFFICE

Melanie throws the calendar onto Tom's desk.

MELANIE
I plotted out every single kill for every known serial killer. Full Moon Sniper is in Red, Servant of Satan: green, etcetera. What do you notice?

TOM
My junior reporter has a promising future teaching arts and crafts?

MELANIE
None of them overlap.

TOM
Why are we ignoring the rapist guy?

MELANIE
Fine. So there's one guy who overlaps, but why are all of the others avoiding each other?

TOM
(she's crazy)
Are you saying there are ten psychopaths observing a batting order? C'mon!

MELANIE
I'm saying...

INT. PHILHARMONIC HALL

A VIOLA PLAYER opens his case. He leaps back when he sees--

JEAN-PIERRE'S DECAPITATED HEAD RESTING WHERE HIS VIOLA SHOULD BE.

MELANIE

...it's one guy. There are over ten known serial killers in this city, and none of them murder at the same time...

Below the head, a note written in crayon: "THE FIFTH, YOU IDIOTS!"

INT. BACHELOR PAD APARTMENT

A CORPSE balances atop a Twister board, its legs crossed over each other. JD holds a Twister Spinner: "Right hand green."

MELANIE (V.O.)

We have a death toll of over 100 people a year, and they're not even on the same days...

What else would he do? JD moves the corpse's right hand to green.

INT. DAILY GLOBE NEWSROOM, EDITOR'S OFFICE

Melanie is gushing. She lords over Tom's desk, jabbing her finger at the calendar.

MELANIE

...not statistically likely.

TOM

It could still be coincidence.

MELANIE

Are you kidding?

TOM

For one year? It could happen.

Melanie tosses five more calendars on Tom's desk.

MELANIE (CONT'D)

I did it for the last six years.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

A METER MAID prints a ticket from her vile electronic device.

Suddenly a PRIUS SPEEDS INTO HER. Her crushed body flies over the roof.

MELANIE (V.O.)
Never been an overlap.

I/E. PRIUS - DAY - CONTINUOUS

JD checks his rearview as he chuckles to himself.

MELANIE (V.O.)
That is statistically impossible.

INT. DAILY GLOBE NEWSROOM, EDITOR'S OFFICE

Tom's face has gone ashen white.

TOM
Holy shit.

MELANIE
It's one guy...

EXT. CITY PARK - DAY

Two BLOND CORPSES lie atop the wet grass - one male, one female. They are arranged in a perfect recreation of a Queen of Hearts. Their bodies have been cut off at the waist and, beneath the ornate fabric that covers them, have probably been stitched together.

MELANIE (V.O.)
It's one guy, and he has different triggers. Sometimes it's something simple like...the full moon. Sometimes it's--

We see JD standing over the body, holding the Queen of Hearts from Hamburger Habit.

MELANIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
--something to do with a Queen of Hearts. Sometimes, I don't know, he's doing Satan's bidding.

JD reaches down to the duo of corpses and lays a four-petalled flower in each of their hands.

MELANIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 He is incredibly detail-oriented.
 Meticulous beyond belief.

INT. DAILY GLOBE NEWSROOM, EDITOR'S OFFICE

MELANIE
 He has different rituals, but he is
 one guy. And since I "discovered"
 him, Jeff can take the stupid
 rapist case.

INT. JD'S BASEMENT - THE NEXT DAY

JD manipulates a corpse on his work table. Black Sabbath's
 "Paranoid" plays in the background. Behind him, Steve rifles
 through the newspaper, searching for something.

STEVE
 Can you put on something a little
 softer?

JD
 Ozzy Osbourne clears my mind.

Like a wax-museum, the basement is divided into frozen
 tableaus, each from a famous work of art, except that these
 are stuffed people instead of wax statues.

There is a stuffed MONA LISA standing in front of a backdrop
 that matches the famous painting. A BALD MAN with a serious
 makeup job is posed as THE SCREAM, and a WOMAN appears in
 Monet's ON THE BANK OF THE SEINE, BENNECOURT, which only
 works because the entire setup is behind a blurred glass.

The net effect is terrifying. JD is a prolific psychopath.

Steve suddenly SHOUTS, flailing a copy of The Daily Globe
 around.

STEVE
 They've buried me on M28. M fucking
 28.

JD
 I'm sorry, dude.

STEVE
 Meanwhile, you - you get the
 fucking cover story.

He drops the paper on JD's worktable.

JD
Whoopdie-doo. They've written about me before.

STEVE
Not like this they haven't.

JD
I've had a dozen reporters write articles about me. They've described my Queen of Hearts killings as, "the random workings of a disturbed man."

STEVE
(RE: the paper)
Yes, but--

JD
They said my full moon killings were "unfathomable." And that busload of nuns? One reporter called it, "As brutal as it is incomprehensible."

STEVE
Well, you were working for Satan at the time.

JD
Right. You can't blame me for something I did on commission!

STEVE
Those people didn't know what they're talking about. But this--

JD
Just once, I'd like it if they got their thumbs out of their asses and gave me some credit for my work.

STEVE
The Globe has really been turning on the heat recently. The Sports Section, the Metro Section - Everything is better.

JD
(RE: the body)
Can you help me out with this?

STEVE
You finally found...

Steve and JD drag the body to a long dinner table that is lined with stuffed corpses. They prop up the body so he is leaning over the table.

JD
He's perfect for it.

STEVE
You found Matthew?

JD
No, Matthew I found a while ago.
This one is Bartholomew.

STEVE
Sorry, I get them confused.

On an easel next to the table is Da Vinci's THE LAST SUPPER. The bodies are arranged as a perfect replication, except the middle seat is empty...

JD
Now, you're gonna have to imagine this guy with the robe, and I think I need an extra goblet.

STEVE
No, you're right, he's perfect. Now you just need Jesus, huh?

JD
(adjusting a wig)
That's been a tough one from the beginning.

STEVE
Don't worry. You'll find Jesus eventually. The important thing is to not lose faith.

INT. HAMBURGER HABIT - LATER

Steve and JD stand in line, JD now engrossed in the paper.

JD
Oh my God!

STEVE
I told you.

JD

She figured it out. She's giving me credit for all my work.

STEVE

It's like suddenly she can write. Did you know she once copied an article verbatim? People notice these things, you know?

JD

(giddy)

She calls it, "A meticulously designed work of horror."

STEVE

I think it's great that you finally found a woman who gets you.

JD

I don't know if I want to meet her or kill her.

They reach the front of the line.

STEVE

The usual.

HAMBURGER HABIT CLERK

(holds out a card)

Twelve-fifty.

Steve takes the card.

STEVE

Well, I guess this settles the meet her or kill her question.

JD grabs the card, looks at it: Queen of Hearts.

JD

Oh, you have got to be kidding me.

STEVE

(to Clerk)

Do you guys ever shuffle that deck?

INT. DAILY GLOBE NEWSROOM

An overhead view of the busy newspaper. Reporters mill around in the standard drab business colors. And, in one corner, we see a figure in red...

JD meanders from cubicle to cubicle, dressed as a Papa John's delivery guy. He studies the contents of their desks--

On one desk - a football helmet, a grid of scores...

On another desk - a large weather map with high-pressure and low pressure fronts drawn onto it in Sharpie--

Jeff White BARGES into JD, knocking his pizza bag to the ground.

JEFF

Watch where you're going!

JD takes a long hard squint at this jerk-off, a look of recognition crossing his face.

JD

What's your name?

JEFF

Jeff.

JD

Jeff White? The original reporter on the "Servant of Satan" case?

Jeff is spooked. He books it back to his desk.

JD

(dark)

I'll see you later, Mr. White.

JD is distracted from his murderous mediation by--

MELANIE'S CUBICLE: littered with crime scene photos, coroner's reports, and criminal profiling books.

He notices a map of the city on Melanie's cubicle wall. She's drawn a huge red circle on the map, labelling it - "central locus of activity."

JD looks tense: she's onto him.

JD

That's my block!

INT. DAILY GLOBE GARAGE

Melanie turns the ignition to her car. She pulls out an iPod and shuffles through it, looking for that perfect driving song. She's too caught up to see that--

--behind her, in the back seat, SOMETHING MOVES.

JD glides up into view, ready to kill.

She settles on a song, hits play.

He lifts the garrotte wire.

Suddenly the car's speakers blast Black Sabbath's "Paranoid."

The look on JD's face is one of utter confusion: who is this woman?

He ducks down as she puts the car in reverse.

She pulls forward and he drifts back up beside her, trying to summon the will to kill her--

She nods her head in time with the hard bass-line. Baffled, immobilized, JD sinks into the back seat, mouthing along with the lyrics...

INT. SUBURBAN HOME, GARAGE

JD lies in the back seat as Black Sabbath's "Into the Void" comes to a close. He is speechless.

Melanie gets out of the car, and walks into her house.

INT. SUBURBAN HOME, KITCHEN

JD looks around, admiring a very well-stocked kitchen. He nods his head in appreciation of a meat grinder. This girl's got everything! In the next room we hear a shower start to run. He pulls a knife from the block.

He holds it in his hand for a moment, impressed.

JD
Good balance.

He checks the brand.

INT. SUBURBAN HOME, MELANIE'S STUDY

On his way to the bathroom, JD pokes his head into Melanie's study. It is STOCKED with books on serial killers, crime scene forensics...

JD spots her DVD shelf: SE7EN, COPYCAT, SUMMER OF SAM, TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE, PSYCHO, and SILENCE OF THE LAMBS.

INT. SUBURBAN HOME, BATHROOM

Melanie enjoys a nice, steamy shower, luxuriating in the end of her workday.

Behind her, through the translucent shower curtain, we see the bathroom door open, and a dark figure step through, the silhouette of the sharp blade in his hand.

JD leans his face up next to the shower curtain. It's almost a tender moment. He pulls up the knife, ready to strike--

From within the shower we hear Melanie hum the opening riff to "Crazy Train".

He looks over at the toilet. Two books sit on the back - one piled on the other: "Understanding Serial Killers" and "A Short Guide to Writing About Art". JD looks back at Melanie's shadow in the shower, listening to her off-key rendition of Ozzy Osbourne--

INT. JD'S HOUSE - DAY

Steve sits on the couch eating milk and cookies as JD comes in, dragging a body behind him in a potato sack.

JD
What're you doing here?

STEVE
Why were these cookies by the fireplace?

JD
Satan likes it when I leave him a little something.

STEVE
("never mind")
So, is that the reporter?

JD blushes as he descends into the basement.

INT. JD'S BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

JD heaves the body onto the worktable. It's Jeff White.

STEVE
Whoa! That's a dude.

JD grabs a pair of goggles and the bone saw.

STEVE
What happened?

JD
She lived.

STEVE
You couldn't find her?

JD
(sheepish)
No. I found her.

STEVE
I don't understand. Did she run
away too fast?

JD
No, she was at the office. And I
followed her home.
(under his breath)
And she likes Sabbath.

STEVE
Why didn't you...
(beat, Steve smiles)
Wait a minute. Are you falling for
this girl?

JD starts applying blush to the corpse, obsessively.

JD
I don't know what you mean.

STEVE
J., buddy, if you've got a thing
for her, I couldn't be happier. But
you have to try something different
with her.

JD
A gun?

STEVE
No, no, listen to me. You have to
actually interact with her.

JD
You mean...talk to her?

STEVE
For starters.

JD frantically primps the body's hair.

JD
Look at this mess. I'm going to
need more gel.

Steve slaps JD hard in the face.

STEVE
Dude, get a hold of yourself. This
is a natural part of living.
Sometimes I sleep with women before
I kill them. And sometimes it's
voluntary.

JD takes a deep breath. Rubs his cheek.

JD
What do I do?

Steve smiles.

EXT. NEWSSTAND - DAY

JD and Steve loiter in the Newsstand, reading the paper.

JD
This is really insightful stuff.
I've never quite looked at myself
this way.

STEVE
I don't get it. She never wrote
these kinds of stories about me.

JD circles around behind the newsstand, and the AGING
NEWSPAPER VENDOR.

NEWSPAPER VENDOR
Hey, it's the armchair
psychologist!

Behind the Vendor, JD holds up a knife and a pair of
scissors.

JD
 (mouths)
 Knife? Scissors?

STEVE
 Scissors.

The Vendor turns as JD stabs him in the heart.

STEVE (CONT'D)
 I thought you needed a trigger to
 kill someone.

JD
 (handing him a paper)
 I got a note from Satan.

Steve takes the paper and unfolds it. It's a gas bill with the word, "Kill," written on it in plain black ink.

STEVE
 This is your gas bill,
 but...Awesome!

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

JD drags the Vendor's body into an alley, and props him up while Steve drones on.

STEVE
 Think about it, you're a serial
 killer. I am a serial-killer-
 rapist. I'm a multi-hyphenate. So
 why, when they write about me, is
 it just, "Another bitch died last
 night?" Don't people care about
 what's happening to the women in
 this city?

JD tears the Vendor's shirt off. He pulls out a crumpled looking map of a lake, with a bright "X" drawn on it.

JD
 What do you think? Pin it to the
 chest? Or carve the map on with a
 scalpel?

STEVE
 Are you even listening to me?

JD rolls his eyes.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Oh, I'm sorry, you're so in love.

JD

I just want it to look right.

Steve relents.

STEVE

Just pin it on.

JD pulls out a long pin from his shirt. He carefully holds the pin over the map, positioning it dead center over the corpse's left breast.

STEVE (CONT'D)

And you know what? This is why they love you. It's your fucking attention to detail--

JD slowly drives the pin forward.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Where's the passion, JD? Where's the heart?

He shoves the pin in.

INT. JD'S HOUSE, STUDY

JD hunches over a desk as Steve paces behind him, trying to get a peak at what he's doing.

STEVE

What kind of cipher are you using?

JD

I'm not using a cipher.

STEVE

Your first letter to a newspaper, and you're not even using a cipher? You're not a-- I don't know what you are, but you're not a serial--

JD

Steve, I want to see her tomorrow. Not three years from now when they decode my "cipher".

STEVE

At least misspell some words or something.

JD

Why?

STEVE

Because you're a crazy serial killer, that's why! What? What is this? "Follow the clues to the next body." Is this a fucking scavenger hunt? Don't be so fucking literal. How about, "the map leads to the fucking voices that tell me to kill and I'm dying on a fucking flesh-colored sunset." What about that?

JD

What does that even mean?

STEVE

YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE FUCKING CRAZY!

JD shakes his head, keeps writing.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Is she hot? You think I'd like her?

JD stares daggers into Steve. He completes the letter by signing it: "The Omni-Killer."

EXT. STATE PARK - DAY

An idyllic, late-summer day next to a crystal-clear lake. Melanie walks along the water's edge, taking in the scene. She studies a familiar-looking map, with a red circle: the one that was pinned to the News-Vendor's chest.

JD (O.S.)

Hello there!

Melanie sees JD sitting on a large picnic blanket, sipping red wine as the waves roll in off the lake.

MELANIE

Hi.

She walks on.

JD
Lovely day!

MELANIE
(distracted, looking
around)
Yeah.

JD pours another glass of wine.

JD
You want to join me for a minute?

Melanie doesn't quite know what to say.

MELANIE
I'm sorry, me?

JD
Yeah, I mean...On the blanket.

Beat.

MELANIE
On the blanket?

JD
Or you could stand. I'm OK with
that.

MELANIE
Listen, I'm working right now...

JD
Oh, are you a park ranger?

JD laughs awkwardly, then stops just as awkwardly.

MELANIE
Journalist.

JD
(guessing)
Nature reporter?

MELANIE
Crime reporter, actually.

JD
Eesh. Grisly.

MELANIE

Doesn't bother me. What about you?
Not really a peaceful day by the
lake.

JD

What do you mean?

As if on cue, a HELICOPTER ROARS BY OVERHEAD, BUZZING the lake. We see what's been going on behind JD this whole time--

An enormous search and rescue operation is in progress. Scores of boats float in the lake, dragging nets. Helicopters fly overhead. Police cars are pulled right up to the shore, and K-9 units search for signs of a body.

JD (CONT'D)

Yeah, I...hadn't thought of that. I mean, I hadn't noticed.

MELANIE

Some psycho wrote my paper that there was a body in the lake.

JD

(sipping wine)

Someone wants attention. So, do--

MELANIE

Sorry, I have to go interview police officers, and, you know, do reporter things.

JD

Are you sure you don't want some wine? Or carrot sticks? I packed carrot sticks. I can't think of why right now.

MELANIE

No, no. I've got to go.

Melanie sees a POLICE OFFICER and approaches, abandoning JD and his whole setup. JD sags...

CLOSER TO THE LAKE...

Melanie talks to a POLICE SERGEANT

SERGEANT

We dragged the whole thing. There's nothing there.

MELANIE
Why would he point us to an empty
lake?

SERGEANT
I dunno.

NEARBY OFFICER
Maybe it's a cipher, Sarge.

SERGEANT
Hey, you're right. It could be a
cipher.

NEARBY OFFICER
You want me to call my friend with
the NSA?

SERGEANT
I've got another idea. Hey,
Johnson. Do we still have that
autistic guy in holding?

JOHNSON
Yeah.

SERGEANT
How about that physics professor
who went crazy and killed his wife?

JOHNSON
Got him too.

SERGEANT
Good. Put 'em in the same cell, see
if they can crack this code.

Melanie rolls her eyes and leaves. Behind her, we hear--

JOHNSON (O.S.)
Whoah. Is this some kind of cipher?

INT. MELANIE'S HOUSE - LATER

Melanie comes in, pinching her sinuses. Rich is there,
holding up paint swatches.

RICH
Oh, hey honey.

MELANIE
Hey.

They exchange a perfunctory kiss.

RICH
Where were you all day?

MELANIE
I was following a lead.

RICH
Because I called the office, and they said you weren't there.

MELANIE
Yeah, I was out, following a lead. Actually, it was kind of weird, because--

RICH
I just like to know where you are, you know.

MELANIE
I was at the Lake. See there was this serial killer, and he sent--

RICH
It's no big deal, I just...you know, like to know where you are. In case you need anything. Or if there's an emergency or something.

MELANIE
(pulls book from shelf)
Anyway, it turns out this killer--

RICH
(grimaces)
Honey, could we not talk about killers? You know it makes me squeamish.

Melanie holds up the book: "Serial Killers: A Case Study."

MELANIE
Guess you don't want to read along with me then, huh?

RICH
(no sense of humor)
No. I'm just glad you're alright.

Melanie sighs and retreats to her study...

INT. JD'S HOUSE OF TAXIDERMY

JD sits at the counter, eating carrot sticks out of the picnic basket. Steve plays out a wrestling match between two stuffed squirrels.

JD
She didn't even want to talk to me.

STEVE
Were you creepy?

JD
(defensive)
I just asked her nicely to--

STEVE
Yeah, you were creepy.

JD
Damn it! How can I not be creepy?

STEVE
You could rape her in an alley and kill her.

JD gives Steve a long look.

JD
You don't actually listen to yourself when you talk, do you?

Through the window, we see Melanie approach the store.

JD
Oh God, it's her.

STEVE
Who?

JD
HER!

STEVE
(checking her out)
What's she doing here?

JD
I don't fucking--

The bell on the door rings as Melanie comes in.

JD
 (feigning calm)
 Can I help you, Miss?

Melanie sees JD.

MELANIE
 (hesitating, nervous)
 Oh, it's you.

JD
 Jack Dahmer Berkowitz.

MELANIE
 Sorry?

JD
 Just call me JD.

MELANIE
 (shakes hands)
 Melanie.
 (RE: Steve)
 And you are...

Steve sits perfectly still with an awkward smile.

JD
 Steve? Say hello.

STEVE
 Do you like squirrels?

MELANIE
 Oh, he talks. I thought you were
 part of the display.

JD
 Ha! Part of the display. How weird
 would that be, to stuff a person?
 (getting no response:)
 So, what brings you here?

MELANIE
 (eyeing Steve nervously)
 Actually, as I mentioned, I'm a
 reporter. I'm working on a story
 about a serial killer, and a lot of
 them start by hurting animals. So I
 decided to talk to people who deal
 with animals.

JD
 (defensive)
 I don't deal with animals! I deal
 with dead animals!

MELANIE
 No, I mean, not you. I mean, you
 know, if you know anyone with an
 unnatural fascination with animals.
 Someone who hangs around here a
 lot. Someone strange.

Melanie tilts her head to Steve, who is still smiling
 awkwardly and holding two stuffed squirrels in his hands.

JD
 Nobody comes to mind.

MELANIE
 (takes out a card)
 Will you call me if you think of
 anything?
 (considers the card,
 pockets it)
 I'm at the Globe.

JD
 Sure.

MELANIE
 Thanks.

Melanie turns to the exit, but Steve is standing in the way.

MELANIE
 Umm...Excuse me.

Steve looks at JD, "Don't fuck this up."

JD
 Uh...What sort of killer are you
 talking about?

MELANIE
 Sorry?

JD
 I mean...should I be looking for
 something specific?

MELANIE
(dismissive)
The details are a little
unsettling.

JD
(blurts)
I can handle it.

Melanie thaws, glad to have someone to share with. She sits at the counter. Steve gives JD the thumbs up and slips out.

MELANIE
OK. Umm...So, one of the things he
does is kill members of the
Philharmonic.

JD
Wow. How does he kill them?

Melanie smiles.

INT. JD'S HOUSE OF TAXIDERMY - LATER

Melanie and JD are now sharing a coffee over the counter.

JD
Maybe you're dealing with someone
who responds to very specific
impulses. Maybe there's a song they
keep playing and he's trying to get
them to stop.

MELANIE
I completely hadn't thought of
that. I'll look into that and give
them a warning.

JD fist-pumps to his success behind the counter. Melanie's cell phone rings.

MELANIE
Oh, God! What time is it?

JD
It's about tenish.

MELANIE
(hits "ignore")
Wow! I didn't even notice the time
go by. I should get going.

JD
You don't have to.

MELANIE
No, but it's late and--

JD
OK, well, ummm...

MELANIE
It was nice talking to you...

JD
If you ummm...
(gives her an order form)
If you want to talk about your
stories anymore...Or anything, or
whatever, my number's on the top.

MELANIE
(hands card to JD)
Thanks. This has my direct number.

Melanie flashes an awkward smile on the way out the door.

JD
(reading card)
Melanie...Camden. Melanie...Camden.
Melanie, Melanie, Melanie...

He looks at the two squirrels that Steve left on the counter.

JD
What are you looking at?

INT. SUBURBAN HOME, MELANIE & RICH'S BEDROOM

Melanie sneaks into the bedroom, where Rich is already
asleep. She takes off her shoes, slips into the covers.

She's barely in bed when Rich rolls over and envelops her in
his arms, snuggling his head into her shoulder.

Melanie frowns...

INT. JD'S BASEMENT

Steve descends the stairs to the sound of Nat King Cole's,
"Unforgettable." He comes down to see JD dancing with Judas.

STEVE

Ummm...JD?

JD

(sings)

That's why darling, it's
incredible...

STEVE

(louder)

JD!

JD

(sings)

That someone so unforgettable...

(sees Steve, keeps
singing)

Thinks that I am unforgettable too.

JD does a last pirouette with the stuffed Judas and sits him gently back at the Last Supper.

STEVE

I take it things went well after I
left.

JD

Oh, Steve, it was amazing. An
actual conversation...with a woman.

STEVE

Yeah, sorry about, you know, I just
couldn't really get up the nerve to
talk to her.

JD

We exchanged thoughts and ideas,
and she didn't run in panic.

STEVE

I figured I should just rape her,
you know, to settle my nerves, but
it would have been awkward with you
there.

JD

Not only that, I mean, not only
does she not loathe me, but I get
the feeling that she actually
doesn't mind speaking to me.

STEVE
That's...great JD. I'm really happy
for you.

The song changes to Cole's, "Let's Fall In Love."

JD
I bought this CD to try to express
how I'm feeling.

STEVE
I have to go.

INT. THE DAILY GLOBE, MELANIE'S DESK

Melanie is hard at work. Typing, typing...

She giggles, maybe thinking about JD?

The intercom BUZZES.

MELANIE
(into intercom)
Yes?

RECEPTIONIST (O.S.)
(through intercom)
Your fiance.

Melanie rolls her eyes.

MELANIE
Yeah, OK.

She turns in her chair and Rich is already standing there,
holding a cake.

RICH
Surprise!

MELANIE
Hey...

RICH
Look, you were working late
yesterday, and we didn't get to
talk at all, so I thought I'd come
by and we could celebrate.

MELANIE
Celebrate what?

RICH
(sits at her desk)
Our anniversary.

MELANIE
Our anniversary is in three months.

RICH
(lighting candles)
Ah, yes, our five-year anniversary
is in three months. This is our 250-
week anniversary.

MELANIE
Don't you think that's a bit...

RICH
I miss you. You're working so much
now, I just wanted an excuse to
celebrate. To celebrate us.

Rich smiles a puppy-dog smile. Melanie melts into the chair.

MELANIE
Yeah, sure, let's celebrate.

RICH
Now, make a wish.

MELANIE
Doesn't that only work on
birthdays?

RICH
Well, let's give it a try.

They blow out the candles together.

RICH
Hooray!

They kiss.

MELANIE
Thanks, Rich. I feel bad, too,
because I'm going to have to work
late tonight, and I might have to
go out and--

RICH

Oh, about that, I was thinking, I don't want you going out anymore without telling me where you're heading.

Melanie freezes. All the joy has been sucked out of the situation.

MELANIE

That's not realistic, Rich.
Sometimes the situation requires--

RICH

Mel, if you love me, then you'll please listen to me.

MELANIE

If I love you?! Jesus Christ, Rich.
Stop being so...UGH!

Melanie storms off. Rich sits quietly, grabs a slice of cake.

INT. THE DAILY GLOBE, RECEPTION AREA

Melanie fumes. She stuffs her hands in her pockets. Wait a second, what's this? She draws the Order Form from JD's shop.

She stares at it. Looks over her shoulder: No Rich.

She takes out her cell. Weighs it in her hand. Dials. As the phone rings, looking back over her shoulder toward Rich, she smirks...

EXT. BOARDWALK - NIGHT

Melanie and JD stroll down a crowded boardwalk: lots of people, roller coasters, Ferris wheel, the works.

MELANIE

...as if a cake would make it OK!
I'm sorry, all I can talk about is how pissed I am.

JD

Well, I'm hardly the guy to talk to about relationships.

MELANIE

Sorry, didn't mean to drag you down.

JD
I'm happy to listen. But I dunno what to tell you. Sounds like your boyfriend is a jerk.

MELANIE
Fiance. And that's not entirely fair. I'm just giving you the bad stuff because I'm pissed at him.

JD
Maybe what you need is a torrid affair.

Melanie smacks him playfully. He catches her hand with cat-like reflexes. They are very close now - hands locked. Melanie stares at him.

Close on JD's eyes: we see her face reflected in them, and it's so beautiful that you just want to kiss it. Suddenly a flame LEAPS UP BEHIND HER.

JD jerks back, distracted.

MELANIE
Are you okay?

We hear a voice - a voice that sounds like Christopher Lee recovering from emphysema.

OMINOUS VOICE (O.S.)
(beckoning)
Jack Dahmer Berkowitz...

JD
Oh no.

MELANIE
(not hearing the voice)
What?

OMINOUS VOICE (O.S.)
(beckoning)
Come to me, Berkowitz. Your master calls.

JD
I really have to...Fuck, I want to keep talking to you but--

Behind Melanie, flames LEAP from the restroom pavilion's windows, punctuating the ominous voice.

OMINOUS VOICE (O.S.)
NOW, BERKOWITZ!

JD
I have to go to the bathroom.

MELANIE
That's fine. I'll be here.

JD
(weak)
Yeah.

The walls of the restrooms begin to melt in a lavalike display.

OMINOUS VOICE (O.S.)
By all of the powers of hell, I
summon you to this outhouse.

JD
(runs off)
I get it, I'm coming!

MELANIE
(calls after)
There's something very peculiar
about you.

JD ignores her and runs into the--

INT. BOARDWALK MEN'S ROOM, HELLISH VISION

JD scurries into a restroom that looks like it was built by Marilyn Manson's interior decorator. Flames lick the edges of the room. Blood drips from the faucets. Etc.

In the middle of it all is none other than - SATAN, carrying a big, fucking pitchfork.

JD
Are you out of your mind? I'm with
a girl right now.

SATAN
I need souls Berkowitz.

JD
Now?

SATAN

The work does not wait for "kissie-kissie."

JD holds his head in his hands.

JD

Why couldn't I have just been bulimic?

INT. BOARDWALK MEN'S ROOM, STALL, NORMAL VISION

A MAN sits on a toilet. From his perspective, it's a totally normal bathroom. Well, except for that guy who's talking to himself outside his stall.

JD (O.S.)

Okay, so where are the souls?

The Man slowly rises up from his seat, pulls up his pants.

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

No, no, look. I'm not rushing. I just...I don't want you to have to wait, to get the souls.

The man looks frantically around for a way out. Above his stall there is a small window.

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

There's someone in here now?

The man FREAKS OUT. He hops up on top of the toilet and starts to fumble with the window. Behind him, we hear a knocking sound on the stall door.

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

Hello? Anyone in there?

The man succeeds at opening the window. It's an awfully tight fit, though. Will he be able to make it out?

JD kicks the stall door in.

MAN

Fuck fuck. Please--

JD

Listen, I want you to know, I'm really sorry about this.

MAN

No, please...

He manages to squeeze through the window with his arms. His gut is a little stuck, though.

JD pulls out a knife.

JD

It's just that, Satan wants me to collect your soul for him.

MAN

No, no, no, no, please--

JD

(lame)

Hey, I'm really sorry. Okay? Really sorry.

EXT. BOARDWALK RESTROOM BUILDING, REAR VIEW - NIGHT

We see the man from the outside, trying to squeeze through the window. He lets out an ear-shattering scream, and we hear something squishy/rippy/disembowly from within. His body is PULLED back into the stall.

More muffled screams from the restroom. They abruptly stop.

JD (O.S.)

Okay. Are we done now?

Beat.

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

Oh, come on!

EXT. BOARDWALK - NIGHT

JD and Melanie walk side by side...

JD

It's a lovely night.

MELANIE

I know. Thanks for this. I don't think I've ever been on the boardwalk at night.

JD

My pleasure.

...they are walking side by side with Satan.

SATAN
You are right. It is quite
pleasant.

JD glares at him.

SATAN (CONT'D)
What? I agree.

MELANIE
Anyway, it used to be much better
between us. But ever since we got
engaged, he's become, I don't
know...clingy.

JD
Maybe it's time you tried something
new...

MELANIE
Yeah, you wish.

JD smirks.

MELANIE (CONT'D)
Look, I'm flattered, but Rich and I
have been together for years now.
And I think it would really hurt
him if I left.

SATAN
(sees something up ahead)
Uh oh.

JD sighs, exasperated.

MELANIE
I mean, I know that's not a good
enough reason to stay with someone--

SATAN
Do you see what I see, Berkowitz?

MELANIE
--but sometimes I feel like
somewhere deep down that's one of
the things that--

SATAN
I see a soul, fresh for the
reaping.

JD
 (mouthed)
 Fuck.

Sure enough, by the edge of the pier, there is a MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN standing by herself, and, you know, her soul probably needs reaping.

JD shakes his head.

MELANIE
 --you know, that you just learn to accept. We've been together for almost five years. So, he turns out to be a little clingy--

JD steers her toward the edge of the pier.

MELANIE (CONT'D)
 Where are we going?

JD
 I just want to get closer to the water.

MELANIE
 Oh, okay.

Melanie finds this compulsiveness a little strange, but she follows along anyway.

JD
 Please, your loser of a fiance is a bit clingy...

MELANIE
 Right, I mean, look I, you know, love Rich, but every once in a while--

SATAN
 FASTER BERKOWITZ.

JD walks faster to the edge of the pier, Melanie speeds to catch up.

MELANIE
 --there's a little voice in my head that says, "he's holding you back."

They reach the edge of the pier. JD nods at the MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN. She nods back.

MELANIE (CONT'D)
 I mean, I could be a phenomenal
 reporter--
 (getting angry)
 --except he always makes me feel
 small.

The Middle-Aged Woman doesn't really want to hear this, so she starts to walk away.

SATAN
 YOU ARE TOO SLOW, BERKOWITZ.

JD looks around for options, how can he follow this woman?

MELANIE
 And I've been doing a pretty
 fucking good job on this story. And
 he doesn't even notice. It's like
 I'm just his fiancée, and that's my
 job, like I'm punching the clock.

SATAN
 WHERE IS MY SOUL?

JD pulls a hunting knife out of his pocket, fingering it nervously.

MELANIE
 (holding back tears)
 And it could be that I'm going to
 marry this man because I was too
 scared of hurting him to leave him.

She retreats into JD's arms. He uses this opportunity to FLING his hunting knife at the Woman. It strikes the back of her neck, and she falls, gurgling blood from her throat.

JD
 It's okay, Melanie.

SATAN
 (menacing)
 On your right, Berkowitz.

JD, who is holding Melanie tight, sneaks a look to his right. Next to him is a LITTLE 5-YEAR-OLD BOY, staring off into the ocean.

SATAN (CONT'D)
 Young meat for my three-headed dog.

JD shakes his head.

JD
You've still got a choice.

Melanie sobs.

JD (CONT'D)
(to Boy)
Psst.

The Boy looks up at him. Melanie sobs loudly.

JD (CONT'D)
(whispering)
Do you swim?

5-YEAR-OLD BOY
No, mister, why--

JD kicks him off the pier into the water. He screams as he falls. SPLASHES below as he struggles to stay afloat.

MELANIE
What's that?

SATAN
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA...

JD
One way or another, what you do is going to be your choice.

SATAN
Excellent work, Berkowitz.

MELANIE
No. I'm wearing the ring. I'm committed.

SATAN
One more, Berkowitz.

JD
COME ON.

MELANIE
Okay, fine. I'll think about it.

A WORRIED MOTHER approaches the pier.

WORRIED MOTHER
Bobby? Bobby? Are you here?

JD shuts his eyes. Knowing what he must do.

MELANIE
(whispered)
Thank you for listening to me.

She leans over the railing, stares out into the night.

WORRIED MOTHER
Excuse me...

JD snaps the Worried Mother's neck, kicks her behind the knee, forcing her down, and into the water. He jerks forward, putting his arm around Melanie.

JD
Happy to listen.

He wraps his coat around her.

INT. MELANIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Melanie arrives home from her night on the town. Rich is sitting in the living room, watching CSI.

MELANIE
Hey honey.

RICH
Hey, where were you? You missed the beginning of CSI. I'll catch you up: A bunch of attractive lab technicians recited a lot of technical jargon and there was a montage with Enya music.

INT. JD'S BASEMENT

JD and Steve are locked in a fierce game of Go Fish, sitting amidst a taxidermy version of DOGS PLAYING POKER.

JD
I can't stop thinking about her.

INT. SUBURBAN HOME

RICH
Listen, I'm sorry about our little argument. I don't want to fight on our anniversary.

MELANIE

It's not our--
 (new thought)
 OK, I'm sorry too. I'll try to let
 you know where I am...

RICH

Where were you tonight?

INT. JD'S BASEMENT

JD

She's onto me. We were on a date,
 Satan showed up, and I had to kill
 four people. I'm a complete wreck.
 No girl is worth this.

INT. MELANIE'S HOUSE

MELANIE

I went to talk to someone, OK?
 Someone who knows about my story.
 He was--

RICH

He?

INT. JD'S BASEMENT

STEVE

What are you going to do?

JD shakes his head. He looks down at the HALF-FINISHED Queen
 of Hearts: JEFF WHITE'S TORSO.

JD needs another body...

JD

I think I really have to kill her
 this time.

INT. SUBURBAN HOME

MELANIE

Yes, it was a guy. But it was just
 about the story, OK?

RICH
 You know I only get jealous because
 I love you, right?

Rich once again goes for the puppy-dog eyes.

MELANIE
 Yeah, I know...

They hug. Rich holds on tightly...

INT. JD'S BASEMENT - LATER

Steve has left. JD stares at his phone, forlorn. Takes a deep breath. Dials...

INT. SUBURBAN HOME

Melanie and Rich watch CSI.

CSI CHARACTER
 ...so as you can see, we can prove
 it was you by the stitch count in
 the jeans your brother was wearing
 last Christmas...

Melanie's phone RINGS. She sees the caller ID, answers.

MELANIE
 Hi.

INT. JD'S BASEMENT/SUBURBAN HOME

Intercut the call.

JD
 Oh, hi.

RICH (O.S.)
 Who is it?

MELANIE
 (waves Rich off)
 Can I help you?

JD
 Melanie, I had a really great time
 tonight. I really--

MELANIE

So did I, but--

JD

There's something I need to talk to you about. I was wondering if maybe you could come over for dinner tomorrow.

MELANIE

I don't know if I should--

JD

I'm a good cook...

MELANIE

It's just that, I've got this--

RICH (O.S.)

Who are you talking to?

JD

C'mon. Just a little talk. Do you like Thai food?

MELANIE

Sure, sure. But I gotta go.

JD

See you tomorrow.

Melanie hangs up.

RICH

What was that?

MELANIE

Just...just a work thing.

Melanie leans against Rich to appease him. Rich looks at her sideways...

INT. MORGUE - THE NEXT DAY

Melanie arrives at a morgue, where several OFFICERS and DETECTIVES are looking over four dead bodies. Melanie inches closer to the Sergeant, who is once again on the scene.

MELANIE

What happened here?

SERGEANT

Four people killed last night at
the pier.

MELANIE

Last night?
(scribbles in her pad)
How did they die?

SERGEANT

Well, the little boy drowned. His
mother had her neck snapped. And
that woman over there was stabbed
in the throat.

Melanie looks up as the cover is taken off one of the bodies,
the Middle-Aged Woman.

MELANIE

I saw her, last night.

SERGEANT

Well, you may have been one of the
last to see her alive. Did you see
anyone unusual around her?

MELANIE

No it was just me and...
(Melanie shakes her head)
No, it was just me.
(back to the pad)
You said there were four?

SERGEANT

Yeah, the one at the end.

The cover is taken off the last body: the Man from the
bathroom stall. Knife wounds decorate his torso.

SERGEANT (CONT'D)

He was stabbed eleven times.

Melanie moves over to the body. She leans over it,
fascinated.

MELANIE

(RE: a wound on the back
of his shoulder)
This was the first wound.
(looks some more)
Then these were made with a sort of
pattern.

Melanie begins mimicking the stabbing motion.

MELANIE (CONT'D)
 Two...three...four...five...
 (She gets into it some
 more)
 The victim tried to roll over...
 (more stabs, more
 animated)
 Six!...Seven!...Eight!...Nine!...
 (breathing a little heavy)
 Then the killer finished it off
 with a couple of the vitals...
 (her pad IS the knife)
 Ten!...ELEVEN!!!

Melanie practically orgasms at the gruesome description of the murder. Then she sees the Sergeant, the MEDICAL EXAMINER, and a couple of officers looking at her oddly.

MEDICAL EXAMINER
 (to Sergeant)
 I've ruled out suicide.

SERGEANT
 Good work! But let me ask you this -
 Do you think this might be a shark
 attack?

Silence.

MEDICAL EXAMINER
 I haven't ruled it out, yet.

SERGEANT
 Johnson! Get me a lifeguard, a
 marine biologist, and a World War
 II naval vet.

JOHNSON
 I'll put out a skinny-dipping
 advisory!

Melanie rubs her temples...

CUT TO:

INT. JD'S HOUSE, KITCHEN

An ENORMOUS KNIFE CHOPS vegetables into small, bite-sized morsels. JD slides the vegetables into a large pot of broth.

He opens the fridge...

An assortment of human legs hang inside. Each leg is labeled: Tiffany Wilshire, Right, Athletic and Lean...Or David Weissman, Left, Meaty...

He finally settles for a smaller choice: Timmy Lossman, Left, Young and Tender.

JD drops something flesh-colored into a blender...

INT. JD'S HOUSE, BEDROOM

JD rifles through his closet: Hawaiian shirt, bowling shirt, WOMAN SUIT (you know, the kind Buffalo Bill is constructing in SILENCE OF THE LAMBS, flesh sewn together into the shape of a woman's body) Hawaiian shirt, woman suit, woman suit, and ah...

A tasteful outfit.

JD brushes the woman suits aside and pulls out the tasteful outfit, nodding his head.

INT. SUBURBAN HOME, MELANIE & RICH'S BEDROOM

Melanie stares at herself in the mirror. She airs out her blouse.

INT. JD'S HOUSE, KITCHEN

JD lights two candles when the DOORBELL rings.

He opens the door to reveal Melanie.

MELANIE

Hi.

JD

Welcome to Chateau JD. Please make yourself at home.

She enters - sees a thick, plastic tarp under the table.

MELANIE

Do you have plastic carpeting?

JD

May I take your coat?

MELANIE
 (eyes the tarp
 suspiciously)
 Sure, I guess--

JD
 (nervous)
 Is something wrong? You look tense.

MELANIE
 No I'm just--

She suddenly stops, dumbstruck by what she sees--

MELANIE (CONT'D)
 Oh my God...

JD turns to her, hanging up her coat.

JD
 What?

MELANIE
 What is that?

We see that JD is hanging the coat on a MOOSE HEAD COAT RACK. The rack base had been fashioned out of an animal's torso, and top is actually three moose heads stitched together, with the antlers serving as hooks.

JD
 Oh. Um, just something I put
 together when I was a kid. Want
 some wine?

MELANIE
 (impressed)
 You made this?

JD
 (brushing it off)
 Yeah, I'm, you know, a taxidermist.

Offers her a glass of wine.

MELANIE
 Wow. It's...I mean, it's pretty
 cool. I always thought it was just,
 you know, plain old animals. Like
 it was always just a real animal.

JD
There aren't really hard and fast rules.

MELANIE
Wow.

She takes the glass of wine.

JD
(defensive)
It's normal. I'm not alone. There are other people who do this too.

MELANIE
Of course. I just mean, I think it's really interesting. That you take your work home...

INT. JD'S HOUSE, DINING ROOM - LATER

Melanie and JD sit at the table.

MELANIE
So it's kind of like an art form for you?

JD
(apprehensive)
Why do you ask?

MELANIE
(shrugs)
It's just that I admire the passion. The detail. I'm a reporter. I dig meticulousness.

JD
I guess. I mean, I don't like to think of dead animals as art. Since I'm normal. I mean, I'm not like some psycho-taxidermy creep.

Awkward silence. Melanie stares at her plate. She hasn't eaten a bite.

JD
Is there something wrong with the food?

MELANIE
No, no.

She lifts it to her mouth, about to take a bite.

JD
Something's bothering you.

His hand inches towards the Hunting Knife by his side.

MELANIE
I'm sorry, it's just...this IS a
very nice dinner...

JD picks up the knife, he rounds the table toward her.

JD
But something's on your mind, isn't
it?

She puts down the fork.

MELANIE
Yes. Something is.

JD shuts his eyes, shakes his head.

JD
(under his breath)
You know.

MELANIE
I'm sorry, JD.

JD's eyes tear as he walks behind her.

JD
So am I.

MELANIE
It's hard to say this, but...

He raises the knife to strike.

MELANIE (CONT'D)
...I can't do this.

JD pauses, mid-strike.

JD
What?

MELANIE
I'm sorry.

She turns to him - he hides the knife.

JD
 (taken aback)
 I thought things were going well.
 You like my coat rack.

MELANIE
 I'm engaged, JD.

JD
 But...

Melanie gets up.

MELANIE
 I shouldn't have come.

JD
 But I cooked you a nice dinner, and
 now you're--

MELANIE
 I know. It just...doesn't feel
 right--

JD
 (hyper-ventilating)
 I can't believe you're doing this
 to me.

MELANIE
 I'm sorry.

She reaches for the door. He lifts up his knife to THROW IT AT HER, but CATCHES HIMSELF. This new turn of events is aggravating.

JD
 But I really don't want you to--

MELANIE
 Goodbye, JD.

She shuts the door.

EXT. JD'S HOUSE, FRONT PORCH

Melanie hears a dull THUD behind her.

EXT. JD'S HOUSE - LATER

Steve comes striding up the walk, whistling a merry tune. He notices a small notch on the front door. He enters the house.

INT. JD'S HOUSE, ENTRYWAY

As Steve walks in, he notices the knife EMBEDDED in the front door.

INT. JD'S BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Steve descends to find JD finishing up his Queen of Hearts, attaching a new body to Jeff White - the new body wears white face paint: its A MIME.

JD makes a violent CHOP. He's frustrated.

STEVE

What's going on, buddy?

JD

How could she fucking do this to me?

STEVE

The reporter chick? Is she finally dead?

JD

No! She rejected me. Can you believe that?!

JD RIPS part of the corpse off. (Off-screen, so as not to disturb the squeamish).

STEVE

Not even a little.

JD

And now I want her more than ever!

STEVE

I've never seen anyone fall for hard-to-get like this.

JD

Once she wasn't interested, I couldn't bring down the knife. I was paralyzed. I was so frustrated I went out and killed this mime.

STEVE

Too bad you didn't just kill Rich.

JD stops in mid-chop.

Beat.

JD
(simmering)
Rich.

INT. BAR - LATER

JD sits at a bar, drinking a bourbon.

JD
Come on. He's a jerk. He would fit
in down there, right?

Satan sits beside him, drinking a tequila sunrise.

SATAN
Sorry, Berkowitz. I do not need his
soul.

JD
Seriously? You always need souls.

SATAN
I tell you when to kill. You don't
tell me when to tell you when to
kill.

JD
Fuck.

We see for a moment from an objective point of view, as the BARTENDER and the scattered PATRONS look at JD, who speaks to himself and curses.

JD (CONT'D)
I need to kill him. I need to get
him out of the picture. It's for a
girl. I'll sell my soul. You can
understand that, can't you? That's
a language you speak, right?

Returning to JD's view--

SATAN
Calm down, Berkowitz. Not buying
souls today. Sorry.

JD
But--

SATAN
 (waving his pitchfork)
 Day of rest. Read the bible.

JD
 (RE: Pitchfork)
 Stop it! You know that thing freaks
 me out.

SATAN
 Sorry, Berkowitz. You have other
 methods. Perhaps a Queen of Hearts?

JD
 (frustrated)
 I used it on a mime.

INT. HAMBURGER HABIT - MOMENTS LATER

JD at the head of the line.

JD
 A number 3, please.

The Clerk hands JD a card: Three of Diamonds.

JD (CONT'D)
 Damn it!

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. HAMBURGER HABIT - MOMENTS LATER

JD is wiping his face and bussing his tray to the register
 again. The Clerk recognizes him.

HAMBURGER HABIT CLERK
 (a little confused)
 Can I help you?

JD
 Number 3, please.

The Clerk hands him a card: Ten of Spades. JD curses under
 his breath.

In fast cuts:

The King of Spades...

The Seven of Clubs...

The Queen of Diamonds...

JD looks up, excited, looks back at the card.

JD (CONT'D)
Fuck!!!

HAMBURGER HABIT CLERK
You need another order?

JD looks up, sick to his stomach.

JD
Number 3, please.

INT. JD'S HOUSE - LATER

JD emerges from the bathroom at his house, spraying the deodorizer.

He puts the deodorizer down, is about to walk away, reconsiders, sprays some more.

INT. JD'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

JD flips rapidly through a phone book, stopping on a random page. He closes his eyes and hovers a finger over it.

JD
Come-on-come-on-come-on...

His finger slaps down on a name. He opens his eyes...

JD (CONT'D)
Damn it!

JD tears the page out of the book and gets up...

EXT. RANDOM HOUSE - LATER

JD runs up the stairs to a house. He rings the bell frantically.

A PLEASANT MAN answers the door.

PLEASANT MAN
Yes?

JD
 (in a rush)
 Sorry, phone book killer.

JD slams a brick into the Pleasant Man's head. Takes the phone book page, crumbles it, and tosses it onto the body.

He runs back to his car, talking to himself.

JD (CONT'D)
 This is gonna take too long.

EXT. JD'S CAR - LATER

It's late at night as JD drives alone. He sees a mangy stray DOG limping down the sidewalk.

His eyes open wide. He quickly rolls down the window.

JD
 (leaning out the window)
 Hey. Here boy! Come on.

He makes a sharp whistle and the Dog peers up dejectedly.

JD (CONT'D)
 Come on, boy. Tell me I need to kill someone. Come on. Talk to me. Just a quick word or two. I can make far-reaching conclusions from even the slightest speech. Come on...

DOG
 (proper British accent)
 I like cheese whiz.

Beat.

JD
 I'm gonna need a little more than that.

INT. JD'S HOUSE - LATER

JD enters his house. At the sink, Steve is drying his hands with a rag...wait a minute, that's women's underwear.

STEVE
 So, how're things going with Rich?

JD

I can't get rid of this guy. Satan doesn't want him, I can't get a Queen of Hearts when I need one--

STEVE

He could be Jesus...

JD

On some subconscious level, I think my brain is keeping me from killing people I'm actually invested in. It's why I haven't killed you. It's hardly been for lack--

STEVE

Forget about the guy. Just rape her in an alley and kill her.

JD

That's always your solution.

STEVE

Fine. Fine. Kill her in an alley and then rape her. There. Different enough for you?

JD

All she cares about is her fiance and her job.

STEVE

So, get her attention through her job.

JD is intrigued. Suddenly, a KNOCK on the door.

Standing on the stoop is a well-dressed, neatly-combed man holding a bible. A JEHOVAH'S WITNESS.

JEHOVAH'S WITNESS

Have you found the healing power of Jesus Christ?

JD turns to Satan, who sits on the couch, reading THE O'REILLY FACTOR FOR KIDS (an actual book) over half-moon glasses.

JD

(RE: Jehovah's Witness)
How 'bout this one?

SATAN
Sure, why not?

INT. DAILY GLOBE, MELANIE'S DESK

Melanie types a story: "...gruesome murders on the boardwalk. Police believe they can link the deaths to an ongoing..."

The intercom buzzes and she hits a button.

MELANIE
Yes?

RECEPTIONIST (O.S.)
(other end of phone)
Visitor here for you.

INT. DAILY GLOBE, RECEPTION AREA - MOMENTS LATER

Melanie comes out of the newsroom to greet a smiling JD.

MELANIE
What are you doing here?

JD
I had to see you.

MELANIE
(ushering him out)
JD, I can't see you any more. I wish I could, but I'm engaged.

JD holds up a little baggie.

JD
But look what I found.

Melanie looks into the baggie and sees--

--A SEVERED INDEX FINGER.

MELANIE
Is that fresh?

JD
There's a body that goes with this. Still want me to leave?

MELANIE
I haven't heard anything on the scanner.

JD
I didn't call the police...yet.

MELANIE
Take me to the body.

JD
Have dinner with me.

MELANIE
I can't go on a date with you.

JD
Not a date. Business.

MELANIE
(takes out cell)
Oh, great. So you don't mind if I
bring my fiance along?

JD frowns...

CUT TO:

INT. LIMO

JD, Melanie, and Rich sit in the backseat of a limo.

MELANIE
(RE: the limo)
I thought this was a business
dinner?

JD
I just like to travel in style...

JD reaches into a compartment and starts pouring champagne.

JD
This is a Clos du Moulin Pinot
Noir, which was...given to me by a
very kindly old woman who used to
live next door.

JD hands glasses to Melanie and Rich.

MELANIE
I don't want to think of this as a
special occasion.

JD
I can't help it.
(toasting)
To new beginnings.

RICH
(counter-toasting)
To previously engaged couples.

JD
(countering)
To finding happiness in our
relationships.

RICH
(countering again)
To staying in committed
relationships, irrelevant of
happiness.

MELANIE
How about, just, to Tuesday. It's
Tuesday, right?

Melanie raises her glass, clinks with JD and Rich, gulps down the champagne. JD and Rich stare one another down...

EXT. ALLEYWAY - LATER

The limo pulls into an alley. The DRIVER lets the trio out of the car.

MELANIE
Is the body here?

JD
It's very close. We'll look at it
after we order.

MELANIE
We're in an alleyway.

JD
Vito!

An Italian waiter, VITO, emerges from a door in the alley.

VITO
Ah, Don Berkowitz.
(confused, aside to JD)
Are they here...for dinner?

JD
 To EAT dinner, Vito. They're here
 to EAT dinner.

VITO
 Ah, right away.
 (barking)
 Luigi! Antonio!

Two PORTERS emerge, carrying a small table and one of those
 red-white checkered tablecloths.

VITO (CONT'D)
 Don Berkowitz is a long time friend
 of our little establishment. He
 provides us occasionally with
 discount meat products.

JD
 (off Melanie's look)
 I have- had- have a cousin in
 livestock exports...You know...

Vito sweeps his hand to the table.

VITO
 Your table is ready.

Rich pulls out the chair for Melanie and they all sit as Vito
 hands them menus.

MELANIE
 So, Rich, JD is the one who has
 been helping me with my story.

JD
 And as you can see, there's no--

Behind Melanie and Rich, a STRING QUARTET is setting up.

RICH
 What's going on?

JD
 It's a, umm...string quartet. I
 wonder what they're doing here, in
 this alley...

The Quartet starts playing a beautiful serenade.

MELANIE

(changes subject)
So what sort of victim is it this time?

JD

I think it's the one your paper refers to as, "Servant of Satan."

MELANIE

Oh, you've been reading the articles?

JD

Of course. And I think you're dead on with a lot of your insights.

RICH

I work for a marketing firm.

MELANIE

What do you think of my take on the Full Moon killings?

RICH

Well, I guess it's more sales--

JD

I think you pretty much have it. But why do you discount the locations he, I'm assuming it's a he, chooses?

RICH

Well, I make cold calls, but I'm pretty good at it. In fact--

MELANIE

I tried to do a pattern map...

Vito pops back in with flowers and a box of chocolates.

VITO

Were these for the lady?

JD

(harsh whisper)
Not now.

Vito scurries away.

MELANIE

JD, I think I was very clear--

RICH
 I can handle this, dear.
 (to JD)
 Sir, Melanie and I are held
 together by the eternal bonds of
 love. And more importantly,
 engagement. So, I would appreciate
 it if you didn't try any more--

Vito comes back out with a painting of Melanie as the Venus
 de Milo.

VITO
 Did you want this first?

JD
 Get out!

MELANIE
 How about you take me to the body?

JD
 Excellent idea.

JD stands and walks further down the alley.

JD
 This way.

Melanie and Rich follow. The alley gets darker and seedier.
 As they pass a flickering neon security light, they come upon
 a dumpster which is an island in a sea of blood.

Melanie peeks behind the dumpster and discovers the dead body
 of the Jehovah's Witness. Rich immediately goes pale.

But Melanie...All the awkwardness of the date is forgotten.
 She's animated. Invigorated.

MELANIE
 Holy shit, JD, this is disgusting.
 I've got to get some pictures.

Melanie takes out a camera and starts snapping away.

JD
 See, wasn't this worth dinner?

MELANIE
 Look at the blood. It's just
 starting to coagulate.

JD
Yeah, he was practically still
alive when I found him.

Melanie leans over the body.

RICH
Honey, maybe you shouldn't touch--

MELANIE
His hands!

She turns his hands out (one of them missing a finger.) We
see bloody designs carved onto the corpse's palms.

MELANIE (CONT'D)
Look, on one hand he has a
pentagram, and on the other hand...

JD
(not even looking)
Another pentagram!

MELANIE
Actually, no. It's a Jewish Star.

JD turns suddenly and looks over Melanie's shoulder.

JD
No, it's a pentagram.

MELANIE
No, see, he confused the Satanic
pentagram with the Jewish Star.

JD
Or maybe he was in a rush and was
going to draw two pentagrams, but
he had to be somewhere or
something.

Melanie leans in for closer shots of the hands when--

The Jehovah's Witness suddenly GASPS, startling them.

MELANIE
Jesus Fucking Christ! Did you check
for a pulse?

JD
(pissed at himself)
No!

MELANIE

(to Rich)
Call 911!

Rich dials. Melanie tears open the Jehovah's Witness' shirt.

RICH

(into phone)
Hello, I need an ambulance. I'm in
an alleyway...

Jehovah's Witness comes to a bit. He looks around, vision blurred, until he makes out JD, holding the sandwich bag with his severed finger.

Jehovah's Witness lifts his right hand to tries to point to JD, but he discovers he doesn't have an index finger. He tries to scream, but he can only muster a hollow, piercing, holes-in-your-lungs sound.

MELANIE (CONT'D)

(to JD)
These wounds are small and deep.
Like an ice pick.

In one swift motion, JD takes an ice pick from his back pocket and throws it down the alley. It clicks and clatters down a ways, rolling to a stop. JD points at it.

JD

Look, an ice pick!

Melanie races to the ice pick. While she examines it, JD stalks toward the Jehovah's Witness. He makes a swift, indeterminate motion with his foot. The wheezing abruptly stops.

JD (CONT'D)

(sorrowful, to Melanie)
I think he's gone!

Melanie comes running back to the body, which now has a huge footprint on its neck. Melanie checks for a pulse, then sags, shaking her head.

JD (CONT'D)

(relieved)
Man, that was close.

Melanie turns slowly to JD.

JD (CONT'D)
(frustrated)
Damn it! So close.

RICH
The paramedics are on their way.

MELANIE
This guy is sick. But he did leave us some important clues about himself.

JD
(nervous)
Really?

RICH
Honey, I'm not feeling so great...

MELANIE
Yeah. Classic dismemberment and decoration. Freudian roots, probably.

JD
(intrigued)
Really?

RICH
Pumpkin, can we please leave?

MELANIE
Yeah, he cut off an index finger. Probably wanted to cut the penis off, but has issues with touching another man's penis. Probably has issues with masculinity, sexually repressed...

JD
Maybe he just wanted to throw people off.

RICH
Honey, I think I'm going to...

MELANIE
No, these things are usually very carefully motivated. For example, the Pentagram and the Jewish Star. I don't think he's anti-Semitic. I think he's Jewish. He probably has a very recognizable Jewish name.

(MORE)

MELANIE (CONT'D)
 Like Berkman. Or Berowitz.
 Something like that.

JD
 (laughing it off)
 I think you're making some of this
 stuff up...

MELANIE
 Even the stabbing pattern is
 interesting.

RICH
 Sugarbear, I really don't know if I
 can stand up anymore...

JD
 Looked sorta run-of-the-mill...

MELANIE
 He hit every vital organ dead on -
 one stab a piece.

JD
 (good news)
 So he's a surgeon.

MELANIE
 (correcting)
 More likely one degree removed from
 actual medicine. Maybe a coroner or
 a vet. Might work with animals a
 lot. He knows his internal organs.
 Actually, what's funny is he could
 be a taxider--

Rich faints right next to the dead body just as two
 PARAMEDICS burst into the alleyway.

PARAMEDIC
 Make room! Coming through!

Melanie and JD duck into an alcove as the Paramedics tend to
 Rich.

MELANIE
 Isn't this exciting?

JD
 Actually, yes.

MELANIE

I mean, usually I have to ask the police for their reports, or visit the coroner's office. But this...this is the real thing.

JD

I guess dinner is kind of ruined.

MELANIE

Aren't you excited? It's kind of...
(thrilled)
Frightening!

The Paramedics rush behind them, carrying Rich into the ambulance and leaving the Jehovah's Witness body behind.

JD

I guess, but shouldn't you--

MELANIE

I mean, here we are, in the darkest corner of the city, experiencing the story happening right in front of us.

JD

You make it sound almost romantic.

MELANIE

Doesn't it make you want to try something new? Something you would never do otherwise?

JD

What did you have--

Melanie pulls JD in and kisses him.

JD

--in mind?

MELANIE

Wow, sorry. I don't know what got into me. I'm just a little wired.

JD

It's understandable.

(beat)

You know, if you need to work off any more energy--

Melanie grabs JD again and they kiss, holding it for a few seconds. The String Quartet music SWELLS...

INT. JD'S BEDROOM - THE NEXT DAY

As the sun rises, we pan across JD's bedroom:

A stuffed raccoon with a bra over its eyes...

A stuffed frog buried under a sock...

A stuffed ostrich is wearing Melanie's blouse...

Finally, JD and Melanie asleep in bed.

Melanie stirs. Turns to a still sleeping JD, her face unreadable...

INT. JD'S LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Melanie wanders JD's house, admiring the taxidermy.

She notices the basement door is ajar. She peaks in, curious. It's dark as night...

INT. JD'S BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

Melanie walks down the darkened stairs. She feels around the wall. Ah, there's the switch...

CLICK. The basement lights up.

Melanie stands in dead silence.

So many bodies...

The Last Supper...

The Mona Lisa...

So many bodies...

It's shocking...

Melanie doesn't know what to do. What to think...

MELANIE
(breathless)
Oh my God...

Melanie takes out a small camera and starts flashing shots of everything.

Click...Click...

INT. JD'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Click...

JD startles awake. He looks at the squirrel beside the bed.

JD
Did you say something Pete?

He hears footsteps from the house. He rolls out of bed. We hear a door SLAM.

INT. JD'S LIVING ROOM

JD emerges from his bedroom, sporting boxers.

JD
Melanie?

He sees the basement door is open...

JD
Uh oh.

INT. POLICE STATION

Melanie walks into the Police Station, a defeated look in her eyes. She finds ANOTHER MIME talking to the Sergeant.

MIME
You have to listen to me. Robert has never missed a day before. Something is horribly wrong...

SERGEANT
I don't understand. You're a mime. How are you even talking?

MIME
What?

SERGEANT
Johnson! Get me some duct tape for this Mime's mouth.

NEARBY OFFICER

Maybe he's using another cipher,
Sarge.

SERGEANT

You're right. Johnson! Let's get
this mime in with the professor!

JOHNSON

Sarge, the autistic guy killed the
professor.

SERGEANT

What?

JOHNSON

Yeah. Also, turns out the professor
was innocent. When he said he
didn't kill his wife, he wasn't
crazy. He was right.

NEARBY OFFICER

Could that autistic guy be our
shark?

SERGEANT

That doesn't make any sense: he's
autistic! We need to talk to this
clown.

MIME

I'm a mime.

SERGEANT

Hang in there, buddy. I'm going to
need the French ambassador, a
spiritual medium, and the corpse of
Marcel Marceau.

Melanie shakes her head and walks out.

INT. THE DAILY GLOBE, MELANIE'S DESK

Melanie sits at her desk. She looks at the map, the calendar,
the charts. She scrolls through images on her camera: The
Mona Lisa, the incomplete Last Supper...

We see an article open on her computer screen: "The Mind
Behind the Madness: The Omni-Killer"

Her phone RINGS. She JUMPS.

She stares at the number on the caller ID: JD.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

JD cradles his cell with his shoulder. His arms are busy off-screen tugging at something.

JD
 (struggling)
 Hey Melanie. It's JD. Just wanted
 to, you know...Well, I had a--
 (JERKS suddenly)
 --great time last night...Call me?

He hangs up his cell phone. Shrugs. Morose. He holds a garrote wire tight around a LARGE BLACK MAN'S neck.

INT. HOSPITAL

Melanie enters Rich's hospital room.

MELANIE
 How're you feeling?

RICH
 Honey! So good to see you!

MELANIE
 Listen, we need to talk--

RICH
 I'm just glad you're here with me.
 I also have something to say to
 you...

MELANIE
 Uh, OK, but we need to talk about
 our rela--

RICH
 I wanted to say that I'm so lucky
 to have you in my life. I didn't
 think I would make it out of this
 hospital, but now that you're here,
 I think I can pull through. You're
 everything to me. My life. My
 breath. My soul.

Melanie is dumbstruck.

RICH
Now, what did you want to say?

MELANIE
I'll check back with you later.

INT. THE DAILY GLOBE, MELANIE'S DESK

Melanie continues to work on her story. She references notes, checks dates...

Her phone, now on silent, lights up: 17 missed calls.

INT. JD'S BASEMENT

Steve stares at one of JD's masterpieces while JD throws knives at a dart board. THWACK

STEVE
Is something wrong, J?

THWACK. JD throws another knife, distracted.

STEVE (CONT'D)
JD? Is something up?

JD
Huh? No.

STEVE
OK.

We see what Steve's staring at: JD's most recent artistic interpretation. It's Whistler's Mother, but he used the Large Black Man for the corpse. Sloppy work.

Steve stares at JD.

INT. THE DAILY GLOBE, MELANIE'S DESK

Melanie types and types...

Melanie prints the article...

Melanie looks over her work...

She sits back, satisfied...

She goes to Tom's office, holding the article...

She is about to hand it in when he cell phone blinks: Another missed call from JD.

The cell phone gives her pause...

TOM

What's that, Mr. Pulitzer? You hope
Melanie earned you a girlfriend to
keep you company?

Melanie looks at the cell phone. The Pulitzer. The cell phone. The Pulitzer....

The article...

INT. CLOCK TOWER, GEAR ROOM - NIGHT

At first, we just see the FULL MOON through the tower window, but then we tilt down to...

JD leaving a message as he squints into a sniper rifle.

JD

Hi Melanie. I haven't heard back
from you--

Through the scope we see:

SOME GUYS playing basketball...

A NUN walking down the street...

JD (CONT'D)

I really want to talk to you...

He NAILS a BASKETBALL PLAYER in the shin. He blinks forcefully, trying to clear his vision.

JD (CONT'D)

I think I'm--

The players scream, running away from the injured man, scattering around the basketball court.

He shoots at the Nun. The bullet tears a hole in her habit but misses her. She reaches for the hole, feeling the breeze.

JD (CONT'D)

I'm a mess without you Melanie. I'm
a wreck at work--

He misses a head shot on the injured Basketball Player, but then just starts firing wildly into the crowd of running men - injuring sure, but not scoring a kill.

He keeps missing the nun over and over again.

JD (CONT'D)

Listen to me! I don't mean to
unload my baggage on you. Sorry--
Bye--

He hangs up...

INT. HOSPITAL

Melanie is passed out in the guest chair. Rich stirs awake. His eyes settle on Melanie's cell which blinks: 24 Missed Calls.

Rich frowns, checking the missed calls:

JD

JD

JD

JD...

Rich's frown gets frownier. He grunts as he slides out of bed...

INT. JD'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Steve enters to find JD sitting on his couch, flipping cards into a hat, totally dejected.

STEVE

Alright, man, you've been in a funk
for almost a week now. What's going
on?

JD

She found out.

STEVE

I know what will cheer you right
back up. There's a kegger at Phi
Beta House on Risley Avenue
tonight. You know what that
means...

(conspiratorially)

Drunk girls walking home alone...

JD flips another card into the hat.

JD
(distracted)
What? Nah.

STEVE
You're starting to scare me, man.

JD
(lost in thought)
I just wanted her to like me for
who I was. But it turns out I'm a
serial killer, and that's
impossible.
(tosses another card)
Maybe I could change. Maybe if I
weren't a serial killer, she'd like
me.

JD angrily flips another card and misses the hat completely. In frustration, he tosses the whole deck. The cards go flying everywhere, except for one, which catches an odd draft and spins back like a falling leaf. It lands in JD's lap, face down--

--There's a knock on the door. JD stares at the card on his lap. Steve looks from JD to the door.

STEVE
Do you want me to get that?

JD doesn't answer, mesmerized by the card. Steve goes to the door anyway. He opens it a crack. It's Rich.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Can I help you?

RICH
Is there a JD here?

Steve stands aside.

STEVE
There's a guy here to see you.

Rich stalks towards JD.

RICH
I know what's going on between you
two, and I'm here to win her back.

JD

Well, you can't win her back from me, Rich. She's not here.

RICH

Bullshit! If I don't get my girl back, I'm going to cause some serious trouble.

JD looks up at Rich, then back at the card in his lap. He picks it up...

Queen of Hearts. Both heads wink at him.

Steve, looking over his shoulder, sees this.

STEVE

Perfect. I'll get the steak knives.

Steve heads into the kitchen. JD considers the card.

RICH

(lifting his fists like a British boxer)

Perhaps I wasn't making myself clear. I'm going to fight you for her love.

STEVE

Dude, all your steak knives are dirty. I'm going downstairs to get your hatchet.

Steve descends into the basement.

RICH

If I ever see you near her again, I'll kill you.

JD

(ominous)

You don't know what it means to kill someone. You've never done it. You've never seen the light go out in someone's eyes; watched a body transform from vessel of life to meaningless collection of dead cells. That moment of transition...

(creepy smile)

Well, you'd have to experience it to understand it.

Rich gulps. JD smiles, placing the Queen of Hearts on the table.

JD (CONT'D)

But you caught me at just the right moment. I want people to like me, which means I'm going to have to change. So, it's your lucky day, because I'm not going to kill you.

From offscreen...

SATAN (O.S.)

(scolding)

Berkowitz!

Satan comes into frame and sits on the couch next to JD.

JD

Hi.

Rich looks confused. Satan puts his arm over JD, friendly.

SATAN

Berkowitz, I need souls! You think souls just wander down to me? I need help here, Berkowitz. Start with this one.

JD

Not tonight.

SATAN

I'm starting to get very upset with you, Berkowitz. You used to be reliable, like the Energizer Bunny. Now you're just pathetic, like Duracell.

JD

I'm not pathetic. I'm just trying to be a better person.

Rich recoils a bit.

RICH

(backing up)

OK, you are seriously freaking me out.

Rich SLIPS on a small stack of cards.

Stumbling, he tries to break his fall, but his hands get impaled on the antlers of the Moose Head Coat Rack.

RICH (CONT'D)
Holy...FUCK ME!

Rich spins around, cupping his hands, stumbling in immense pain.

JD stands at this, as though something in him is stirred.

Rich bumps his knee on the couch and starts hopping around. He hops all the way into the dining room, where he loses his balance and falls onto the table.

He rolls off, entangled in the table cloth. He looks like he's been wrapped in a white toga.

Rich struggles to stand, when his hair gets caught on the edge of the table. He yanks free, breaking his ponytail holder. His hair comes down.

Still in pain, he hobbles back into the living room, bumping into the wall...

Which shakes a stuffed bird out of its fake nest. The nest, in turn, falls on Rich's head.

Light bursts from the basement as Steve emerges carrying a hatchet and a STRANGE, SHARP TOOL.

STEVE
Alright, I found the hatchet, but I also found this. I'm guessing it's part of the taxidermy thing, but anyway...

JD is lost in reverie, staring at Rich--

With the light from the basement putting his head in an odd backlight...

His hair is down...

Wearing a white robe...

With a nest on his head...

He holds out his hands, both bleeding from the palms.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Holy Jesus!

JD
Jesus...

SATAN
(quietly)
Fucker.

Indeed, with the light behind his head and the stigmata, Rich looks like a perfect Jesus. He reels from the pain.

STEVE
Come on, JD. This is perfect. You finally have an excuse to get rid of the competition. You have to kill him.

SATAN
Kill him Berkowitz.

STEVE
Just kill him.

SATAN
Kill him now!

TWO FACES FROM THE QUEEN OF HEARTS
Kill him!

STEVE
What's the matter with you, man? You finally found Jesus. Come on, kill him with the hatchet.
(beat)
Or this twisty thingy.

JD sighs.

JD
I just can't. I feel like...I feel like she's judging me. Even though she's not here.
(gearing up for an epic speech)
I've learned something today. I've learned that--

JD sees MELANIE STANDING IN THE DOORWAY.

JD
Oh God. Let me explain--

MELANIE

What were you hoping to explain?
That you're the Queen of Hearts
Killer? And the Full Moon Killer?
And that you've been running over
meter maids with your Prius? Is
there really an explanation for all
that?

RICH

Petunia, I'm in an incredible
amount of pain--

MELANIE

(ignoring him)

It's so strange. I thought I knew
what it meant to be in love. You
find a guy who seems interested in
you. You stay with him. You get
engaged. But there was something
missing that whole time, and I
never knew it. Not until I met you,
JD.

JD

I wish I were someone else, Mel. I
wish I weren't this person. That I
didn't have these...compulsions.

Melanie smiles and brushes her hand through his hair.

MELANIE

No, don't you get it? That's what
was missing: danger and excitement.

JD

Even if it's because I'm a deranged
killer?

MELANIE

Especially because of that.

They kiss. Steve wipes his eyes.

STEVE

It's so...consensual.

RICH

(fumbling with cell)
I'm calling 911.

JD pulls out of the kiss, implores:

JD
Mel, I'm sorry, but I can't let
him...

MELANIE
No, it's OK. This is something we
can do together.

JD
Really?

MELANIE
(she takes the hatchet
from Steve)
Sorry honey, the engagement's off.

Melanie raises the hatchet up in the air and plants it firmly
in Rich's chest. He gasps and falls to his knees.

MELANIE (CONT'D)
(to JD)
Would you do the honors?

JD
If you don't mind.

Melanie gestures: All yours!

JD holds out his hand to Steve.

JD (CONT'D)
(like a surgeon saying,
"Scalpel")
Twisty thingy.

STEVE
Twisty thingy.

Steve plants the handle of the object in JD's palm. JD stabs
down at Rich. Then Melanie joins in. The two of them stab and
swing over and over and over again, blood splattering all
over them, the walls, everywhere.

Finally, having reduced Rich to a bloody pulp, they drop
their weapons and kiss.

We track over to Steve and Satan standing side-by-side,
watching the happy couple.

STEVE
Look at that. What could be more
symbolic?
(MORE)

STEVE (CONT'D)

The press literally loves him. And I'm stuck in the Metro section.

SATAN

If you want the press to do your bidding, I could give you some...pointers.

STEVE

Really?

SATAN

Well, for starters, does it always have to be in an alley?

Satan leads the way out the door. We pull back through the window, fading as the couple continues to kiss and Steve and Satan stroll down the block.

CUT TO:

CREDITS ROLL OVER A SERIES OF STILL PHOTOGRAPHS

NEWSPAPER HEADLINE - MELANIE CAMDEN WINS PULITZER. Secondary headline: BUT HOW DID SHE GET THOSE PICTURES?

JD'S BASEMENT - JD leading a blind-folded Melanie down the stairs to the complete Last Supper, with Rich as Jesus.

JD'S BASEMENT, MOMENTS LATER, REVERSE ANGLE - Rich is posed with his arm out, holding an engagement ring. Melanie is overjoyed.

A WEDDING PICTURE. JD and Melanie lock lips at the alter.

SAME WEDDING PICTURE, longer shot: Satan is officiating.

HOSPITAL ROOM - A DOCTOR pulls a child out of Melanie as JD looks on, horrified.

SAME HOSPITAL ROOM: moments later, JD strangles the Doctor with the umbilical cord.

MELANIE CHANGES A DIAPER, BLUE SKY IN THE BACKGROUND.

SAME SCENE, longer shot: JD stares through a sniper rifle as Melanie fusses with the diaper in the background.

BIRTHDAY SCENE: Their 5-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER is opening a present at a table with her young friends while JD and Melanie look on.

SAME BIRTHDAY SCENE: Apparently the present was a carving knife. Some children run in terror, the others lay dead. The Daughter is giggling.

SATAN WITH HIS ARMS AROUND MELANIE AND JD. They are at some kind of altar.

SAME ALTAR: The 12-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER is in the foreground reading from the Torah during her Bat Mitzvah.

DINNER TABLE. In the foreground, we see that the 16-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER is covertly holding a TEENAGE BOY'S hand. In the background, Melanie and JD pass food.

SAME DINNER TABLE: Reverse angle - the Boy is dead.

GRADUATION. Melanie and JD applaud.

SAME GRADUATION, longer shot: we see Steve next to them, eyeing some hot barely-legals in the back row.

Final photo: MELANIE EMBRACING JD. We pull out of the photo: a longer shot, Melanie and JD are in a field, surrounded by a vast expanse of greenery. There's no twist here, just an idyllic scene.

We pull further and further out - to satellite photo level, until they are only a speck, locked by the photograph in an eternal embrace.

FADE TO BLACK.