

INFERNO

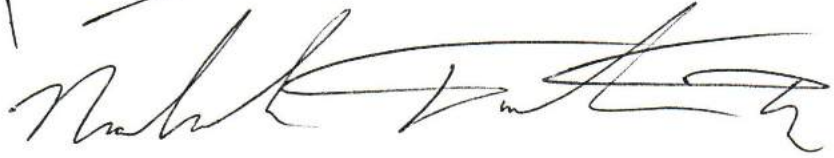
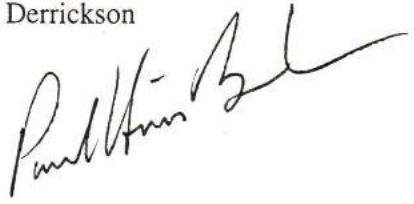
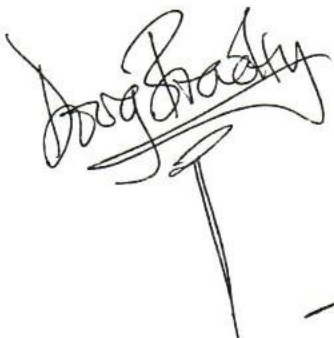
by

Paul Harris Boardman and Scott Derrickson

based on a story

by

Scott Derrickson



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Handbasket, Inc.
8315 Beverly Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90048
323.653.6007

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1 THE TITLE SEQUENCE

1

is like a beautiful nightmare.

It's a MONTAGE of fluid, dreamlike images, one shot dissolving into the next...

But these are HORRIFIC IMAGES nonetheless: EXTREME CLOSE-UPS and strange, disorienting perspectives of TORTURE -- chains wrenching tight, hooks piercing flesh...

SOMEONE is dying, in unendurable pain. His SCREAMS are lost in the SOUNDTRACK MUSIC, unanswered.

We never see who's doing the killing. As the TITLES END, we...

DISSOLVE TO:

2 INT. A GYMNASIUM -- LATE AFTERNOON

2

CLOSE ON JOSEPH THORNE

*

a man in his early 30s, tightly-wound. He's sweating, staring at something. In the background, slightly out-of-focus, a SCOREBOARD ticks off minutes and seconds...

Joseph moves something OFFSCREEN, sets it down hard -- we hear the SLAP of wood against wood. Then he reaches over, and CLICKS something else.

The rate and volume of the off-camera sounds begin to escalate: SLAP...CLICK...SLAP, CLICK...SLAP-CLICK...

Waiting now. Joseph's eyes darting up and down. Impatient.

The sound of another SLAP -- and on the following CLICK, we...

CUT TO:

A 30-SECOND TIMER

with a circular clock face, ticking down... And now a WIDER SHOT REVEALS...

THE GYMNASIUM

SUNLIGHT through high windows. Joseph and an older man who looks like a PROFESSOR sit at a small table, playing SPEED CHESS. Both wear t-shirts and shorts, soaked with sweat.

They're on a balcony above a BASKETBALL COURT, where an intense, five-on-five game is winding down. A JOGGER slowly makes his way around a TRACK that encircles the court.

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED:

2

Joseph SLAPS his piece down on the chessboard and -- CLICK -- restarts the timer, watching his opponent intently. We hear a CELL PHONE RING...

JOSEPH
(into his CELL PHONE)
Yeah... What the fuck do you care?
(beat)
We won by seven, but it should've been
twenty. Where were you...?

As Joseph listens, he points at the timer and gives the Professor a look. The man MUTTERS something in German.

JOSEPH
(into phone)
All right...fifteen minutes.

He hangs up and checks his watch, then glances up at...

A ROUND CLOCK

mounted high on the gymnasium wall. It reads 6:15.

JOSEPH
(trash-talking)
Come on, think hard, Professor, every
second counts...

Now the Professor moves his bishop. Joseph grins, and quickly makes a counter-move. They begin swapping pieces at lightning speed... Finally, Joseph SLAMS down his knight, checkmating the older man's king.

JOSEPH
You played right into my game.

The Professor CURSES in German. Joseph grabs a TWENTY off the table.

JOSEPH
Next week?

THE PROFESSOR
Ja...

Joseph picks up a basketball and walks away. Watching him go, the Professor looks pissed, but also looks like he's used to it.

3 INT. LOCKER ROOM -- A BIT LATER

3

Joseph stands, hair wet, in a silk shirt and slacks, knotting his tie. He dresses well. Reaching into his pocket, he discovers a small "silver bullet" container of COCAINE.

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED:

3

He snorts it, clean and quick. Then he reaches into a locker and takes out a SHOULDER HOLSTER with a 9mm tucked inside. He slips it on, along with his jacket and a DETECTIVE'S SHIELD.

4 EXT. YMCA -- SUMMER DUSK

4

An UNMARKED SEDAN pulls up as Joseph walks down the steps, basketball in hand.

Joseph gets in the passenger side. We don't see the driver, but we hear...

A MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Sounds like we caught a fuckin' mess.

Joseph doesn't answer, just stares out the window as we...

FADE TO BLACK.

Now we FADE UP A TITLE: SUNDAY, 6:33:13 P.M.

The seconds continue to roll -- 14, 15, 16 -- as we HEAR a VOICE-OVER begin.

Whenever we hear this voice-over, it will feel quiet, internal, and contemplative -- like we're listening in as Joseph is thinking to himself...

JOSEPH (VOICE-OVER)
Even as a little kid, I was always one to examine things closely...

And now we FADE IN ON:

5 EXT. A STATELY MANSION -- DUSK

5

A BLOOD-RED GLOW shrouds the ROCKY MOUNTAINS in the background. Several POLICE CARS and a CORONER'S VAN are parked in front.

JOSEPH (V.O.)
The world was full of riddles, and mysteries, and puzzles... And I learned early on that I had a gift for solving them...

The sedan pulls up and parks in front of the coroner's van.

JOSEPH (V.O.)
...I learned that careful examination of how, and what, and why would inevitably lead to understanding, even to control...

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED:

5

Joseph gets out of the passenger side and walks around to the back of the sedan. He stands there, staring up at the looming mansion...

As he waits, Joseph shifts lightly from one foot to the other, and rolls a SMALL SILVER BALL between his fingers -- he's all restless energy, his mind and body always in motion...

JOSEPH (V.O.)

But what I didn't know...what I never could have imagined...was that one day my own life would become the most challenging puzzle of all...

Now Joseph's partner comes around the car, and...

THEY APPROACH THE MANSION

walking past a few smoking COPS, toward the columned entrance...

Now we get a look at Joseph's partner: TONY NENONEN is in his 20s, a newly-minted detective, earnest and dedicated to the job. He's chewing gum, flexing his jaws.

TONY

Eight-letter word for a slaughterhouse.

Joseph seems preoccupied, still staring up at the house...

TONY

(pleased)

You stumped?

JOSEPH

"Abattoir."

Tony grins and shakes his head.

JOSEPH

How do you spell your last name again?

TONY

(annoyed, sarcastic)

N-E-N-O-N-E-N. Tony Nenonen, nice to meet you, Detective, it's only been a month now...

They walk up the steps, onto the broad stone PORCH.

JOSEPH

Ten-letter word for your name.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: (2)

5

TONY
My name...?

A CRIME SCENE COP steps forward from the dim entryway.

CRIME SCENE COP #1
A.C.'s cut off, it's hot as hell in there.

JOSEPH
Supposed to be hotter tomorrow.

TONY
(catching up to him)
My name's got seven letters...

JOSEPH
Right. But it's a ten-letter word.

They walk into the house.

6 INT. THE MANSION -- HALLWAY -- SAME

6

Joseph and Tony walk down a DIM HALLWAY, lit only by CANDLES in elaborate sconces mounted on the walls. They slip on latex GLOVES as they go...

At the hallway's end, they stop, taking in the scene.

7 INT. THE MANSION -- A LARGE ROOM -- SAME

7

The room is illuminated only by dozens of CANDLES and a small FIRE burning in the fireplace.

This is the home of a single guy with money and eccentric taste: Modern furniture, old baroque and Renaissance paintings, artifacts and sculptures from all over the world...

A few CRIME SCENE COPS wearing "DENVER P.D." jackets take notes and measurements. Joseph slips on rubber gloves and begins his walk-through, moving quickly, keeping his hands behind his back.

His eyes miss nothing. His expression is intense, the same "game face" we saw him wear while playing chess at the gym. Tony slips on his gloves and does the same -- watching and imitating Joseph, learning from him how to do the job.

We catch glimpses of the DISMEMBERED CORPSE OF A MAN, the body parts scattered about the room. Joseph approaches a low COFFEE TABLE, carved of black ebony...

On it, a SINGLE WHITE CANDLE burns. The ornate candlestick rests on a SMALL GOLDEN BOX. Wax has dripped down and clings to the box's sides.

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

7

As Joseph bends down to study this more closely, a Crime Scene Cop approaches with the victim's wallet.

CRIME SCENE COP #2
Here's what he looked like with a face.

Joseph stands up and looks at the DRIVER'S LICENSE PHOTO.

JOSEPH
(mildly surprised)
Jay Cho...I knew him. He went to my high school.

CRIME SCENE COP #2
Let me guess: "Most Likely to Succeed"?

Joseph walks away. He looks troubled. Tony glares at the Crime Scene Cop, then follows Joseph...

TONY
You okay...? Was he a friend of yours?

JOSEPH
No...he was kind of odd...real quiet, he didn't really have any friends...
(grows distant, remembering)
He tried out for the basketball team one year. What a nightmare...he was terrible, and we just tortured the shit out of him until he quit. God, we gave him hell...

TONY
What did you do to him?

JOSEPH
(after a beat)
Nothing, really...teenage pranks, you know...nothing that bad.

Joseph shrugs it off -- subject closed -- but he still looks unsettled as he examines the victim's bloody remains.

He kneels beside a large PIECE OF FLESH that looks like part of the victim's back or belly, probably peeled off the TORSO that rests on the floor nearby.

Watching him, Tony talks to hide his own uneasiness.

TONY
(speaking quickly)
Man, one time, I saw this guy, he'd been attacked by, like, a grizzly bear...

(CONTINUED)

Joseph notices several small, strange PUNCTURE WOUNDS on the jagged piece of flesh...

TONY
...and he looked sort of like this, like
something had just ripped him apart --

JOSEPH
(interrupting)
--You ever do any fishing, Tony?

Joseph stands, his eyes distant, like he's lost in his thoughts...

TONY
Huh? Yeah, I take the boys up to the
mountains sometimes...

But Joseph's already moving on, crossing the room to a bookcase that holds a collection of hardbacks, some leather-bound. Joseph scans the titles: De Daemonialitate, Malleus Maleficarum, Crowley's Letters... Almost every volume relates to the Occult.

A copy of Dante's Inferno juts out from the other books. Joseph opens it and discovers a small BAGGIE OF COCAINE in the book's hollowed-out center. He palms it, then makes it disappear -- a standard close-up magic trick.

Tony's still standing behind Joseph. He's sweating, looks like he's getting sick.

TONY
Are we finished here?

Joseph turns around. On the far wall, he notices...

RED CANDLES

arranged above a bookshelf in the shape of a triangle.

He stares at the red candles on the wall, then looks down at the white candle and box atop the ebony coffee table...

Joseph walks over, and crouches next to the low table. Peering up at the shelf from this low angle, he sees that the triangle of red candles perfectly frames the white candle and golden box on the table, like a flaming tower within a pyramid.

Carefully, he picks up the candle, holding it by the wax-shrouded box beneath: Up close, he sees that it's some sort of PUZZLE-BOX, intricate pieces joined in a complex pattern...

Now he notices something INSIDE THE CANDLE. He takes out a powerful POCKET FLASHLIGHT, holds it up to the candle...

7 CONTINUED: (3)

7

And freezes. A SEVERED FINGER is packed inside the wax.

The fingerprint has been burned off by the flame. The finger is very small, like that of a six- or seven-year-old...

As Joseph stares at the severed finger, we PUSH IN ON HIS FACE: He looks deeply disturbed.

HOLD ON HIS FACE as we slowly FADE TO BLACK.

FADE UP A TITLE: **SUNDAY, 9:13:47 P.M.** The seconds run...

And we hear SOUNDS: The SHRIEKS of a CHILD being tortured. Hysterical with terror, unable to form a word...

FADE IN ON:

8 EXT. POLICE STATION -- ESTABLISHING -- NIGHT

8

Various POLICE CARS parked outside the building, and a SIGN over the entrance: "DENVER POLICE DEPT. 13TH PRECINCT."

9 INT. POLICE STATION -- EVIDENCE ROOM -- NIGHT

9

Joseph paces, circling a large oval table arrayed with the evidence collected at the scene. It's now stored in tagged envelopes and clear plastic bags.

Joseph is outwardly calm, but still looks deeply disturbed. Almost unconsciously, he takes \$300.00 from the victim's wallet, changing the amount written on the evidence tag, and slips the money into his shirt pocket.

Behind a window, A CRIME LAB TECHNICIAN appears with two more items in clear plastic bags: the candlestick -- now without the candle or the finger -- and the GOLDEN BOX. He opens the window and hands them to Joseph.

TECHNICIAN

We got two good prints off the box. One belongs to your victim. I'll run the other one through the computer tomorrow.

JOSEPH

Can't you run it tonight?

TECHNICIAN

No, because believe it or not, Detective, I also have a life.

He SLAPS the window shut and walks away. Joseph sets both items on the table and begins pacing, rolling his steel ball between his fingers. His eyes are drawn to the PUZZLE BOX, now wiped clean of candle wax.

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED:

9

He picks up the box, fascinated by its intricate design. After a moment, he takes it out of the bag and studies it more closely -- then he begins to fiddle with it, focusing in on this small mystery before him...

It's a challenging little puzzle, a new game to win... -
Hooked, Joseph slips the box into his pocket and leaves.

10 EXT. JOSEPH'S HOME -- NIGHT

10

Traditional, well-crafted. Joseph's car pulls into the drive.

11 INT. JOSEPH'S HOME -- LIVING ROOM -- SAME

11

His wife MELANIE, 30, is curled up on the couch, wearing a bathrobe. Joseph enters, and sees her in the television glow. She's asleep. He looks relieved.

He walks quietly past her, into the hallway, and enters...

12 INT. JOSEPH'S HOME -- HIS DAUGHTER'S ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

12

CHLOE, 7, sleeps with her Pooh-bear in her arms. Joseph kneels at her bedside. Gently, he lowers his head onto her pillow, his cheek next to hers, and closes his eyes...

A moment of reassurance -- feeling her soft warm skin, breathing in her sweet innocence... And for the first time since we've met him, Joseph is completely still.

Then the door cracks open, and LIGHT slants across his eyes. He opens them to see his wife standing in the doorway.

After a moment, he gets up, and follows her back into...

13 INT. JOSEPH'S HOME -- THE KITCHEN -- CONTINUOUS

13

She regards him with sleep-heavy eyes. A pretty woman.

JOSEPH
Feeling any better?

MELANIE
A little...I took a bath, and a pill.

He nods, moving past her, then rummages in the refrigerator. She hangs back a bit, keeping her distance.

MELANIE
I could fix you something...
(mechanically)
...Are you home for the night?

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

13

JOSEPH
(still digging in the fridge)
No, I caught a case. I'm working.

As she expected. Pain and resentment harden her features.
She turns away, speaks with an edge of bitterness:

MELANIE
How was your game...?

He grabs an apple and closes the fridge, turning to face her
-- and we see that he's oblivious to her tone, her mood...
He kisses her cheek, a quick little peck.

JOSEPH
We won. Just get some rest, you'll feel
better, okay? I'll see you tomorrow.

She nods. Another quick kiss on the cheek, and Joseph walks
out, leaves her standing there alone.

14 INT. JOSEPH'S CAR -- TRAVELLING -- NIGHT

14

Joseph drives the city streets. The neighborhoods become
increasingly grim. A HOT WIND blows trash along the sidewalks.

JOSEPH (V.O.)
I believe in loyalty...fidelity... I
understand the concept -- my parents have
been married forty years.
(beat)
But I live in a different world.

15 EXT. SLEAZY BOULEVARD -- SAME

15

Joseph's car pulls up next to several HOOKERS. His window
powers down, and one of the hookers approaches him...

JOSEPH (V.O.)
Most marriages fail. Most men just
leave... I know this would kill her. But
if she doesn't know, if doing this keeps
me coming back, then who is to say what
is wrong...?

The hooker gets in, and Joseph's car pulls away.

16 INT. CHEAP MOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT

16

The hooker, DAPHNE, stands beside the air conditioner,
gracelessly taking off her shoes. She's about 20, and still
quite pretty, but using it up fast.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

16

 DAPHNE
God, my feet hurt...

Joseph takes off his jacket and gun. She sees his shield.

 DAPHNE
A detective, damn...I like cops. You got
any gum?

He shakes his head, and walks toward her, holding up his empty hands. She eyes him curiously... Now he closes one hand, waves the other hand over it, and...

OPENS THE HAND

to reveal -- like magic -- the BAGGIE OF COCAINE he took from the victim's house. Then he reaches into his shirt pocket and takes out the \$300.00 CASH he took from the victim's wallet.

Daphne's eyes come to life...

IN QUICK CUTS, we see her snort the coke, and slip the cash into her tiny plastic purse. Then she whispers in his ear:

 DAPHNE
Whatever you want, as many times as you
want it...

Her hands begin working his body, and he closes his eyes.

FADE TO RED, then...

DISSOLVE TO:

JOSEPH AND DAPHNE having sex: One stylized SLOW-MOTION SHOT, MOVING PAST her face to reveal Joseph behind her -- the image OVEREXPOSED, the MUSIC building darkly to a climax as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

17 INT. MOTEL ROOM -- LATER

17

Joseph lies on his back in the darkness, wide-awake, staring at the ceiling. His foot jogs restlessly up and down...

He gets up, leaving Daphne asleep on the bed. Grabbing his jacket and his gun, he steps into...

18 INT. MOTEL ROOM -- BATHROOM -- CONTINUOUS

18

And snaps on the LIGHT, closing the door. He puts the gun on the sink and checks himself out in the mirror.

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED:

18

Digging in his jacket pocket, he comes up with a pint of Jim Beam and takes a swig. Then he sits on the closed toilet lid.

His mind is racing. He takes another long drink. No good. He taps the bottle with a fingernail. Then he remembers something, reaches into his jacket again...

And takes out the GOLDEN BOX, still in the plastic evidence bag.

He sets it on the sink and stares at it awhile.

Turning the box this way and that, he caresses the almost imperceptible grooves where the pieces join together, feeling his way into the heart of its design...

THE BOX OPENS

one section sliding apart from the rest, like some clockwork mechanism. Startled, Joseph sets it back on the sink, and it MOVES AGAIN, another section emerging like a puzzle piece from inside the first...

Now the LIGHT in the bathroom begins to change -- dimming, then brightening. Joseph hears...

A HISSING SOUND

beyond the bathroom door: Could it be the air conditioner, or Daphne's breathing...?

Slowly, Joseph stands, opens the bathroom door, and walks into...

19 INT. A CHILD'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

19

He looks around, astonished. His eyes take in details: a child's empty bed, a ball glove in one corner, a model airplane hanging by a string...

The HISSING-BREATHING SOUND grows louder, drawing him across the room to another door, and he steps into...

20 INT. A DARK HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

20

The ceiling seems impossibly high: He can't even see it in the darkness...

And the HISSING SOUND seems to be the rise and fall of HEAVY WIND -- he can feel the hot wind against his face. Now a HINT OF MOVEMENT catches his attention, and he looks up...

(CONTINUED)

INTO THE DARKNESS

What is it? Something... A shifting SHAPE...

Suddenly, A CREATURE JUMPS DOWN almost right on top of him. Terrified, he stumbles backwards, turns to run...

...and THWUMP!! A SECOND CREATURE drops from the darkness above, blocking his path.

The Creatures close in on him from either side. They're pale, lithe...and unmistakably FEMALE. Sexy and terrifying at the same time.

Joseph flinches as they enfold him in their arms, their long, hooked fingernails tracing the lines of his flesh... Slim fingers rake his hair, a serpentine tongue finds his ear...

Joseph's expression changes as his fear is overtaken by feelings of exquisite pleasure...

His breathing quickens, his body thrilling and trembling at their touch... His eyes roll back, and he lets out a MOAN...

The Creatures cry out as well, and breathe rhythmic sighs of ecstasy that surround him, blending with the voice of the WIND...

Joseph is losing himself. Intoxicated by an impossible intimacy, by a sensation that these Creatures are literally folding their hot silk flesh into his own...

He looks down, and sees one of the Creatures' hands PENETRATE HIS SKIN -- slipping into his body as easily as an oar dipping into a pond.

Now the hand emerges, slicked with BLOOD that it smears across Joseph's chest -- but there's no pain, only a slippery slide into Oblivion...

Then A DISTANT VOICE cuts through the sibilant whispers -- it's a CHILD, calling out from somewhere below:

CHILD'S VOICE (O.S.)
Help...me...

Joseph suddenly comes to his senses, and stares at the hideous Creatures like he's now seeing them for the first time.

He rips free of their embrace and RACES down the hallway toward...

21 INT. A DESCENDING STAIRCASE -- CONTINUOUS

21

As he runs headlong down the stairs, Joseph sees A THIRD CREATURE waiting at the bottom, and stops short.

This one ain't so sexy: It's a truncated TORSO with a small head and no legs -- just SIX PAIRS OF ARMS that radiate from the torso like a spider's limbs...

It creeps up toward him, SNAPPING its jaws...

He turns to run back upstairs, but the two Female Creatures are coming down after him now, impossibly fast...

At the last second, Joseph grabs the bannister and LEAPS OVER THE RAIL, FALLING fifteen feet, CRASHING onto a coffee table below.

He's at the front door. As he reaches for the knob, he hears:

THE CHILD'S VOICE (O.S.)
Help me... Help me...

And Joseph turns around to see...

22 INT. A SLOW-MOTION IMAGE OF A LONG HALLWAY

22

leading toward the back of the house. It's DARK, with OPEN DOORS along one side. LIGHT angles in through the open doors, and SNOWFLAKES SWIRL in the slanting beams of light...

BACK TO NORMAL SPEED as Joseph turns and YANKS OPEN the door.

ANOTHER CREATURE

stands in the front doorway: He's pale and scarred, the skin of his bald head lined with fissures, as if the flesh has been cut away in sections, then reassembled without a stitch. At each intersection of his flesh is a driven SILVER PIN.

Joseph stares at this Creature a moment in curiosity and fear...

Then the Creature reaches out with both hands and RIPS JOSEPH'S FACE APART -- and we...

SMASH CUT TO:

23 INT. THE MOTEL BATHROOM -- MORNING

23

...as Joseph WAKES UP, sitting by the sink, the GOLDEN BOX on the bathroom floor beside him.

FADE TO BLACK, and FADE UP A TITLE: MONDAY, 8:33:06 A.M.

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED:

23

As the seconds run, we hear the FEMALE CREATURES WHISPER and MOAN and GIGGLE with ecstasy...

Then we FADE IN ON:

24 INT. THE MOTEL BEDROOM -- SAME

24

Joseph enters from the bathroom, a bit unsteady. MORNING SUNSHINE pours in the motel room windows. Disoriented from the nightmare, but apparently unhurt, Joseph gathers his things and walks out, leaving Daphne asleep on the bed.

25 EXT. POLICE STATION -- MORNING

25

Several POLICE CARS are parked out front, and COPS stand around sipping coffee and chatting. Joseph approaches the front door and enters the building, still in yesterday's clothes.

26 INT. POLICE STATION -- STAIRS -- SAME

26

The PATHOLOGIST, coffee in hand, sees Joseph coming up the stairs.

PATHOLOGIST
(chipper, a real morning person)
Morning, Detective. You look like you
could use an autopsy yourself.
(leans closer)
Smell like it, too...

A look from Joseph kills the wit. He gets down to business:

PATHOLOGIST
You were right about Jay Cho. The
punctures and tears in the flesh -- they
were made by a hook, or hooks, with
barbed ends...

Joseph keeps walking, climbing the stairs, and now the other man struggles to keep up.

PATHOLOGIST
...but they weren't like piercings for
jewelry. It was something bigger, more
cutting, like --

JOSEPH
(interrupting)
Like it was supposed to hurt.

PATHOLOGIST
Bingo.

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED:

26

JOSEPH

And the child's finger in the candle?

PATHOLOGIST

Oh, that... The print was burned off completely, but from the bone growth, I'd say about seven years old.

Now Joseph stops. He looks disturbed: That's the same age as his daughter...

JOSEPH

Boy or girl?

PATHOLOGIST

At that age, you really can't tell.

Joseph starts up the stairs again, but the man stops him:

PATHOLOGIST

One more thing... From the blood flow and tissue morbidity, I'm pretty sure that when the finger was cut off, that kid was still alive.

As Joseph stands there, letting that sink in, an OLDER DETECTIVE calls down to him from the top of the stairs:

OLDER DETECTIVE

Thorne. The new Captain wants to talk to you.

*

JOSEPH

The new Captain starts today?

OLDER DETECTIVE

(nods)

He's in his office.

27 INT. POLICE STATION -- SQUAD ROOM -- SAME

27

Tony sees Joseph enter from across the room. He watches as Joseph walks toward the CAPTAIN'S OFFICE, rubbing his face wearily...

The Older Detective sits near Tony, reading the sports section.

TONY

Hey, what's a ten-letter word for my name?

OLDER DETECTIVE

Hmmm...

(smiles, pleased with himself)

How 'bout, "Cocksucker"...?

28 INT. POLICE STATION -- CAPTAIN'S OFFICE -- SAME

28

Joseph enters. CAPTAIN ABADAJIAN sits behind his desk, reading case files. He's 60, trim and fit in a neat tailored suit.

Most of his stuff is still in boxes, but there's one PICTURE already hanging on the wall: It's the Captain as a 30-year-old Sergeant in Vietnam, posing with his squad of Marines.

CAPTAIN
Sit down, please.

Joseph sits across from him. The Captain sets the files aside. His movements and speech are quick and precise.

CAPTAIN
You missed my little speech this morning.
I introduced myself at the beginning of
the shift.

JOSEPH
I was late...

CAPTAIN
That's okay. I'm having a transcript of
the speech typed up, it'll be on your
desk this afternoon.

Joseph looks at him, not quite sure he's kidding... Then the Captain smiles, extending his hand.

CAPTAIN
I'm Michael Abadajian.

JOSEPH
(shaking his hand)
Welcome to the squad.

He sits back. Taps his fingers restlessly against his thigh. The Captain studies him patiently.

CAPTAIN
You're a family man, right?
(Joseph nods)
That's good.

JOSEPH
(smiles slightly)
You say it like it's some absolute truth.

CAPTAIN
It is. And that was really the gist of
my words this morning. That this squad
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

28 CONTINUED:

28

CAPTAIN (cont'd)
is like a family, and I'm the father. If
you need to talk about anything -- your
family, a case you're working on, or how
those things are affecting each other --
my door is always open to you.

JOSEPH
(rubbing his face tiredly)
Thanks, I appreciate the thought...

CAPTAIN
It's more than a thought, Detective.
It's the way I run a squad.
(beat)
Don't ever shut me out.

Joseph almost flares -- we see it, a hint of the heat that's
always beneath the surface... Then it's hidden away, and
Joseph smiles, getting to his feet.

JOSEPH
Nice meeting you, Captain.

He takes another look at the Vietnam photo on his way out the door.

29 INT. SQUAD ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

29

Joseph crosses to his desk and sits down. He flips through
the paperwork on the Jay Cho murder: incident forms and
investigation reports to fill out; the autopsy report; and
CRIME SCENE PHOTOGRAPHS -- including one of the GOLDEN BOX.

It's hard to concentrate on this stuff -- he's got a wicked
hangover, and it's hot as hell. Joseph loosens his collar,
flips on a small FAN atop his desk.

He checks his watch, and leans forward, rubbing his temples...

And we FADE TO BLACK, then FADE UP A TITLE: **MONDAY, 9:01:19 A.M.**

The seconds run -- **20, 21, 22** -- and we HEAR...

TONY'S VOICE
Joe... Hey, Joseph...

...as we FADE IN ON:

TONY

standing over Joseph's desk, looking pissed.

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED:

29

TONY

What's the answer? Ten-letter word for my name.

Joseph lowers his hands from his face and looks up at him.

JOSEPH

You're giving up quicker than usual.

TONY

Just tell me the goddamn word.

JOSEPH

(after a beat)

"Palindrome." Your name's a palindrome.

Tony frowns, confused. He's still trying to be angry, but it's fading...

TONY

What's that? You making fun of me, is that something bad?

JOSEPH

N-E-N-O-N-E-N. It's spelled the same, forwards and backwards. Like the phrase "Madam in Eden, I'm Adam"...

(shrugs)

It's a palindrome... It ends the same way it begins.

TONY

(after a beat, thinking)

So, like, the name "Bob"... That's one too, right?

Joseph nods, smiling slightly. The TELEPHONE RINGS on his desk. He picks it up.

DAPHNE'S VOICE

(telephone filter, very distorted)

Detective Thorne...?

*

JOSEPH

Yeah, who's this?

DAPHNE'S VOICE

It's, it's Daphne, I'm -- from last night, I'm, I'm the girl...

PUSH IN ON JOSEPH'S FACE as he recognizes the voice. He swivels his chair away from Tony, speaks low into the phone:

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED: (2)

29

JOSEPH
This is my direct line, how did you...

DAPHNE'S VOICE
P-please, I, I'm still here, and, oh...
Oh, God... Oh God, please, no...

Her words are blurted out between hiccoughing gasps for air.
She's panicking, absolutely terrified...

JOSEPH
Okay, wait, slow down --

DAPHNE'S VOICE
--OH, GOD! Help me, stop this, no, God,
help me, PLEASE...!!!

Then her words break down into HORRIFIC SCREAMING...

CLOSE ON JOSEPH'S EYES darting back and forth as the
BLOODCURDLING SCREAMS continue...

Then -- CLICK. A DIAL TONE.

Joseph looks shaken to the core. That was too fucking real.
He slowly turns his chair back around and hangs up the phone.

TONY
(reacting to Joseph's face)
What is it? Everybody okay?

JOSEPH
(getting up)
I...gotta check on something...

He's heading for the door.

TONY
You...you want me to...

The Captain steps into his open doorway as Joseph walks by.

CAPTAIN
Detective Thorne...?

*

JOSEPH
(turning around)
I gotta go...check out a possible lead...

The Captain looks over at Tony, then back at Joseph.

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED: (3)

29

CAPTAIN
You taking your partner with you?

JOSEPH
Yeah...of course. C'mon, Tony, let's go.

The Captain watches as Joseph hurries out the door, Tony behind him, trying to catch up.

CUT TO:

30 INT./EXT. A VIEW THROUGH A WINDSHIELD -- DAY

30

as Joseph and Tony pull into the MOTEL PARKING LOT...

31 INT. UNMARKED SEDAN -- DAY

31

Tony parks and starts to open his door, but before he gets out...

JOSEPH
Tony, I need a favor.

TONY
Sure, man, what --

JOSEPH
--Wait here, while I check this out.

TONY
(after a beat)
What...here in the car?

JOSEPH
Yeah. Just for a minute, okay?

TONY
(starting to smile)
...You're serious?

Joseph's expression answers the question. Tony's smile fades.

TONY
Okay, Joe...

He watches Joseph get out of the car.

32 INT. MOTEL ROOM -- DAY

32

The motel room door is slightly ajar. It swings open, and Joseph steps inside. Gun out, sharp-eyed. No sign of Daphne, or anyone else. The room is exactly as he left it...

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED:

32

He checks the closet -- empty -- then sees A MISSHAPEN SHADOW flit past the partly-open bathroom door. Heart pounding, he crosses the room, and KICKS THE BATHROOM DOOR OPEN --

33 INT. MOTEL ROOM -- BATHROOM -- CONTINUOUS

33

This room's as empty as the first. But the SHOWER CURTAIN is closed, and from behind it comes a SLOW DRIPPING SOUND...

Slowly, Joseph approaches the closed curtain.

He sets himself, then YANKS THE CURTAIN OPEN TO REVEAL...

DAPHNE

Her throat cleanly slit, she's hanging from the shower pipe by her own leather belt. The last of her BLOOD is tracing its way down her body and slowly DRIPPING from her toe into the shower drain below.

Joseph unconsciously backs away until he's stopped by the sink behind him. He sits on the edge of the sink, staring at her in shock, as we...

FADE TO BLACK. Pause. Then we HEAR...

JOSEPH (V.O.)

The things that run through your mind...
Bury her. Come back later and put her in
the ground, put this whole fucking thing
away, like it never really happened...

FADE UP A TITLE: MONDAY, 9:49:01 A.M.

As the seconds run, we HEAR the sound of APPROACHING FOOTSTEPS...

JOSEPH (V.O.)

But some questions are too big to bury.
You have to deal with them, try to make
sense of them...

And we FADE IN ON...

34 EXT. MOTEL -- JOSEPH'S SHOES -- DAY

34

...as he walks toward the parked car.

JOSEPH (V.O.)

...because if you don't, they'll haunt
you for the rest of your life.

35 INT. UNMARKED SEDAN -- DAY

35

Joseph opens the door and gets in. Tense.

JOSEPH
(after a moment)
I stayed here last night.

TONY
You and Melanie have a fight again?

JOSEPH
It's worse than that...

Joseph starts putting on his rubber gloves. Tony looks at the gloves, then at Joseph's face...

JOSEPH
Go look in the bathroom.

Beat. Then Tony gets out of the car, goes inside.

Joseph waits until the motel room door closes. Then he reaches into the glove compartment, takes out a PACK OF CIGARETTES, and unhooks an expensive PEN from a small spiral notebook.

He slips the pen and cigarettes into his pocket... *

Now Joseph gets out of the car and approaches the motel room. *

Tony's in his face as soon as Joseph opens the door: *

TONY
What the FUCK...?!

JOSEPH
Tony...

TONY
(stepping out onto the sidewalk) *
What the fuck do you mean, you "stayed
here last night"...? Jesus Christ...!

He gestures back toward the motel room, in a daze... *

TONY
(quieter now)
...What the fuck did you do...?

Joseph steps forward, a firm hand against Tony's chest, pushing him back into... *

36 INT. THE MOTEL ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

36*

JOSEPH

Tony, sit down and listen to me now.

He pushes Tony back onto the bed, and stands over him.

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED:

36

JOSEPH

I was with that girl last night. I did coke with her, I had sex with her...

(he points at the bathroom)

...but I have no fucking idea who did that to her. When I left this morning, she was right where you're sitting now, sleeping like a baby.

Tony looks down at the bed, stares at it, then at Joseph.

JOSEPH

You've got to help me. If I get connected to this, everything I've got, my family, ten years on this job -- it's gone.

TONY

(getting up)

Aw, shit, man... Don't do this, Joseph! You know me, I'm a good cop, I play things straight down the line...Jesus... (almost pleading)

I got a wife and two kids of my own...

JOSEPH

You are a good cop. And you're my partner, even if it hasn't been for long.

Tony shakes his head and turns away, feeling the pressure, but Joseph won't let him off. He closes in, crowding him...

JOSEPH

Look at me, Tony. Look me in the eye, and say I'm not telling the truth.

Beat. Then Tony looks at him. Joseph's eyes are intense, and undeniable. As Tony stares into them, weakening, we...

CUT TO:

37 INT. MOTEL ROOM -- LATER

37

Sweating, Joseph and Tony are wiping off everything in the room with towels. Joseph stops, throws his towel on the floor.

JOSEPH

That's it...that's everything I touched. Call it in.

Tony just stares at him, breathing hard.

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED:

37

JOSEPH
Go on, call.

Beat. Then Tony wearily dials his cell phone.

TONY
(into phone, somber)
It's Nenonen. We got a homicide, Sunrise
Motel at Thirty-Ninth and Rose...

Tony crosses to the door and opens it to let in some air. As he does, Joseph turns away from him...

TONY
(into phone)
White female, twenties... Somebody cut
her throat and hung her up in the shower
like a piece of meat...

ANGLE ON JOSEPH

We see Tony in the background, standing by the door. He doesn't see a thing as Joseph sets the EXPENSIVE PEN on the nightstand behind the phonebook, and drops the PACK OF CIGARETTES, kicking it just out of sight, under the bed...

TONY
(into phone)
...I don't know, you'll have to ask
Detective Thorne...
(glances over at Joseph)
...I think it was an anonymous tip.

Joseph turns back to face Tony, and nods. Then Joseph crosses the room and enters...

38 INT. MOTEL ROOM -- BATHROOM -- CONTINUOUS

38

where he approaches Daphne's corpse again. She's empty of blood now, no longer dripping.

Calm now, Joseph takes a closer look...

And sees ANOTHER TINY FINGER on the soap dish, behind the hanging corpse. Once again, the fingerprint has been burned off. Joseph stares at the finger, horrified...

Tony enters the room behind him.

TONY
Let's get the fuck out of here.

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED:

38

But it's like Joseph doesn't hear him: He's reaching out,
toward the tiny finger...

Now Tony sees it.

TONY
(steps forward)
...Is that what I think it is?

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED: (2)

38

JOSEPH
(quietly)
It's from the same hand...the left. This
one's the index finger.

Joseph touches the finger, gently bends it at the knuckle...
Then he lets it go, and the finger springs back softly like a
blade of summer grass.

JOSEPH
No stiffness.

And there's no discoloration where Joseph pressed into the
flesh -- just a tiny pinch of BLOOD that emerges: still
fresh, and flowing...

JOSEPH
(mumbles quietly to himself)
This kid is still alive...

He turns to Tony, and we see it in his eyes: Something has
caught fire in Joseph's soul.

JOSEPH
We gotta find this child.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE UP A TITLE: **MONDAY, 11:22:09 A.M.**

The seconds run -- 10, 11, 12 -- and we HEAR THE CHILD'S SCREAMS:
Distant and echoing, as if coming from the bottom of a well...

They fade away as we FADE IN ON:

39 INT. A FINGERPRINT LAB -- DAY

39

CLOSE ON A COMPUTER SPLIT-SCREEN running the Automated
Fingerprint Identification System. On the left, one enlarged
image of a FINGERPRINT remains constant. On the right,
fingerprints pop on and off as they are quickly compared and
rejected by the machine...

WIDEN TO REVEAL the same young Crime Lab Technician Joseph
spoke to the night before. He's sitting at the AFIS computer,
reading the classic novel 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea and
eating a hot-dog-on-a-stick.

*
*

He doesn't hear Joseph walk in.

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED:

39

JOSEPH
(sharply)
You running the print from the box?

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED: (2)

39

Startled, the Tech almost drops his dog. He regards Joseph without affection.

TECHNICIAN

Yes, Detective, I'm running the print from the box. No hits so far.

JOSEPH

(checks his watch, annoyed)
When did you start?

TECHNICIAN

(also checking his watch)
Two hours ago. AFIS goes through fifty thousand print cards in an hour. We have seven million print cards in the system. Do the math.

He takes a bite of hot dog and returns to his book.

Joseph stares at the computer, tapping his foot restlessly. The fingerprint images are a blur of arches and loops and whorls, too fast for the human eye to follow...

Not fast enough for Joseph.

JOSEPH

Change the parameters.

TECHNICIAN

Based on what? It's a nonsuspect ident. I already limited it to a history of violent crime... C'mon, Detective, let's not waste my time.

Mistake. Joseph snatches the book from the Technician's hand and throws it across the room.

JOSEPH

Hey. Captain Nemo. There's a child out there somewhere, alive, and he's at the mercy of a fucking freak who likes to rip people apart. Your time is not important right now... Understand?

*

TECHNICIAN

(after a beat)
What do you want me to do?

JOSEPH

Take out the "violent crime" parameter -- just leave "Criminal History" wide-open. Go under "Distinguishing Marks," and select for body-alteration.

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED: (2)

39

The Technician turns to the computer.

TECHNICIAN
What, like, tattoos?

JOSEPH
(mutters to himself)
No...something with hooks...
(louder, to the Tech)
Try "body piercings"...

The Tech types in the new information. Joseph moves closer, watching the screen intently as the computer scans the prints at cyberspeed...

Suddenly, it BEEPS to a stop. On the left is the unknown latent print lifted from the box. On the right, five smaller prints are lined up in a vertical row. Five hits.

The Technician moves his cursor down the row, studying each of the smaller prints in turn. He CLICKS on one of them, and now TWO FINGERPRINT ENLARGEMENTS are side-by-side on the screen.

Using the cursor like a pointer, the Tech compares the one on the right to the original, looking at specific points of similarity -- ridge endings, deltas, bifurcations of line...

It's a perfect match.

TECHNICIAN
Well. Sherlock-fucking-Holmes.

JOSEPH
Print the file.

40 INT./EXT. JOSEPH'S CAR -- TRAVELLING -- DAY

40

Joseph drives through a seedy part of town. The wind is gone, and the city bakes beneath a sky of white haze...

JOSEPH (V.O.)
I was starting not to feel so bad about Jay Cho, and the things I did to him in high school... If he'd gotten into some kind of weird S&M shit, or if he was connected to hurting that kid, then maybe he got what he deserved...

41 EXT. CITY STREET -- SAME

41

PEDESTRIANS soak up every inch of shade. Waves of heat rise from the street. An OLD MAN uses a handkerchief to mop the sweat from his brow.

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED:

41

JOSEPH (V.O.)

And about the girl, Daphne, well...I
didn't really feel a thing. All I knew
about her was that she was a hooker...
Maybe she got what she deserved, too...

42 EXT. FUNKY STREET -- SAME

42

Joseph turns the corner into a funky street of HEAD SHOPS and
USED RECORD STORES...

JOSEPH (V.O.)

One thing I've learned, keeping my eyes
open, eleven years on the job: People do
tend to get what they deserve.

He parks in front of...

43 EXT. A TATTOO-AND-BODY-PIERCING SHOP -- SAME

43

The sign above the door says "STIGMATA." As Joseph gets out
and heads for the entrance, we...

CUT TO:

44 INT. STIGMATA -- SAME

44

CLOSE ON A TONGUE BEING PIERCED

The PAYING VICTIM squirms, GASPING in pain...

LOUD GOTH/INDUSTRIAL MUSIC plays. Joseph walks through the
room, looking around. Handcuffs, whips, chains, bizarre
jewelry, and truly twisted S&M shit hang on the walls...

A FREAKY-LOOKING GUY sits in the lobby, flipping through an
ALBUM with photos of various pierced body parts. His own
tongue, nose, eyebrows -- you-name-it -- are already pierced
for jewelry. But he also has little incision scars on his
shoulders, arms, and torso, in various states of healing...

*
*
*
*
*

Ritual scarification: Piercing for its own sake, for cherishing
the pain. Joseph walks past him, unnerved, trying not to stare.

*

The MANAGER behind the counter is also pierced from head-to-
toe, and covered with tattoos. Joseph approaches him.

*
*

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED:

44

JOSEPH
Leon Gaultier. Is he here?

The Manager grins at him. Three gold teeth.

*

MANAGER
You wanna tattoo, or a piercing?

*

JOSEPH
(shakes his head)
I want to talk to Leon.

The Manager points toward the far end of the room, and puts his headphones back on. Joseph walks in that direction.

*

*

45 INT. STIGMATA -- PIERCING AREA -- CONTINUOUS

45

A YOUNG WOMAN stands facing away from him. She sounds like she has a bad speech impediment:

YOUNG WOMAN
Wha' m'sthposetha eath? I'munna shtarf
t'death!

A MAN'S VOICE
(indifferently)
Swelling only lasts a couple days... Go
get a Smoothie.

The Young Woman turns around and passes by Joseph on her way out, her mouth half-open around an already swelling tongue...

And now Joseph gets a better look at the man who spoke.

LEON GAULTIER

is a scary-looking dude. Big, bald, and buffed-out. Dressed in jeans and motorcycle boots, his upper body bare and completely covered with tattoos.

The Young Woman SLAMS the door. Joseph nods in her direction as he approaches Leon.

JOSEPH
Another happy customer?

LEON
(shrugs)
So she won't be giving head for a while.
What can I do ya for?

Joseph stops a few feet away from him. Now he can see PATTERNS OF SCARS looping and twisting all over Leon's torso, the ridges of scar tissue like a counterpoint to the tattoos.

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED:

45

It's disturbing: so much self-inflicted pain...

JOSEPH
(after a moment)
Let's talk about the box.

Beat. Leon turns away from Joseph. Switches on the water at a small sink and starts cleaning his PIERCING TOOLS, washing off the Young Woman's blood.

JOSEPH
A golden box, about four inches square.
Jay Cho told me I could find it here.

Leon nods slowly, continues washing off his tools...

LEON
(without looking at Joseph)
He did, huh? Jay Cho...

Suddenly, Leon GRABS Joseph, spins him around and SLAMS him up against the wall.

LEON
You tell Jay Cho something for me: Tell him the Engineer wants his money, or he wants his property back!

He SLAMS Joseph against the wall again.

LEON
Tell Jay if I find him, I'm gonna rip his fuckin' head off -- and tell him he'd still be better off dealing with me than with the Engineer.

JOSEPH
Hey, take it easy -- I'm not Jay.

LEON
"Take it easy"?! Who the fuck are you, anyway...?

In reply, Joseph holds up his detective's shield. Leon deflates like a punctured balloon.

LEON
(deadpan)
Unbelievable.

He lets Joseph go and slumps back into his seat.

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED: (2)

45

Joseph drags over a chair and sits in front of him, so close that their knees almost touch. Leon stares at the floor.

JOSEPH
(quietly)
Now. Why don't you tell me about this
"Engineer."

Leon says nothing, just sits there silently cursing his luck. Joseph reaches out and places a fingertip under Leon's chin, tilts Leon's head back until he looks him in the eye.

JOSEPH
Leon...?

LEON
(flatly)
No way.

JOSEPH
(sighs)
Leon. You just got off parole. Jay Cho is dead -- in fact, somebody ripped his body apart with hooks big enough to snag a Great White. And your fingerprint was on the box --

LEON
(interrupting)
--He wanted it! Jay tried to buy it, and when he couldn't afford to do that, the motherfucker stole it off me.

JOSEPH
He couldn't afford it? I saw his place...Jay Cho had money.

LEON
(smiles grimly)
Not enough.

Beat. Joseph gets up, paces restlessly...

Leon watches him fiddle with a CUSTOM-MADE LEATHER WHIP that hangs on the wall: It's a "cat-o'-nine-tails," and each of the nine knotted cords is studded with RAZOR-SHARP HOOKS...

JOSEPH
Why is the box so expensive, Leon? Why did Jay Cho want it so bad?

(CONTINUED)

LEON

I don't know. I'm just a middleman, I was just holding it, taking offers...

JOSEPH

Holding it for the Engineer -- right? The box is his...

Now Leon's voice is steady, and Joseph sees the absolute sincerity in his eyes:

LEON

You can arrest me, you can take me downtown and kick the livin' shit outta me, you can do any fucking thing you want to me, but there's no fucking way I'll talk to you about the Engineer.

Joseph walks back and stands over him.

JOSEPH

You know, Leon, I'll find him, whether you talk to me or not.

Leon shrugs without looking up, and half-mutters something almost as if by reflex, like it's some proverb of the street:

LEON

"Hunt for the Engineer, and the Engineer will hunt you."

As Leon says it, he actually SHIVERS slightly.

Joseph frowns, starts to say something -- then shakes his head. He gets out his wallet. Leon stands, and they're face-to-face.

JOSEPH

I think, if you lost this guy's property, you may be in a world of shit yourself...
(he hands Leon his CARD)
...so don't forget about me, Leon.

Leon tosses it on a table without looking at it.

LEON

Yeah, I'll send you candy at Christmas.

Joseph stares at him a beat, then turns and walks away.

There's a MIRROR on the wall across the room. As Joseph approaches it, he sees Leon in the reflection. Leon turns around to do something, and now Joseph has a clear view of the TWO LARGE TATTOOS that cover Leon's back...

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED: (4)

45

Joseph stops in his tracks.

The tattoos depict THE TWO FEMALE CREATURES from the nightmare Joseph had after he opened the box.

As Joseph stares, one of the Creatures seems to tilt her head to one side and regard him with an eerie smile...

Joseph whirls and crosses the room in a heartbeat, THROWS Leon up against the wall. A sandwich flies out of Leon's hand --

LEON
(spitting food)
What the fuck...?

-- but then Leon relaxes into the familiar drill, spreading his legs and placing his palms flat against the wall.

Joseph stands motionless behind Leon, his hands at his sides.

LEON
(waiting)
So, you gonna frisk me, or fuck me?

As Joseph just stares at Leon's back, dumbfounded, we CUT TO:

JOSEPH'S POV: Leon's back is completely covered by a tattoo of a BLEEDING HAND with a large nail driven through the palm...

The two Female Creatures are gone.

FADE TO BLACK.

Now FADE UP A TITLE: **MONDAY, 12:47:05 P.M.**

The seconds run -- 6, 7, 8 -- and we HEAR tinkling MUSIC, a simple, repeated refrain, joined by the SHOUTS and LAUGHTER of CHILDREN...

...as we FADE IN ON:

46 EXT. A SUBURBAN STREET -- HOT DAY

46

AN ICE CREAM VAN leads a bunch of KIDS down the street like the Pied Piper. It stops, and the kids, mostly barefoot and shirtless, crowd up to the side window...

Joseph crosses the street toward the van as BERNIE, a weaselly little guy, passes out bomb pops and snow cones, jabbering his sales pitch like some low-rent Willie Wonka:

(CONTINUED)

BERNIE

(sing-song)

Cold and sweet's the only way... To beat
the heat on a summer day... There ya go...

The kids scurry off, LAUGHING and rolling their eyes....

JOSEPH

(approaching)

What'd you hook 'em up with, Bernie?

BERNIE

Please, I got some scruples -- with the
young 'uns, I only deal in double-dip.

Bernie's drenched in sweat. Joseph regards him with distaste.

JOSEPH

You look like you just ran a marathon.

BERNIE

Nothing works on this fucking truck. I
been stickin' my head in the coolers...

He cranks a lever to open an ANTIQUE CASH REGISTER, puts the
kids' money in the drawer.

JOSEPH

Leave it open. Rockies won by five.

Bernie frowns, takes \$200.00 from the register and starts to
put it in Joseph's hand...

JOSEPH

Wait -- what's the line on the De La Hoya
fight?

BERNIE

Three-to-one, and going up.

JOSEPH

Parlay, against the Kid. But I will take
my birthday present.

Bernie puts the money away, and gives Joseph two eight-ball
packets of COCAINE.

BERNIE

You sure got a lotta fuckin' birthdays.

JOSEPH

You know a hooker named Daphne?
(slightly uncomfortable)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JOSEPH (cont'd)
Dark hair...athletic body...young. Works
the stroll south of the Boulevard.

BERNIE
(grins lasciviously)
How young?

JOSEPH
(disgusted, partly at himself)
She's over eighteen, Bernie. Probably
too old for you.

BERNIE
(shrugs)
Daphne, Corey, Shauna, Dewanna, they all
kinda blur together, y'know...?
(he thinks a moment)
Yeah, but...I think I do know who she is.
She's kinda new. Can't say I've partaken.

JOSEPH
Who does she work for?

BERNIE
Hey, I'm out of that business...
(off Joseph's look)
Okay, fine, maybe I know that she works
for this guy, Terry-somebody... Connected
guy, he's got a lot goin' on --

JOSEPH
--Connected how?

Suddenly, Bernie seems nervous: He said too much...

JOSEPH
Does this friend of yours work for the
Engineer?

A look of absolute fear washes over Bernie's face.

BERNIE
The who...? I don't know no "Engineer"...

SMACK! Joseph hits him with his open hand.

BERNIE
(backstepping into the van)
C'mon, for Crissake!

SMACK! Again. Sweat flies off Bernie's head like a boxer's.
Joseph steps up into the van...

47 INT. ICE CREAM VAN -- CONTINUOUS

47

Cowering, head down, Bernie backpedals as Joseph continues THWACKING him upside the head, forcing him toward the rear of the van.

BERNIE
C'mon, stop it!

SMACK! Joseph hits Bernie once more, then SLAMS him up against the van's rear doors.

BERNIE
Joe, it ain't right for you to treat me like this -- what am I, your whipping boy?

JOSEPH
You want to go downtown, Bernie? Impound the van, explain your daily activities? You remember the last time?

Joseph raises his hand, and Bernie cringes.

BERNIE
Okay, shit, okay...

JOSEPH
The Engineer, Bernie: Who is he?

Bernie's shivering now, the sweat feels ice-cold on his back.

BERNIE
I never met him, I swear to God. I only heard stories... This guy, Terry, he runs women for the Engineer...

Joseph pulls the bottle of Jim Beam from his coat pocket, hands it to him, and Bernie takes a drink.

BERNIE
Few years back, the Engineer sends Terry this new girl... She was the Engineer's number one earner, took Terry's business to a whole 'nother level -- politicians, actors, rock stars... But, Terry...
(shakes his head)
...the poor bastard, he pulls up his pants one day, and finds himself "in love." They decided to get married -- but the Engineer wouldn't allow it...

Bernie's voice cracks. Joseph gives him another drink.

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED:

47

BERNIE

Terry tried to buy her, offered the Engineer everything he had -- but the Engineer said no... So Terry just took her away. They eloped, and hid out in this cabin, up in the hills... They were gonna have a baby, start this whole new fucking life together... Then, Terry came home one day...and she was just...gone.

He takes the bottle from Joseph and finishes it. Shivers.

BERNIE

Terry went crazy. He put the word out on the street -- he said, "I'm gonna find the Engineer, and take back what's mine"...

The WIND has returned. Bernie shivers again, and MUTTERS SOMETHING...

JOSEPH

...What was that?

BERNIE

Nothing -- it's just, like, this saying, y'know, it's just something people say... "Hunt for the Engineer," they say, "and the Engineer will hunt you."

Feeling the cold sweat on his own brow, Joseph wipes it off. He rolls the silver ball around in his other hand...

JOSEPH

...So what happened?

CUT TO:

48 INT./EXT. A VIEW THROUGH A WINDSHIELD -- DIRT ROAD -- DAY 48*
Over a MAN'S shoulder as he drives down a rutted dirt road. *

BERNIE (V.O.)

Terry kept looking, but he never found the Engineer...

Now we pull up in front of...

49 EXT. A MOUNTAIN CABIN -- DAY 49*
We FOLLOW THE MAN as he parks, gets out, and walks toward the small, single-story cabin... *

(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED:

49

BERNIE (V.O.)
...and, to this day, Terry's never seen
the Engineer again. But...
(his voice drops, uneasy)
...he started getting, these, like,
gifts... Like the Engineer was sendin'
him a message...

The Man unlocks the front door, steps inside...

50 INT. MOUNTAIN CABIN -- SAME

50

WALKING upstairs, then down a hallway, toward a closed door... *

BERNIE (V.O.)
A box would show up on his doorstep. Or
something would come in the mail, like a
locket she wore, or a clump of her hair...

The Man PUSHES OPEN THE DOOR, and we enter...

51 INT. MOUNTAIN CABIN -- A BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

51

MORNING SUNLIGHT bleeds through closed window curtains, dimly
illuminating the small room... *

BERNIE (V.O.)
When her wedding ring came, Terry figured she
was dead -- but, still, he kept looking...

A gentle breeze softly billows the white curtains, and we can
hear the faint RUSTLING of trees outside... *

BERNIE (V.O.)
And then, just like it happened when she
disappeared, Terry came home one morning
and she was back again... *

A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN

sleeps peacefully under the covers.

BERNIE (V.O.)
Just layin' there in his bed, sleepin'
like a baby...

TERRY

stands in the doorway -- he can't believe his own eyes. He
starts slowly across the room...

(CONTINUED)

51 CONTINUED:

51

BERNIE (V.O.)
He tiptoed over to the bed, so he could
slide in beside her...

*
*

Terry leans down close to the girl...

BERNIE (V.O.)
...kissed her on the cheek, and pulled
back the covers... But she wasn't there.

JOSEPH (V.O.)
What do you mean, she wasn't --

Terry pulls back the covers, revealing the girl's SEVERED HEAD.

BERNIE (V.O.)
Just a note, where her body should of been...

Terry JUMPS back in horror, causing the head to roll off the
pillow onto the floor. He starts SCREAMING...

BERNIE (V.O.)
After some time, I don't know how long,
Terry finally got up the guts to read it...

CUT BACK TO:

52 INT. ICE CREAM VAN -- DAY

52

CLOSE ON BERNIE, his gimlet eyes glittering in the shadows, a
grim smile on his face.

BERNIE
It said, "You win, Terry: I kept what I
needed. The rest is yours."

Joseph just stares at Bernie a long moment.

JOSEPH
Do you believe that story?

BERNIE
I saw his face when he told me. Terry
wasn't makin' that shit up.

Joseph stands there, thinking, rolling the ball in his hand...

JOSEPH
...Talk to Terry.

BERNIE
C'mon, Joe, I don't see him much anymore,
I don't know where --

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED:

52

Joseph grabs Bernie by the hair and BANGS his head hard against the back door.

JOSEPH

Talk to him. By the end of the day,
you're gonna tell me where I can find the
Engineer.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE UP A TITLE: **MONDAY, 1:31:13 P.M.**

As the seconds run, we HEAR the broadcast of a BASEBALL GAME,
and we FADE IN ON...

53 INT. A SPORTS BAR/RESTAURANT -- DAY

53

A SPARSE, LATE-LUNCHTIME CROWD, mostly men, putting away
burgers and beer. Tony stares up at a TV SCREEN ABOVE THE
BAR, absently eating chicken wings -- but he looks
preoccupied, he's not really watching the game...

*
*
*

Suddenly, Joseph slides into the booth across from him.

TONY

(nervous)

Hey...I didn't see you.

Joseph studies him closely. Joseph is cool and in control.

JOSEPH

How'd you do?

TONY

The neighbors said Jay Cho had "unusual
friends" -- not the usual type for that
zip code, anyway. But nobody saw
anything or anybody the last couple
days... You get anything from the ice
cream man? Any information, I mean...

*
*
*
*
*

He tries to laugh at his joke. It dies in his throat.

JOSEPH

What's up, Tony? What's bothering you?

Tony hesitates, avoiding Joseph's gaze. Searching for words.

TONY

I just...I just think there are some
lines you set, and...and just don't
cross. Period. Otherwise, you just keep
crossing them, you know, one after
another, until you're just...lost.

(CONTINUED)

53 CONTINUED:

53

He looks tortured. Stress and guilt are eating him alive. Finally, he summons the courage to look Joseph in the eye.

TONY

I'm your partner. And that matters, that means something to me... But I can't do it, Joe. I'm gonna tell the Captain about Daphne, about wiping off your prints... I'm gonna tell him what we did.

(leans toward Joseph, earnest)

I believe you didn't kill her. Tell him with me... It's the right thing to do.

Joseph's eyes are cold. His face reveals nothing. After a moment, Tony slumps back against his seat.

And now Joseph speaks calmly:

JOSEPH

You're right about one thing, Tony -- I didn't kill that girl... And I won't let anything get in the way of me finding the person who did.

(now he leans closer)

Where's your pen? The Mont Blanc with your initials -- the one your wife gave you...

TONY

(confused)

...I...I don't know, it's --

JOSEPH

--It's in the Crime Lab by now, Forensics picked it up. You left it at the scene.

Now it starts to hit Tony: We see it in his face...

JOSEPH

And your cigarettes -- that last open pack, with your fingerprints all over the wrapper... Have you been jonesin' for nicotine, Tony? 'Cause you left your smokes at the scene, too...

TONY

Oh my God...you...you took my --

JOSEPH

No, no, no -- you came to me, remember? 'Cause you fucked some hooker last night and, holy shit, found her dead the next morning. So you asked me to help you

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

53 CONTINUED: (2)

53

JOSEPH (cont'd)

wipe the place down, to cover your tracks... I shouldn't have gone along with you -- but as everybody knows, I'm nothing if not a loyal partner.

(beat)

You're new to this precinct, with what, maybe three years up from Uniform...? Whose story do you think they'll believe? I mean, looking at the evidence...

*
*

Tony just sits there, reeling, gut-punched by this betrayal. He's in shock, unable even to summon any rage...

TONY

My God... You planned it... You fucked me, and you planned it all...

JOSEPH

No, Tony. Nobody will get fucked. When the Crime Lab files its report, I'll tell the Captain you were shaken up by what we found at the scene, and I saw you have a smoke and touch a couple of things before you remembered to put on your gloves. It's a simple mistake -- you'll get a verbal reprimand, that's all.

*

(he smiles)

Don't worry, partner. I'm not out to get you -- I'll take care of you. I won't let this make you look bad.

Tony shakes his head slowly, just staring at Joseph, like he's never really seen him before.

TONY

(quietly)

I trusted you.

With some difficulty, Tony gets to his feet, and walks out the door without looking at Joseph again.

Joseph sits in the booth, staring up at the baseball game -- it's the Little League "World Series," just a bunch of kids playing... He checks his watch, giving Tony time to be on his way...

*
*

And a LITTLE BOY walks up to him.

It's one of the kids we saw buying ice cream from Bernie. The Little Boy has a VIDEOTAPE in his hand.

LITTLE BOY

Detective Thorne?

*

(CONTINUED)

53 CONTINUED: (3)

53

Joseph turns, startled, and nods.

LITTLE BOY
This is for you.

He places the tape on the table in front of Joseph. Turns around, and RUNS...

JOSEPH
(gets up, grabbing the tape)
Wait -- !

The kid's already RUNNING OUT THE DOOR. Joseph starts after him -- then stops, and stares at the tape in his hand: It's unmarked, and the recording tabs have been broken off, so it can't be erased. Now Joseph glances toward...

THE TV ABOVE THE BAR

It has a VCR built into it. Joseph crosses the room, reaches up and starts to turn the TV/VCR around...

54 OMITTED

54*

55 OMITTED

55*

56 OMITTED

56*

53 CONTINUED

53*

The BARTENDER leans over the far end of the bar, flirting with a bored-looking YOUNG WOMAN. He sees Joseph and turns to face him, putting on a tough front:

BARTENDER
(a warning, not an offer)
Hey...can I help you...?

JOSEPH
I need to play this tape.

Before the Bartender can go off, Joseph shows him his badge. The guy eyeballs it a beat, then shrugs.

BARTENDER
Knock yourself out.

He turns back to his unenthused flirtee. Joseph pops in the tape the Little Boy gave him, and it PLAYS on the TV SCREEN.

57 INT. BERNIE'S VAN (ON TV SCREEN) -- SAME

57*

The image is a dim, fuzzy view of the enclosed space of BERNIE'S VAN. It's hard to see what's going on. But we can't miss BERNIE'S SCREAMS...

Now the fuzzy image clears, and we see BERNIE, stripped, his hands tied to the steering wheel... A LEATHER WHIP -- a "cat-o'-nine-tails" -- comes down on his back with a CRACK!

(CONTINUED)

57 CONTINUED:

57

Bernie SCREAMS again, and when the whip is pulled away, we see that it's studded with large, RAZOR-SHARP HOOKS...

...and that Bernie is being RIPPED TO PIECES.

As the horrible whipping continues...

58 INT. SPORTS BAR -- SAME

58*

Joseph watches, jaw tight, flinching at each CRACK of the whip. Now we hear a sharp WHACK! And a CHILD'S SCREAM cuts through Bernie's low, dying moans, piercing Joseph to the core...

59 INT. BERNIE'S VAN (ON TV SCREEN) -- SAME

59*

Now A FIGURE steps in front of the camera. We stare in horror at the Figure's FACE: It has no eyes, no ears, no nose... Just a hideous mouth, and that's all.

This FACELESS KILLER holds a CHILD'S BLEEDING FINGER up to the video camera -- but we do not see the child. The Killer opens his mouth, revealing a JET BLACK TONGUE...

We PUSH IN CLOSE ON THE TV SCREEN as the Killer places the tip of the severed finger onto his tongue -- and it SIZZLES, creating the familiar BURN MARK over the fingerprint.

Then the Killer opens Bernie's CASH REGISTER, placing the child's finger in the register drawer as the...

VIDEOTAPE CUTS TO STATIC, and we...

CUT TO:

60 INT. POLICE STATION -- CAPTAIN'S OFFICE -- DAY

60

CLOSE ON ANOTHER VIDEO SCREEN also showing nothing but STATIC and WHITE NOISE. Then we PULL BACK TO REVEAL Joseph, Tony, the young Crime Lab Technician, and Captain Abadajian staring at the static on the screen.

Now Joseph jumps out of his chair, fiddles with the VCR...

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED:

60

JOSEPH
(agitated)
I don't understand this...

He pops the tape out of the machine, looks it over, then turns to the Crime Lab Technician:

JOSEPH
Can you guys run a test on one of these, to see if it's been erased or something?

The Tech takes the tape, regards it dubiously.

TECHNICIAN
I can tell if it's been erased, but I can't tell you what was on it before that...if anything.

JOSEPH
(flaring)
I know something was on it, all right? I know what I saw...

He grabs the tape back from the Technician and returns to the VCR.

JOSEPH
(mutters)
Let's try it again...

CAPTAIN
Joseph. We've already run through the entire tape twice... There's nothing there.

The Captain sounds like he's speaking to a child. Joseph looks from him to the others... They all look at him like he's a fool.

Joseph can barely contain himself.

JOSEPH
(his voice shaking)
I saw what I fucking saw...

Nobody looks convinced.

CAPTAIN
Let's move on, gentlemen. We all have work to do. Joseph, if you could stay in here a moment...

The others leave. Joseph stares at the floor.

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED: (2)

60

CAPTAIN
Do we need to talk, Detective?

JOSEPH
About what?

CAPTAIN
About you.

Now Joseph looks at him. Joseph's face is impassive, a mask.

CAPTAIN
I'm concerned about your state of mind...
Bernie is your snitch, right?

JOSEPH
Was my snitch.

CAPTAIN
(nods)
And you knew the first victim, Jay Cho...

JOSEPH
I barely knew him, Captain. Years ago.

CAPTAIN
My instincts keep telling me that
something's not right here. I'm very
concerned...
(he sighs)
But you don't feel comfortable talking to
me. I could suspend you...

JOSEPH
(angry)
--On what grounds?

CAPTAIN
...but I won't do that. However, I will
make a formal request that you see the
Department Counselor.

Joseph starts to let it rip, but bites his tongue. He takes
a moment, then speaks calmly.

JOSEPH
Captain. I don't have time for that.
There's a child's life at stake, here.

CAPTAIN
All the more reason. It's not optional.
Go make an appointment, before you do any
more work on the case.

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED: (3)

60

A beat. Then Joseph walks out, leaving the Captain alone.

61 INT. POLICE STATION -- SQUAD ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

61

Tony sits behind his desk, working. He looks up, sees Joseph exit the Captain's office.

JOSEPH
(approaching Tony)
Expect to see me come out in handcuffs?

TONY
No, why, did you do something bad?

Joseph takes a COMPUTER PRINTOUT off the top of his desk: We see LEON'S PICTURE at the top of a criminal file.

JOSEPH
Leon Gaultier. His fingerprint was on the box.

TONY
The "box"?

JOSEPH
It was at the Jay Cho crime scene, under the candle. Jay stole it from Leon.

TONY
Thanks for keeping me informed.

JOSEPH
I saw the murder weapon, Tony -- the one that killed Bernie. It was hanging on the wall in Leon's shop.

TONY
(a hint of a smirk)
What, the "whip"?

JOSEPH
Just find Leon and pick him up. And look for Bernie's van...

Tony stares at him coolly.

TONY
What are you gonna do?

JOSEPH
I'm gonna go lie down and talk about my childhood.

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED:

61

Joseph heads down the hallway, glancing at his watch, and we
FADE TO BLACK...

...and FADE UP A TITLE: **MONDAY, 3:07:11 P.M.**

The seconds run. We HEAR a MAN'S VOICE in the blackness: -

MAN'S VOICE

Time is running out...Thompson gets the
ball at the top of the key...Gervin's on
his hip...

And we FADE IN ON:

62 INT. THE COUNSELOR'S OFFICE -- DAY

62

A MAN about Joseph's age stands with his knees bent, an
orange foam NERF BASKETBALL in his hand. He wears a clerical
collar, and has his back to a small BASKETBALL GOAL that's
suction-mounted on the wall two feet above his head.

He continues his "sports announcer" play-by-play commentary:

MAN

Thompson takes a look at the game clock...

He glances up at a CLOCK on the opposite wall: The clock
face is round, and designed to look like a basketball...

MAN

He fakes left, pivots, gets a step...
(the Man does all of the above)
And he's airborne...!

But the Man doesn't jump -- instead, he goes into mock "slow-
motion": twisting, tucking the ball into his hip, then
tomahawking it back over his head for a mighty REVERSE SLAM...

...at which point he sees Joseph standing in the doorway.

MAN

(after a beat)

David "Skywalker" Thompson. Best guard the
Nuggets ever had. Only six-four and he could
snatch a dime off the top of the backboard.

JOSEPH

(nods)

I saw him play.

The Man smiles. Uncoils from his dunking position.

62 CONTINUED:

62

MAN

Me, too. My Dad had season tickets.
(walks toward Joseph,
extending his hand)
I'm Dr. Gregory.

Joseph shakes his hand.

JOSEPH

Joseph Thorne. I was told to make an
appointment. *

DR. GREGORY

Yeah, your Captain called. Will you sit
down for a minute? I need some
information for your file.

He goes to a row of CABINETS containing the files of every
policeman in the Department. Joseph looks around. DIPLOMAS on
the wall: a Cal Berkeley Ph.D., another from Union Theological
Seminary... Also, on the wall is a PICTURE of a LITTLE GIRL.

DR. GREGORY

(flipping through the files)
So, were you involved in a use of deadly
force?

JOSEPH

Not recently.

DR. GREGORY

Problems at home? Substance problems?

Joseph looks at him strangely.

JOSEPH

The Captain didn't tell you why he sent
me here?

DR. GREGORY

No. Why are you here?

The Counselor pulls Joseph's file, and approaches him.

JOSEPH

Not because I want to be.

DR. GREGORY

(gestures as he sits)
Please, sit down.

Reluctantly, Joseph takes a seat across from him.

(CONTINUED)

62 CONTINUED: (2)

62

DR. GREGORY

These sessions are very informal. We can just talk...about anything you like.

Joseph's eyes drift to the LITTLE GIRL'S PICTURE again.

JOSEPH

That's a nice picture.

DR. GREGORY

That's my daughter, Melissa. She's nine.

JOSEPH

Mine's eight next month.

(half-laughs)

So, I guess you're not a priest...

DR. GREGORY

Episcopal. We get to have a little fun.

(looks at the picture and smiles)

She's the best thing in my life. I envy children...

Now he turns to look at Joseph.

DR. GREGORY

I envy their innocence.

JOSEPH

...Yeah. Me, too.

The Counselor regards Joseph with interest. He notices the metal ball Joseph rolls in and out of his fingers.

DR. GREGORY

That's a Chinese thing, right? For stress...

JOSEPH

It keeps me calm...sometimes.

He looks down at his hand... As Dr. Gregory watches, Joseph waves his other hand over it, and the silver ball DISAPPEARS.

DR. GREGORY

(delighted)

Close-up magic... I hired a guy to do that, to entertain at my daughter's birthday...I bet your daughter loves it.

JOSEPH

I don't know, I mostly do it to entertain myself...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

62 CONTINUED: (3)

62

JOSEPH (cont'd)
(suddenly impatient)
Look, can I make an appointment for
later? I'm working a case...

DR. GREGORY
How about tomorrow, at ten?

JOSEPH
(just wanting to leave)
...Okay, sure. Thanks.

He stands, starts walking out, but then stops in the open doorway.

JOSEPH
(good-naturedly)
Oh, and if you're gonna keep playing with
yourself like that, you might want to
keep the door closed.

As Joseph shuts the door behind him, Dr. Gregory smiles.

DR. GREGORY
Take care, Detective.

CUT TO:

63 INT. POLICE INTERROGATION ROOM -- DAY

63

A CLOSE-UP OF A FINGER

Now a PENCIL ENTERS FRAME, jabbing at the fingertip. Once,
twice, three times, until it draws BLOOD...

JOSEPH (O.S.)
(enraged)
Is that it? You want to bleed? Is that
what you want...?!

WIDEN TO REVEAL Leon Gaultier sitting at a table with a pad
of paper in front of him, jabbing his fingertip with a
pencil. Joseph stands across from him -- collar loosened,
flushed and sweating. They've been at this awhile.

LEON
(glances up at him)
I gotta do something to stay awake.

Tony pokes his head into the room.

TONY
You got a sec?

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED:

63

Joseph steps out the door and into...

64 INT. THE OBSERVATION AREA -- CONTINUOUS

64

Tony and Joseph face off in the dim viewing area. In the background, Leon is visible through the observation window.

TONY

He's got a solid alibi.

JOSEPH

Let me guess. The tattoo freak behind the counter...

*
*

TONY

Yeah. And five customers, back-to-back. Leon was sticking needles in people all afternoon.

JOSEPH

Leon told me he sold the whip about an hour after I left. Some nutbag in a black ski mask walks into the place, and Leon figures they're gettin' robbed, but the guy asks for the whip instead... He left in such a hurry, he forgot his change.

*
*

(beat)

I'm telling you, that whip was the weapon on the tape.

TONY

(nods)

The blank tape.

JOSEPH

I know what I saw.

TONY

Yeah, you keep saying that.

A long moment, as the two men stare at each other.

JOSEPH

Just find Bernie for me, all right?

TONY

Whatever you say, Detective.

Tony walks out. Joseph steps closer to the window. As he stares in at Leon, we slowly FADE TO BLACK...

...and FADE UP A TITLE: MONDAY, 5:35:07 P.M.

(CONTINUED)

64 CONTINUED:

64

JOSEPH (V.O.)
Dr. Gregory said that he envied the
innocence of children...

FADE IN ON:

65 INT. POLICE STATION -- MISSING PERSONS ARCHIVE -- DAY

65

Joseph is at a DUAL COMPUTER TERMINAL, going through MISSING CHILDREN FILES, and cross-referencing them with files on Jay Cho, Daphne, and Leon...

JOSEPH (V.O.)
But staring at the faces of a thousand
missing kids, envy is the last thing you
feel... All I felt was rage.

The missing children files are voluminous...endless....face
after face after innocent face...

JOSEPH (V.O.)
Children are the only sacred thing left in
this world, and most of these little ones
were gone for good...

Staring at the files, Joseph looks overwhelmed, depressed...
A descending weight of hopelessness.

JOSEPH (V.O.)
...but not the kid I was looking for.
That child was still alive... And if I
could just keep it that way, I knew it
would be the best thing I'd do in my
lifetime.

He pushes his chair away from the computer, rubs his eyes and temples. Then he opens his eyes, and looks through the GLASS OFFICE WALL into the SQUAD ROOM beyond.

A HANDCUFFED PERP

is being dragged by A UNIFORM COP toward one of the holding cells. The Perp is struggling, fighting the Cop who shoves them along.

Suddenly, the Perp turns, and Joseph gets a clear glimpse of him through the crowded squad room...

IT'S THE FACELESS KILLER

Joseph sees nothing but a black shape around an open, SHOUTING MOUTH... Then the Killer's GIANT BLACK TONGUE SLITHERS OUT and starts FLAPPING BACK AND FORTH...

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED:

65

Joseph jumps back from his desk, horrified...

And the Faceless Killer's tongue rolls back into his mouth as he is ushered ahead by the Uniform Cop.

JOSEPH
HEY! STOP....!!

66 INT. SQUAD ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

66

Joseph bursts into the room:

JOSEPH
HEY!!

He pushes his way through the crowd of Cops and STAFF PEOPLE, past the rows of desks...

SHOVES the arresting Uniform Cop aside, GRABS the faceless guy...

And a BLACK SKI MASK comes off, revealing some PUNK KID who just robbed a convenience store.

UNIFORM COP
Hey, yourself, Detective. What's the
freakin' problem...?

Joseph stares in bewilderment as the Cop drags the Kid away...

Then SOMEONE touches his shoulder:

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Detective...?

Joseph whirls on him, freaked out: It's the DESK SERGEANT.

DESK SERGEANT
They found your snitch.

CUT TO:

67 EXT. STREET BESIDE A PARK -- LATE AFTERNOON

67

The sun is low. A few KIDS play soccer in the park, using traffic cones for the goals. They're not too far from...

*
*

BERNIE'S VAN

which is swarming with CRIME SCENE COPS as Joseph approaches. Tony leans against the van, eyeballing him.

(CONTINUED)

67 CONTINUED:

67

TONY
He's in there. And it's another fucking
mess...
(pointedly)
...just like you described it.

Joseph stops right next to him.

JOSEPH
(in Tony's face, quietly)
You surprised...?

He doesn't wait for an answer, pushing past the Crime Scene
Cops and climbing into the van.

TONY
(quietly, to himself)
No...not really...

68 INT. BERNIE'S VAN -- CONTINUOUS

68

Joseph approaches the body.

JOSEPH
Nobody touch a fucking thing!

He's on a short fuse. The Crime Scene Cops back off.

JOSEPH
Just get out, everybody -- there's too
many people in here.

The other Cops step out of the van, but several of them
remain at the van's side business window, looking in.

Tony stands inside with Joseph.

BERNIE

is still tied to the steering wheel, his back torn to shreds
by the whip. A section of his spine is exposed...

There's a CELL PHONE on the seat next to Bernie. Careful of
fingerprints, Joseph picks it up, and sees...

A TELEPHONE NUMBER

on the cell phone's L.E.D. display.

Joseph takes a MINI-CASSETTE RECORDER from his pocket, turns
it on. Then he presses the "SEND" button on the cell phone.
As the call goes through, Tony leans in close to listen...

(CONTINUED)

68 CONTINUED:

68

MECHANICAL VOICE
(over cell phone)
You have one unplayed message.

Now we HEAR a MAN'S VOICE, nervous:

MAN'S VOICE
(over cell phone)
Bernie, it's Terry... Listen, about the
pers -- the thing we talked about...
Find Mr. Parmagi, at a place called "The
Crossing," just past Blackhawk at the end
of the Old Mining Road...
(more intense)
...and now we're even, a'right? After
this, I don't owe you a fuckin' dime --
don't ever talk to me again.

The RECORDING ENDS. Tony begins moving through the back of
the van, looking around...

TONY
Doesn't this guy usually give us the
finger?

A Crime Scene Cop chimes in from outside the window:

CRIME SCENE COP
We looked, we ain't found one yet...

JOSEPH
(impatiently)
It's in the cash register.

He's still staring at Bernie, his mind racing...

TONY
...What?

JOSEPH
THE CASH REGISTER!!!

Raging, Joseph lunges to the antique cash register, pulls the
lever -- KA-CHING! -- and the drawer opens.

The CHILD'S FINGER rests inside.

Everybody -- Tony, and the Cops outside the window -- looks
down at the finger, then back up at Joseph.

JOSEPH
IT WAS ON THE FUCKING VIDEOTAPE!!

(CONTINUED)

68 CONTINUED: (2)

68

They just continue to look at him strangely. Tony included.

JOSEPH
(to Tony)
Let's go, "partner."

He steps out of the van, shoving the Crime Scene gawkers aside.

Tony stands there a long beat, staring at the corpse and the finger, before he follows.

70 EXT. EDGE OF THE CITY -- DUSK

70

Joseph's car leaves the city behind. Ahead, the MOUNTAINS raise their jagged peaks into a crimson sky.

FADE TO BLACK, and FADE UP A TITLE: **MONDAY, 6:28:18 P.M.**

As the seconds run -- 19, 20, 21 -- we HEAR an engine accelerating, shifting gears...

TONY'S VOICE
Maybe this guy just wants his box back...

And now we FADE IN ON:

71 INT. JOSEPH'S CAR -- TRAVELLING -- TWILIGHT

71

Joseph steers the car up a winding mountain road. He's driving way too fast.

JOSEPH
(shakes his head)
It was left in plain sight, at the first murder scene -- if the Engineer wanted the box, he'd have it by now...

Tony hangs onto the passenger door, looking out the window, then at Joseph's face, then back out the window again. He's afraid of heights, and trying to hide it, but...

THE VIEW OUT THE PASSENGER WINDOW

is a sheer thousand-foot drop.

JOSEPH
No. The fingers are a message. The Engineer is warning me...

Sweating, Tony looks over at Joseph, who drives angrily, fighting the road...

(CONTINUED)

71 CONTINUED:

71

JOSEPH
...He's telling me that if I keep looking
for him, the child dies.
(beat)
And then I'll die, too.
(bitterly)
"Hunt for the Engineer, and Engineer will
hunt you."

TONY
(hanging on for dear life)
...What?

JOSEPH
(quietly)
He won't have to hunt me for long.

He jerks the wheel, torquing the car through a hard turn...

TONY
Shit....! Slow down, man!

72 EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD -- NIGHT

72

Kicking up dust, Joseph's car turns onto a SIDE ROAD...

73 EXT. OLD MINING ROAD -- NIGHT

73

Joseph's car passes several low ramshackle wooden buildings,
and now "THE CROSSING" is dead ahead.

74 EXT. THE CROSSING -- SAME

74

It's a small, windowless wooden shack in the middle of nowhere,
backed by thick WOODS. A RAILROAD-CROSSING SIGN is nailed
above the door, with "The Crossing" painted on the crossbars.

Joseph pulls up and parks. There are no other cars in sight.

JOSEPH
You with me?

Tony peels himself off the passenger door, takes a deep
breath, and looks at Joseph like he's not sure whether to
believe in him, suspect him, or just say he's nuts...

TONY
Sure... "Let's go, partner."

They get out and head into the bar.

75 INT. THE CROSSING -- NIGHT

75

Five POKER TABLES are surrounded by GAMBLERS playing cards. Most of them are nicely dressed, and they all wear COWBOY HATS that totally shadow their faces. It's odd, even creepy: Nobody is talking -- all we hear is strange MUSIC and the CLICKING sound of chips.

A CARD-PLAYER rises from a table. Joseph mutters something to Tony, then heads over to the empty seat, discreetly casing the room as he goes.

He sits down and pulls out his wallet. Turns to the PLAYER next to him:

JOSEPH

I see chips, but I don't see a cashier...
Where can I buy in...?

The Player doesn't answer. He just takes a drag from his cigarette, his face still obscured by the shadow of his hat.

JOSEPH

I'm looking for Mr. Parmagi. Does he
still work here?

A VOICE answers at Joseph's shoulder:

MAN'S VOICE

I do. And I know most of the faces...

Joseph turns around to see...

AN ENORMOUS COWBOY

wearing a ten-gallon hat and black-and-white cowhide chaps, a pair of ANTIQUE REVOLVERS holstered at his hips. Since we see him from below, we can make out his features.

MR. PARMAGI

...though I can't say I remember yours.

JOSEPH

(after a beat)
Those six-guns look real.

MR. PARMAGI

(a slight smile)
Are you here to play?

Joseph gets up and stands as tall as possible, but Parmagi is truly monstrous, almost a full head taller and twice as wide as Joseph.

(CONTINUED)

MR. PARMAGI

I have a permit for the guns, if you'd like to see it.

JOSEPH

Are you the Engineer?

MR. PARMAGI

(affably)

Oh, no. You flatter me, sir...

JOSEPH

I'm not going away. You can tell him that... You can tell him I got his message, and give him this message from me: I won't stop until I see the child alive.

Parmagi stares down at him with a small, pitying smile.

MR. PARMAGI

I can assure you, Detective, you are quite mistaken about the Engineer's "message"...

JOSEPH

Don't fuck with me... Is he here?

MR. PARMAGI

You like games, don't you, Detective?

Joseph doesn't answer.

MR. PARMAGI

The Engineer likes games... And it appears that you're playing one of his games right now...

(leaning closer)

He doesn't want you to stop. He wants you to play the game.

Parmagi LAUGHS, a low RUMBLE that shakes him like a Jell-o mountain.

Joseph flares, and grabs the giant like he might actually try to manhandle him.

JOSEPH

You think this is a goddamn GAME...?!

Tony sees this, and starts toward Joseph to help...

Suddenly, Joseph sees one of the Players stand up at a table across the room. He tips his hat back, revealing...

(CONTINUED)

75 CONTINUED: (2)

75

THE FACELESS KILLER

He walks toward the EXIT at the rear of the room. Although the Faceless Killer walks with an easy gait, he crosses the room with TERRIFIC SPEED...

Joseph lets Parmagi go, and starts RUNNING.

TONY

Joe!

Joseph reaches the EXIT DOOR, bursts through it to find himself...

76 EXT. OUTSIDE "THE CROSSING" -- CONTINUOUS

76

The rear of casino is at the edge of a dense FOREST. The sky is deep purple, and clear. Hard bright stars overhead. Joseph sees the Faceless Killer disappear into the trees. Running, he follows the Killer into...

77 EXT. THE WOODS -- CONTINUOUS

77

It's DARK. The branches form a tight canopy above, and the STRAIGHT BLACK TREE TRUNKS are hard to see.

Dodging the trees as best he can, Joseph runs flat-out, swatted by branches, his clothes and skin ripping against the bark...

Between the trees, he catches GLIMPSES: A coat...the shape of a man's head...white hands...a flash of teeth...

TONY'S VOICE calls from somewhere behind him:

TONY'S VOICE (O.S.)

JOSEPH, WHERE ARE YOU? WAIT!!

But Joseph runs even harder, uphill now, GASPING in the thin mountain air... His head pounds, his eyes water, he's getting delirious -- and now he glimpses...

SOMETHING ELSE

flitting through the trees: A lithe, pale FEMALE FORM...

NOW ANOTHER, flitting past his vision...

AND A THIRD CREATURE

is perched on a thick branch above. It's a TRUNCATED TORSO, with a SMALL HEAD, and A DOZEN ARMS entangled in the dark tree limbs -- the same hideous Creature Joseph saw at the foot of the stairs in his dream...

*
*
*
*

(CONTINUED)

77 CONTINUED:

77

Joseph turns, walking backwards, and stares up into the shadowy canopy of trees, unsure of what he's just seen...

*
*

AND HE STUMBLES

*

falling backwards and TUMBLING violently down a slope -- tearing through the brush, scraped by branches and thorns, until he lands hard at the bottom of the incline.

*
*
*

He pulls himself up against a tree, leaning back against the trunk. And now Joseph sees that he's at the edge of...

*
*

78 EXT. A SMALL CLEARING -- CONTINUOUS

78*

Chest heaving, baffled and completely disoriented, Joseph stares into the dense dark trees...

*

And TWO FIGURES EMERGE, liquid shadows, like the vague stalking horrors of a nightmare... Joseph just stares at them at first, not sure if he's really seeing anything...

JOSEPH

...Tony?

...then TWO MEN are revealed in the MOONLIGHT.

They're small Asian men with long hair, dressed as cowboys. One is the classic "villain," his hat and outfit black. The other's all in white, and wears a sheriff's star.

*

Still moving slowly, like he's watching himself in a dream, Joseph reaches for his gun -- but it's GONE...

And now the two Men are upon him: KICKING and PUNCHING with terrifying speed. All Joseph can do is try to cover up and survive...

After a few seconds, they step back. Joseph is curled up -- bleeding, clutching his ribs -- at the base of the towering rock wall.

Parmagi approaches, and stands over him, blocking out the stars.

Joseph looks up at him. He is physically and emotionally exhausted. Almost in tears, he manages to choke out the words:

JOSEPH

I'm gonna find the child...

FROM JOSEPH'S POV, we can't see Parmagi's face in the darkness. But the giant's voice is soft and clear:

MR. PARMAGI

That, I suspect, is the object of the game.

Parmagi leans down, and sets JOSEPH'S GUN on the ground at his feet. Confused, Joseph closes his eyes in a spasm of pain...

When he opens them, Parmagi is gone.

(CONTINUED)

78 CONTINUED:

78

He closes them again. And after a moment, we HEAR:

TONY'S VOICE
(calling out)
Joseph! Joe...!

Now FOOTSTEPS, approaching... And Joseph opens his eyes to see...

TONY

towering above him as Parmagi did before, framed against the sky. Tony has his own GUN in his hand, and is looking around...

Now he kneels beside Joseph, his face close, and reacts when he sees Joseph's injuries:

TONY
Holy shit... Come on.

As he lifts Joseph into his arms, we FADE TO BLACK...

...and FADE UP A TITLE: **MONDAY, 7:49:19 P.M.**

The seconds run -- 20, 21, 22 -- and we HEAR a SIREN, growing LOUDER and LOUDER until we...

FADE IN ON:

79 INT. JOSEPH'S CAR -- TRAVELLING -- NIGHT

79

Tony's at the wheel, racing through the CITY. On the roof of the car, a POLICE LIGHT flashes, strobing Tony's face.

Joseph is buckled into the passenger seat beside him. Clutching his throbbing, bleeding head...

JOSEPH
Turn it off...TURN IT OFF!!

Tony cuts the SIREN. Regards Joseph anxiously.

TONY
I been trying to keep you conscious...

JOSEPH
(groggy)
Where we goin'....?

TONY
To the hospital -- we're getting close.

He slows down, the POLICE LIGHT still FLASHING, as he approaches an intersection, waiting for the traffic to clear.

(CONTINUED)

79 CONTINUED:

79

Despite what Joseph has done to him, Tony is beating himself up over what happened at The Station.

TONY
I'm sorry, man, I got lost in the woods...
(quietly)
I should of been there.

JOSEPH
Take me to the House.

TONY
(turns on him)
What?! Man, you gotta go to the
hospital, you're fucked up -- you could
have a concussion...

JOSEPH
No! Just take me back to the Squad.

He leans forward, clutching his throbbing head again.

Tony looks at him a long beat, then...

TONY
God damn it!

...he TURNS hard to the right and speeds off in a different direction.

CUT TO:

80 INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT -- A HALLWAY -- NIGHT

80

AN OFFICE DOOR is labelled:

DR. PAUL GREGORY
Department Counselor

A FIST ENTERS FRAME and POUNDS on the door -- then we WIDEN TO REVEAL JOSEPH as he sees LIGHT in the crack beneath the Counselor's door. Joseph POUNDS on the closed door again...

And it OPENS. Dr. Gregory looks at him with concern.

DR. GREGORY
Joseph...?

JOSEPH
I need to talk to you.

(CONTINUED)

80 CONTINUED:

80

DR. GREGORY
Of course. Come in...

81 INT. DR. GREGORY'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

81

Joseph steps inside and the Counselor closes the door.

DR. GREGORY
You all right?
(motions to a chair)
Why don't you sit down...

Joseph shakes his head.

JOSEPH
I'm losing it, Doc...

DR. GREGORY
What do you mean?

JOSEPH
(after a beat)
I think... I think I'm going insane.

DR. GREGORY
That's a thought insane people rarely have.

Joseph grips the back of a chair and leans against it for support.

DR. GREGORY
Joseph. Please. Sit down.

JOSEPH
(shakes his head again)
If I do, I won't get back up so easy...

Dr. Gregory glances down at Joseph's white-knuckle grip on the back of the chair. Joseph's hands slowly twist back and forth.

JOSEPH
...Years ago, back when I first joined the force, I heard about somebody called the Engineer... I thought it was just some campfire story to scare Academy cadets and rookies... Then, today, I heard the name again.

Dr. Gregory tries to hide his reaction to the name, but his face betrays him.

JOSEPH
What, you know who I'm talking about...?

(CONTINUED)

81 CONTINUED:

81

DR. GREGORY
(poker-faced)
Please...continue what you were saying.
Why did you come here?

JOSEPH
(louder)
Answer my question! Do you know who the
Engineer is?!

Pause. Then Dr. Gregory takes Joseph by the arm and guides him into a chair. Joseph doesn't resist. The Counselor goes to the cabinet, and quickly finds the file he's looking for.

He sits across from Joseph, opens the file and flips through it, staring at the pages as he speaks...

DR. GREGORY
I've returned to this file many times...
It was 1986, my first year as Department
Counselor. He was a veteran, like you.
Good at his job... Until he caught a case
where everything led to one man, known
only by his street name, the "Engineer"...
(turning pages)
This detective began to mistrust his own
instincts. Self-doubt grew into
paranoia, and in his delusions he
elevated the Engineer into a figure of
almost supernatural power -- he said the
Engineer knew everything about every cop
on the force, especially him...

He stops at a page of the file transcript, and reads:

DR. GREGORY
"It's like he lives inside my head"...
(sighs)
His anxiety shifted rapidly into a deep
depression... And then one day he came
into work, sat down behind his desk...and
shot himself in the head.

Dr. Gregory begins flipping through the file again, then stops and stares at a certain page...

JOSEPH
Let me see that.

The Counselor slides the file over to Joseph. It's open to a...

(CONTINUED)

81 CONTINUED: (2)

81

CRIME SCENE PHOTOGRAPH

A black-and-white, life-size photo of the box.

Joseph stares at it.

DR. GREGORY

Do you recognize that? The detective had
it with him when he shot himself.

Joseph looks up at the Counselor, his face inscrutable.

JOSEPH

What is it?

Dr. Gregory hesitates a moment, studying Joseph's face.

DR. GREGORY

It's described in the report as a golden
box, about four inches on a side... I
must admit, I was intrigued enough to
actually look for it, but when I checked
the evidence archives, it wasn't there...

(shakes his head)

It's probably lost or destroyed by now.
All that's left of it is the picture...

The Counselor looks down at the photograph again, captivated
by the picture of the box...

And Joseph takes THE BOX ITSELF out of his jacket pocket. He
sets it down right on top of its black-and-white image.

Dr. Gregory stares at it in awed fascination.

JOSEPH

What is it, Doc? I think you know. I
think you couldn't get that picture out
of your head until you found out.

Slowly, the Counselor raises his eyes to meet Joseph's.

DR. GREGORY

You're right. I did some research.

(after a moment, quietly)

It's called the "Lament Configuration."
It shows up in Occult literature here and
there, through the centuries...

JOSEPH

What do they say about it?

(CONTINUED)

81 CONTINUED: (3)

81

DR. GREGORY

That it's a window...maybe a gateway.
You open it, and they come, and they
tear you apart...

JOSEPH

"They"...?

DR. GREGORY

They have various names... Some call them
Cenobites... Others call them Demons, and
say they take you to Hell.

JOSEPH

Well...they didn't take me.

Now Dr. Gregory stares at Joseph in awe.

DR. GREGORY

You opened the box...?

JOSEPH

(rubbing the back of his neck)
Yeah. Last night. I had one hell of a
fucking nightmare, and every since then
I've been seeing...I don't know...
(looks up at the Counselor)
..."Them."
(beat)
Christ, am I crazy...?

Dr. Gregory thinks a moment.

DR. GREGORY

I'm more of a psychiatrist than a priest.
Ask me if I believe in the Devil, and I
don't know what to tell you. But ask me
about this box...? From what I've read,
and seen, I believe it's real.

Now he speaks softly, staring down at the box's gleaming
golden surfaces...

DR. GREGORY

But the history is consistent. It opens,
they come for you, and they leave. So if
you say they left you behind...and you've
been seeing them...
(now he looks Joseph in the eye)
...then maybe they're still here.

Slowly FADE TO BLACK.

(CONTINUED)

81 CONTINUED: (4)

81

Now FADE UP A TITLE: **MONDAY, 8:33:56 P.M.**

As the seconds run, we HEAR CLASSICAL MUSIC...then JAZZ...
Spanish RANCHERA...OLDIES...COUNTRY...PROGRESSIVE...R&B...

Short snippets from one RADIO STATION after another as we...

FADE IN ON:

82 INT./EXT. JOSEPH'S CAR -- TRAVELLING -- RAINY NIGHT

82

A POINT-OF-VIEW THROUGH A WINDSHIELD

SUMMER RAIN. Everything's a blur. STREETLIGHTS are haloed.
NEON SIGNS leave snail-trails of color as they float past...

Joseph drives, blinking, trying to focus. His eyes are
heavy, his head throbs... Wincing with pain, he SWITCHES OFF
THE RADIO and pulls into...

83 EXT. A FAST FOOD RESTAURANT -- RAINY NIGHT

83

No other customers. Joseph's car in the drive-through lane.

JOSEPH (V.O.)

I live in a world of facts, of close
attention to detail... No matter how
confusing the mystery, no matter how
difficult the puzzle, the answers always
seem, in the end, as natural as rain...

84 EXT. CITY STREETS -- RAINY NIGHT

84

Joseph's car drives down gleaming wet streets. PEOPLE,
dressed lightly for the heat, dash for cover in the rain.
Everything looks strange, and dreamlike...

JOSEPH (V.O.)

Everything, every process, no matter how
complex, is a piece of reality in the
end, and the design can be understood...
All things can eventually be explained.

85 INT. INSIDE THE CAR -- TRAVELLING -- RAINY NIGHT

85

Joseph is sweating, and shivering despite the heat...

JOSEPH (V.O.)

But maybe some facts are in the eye of the
beholder...

A RED LIGHT. He stops. COFFEE steaming in a paper cup. He
sips, clutching it with shaking hands.

(CONTINUED)

85 CONTINUED:

85

JOSEPH (V.O.)
And maybe some explanations...are not of
this world.

A LITTLE GIRL splashes through a puddle on the sidewalk. Her
MOTHER is leaving her behind...

LITTLE GIRL
(cries out)
Mom-my, wait...!

Her voice haunts Joseph. He watches her running down the
street. And suddenly, he has...

86 INT. A MEMORY FLASH: THE LONG HALLWAY

86

from his nightmare, SNOW drifting in the slanting light, and
the CHILD'S DISTANT VOICE:

CHILD'S VOICE
Help...meeee...

87 INT. INSIDE THE CAR -- SAME

87

Joseph snaps out of it. His eyes are wide with irrational
terror. He dumps the coffee and takes off, driving fast...

CUT TO:

88 EXT. JOSEPH'S HOUSE -- RAINY NIGHT

88

A SHAKY, MOVING POINT-OF-VIEW

crossing the yard to the FRONT DOOR of JOSEPH'S HOUSE. A key
in the lock, the door opens, and now we're...

89 INT. INSIDE JOSEPH'S HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

89

MOVING through the living room, down the hallway, and into...

90 INT. JOSEPH'S HOUSE -- CHLOE'S ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

90

Chloe sleeps soundly in the window's MOONLIGHT.

Joseph leans in the doorway to his little girl's room,
watching her sleep, like he's afraid to cross the threshold.
Chloe's plug-in NIGHT-LIGHT bathes him softly from below.

His wife, Melanie, exits the bedroom down the hall.

MELANIE
Where have you been? You didn't even
call, I paged you...

(CONTINUED)

90 CONTINUED:

90

JOSEPH
(still staring at his daughter)
I told you, I was working a case.

MELANIE
(approaching him)
Why are you lying to me, Joseph? You
can't keep doing this, you know we can't
just keep...
(she sees him clearly now)
Oh my God...!

Bruised and battered, with haunted eyes, he looks terrorized,
like a prisoner-of-war. She gently touches his face.

MELANIE
What happened to you? How --

JOSEPH
I got jumped -- a couple guys -- I'm all
right...

CHLOE
Daddy...? Are you home?

Chloe's sitting up in bed, backlit by the moonlight, an angel.

JOSEPH
No, sweetheart -- just for a minute, then
I gotta go...

MELANIE
(taking his arm)
Come in here.

She pulls him toward their bedroom. Chloe's rubbing her eyes,
murmuring sleepily as she watches him go.

CHLOE
When are you coming home...?

91 INT. JOSEPH'S HOUSE -- HIS BEDROOM -- SAME

91

Melanie lays Joseph down. She rushes out, and comes back
with a wet rag and iodine, starts ministering to his wounds.

As she looks away to do something, Joseph starts to reach out
to her -- but as he reaches out, he sees...

A CREATURE'S HAND at the end of his own arm.

He jerks his arm back, but when he looks at his hand, it's
normal again. He lies back on the pillow and closes his
eyes. After some time...

(CONTINUED)

91 CONTINUED:

91

A TELEPHONE'S RING

awakens him. STAYING ON JOSEPH, we hear MELANIE answer...

MELANIE (O.S.)
Hello...? Oh -- um, hi, how are you?
(pause)
Uh-huh...well -- wait! Hello? Hello...?

Joseph turns to her as she hangs up the cordless phone.

MELANIE
(confused)
That was your mother...

JOSEPH
(sitting up)
...What?

MELANIE
I know, what's it been, five years? I
almost didn't recognize her voice. She
said she had a visitor...

CLOSE ON JOSEPH as his expression darkens. A premonition.

MELANIE (O.S.)
She said he's the one you're looking for,
something like that... I think she said
he was some kind of engineer.

Adrenaline. Joseph's on his feet.

JOSEPH
Do not leave this house. You understand?
Lock the doors, and the windows, and...

He lunges to the closet, yanks it open, reaches high...

Brings down a GUN. Checks the load, puts it in her hands.

JOSEPH
Do you remember how to use this?

MELANIE
Jesus Christ, Joseph, what --

JOSEPH
--DO YOU REMEMBER?!!

MELANIE
YES!!!

(CONTINUED)

91 CONTINUED: (2)

91

Down the hall, Chloe begins to WAIL.

MELANIE

Joseph, are you in some kind of --

JOSEPH

--Yes. Yes, I am. We are. So just do what I say and listen to me now.

She nods, and Joseph steps quickly into...

92 INT. JOSEPH'S HOME -- THE HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

92

He starts down the hallway with Melanie close behind. Chloe stands in her doorway, BAWLING, confused and terrified.

CHLOE

DAD-EEE!!!

He walks right past her.

MELANIE

Joseph, please, tell me something...

Chloe's freaked out, staring at the gun in Mommy's hand.

CHLOE

(gulping air between sobs)

I want...my...Dad...dy...

The FRONT DOOR SLAMS behind him.

MELANIE

It's just us, baby...Daddy's gone.

93 EXT. CONVALESCENT HOME -- NIGHT

93*

The RAIN HAS STOPPED. Joseph's car SPEEDS past a sign that says "COLORADO CONVALESCENT CARE," then SKIDS into the wet parking lot.

*
*
*

94 INT. CONVALESCENT HOME -- FRONT DESK -- SAME

94

Joseph approaches the front desk. A NURSE looks up at him.

NURSE

Can I help you, sir?

JOSEPH

I'm here to see Art and Mary Thorne. I'm their son, Joseph.

*

(CONTINUED)

94 CONTINUED:

94

NURSE

I didn't know the Thornes had a son.

*

JOSEPH

It's an emergency. Did they have any other visitors today?

NURSE

(she looks him over; he looks like hell)

Are you sure you're really their son?

Fighting his temper, Joseph shows her his I.D. and his shield. She hesitates, then pulls out a thick REGISTER. Scans the names, then pushes it toward him.

NURSE

They had no other visitors today -- or any other day that I can remember. You'll have to sign in. Room 116.

Joseph starts quickly down the hallway. The Nurse gets up and follows him...

NURSE

Sir...you have to check in... Sir, please slow down! Wait...

95 INT. CONVALESCENT HOME -- HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

95

JOSEPH'S POINT-OF-VIEW: The hallway seems impossibly long. The floor is shiny black, and seems to SHIFT under the fluorescent lights. Joseph struggles to keep his balance...

THE WALLS breathe in and out, in and out... RESIDENTS and ORDERLIES are blurry, their faces unclear...

NURSE (O.S.)

(her voice growing faint as he leaves her behind)

Mr. Thorne...please...

*

Now a FEMALE RESIDENT approaches Joseph, going the opposite way -- and Joseph is SEEING DOUBLE: two blurry images of her...

JOSEPH

rubs his eyes and face, looks again...

JOSEPH'S POINT-OF-VIEW

He sees her clearly now, just one old lady in a housecoat. We HEAR a BUZZING SOUND, and without stopping, Joseph looks behind him and sees...

(CONTINUED)

96 CONTINUED:

96

MOTHER
(without looking up)
Why don't you visit us, Joe? He gets a
little worse, every day...

Slowly, drawn against his will by the old man's eyes, Joseph approaches the bed...

HIS FATHER

can't be much past 70, but looks like he belongs in a grave. Strokes have twisted and paralyzed his face. His arms and hands quiver with involuntary spasms...

Only his EYES still seem alive. Unnaturally so.

They're fixed on Joseph, light blue and shiny-wet in a sliver of LAMPLIGHT. Piercing... Piercing Joseph to the soul.

MOTHER
(in a strange monotone)
Why don't you visit us, Joe? We never
see you anymore... We don't like it
here...

JOSEPH
(stammering like a little boy)
I...I don't know, Mother, I...try to --

A GURGLING SOUND from the old man interrupts him. Joseph lurches back in horror. His Father's lips move without words...

And now A DIFFERENT SOUND turns Joseph's head. A HISSING sound from the CLOSET across the room -- maybe the sound of something BREATHING...

LIGHT dims and brightens in the crack beneath the door. Joseph draws his GUN, approaches the closet...

MOTHER
(without looking up, still
crocheting)
Put that away, Joseph Thorne!

*

Joseph has his hand on the knob. He takes a deep breath, counting up his courage -- then FLINGS THE DOOR OPEN to reveal...

97 INT. A CHILD'S BEDROOM -- SAME

97

He steps inside and looks around...

It's the same room he entered after opening the box: A child's empty bed...a ball glove in one corner...a model airplane hanging by a string...

(CONTINUED)

97 CONTINUED:

97

JOSEPH
(softly, staring in wonder)
What is this...?

Suddenly, the CLOSET DOOR SLAMS SHUT behind him. Joseph tries to open it: The knob won't turn...

JOSEPH
Mom...? Mom, let me in...!

His Mother SCREAMS, and his Father lets out a pitiful WAIL -- louder than his frail body would seem capable of...

Joseph throws himself against the door -- WHAM! -- again -- WHAM!!

Now he hears a NEW SOUND -- indescribable, sort of like the SLICE and SLAP of a butcher shop, or the sound of a barber's straight razor SCRAPING the flesh...

His PARENTS' SCREAMS are pure animal now, a sound irretrievably severed from any human speech...

The sound freezes Joseph in his tracks...

*

And now BLOOD seeps slowly under the bedroom door. As Joseph -- horrified, paralyzed -- watches the POOL OF BLOOD begin to cover the floor...

*

*

*

A TELEPHONE RINGS

and Joseph jerks upward from the bed as he wakes up, back in...

98 INT. JOSEPH'S HOME -- BEDROOM -- NIGHT

98

Bathed in sweat, he looks around in confusion as we HEAR the telephone continue to RING...

He's been dreaming since the moment he closed his eyes.

Now his wife picks up the phone...

MELANIE
Hello...? Oh -- um, hi, how are you?
(pause)
Uh-huh...well -- wait! Hello? Hello...?

Joseph sits up in bed, disoriented and afraid.

MELANIE
(hanging up, confused)
That was your mother...

(CONTINUED)

98 CONTINUED:

98

JOSEPH
(still reeling)
...What?

MELANIE (O.S.)
I know, what's it been, five years? I
almost didn't recognize her voice. She
said she had a visitor...

SWOOP IN CLOSE ON JOSEPH'S FACE as she continues:

MELANIE (O.S.)
She said he's the one you're looking for,
something like that... I think she said
he was some kind of engineer.

As Joseph BOLTS up out of the bed, we...

SMASH CUT TO:

99 INT. JOSEPH'S CAR -- TRAVELLING -- NIGHT

99*

No rain outside, but RAINDROPS still speckle the car windows.
Joseph clutches his throbbing head as he drives, POUNDING the
wheel...

*
*

100 INT. CONVALESCENT HOME -- SAME

100

Joseph blows right by the front desk, GUN in hand, and turns
down the hallway. The NURSE jumps up and calls to A SECURITY
GUARD seated a few yards away, reading a magazine:

NURSE
(pointing down the hallway)
That man had a gun...!

101 INT. CONVALESCENT HOME -- HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

101

As Joseph moves quickly down the quiet hallway, his head is
on a swivel, taking everything in...

But it all looks normal this time. The floor is steady, the
hallway is empty, the walls don't breathe.

Most of the doors are closed, and he can HEAR the elderly
RESIDENTS TALKING softly and WATCHING TV inside the rooms.

SECURITY GUARD (O.S.)
DROP IT, AND DON'T YOU FUCKING MOVE!

Joseph sees the SECURITY GUARD coming down the hallway, pointing
his GUN, the Nurse following him at a cautious distance. Joseph
stops next to his PARENTS' DOOR, and sets down his gun.

(CONTINUED)

101 CONTINUED:

101

JOSEPH
I'm a Detective. Denver P.D.

SECURITY GUARD
Show me -- take it out slow...

Joseph pulls his jacket aside, and the Guard sees his shield.
Now the Nurse approaches him.

JOSEPH
(to the Nurse)
I'm looking for the Thornes. *

NURSE
(cross)
Yes, we've been expecting you -- if you
had only shown some identification...

JOSEPH
(picking up his gun)
I'm their son. I'm here to see them.

NURSE
I didn't know the Thornes had a son... *

Joseph reaches to open the door...

NURSE
They're not here, sir.

He stops with his hand on the knob.

NURSE
We called the police almost an hour ago.
They've been missing since dinner, and
we've searched all around... They just
seem to have vanished.

Beat. Then Joseph yanks open the door, and steps inside...

102 INT. HIS PARENTS' ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

102

Empty. He goes to the closet: nothing but outdated clothes.
The Nurse follows him in, and smooths the bedspread out of
habit as she speaks:

NURSE
It's so strange... Mr. Thorne never
leaves his bed anymore, and they've never
been prone to wander, like some of our... *

She trails off, and Joseph approaches her. She's staring
down at...

(CONTINUED)

102 CONTINUED:

102

THE BEDSPREAD

which has FIVE DARK LINES across it where the Nurse pressed against it with her fingers.

Joseph reaches out with his own fingertip and PRESSES it into the covers, lifts his finger away.

A DARK CIRCLE remains, growing as they look at it. Joseph reaches down and peels the covers back...

The BEDSHEET beneath is completely soaked with BLOOD.

The Nurse stares at the sheet a moment, puzzled... Then covers her mouth to stifle a SCREAM.

As she rushes out the door in the background, Joseph sees something on the dresser across the room.

IT'S A SMALL PACKAGE

The wrapping paper is for a little boy's birthday, covered with pictures of ball gloves, toy trains, and model planes. Attached is a small card, handwritten: "Joseph."

He opens the package, and sees TWO MORE BLOODY FINGERS, child-sized, with the fingerprints burned off.

Underneath the bloody fingers is a handwritten NOTE:

416-C Hathaway Lane

103 EXT. CONVALESCENT HOME -- NIGHT

103*

Joseph hurries out of the building. As he starts down the wet sidewalk toward the parking lot, he sees...

*
*

TONY

getting out of his car.

TONY

Your wife said you might be here.

JOSEPH

(approaching him)

Look, I know you don't have much reason to trust me right now, but listen: I found out more about the Engineer, and --

TONY

--The Captain wants to see you.

(CONTINUED)

Joseph stops a few feet away and stares at Tony.

JOSEPH
...You told him about Daphne?

TONY
No, not yet... You're out of control, Joe.

Joseph shows him the NOTE he found in his parents' room:

JOSEPH
Come with me to this address, and we'll
catch the son of a bitch... We'll stop
all this, together...

He winces in pain, and leans against the car, holding his head.

JOSEPH
I'm scared, Tony... I can't do this alone.

TONY
Then come in with me. We'll talk to the
Captain together.

JOSEPH
About what? About the Engineer? He
won't believe it, not until I can prove
that the Engineer is the connection --

TONY
(losing it)
--He's not the fucking connection, Joe!
You're the fucking connection!!

Joseph looks away, shaking his head...

TONY
You knew Jay Cho, and Daphne, and Bernie...
(calming down)
There is no "Engineer"...there's just you.

Beat. Then Joseph suddenly takes a SWING at him. Tony slips
the punch, grabs Joseph, and they both go down hard on the
concrete. They trade a few sloppy punches on the ground
before scrambling to their feet.

Then they separate, and square off again, chests heaving...

JOSEPH
(shouting at him)
You think I killed those people? You
think I could do that...?!

Joseph stops a few feet away and stares at Tony.

JOSEPH
...You told him about Daphne?

TONY
No, not yet... You're out of control, Joe.

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You're the fucking connection!!

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You knew Jay Cho, and Daphne, and Bernie...
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There is no "Engineer"...there's just you.

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the punch, grabs Joseph, and they both go down hard on the
concrete. They trade a few sloppy punches on the ground
before scrambling to their feet.

Then they separate, and square off again, chests heaving...

JOSEPH
(shouting at him)
You think I killed those people? You
think I could do that...?!

103 CONTINUED: (2)

103

TONY
(shouting back)
You were with the girl! You knew about
Bernie, and there was nothing on that
goddamn videotape -- and you knew where
to find the FINGER! What am I supposed
to think...?!

Joseph leans over, pressing his fingers to his temples: He's
bleeding again, from his previous head injuries...

Tony sees that, and is hit by remorse.

TONY
Oh, man...I didn't mean to do that.
(reaches toward him)
Let me see --

Joseph pushes him away. Speaks more quietly now.

JOSEPH
You think I could do those things...

TONY
I don't know, Joseph. Ask me yesterday,
I say "No fucking way." But today... I
just don't know.

Joseph stares at his partner a moment. Then he turns away,
and gets in his car. Tony steps up to the window.

TONY
You need help, Joe.

JOSEPH
(throws the car into gear)
Go to hell.

Tony watches him drive away as we slowly FADE TO BLACK.

Now we FADE UP A TITLE: **MONDAY, 9:58:08 P.M.**

The seconds run -- 9, 10, 11 -- and we FADE IN ON:

*

104 INT. JOSEPH'S CAR -- TRAVELLING -- NIGHT

104*

Driving, Joseph peers into the darkness...

*

(CONTINUED)

104 CONTINUED:

104

He sees a POLICE CAR up ahead, coming the opposite way. He turns down a side street, afraid to let it pass, afraid to let the COPS see his face in the headlights...

Paranoia. The world is closing in.

CUT TO:

105 EXT. AN OLD APARTMENT BUILDING -- NIGHT

105*

The sign reads, "416 Hathaway Lane." The building seems deserted. Joseph tries the door, and it OPENS...

106 INT. APARTMENT BUILDING -- STAIRCASE -- SAME

106

Joseph hurries up the rickety staircase, GUN in hand...

107 INT. APARTMENT BUILDING -- HALLWAY -- SAME

107

Apartment C is on the third floor. Its door is also unlocked. He steps inside...

108 INT. APARTMENT "C" -- CONTINUOUS

108

The room is completely DARK, stifling hot, and it stinks. Joseph clicks on his POCKET FLASHLIGHT and starts across the room.

No furniture, no bed. The single room is completely empty except for a TELESCOPE on a tripod at the window, and an old-fashioned ROTARY TELEPHONE on the floor beside it.

He stares at the telescope. Then OPENS THE WINDOW in front of it, letting in a glimmer of MOONLIGHT. Warily, Joseph leans down to the telescope's eyepiece...

109 THE TELESCOPE POINT-OF-VIEW

109

looks into a WELL-LIT ROOM, through an open window.

*

The scope is centered and perfectly focused on TONY, who sits backwards on a chair, his arms crossed in front of him and tied to the back of the chair. He is also GAGGED.

JOSEPH (O.S.)

Tony...where the fuck...

He SWIVELS THE SCOPE, and the CIRCULAR POV tracks its way across a LARGE BRICK BUILDING, then down to the entrance...

Engraved above the door:

*

Mountain Vista Catholic Elementary School

*

(CONTINUED)

109 CONTINUED:

109

Below that, a hand-painted BANNER hangs: "INDEPENDENCE DAY
PAGEANT -- WELCOME, PARENTS!"

CHILDREN exit the building in various costumes: Revolutionary
War soldiers in tricornered hats, Paul Revere with a
hobbyhorse, Betsy Ross with her hand-sewn, 13-star flag...

We see the children and PARENTS as they walk to their cars --
and now A PRETTY WOMAN in her 20s emerges, holding two LITTLE
BOYS by the hand...

*
*

The boys are seven-year-old TWINS: a matching pair of top-
hatted Uncle Sams, dressed in red, white, and blue.

110 INT. APARTMENT -- SAME

110

CLOSE ON JOSEPH as he reacts, recognizing them.

JOSEPH
(softly)
Oh, no...

111 THE TELESCOPE POV

111

follows the Woman and the Twins down the sidewalk to a parked
car -- it's TONY'S POLICE SEDAN. As they get close, the
Woman frowns, seeing that the car is empty...

*
*

We hear Joseph's voice as he mutters to himself, panicking:

*

JOSEPH (O.S.)
That's right, he's not there -- now come
on, look up, he's upstairs, look up...

*
*
*

The TELESCOPE POV SWIVELS BACK UP TO THE WINDOW, and we see...

*

TONY SCREAMING

His gag has been removed. His body strains against the bonds,
flinching and jerking as he SCREAMS, again and again and again --
too far away for us to hear.

*
*

SOMEONE is behind him, only the shoulders visible...

JOSEPH (O.S.)
(softly, in anguish)
Oh Christ, somebody help him...

*

He SWIVELS THE POV BACK DOWN TO TONY'S FAMILY, who still
stand next to the police sedan: Now they're turning to stare
up toward the school window...

*
*
*

(CONTINUED)

111 CONTINUED:

111

We can't even hear an echo of the screams. But to Tony's
wife and their twin boys, the screaming voice must be
horrifyingly loud...and familiar.

*
*
*

JOSEPH (O.S.)
(panicked)
Come on, it's him, it's your husband,
goddamnit, do something --

*
*
*
*

The TELESCOPE SWIVELS BACK UP TOWARD THE WINDOW --

*

(CONTINUED)

111 CONTINUED: (2)

111

-- and we see that it's too late: Tony slumps lifelessly,
his head tipped forward over the back of the chair. *

And now THE FACELESS KILLER steps out from behind him.

He pulls Tony's head back by the hair: Tony's mouth hangs
open, his eyes fixed wide.

The Faceless Killer holds A CHILD'S SEVERED FINGER up toward
the window, as if he's presenting to Joseph, making sure he
can see it... *

JOSEPH (O.S.)
(horrified)
Another finger...you fucking monster... *

...then the Killer PLACES THE CHILD'S FINGER IN TONY'S MOUTH
and clamps the mouth shut, the finger clutched in Tony's teeth. *

The Killer walks back behind Tony, and -- out-of-focus, in
the background -- we see a DOOR open and close. *

112 INT. APARTMENT -- SAME

112

Joseph holds his breath for several seconds, his eye to the
scope, unable to move...

Then the TELEPHONE RINGS, breaking the spell. He picks it up.

A MAN'S VOICE
(over the telephone)
Do you know who I am, Detective?

The voice is vaguely familiar...

JOSEPH
(after a beat)
You're the Engineer.

No reply.

JOSEPH
I got your message. I understand your
fucking game...

No answer. A silent presence on the line.

JOSEPH
Is the child even alive...?

Still nothing. Joseph loses it, SCREAMS:

(CONTINUED)

112 CONTINUED:

112

JOSEPH
WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME?!!

THE MAN'S VOICE
(almost gently)
I want you to go home. It's time for you
to go home...

(CONTINUED)

112 CONTINUED: (2)

112

DIAL TONE. Joseph drops the phone and rushes out the door.

FADE TO BLACK.

Now FADE UP A TITLE: **MONDAY, 11:05:00 P.M.**

As the seconds run -- **01, 02, 03** -- we HEAR a HELLISH MEDLEY of SOUNDS: the SCREAMS of the various VICTIMS, the SIZZLE of the Faceless Killer's tongue, and the SENSUAL GIGGLES and SIGHS of the Female Creatures...

THESE SOUNDS CONTINUE as we FADE IN ON:

113 INT. JOSEPH'S CAR -- TRAVELLING -- NIGHT

113*

As he drives, Joseph calls in the location of Tony's murder, but we BARELY HEAR his words, while the HELLISH SOUNDS get LOUDER and LOUDER...

COP CARS

seem to be the only others on the streets. Joseph avoids them, taking side alleys, sudden turns -- SKIDDING and SLIDING around corners...

ONE PATROL CAR sticks with him, tailing him, finally chasing him with SIRENS. The sirens' wail only adds to the HELLISH CACOPHONY. Now Joseph approaches A RAILROAD CROSSING...

114 INT./EXT. JOSEPH'S CAR/A RAILROAD CROSSING -- SAME

114

We HEAR A TRAIN, its WHISTLE joining the WAILING SIRENS and the medley of SLASHING and GIGGLING and SCREAMS...

Joseph SCREAMS HIMSELF at the raging pain in his head, POUNDING on the steering wheel...

Weaving through the lowered CROSSING GATES, Joseph just gets across before the TRAIN barrels through, coming STRAIGHT AT CAMERA until its HEADLIGHT FILLS THE SCREEN...

CUT TO BLACK.

Now FADE UP A TITLE: **MIDNIGHT**

And we FADE IN ON:

115 EXT. SUBURBAN STREET -- NIGHT

115*

Joseph parks on the street behind his house. Opens the trunk of his car, and takes out a 12-GAUGE SAWED-OFF SHOTGUN. He

(CONTINUED)

115 CONTINUED:

115

attaches a circular, 12-round "Street Sweeper" magazine, and hops the fence into his yard.

116 EXT. JOSEPH'S HOUSE -- BACK YARD -- CONTINUOUS

116

Joseph crosses the yard, slips a key into the back door.... *

117 INT. JOSEPH'S HOME -- HALLWAY -- SAME

117

He enters quietly, closes the door behind him. As he walks down the hallway, he shivers... Why does it feel so cold in here...? Now he HEARS the sound of WIND. Puzzled, he steps into... *

118 INT. JOSEPH'S HOME -- THE LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

118

He stops dead. Stares. Dumbfounded. *

HIS WIFE AND DAUGHTER *

are CHAINED to a tall WOODEN POST in the center of the room. They stand back-to-back against the rough, square-sided post, which is studded top-to-bottom with jagged barbs and hooks. *

MORE CHAINS dangle from the ceiling, swaying in the wind. SNOW BLOWS WILDLY around the room, shimmering in a shaft of MOONLIGHT, swirling all around their blue-cold FROZEN BODIES, which are partially hidden in shadow... *

...AND THE POST IS SLOWLY TURNING, bringing their faces in and out of the slash of light. *

TWO SMALL, FLESH-COLORED OBJECTS rest on an ornamental mantel next to Joseph, just inside the doorway. He doesn't need a closer look to know that these are TINY FINGERS. *

He just stands there, his hair WHIPPING in the WIND. Staring at the fixed, rigid faces of the ones he has forsaken. *

But at least he's not alone.

A MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
(calling from the kitchen)
Welcome home, Detective!

(CONTINUED)

118 CONTINUED:

118

Still in shock, Joseph slowly turns toward the FAMILIAR VOICE...

DR. GREGORY

walks into the room. He's mildly cheerful, easy-going as always. He nods toward Joseph's frozen wife and daughter.

DR. GREGORY

It takes hours to die of exposure. Hours
in which no one came home, no one was there
to hear their cries...

*

Suddenly, Joseph sees a slight movement in the corner of his eye. *

Melanie and Chloe are still alive.

His wife speaks as her face slowly turns into the light -- her
voice has an eerie, submerged quality:

*

MELANIE

Why are you lying to me, Joseph...? You
can't keep doing this...

Staring, shaking his head, Joseph steps toward them in fear
and disbelief... And now his daughter's face catches the
light, as she turns to stare up into her father's eyes:

*

*

*

CHLOE

Daddy...are you home...?

Her voice and her innocent gaze stab Joseph to the core. He
falls to his knees beside her.

*

*

JOSEPH

(a choked whisper)

I'm here, baby...I'm here...

*

*

Shivering, Chloe struggles to speak again, her blue-cold lips
cracking as she says:

*

CHLOE

I miss you, Daddy... When are you coming
home...?

He's speechless. His face contorts in pain. He reaches out
to touch her, his hand closing gently around her tiny arm as
the post slowly continues to turn...

*

*

*

And her little arm SNAPS OFF like a twig in his hand.

*

JOSEPH

CHLOE!

(CONTINUED)

118 CONTINUED: (2)

118

Joseph RECOILS from her in shock, falling back onto the floor.

*

Chloe continues to SPLINTER, the CRACKS EXTENDING INTO HER
MOTHER'S BRITTLE FLESH -- until Joseph's wife and daughter
are like two fissuring sculptures of glass...

*

*

*

(CONTINUED)

118 CONTINUED: (3)

118

And Joseph watches in horror as they SHATTER TO PIECES.

*

Slowly, Joseph stands. He turns to face the Counselor,
unable to speak. After a moment:

*

*

DR. GREGORY

They found Tony...and the child's finger
-- you know, the one the killer left in
his mouth...? This time, the print
wasn't burned off.

Now Joseph sees that the Counselor has JOSEPH'S POLICE FILE
in one hand, and a COMPUTER PRINTOUT in the other...

DR. GREGORY

They ran the print taken from the severed
finger, and -- like a miracle -- they got
a match almost instantly.

Dr. Gregory holds up the printout, which depicts a BLOW-UP OF
A SINGLE FINGERPRINT with lines of information below.

Then he opens Joseph's file to the "PERSONAL DATA PAGE,"
which contains all of Joseph's I.D. information -- including
HIS FINGERPRINTS, taken when Joseph joined the force.

The Counselor holds the file page up next to the printout,
and smiles good-naturedly.

DR. GREGORY

What they found doesn't make any sense,
Joseph, because...the child's fingerprint...
Well, it's yours.

Joseph still just stares at him, a zombie.

JOSEPH

(chokes out)

I...I don't understand...

DR. GREGORY

I know. You even misunderstood me before,
when I told you to go home -- I didn't
mean this place, I meant your first home,
the home you grew up in...

Now a CHILL runs down Joseph's spine as it starts to sink in,
not yet quite coming clear...

DR. GREGORY

But I can help you understand...

(CONTINUED)

118 CONTINUED: (3)

118

He holds up Joseph's police file, taps it with his finger.

DR. GREGORY

You see, I know everything about you...
And now, your file is almost complete.

Finally, Joseph speaks, an astonished whisper:

JOSEPH

You're the Engineer...

DR. GREGORY

(shrugs)

It's as good a name as any.

He tosses Joseph's file aside...

And suddenly, THE FLESH ON DR. GREGORY'S SKULL SPLITS into a patchwork of fissures. And from all directions, SILVER PINS FLY IN and SINK INTO HIS HEAD.

Joseph is terrified. He raises the SHOTGUN with trembling hands.

JOSEPH

What are you...?

DR. GREGORY/PINHEAD

I'm not the killer, Joseph... If you want to catch the killer, you need to go home.

(beat)

Go home, Joseph.

And as Joseph just stares, catatonic, the Creature turns and walks away...

JOSEPH

(snapping out of it)

STOP!

BOOM! He fires, taking a chunk out of the kitchen doorway -- too late, the Creature is gone. Joseph rushes through the kitchen, yanks open the back door, and steps into...

119 INT. A CHILD'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

119

We recognize it instantly -- the empty bed, the ball glove in one corner, the model airplane hanging by a string...

Joseph turns slowly in a circle, shotgun in hand. He has no idea anymore what to expect, what to do, or what to believe.

SNOW slants across the windowpane. He peers outside...

120 EXT. JOSEPH'S POV THROUGH WINDOW -- DAY

120

It's OPEN COUNTRY, as far as the eye can see. Joseph's suburban neighborhood is gone. SNOW blankets the farmland, drifts deep against the side of a barn half an acre away, and caps the distant mountains.

121 INT. CHILD'S BEDROOM -- SAME

121

Turning away from the window, Joseph sees...

A LITTLE BOY

sitting on the floor, putting together a JIGSAW PUZZLE. The boy wears a RED BASEBALL CAP, a red t-shirt, and blue jeans. Joseph can't quite see the Little Boy's face as the boy leans over the puzzle, studying the pieces closely...

A WOMAN'S VOICE calls from somewhere:

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
JO-SEPH...! JOSEPH THORNE!

*

The Little Boy hops up, and Joseph stops short, seeing his face...

The Little Boy is Joseph as a seven-year-old.

YOUNG JOSEPH runs out the bedroom door, and Joseph follows.

122 INT. JOSEPH'S CHILDHOOD HOME -- UPSTAIRS HALLWAY -- SAME

122

This is not the home where Joseph, Melanie, and Chloe lived. This is an entirely different place, an old house in the country... It's the house Joseph grew up in.

We also recognize this house as the house from Joseph's dream in the bathroom.

Young Joseph is already descending the STAIRCASE at the end of the hall, taking the stairs two at a time...

Joseph hurries after him. Young Joseph takes a left at the foot of the stairs. Joseph pauses, and glances to his right, into...

123 INT. JOSEPH'S CHILDHOOD HOME -- THE LIVING ROOM -- SAME

123

It looks exactly as it did nearly thirty years ago: 1960s and '70s furniture mixed with antiques, an RCA console "Hi-Fi," and Nixon on the cover of Time...

Joseph's FATHER is asleep in a recliner. An episode of "Dragnet" plays quietly on the TV SCREEN in front of him.

(CONTINUED)

123 CONTINUED:

123

Joseph stares in wonder, lost in this Christmas Carol/time-warp moment...

JOSEPH
...Dad...?

Then he hears...

A WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
I made brownies, Joseph -- your favorite!

Slowly, Joseph turns away from the living room to see...

THE KITCHEN DOORWAY

He hears HIS MOTHER'S VOICE from inside the kitchen:

MOTHER (O.S.)
You know why I baked you brownies, Joe?
Because you're such a good boy...

124 INT. JOSEPH'S CHILDHOOD HOME -- THE KITCHEN -- SAME

124

Joseph walks in, and sees HIS MOTHER standing at the kitchen counter: Young and beautiful, she wears a cooking apron, her hair up in a scarf.

She carries a tray of brownies over to Young Joseph, who sits at the table, watching her happily. She cuts the brownies with a large KITCHEN KNIFE, and sets a few out for him on a plate.

She smiles as the little boy take a bite, then leans down to kiss him on the cheek.

MOTHER
I love you, Joseph.
(picking up the tray)
We'll save some for your Father, for when
he wakes up from his nap...

Now she walks back to the counter, and stands facing away from us as she begins to wrap the rest of the brownies...

And the adult Joseph, watching, is overwhelmed by the pain and joy of seeing himself so young and bright and innocent.

Finally, he turns to his Mother, finding his voice:

JOSEPH
(emotional)
Mom...?

(CONTINUED)

And then it all goes wrong.

Dishes SHATTER on the shelves. AN ARRANGEMENT OF FRUIT in a large bowl decomposes into nothing. The cabinets CRACK with age. The whole room, the WHOLE INSIDE OF THE HOUSE weathers and rots through years of neglect in an instant.

And Young Joseph BEGINS TO FADE AWAY...

The little boy becomes a GHOST-LIKE IMAGE OF YOUTHFUL INNOCENCE, superimposed against the decaying old house. He LAUGHS again, his voice a FADING ECHO...

Joseph reaches out toward his young self, and the boy DISAPPEARS.

JOSEPH

NO!

Now Mother turns to face him. She's utterly transformed.

Not only 30 years older -- her EYES HAVE BEEN GOUGED OUT, leaving empty skull-sockets, and BOTH OF HER EARS HAVE BEEN SLICED OFF CLEAN. She approaches blindly, knife in hand...

MOTHER

(in a strange monotone)

Why don't you visit us, Joe? We never see you, or hear from you anymore...

JOSEPH

(paralyzed with horror)

Oh... Oh my God...

Joseph stumbles backwards into the arms of his FATHER: rail-thin and GURGLING, his face distorted by paralysis, the old man is ALSO MISSING HIS EYES AND EARS...

MOTHER

(still approaching him)

We don't like it here...

JOSEPH

M-Mother, stop!

The old man's arms TIGHTEN, one of them around Joseph's throat.

And Mother's still approaching, groping with her knife hand, the SHARP BLADE slashing blindly back and forth...

Joseph tries to shout again, but he can't make more than a squeak -- his Father's forearm is CRUSHING his windpipe...

(CONTINUED)

124 CONTINUED: (2)

124

Now the knife-point RIPS a bloody gash in Joseph's chest, and Joseph FIRES THE SHOTGUN on reflex --

BLAM! Cutting his Mother down.

He tears free of his Father's grip and turns around, sees the old man's EYELESS FACE for the first time as his Father REACHES TOWARD HIM AGAIN...

BLAM! BLAM! Father goes down.

Hyperventilating, his face striped with blood, Joseph backs out of the kitchen, staring down at the mangled corpses of his parents...

CHILD'S VOICE (O.S.)

Help...me...

Turning toward the voice, Joseph sees...

125 INT. A SLOW-MOTION IMAGE: THE LONG DARK HALLWAY

125

from his nightmare, leading toward the back of the house. As in his visions, LIGHT angles in through open doors along one side, and SNOWFLAKES SWIRL in the slanting beams of light...

CHILD'S VOICE (O.S.)

Help...me...

No doubt about it -- the voice is coming from the hallway ahead.

Joseph has no choice now: He's on this ride to the end. Shotgun ready, he starts down the hallway...

The hallway floor is FROZEN beneath his feet, the old wood matted with STEAMING dry ice. A COLD WIND ROARS.

As he passes the first open door on his right, he sees the BLIZZARD RAGING OUTSIDE, funneling snow through the window.

The room itself is familiar, but feels out-of-place in this old house. Joseph steps inside...

126 INT. THE MOTEL BATHROOM -- CONTINUOUS

126

The shower curtain is closed. A HUMAN SHADOW behind it.

As Joseph stares, he HEARS the HISSING-BREATHING SOUND of the WIND, and the rhythmic WHISPERS and GIGGLES and SIGHS of the Female Creatures from his nightmare...

Slowly, he reaches out toward the edge of the shower curtain, to pull it back -- but before he can...

(CONTINUED)

126 CONTINUED:

126

DAPHNE

yanks the curtain open and LEAPS out of the shower stall onto Joseph, wrapping him tight in her legs and arms.

DAPHNE
(whispers in his ear)
Whatever you want, as many times as you
want it...

Her tongue slips into his ear. He puts his hand on her forehead, tries to shove her away...

But her HEAD JUST FLOPS BACKWARDS, her SLIT THROAT YAWNING OPEN like a second mouth.

BLOOD pours out all over him, drenching his clothes.

He SCREAMS, and the SHOTGUN BLASTS, hurling her back into the shower, the curtain tearing down beneath her. She settles into a motionless heap.

The CHILD'S VOICE cuts through Joseph's own ragged breathing:

CHILD'S VOICE (O.S.)
Help me...help...meeee...!

He runs out of the room.

127 INT. BACK IN THE LONG HALLWAY -- SAME

127

Joseph sees A FIGURE up ahead, standing at the end of the hall.

Approaching, Joseph recognizes TONY, stripped to the waist, facing away from him. Joseph stops, staring in horror.

Tony has been STABBED IN THE BACK at least a hundred times. SEVERAL KNIVES REMAIN, jutting from his back, dripping blood. Tony speaks without turning around.

TONY
I trusted you.

Now Tony turns and walks stiffly toward Joseph, reaching back over his shoulder as he approaches...

JOSEPH
Tony, I...I'm sorry...

Tony PULLS A KNIFE FROM HIS BACK and THROWS it at Joseph's face. Joseph DUCKS, and it misses by inches...

(CONTINUED)

127 CONTINUED:

127

JOSEPH

Tony, stop --

ANOTHER KNIFE yanked from Tony's back -- it WHIZZES PAST,
SLICING Joseph's cheek...

TONY

I trusted you.

JOSEPH

(raising the SHOTGUN)

TONY! NO!

ANOTHER THROW -- and the knife SINKS DEEP into Joseph's thigh.
He YELLS in pain, and FIRES...

BA-DOOM! The shotgun echoes in the hallway. Tony's cut in two.

CHILD'S VOICE (O.S.)

Help me...

Again, the muffled cry. Now Joseph can make out a CLOSED DOOR
up ahead, at the end of the long hallway.

He listens: the CHILD'S CRY seems to be coming from there.

Joseph YELLS again as he pulls the knife from his thigh. He
steps over half of Tony's corpse and limps toward the end of
the hall. As he does, he passes another OPEN DOORWAY...

And A MAN'S HAND REACHES OUT, yanking him through the doorway into...

128 INT. BERNIE'S VAN -- CONTINUOUS

128

Wide-eyed, Joseph confronts Bernie -- his back cut to bloody
ribbons, holding the HOOKED WHIP that did the job.

BERNIE

(grinning wickedly)

It ain't right to treat me this way, Joe.

JOSEPH

Bernie, I didn't...I never --

BERNIE

(sudden rage)

--What am I, your whipping boy...?!

He SWIPES the cat-o'-nine-tails at Joseph.

Joseph blocks it with his arm, and the hooks RIP his flesh.

(CONTINUED)

128 CONTINUED:

128

As Bernie draws back the whip to strike again...

BLAM -- CRASH!!!

Joseph blasts him backward, THROUGH THE VAN WINDSHIELD.

And Bernie DISAPPEARS -- beyond the windshield is nothing but A WILD, WHITE BLIZZARD. The COLD WIND SUCKS pieces of glass into the whiteness, as if into an abyss.

His clothes whipping in the wind, Joseph stares at HIS OWN REFLECTION in the jagged shard of windshield that remains...

His flesh is deeply torn, and is covered with blood -- his own, and the murder victims'. The thick ropes of blood have FROZEN to his face like a hideous mask...

He looks like a monster.

CHILD'S VOICE (O.S.)
Help...help meee...!

Joseph lurches back into...

129 INT. THE LONG HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

129

And again, he hears...

CHILD'S VOICE (O.S.)
Help me...HELP MEEEE!!!

Joseph approaches the door at the hallway's end, as if drawn against his will to meet his fate...

He HEARS the LAUGHTER OF THE FEMALE CREATURES as he goes, and A SMALL CREATURE scuttles like a rat along the floor ahead of him, dragging its long, snake-like arms...

It disappears into a ROOM. As Joseph walks by, he sees...

THE TWO FEMALE CENOBITES

in the back of the room, staring at him from the shadows. They seem to be smiling slightly, as if they share a secret...

Unnerved, Joseph keeps walking until he reaches A CLOSED DOOR at the end of the hallway. It's locked. Joseph steps back to blast it open, and -- CLICK. The shotgun is empty.

He tosses the gun aside, KICKS the door open, and steps into...

130 INT. AN ABYSS OF TOTAL DARKNESS -- CONTINUOUS

130

Far below, A TINY FIGURE can be seen: The Figure appears to be SUSPENDED IN LIMITLESS SPACE... As Joseph descends, he can see his BREATH in the dimness.

His terror multiplies as he approaches the foot of the stairs and can clearly make out the scene...

A LITTLE BOY

strapped to a nursery chair, his hands in his lap, ROPED to his thighs. The boy wears a RED BASEBALL CAP, and his head is tilted down so we can't see his face.

The Little Boy has eight fingers missing...

The Little Boy is Joseph as a child.

Now the FACELESS KILLER emerges from the darkness and stands beside the Child-Joseph, keeping his hands out of sight. His teeth are gleaming in the light.

JOSEPH

You murdering bastard...

As Joseph starts toward him, drawing his HANDGUN...

...the Faceless Killer begins to TEAR at the blank, fleshy area above his mouth...

And from underneath the Faceless Killer's skin, JOSEPH'S FACE emerges, dark and covered with blood.

Joseph is staring at the two sides of himself: His Appetite and his Conscience. His Id and his Superego. His Angel and his Demon...

His Desires... And his wasted, forsaken Innocence.

A long beat, as Joseph's universe spins to a stop --

Then he ROARS, and raises his GUN to fire...

SH-SH-SH-SH-SHHKKK!

CHAINS fly in from either side of Joseph, and HOOKS at the end of each chain PIERCE JOSEPH'S WRISTS, JERKING TIGHT.

Joseph stands there, helpless, arms spread out by the chains. Still riveted by the incomprehensible sight...

And PINHEAD steps forward from the shadows.

(CONTINUED)

PINHEAD

What's the matter, Joseph?
(nods at the bloody-faced
Killer-Joseph)
Don't you recognize your own Flesh...
(nods at the Child-Joseph)
...and Spirit?

JOSEPH

I...don't understand...

We see their BREATH as they speak.

PINHEAD

It's the life you have chosen. All the
people you have hurt, all the appetites
you have indulged... Look what you've
done -- you've destroyed your own
innocence, Joseph... You're appetite has
ravished your conscience... Your Flesh is
killing your Spirit...

He nods, and the bloody-faced KILLER-JOSEPH turns to face the
child, a WICKED, BLOODY KNIFE in his hand.

JOSEPH

No...!

The Killer-Joseph RAISES THE KNIFE...

We do not show the Child-Joseph being killed. WE CUT IN CLOSE
ON JOSEPH as he watches, hearing the child's DYING SCREAMS.

JOSEPH

NOOOO...!!!

PINHEAD

Yes, Joseph...you have forsaken yourself.

The Child-Joseph's screaming stops, and we know that he is dead.
FROM OFFSCREEN, we hear a familiar WHACKING SOUND -- the bloody
Killer-Joseph is removing another of the child's fingers.

PINHEAD

Only one finger left now, Joseph... Only
one death to go...

Now the bloody Killer-Joseph moves toward the Detective. The
two adult Josephs stand face to face.

The bloody Killer-Joseph motions with outstretched arms, and
MORE CHAINS fly out from every direction, hooking into Joseph
in a dozen places.

(CONTINUED)

130 CONTINUED: (2)

130

The chains which bind Joseph begin to pull in all directions...

And Joseph SCREAMS as he is slowly TORN APART.

The MUSIC BUILDS as we PUSH IN on the blood-shrouded face of the Killer-Joseph. He is pure desire, pure flesh, pure rage, pure Id...

Joseph's innocence is long, long gone, and now, so is Joseph.

All that remains is his own darkness. And now we...

CUT TO:

131 INT. THE MOTEL BATHROOM -- MORNING

131

...and see Joseph WAKE UP, sitting by the sink, the GOLDEN BOX on the floor beside him.

FADE TO BLACK, and FADE UP A TITLE: MONDAY, 8:33:06 A.M.

For the first time, as the seconds run, there is only SILENCE.

Then we FADE IN ON:

132 INT. THE MOTEL BEDROOM -- SAME

132

Joseph walks slowly out of the bathroom, golden box in hand, looking around. He sees Daphne sleeping peacefully... He walks up to her, nudges her awake...

DAPHNE

(groggy)

Jesus, ain't I earned my money yet?

JOSEPH

(after a beat, quietly)

Sorry...

DAPHNE

You better lay off that cocaine...

She rolls over and goes back to sleep.

And he just stands there, heart pounding, out of breath. Bathed in the SUNLIGHT that floods through the windows. Blinking, trembling, disbelieving...

A tear slides down his cheek as he looks around, astonished.

It was all only a dream.

(CONTINUED)

132 CONTINUED:

132

Slowly, distracted, Joseph gathers his stuff and leaves.

133 EXT. POLICE STATION -- ESTABLISHING SHOT -- LATER THAT MORNING 133

134 INT. POLICE STATION -- SAME

134

Joseph sits behind his desk. His eyes are red, and he looks exhausted -- but, somehow, also renewed, even reborn. As he stares at a PICTURE OF HIS WIFE AND DAUGHTER, we sense that he will never see or feel things quite the same.

An OLDER DETECTIVE walks by, interrupting Joseph's daydream.

OLDER DETECTIVE

How'd you do?

JOSEPH

...What?

OLDER DETECTIVE

(stops, looks at him funny)

The game...last night...how'd ya do?

JOSEPH

(after a beat)

Oh...we won by seven, but it should've been twenty...

(glances at someone, smiles)

Tony no-showed.

TONY

smiles back at Joseph from behind his own desk.

TONY

Yeah, I had to go fishing...

And then Joseph's TELEPHONE RINGS. He picks it up.

DAPHNE'S VOICE

(telephone filter, very distorted)

Detective Thorne...it's, it's Daphne, I'm

-- from last night, I'm, I'm the girl...

*

SWOOP IN ON JOSEPH'S FACE

as he realizes in an instant that it's happening again...

DAPHNE'S VOICE

(panicking, terrified)

I, I'm still here, and, oh...no, oh God,
stop this, HELP ME, PLEASE....!

(CONTINUED)

134 CONTINUED:

134

As she continues to SCREAM, Joseph slowly sets the receiver down on the desk. Expressionless.

TONY

What is it, Joe? You okay...?

Joseph pulls out his PISTOL, puts it in his mouth...

TONY

NO! DON'T....!!

And Joseph FIRES, as we...

CUT TO BLACK.

We hear the HISSING of the FEMALE CREATURES, which gets louder and louder until we finally...

CUT TO:

135 INT. THE MOTEL BATHROOM -- MORNING

135

...as Joseph awakens again, sitting by the sink, the GOLDEN BOX on the bathroom floor beside him. He sits up and looks around. His face is numb.

JOSEPH (V.O.)

I lived in a world of facts, of a reality
I thought I understood... I believed I
was the center of the design, and I was
certain that I knew all the answers...

Unhurriedly, Joseph stands and opens the door, stepping into...

136 INT. A CHILD'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

136

A ball glove in one corner, a model airplane hanging by a string, and on the floor, an unfinished puzzle...

JOSEPH (V.O.)

But now I've faced the truth about what
I've done to hurt those around me, and in
hurting them, what I've done to myself...

Joseph crosses to the child-size bed and sits down.

JOSEPH (V.O.)

...I've confronted my own demons... And
now, the only thing I know for certain...

He looks up INTO THE CAMERA, his eyes a terrifying void...

(CONTINUED)

136 CONTINUED:

136

JOSEPH (V.O.)

...is that I will live with them forever.

...And we slowly FADE TO BLACK.