

Kingdom Hospital, Episode 1: THY KINGDOM COME

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Final Draft

ACT 1

FADE IN ON:

1 FOGGY LANDSCAPE DAY? NIGHT? 1

Fog rolls across the screen as the CAMERA PANS STEADILY RIGHT. We're going to see CHARRED, BLACKENED BEAMS and hear the SOUND OF THE WIND. Mingled in it are GHOSTLY CRIES--the voices of CHILDREN. Here and there FAT RATS scutter in and out of the mist.

NARRATOR

A hundred and fifty years ago, the Gates Falls Mill stood here. It employed 200 men and women, good Yankees all. When the mill burned in 1869, most of them got out.

Now the beams are sticking out of swampy water.

NARRATOR (CONT' D) (cont' d)

2 DYING AND BLEACHING ROOM DAY? NIGHT? 2

This is a brief, nightmarish glimpse of a HUGE ROOM where PALLID CHILDREN labor near HUGE DYING VATS. Rolls of cloth spin on DANGEROUS MACHINES. Smoke & vapor everywhere. And we see one little girl--just a glimpse, mind you--who is ringing a SILVER BELL. This is MARY. We also see a trio of HEARTLESS FOREMEN, urging the CHILDREN to work faster.

NARRATOR

Sixteen-hour shifts during the Civil War, when the Gates Falls Mill made uniforms for the Union Army. The job of the men wearing those uniforms was to end the Peculiar Institution. The Peculiar Institution being slavery.

3 BACK TO THE BURNT RUINS 3

The CRYING VOICES are LOUDER. The CAMERA PANS RELENTLESSLY. A crow perched on the DECAYING HAND OF A CHILD flies away, CAWING.

4 Now the CAMERA dives into the MURKY WATER and descends 4
past various bits of FLOATING DETRITUS.

NARRATOR

The fire started on the first floor, perhaps as a result of children smoking. Most of the adult mill-workers got out. Most of the children...

5 DYING AND BLEACHING ROOM DAY? NIGHT? 5

The SMOKE is heavier, and we see the ORANGE GLOW OF FIRE. CHILDREN SCREAM & RUN like phantoms.

6 A STAIRCASE DAY? NIGHT? 6

CHILDREN run up the narrow stone stairs, but the door at the top won't open.

7 THE DOOR, REVERSE 7

A STOUT BAR is across it. SOUND OF HAMMERING, but the few ADULTS we see ignore it. To hell with the kids below; they've got their own asses to save.

8 DYING AND BLEACHING ROOM DAY? NIGHT? 8

In a thick haze of SMOKE & FLAME we see MARY like the wraith she will become, RINGING HER BELL. This is hell.

NARRATOR

...most of the children did not.

9 MURKY, SWAMPY WATER DAY? NIGHT? 9

THE CAMERA descends into darkness. FAINT, GHOSTLY SOUND: THE RINGING OF A BELL. We go down past earth and roots and squirming WORMS. And up from this dirt comes a pair of PALLID, SEEKING HANDS. Those of a child. MARY? Perhaps.

SMASH CUT TO:

10 KINGDOM HOSPITAL DAY 10

NARRATOR

A hundred and twenty years later, a hospital was built here. Kingdom Hospital.

11 OR DAY 11

It's empty, but shining with gorgeous (and expensive) state-of-the-art equipment.

NARRATOR

The bleaching and dying vats have given way to doctors and researchers and operating rooms filled with modern equipment.

12 THE ER RECEIVING AND WAITING AREA DAY 12

This room, with its ranks of plastic Walmart chairs, also looks state-of-the art, but it's almost empty. In the SECURITY CUBICLE we see a single ORDERLY (OTTO), eating a sandwich and reading Spanking Nurses. His nose is almost touching the glossy pages. Every now and then he takes a look at the bank of VIDEO SCREENS, which show various floors (always from the perspective of the nurses' station), the ER, the ER entrance, the doctors' parking lot (nice), and the patients' parking lot (rather shitty, and also a long walk from the main entrance). There are also several MONITOR PANELS showing GREEN LIGHTS.

12V1-3
12V4
12V5
12V6
12V7

12V1-3
12V4
12V5
12V6
12V7

NARRATOR

Here life is charted with lasers and EKGs and MRIs. There is no place for superstition. Rational thought has replaced whispered myths about the unquiet, hungry dead. But there is such a thing as intellectual arrogance...

13 A THIRD FLOOR CORRIDOR (SUNSHINE WARD) 13

It's empty except for one OLD MAN (LENNY STILLMACH). His eyes are MILKY AND BLIND. He sits forgotten in his wheelchair. One hand hangs down. In it is a sandwich which BLONDI, OTTO'S German Shepherd, is eating. LENNY doesn't have a clue, poor old thing. Shouldn't someone be taking care of him? If so, where is that someone? We don't know.

NARRATOR

...and arrogance is blind. Perhaps the ground Kingdom Hospital stands on is still uneasy, for the cold and damp have returned.

A NURSE comes down the hallway pushing a cart with a large red rubber bag on it. Brisk and sunshiny, but no sympathy for poor, dying LENNY.

13

CONTINUED:

13

She takes the remainder of the sandwich from his hand, feeds it to BLONDI, then makes a SHOOING GESTURE. BLONDI trots off. No pets in Kingdom Hospital, but BLONDI has the run of the place. As we will see.

NURSE

(lucky you!)

Time for your enema, Mr. Stillmach!

LENNY makes BLURRY SOUNDS OF PROTEST.

NURSE (cont' d)

By tonight, that impacted colon will be a thing of the past!

We watch as she pushes him away, still PROTESTING. LENNY may be blind and dying, but he knows what's coming.

NARRATOR

Although Kingdom Hospital is brand new, there are already distressing signs of decay.

14

A CRACK appears in the floor where LENNY'S wheelchair was standing. 14

DECAY MONTAGE

15

A.) A crack in a wall; WATER SEEPS THROUGH. 15

16

B.) In the HEMATOLOGY LAB, a video screen is BLANK and marked with a sign reading OUT OF ORDER (along with a smiley-smile face). 16

17

C.) An empty office (STEG'S). Quite suddenly, and for no reason, most of the books tumble off a shelf, landing on the cluttered desk and the floor. 17

18

D.) SLEEP LAB: Ranks of empty beds. Overhead, a single fluorescent light is out. It buzzes, but can't quite come back on. 18

19

E.) In the DOCTORS' PARKING LOT, a crack appears in the fresh hot-top, running diagonally across the fresh yellow lines. 19

20

F.) Underneath the ER receiving area, where the ambulances pull up, there are pillars holding up the canopy. A crack appears in one of these, as well. This looks dangerous. If a couple of those pillars let go, the canopy might fall down. 20

21 G.) In the kitchen, two DOWNES SYNDROME PEOPLE (one 21 male, one female, both early 30s) are putting away dishes and laughing. Suddenly one of the industrial washers clogs up, spewing soapy water all over the floor. They look at this with dismay...and then LAUGH CHEERILY! One of them (CHRISTA) shuts the washer down. The other (ABEL) runs for the closet where the mops are. As he does, several BANKS OF LIGHTS go out.

ABEL brings back a couple of mops and gives one to CHRISTA. Instead of putting them to work on the spreading water, they begin to mock-swordfight with them.

22 H.) In a second floor hallway, a BESPECTACLED YOUNG 22 RESIDENT (ELMER TRAFF) is standing facing a line of lockers. He's dressed in a natty white coat and has his hands spread to take his weight while he bangs his head softly but steadily against one of the lockers.

23 I.) In the elevator shaft, a descending car WIPES ACROSS 23 THE CAMERA and then comes to a GRINDING HALT. On top of the elevator car, greasy and forgotten, is a CHILD'S RAG DOLL. An ALARM BELL begins to ring.

24 INT. SECURITY CUBICLE, ER RECEIVING & WAITING AREA DAY 24

OTTO has to just about put his nose on the panel to see the RED LIGHTS. He's wearing great big glasses (think Uncle Junior on The Sopranos). The eyes behind them are MAGNIFIED to the size of soft-boiled eggs.

He makes a SOUND OF DISGUST ("Tcha!") and flicks a SWITCH several times. The ALARM BELL stops.

24V1 OTTO now turns to the monitors. He looks at the one for 24V1 ELEVATOR 3, which is the stalled car. Gets his nose right down, almost on it.

ELEVATOR MONITOR, OTTO'S POV (THUS ECU)

The LINES and PIXELS are so pronounced that we really have to work to make out what we're seeing: an empty elevator car.

RESUME OTTO

He grunts, pleased, and starts to pull back. But...

ELEVATOR MONITOR, OTTO'S POV (THUS ECU)

24E1 On the GLASS, there emerges the GHOSTLY FIGURE of a LITTLE GIRL. It's MARY. She looks like one of the zombies in Carnival of Souls, her face dead-white, her eyes dark sockets. Her SILVER BELL hangs around her neck by its leather strap. 24E1

And MAKEUP PLEASE NOTE: over each eyebrow is a burr hole or short HORIZONTAL SCAR, like shallow stab-wounds (perhaps made w/ a paring knife or ice pick) that have long since healed.

RESUME OTTO

He's TERRIFIED. Forgets all about the stalled elevator. He looks around, assuming that the LITTLE GIRL is standing behind him. But no one's there.

25 INT. EMPTY WEST-1 CORRIDOR (OTTO'S POV) 25

Or is it empty? Even with his glasses on, OTTO can't see much. The CORRIDOR WAVERS IN AND OUT OF FOCUS. Also, a bunch of the fluorescent overheads are out.

26 RESUME OTTO 26

We're tight on him, and he's freaked. It would be better if he could see. (Only in KH would they put an ORDERLY who can't see in the SECURITY BOOTH).

OTTO
Is someone there?
(no answer)
Little girl?
(no answer)
Blondi? Blondi, where are you?

On a nearby shelf is a stack of girlie mags and a box of Buster's Beefy Dog Treats. OTTO grabs the box and SHAKES IT HOPEFULLY.

OTTO (cont'd)
Come get a treat, Blondi! Come--

A HAND reaches into the frame and grasps his shoulder. It startles us only a little (pretty standard suspense-film trick, after all), but it scares poor OTTO almost out of his chair. He whirls around.

SECURITY CUBICLE, WIDER

HOOK is leaning in the doorway with a can of Nozz-A-La Cola in his hand (this is a standard brand in the show, so someone needs to work out a logo).

(CONTINUED)

HOOK is about thirty, good-looking, dressed in a white coat w/ green scrubs beneath. He's wearing a stethoscope. HOOK is a doctor, and we'll see him doing everything from teaching to brain surgery to forensics. We're only going to see a few working doctors in the show, because not much doctoring goes on at KH. But, for whatever it's worth, HOOK is brilliant. In all sorts of ways.

HOOK

(extending the can)

Girl-watching's thirsty work. I brought you this.

OTTO

(snatching the can)

You scared the hell out of me.

HOOK

Problems with the elevators?

OTTO

With three. Always three. Hook, did you just see a little girl? In the hallway, maybe?

HOOK

I didn't see anyone, but half the lights are out again.

OTTO can fix that. He flicks a switch marked KITCHEN and picks up his mike.

OTTO

Abel to Security! Abel to Security!

They are still mock-swordfighting with the mops in the spilled water when OTTO'S voice comes through the overhead speakers.

OTTO

(amplified V-0)

Abel to Security!

The Downes Syndrome YOUNG PEOPLE--they both look about 25-- stop what they are doing and GRIN DELIGHTEDLY at each other.

ABEL

Otto!

CHRISTA

And Hook!

ABEL

The lights are out in West-1!

CHRISTA

Overloaded circuits!

ABEL

Shoddy wiring!

CHRISTA

The rich get richer!

They hug each other, DELIGHTED. They are always delighted.

CHRISTA (cont'd)

Did he see the little girl?

ABEL

Otto did!

CHRISTA

What about Hook?

ABEL

Not yet.

HOOK

Where's Blondi?

OTTO

I don't know. You're sure you didn't see a little girl? With scars... here?

He makes a V with his fingers and wiggles them above his eyebrows.

HOOK

No little girl with scars anywhere.

Behind them, ABEL appears. He's got a CARRIER full of fluorescent tubes in one hand. He's also got a stepladder.

OTTO

Hurry up! And Elevator 3 is acting up again.

29 INT. KINGDOM HOSPITAL ELECTRICAL CLOSET, WITH CHRISTA 29

She opens the door and looks at a bewildering array of dials, switches, wires, breakers. She locates the elevator breakers and flips #3. And GRINS DELIGHTEDLY.

30 SECURITY CUBICLE, WITH HOOK AND OTTO 30

The RED LIGHT over Elevator 3 goes out.

31 ELEVATOR SHAFT 31

The elevator BEGINS TO MOVE DOWNWARD AGAIN. The DOLL--GREASY, DUSTY, and FORGOTTEN--stares at us, then sinks out of sight.

32 RESUME SECURITY CUBICLE DAY 32

HOOK

Flipping a breaker isn't a solution, you know--only a Band-Aid.

OTTO doesn't care. He's still looking around for the LITTLE GIRL he saw reflected in his monitor.

OTTO

You're sure you didn't see a little girl? If kids are getting out of Pedes and wandering around, Dr. James is going to be very unhappy.

HOOK

I've never seen Dr. James unhappy.

He picks up one of OTTO'S magazines and studies the centerfold.

HOOK (cont'd)

Very interesting. From a gynecological standpoint.

From down the hallway, passing beneath the stepladder (ABEL is now up on it, competently replacing a dead fluorescent tube with a fresh one) comes BLONDI, the dog we saw before eating LENNY'S sandwich. OTTO is delighted.

OTTO

There you are! I was worried about you!

BLONDI comes to OTTO, who gives him a treat. HOOK starts away.

33 INT. WEST-1 CORRIDOR, WITH HOOK AND ABEL 33

HOOK
Need any help?

ABEL looks down at him, GRINNING HAPPILY, and shakes his head. HOOK picks one of the fluorescent tubes out of the CARRIER on the floor and holds it up.

HOOK (cont'd)
What would you call this, Abel?
Geometrically speaking?

ABEL
(working away)
Circular cylinder! A solid that has
two bases of equal size and a third
side that joins them!

HOOK
Bingo!

34 INT. THE ER AND THE SECURITY CUBICLE, LONG 34

We're looking through the doors from the outside. They are the sort that open automatically when someone breaks a beam. Printed on the door is the first line of the Patient's Bill of Rights: THE INDIVIDUAL DIGNITY OF A PATIENT MUST BE RESPECTED AT ALL TIMES AND UPON ALL OCCASIONS.

34E1 Shadowy and faint, TRANSPARENT (oh, but that might only 34E1
be the result of a reflection in glass), is the LITTLE
GIRL, MARY. WATCHING.

35 EXT. KINGDOM HOSPITAL DAY 35

A gothic lens or something, to make it look properly spooky. The director will know. Hold and then

DISSOLVE TO:

36 EXT. THE LAKESIDE HOME OF PETER AND NATALIE RICKMAN DAY 36

This is a beautiful if isolated place. Around it, the trees BLAZE WITH AUTUMN COLOR. In the driveway are two pieces of expensive rolling iron--a Mercedes and a SUV. The latter maybe a Navigator or a Cadillac Escalade.

37 INT. PETER AND NATALIE'S BEDROOM, BATH & STUDIO DAY 37

From the rumpled state of the sheets, it looks like these two have been having a little afternoon delight.

(CONTINUED)

The bathroom door is open and the shower is running. PETER, a well-built, handsome man in the 30-40 age range, is wearing running shorts. We catch him in the act of pulling a sweatshirt over his well-muscled torso. Nearby is a Walkman which he listens to while jogging.

Beyond him is a doorway giving upon a white-walled, skylit loft that runs the length of the house (except for the bedroom). It is the studio of a working artist with a floor of beautiful polished hardwood. Canvases are spotted around, most leaning against the walls. A few have been hung. We'll get a better look later.

NATALIE (O.S.)

Come on in, the water's fine!

PETER

I'm going for a run. I'll shower when I get back.

He cinches a belt over the bottom of the sweatshirt, which says LITTLE TALL ISLAND on the front. Clips the Walkman to the belt. All of this is habit; PETER'S daily run is as much a part of who he is as his artistic ability.

NATALIE (O.S.)

Come here a sec.

PETER goes to the bathroom door, where STEAM billows out. They have a rich folks' shower, of course; you could swim with dolphins in there. And we can see he knows what this is about, but he loves her and is willing to be a good sport.

We can see just enough of her through the steam and the pebbled glass to know she's great-looking.

NATALIE

Stay on the lane, okay? I hate it when you run on the main road.

PETER

It's October, in case you didn't notice; there's no traffic on the main road. The summer people went home a month ago, God bless their pointy little heads.

NATALIE

Still...

She pokes her head out of the shower. Her hair's full of shampoo.

NATALIE (cont' d)

It makes me nervous. Can't you just stay on the lane?

PETER

I suppose I could...

NATALIE

Great! (A beat) And you were great.

PETER

So were you. Seeya.

NATALIE

Peter?

(off his "What now?" look)

What are you painting? That's not a book-jacket assignment, is it? That new one?

PETER

How many times have I told you--

NATALIE

--you don't like me looking at your works in progress. Sometimes I feel like Bluebeard's wife. But that one is weird.

She pops back into the shower, and from there:

NATALIE (cont' d)

And you must know it's weird, because you never used to cover your paintings.

PETER

(genuinely stung)

It's covered for a reason.

NATALIE

And what would that be?

PETER

I don't know. Okay?

NATALIE

Hon--

PETER

(brusque)

I'm going. See you later.

NATALIE

I didn't mean to piss you off...

But she did and he's gone. The room is empty.

PETER, now all set for his run, crosses it. The pictures hung on the wall are bodice-ripper paperback covers for the most part, featuring lots of bare-chested men sweeping passionate women into their arms. The majority of settings appear to be gorgeous tropical islands. The titles are things like This Savage Heart, Nights in Paradise, and Love's Volcano. More canvases in various stages of completion lean against the walls. A few are more conventional (i.e. staid) book jackets. One or two of them show Serious Artiste fare: still lifes and woodsy scenes painted near the house. There's also a mostly completed portrait of NATALIE--a nude, if Standards & Practices will allow it.

There are three easels set up in the long room, each under a skylight. Two of them show scenes of paperback passion under construction, only without the titles. The canvas on the easel in the middle is covered with a paint-splattered dropcloth. It's easily the biggest in the room, maybe 4' by 3'. Another dropcloth protects the hardwood floor beneath it, because this is where PETER is currently working.

He approaches the center easel, rather reluctantly, and lifts away the cloth.

INT. PETER'S PAINTING OF ANTUBIS

It's a MONSTER that looks something like an oversized ANTEATER the size of BLONDI. He has RED EYES and a LONG SUCKING PROBOSCIS, perfect for gobbling ants and various diseases, both the physical and the spiritual. It has a look of MALEVOLENT INTELLIGENCE.

ANTUBIS is waddling down the center of a 2-lane COUNTRY HIGHWAY. In the b.g. we see a sign and a dirt road. The sign reads WARRINGTON'S INN. The leaves BLAZE WITH COLOR.

RESUME PETER'S STUDIO DAY

He's puzzled and maybe even a little frightened by his own work.

PETER

What are you?

He doesn't know and isn't going to worry about it right now. He flips the dropcloth back into place and leaves by the stairs at the far end of the room.

40 EXT. THE LAKESIDE HOME OF PETER AND NATALIE RICKMAN DAY 40

HIGH ANGLE. PETER comes out. Puts his earbuds in place and starts to RUN up the driveway.

MUSIC: "Red Dragon Tattoo," by the Fountains of Wayne.

41 EXT. RUNNING MONTAGE DAY 41

PETER and NATALIE live on a lakeside lane that is deserted save for them at this time of the year, but Gorry (as we say up here), ain't it beautiful!

PETER runs confidently in the center of the dirt track.

42 We see him come to a split in the lane, where a signpost reads TO WARRINGTON'S. 42

He comes to a chain across this lane (which is also dirt). A sign hanging from it reads WARRINGTON'S INN ROAD KEEP OUT. PETER runs around the chain.

43 He runs past WARRINGTON'S, which consists of a center lodge and lots of little cabins. There's a softball field, a tennis court, a putting green. All empty. The sign on the side of the lodge reads CLOSED FOR THE SEASON SEE YOU NEXT JUNE! 43

The lane splits again. One sign reads TO LAKEVIEW. The other reads TO ROUTE 7. PETER pauses here, running in place for a moment, deciding. Then he takes the fork marked TO ROUTE 7.

Oh-oh.

MUSIC GETS LOUDER.

44 EXT. ROUTE 7 DAY 44

We're looking down a stretch of 2-lane blacktop with a sign reading WARRINGTON'S INN marking a lane (to our right). The trees BLAZE WITH COLOR. It's a perfect autumn picture. And it's the setting of PETER'S painting.

He comes running to the head of the lane, turns left, and runs toward THE CAMERA along the main road.

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED: 44

As he promised NAT, he'd be facing traffic if there was any, but the road is deserted. He runs on the shoulder. He's puffing and his sweatshirt has large dark patches spreading on it, but he's found that Nirvana known as Runner's High. He passes us and starts up a hill. THE CAMERA turns to follow.

45 EXT. FURTHER DOWN THE ROAD DAY 45

Coming toward us is a DIRTY WHITE VAN, dented and old. It's SWERVING back and forth across the white line, as if the driver is drunk or (Bingo!) high.

MUSIC: "Red Dragon Tattoo."

46 INT. THE BACK OF THE VAN, WITH CHARLIE THE ROTTWEILLER 46

There's an Igloo cooler behind the van's passenger seat. CHARLIE is trying to get into it. A HAND is pushing his head away, not very effectively. The cover is half off. Inside we can see wrapped packages of MEAT.

MUSIC, LOUD: "Red Dragon Tattoo." Which seems like an amazing coincidence, except that we already know better.

DAVE (O.S.)
Quit it, Charlie! Get outta that!

CHARLIE thinks DAVE said "Try harder," and does.

INT. THE VAN, WITH DAVE HOOMAN DAY

The interior is littered with fast-food wrappers, beer bottles, and empty Nozz-A-La cans. It looks like it was last cleaned around the time Nixon was President. DAVE is about 35, sloppily dressed, needs a shave. He's stoned and has been pretty much constantly since Jimmy Carter was President.

He's half-turned in his seat, trying to push CHARLIE away from the cooler, steering by telepathy.

DAVE (cont'd)
Dammit, Charlie, that's my dinner!

47 EXT. PETER, RUNNING ON ROUTE 7 DAY 47

Up the hill, running on the shoulder.

EXT. PETER AND THE APPROACHING VAN DAY

We INTERCUT for maximum suspense. The MUSIC is now ear-splitting. "Red Dragon tattoo/Is just about on me," sing the Fountains of Wayne.

(CONTINUED)

47

CONTINUED:

47

DAVE is turned all the way around. He's forgotten the road completely in his struggle to get CHARLIE'S nose out of the cooler.

EXT. CREST OF THE HILL

PETER is looking down at his feet as the VAN crests the hill, now entirely on the shoulder. He looks up, but it's far too late to take evasive action.

48

INT. THE VAN, WITH DAVE HOOMAN DAY

48

He looks around, just in time to see the terrified man looming in his windshield.

49

EXT. THE ACCIDENT SCENE, SLOW MOTION DAY

49

With the music blaring in hideously cheerful counterpoint, we see the most horrible vehicle-pedestrian collision ever filmed. PETER'S HEAD strikes the windshield on the passenger side, starring it, marking it with BLOOD AND HAIR. The bumper strikes his LEFT LEG as he tries to twist away and it BOWS OUTWARD at the thigh, creating a large and hideous BUMP in the skin. The VAN'S blunt nose caves in his ribs.

PETER sails through the air, blood flying around his head in a corona of droplets. He lands in the ditch, both of his legs TWISTED CRUELLY and his face covered with blood. The worst wound is in the center of his FOREHEAD. The lines of the VAN'S GRILLE are imprinted on his sweatshirt. He lands in the ditch, his earbuds coming loose. The Walkman lands nearby, a twisted piece of blood-streaked metal and plastic. The CD pops out and lands in the dirt.

50

The VAN screams across the road, leaving a trail of SMOKING RUBBER. It thinks about tipping over but doesn't. Instead it finishes up on the soft shoulder on the opposite side.

50

FAINT (from inside): "Red Dragon Tattoo."

51

INT. PETER'S STUDIO, WITH NATALIE

51

She's flipped back the dropcloth and is studying PETER'S work in progress.

NATALIE

What in God's name is it?

INT. THE PAINTING

(CONTINUED)

CAMERA PUSHES IN AND IN on those RED, KNOWING EYES. AND WE
FADE TO BLACK.

ACT 2

52 EXT. THE SCENE OF THE ACCIDENT DAY 52

A CROW is sitting on the jutting branch of a pine, watching everything. As DAVE gets out of his van and slams the door, it flies away, CAWING.

53 INT. BACK OF THE VAN, WITH CHARLIE 53

Ah, alone at last. CHARLIE noses off the lid of the cooler and drags out the first packet of meat. Lunch is served.

54 EXT. SIDE OF THE ROAD, WITH DAVE 54

He runs across to where PETER has landed, and an expression of HORROR fills his face.

55 EXT. PETER, IN THE DITCH 55

Hey! He doesn't look bad at all. No blood, no broken bones.

PETER (V.O.)

Help me up, would you? My hip hurts a little. I think you brushed me going by.

56 EXT. DAVE, FROZEN WITH HORROR 56

DAVE

Oh Jeez...

EXT. PETER, IN THE DITCH (DAVE'S POV)

Here's the truth: Both of his legs have been TWISTED CRUELLY, and his face is covered with blood. The worst wound is on his forehead, where the skull has been so badly crushed we can see the artist's PULSING BRAIN.

PETER (V.O.)

Come on, fella--help me. Just a close call.

His LIPS DON'T MOVE when he says this.

EXT. THE DITCH, WITH PETER AND DAVE

DAVE kneels beside his victim. PETER'S lips open a little as DAVE bends down, and BLOOD TRICKLES OUT. DAVE recoils.

DAVE

Ah, Jeez!

(CONTINUED)

For the first time he becomes fully aware of his surroundings (better late than never). He looks around nervously, then back at PETER.

DAVE (cont'd)

Listen, man, I'm sorry...I'm really, really sorry...

Once again he looks just fine, because in his state of post-accident shock, he thinks he is. The only mark on him is a smudge on the left hip of his running shorts.

PETER

Quit gibbering and help me get up!
I think I sprained my hip getting
out of the way and my back hurts a
little...

He tries to get up by himself, and can't. A look of HORROR begins to dawn on his face...and suddenly HIS FACE CHANGES. Blood covers it. The terrible wound in the center of his forehead reappears, with the brain pulsing inside the breached vault of the skull. This is PETER, realizing that he's been seriously hurt after all.

PETER

Oh my God, did you really hit me?

DAVE

I can't deal with this, man. I really can't. I got twelve points and a DUI on my license already...and an ounce in the glove compartment.

PETER (V.O.)

(lips don't move)

What are you talking about? Help me!

DAVE has made his decision. He gets to his feet, takes another nervous look around--still no traffic--and then looks back at PETER.

DAVE

Not really primo stuff, but an ounce is an ounce, and someone'll come along pretty soon...

PETER (V. O.)

What are you talking about? I think I'm really hurt here! Help me, you son of a bitch!

DAVE

(backing away)

I mean, even out here, someone always does, eventually. Sorry I hit you...

(starts away, turns back)

I'm really sorry, man.

(starts away, turns back)

What were you doing, running in the middle of the road, anyhow?

Now that he's put himself in the right, DAVE goes back to his van.

EXT. RESUME HIGH ANGLE OF ACCIDENT SCENE DAY

DAVE gets into his van and drives away in a hurry--what a prince. To the left of our view, PETER lies in the ditch looking almost like the silhouette of a victim chalked on the floor of a crime scene...except here the body is still in situ. And he's far enough down in the ditch so that if someone does come along, they might easily pass him by without seeing him

The crow returns and looks down. Road-kill. Tasty.

EXT. PETER, CU

Blood running down into his eyes. He blinks it away.

PETER (V. O.)

Can I move my...?

EXT. PETER'S RIGHT HAND, CU

It trembles but doesn't rise.

RESUME PETER

PETER (V. O.) (cont'd)

No.

He looks up at:

EXT. CROW IN THE TREE, PETER'S POV

Looking down at him

62

CONTINUED:

62

CROW

You look pretty tasty. I think I'll
start with your... eyes.

63

RESUME PETER

63

PETER (V. O.)

Bug outta here!

64

EXT. THE ROAD

64

From this angle we can see PETER lying in the ditch, but the driver of the car that comes over the hill (the one DAVE came over just before he hit PETER) cannot.

PETER (V. O.)

Hey! Hey, stop! I need some help!
I'm down h--

The car BLASTS BY.

65

EXT. RESUME PETER

65

An ANT is now voyaging across his face.

PETER (V. O.)

Get off me.

But he can't do a thing about the ant. It crawls across PETER'S EYE. His right hand TREMBLES, then goes still.

Now, to make things worse, the CROW flies down beside him and stares at him more hungrily than ever. PETER'S bloody face and bulging eyes register his horror.

PETER (CONT'D) (cont'd)

(screaming...but only in
his head)

Get away from me!

CROW

(croons sentimentally)

"My eyes adored you...my eyes
adored you..."

It's about to start PECKING when the bushes shake and something emerges from the woods that looks--initially, at least--even worse. It's ANTUBIS, red eyes glaring and snout protruding.

The CROW gets a look and flies off. ANTUBIS approaches PETER and lowers his PROBOSCIS until they're face to face.

(CONTINUED)

PETER is almost completely paralyzed, but we can see his terror at being confronted by this monster from his imagination.

PETER (V. O.)

Get away from me!

ANTUBIS'S muzzle wrinkles back, showing a mouthful of FANGS. It's like looking into a shark's mouth, and it's inches from PETER'S bloody face. Then a RED TONGUE that looks about three feet long comes out. It rolls into a tube and SUCKS THE ANT OFF PETER'S FACE with a SOUND like an INDUSTRIAL VACUUM

ANTUBIS

Yum! Ant-solutely delish!

PETER (V. O.)

Please don't hurt me...

ANTUBIS

You're a real mess, my friend. I mean seriously racked up!

PETER (V. O.)

Please... pl--

ANTUBIS

(gets serious)

Watch for Mary. Listen for her bell. It's a death-bell. Watch for Stegman. Stegman's a leper. Watch for the old woman. She can hear you. Watch for Hook. He'll hear you, too. If you make him. And now... if you'll pardon me...

ANTUBIS begins to lap the wound in PETER'S FOREHEAD. Begins, in fact, to lick his exposed brain. Sure, it's repulsive, but ANTUBIS has a certain tender and compassionate roadside manner. Doesn't do a thing for PETER, though; he begins to SHRIEK WITH HORROR. His hands TREMBLE as he tries to lift them and shield his face, but he can't do it.

ANTUBIS (cont'd)

Save your strength, that would be my advice. You'll need it.

Then, catching hold of PETER'S torn and bloody shirt in his jaws, ANTUBIS begins to drag PETER out of the ditch and to the edge of the road, where he can be seen by the next passing motorist.

66 EXT. RTE 7, WITH THE NEXT PASSING MOTORIST DAY 66

It's a Nozz-A-La soft drink truck. STEVE EARLE pouring out of it as it approaches the site of the ACCIDENT.

67 INT. THE SOFT DRINK TRUCK, W/ DELIVERY DRIVER DAY 67

He's singing along with the FM radio. He's got a CB, currently turned off. As he crests the hill, he stops singing and looks forward with concern.

68 EXT. ACCIDENT SCENE/INT. TRUCK, PETER, DELIVERY DRIVER'S POV DAY 68

Lying on the side of the road. No sign of ANTUBIS.

69 EXT. ACCIDENT SCENE, THE NOZZ-A-LA TRUCK DAY 69

It pulls over on the shoulder and the DRIVER comes spilling out. He goes to PETER, who's lying there with his eyes shut. He's covered with blood, especially his battered HEAD, but we can no longer see his brain. What a relief. His legs are BENT CRAZILY in opposite directions. Blood-roses are blooming on his sweatshirt.

PETER'S eyes open. He looks at the DELIVERY DRIVER, who RECOILS IN FRIGHT.

PETER (V. O.)

Help me...

DRIVER

(to himself)

Not dead. Not dead. Oh God--

(realizes PETER'S watching him)

You'll be okay, fella. Just lie still!

PETER (V. O.)

I think I'm paralyzed. Can you--

DRIVER

(babbling)

You'll be okay, you'll be fine--

PETER (V. O.)

I'm not actually talking, am I?
This is bad.

DRIVER

Just lie still!

(CONTINUED)

He gets up and runs back to his truck.

PETER (V.O.)

This is really bad.

He closes his eyes.

EXT./INT. ANGLE ON THE CAB OF THE TRUCK

The DELIVERY DRIVER leans in, kills the MUSIC, turns on his CB, and dials to Channel 19.

DRIVER

Breaker one-nine, breaker one-nine,
this is Soda Pop. If there's a
Smokey or a mobile EMT unit with
yer ears on...

EXT. CASTLE VIEW RESCUE GARAGE DAY

UNIT 19 is parked on the tarmac. EMT GUY #1 (OLLIE) is inside, eating a sandwich.

DRIVER (V.O.)

...ah, I got a seriously injured
fella here on Route 7, about a
quarter-mile from Warrington's
Inn...

OLLIE BEEPS his horn and starts his engine.

OLLIE

I got you, Soda Pop. Is the victim
in the road?

EMT GUY #2 (DANNY) comes hurrying out of the Rescue House, carrying a DEFIBRILLATOR.

EXT. THE TRUCK DRIVER AND EMT #1, ALTERNATE

DRIVER

Ah, nossir, he's on the shoulder--

OLLIE

Good. Block him from oncoming
traffic with your truck. And don't
run him down.

DRIVER

Ah, I don't think the company'd be
too crazy about--

OLLIE

Just do it! I'll get the State
Police--

OFFICER DOWNES (V. O.)

This is Officer Frank Downes, Maine
State Police. I am en route, copy?

EMT #2 DANNY has hopped into the passenger seat. Puts the
DEFIBRILLATOR in the wheel-well. They're already rolling.

OLLIE

So are we, Trooper Downes.

The TRUCK DRIVER has parked his truck aslant, half on and
half off the shoulder, protecting PETER as instructed.
TROOPER DOWNES is parked on the other side of the scene,
lights flashing. He's putting out orange traffic cones. Gives
the boys a wave and continues doing his part of the job.

PETER has been covered with a blanket.

The EMT VAN pulls up. OLLIE and DANNY are out in a flash, but
DANNY lingers long enough to turn on the CB. He also flips a
switch that will broadcast any hospital response from a roof
speaker.

DANNY

Kingdom, this is Castle View 19, do
you read?

KINGDOM DISPATCH (V. O.)

Five-by-five, 19.

DANNY

We are going mobile.

His partner has already gone mobile, carrying a tool chest of
medicines and instruments. DANNY follows with the portable
defibrillator.

OLLIE arrives first, bends over PETER and gets brought up
short: He's seen trauma in his day, but NOTHING like this.

OLLIE

(shaken)

Can you hear me, sir? Can you move
your, uh, arms and legs?

KINGDOM DISPATCH (V. 0.)
How's he looking?

OLLIE'S not quite functioning, just stares into PETER'S eyes.

OLLIE
Right pupil fixed and dilated. Left
pupil is...I dunno.

HOOK (V. 0.)
Say again, Ollie.

INT. ER NURSES' STATION - SAME, WITH HOOK

Also present is CHRISTINE DRAPER, a doctor (mid-30s) and LIZ HINTON, a CRUSTY VETERAN NURSE (55 going on a hundred). Behind them, the ER RECEIVING AREA is in its accustomed doze. OTTO has put aside his magazine. This is more interesting, at least for the time being.

HOOK
It is Ollie, isn't it?

OLLIE (V. 0.)
Yeah, Ollie and Danny.

HOOK
Never mind his eyes, what else have
you got?

EXT. THE ACCIDENT SCENE

DANNY'S already back at the side of the of the EMT truck where they have all of those neat compartments. He whips out a hard stretcher and loads it up with air splints, a cervical collar, monitors, a defibrillator, an ambu bag, an O2 tank, and tubing, then hauls it like a sled to PETER'S side.

Everything happens in a hurry but nothing happens in a panic. He's done this a hundred times.

HOOK (V. 0.)
Do you copy, Ollie? What else have
you got? Is he conscious?

OLLIE
(almost in a trance)
His eyes are open.

HOOK AND CHRISTINE (V. 0.)
Not the same thing, Ollie.

The DRIVER watches with horrified fascination as DANNY takes over, opens his bag of tricks and dives in, reporting on his progress as he goes (mike clipped to shirt-collar). He shoulders the dazed Ollie aside and clips a pulse-and-O2 monitor to PETER'S FINGER, then winds an automatic blood pressure cuff around PETER'S upper left arm. He takes just a sec to glance at his watch.

DANNY

Yeah, sorry about that, Kingdom. We copy. At sixteen-forty-two, with the clock running, we got multiple traumas. He's dazed, conscious, probably shocky, minimally responsive. Compound fractures-- ribs, both tibias, spiral fracture of the right ulna. Looks like his pelvis is fractured. Multiple head injuries...

Ollie's still scared, but starts snapping out of it.

OLLIE

BP 78 over 44, goin down. Respiration's I'm gonna say thirty-two. He's tachy--

Danny glances at the monitor.

DANNY

--heart rate clocking at 140. Make that 150.

HOOK

Get a line in him, Danny. Color? Saturation?

OLLIE (V.O.)

(lame)

His eyes are still open. He's looking around.

CHRISTINE

(low to Hook)

Ollie the ophthalmologist with more eye data.

DANNY (V. O.)

Color is dusky. Saturation is 83.
Starting 100% O2 by high-flow venti
mask.

HOOK

Got the line?

DANNY (V. O.)

Line's in.

HOOK

Normal saline wide open. Four
milligrams morphine, IV push, PRN.

CHRISTINE

Immobilize that spine with a
collar, side head supports, and
straps. BE VERY CAREFUL.

CHRIS DRAPER and HOOK exchange a brief glance: cool, knowing.
These two are real doctors. Unlike many they could name.

OLLIE (V. O.)

That's a Roger. We will stabilize,
and then we'll transfer him to the
van.

HOOK

Yes, why not do that? Then you
won't have to leave him there when
you go.

The EMTs have the cervical collar and O2 mask on PETER. The
bag of saline swings on short pole. PETER'S in position and
ready to be moved onto the stretcher.

PETER stares up at them with his frightened, mismatched
pupils. Disconcerting.

OLLIE

If you're awake, sir, that shot
should help with the pain.

OLLIE and DANNY know that one wrong move of the head and neck
means PETER never moves again. Now even Ollie looks like he
knows what he's doing. They position PETER and then
themselves: OLLIE's at PETER'S feet, DANNY manages the all
important shoulders, head, and neck. They take deep breaths.
Ready.

DANNY

Okay.

DRIVER

Want me to help?

OLLIE AND DANNY

(immediately)

No!

This is something else they've done hundreds of times.

OLLIE

Mississippi - one, Mississippi - two - -

OLLIE AND DANNY

-- Mississippi THREE!

They hoist PETER aboard, strap him in the stretcher, and heap a yard sale's worth of monitors and equipment in with him. They check the straps: arms, legs, head, neck, and put head side supports in place. By the time they're done, PETER looks like he's strapped in the cockpit of the space shuttle awaiting take-off.

The DRIVER winces on PETER'S behalf and trots alongside, as they ferry PETER toward the van. PETER just keeps on STARING. OLLIE and DANNY exchange a look that speaks volumes. They may not be doctors with lifetime memberships at the Poland Springs Golf Course, but they both recognize a freshly minted "quad" when they see one.

Also PETER is getting SHORT OF BREATH.

OLLIE

Respiration's rapid and shallow.

DANNY

Oh yeah.

They get him to the EMT squad and load him in. TROOPER DOWNES comes over.

OFFICER DOWNES

He say anything about who hit him?

OLLIE

He didn't say anything.

77 DANNY in back. OLLIE behind the wheel. The EMT Squad 77
pulls out, SIREN WAILING and FLASHERS FLASHING, weaving around
the CONES. Poor PETER is bound for Kingdom Hospital.

MUSIC: "Red Dragon Tattoo."

78 EXT. THE EMT SQUAD DAY 78

Racing along, first through RURAL COUNTRYRYSIDE BLAZING WITH
79 COLOR and then (through the magic of DISSOLVES) to the 79
outskirts of a smallish New England city. Here the mills
still stand, but those not empty have been turned into
malls. The squad eats up all the traffic it meets.

80 INT. THE BACK OF THE EMT SQUAD, DANNY AND PETER 80

This is the SHAKY-CAM Von Trier employs, going back and
forth, getting everything in a single messy, jiggling take.

PETER'S hooked up to the monitoring equipment and he's having
trouble first with his lungs--lots of SHORT, SHALLOW BREATHS--
and then with his heart. (One always leads to the other, sad
but true.) His eyes are SHUT.

DANNY
Oh sugar, Ollie, he's gonna--

SOUNDS: RESPIRATORY MONITOR ALARM, then, joining in, CARDIAC
MONITOR ALARM

DANNY (cont' d)
--crump on me.

OLLIE
Can you--do you want me to pull
over?

Danny starts grabbing equipment off the racks.

DANNY
I got it, I'm stylin', just get us
there!

DANNY intubates PETER quite skillfully, inflates the cuff
with a syringe, seals the tube, rigs up the O2 and the ambu
and starts bagging PETER.

81 PETER'S eyes OPEN. He looks past DANNY and we see that 81
SPOOKY LITTLE GIRL--MARY--sitting there at the back of the
ambulance and watching with her SHADOWY EYES IN THEIR SCARRED
SOCKETS. The BELL hangs around her neck.

ANTUBIS (V.O.)

Watch for Mary. Listen for her
bell. It's a death-bell.

This voice is all ECHOY AND OVERLAPPING, indicating PETER'S
deteriorating consciousness as he circles the drain.

THE CAMERA jerks away as OLLIE swerves to avoid traffic, then
jerks back. MARY is gone.

FADE TO BLACK.
THIS ENDS ACT 2.

ACT 3

82 EXT. THE AMBULANCE DAY 82

It's speeding through an industrial area--lots of vacant lots and empty buildings.

83 INT. THE AMBULANCE, AS PREVIOUS DAY 83

Resume "ER SHAKY-CAM "

DANNY
(into his mike)
I'm bagging away here, but I'm getting airway resistance.

HOOK (V. O.)
Has his sternum shifted?

DANNY
To the right. Big time. Ah fubar, here comes V-fib. The fun never stops.

DANNY bags twice, then grabs the portable DEFIBRILLATOR, and we'll use the kind with the paddles here.

DANNY (cont' d)
Clear!

DANNY shocks him with the paddles. PETER jumps on the gurney, at least as much as the STRAPS will allow. DANNY looks anxiously at the CARDIAC MONITOR. Starts bagging again. Nothing...nothing... Danny gets ready to start chest compressions, as well.

OLLIE
Are we open for business or not?
Don't keep me in suspense.

The MONITOR blips, then goes to semi-normal sinus rhythm.

DANNY
Ladies and gentlemen, we're back!

84 EXT. THE EMT SQUAD DAY 84

More urban landscape. Approaching Kingdom Hospital now.

85

INT. TRAUMA ROOM, WITH HOOK

85

He's in GREENS now, scrubbing. So is ELMER TRAFF, who will be assisting. And LIZ HINTON, the CRUSTY VETERAN NURSE. CHRIS DRAPER looks in. She's in WHITES and has a clipboard.

HOOK

(to Liz)

Get a cutdown tray ready for a chest tube insertion.

CHRISTINE

I already ordered it, Doctor Hook.

LIZ

(looking pleased)

Tension pneumothorax. We knew that BEFORE you asked about the sternum.

Looks like girls against the boys, with the girls on top.

CHRISTINE

You okay with this one?

HOOK

I'm -

LIZ

He's okay with this one. You have a case.

CHRISTINE

(yuck)

Druse.

HOOK

Again?

LIZ

Sooner or later the little girl who cries wolf--

CHRISTINE

--is telling the truth. But Eleanor Druse is no little girl.

HOOK

Go on, Chris. We'll be fine. Won't we, Elmer?

(CONTINUED)

85

CONTINUED:

85

ELMER
(hollowly)
Fine.

86

EXT. A HALL IN THE NEURO WING DAY

86

BOBBY DRUSE, about 40, is pushing his mother, MRS. SALLY DRUSE, in a wheelchair. BOBBY is a large (and rather sloppy) ORDERLY. His mother is nicely dressed, and happy to be here. As they roll along she looks contentedly from side to side, like a queen surveying a particularly interesting part of her-
-ahem- kingdom.

BOBBY
Mama, mama, mama...

MRS. DRUSE
Hush, Bobby. This could be serious.
I'm pins and needles all up my left arm.

BOBBY rolls his eyes. With his Mama, it's always serious.

87

INT. SECURITY CUBICLE, WITH OTTO AND BLONDI DAY

87

He's feeding BLONDI half a sandwich.

OTTO
There! Isn't it lovely!

87V1

On the MONITOR showing the ER entrance, EMT UNIT 19 pulls up. Almost before it stops, OLLIE and DANNY are opening the rear doors and lifting PETER, strapped to the stretcher and now fully intubated, out.

87V1

88

INT. ER CORRIDOR DAY

88

We're in full SHAKY-CAM mode as the legs of the stretcher come down and the EMTs wheel PETER toward the TRAUMA ROOM

89

INT. TRAUMA ROOM (SHAKY-CAM) DAY

89

The doors FLY OPEN. As the stretcher comes rolling in, LIZ swoops down, reaches beneath him, and...

LIZ
Running shorts! No pockets! We can't do a wallet biopsy on this one! SHIT!

OLLIE
I know who he is.

(CONTINUED)

LIZ

Do you want me to guess? Is there a prize?

Danny is bagging with both hands and it's hard work.

DANNY

I can't get air in him

HOOK

I know.

DANNY

Really? Wanna share?

OLLIE

His name's Peter Rickman. He lives in Castle View. He's a famous artist--

HOOK pushes him aside and does a quick eyeball exam

HOOK

Liz, gimme a ten-gauge needle. No syringe, just a needle.

LIZ

Are you--

HOOK

Yes.

(to ELMER)

Tension pneumo, Elmer. The pleural sac is inflating like a beach ball and squeezing his lungs shut. Half that air Danny bagged in is trapped. Time for a party trick.

He stabs THE NEEDLE into the PLEURAL SPACE of the UPPER CHEST and there's a LOUD, LONG HISSING SOUND, like air from a tire valve. PETER'S eyes open. He takes a BIG, WHOOPING BREATH through the tube and makes the ambu bag collapse. ELMER'S reaction is SHOCK. We're starting to see that this young doctor doesn't really want to be a doctor.

ELMER

(whispers)

May I be excused?

(swallows hard)

Never mind.

LIZ shows up with the cutdown tray and chest tube kit, takes over on the ambu bag for Danny.

Hook bends toward PETER'S face.

HOOK
(to Peter)
Can you hear me, Mr. Rickman?

PETER tries to nod. The CERVICAL COLLAR gets in the way.

HOOK (cont'd)
No, don't do that. Just blink your eyes if you can hear me.

PETER doesn't blink.

OLLIE
Doc, I don't think...

LIZ throws an elbow into his side to shut him up.

HOOK
If you understand me, blink once.

PETER blinks once...then again...then twice more in rapid succession.

HOOK (cont'd)
We're going to take care of you, okay? Blink once if that's okay.

PETER blinks twice.

LIZ
His saturation's dropping again.

ELMER
(hopefully)
Do we have a consent issue here? We do, don't we?

HOOK
Blink once or twice if you want us to take care of you.

PETER doesn't blink at all. He looks utterly confused.

HOOK (cont'd)
Okay, that's great. Let's go to work, people.

(CONTINUED)

ELMER

That was not informed consent.

LIZ

It was. I saw it.

DANNY

So did I.

LIZ rolls up a tray with instruments on it.

LIZ

Goodbye, boys. Thanks.

The EMT's leave. PETER'S eyes follow them

PETER (V.O.)

Please let this be a dream

MUSIC: "Red Dragon Tattoo."

He looks at the tray LIZ just rolled up. It's covered with various snack-foods: Sno-Balls, Ding-Dongs, Yodels, etc.

HOOK

I want a dozen double-stuffed Oreos, IV push. Ready with one thousand milligrams of peanut-butter crackers and two amps of Nestles Quik.

He reaches onto a lower shelf of the tray and brings out a large pair of ELECTRIC HEDGE-CLIPPERS. When he turns them on, PETER can bear no more. He closes his eyes.

MUSIC: "Red Dragon Tattoo," UP TO LOUD.

INT. A CORRIDOR (1ST FLOOR) DAY

BOBBY DRUSE is lurking uncomfortably outside a door marked EXAM ROOM 2. There's LINEN HAMPER in the doorway and BOBBY is pretending to fold soiled bibs and johnnies.

To him comes CHRIS DRAPER in her white coat, carrying her clipboard; Ms. Taking Care of Business.

CHRISTINE

Is the patient here or across the hall, Bobby?

BOBBY

In here.

The urge to CONFESS gets the better of him

BOBBY (cont'd)

She's my Ma. But this is not my idea!

CHRISTINE

I'm sure it isn't.

She gives a single token KNOCK and goes in.

MRS. DRUSE is in a hospital bed that's cranked so she can sit up. CHRISTINE has caught her TELLING HER ROSARY (although DRUSE is by no means Catholic; she's everything and nothing). She has a tray table in front of her with a deck of Tarot cards in plain view. She puts the beads away and looks at CHRISTINE with an air of PLEASANT EXPECTATION. On the shelf beside her is a monstrous big PURSE. Has to be big; it's full of her psychic supplies (pendulum, etc.). You could call it her [WITCH] DOCTOR BAG.

CHRISTINE

Good afternoon.

DRUSE

Almost good evening.

No smile from CHRIS. She will not let DRUSE buddy up to her.

CHRISTINE

My name is Christine Draper. I'm a neurosurgeon.

DRUSE

Sally Druse. Are you a good doctor?
As good as Hook?

CHRISTINE

(very dry)
No problem there.
(a glance at the clipboard)
Your hand's acting up?

DRUSE

Yes, needles and pins. And I need it for my pendulum. I'm a professional psychic, you know. I've been written up in several magazines.

CHRIS takes a POCKET TAPE RECORDER from the pocket of her white coat and pushes RECORD.

CHRISTINE

Patient complains of needles and pins--

DRUSE

(jovial)
Noodles and prunes!

CHRIS SIGHS and moves in to examine the PATIENT.

INT. O. R. #1, WITH HOOK, LIZ, TRAFF, 2 ASSISTING NURSES 93

The TEAM is HOODED, GOWNED, AND GLOVED.

Oh, and PETER'S here, too, on the OPERATING TABLE. A sterile field isolates the top of his skull from the rest of him. He's still intubated and an ANESTHESIOLOGIST runs the machines and gases that keep him breathing and alive during surgery. With his eyes closed, PETER seems almost beatific beneath his halo of sterile blue paper.

BIG O. R. DRUM LIGHTS GLARE DOWN on PETER'S SKULL, which has been immobilized and BOLTED into a Mayfield three-prong HEADHOLDER. Peter's SCALP has been shaved. A sheet covers his broken body, and we can see only the shapes of the air-casts on his legs.

Near HOOK is a COMPUTER MONITOR showing FOUR SCAN IMAGES OF PETER'S BRAIN (sagittal, coronal, axial, and a surreal, reconstructed FLESH MODEL image). This gadget is a NeuroNavigator. It shows a serious HEMATOMA in PETER'S FOREBRAIN--the very place we saw ANTUBIS licking.

HOOK

He's got one hell of a blood-puddle in there. I'm surprised the blow didn't crack his skull wide open.

(to ELMER)

First we open our craniotomy, and then we evacuate the hematoma. Capish?

Elmer doesn't appear eager to watch a live-action craniotomy.

THE CAMERA MOVES IN as HOOK, with LIZ assisting and mopping the blood away, clamps the bleeders himself, reducing ELMER to no more than a spectator.

HOOK wields a fancy scalpel, peeling back the center of PETER'S forehead like the pages of a book. LIZ retracts the scalp, while HOOK uses a clip gun to seal the bleeders with Rainey clips. LIZ cauterizes right along behind him

HOOK (cont'd)

You did not assist in this procedure, Nurse Hinton.

LIZ

No, Doctor.

The SKULL beneath is cleared of blood and serous fluid. The DEPRESSED FRACTURE looks like a large jigsaw puzzle piece pushed into the dura.

HOOK

Elmer, I always pause here at the boundary and imagine that I am the first neurosurgeon. The first to boldly journey inside a living, working human brain.

Elmer looks as if he just wants to get it over with.

ELMER

Cool.

HOOK

Inside this skull is another universe: the biggest, scariest haunted house of them all.

LIZ

(impatiently)

Elmer, hurry up and tell Dr. Hook how profound he is so that we can get inside this poor guy's noggin and lower his cranial pressure.

HOOK holds out his gloved right hand, and LIZ slaps a drill onto his palm. HOOK looks ELMER in the eyes.

HOOK

After I've paused and reflected on the gravity of what I am about to do, then, and only then, do I proceed with my mission.

ELMER

Yes, doctor.

(CONTINUED)

HOOK fires up the DRILL. SOUND: HIGH-PITCHED WHINING as the tip WHIRS.

HOOK

(sings)

"Come and listen to a story 'bout a
man named Jed/A poor mountaineer,
barely kept his family fed..."

HOOK brings the DRILL down to the skull and begins to work.

OTTO is pushing MRS. DRUSE (still in her bed) along the CORRIDOR. The OVERHEAD SPEAKERS crackle with occasional CALLS for doctors to go here and there. BLONDI pads along beside the bed, well-behaved. OTTO is wearing a lapel mike.

OTTO almost pushes the bed into a wall. BLONDI barks and OTTO gets back on course. He almost runs the bed into an ABANDONED WHEELCHAIR and BLONDI barks again. OTTO once more swerves.

OTTO

You're back again, Mrs. D!

DRUSE

Yes...I thought animals were
forbidden in the hospital.

OTTO

Oh, they are.

MRS. DRUSE thinks of pursuing this and decides it's not worth the trouble. She's more interested in her own life, which she finds very interesting indeed. Very rich.

DRUSE

I'm going to the Neurology Ward.
Dr. Draper admitted me. It's hard
to get a place there.

One of the elevators stands open, and as OTTO pushes her in:

OTTO

(to lapel mike)

Patient to nine, neuro.

NURSE (V. O.)

Standing by.

OTTO
(pushes 9)
You'll be fine.

DRUSE
Of course I will. Tell Bobby not to
worry.

The doors CLOSE.

INT. ELEVATOR CAR, WITH DRUSE

Nothing happens.

DRUSE
These things are so slow...

She looks DROWSY, starts to DROP OFF. There is a CLUNK, a JERK, and a WHINE as the elevator starts to RISE. Her eyes open briefly and then she drowns again...perhaps they gave her something...

INT. ELEVATOR SHAFT

The car rises toward us and as it WIPES ACROSS THE SCREEN, we see the CHILD'S RAG DOLL, still sitting up there. It's car #3, the haunted elevator car, and we should feel its CHILL.

INT. ELEVATOR CAR, WITH DRUSE

She's almost completely asleep. Then, FAINT, we hear the CRY OF A CHILD. Or maybe more than one. Hard to tell.

Her eyes snap open. She listens. And we see that, hypochondriac or not, there is a formidable intelligence at work in this woman.

THE CRIES GROW LOUDER...and then FADE AWAY. DRUSE'S eyes remain open.

INT. 9TH FLOOR ELEVATOR LOBBY

A NURSE is waiting. The doors open, revealing MRS. DRUSE'S bed. The NURSE rolls her out.

DRUSE
Someone was crying in the
children's ward.

The NURSE turns her and gets her started down the hall.

NURSE #2

We call it Pediatrics these days,
Mrs. Druse.

DRUSE cranes back to see:

ELEVATOR MRS. DRUSE'S POV

The doors close slowly. Like a mouth.

DRUSE

Whatever you call it, one of them
sounded as if she were right on top
of the elevator! A little girl.

NURSE #2

(doesn't believe a word)

I see.

MRS. DRUSE looks at the passing rooms on the Neuro Ward with
great satisfaction.

DRUSE

It's very hard to get a place here.

100

INT. OR, WITH HOOK, PETER, LIZ, ELMER, OTHERS

100

HOOK is still drilling and still singing.

HOOK

(sings)

"Then one day he was shootin' at
some food/And up through the ground
came a bubblin' crude!"

Right on cue, BLOOD comes a-bubbling out of PETER'S BRAIN
through the hole.

HOOK (cont'd)

(genial...)

Hoo, done gone a GUSHA!

(...and hard)

Mop, sponge, irrigation! Come on,
people, don't let this guy drown!

LIZ moves forward to do it, but HOOK stops her.

HOOK (cont'd)

You're up, Elmer!

ELMER

(offended)

That's not my job!

HOOK

Your union steward doesn't appear to be in attendance today, so get in there!

ELMER'S feathers are ruffled, but HOOK is the captain of this ship. Elmer takes the proffered bulb syringe.

HOOK and LIZ stare at the images on the NeuroNav.

LIZ

You seeing what I'm seeing?

HOOK

We took these pictures less than an hour ago. Anybody have any idea how come the hematoma in the scan is three times the size of the one inside the skull?

LIZ

The fragment elevated on its own, too. It's like the whole mess is healing itself at warp speed.

They look at each other, then back at the scan, then down at the brain. Most wondrous. How can it be?

We hear the SOUNDS of bureaucracy at work: PHONES and CLICKING KEYBOARDS.

On the door, in GOLD: DR. JESSE JAMES CHIEF HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATOR

Also, there's a sticker for OPERATION MORNING AIR, which is DR. JAMES'S current PR baby. The logo shows a CARTOON DOCTOR wearing one of those head-reflectors that looks like a miner's lamp. The CARTOON DOCTOR is smiling and winking. "Everything's all right," that smile and wink says.

An INTERN comes along. Looks both ways. Sees nobody. Adds a mustache to the SMILING CARTOON DOCTOR and walks on, mission accomplished.

102

INT. DR. JAMES'S OFFICE DAY

102

Plush digs, indeed. DR. JAMES, a distinguished-looking man of about 55 in a designer suit, is sitting behind his desk, looking at the contents of a slim folder. With him is DR. BRENDA ABELSON, about forty-five, sexy in a doctorly way.

ABELSON

The home number was unlisted, but he was in the ER last year with a badly cut finger, and his wife had a pap-smear. Dr. Willock.

JAMES

Dr. Willock, excellent! And who's taking care of this fellow now? It's not Dr. Stegman, is it?

ABELSON

(frowns)

No--oo, Steg isn't in. I believe... Hook.

JAMES

Hook! Excellent!

He's smiling, warm. DR. JAMES is always smiling and warm. He's an utter incompetent as a doctor (join the club), but when it comes to administration, fund-raising, and dealing with big insurance companies, he's got game.

BRENDA is less sure. For one thing, she doesn't like the idea that DR. JAMES prefers HOOK to STEGMAN in this situation.

ABELSON

Do you think so?

JAMES

Yes indeed. You say this Peter Rickman is quite well known?

BRENDA ABELSON leans over his chair and flips back the first sheet, which is paperwork from PETER'S previous ER visit.

Below is a print-out of a newsmagazine cover with PETER on it, smiling. Canvases in the background show lovers in tempestuous embraces. The line at the bottom reads PETER RICKMAN, AMERICA'S MOST POPULAR POPULAR ARTIST.

JAMES (cont' d)

Ah! I see! Thank you, Brenda! Quick work and even quicker thinking!

(CONTINUED)

ABELSON

I thought you'd want to call Mrs. Rickman herself. Before she hears it on the news.

JAMES

We wouldn't want that, would we?

ABELSON

(checks her watch)
I wouldn't think so, no. I've really got to run.

JAMES

Of course. But thank you for this. Thank you so much. And here--take this...and one of these...

He gives her some pamphlets concerning OPERATION MORNING AIR, all bearing the logo of the SMILING, WINKING CARTOON DOCTOR.

JAMES (cont'd)

And of course, one of these! For your car window!

It's a sticker much like the one on his door. BRENDA takes it. From the look she gives it, it's doubtful this will ever find a place on her car.

JAMES (cont'd)

Aren't they wonderful? Aren't they...really excellent?

ABELSON

(who gives a shit)
Very nice.
(the serious business)
If this works out, you know, the Rickmans are in a position to give Kingdom Hospital a great deal of help.

JAMES

(smiling)
Filthy rich, are they?

ABELSON

I don't know that I'd put it that way, exactly--

JAMES

No, no, but just between us?

(CONTINUED)

ABELSON

(the watch business again)

Excuse me, Jesse. I really have to run. Don't let Rickman's wife hear it on the news. Please.

JAMES

(sees her to the door)

Absolutely not! Have a great day! A Morning Air day!

As the door shuts, she sees the defaced sticker. Very carefully, she removes the backing from her sticker and puts it over the DEFACED ONE. Then she walks away.

He returns to his desk, smiling.

JAMES

Filthy rich. Call a spade a spade and a chicken a chicken.

He picks up the phone and begins to dial the RICKMAN home number from the file. He gets about one digit from the end, then pauses. We can practically see the wheels turning: what if PETER RICKMAN dies?

He hangs up the phone and thumbs the intercom instead.

JAMES (cont'd)

Julie, call me the minute Peter Rickman's out of the O.R. The very minute.

JULIE (V.O.)

Yes, Dr. James.

JAMES

Perhaps you could get me an update on Hook's progress.

JULIE (V.O.)

Yes, Dr. James.

DR. JAMES leans back in his chair, and then does an odd thing. He puts his thumb in his mouth and BLOWS ON IT.

His little finger sticks up, as if inflated. He smiles, delighted with himself.

FADE TO BLACK.
THIS ENDS ACT 3.

ACT 4

105 INT. THE O. R. , WITH HOOK, ELMER, LIZ, NURSES 105

Now the craniotomy is wide open, offering a view of RICKMAN'S BRAIN and the dark coagulated HEMATOMA, which is almost evacuated. ELMER moves in to suction blood and sera out of the wound.

We see the splendor of Rickman's EXPOSED BRAIN.

HOOK

There it is, Elmer. One hundred billion neurons. One hundred trillion synaptic connections. A three-pound universe.

Now Elmer's downright fascinated and leans closer, studying the crenellations, sulci and gyri of RICKMAN'S brain. He leans even closer, until he's right down to KISSING DISTANCE--

PETER OPENS HIS EYES AND LOOKS AT HIM!

ELMER

AG!

He recoils, almost falling over. One of the OR NURSES (the FAINTING NURSE) gets a look at PETER'S OPEN, BLOOD-RIMMED ORBS and CRUMPLES DOWN in a DEAD FAINT.

PETER looks toward the corner of the OR where he sees:

106 INT. CORNER OF THE OR, PETER'S POV 106

Standing there are MARY and ANTUBIS. MARY is wearing her bell around her neck and she's stroking ANTUBIS as if he's a large and friendly dog instead of the Anteater Hell Forgot. ANTUBIS stretches his neck up and gives her a grin both FRIENDLY and GRUESOME. Boy, there are a lot of teeth on view there.

MARY puts a finger between ANTUBIS'S eyes. ANTUBIS closes his eyes BLISSFULLY.

107 HOOK sees none of this, but he does see PETER'S open 107 eyes, and acts out of pure instinct (or is it telepathy?). He puts the tip of one finger between PETER'S EYES, just below the BLOODY DRILL HOLE.

HOOK

Go back to sleep!

(CONTINUED)

PETER'S eyes, like ANTUBIS'S, close immediately. LIZ HINTON is the kind of career nurse who's seen everything (most of it twice), but she's stunned by this.

LIZ

What the hell did you just do?

HOOK

I don't know.

LIZ

Well, if you could patent it, you could make a million dollars.

HOOK

(back to work w/o a pause)
Elmer, that nurse is no longer marching to the sound of the big brass band. Tuck her away in the corner, please.

ELMER does so without protest--probably glad to get away from the operating table. All this is just too weird.

JULIE (O. S., SPEAKER)

Dr. Hook, Dr. James would like to know when you expect to be finished with your patient?

HOOK

Tell Dr. James I'll send him a singing telegram when that glad moment arrives.

JULIE (O. S., SPEAKER)

I'm afraid I didn't get that.

HOOK

I said, "Shut up and let me work."

LIZ winces. So does ELMER as he returns to the OPERATING TABLE. Mostly HOOK maintains his jacket of cynical good humor, but sometimes an angry, despairing man inside peeks out. This is one of those times.

HOOK (cont'd)

Do either of you have anything to say?

(they don't)

Then let's get an ICP reading.

LIZ hands him the probe (it looks like a meat thermometer), which will go into the opening, so they can get an intracranial pressure reading from PETER'S brain.

ELMER

He woke up.

HOOK

He opened his eyes. There's a difference.

UNIT 19 is once more parked on the tarmac. It's now nearly quarter past six in the evening. DANNY stands in the doorway, smoking a cigarette. OLLIE comes out. Both of them have found time to change to CIVVIES.

OLLIE

You're killing yourself with those things.

DANNY

Is that how you explain the guy we just scraped up off Route 7? A smoking-related paralytic?

DANNY has been trying to come to a decision, and now he does. He flips away the cigarette.

DANNY (cont'd)

I'm calling her.

OLLIE

Who?

DANNY

Who do you think? Mrs. Rickman.

OLLIE

That's the hospital's job! They probably called her as soon as--

DANNY

Fifty bucks says they haven't. Fifty bucks says they're waiting to see if the guy lives or dies... then they can decide how to spin it.

He sticks out his hand. OLLIE considers and declines the bet.

DANNY (cont'd)

It's just how they operate since the Glimmer Twins came on board.

OLLIE

Glimmer--?

DANNY

James and Stegman. Stegman and James. I'm calling her. If she's already heard, I'll get the answering machine.

OLLIE follows DANNY to the phone on the desk at the head of several ranked EMT UNITS.

OLLIE

You don't have their number.

DANNY

No, but I can get it. I've got a contact.

He starts to DIAL.

ABEL and CHRISTA are washing dishes. They're always here and always washing dishes.

SOUND: TELEPHONE.

ABEL and CHRISTA look at each other with mutual delight: the phone! The phone!

ABEL picks it up.

ABEL

Hello! This is Abel!

CHRISTA

And Christa, too!

They LAUGH CHEERILY.

111 INT. CASTLE VIEW RESCUE GARAGE, W/ DANNY AND OLLIE 111
LATE DAY

DANNY
(listens; smiles)
Listen, can you still hack into
LS&MT's unlisted numbers?

112 EXT. THE RICKMAN HOME LATE DAY 112

The sun is starting to slide down toward the lake.

113 INT. THE RICKMAN LIVING ROOM LATE DAY 113

CU on the clock. It's pushing 6:30. SOUND of the TV.

113V1 NEWSCASTER (O. S.) 113V1

And tonight's Big Ole Fish belongs
to Jamie Parker of Durham. He
caught a 4-pound pickerel in
Runaround Pond and wins a case of
Nozz-A-La! Way to go, Jamie!

THE CAMERA, MEANWHILE, is widening out. NATALIE is sitting on
the sofa, dressed in a leotard and a white blouse knotted
below her breasts. It's our first good look at her. She's
beautiful, intelligent, mid-30s. Eating a sandwich. Dividing
her attention between the clock and the TV--where's PETER?
He's had time enough to run all the way to Portland.

NEWSCASTER (cont'd)
Our runner-up is little Kristen
McCurdy, of Pownal...

NATALIE gets up and looks out the window.

114 EXT. DRIVEWAY, NATALIE'S POV 114

Empty. No sign of her husband.

115 INT. RESUME NATALIE 115

As she walks back toward the couch, the PHONE RINGS and on TV
someone hands the NEWSCASTER a sheet of paper.

NEWSCASTER
We have breaking news from Castle
Rock, where a hit-and-run victim
was discovered lying by the side of
State Highway 7...

NATALIE

Hello?

NEWSCASTER

...and was taken by EMT Rescue Unit to Kingdom Hospital, in Lewiston. A hospital source claims the victim was this man...

Behind him, a photo of PETER (the one from the cover of the newsmagazine) appears as a SUPER. But even before that, NATALIE'S look of IMPATIENT BOREDOM has changed to one of FRIGHTENED CONFUSION. She sees her husband's face on the TV screen, and FRIGHTENED CONFUSION becomes OUTRIGHT HORROR.

NEWSCASTER (cont'd)

Peter Rickman, 41, named America's Most Popular Popular Artist by The Weekly Review. (Beat) Popular-Popular? (Beat) We'll have more on this story at eleven.

NATALIE

No!

She drops the phone and RUNS FOR THE STAIRS.

116

INT. THE RICKMAN BEDROOM LATE DAY

116

NATALIE runs in and grabs her purse from the dresser. She paws madly inside and grabs her car-keys. She rushes back out of the room with them clutched in her fist. She's crying.

117

INT. THE STUDIO LATE DAY

117

NATALIE comes rushing out of the bedroom and across the STUDIO, which is dimly lit from the skylights. Art appreciation is the last thing she's interested in, but the painting of ANTUBIS stops her.

We know PETER covered it again before he went out on his run, but now it's uncovered. ANTUBIS has changed position. Now he's closer. And there is BLOOD ON HIS MUZZLE. He's GRINNING.

NATALIE looks at this for a moment. Then tears herself away.

MUSIC (as we HOLD ON ANTUBIS): Frank Sinatra or someone similar singing: "I'll be seeing you...in all the old familiar places..."

118 EXT. THE RICKMAN DRIVEWAY LATE DAY 118

HIGH ANGLE. NATALIE comes running out, throws herself into the Mercedes, and drives away fast.

"That this heart of mine embraces...all day through..."

119 EXT. KINGDOM HOSPITAL, ESTABLISHING SUNSET 119

SINGING CONTINUES: "In the small cafe...the park across the way...the children's carousel..."

120 INT. THE SECURITY CUBICLE, WITH OTTO AND BLONDI 120

Both asleep, OTTO with his magazine spread open on his lap.

SINGING CONTINUES: "The chestnut trees...the wishing well..."

121 INT. A ROOM IN ICU 121

PETER lies in a deep sleep--or maybe it's a coma--surrounded by BEEPING MACHINERY. There's a big white bandage on his head. His legs, still in the AIR CASTS, are slightly elevated. Now he's also wearing BUMP SLIPPERS that keep making little explosive sounds and twitching his feet (to keep clots from forming). He's still wearing the CERVICAL COLLAR, too. All in all, he looks like a man in a torture chamber (which is pretty much what this is), and we think he's lucky to be unconscious. He might be luckier to be dead.

SINGING CONTINUES: "And I'll be seeing you...in every lovely summer's day..."

122 INT. MRS. DRUSE'S ROOM 122

She's clad in a nightie and on her knees at the foot of her bed, praying. Her bare feet glimmer below the hem of her johnnie. The door opens and BOBBY enters with her supper tray, and one for him. I think maybe he even has a couple of candles, so they can dine by candle-light. She irritates the hell out of him, always getting admitted with some new disease so she can continue her seances with the terminal gomers and gomettes (like LENNY), but what can BOBBY do? He loves his Mama, and we all say thankya.

She's off her knees in a flash (pretty nimble for a sick lady), delighted to see him. As they prepare to eat their cordons bleu hospital dinner (NOT!):

SINGING CONTINUES: "In everything that's light and gay...I'll always think of you that way..."

123 INT. HOOK'S "APARTMENT" 123

This is in the basement, and it's really amazing. He's in the living area, where there's a TV, a couch, a couple of armchairs, and a phone. There are stacks and stacks of boxes surrounding the room, all of it hospital equipment and supplies that he has salvaged or acquired by swapping and dealing on the side. HOOK has also managed to acquire a lot of valuable computer peripherals and components, flat panel monitors, Palm Pilots, lab instruments, like microscopes and blood gas machines. HOOK is the Milo Minderbinder of Kingdom Hospital. Always able to make a phone call and find what you need for your lab or your office.

Beyond is a bedroom with a really excellent double bed. HOOK is having a much nicer meal than BOBBY and MRS. DRUSE (and a fine bottle of wine to set it off), but he looks tired. And he's eating alone, of course.

SINGING CONTINUES: "I'll find you in the morning sun... and when the night is new..."

124 EXT. KINGDOM HOSPITAL JUST PAST SUNSET 124

The Mercedes comes roaring up beneath the ER canopy and NATALIE is out, running even before her feet hit the ground. In the sky is an EARLY MOON.

SINGING CONCLUDES: "I'll be looking at the moon...but I'll be seeing you!"

125 INT. THE KITCHEN, WITH ABEL AND CHRISTA 125

ABEL

The artist's wife is here!

CHRISTA

Now the flies will spark!

She's gone and puzzled herself again, she mouths, "Sparks will fly? Flies will spark?"

They grin at each other, delighted.

126 INT. THE ER RECEIVING AND WAITING AREA EVENING 126

Kingdom Hospital isn't like other hospitals, and NATALIE registers this at once. The ranks of plastic Walmart chairs are completely empty. The NURSE'S STATION is likewise empty. We can see OTTO in the SECURITY CUBICLE, snoozing away.

(CONTINUED)

NATALIE comes to a dead halt in the middle of this emptiness, listening to FAINT BELLS and the DISTANT, ECHOING SOUND of LOUDSPEAKER CALLS: "Dr. Smythe to Radiology...Dr. Smythe..."

Her TERROR gives way to BEWILDERMENT, then to ANGER. She draws in a deep breath...and...

NATALIE
(at the top of her lungs)
HEY! HEY! WHERE THE HELL IS MY
HUSBAND???

INT. THE SECURITY CUBICLE, WITH OTTO AND BLONDI

OTTO comes awake with a HARD START that almost throws him out of his chair. The magazine hits BLONDI on the head; BLONDI also looks startled. OTTO stares out at the furious woman in the ER RECEIVING/WAITING AREA.

OTTO
Oh scheiss.

He thumbs a switch on his intercom

OTTO (cont'd)
Dr. James to ER Waiting and
Receiving, Dr. James...
(beat)
Stat!
(letting go of switch)
Please be there.

INT. ER WAITING/RECEIVING

NATALIE
(bellowing)
WHAT KIND OF PLACE ARE YOU PEOPLE
RUNNING HERE? I WANT TO SEE MY
HUSBAND!!!!

LIZ HINTON appears. Behind her, kind of lurking around, comes ELMER TRAFF. He's scared, but he's also fascinated. LIZ passes the SECURITY CUBICLE and leans in to OTTO, her face full of don't-fuck-with-me.

LIZ
Hook to ICU, stat. Extension 99.

She's gone before OTTO has a chance to respond. CAMERA MOVES WITH HER to NATALIE, who's standing in the middle of the ER waiting area, getting ready to loose another blast.

(CONTINUED)

LIZ (cont'd)

Ma'am, you need to be quiet. This is a hospital.

NATALIE

I'll be quiet when I see my husband! My husband Peter Rickman! Is he here or not?

LIZ

He's here.

LIZ is calm, and is having a calming effect on NATALIE. OTTO and ELMER are watching. OTTO has a call to make, but for the time being, this is too interesting. A few other NURSES (and patients in johnnies) are also gathering for a gander. We go back and forth w/ SHAKY-CAM

DR. JESSE JAMES appears, smiling (but flustered), almost knocking ELMER down as he hustles on his way to the irate (and terrified) MRS. RICKMAN. He's wearing a Morning Air button: the SMILING CARTOON DOCTOR.

JAMES

(desperate charm)

Mrs. Rickman, I've been trying to reach you! Thank goodness you've made it safely! I have very good news for you! Your husband is stable!

He says this with the same enthusiasm a game-show host might use to tell a contestant he/she has just won a trip to Aruba.

NATALIE looks at him. Everyone else looks at her. A moment of BREATHLESS SILENCE. Everyone is waiting to see if she'll explode again. This is the wife of a rich man, remember, part of a marital partnership that could do KH great good or great potential harm, in a PR sense at the very least.

NATALIE dismisses JAMES as a blowhard and turns to LIZ.

NATALIE

Take me to him, please.

JAMES

Mrs. Rickman, I'm not sure, that under the circumstances--

LIZ

That will be fine, Doctor. Come with me, Mrs. Rickman.

(CONTINUED)

And with that, LIZ leads NATALIE toward the elevators, and the ICU (which is on 4). DR. JAMES scurries after, and as he passes OTTO'S security cubicle, he leans in. Now he can show the strain of this encounter. He's still smiling, but we also see the stress.

JAMES

Dr. Hook to ICU, stat!

And JAMES goes on, following the ladies.

OTTO looks at his main phone (there are at least three). There are probably three dozen different extensions, but the slot marked 99 is BLANK.

OTTO

(to BLONDI)

What's 99, boy?

BLONDI

How the hell should I know? I'm only the dog.

OTTO doesn't hear him, of course. He shrugs and punches 99.

HOOK has worked his way through most of his meal and is enjoying his wine. Another glass, perhaps? Why not? He's reaching for the bottle when the PHONE RINGS. It's a really nice one-- a DESIGNER PHONE.

HOOK

Hook.

(listens)

Slow down, Otto...

(listens)

Yes, fine. I'll be right there.

HOOK hangs up and leaves.

The doors close and JAMES pushes 4. NOTHING HAPPENS.

NATALIE

What's wrong?

JAMES

These cars are a little slow... a minor glitch in the wiring. Due to be repaired next week.

The elevator LURCHES INTO MOTION.

JAMES (cont' d)

Ah! Mrs. Rickman, I want to repeat that your husband is stable. He was in a serious accident and his lungs stopped working for awhile, but the emergency personnel were right there with him when it happened. They took over and--

SOUND, FAINT: A CRYING CHILD. NATALIE hears it and so does LIZ, although LIZ will say nothing about it.

NATALIE

What's that?

JAMES

Pardon me?

NATALIE

Is it a child?

The CRYING FADES AWAY.

JAMES

I don't hear anything.

NATALIE looks at LIZ, questioning. Before LIZ can say anything, JAMES continues.

JAMES (cont' d)

Castle Rock has the best ER personnel in the Kingdom Hospital service area, wouldn't you agree, Nurse Hinton?

(before she can reply)

All trained right here at The Kingdom, of course... The Kingdom is what we call it...

(happy little chuckle)

As I was saying, the ER personnel took over, breathed for him, gave him oxygen. Now a machine is breathing for him, so--

(CONTINUED)

NATALIE

A machine? A machine is breathing
for my husband?

The elevator stops and the doors open on the ICU. 130
NATALIE makes no move to get out. LIZ holds the DOOR OPEN
button. She's looking at JAMES as if wondering if he intends to
stick his other foot in his mouth or if one will be enough.

INT. THE FAR END OF ICU NIGHT 131

Here is an elevator marked SERVICE AND FREIGHT, AUTHORIZED
PERSONNEL ONLY. The door opens and HOOK steps briskly out,
headed for the nurse's station.

INT. ELEVATOR #3, WITH LIZ, NATALIE, JAMES 132

JAMES

Mrs. Rickman, I assure you--

NATALIE

Are you my husband's doctor?

JAMES

That would be Hook. He was on call
when Mr. Rickman was admitted. He's
a neurosurgeon, one of the finest
on the staff--

NATALIE

I want to see him

She steps out of the car. The others can do nothing but
follow.

INT. ICU ELEVATOR LOBBY NIGHT

LIZ spots HOOK waiting for them at the nurse's station and
exhibits intense--nay, sublime--relief.

LIZ

He's waiting for us, Mrs. Rickman.

INT. PETER'S ROOM IN ICU NIGHT 133

We are ECU on PETER. His eyes are closed, but he's SMILING,
like a man having a sweet dream

SOUND: UNINTELLIGIBLE WHISPERING.

CAMERA PULLS BACK A BIT and we see ANTUBIS' S TOOTHY SNOUT at the cup of PETER' S ear. It' s ANTUBIS who is whispering.

PETER
(in his sleep)
Antubis!...

Whisper- whisper- whisper.

PETER (cont' d)
Antubis! Guardian...of the gate.

PETER' S EYES ROLL beneath his closed lids, like a man in REM sleep. Later he' ll think this is a dream We know better.

PETER (cont' d)
Am I going to die?

Whisper- whisper- whisper.

We see EMPTY HALLWAYS, and DYING PATIENTS on the SUNSHINE WARD.

LENNY STILLMACH sits in the Sunshine Solarium, drooling over a game of Patience. 135

We see CRACKED WALLS and DRIPPING PIPES. 136

On PEDIATRICS (the 7th floor), we see a GIRL OF 9 sitting in the corner of her room, with a doll. This is MONA, and she' s rocking back and forth, DROOLING. 137

NARRATOR
This is Kingdom Hospital, which stands on uneasy ground.

In the MORGUE, we see two bodies with their feet sticking out from beneath the sheets; the Emperor of Ice Cream has called them home. 138

Everywhere we look the CAMERA IS DUTCHED, angling the images left and right, giving us a sense of DREAMY DISLOCATION.

NARRATOR
Here the cold and the damp have returned...and as the gate swings open...

OTTO has gone back to sleep, but BLONDI is looking up at the video monitor which shows the ER entrance. 139V1

139 CONTINUED: 139

On the screen, an OLD AMBULANCE, circa 1935, pulls up with its single roof-light FLASHING.

140 EXT. THE ER ENTRANCE, BENEATH THE CANOPY 140

We're looking at the rear of the AMBULANCE. A BLOODY HAND appears, slaps the glass of the small window in the door with a gesture like supplication. Then the hand SLIDES DOWN AND OUT OF SIGHT, as if the person inside has lost consciousness. Or worse. It leaves FAINT STREAKS OF BLOOD behind.

141 INT. THE SECURITY CUBICLE, WITH OTTO AND BLONDI 141

141V1 OTTO sleeps on. On the video monitor, the OLD AMBULANCE has disappeared. The ER entrance is empty. BLONDI puts his head back down and closes his eyes. 141V1

142 EXT. KINGDOM HOSPITAL NIGHT 142

It hulks against the dark, with just a few lights showing. Like a haunted castle.

NARRATOR

...the dead may also return.

FADE TO BLACK.
THIS ENDS ACT 4.

ACT 5

FADE IN

143 EXT. KINGDOM HOSPITAL NIGHT 143

Von Trier often features an aerial shot. Let's use that here.

144 INT. THE ICU CENTER NIGHT 144

Here we have a central round desk surrounded by a wide COUNTERTOP. Inside, TECHS and NURSES (four in all, let's say) are doing paperwork and keeping an eye on various monitors.

Most of the rooms aren't rooms at all, exactly, but PODS with very wide doorways to allow rolling beds and clunky equipment to fit inside. They orbit the ICU CENTER. There are PULL-CURTAINS for privacy. They can almost turn a POD into a room

There is at least one real room here, however, which the ICU folks call "the Presidential Suite." We see DRS. JAMES and HOOK outside it, along with LIZ and NATALIE.

Across the hall from them is a SUPPLY CABINET that will figure in a bit of business momentarily.

As THE CAMERA MOVES IN:

HOOK

Are you prone to hysteria, Mrs. Rickman?

NATALIE

No.

HOOK

I'm going to give you a moment alone with your husband, if you'd like that. Would you like that?

Here is a man who can talk straight, and NATALIE is relieved, prone to like him already.

NATALIE

Yes. I would. Doctor--?

HOOK

Hook. As in Dr. Hook and The Medicine Show? "The Cover of the Rollin' Stone"?

(sees she doesn't understand)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HOOK (cont'd)

Never mind. You can speak to your husband, but he will almost certainly not answer you, although he may...um...open his eyes.

NATALIE

Is he in a coma?

JAMES

(smiling...oh man,
beautiful)

Mrs. Rickman, I really think it's premature to--

NATALIE

(fierce, to HOOK alone)

Is he in a coma?

HOOK

He's not conscious or responsive right now, but that's not unusual after trauma and surgery. Time may prove me wrong, but I don't expect him to be in a coma.

NATALIE turns to the door, then looks back at HOOK. She's controlled, but we see a kind of BESEECHING TERROR in her.

NATALIE

Is he awful?

HOOK

No.

NATALIE gathers herself and goes in. As the door closes, JAMES turns to him, smiling more splendidly than ever.

JAMES

You handled that brilliantly, Hook!
And thank you for putting him in
the...the...

LIZ

The Presidential Suite is what they
call it up here.

HOOK

Excuse me.

He turns to the SUPPLY CABINET and opens it. Inside are bandages, bedpans, johnnies, slippers...and boxes of Kleenex. HOOK starts taking these, making a pile of them

JAMES

Well, I'll just let you handle
this, shall I?

To HOOK, he puts his thumb in his mouth and inflates his little finger. HOOK shifts his pile of Kleenex boxes under his arm so he can return the gesture. Then JAMES starts away briskly, happy as a clam at high tide.

JAMES (cont'd)

(turns back as an idea
hits)

Make one of the Kingdom Apartments
available to her, if that seems
appropriate. There are lots of
vacancies.

And off he goes.

PETER is unconscious, surrounded by equipment, wearing the CERVICAL COLLAR (and maybe a HALO--it's an option). The BUMP SLIPPERS make their rhythmic explosions. The MONITORS BEEP.

NATALIE approaches him and surveys him. She goes to touch him, then doesn't, then finally musters enough nerve to CARESS HIS CHEEK. She examines the marks of the accident, and perhaps touches them lightly. The tears begin to come, but she CRIES SILENTLY.

NATALIE

Look at you. Oh, just look at you.

Her legs go out from under her and she kneels beside the bed as if praying.

NATALIE (cont'd)

I didn't mean to piss you off this
afternoon. I really, really didn't.
Can you hear me?

This is a CORRIDOR in an old-fashioned, deserted hospital. There are signs of DECAY everywhere. Tiles have fallen off the walls. There are PUDDLES on the floor. An OVERTURNED GURNEY has grown BEARDS OF MOSS AND MOLD.

A sign on the wall says BEWARE OF THE WALKING DEAD.

PETER wanders down this corridor in a HOSPITAL JOHNNY, bewildered. From the speakers overheard, FAINT AND CRACKLY:

NATALIE (V. O.)

Peter, can you hear me? I'm here,
my love. I'm h--

There's a CRACKLE OF STATIC and the VOICE CUTS OFF.

SOUND: A SHUFFLING FOOTSTEP.

PETER turns and sees:

INT. THE OLD KINGDOM CORRIDOR, REVERSE

A TERRIBLE BOY of about 15 stands there. Like MARY, his face is WHITE and his eyes are DEEPLY SOCKETED. This is PAUL. He grins, showing a HUGE MOUTHFUL OF TEETH.

INT. PETER

He's TERRIFIED. Instinctively, he COVERS HIS EYES. When he dares look again:

INT. THE OLD KINGDOM CORRIDOR, REVERSE

Now it's empty. Seeming to stretch away to infinity. HOLLOW SOUND OF DRIPPING WATER.

RESUME PETER

He's terrified and bewildered.

PETER

Where am I?

And it echoes away: "... am I... am I... am I..."

INT. THE KITCHEN, WITH ABEL AND CHRISTA NIGHT

Still doing dishes.

ABEL

The artist has seen the other one!

CHRISTA

He's seen Paul?

Their smiles falter. Now they look at each other SOLEMNLY.

148 INT. THE SUNSHINE WARD/SOLARIUM NIGHT 148

We're looking down toward the Sunshine Solarium, where LENNY is dozing over his cards. To him comes MRS. DRUSE, who fancies that she has the run of the place. Now that she's on her own, she walks briskly enough. Not sick at all. She sees LENNY and brightens up at once.

149 INT. THE SOLARIUM, WITH DRUSE AND LENNY NIGHT 149

DRUSE
Hello, Lenny!

She goes to him and gives him a kiss. LENNY doesn't react.

DRUSE (cont'd)
How are you?

No response. She looks at his game of solitaire.

DRUSE (cont'd)
Red jack on black queen. It's
always best to cover the black
queen as soon as possible.

No reaction from LENNY.

DRUSE (cont'd)
It's Sally. Come back, Lenny. Come
back. It's Sally. Come back.

Slowly, and with tremendous effort, LENNY comes back. He raises his head and peers at her.

DRUSE, LENNY'S POV

149E1 We see her FAINTLY, a glowing core in a lake of 149E1
darkness. Smiling at him

RESUME DRUSE AND LENNY

DRUSE (cont'd)
Move your jack, Lenny. Cover up
that bitch.

LENNY looks down at his game. Lowers his head until his nose is almost touching the cards, then does as she says.

DRUSE (cont'd)
Good! Lovely!
(looking around with vast
satisfaction)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DRUSE (cont' d)

I was right to come back--the vibrations are stronger than ever. Not good. I heard a crying child in the elevator. Perhaps it was only some little girl in the Children's Ward, but I think...yes, I think...

(She nods)

Kingdom Hospital is haunted.

LENNY

Haunted.

DRUSE

We'll resume our seances tomorrow. There's no time to lose. Tell the others.

LENNY

(with tremendous effort)

Mrs. Druse! You're back!

He lifts his arms. She gives him a hug and a kiss. She genuinely loves this old man.

DRUSE

Yes, I'm back, and we're going to set things right. Count on me, Lenny--count on me!

NATALIE has pulled the room's single chair up to the side of the bed. She's still crying. She's holding PETER'S hand and stroking it. She hardly notices HOOK when he enters and begins spotting boxes of Kleenex all around the room, including the toilet area. He's like a director arranging a set, and in a way that's what he is: he's been through this hundreds of times. In the course of the ensuing scene, we'll see NATALIE draw tissues from every single box he's placed.

When he's done, he goes to NATALIE and stands beside her. He's still got one box of Kleenex. She remains lost in her contemplation of her husband. Her tears are still flowing, but there are no great noisy sobs, no melodrama.

When HOOK holds out the box of Kleenex, she takes one w/o looking at him and wipes her eyes with it. HOOK gets a wastebasket and holds it out to her silently. She deposits the used Kleenex. He offers her the box and she takes another. HOOK sets the waste basket down beside her chair.

HOOK

Mrs. Rickman, are you ready to talk a bit?

NATALIE

(still looking at PETER)
Can I stay with him tonight?

HOOK

No. But the hospital keeps apartments across the street, and I can arrange for you to stay in one of those, if you'd like.

NATALIE

(finally looking at him)
You treated him.

HOOK

I was the admitting surgeon, yes. He had a build-up of blood on his brain--a hematoma--that caused his intracranial pressure rise. We fixed that, we hope, and now we are monitoring it.

He gestures at the MONITOR.

HOOK (CONT'D) (cont'd)

He has more surgery ahead. He'll be in OR with Dr. Freeman tomorrow. Freeman's an orthopod. He has multiple fractures to the lower extremities. Both tibias, right ulna. And his pelvis is fractured.

Each one hits her like a blow.

NATALIE

Is he in pain?

HOOK

He's receiving medication which relieves pain.

NATALIE

Morphine?

HOOK shrugs. That's close enough. Now he takes a breath, because this is the hard part.

(CONTINUED)

HOOK

I'm afraid that your husband's spine and skull were also severely damaged.

NATALIE gets up and goes to the window. She takes a Kleenex from the box HOOK has left there and blows her nose. Takes another and wipes her eyes.

NATALIE

Will he be able to walk again?

Then something far more important occurs to her.

NATALIE (cont'd)

Will he be able to use his hands?
My husband is a painter.

HOOK

His spine was fractured between the 4th and 5th cervical vertebrae. The good news is that his ability to breathe seems unimpaired. The bad news is that he has so far shown no ability to move his arms and legs, and no response to stimuli...the prick of a pin, for instance. But we're still in the first twenty-four hours, post-accident.

NATALIE

Dr. Hook, if my husband wakes up, is he going to be a quadriplegic?

HOOK

We're hopeful that the spinal cord may simply be compressed. In that case, he may recover some use of his arms and legs. But with this type of injury, we're very worried that the damage may be permanent.

NATALIE

Permanent. Oh. My. God.

HOOK

I'm sorry I have to tell you this.

NATALIE

Compressed is better than broken. Or fractured. Is that correct?

(CONTINUED)

HOOK

If the cord is only compressed,
your husband might recover some
limited use of his arms and legs.

NATALIE

(starts on a new box of
Kleenex)

What are the chances that it is a
compression... rather than fracture?

HOOK

(the answer's 1%)

Not good. Mrs. Rickman, I'm so
sorry to have to tell you this.

NATALIE

How not good?

She's approaching him, face white, eyes huge and dangerous.
But she told him she wasn't prone to hysteria, and so far
she's done okay in that respect. But HOOK is wary of the
stillness in that face.

HOOK

I don't want to discourage you with
statistics. Statistics are for
groups. Your husband is ONE
talented, driven person. His
chances are one hundred per cent.
Or zero. But we have to be ready
for the zero.

She PUSHES HIM AGAINST THE WALL. HOOK is bigger, but he's
caught off-guard, and if not for the wall, he would probably
have fallen right over. She BALLS HER HANDS INTO FISTS, and
for a moment it looks like she'll wade in: Ali vs. Liston.
HOOK raises his open hands to guard, but on the whole his
attitude is rather ADMIRING.

NATALIE

(low; fierce)

Sorry! You're so sorry! Why do you
keep saying that?

HOOK

Because there's nothing else. The
chances of your husband waking up
the same old Peter are small, Mrs.
Rickman.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

150

CONTINUED: (4)

150

HOOK (cont'd)

The chances that he will walk again--or paint--are also small, although of course we are hopeful. The chances that he will both be his old self and walk? Infinitesimal.

(then, w/ great deliberation)

I'm still so sorry I have to tell you these things.

For a moment her fists remain balled up. Then she starts to HEAVE. HOOK starts toward her, but she holds up her hands in a stay-away-from-me gesture.

NATALIE

No. No. I'm all right.

She's not. She turns, DASHES TO THE JOHN, and rakes the curtain closed. SOUNDS OF RETCHING. HOOK, in businesslike fashion, checks first his PATIENT and then his PATIENT'S vitals, as conveyed by the MONITORS.

151

INT. THE TOILET CUBICLE

151

NATALIE's on her knees before the toilet, eyes closed. She reaches out, finds the chrome lever, and pushes it down. SOUND OF THE FLUSH. She opens her eyes and sees:

BOX OF KLEENEX, NATALIE'S POV

INT. THE TOILET CUBICLE

NATALIE gives a BITTER LITTLE LAUGH as she realizes what HOOK has done, and how many NATALIES he's spoken with over the years--the strategically placed tissue boxes really tell it all. She takes one.

152

INT. THE PRESIDENTIAL SUITE NIGHT

152

NATALIE comes out of the toilet area, wiping first her eyes and then her mouth.

NATALIE

We can afford the best treatment money can buy, but we'd be glad--I'd be glad--if you'd stick with him, at least to begin with.

HOOK

Thank you.

(CONTINUED)

NATALIE

You said something about
apartments. I'll want one. Open-
ended. (Beat) He's a fighter.

HOOK

Good.

A couple of off-brand gas pumps to one side. A STATE POLICE
CRUISER is parked in front (the only car there), and TROOPER
FRANK DOWNES is wearily mounting the steps--it's been a long
day. As he does, most of the lights inside the store GO OUT.

A BELL over the door JINGLES as FRANK enters. Behind the
counter is KENNY, the proprietor. KENNY'S a real Yankee, and
through all the following we see the true Yankee's reluctance
to involve himself in someone else's business.

KENNY

Anything I can help you with,
Frank? I was just closing up.

DOWNES

We had a hit-and-run about two
miles down 7 this afternoon--

KENNY

Rickman. Ayuh. He comes in regular.
He and his wife both. Nice people.

DOWNES

I know it's not likely that the guy
who did it would have stopped in
somewhere afterward for cold-cuts,
but if he was dumb enough...

KENNY

You wouldn't be lookin' for a white
van, would you?

DOWNES

Right now we don't know what we're
looking for.

KENNY

Dave Hooman stopped around five
o'clock. Not for cold-cuts, though.
(MORE)

KENNY (cont' d)

Smokes and beer and five bucks' worth of gas. I thought about callin' the cops, actually, but then we got real busy for awhile and it kinda slipped my mind...

DOWNES

What about him?

KENNY

Well, we get a lot of Fill 'N Flee since the prices got so high...

DOWNES

What'd you see, Kenny?

KENNY

Well, the front of his van was kind of bashed in, like he hit...you know, hit a post or something. And when he paid me, I noticed there was a little blood on one of his hands. Maybe nothing, but...are you gonna pick him up?

DOWNES

Probably not tonight. I know Dave Hooman. He's lived in this town his whole life--if you want to call that living--and he won't be going anywhere tonight. If he happens to come in again early tomorrow morning, though, can you keep your mouth shut?

KENNY

Never see Dave before noon. Do you think he was the one?

DOWNES

You go on and close up.

As TROOPER DOWNES turns to go, we

DISSOLVE TO:

Parked in the driveway is the VAN with the CRUMPLED NOSE and the CRACKED WINDSHIELD. There's a LADDER propped against the roof, and PACKAGES OF SHINGLES are spotted along the crabgrass lawn. We can see the roof is half-shingled, half-bare. DAVE is in the process of a little home improvement.

156 INT. DAVE'S LIVING ROOM, WITH DAVE AND CHARLIE NIGHT 156

The place is a mess. DAVE is sitting in a ratty easy chair, watching the tube (a plasma job, the only nice thing in the place). Beside him is a stand-type ashtray, LOADED WITH BUTTS. There are beer-cans everywhere. CHARLIE is sleeping at DAVE'S feet. DAVE lights a cigarette, not noticing he's already got one burning (and another, half-crushed, smoldering). He's DRUNK and STONED, but not enough to keep him from remembering the accident.

156V1 On TV, a game-show. The CONTESTANT is strapped into an 156V1 EXAGGERATED ELECTRIC CHAIR.

GAME SHOW HOST

Okay, Ron, it's time to Beat the Chair...and earn ten thousand dollars. Are you ready?

RON

I'm ready, Gene.

GAME SHOW HOST

For ten thousand dollars, who starred in the suspense thriller, 3 Days of the Condor?

CAMERA MOVING IN ON DAVE.

RON

Dustin...Hoffman?

SOUND OF A BUZZER.

GAME SHOW HOST

Sorry, Ron--Robert Redford.

The HOST PULLS A LEVER. There's a ZAPPING SOUND. RON SHAKES IN THE CHAIR as the mild current hits him And DAVE SEES:

156V2 TV CU 156V2

PETER FLYING THROUGH THE AIR in SLOW MOTION, surrounded by a CORONA OF BLOOD.

156V3 Next we see RON being helped from the chair--unhurt-- 156V3 and shaking hands with the HOST.

156V4 On the TV: PETER at the side of the road, HORRIBLY 156V4 INJURED, LEGS TWISTED, face a MASK OF BLOOD.

(CONTINUED)

GAME SHOW HOST (V. O.) (cont' d)

What a good sport!

INT. DAVE'S LIVING ROOM, WITH DAVE AND CHARLIE NIGHT

DAVE'S had enough, and uses the ZAPPER to kill the TV. From his pocket he takes a VIAL OF PILLS, shakes out a handful of little pink ones, and swallows them with a mouthful of beer. He toes CHARLIE, who stirs but doesn't wake up.

DAVE

This is all your fault. If it wasn't for you--

SOUND: Something in the bedroom. A CLUNKING NOISE.

DAVE looks around.

DAVE (cont' d)

Is someone there?

No answer. DAVE toes the dog again, a little harder.

DAVE (cont' d)

Charlie! Go check that out! Earn your damn Alpo!

CHARLIE raises his head, then lowers it again.

DAVE (cont' d)

Yeah, right.

He gets up and goes to the bedroom door.

DAVE (cont' d)

(looking in)

Is someone in here?

INT. THE BEDROOM/LIVING ROOM, DAVE'S POV

It's DARK AND CLUTTERED, lit only by overspill from the living room. But there are TWO GLEAMING ORBS in there. In the corner. Could be ANTUBIS'S EYES.

INT. DAVE, IN THE DOORWAY

He's frightened. Steels himself, feels for the switch inside the door, and finally FLIPS IT.

INT. THE BEDROOM, DAVE'S POV

(CONTINUED)

The overhead light reveals a RUMPLED, SAGGING BED, clothes everywhere, more beer-cans, a boombox radio on the peeling dresser. And in the corner is a KEWPIE DOLL with GLASS EYES. It's wearing a button that says FRYEBURG FAIR, 2003.

INT. DAVE, IN THE DOORWAY

He sags with relief. We also see a kind of STONED UNHAPPINESS on his face, which is close as DAVE can come to remorse. From his pocket he takes his pills and CHEWS A FEW.

DAVE

This is so wasted.

THE CAMERA FLOATS PAST HIM into the living room 158
CHARLIE is awake now, but not looking at DAVE. He's looking out the window into the night as the TV CACKLES HAPPILY AWAY.

Looking in the window, JUST BARELY VISIBLE, is ANTUBIS.
As THE CAMERA MOVES in on his red eyes, we

FADE TO BLACK.
THIS ENDS ACT 5

ACT 6

FADE IN

159 EXT. KINGDOM HOSPITAL MORNING 159

This is the aerial shot. And when we go inside, we'll find Kingdom Hospital waking up for another day.

160 INT. ER AREA MORNING 160

NURSES, DOCTORS, and INTERNS are having their morning coffee (and their morning schmooze).

161 INT. A HALLWAY, WITH OTTO MORNING 161

He's buffing the hall. Keeps bumping into things.

162 INT. THE SUNSHINE SOLARIUM MORNING 162

LENNY and a TERMINAL CANCER PATIENT (JUDY) are snoozing side-by-side. JUDY has fallen asleep with a cup of coffee in her hand. BLONDI is lapping from it, being considerate and careful not to wake his unknowing hostess.

163 INT. AN OFFICE MARKED MAINTENENCE AND CUSTODIAL MORNING 163

Inside the half-open door, we can see a new character. The name-plate on his desk identifies him as JOHN B. GOODE, but this is actually EARL SWINTON. Each week there's a different fellow sitting in this chair, always wearing brown chinos and a shirt with the Kingdom Hospital logo--the GUEST CUSTODIAN of the week, if you will. But it's never JOHN B. GOODE. GOODE, the Head Custodian, is our version of Godot.

EARL has his feet up on the desk. He's reading a paperback novel called Love's Savage Fury. The cover is clearly a RICKMAN. EARL is also fishing for boogers, going deep. (That's where the big ones lurk.)

164 INT. THE PRESIDENTIAL SUITE MORNING 164

A NURSE with a Styrofoam cup of coffee comes in. She sets her coffee aside and checks PETER'S various IV DRIPS. She goes to work changing one of them.

165 INT. HOOK'S "APARTMENT" 165

HOOK isn't here, but ABEL and CHRISTA are. They've got the back off an OSCILLOSCOPE, revealing a divine tangle of wires. They're REPAIRING it. ABEL may have a circuit-board tester. They pause to GRIN AT EACH OTHER, DELIGHTED.

166

INT. MRI SCANNING ROOM MORNING

166

The TECH, also with coffee, is readying his machine for the day's first run.

BOBBY comes in, pushing his mother in a WHEELCHAIR. Like almost everyone else, BOBBY is hardly awake, and not happy with this. Mama admitted is one thing; an MRI scan is quite another. As he rolls the CHAIR toward the big machine, the TECH moves away.

Throughout her scene with BOBBY, MRS. DRUSE has the air of a CHASTENED CHILD.

DRUSE

Isn't it a beautiful morning,
Bobby?

BOBBY

Ma, you can't keep doing this.

He helps her out of the chair and sits her down on the ROLLING PLATFORM that will insert her head into MRI.

BOBBY (cont'd)

You promised you'd stop. "Never
again," you said. This is where I
work!

DRUSE

Yes, but this time I think I really
am ill.

Utter bullshit! MRS. DRUSE cannot conceive of being ill.

Before they can get any further, the TECH comes over. BOBBY lowers her onto her back rather ROUGHLY. MRS. DRUSE winces.

TECH

Gently!

The TECH secures her head (gently) so it won't move during the test.

DRUSE

(please don't be mad)
I love you.

BOBBY

(beaten again)
I love you, too.

(CONTINUED)

TECH

You can go now. We'll be fine,
won't we...

He checks her chart, with the TEST ORDER clipped to it.

TECH (cont'd)

Mrs. Drewsie?

BOBBY AND MRS. DRUSE

Druse.

BOBBY starts to turn away. Then he turns back, takes her hand, raises it to his lips, and kisses it. MRS. DRUSE smiles. She's forgiven. BOBBY leaves.

TECH

The headholder can't do all the
work, Mrs. Druse; you must be very
still.

DRUSE

Don't worry; I'm not at all prone
to claustrophobia.

TECH

That's good. Here we go, now.

The TECH goes to his controls.

TECH (cont'd)

Still, now, Mrs. Druse!

DRUSE

Still as a mouse!

MRS. DRUSE is happy. Being tested always makes her happy. As she slides into the tube of the MRI, an expression that might be wonder--or RELIGIOUS AWE--lights her face and makes her radiant and beautiful.

A CROSS OF LIGHT imprints itself on her face.

CAMERA IN ON DRUSE TO ECU.

DRUSE (cont'd)

(low; blissfully)

The world is full of mysteries.

168 EXT. THE KH PARKING LOT/STREET CORNER/MISSION, LONG ANGLE MORNING 168

We're looking at it from across the street. Beyond is the ER entrance. In the middle distance is a PARKING GARAGE, UNDER CONSTRUCTION. In the foreground are some SHITTY TENEMENT APARTMENTS and a storefront: the Christ Only Christ Mission. On the window is an INEPT PAINTING (PETER would SCREAM) of Christ bending to a child. Also on the window:

DO YOU NEED A MEAL ** A BED ** AN HIV TEST

AA MEETINGS NIGHTLY 7 PM

Standing on the corner are a bunch of YOUNG MEN--cigarette-smoking IDLERS with their caps turned around backward. One has a packet that will prove to contain FIRECRACKERS. They watch with interest as the Jaguar rolls slowly down the street toward a sign marked TEMPORARY PHYSICIAN'S PARKING LOT. There is a key-card operated gate. Although this is on the wrong side of the street for the Jag, it approaches in the lane meant for traffic going the other way.

169 INT. THE JAGUAR, WITH STEGMAN MORNING 169

Like HOOK, STEGMAN has no first name. He's just STEG. He's in the 50-60 age-range, a large man with a lot of wavy hair combed in POMPOUS WAVES. (It's his pride, that hair.) He's ARROGANT and OVERBEARING; this should show in his face.

STEG
(total disgust)
Temporary parking! For physicians!
Ri-ight!

He opens his glove compartment and begins fumbling through a rat's nest of paper. Here comes a car the other way, and STEG is in this guy's right-of-way. STEG doesn't even see him; he's looking for his key-card. Paper falls on the floor. And a can of PEPPER SPRAY. And a box containing a MOTION ALARM

The oncoming DRIVER lays on his horn. STEG snaps to attention and sees the LOOMING CAR.

170 EXT. STEG AND ONCOMING CAR, STREETCORNER POV MORNING 170

The half a dozen IDLERS watch with interest and amusement as STEG'S Jaguar mounts the curb and comes back down just in time to avoid a FIRE HYDRANT or NO PARKING sign. The ONCOMING CAR swerves around him. A hand comes out of ONCOMING'S DRIVER'S window and SHOTS STEG THE BIRD.

(CONTINUED)

170 CONTINUED: 170

The IDLERS LAUGH and APPLAUD.

171 INT. THE JAGUAR, WITH STEGMAN MORNING 171

STEG
Idiot! Why don't you learn to
drive?

172 EXT. THE GATE, WITH STEG'S JAG MORNING 172

He stops only an inch or so from the barrier.

173 INT. THE JAGUAR, WITH STEGMAN MORNING 173

He still hasn't found his key-card. Paper is strewn everywhere. He stuffs it all blindly back into the glove compartment (PEPPER SPRAY and MOTION ALARM, too). He grabs his wallet--it bulges with papers, business cards, etc.--and begins going through that.

STEG
Incompetent system..I should have
been issued a windshield sticker.
At Mass General I--

But here it is. STEG plucks it forth TRIUMPHANTLY, and when he does, half the shit in his wallet TUMBLES INTO HIS LAP. He stuffs everything back in with a HORRIBLE GRIMACE OF EXASPERATION. None of this is his fault, that expression says; it's this incompetent system As he goes to stuff his wallet back into his pocket:

SOUND: BANG! LIKE A GUNSHOT.

STEG jumps and looks into his rear-view mirror. The LOUTS are grinning. One holds out a second firecracker and another lights it with the tip of his cigarette. He tosses it into the street. BANG!

STEG (cont'd)
Firecrackers, now! Why don't you go
collect your welfare checks? This
is a hospital zone!

This is only to himself, of course. STEG unrolls his window, pushes his keycard into the slot, and the barrier rises. He drives into the lot.

174 EXT. TEMPORARY PHYSICIAN'S PARKING LOT MORNING 174

We may want to alternate with STEG becoming more and more FRUSTRATED as he cruises slowly.

(CONTINUED)

The only spaces available are too close to the IDLERS across the street for his taste. At the end of the row, however (away from them) is a HANDICAPPED SLOT. STEG parks his Jaguar here.

He gets out, removes TWO briefcases (Mark Cross, or something comparable), locks his Jag (--tweet!--), and starts away, toting a briefcase in each hand. Then he looks at the IDLERS. The way they're wearing their hats is all STEG needs to be sure they are drug addicts.

He goes back to his car, unlocks it (--tweet-tweet!--), and opens the trunk. Here is The Club. He takes it to the driver's side and affixes it to the steering wheel.

Returns to the trunk. Takes out a BOOT and affixes it to the left front passenger's wheel. Goes around to the passenger side and opens the door. He then opens his glove compartment and paws all the shit out again.

STEG puts the PEPPER SPRAY in his pocket. He takes the MOTION ALARM out of the box and turns it on. A RED LIGHT glows. He nods with satisfaction and puts it on the dashboard. He slams the door. Hard.

SOUND: WAAA- WAAA- WAAA- WAAA- WAAA- WAAAA

STEG winces and looks at:

EXT. THE STREETCORNER MORNING

The IDLERS are killing themselves laughing.

EXT. RESUME STEG MORNING

He opens the passenger door, turns off the MOTION ALARM, resets it, and puts it back on the dashboard. Then his eye catches a PAPER SACK that fell out of the glove compartment with the other stuff. He picks it up, starts to SLAM THE DOOR, then thinks better of it. He closes it GENTLY and then locks the car again (--tweet!--).

STEG takes the paper bag and puts it over the sign with its WHEELCHAIR LOGO. We see a momentary expression of VULPINE PLEASURE that is STEG'S closest approach to what normal people call "happiness." He picks up his briefcases and starts away. Looks back at:

177 EXT. STREETCORNER IDLERS, STEG' S POV 177

They are watching him. (NOTE: It might be fun to turn them into PALLID VAMPIRES and HAIRY WEREWOLVES in motorcycle jackets and old-school parkas, but it might be using a sledgehammer to pound home a carpet-tack--let Baxley decide.)

178 EXT. STEG, IN THE PARKING LOT MORNING 178

He's moving briskly toward the hospital's ER entrance--that distinctive triangular canopy overhead--and then takes one more look back over his shoulder.

179 EXT. STREETCORNER IDLERS, STEG' S POV 179

Watching him

180 EXT. RESUME STEG MORNING 180

He's still looking back over his shoulder, so he doesn't see the CRACK that opened yesterday in the parking lot (p. 4). A piece of ASPHALT is sticking up and STEG trips over it. He manages to avoid the indignity of falling on his face, but loses his grip on one of his briefcases. It hits the pavement and COMES OPEN, spraying papers and files every whichway. A BREEZE comes up and starts blowing them around.

STEG scurries about, picking up his paperwork and stuffing it back into his briefcase. When he's done, he's panting, dishevelled, and FURIOUS.

He looks back at:

181 EXT. STREETCORNER IDLERS, STEG' S POV 181

Laughing their asses off.

182 EXT. RESUME STEG MORNING 182

Oh, he is so angry with them! (Never with himself.) He doesn't quite dare to flip them the bird, though, and besides, he's got a briefcase in each hand. He sets off GRIMLY toward the hospital.

STEG

(low)

You should all be sterilized! At least then you couldn't breed!

183

INT. NEUROLOGY CONFERENCE ROOM MORNING

183

The wall-clock reads 8:16. This is the usual morning meeting to get everyone in Neurology up to speed. This AM it's attended by a dozen people--DOCTORS, RESIDENTS, perhaps one lowly INTERN, and at least two SENIOR NURSES (LIZ HINTON and CARRIE VON TRIER).

We see HOOK, BRENDA ABELSON, CHRISTINE DRAPER, ELMER TRAFF, LOU TRAFF (his Dad), and LONA (short for ILONA) MASSINGALE, who runs the Sleep Lab in connection with LOUIS TRAFF. DR. JAMES is not here.

(NOTE: That's eight. There should be four more to give this room the crowded, claustrophobic, sour-stomach, aw-shit-it's-morning feel that Von Trier achieves. Hopefully these other four will be developed characters eventually, in which case I'll go back and slot them in here--adjusting the dialogue accordingly--but for now I don't see them)

LIZ and CARRIE are exchanging paperwork that may have to do with the night shift. BRENDA is carefully eyeing everyone, taking mental attendance for STEG, upon whom she has a terrible crush. (God knows why; Von Trier never makes it clear what she sees in him.) HOOK is sitting next to CHRIS DRAPER. His head is back and he is dozing. Needs a shave.

ELMER TRAFF makes a paper plane out of some bit of bureaucracy and cruises it across the room. BRENDA watches, making a mental note. STEG will be told.

LOU TRAFF

Stop that.

ELMER

Sorry, Dad.

CHRIS elbows HOOK, who awakes so suddenly he almost falls out of his chair. He looks around BLEARILY, then takes a can of Nozz-A-La from the pocket of his white coat. He raises it and POPS THE TOP; FIZZZ-ZZZZ. EVERYONE LOOKS AROUND.

HOOK

Dr. Stegman's clearly not coming, and we all have a lot to do. Let's start.

BRENDA

He's got a heavy case-load. You can't expect him here on the dot.

(CONTINUED)

HOOK

As he has no neurologic complaint,
his mental state is irrelevant to
this meeting. Let's start.

BRENDA'S eyes flicker, deadly as a sniper tracking a target.
STEG will be told.

EARL is still reading his book, and still mining his nose.
STEG comes in, juggling both briefcases, still plenty angry.

STEG

(glances at the name-
plate)

Mr. Goode, I'd like to report--

EARL

Johnny's not here. I'm just holding
down the seat for him

STEG

And where might he be?

EARL

I heard that a pipe burst in the
new parking garage... the one
they're building for the docs?

STEG

(amazed at EARL'S
stupidity)

For the... docs.

EARL

I heard the whole place is fillin'
up with water! Apt to set the
completion date back six weeks!
Longer, maybe, with winter coming!

He laughs as though this is the funniest thing he ever heard.
STEG gives him a smile with ice dripping from the corners.

EARL (cont'd)

Hope you've got yourself a big ice-
scraper, doc! Winter could start
anytime, and up here the winters
are long. It ain't like Boston!

Another cheery laugh.

STEG

Very little up here is like Boston,
I find.

EARL

Yeah, that's the way we like it.

STEG'S face says it clearly: What a moron.

STEG

There's a crack in the parking lot.

EARL

You know, I got one of those. In
the back of my pants.
(laughs cheerily)

STEG

I'd like you to tell Mr.-- Mr.
Goode...that there's a crack--

EARL

Better fill out a maintenance 44-B.

Begins to rummage in the desk.

EARL (cont'd)

I know Johnny's got em here
somewhere...

STEG looks at his watch, clearly impatient, but he knows they
wouldn't dare start the meeting without him

EARL (cont'd)

You better sit down, doc. This
could take a minute.

STEG

My name is Stegman! Doctor STEGMAN!
I am Chief of Neurology.

EARL sticks out his hand and grabs STEG'S. Pumps it. STEG
must bear this, as he must bear so much.

EARL

'Meetcha, doc! Earl Swinton!

STEG looks despairing. This is hell, that look says.

185

INT. NEUROLOGY CONFERENCE ROOM MORNING

185

LONA

How's the famous artist, Hook?

HOOK

Stable.

He shuffles through some papers and puts one in front of
CHRISTINE DRAPER.

HOOK (cont'd)

Chris?

CHRIS

I admitted Eleanor Druse yesterday--

LIZ

Good-time Sally's back in town!

Some of them laugh. BRENDA carefully notes which ones.

CHRIS

She's suffering numbness of the
right arm and possible neurological
insult. She--

ELMER

What's this? Her tenth admission?
And that's just since I've been
here.

HOOK

Sooner or later the little girl who
cries wolf is telling the truth,
Elmer.

CHRIS

I've ordered an MRI.

A MURMUR OF SURPRISE greets this.

BRENDA

Don't be silly, Christine. Only the
Chief of Neuro can order a MRI.
You know that.

CHRIS

That's not true, actually.

BRENDA

What do you mean?

(CONTINUED)

CHRIS

I did it, at 7:10 this morning.

HOOK

I signed off on the paperwork.

BRENDA

(horri fied)

Surely not in Steg's name?!

HOOK

How do I know what it looked like
to the tech on duty?

(off BRENDA'S stunned
look)

Kingdom Hospital Neuro can't grind
to a total halt because Steg
oversleeps!

He takes the paperwork and hands it to LIZ HINTON. She
hesitates--do you really want to do this?--and then files it
in the basket in front of the empty seat. STEG'S seat.

STEG is filling out a form, LABORIOUSLY. EARL has gone back
to reading his book. STEG finishes and hands the form to him

STEG

Here. See that Mr...Mr. Goode gets
it immediately. I have a meeting.

EARL files the paper in JOHN B. GOODE'S IN basket where it
may actually be found. Or not.

EARL

(still deep in his book)

You have a real nice day, doc!

As he leaves, EARL looks up. A funny thought has struck him

EARL (cont' d)

And you want to get you a scraper,
because that parking garage won't
be ready until next spring. If
then. A real big one!

STEG storms out, FURIOUS. EARL looks after him for a moment,
puzzled--was it my breath?--and then goes back to his book.

187 INT. NEURO FLOOR ELEVATOR LOBBY DAY 187

BOBBY rolls his mother (in her wheelchair) to the elevators and pushes a button. As they wait:

BOBBY

This is where I work. Will you try to remember, Mama?

DRUSE

(rather sad)

Yes, Bobby.

BOBBY

You're a bit of a crackpot, I guess...but I'm very fond of you.

To SALLY, this is sunshine on a cloudy day. They have a hug--awkward because of the wheelchair--but sweet enough, for all that. The elevator doors open. #3. The haunted elevator. BOBBY pushes his mother in.

BOBBY (cont'd)

I have some work to do up here--

DRUSE

I'll be fine. I know this place like the back of my hand.

He steps out. The elevator doors close.

188 INT. THE ELEVATOR, WITH MRS. DRUSE 188

She sits in her chair, HUMMING CONTENTEDLY. The elevator also HUMS...until, suddenly, it comes to a JOLTING STOP.

189 INT. OUTSIDE THE ELEVATOR 189

Shots of the machinery stopping, for no reason. Also a shot of the car, hanging from its cables high in the shaft.

190 INT. THE ELEVATOR, WITH MRS. DRUSE 190

She looks up at:

INT. ELEVATOR CEILING PANELS, MRS. DRUSE'S POV

One of them is ajar. Beyond it: BLACKNESS.

INT. THE ELEVATOR, WITH MRS. DRUSE

Still looking up.

(CONTINUED)

LIGHTS GO OUT. BLACK SCREEN.

SOUND: A THUMP, followed by RUSTLING. And then BREATHING. Getting closer. A SOFT SCRAPING SOUND.

DRUSE (V. O.)
Hello? Is someone there?

The EMERGENCY LIGHTS come on, casting a harsh glow on MRS. DRUSE'S frightened face. Looks up at:

INT. ELEVATOR CEILING PANELS, MRS. DRUSE'S POV

The one that was ajar is now FURTHER AJAR. SCRAPING SOUNDS. BREATHING SOUNDS. Something is on top of the car.

RESUME DRUSE

She's scared. She reaches for the ALARM button, and then:

SOUND, VERY FAINT: A child, crying.

DRUSE (cont' d)
Hello?... Hello!

INT. ELEVATOR CEILING PANELS, MRS. DRUSE'S POV

We close in on it and the panel JERKS SUDDENLY, hopefully scaring us: do we really want to know?

ELEVATOR SHAFT, LOOKING UP

DRUSE (V. O, ECHOING)
Is somebody up there? Who are you?

RESUME DRUSE, IN THE ELEVATOR

She's very frightened.

DRUSE
What are you?

FADE TO BLACK.
THIS ENDS ACT 6.

ACT 7

FADE IN ON:

193 ELEVATOR SHAFT, LOOKING UP 193

The car is suspended between floors.

DRUSE

Who's there? Please, you're
frightening me!

194 INT. HOOK'S "APARTMENT" 194

Nor is MRS. DRUSE the only one who is frightened. ABEL and CHRISTA are clinging to each other like children (which they essentially are), looking up.

195 INT. SECURITY CUBICLE, WITH OTTO DAY 195

Once again, the button marking ELEVATOR 3 is lit up RED. The ALARM BELL is RINGING. OTTO'S got his nose almost all the way down on his control panel and is flicking the switch that controls the ELEVATOR ALARM BELL back & forth. This stopped the alarm before (p. 5), but not now.

STEGMAN STALKS PAST on his way to the ELEVATORS.

STEG

Can't you stop that, man? This is a
hospital!

He doesn't wait for OTTO to reply, just STALKS ON. OTTO picks up his mike and flicks the switch labeled KITCHEN.

OTTO

Abel to Security--Abel, are you
down there?

No reply. OTTO doesn't know what to do.

196 INT. THE ELEVATOR, WITH MRS. DRUSE 196

She's looking up at the ceiling panel that's ajar. It gapes like a mouth. She reaches into the front of her dress and draws out a CROSS. She kisses it, then holds it up.

DRUSE

I'm not afraid of you!

LIGHTS GO OUT. BLACK SCREEN.

(CONTINUED)

196

CONTINUED:

196

Now the director will tell us, through SOUNDS, that something is trying to get into the elevator car with MRS. DRUSE. We hear SCRATCHING, and a kind of SLOBBERY BREATH. Maybe it's ANTUBIS; maybe it's MARY; maybe it's the creepy PAUL. But just maybe it's something else.

DRUSE (cont' d)
(terrified)
I'm not afraid of you!

197

ELEVATOR SHAFT, LOOKING UP

197

The car rocks from side to side slightly in the shaft.

198

INT. 1ST FLOOR ELEVATOR LOBBY, WITH STEG MORNING

198

FAINT SOUND: ALARM

STEG pushes the button again and again, as people inexplicably do when a car doesn't open for them immediately. He's late, dammit! How dare this elevator make him later?

The door of CAR #1 OR 2 opens and STEG gets on, still swinging his briefcases.

199

INT. ELEVATOR, WITH MRS. DRUSE

199

THE LIGHTS GO ON--the REGULAR LIGHTS, not the EMERGENCY LIGHTS. At the same time, the NOISES STOP. The car begins to descend as if nothing ever happened. MRS. DRUSE looks up at:

INT. ELEVATOR CEILING PANELS, MRS. DRUSE'S POV

They're all back in place.

RESUME ELEVATOR, WITH MRS. DRUSE

She kisses her cross and slips it back inside her dress. A look of determination on her face. She means to get to the bottom of this.

200

INT. NEUROLOGY CONFERENCE ROOM MORNING

200

The meeting is on the verge of breaking up. There's a BUZZ OF CONVERSATION; papers are being tucked away. ELMER TRAFF goes over to HOOK.

ELMER
I'm interested in getting some
hours in the sleep lab. Aren't you--

(CONTINUED)

HOOK

I only sign the paperwork. As I think you know.

He nods to LONA and LOUIS TRAFF, who are schmoozing. LOU starts away and ELMER starts in that direction.

HOOK (cont'd)

Good luck, Elmer.

ELMER sees that HOOK knows exactly what's up. THE CAMERA follows ELMER over to LONA, who's about 35 and good-looking.

ELMER

Dr. Massingale, I heard you need volunteers in the sleep lab.

LONA

Well, Elmer, that depends.

ELMER

On what?

LIZ

On whether you're interested in working or flirting. You've got a bit of a reputation, I'm afraid.

ELMER

As a flirter?

LONA

And as a practical joker.

Maybe, but ELMER's deeply infatuated with LONA, and that's his motivation for volunteering.

ELMER

I'll be the best sleeper in the house!

LONA rolls her eyes, but before she can reply, STEG finally enters. His mood is foul, even for him. The INTERN (MARK STETSON) almost runs into him. STEG turns him around--not gently--and propels him back into the room.

STEG

What, may I ask, is going on here?

HOOK

We waited, and then held the meeting without you.

(CONTINUED)

STEG considers this, then LAUGHS. Not the laugh of a happy man. Only BRENDA smiles in response.

STEG

That's really quite funny, Hook.
(to the room at large)
Regardless of what Dr. Hook may think, the meeting begins when I arrive and ends when I leave.
Questions?

None. They sense his mood. STEGMAN sits at the head of the table, opens both briefcases, and begins spilling out papers.

STEG (cont' d)

Any new admissions since last night?

HOOK

A man named Peter Rickman. Thirty-seven. Accident victim, brought in late afternoon--just after you left for the day, Dr. Stegman. The patient is presenting with--

STEG

I know what he's presenting with, I read the papers. How's his nut?

HOOK

(with distaste)
His nut, as you say, is banged up. How severely has yet to be ascertained.

STEG

Order some tests. Later, I may want to operate.

This idea fills HOOK with dread, and he's not the only one. CHRIS DRAPER and LOU TRAFF also show...let's say "a certain reluctance" at the idea.

STEG (cont' d)

(making rapid notes)
Any others?

CHRISTINE looks worried and guilty. Before she can speak, however, HOOK steps in front of her and takes the bullet.

(CONTINUED)

HOOK

Sally Druse, age sixty-five, mildly hypertensive, presenting with numbness of the right arm, possible paresis, paresthesia, or neuralgia. I ordered an MRI.

He's perfectly businesslike about this, but everyone else tenses for the explosion.

STEG

(can't believe it)
I beg your pardon?

HOOK

M as in Map, R as in Rat, I as in--

STEG

Only one person in this department has the right to order an MRI, and that person is me! Cancel it immediately.

HOOK

I can't.

STEG

What the hell do you mean, you can't?

HOOK

I'm afraid it's already happened. If you'd been in for early rounds--

STEG

(rising to his feet)
I've disliked your attitude since I came here six weeks ago, Dr. Hook.

HOOK

I'm sorry to hear that, Dr. Steg--

STEG

You're arrogant and insubordinate. I'll have your job for this.

He sweeps his papers together, sweeps them back into his briefcases, and then sweeps out. After a moment of silence:

HOOK

Well! That went quite well, don't you think?

(CONTINUED)

200

CONTINUED: (4)

200

ELMER

Aren't you worried?

HOOK BLOWS ON HIS THUMB, inflating his little finger. ELMER looks totally puzzled by this. LOU TRAFF looks knowing. CHRIS also looks knowing, but still worried.

201

INT. "THE PRESIDENTIAL SUITE" MORNING

201

NATALIE has shown up, but she must have had a bad night, 'cos she's asleep in the room's chair. Littered around her: BALLS and BALLS of WADDED-UP KLEENEX.

PETER had a spot of early orthopedic surgery, and now he has an EXTERNAL FIXATOR on each leg and bandages around his calves as a result of FASCIECTOMIES. His legs are elevated. He's still conked out. The MACHINES BEEP QUIETLY.

THE CAMERA MOVES IN on PETER'S SLEEPING/UNCONSCIOUS FACE.

MUSIC, FAINT AND ECHOING: "Red Dragon Tattoo."

202

The PICTURE WE'RE WATCHING starts to STUTTER INTO BLACK. It's as if there's some technical problem in transmission, but the MUSIC IS CONSTANT and getting LOUDER as THE CAMERA PUSHES IN.

202

Now we start to see SHAPES in that STUTTERING BLACK:

A GURNEY, overgrown with MOLD and MOSS.

203

OTTO'S SECURITY CUBICLE, likewise overgrown.

203

204

The OLD AMBULANCE, parked under the ER CANOPY; once more the hand rises and slaps the glass of the rear window before sliding down and out of sight, leaving TRAILS OF BLOOD behind. All of this should make us feel frightened and disoriented, part of PETER'S nightmare.

204

205

As THE CAMERA PUSHES IN TO ECU on PETER'S FACE, we GO INTO THE BLACK and see:

205

206

INT. A CORRIDOR OF THE OLD HOSPITAL, WITH PETER DAY? NIGHT?

206

He's dressed in a '30s-style JOHNNIE. His feet are bare. He's lost--of course he is! What we're seeing now is a miraculous return to consciousness and memory, and the director should feel free to mold this emergence from coma as he wants to.

207 THE CAMERA PUSHES IN ON PETER. And once again the scene 207
starts to STUTTER, only what we're seeing now are PETER'S
returning memories.

208 INT. PETER'S STUDIO NIGHT? DAY? 208

Still in his OLD-FASHIONED JOHNNIE, PETER is looking at the
painted figure of ANTUBIS.

PETER
What are you?

It echoes away: "...are you...are you...are you..."

209 INT. A CORRIDOR OF THE OLD HOSPITAL, WITH PETER 209
DAY? NIGHT?

He stops and looks up at a CEILING SPEAKER.

INT. SPEAKER, PETER'S POV

It's RUSTED. Beards of MOSS and MOULD hang from its ancient
metal grille. But the SOUND OF MUSIC is LOUDER. "Red Dragon
Tattoo is just about on me," sing the Fountains of Wayne; "I
got it for you, now that you want me."

INT. A CORRIDOR OF THE OLD HOSPITAL, WITH PETER DAY? NIGHT?

He looks around him. Little by little he's starting to
understand, as we see:

210 ACCIDENT MONTAGE 210

These are just suggestions, but:

A.) Running shoes (in SLOW MOTION)

211 B.) The CD Walkman bouncing against PETER'S hip 211

212 C.) His shadow, running beside him on the road 212

213 D.) The grill of DAVE HOOMAN'S van, cresting the hill 213

214 E.) The moment of impact 214

215 F.) PETER'S TWISTING BODY, with the CORONA of BLOOD 215
DROPLETS flying around his head

216 G.) DAVE'S FRIGHTENED, GUILTY FACE, ECU: 216

DAVE

I got 12 points and a DUI on my
licence already...

217 We keep going back to PETER dressed in his JOHNNIE in 217
the corridor of the OLD HOSPITAL, and also intercutting
218 images of the PAINTED ANTUBIS, CLOSER AND CLOSER. 218

Echo: "12 points...12...licence already...ready... ready..."

219 H.) THE CROW, ECU 219

CROW

I think I'll start with your eyes.

And it ECHOES BACK: "Eyes...eyes...eyes..."

220 I.) DANNY, leaning down into the SHAKY-CAM that is PETER. 220

DANNY

Ah fubar, here comes V-fib.

And it echoes back: "Fubar...fubar...V-fib...V-fib..."

221 J.) MARY, sitting in the rear of the AMBULANCE. ANTUBIS 221
is curled up at her feet.

ANTUBIS (V.O.)

Listen. It's a death-bell.

And the ECHO: "Death-bell...death-bell...death-bell..."

MARY suddenly SLAPS THE GLASS OF THE REAR WINDOW.

222 K.) UNIT 19, REVERSE, FLYING AWAY FROM THE CAMERA, 222
LIGHTS FLASHING. But we see that HAND STRIKE THE GLASS...and
SLIDE SLOWLY DOWN.

223 INT. A CORRIDOR OF THE OLD HOSPITAL, WITH PETER 223
DAY? NIGHT?

Intercut with these surreal images of PETER'S accident, we
continue to push in. The last image is:

224 PAINTED ANTUBIS, ECU 224

It turns into:

225 EXT. ACTUAL ANTUBIS, CU SIDE OF THE ROAD DAY 225

CAMERA PULLS BACK TO INCLUDE PETER. ANTUBIS'S muzzle wrinkles back, showing a mouthful of FANGS. It's like looking into a shark's mouth, and it's inches from PETER'S bloody face.

ANTUBIS
Wake up! Wake up! Open your eyes!

PETER
No!

ANTUBIS's red tongue comes out. It still looks about three feet long. It means to lick up the ant on PETER'S FACE.

PETER (cont'd)
No!

He closes his eyes.

226 INT. A CORRIDOR OF THE OLD HOSPITAL, WITH PETER DAY? NIGHT? 226

PETER
No!

He closes his eyes.

227 INT. PETER, IN HIS ICU BED DAY 227

PETER
(low, husky, but there)
No!

This time he opens his eyes. For a moment he's DISORIENTED, then realizes where he must be. He looks across at:

INT. THE ROOM, WITH NAT (PETER'S POV)

Sleeping.

INT. RESUME PETER, IN ICU BED

He looks down at:

INT. PETER'S HANDS (PETER'S POV)

All scratched up. Unmoving.

INT. RESUME PETER, IN ICU BED

He remembers:

228 EXT. SIDE OF THE ROAD 228

PETER is trying to raise his hands. They won't come up... BUT THEY DO TREMBLE!

229 INT. RESUME PETER, IN ICU BED 229

He tries to move his hands...and once again THEY TREMBLE. This time one of them...the RIGHT ONE...rises a little way before falling back. He looks at:

INT. PETER'S FEET (PETER'S POV)

They are elevated. He can see the FIXATORS and the bandages which wrap the FASCIECTOMIES.

HIS TOES WIGGLE.

230 INT. THE ROOM, WITH PETER AND NAT 230

PETER sees ANTUBIS beside his bed like a faithful dog. ANTUBIS looks up, grinning, exposing all those TEETH.

ANTUBIS (V. O.)

I do you a solid, you do me one.
That's how it works. Tell Hook
about Mary. Tell the old woman.
They'll hear you if you make them

PETER (V. O.)

I don't understand.

ANTUBIS (V. O.)

You will. And when you do...
(ANTUBIS grins wider)
Ant-solutely delicious!

PETER

Nat! Natalie!

His voice is LOW AND HOARSE. She doesn't hear him

231 The door opens and LIZ HINTON comes in. She's got a 231
surgical tray filled with scissor and hemostats, which she
promptly drops with a LOUD CLANG ON THE FLOOR.

The first thing she sees is BLONDI the dog, sitting next to PETER'S bed, where ANTUBIS was. Then she sees PETER, AWAKE and MOVING, and drops what she's holding. CLANNNGGG!

LIZ

Oh. My. God.

(CONTINUED)

The noise scares BLONDI, who books for quieter environs.

NATALIE awakes and looks around. LIZ goes to the intercom

LIZ (cont'd)
Hook to ICU room 9! Room 9, stat!

PETER
Natalie...

TOTAL JOY on her face. She's out of the chair like a shot, and over to PETER.

NATALIE
You're awake! Oh God, you're awake!

And, as his hands come up weakly to enfold her:

NATALIE (cont'd)
(screaming with joy)
You can move! You're not paralyzed!

ABEL
He's back. The painter is back from the old hospital.

CHRISTA grins, bright as the sun. And as they do--

--THE RUMBLING SOUND BEGINS. The NARRATOR told us that Kingdom Hospital rested on uneasy ground, and now we see for ourselves. The KITCHEN starts to shake.

SHAKING. SOUND OF RUMBLING. RED LIGHTS start to show up all over OTTO'S board, and ALARMS START RINGING.

BLONDI rejoins OTTO (never mind how he got there so fast). OTTO grabs him, mostly for comfort.

OTTO
(hopes he's right)
It's just a little one, it'll stop in a minute.

Beyond them we can see a room containing about two dozen beds, each equipped with MONITORS, now all empty. Everything shakes. Pencils roll off the desk.

234

CONTINUED:

234

LONA

Oh God, not another one.

He holds her, and she lets herself be held.

235

INT. DR. JAMES' S OFFICE DAY

235

He's fiddling with his Operation Morning Air pamphlets and stickers. Now he stops and looks around. Stuff rolls off his desk. The glass in his window THRUMS.

The door opens and STEG comes in, obviously freaked.

STEG

Now what? Now what?

JAMES

Just a minor shaker, Dr. Stegman.
We have them from time to time. It
will stop shortly.

236

INT. AN OR, WITH LOUIS TRAFF DAY

236

He's operating on someone. He stops, bloody scalpel held up. The equipment (and the PATIENT) shivers and shakes.

237

INT. THE SUNSHINE WARD, WITH MRS. DRUSE DAY

237

Stops in the corridor and watches, AMAZED, as a FRESH CRACK opens in one of the walls. She puts out her arms for balance.

238

INT. THE PRESIDENTIAL SUITE MORNING

238

HOOK comes racing in, and he does, THE EARTHQUAKE STOPS.

239

RELIEF MONTAGE

239

A.) IN THE KITCHEN, ABEL and CHRISTA let go of each other--
and grin, DELIGHTED.

240

B.) IN THE OR, LOU begins to operate again, as if
nothing had happened.

240

241

C.) IN THE SECURITY CUBICLE, OTTO is PUSHING BUTTONS and
FLICKING SWITCHES, killing various alarms.

241

242

D.) IN ONE OF THE CORRIDORS, EARL SWINTON is pushing a
broom and sweeping up broken glass.

242

243 E.) IN THE SLEEP LAB OFFICE, ELMER would be happy to go 243
on hugging LONA, but she wriggles out of his embrace:

LONA

You can let go now, Elmer. (Beat)
It's over.

244 INT. PETER'S ROOM, WITH PETER, HOOK, NAT, AND LIZ DAY 244

In here, they have barely noticed the SHAKER. In here there's been an earthquake of a different kind. NATALIE is embracing her husband, SOBBING. PETER is holding her as best he can, but he's GOING UNDER AGAIN. HOOK and LIZ are off to the side, where they can talk without being overheard... although PETER and NATALIE probably wouldn't overhear them in any case. They're lost in their own little world.

LIZ

I would have said he was totally gorked.

HOOK

Oh, he was.

LIZ

What just happened here?

HOOK

In clinical terms? A miracle.

They watch PETER and NATALIE, now restored to each other.

245 EXT. KINGDOM HOSPITAL DAY 245

246 The aerial shot, and as ominous as we can make it. (The 246
247 director may opt for a MONTAGE here--empty corridors, 247
248 the nearly empty nursery on the Pedes floor, 248
249 the Sunshine Solarium, 248
249 the parking lots, where STEG'S MOTION SENSOR is naturally 249
blatting on the dashboard of his Jaguar, and so on.)

NARRATOR

But there's a price to be paid for the miraculous, and Blue Cross doesn't cover it. This is Kingdom Hospital, where the ground is uneasy and old secrets have begun to rise to the surface. (Beat)
Please come again.

FADE TO BLACK.