

NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD

screenplay
by
George A. Romero

based on the screenplay
of the 1968 film
NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD
by
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and
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First draft
February, 1989

Sanibel Films

NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD

VOICES OVER BLACK:

JOHNNIE (o.s.)
(Doing a bad imitation of Boris Karloff.)
They're coming to get you, Barbara.

BARBARA (o.s.)
Stop it.

JOHNNIE (o.s.)
They're coming to get you. They don't like
being awakened this way.

BARBARA (o.s.)
(Angry) Johnnie!

JOHNNIE (o.s.)
They're not happy, Barbara. You've disturbed
their sleep too many times. They are not happy.
And this time....they are coming....to get you.

SHOCK CUT TO:

EXT CEMETERY ROAD DAY

ECU: A TIRE, SPINNING, slipping, spitting stones, laboring for
purchase on an un-paved hillside road (SOUND EXAGGERATED).

Finally, the treads grip hard-pack beneath the soft dirt. THE TIRE
PULLS AWAY FROM CAMERA and THE CAR above it comes into view. It's
a snappy Japanese sport model (air foil, racing stripes....the sort
of car that attracts a man who sees himself as Andretti, but who
can't afford a Porsche).

As the car withdraws, its surroundings are revealed. We're deep in
rural America. Miles from the nearest McDonald's. Miles from the
nearest anything. It's a dreary afternoon. The sky and the trees
share the same gray hues. Dark, dismal. The brightest thing in
frame is the little white sport car, which seems impatient as it
spurts, fishtailing, up the steep grade. We hear DISTANT THUNDER
as CREDITS BEGIN TO ROLL.

BARBARA (o.s.)
Johnnie, we're here. Now will you please....
just....stop it! We're here!

JOHNNIE (o.s.)
Yes. We're here. It's too late to turn
back now. Even if we tried to turn back....
they'd probably catch us....catch you....

ANOTHER ANGLE as, at the top of the grade, the car passes under a wrought iron archway (circa 1880) which spans the road. Rusted letters (some of them missing) spell out: EV_NS C_TY CEM_TERY.

BARBARA (o.s.)

Why do you have to be so....cruel? You've always been that way. Even when we were children. Cruel and....heartless.

JOHNNIE (o.s.)

(Dropping the Karloff) I'm your older brother. Being cruel and heartless is part of my job. And I am particularly good at it....you might say I become inspired....during these three hour drives into the boonies where there's nothing better to do!

ANOTHER ANGLE as, shifting out of Low, the car pulls onto the level and glides along a narrow road that meanders among the graves. A few of the headstones, the newer ones, are simple slabs of granite, but most are far more elaborate, as was the fashion at the turn of the century. Columns. Obelisks. Statuary, old and crumbling. Some have been vandalized. Some are pock-marked from buckshot.

BARBARA (o.s.)

You didn't have to come out here today. I could have driven myself.

JOHNNIE (o.s.)

Right. I'd have heard about that for the rest of my life.

CUT TO:

INT JOHNNIE'S CAR DAY

BARBARA is young. Twenty five at the most. She could be attractive if she worked on it, but she doesn't work on it at all. She's what central casting would call a "Marian the Librarian" type. Limp hair, terminally out of style. A home-made dress from a Simplicity pattern. She's clutching a small artificial flower arrangement, which includes a sympathy ribbon and a white styrofoam crucifix, all wired onto green metal prongs meant to be driven into the ground.

BARBARA

She's our mother, for God's sake! Can't you even give her one day out of your life?

JOHNNIE, behind the wheel, is a contrasting type. A Yuppie who frequents Ralph Lauren, he's dressed in layered knits and tweeds, as though for a polo match. He's trying hard to look monied.

JOHNNIE

One day? This is the fourth time we've been up here in the three months since she died! I'm spending more time with her now than I did when she was alive!

BARBARA

I'm sure that makes her happy. Wherever she is, I'm sure she's....smiling.

JOHNNIE

Smiling. She's probably hysterical with laughter. She knew I'd wind up having to bring you out here. That's why she had herself buried two hundred miles from the nearest glass of beer.

BARBARA doesn't respond. She looks out the window.

JOHNNIE (cont.)

I don't understand. Why all this dedication? That woman walked all over you. If you had half a ball, you'd have told her to go take a flying fuck. You were never strong enough with her.

BARBARA

I'm stronger than you think, John. I hang in there. This life isn't what any of us want it to be. You gotta just....hang in there.

JOHNNIE

Well, you have now given new meaning to those words, Barbara. You have hung in there beyond the grave. What do you, think she's gonna look up and suddenly realize what a good daughter you are because you come around on Saturdays with a prayer and a twenty dollar piece of plastic?

JOHNNIE turns into a curve and TWO CARS, parked at roadside, come into view through his side window. A hearse and an appropriately somber Crown Victoria. Strange that there are only two. Strange that there are no people. No signs of life.

Oh. There's someone.

EXT THE CEMETERY (JOHNNIE'S P.O.V.) DAY

Through the moving windshield we see, in the dark distance, the lone figure of a black suited man....walking slowly and with some difficulty Low hanging tree limbs obscure the man's face but his stumbling gait makes him appear old....or infirm.

INT THE CAR DAY

JOHNNIE sees the man but just then....WHU-DUMMPH! The car hits a deep pothole and bounces violently.

JOHNNIE

Shit! I'm gonna ruin the fuckin' car driving around up here! Goddammit!

He turns into another curve, his eyes scanning for landmarks.

JOHNNIE (cont.)

She couldn't possibly be buried in the city. No. No, that would be too easy.

BARBARA

She wanted to be near daddy.

JOHNNIE

Daddy! Christ, all we ever heard was how glad she was to be rid of him! She was a bitter, nasty woman, Barbara. She drove her husband to an early grave. She drove me away from home. She damn near drove you into a convent. The one and only thing she never, ever drove....was two hundred miles to visit anyone or any thing!

Spotting something familiar, JOHNNIE spins the steering wheel and quickly, angrily, stops the car at the edge of a foot path.

JOHNNIE (cont.)

So why do we have to put ourselves through this....charade?

BARBARA

Because she is our mother.

JOHNNIE

Stop talking about her as though she was still alive! You don't need to impress her anymore,

Barbara. You can stop looking for her approval. She is no longer with us! She is not....our mother....any more! She found a way to do even less with her time than she did in life. She stopped breathing. She is now a lump of rapidly rotting compost, soon to become fertilizer for the weeds. And when that happens, it will mark the only significant effect that simple minded drudge of a woman will ever have had on this planet.

BARBARA

Stop it, John. I need you to stop it. Please don't talk that way, not....not here.

JOHNNIE

What do you mean, not here?

BARBARA

Not here. Not in the middle of....

BARBARA looks around, as though suddenly worried that someone (Who? One of the dead?) might be listening.

BARBARA (cont.)

Show some respect.

A sinister smile creeps across JOHNNIE'S face.

JOHNNIE

You're afraid, aren't you? You really are afraid of this place.

BARBARA

God.

She flings her door open and climbs out of the car.

EXT THE CEMETERY DAY

BARBARA stands up into the wind. She looks across the road at....

....the dark headstones, the darker sky behind them.

She shivers. She is afraid of this place.

BARBARA

We feed on each other. We feed on each other until....

JOHNNIE (o.s.)
They're coming to get you, Barbara.

BARBARA
Let's just get through this, can we please?
Just....get this over with.

CREDITS END as we CUT back....

INT THE CAR DAY

....inside the car and are suddenly startled by THE LOUD SOUND OF
RADIO STATIC. A BROADCASTER'S VOICE crackles over quad speakers.

RADIO VOICE #1
Er....yeah. Are we....? Should I just
go ahead....? We're on?

JOHNNIE
Hey. How do ya like that....

WHUMMP! THE PASSENGER DOOR slams shut. BARBARA is gone.

JOHNNIE looks down at the radio. Apparently it's been turned on all
this while but the local station hasn't been broadcasting.

RADIO VOICE #1
Ladies and gentlemen....we're back on the
air having solved....I....I hope....our
technical....difficulties, er....we'll
see if we can....avoid any further....

JOHNNIE
Perfect. Now that we're all the way up
here you get your shit back together.
Where were you when we needed you, pal?

JOHNNIE clicks off the radio. He kills the engine, pulls the keys,
and climbs out of the car.

EXT THE CEMETERY DAY

JOHNNIE shuts the driver's door and pockets the keys. The first
thing he sees is....

EXT THE CEMETERY (JOHNNIE'S P.O.V.) DAY

....ANOTHER CAR. This one a limousine. It's parked at an odd angle, its front tires up off the road on a grassy knoll. Two of its doors are open wide, as though the occupants made a hasty exit. But there are no people in sight....anywhere.

EXT THE CEMETERY DAY

JOHNNIE looks around. MORE THUNDER. THE WIND IS MOANING.

EXT THE CEMETERY (JOHNNIE'S P.O.V., ANOTHER ANGLE) DAY

There's that MAN again. Limping along in his black suit. Getting closer. Is he looking at Johnnie? Can't tell. His shambling gait is causing his head to sway back and forth....back and forth. There's a dim flicker of LIGHTNING. Not enough to afford a clear look at the man's face.

EXT THE CEMETERY DAY

JOHNNIE watches for a moment....until another sinister smile is born on his lips. Then he turns and looks toward....

....BARBARA, who, in amongst the headstones, is walking slowly away from him, searching for mother's resting place.

JOHNNIE

(Karloff again) They're coming, Barbara.

BARBARA spins angrily, both fists clenched around that styrofoam crucifix, twisting it out of shape.

BARBARA

For the love of GOD, John!

JOHNNIE

They're coming to get you. Look. (He points.)
Here comes one of them, now.

BARBARA looks and sees....

....THE DARK MAN, advancing slowly but steadily. He's near enough that we can detect a pallor in his skin. But before we're able to register very much detail, he passes behind a row of shrubs and we momentarily lose sight of him.

BARBARA feels the combined effects of embarrassment and fear. The leading edge of the shrub row is only a few yards away from her. When the man steps into view again, he'll be very, very close. She can hear his limping footfalls even over the rolling THUNDER (step... scrape, step...scrape, step...scrape). She can see....

....HIS SHADOW, stuttering along behind thick gray leaves.

JOHNNIE (cont.)

He's getting close, Barbara. Dangerously close....

BARBARA turns to face her brother again. Taking several steps forward, away from the hedgerow, she drops her voice to an urgent whisper.

BARBARA

(Articulating through angrily clenched teeth) He...is...going...to...hear you!

JOHNNIE

It doesn't matter. He knows we're here. It's too late. There's no escape now.

BARBARA

(Still whispering through her teeth) You.... you bastard!

The crucifix SNAPS in two from the force of her tightening fingers and just as this happens, THE DARK FIGURE appears from around the bushes....maybe ten yards behind BARBARA'S BACK. He's obscure, out of focus, but his presence is felt....by us....and by BARBARA.

JOHNNIE looks at the man. That sinister smile disappears and alarm registers slowly on his face.

BARBARA sneers, thinking the alarm is part of Johnnie's "act". Behind her THE FIGURE ADVANCES....step...scrape, step...scrape. (We still can't see the man's face.) BARBARA turns and walks on about her business.

ANOTHER ANGLE as BARBARA approaches the man. Her eyes are turned down, purposely avoiding contact. THE MAN'S SHOULDER lurches into frame. Step...scrape. He's only a few short strides away. Still, BARBARA can't bring herself to look up.

BARBARA'S P.O.V. of: THE MAN'S LEGS, the right one of which is twisted grotesquely, its foot dragging in the grass. My God, what's that? A dark patch of BLOOD, quite large, halfway up the thigh.

BARBARA GASPS, looking up at last. THE MAN collides into her, almost losing his balance. A deathly moan escapes his lips.

I bet you think this is a zombie. Well you're wrong. His face is gray from loss of blood. His hair is dishevelled. His eyes are wild. There's more blood (another wound) running from his left temple. But this is a human. Alive, not dead....at least not yet. He's a farm type, large and leathery. His ill fitting black suit marks him as a mourner. Probably one who fled the abandoned limousine.

A WEAK HAND, gnarled and blood covered, reaches for BARBARA'S shoulder. It's not a threatening gesture. THE MAN just means to steady himself from the collision. But BARBARA SCREAMS and pulls away violently.

THE MAN almost falls, but he manages to save himself. He stands there, swaying on rubber knees. He blinks several times, momentary confusion masking the blind panic that lives in his eyes. We can see that he is permanently "out of the loop". Something in this graveyard has driven him insane.

MOURNER

(Weakly) I'm....I'm sorry. I'm so....sorry.

He limps away. Step...scrape, step....scrape.

BARBARA, in shock, turns toward her brother.

JOHNNIE takes a few steps forward, calling after the dark man.

JOHNNIE

Hey. Hey, er....are you....are you alright?
Is there anything we can do?

Without warning, ANOTHER FIGURE, appearing out of nowhere, grabs BARBARA from behind....and this is no living human, friends. This is the real article. This is what we came to see. Rotten flesh peeling. Strings of mucous clinging elastically to the teeth in its gaping mouth. It's walking. It's hungry. But it's dead. BARBARA tries to pull away. Gray hands cling. Her dress tears. She stumbles. Falls. THE DEAD THING lurches forward, drops to its knees, and pounces. My God. It's trying to bite her!

JOHNNIE rushes to the rescue.

On the ground, BARBARA screams hysterically. She punches and kicks, using knees, elbows, fists. The little foam crucifix breaks into snowflakes that are carried off by the wind. Those iron prongs are

bared. BARBARA stops screaming. Something has snapped in her mind, abruptly changing her character. Venom, stored for years, twists her face into a savage rictus. Tightening her grip on the green metal, she stabs, viciously, at THE DEAD THING, at all the things, dead or alive, that have ever repressed her.

Over and over the prongs sink deep....in a peeling cheek....in a shoulder....a wrist....and several times in THE DEAD THING'S chest. Blood flows. Dark, almost black blood. The creature's attack is slowed, but the wounds inflicted....ordinarily fatal wounds.... score no kill. They don't even seem to bring pain.

In the next second, JOHNNIE is there. He drops to his knees and grabs THE THING from behind, pulling it away from his sister. JOHNNIE'S arms twine under the arms of THE CREATURE. He brings his hands together, clasping them behind THE MONSTER'S neck in a classic full-Nelson. Drooling, THE THING makes INHUMAN SOUNDS. It claws at the air searching for the intruder which it cannot see.

BARBARA, still the savage, pulls herself up off the ground. For a moment, they are all three kneeling, BARBARA facing the other two. She lunges again with what's left of her flower arrangement. The sympathy ribbon flaps ("Rest in Heavenly Peace", it says) as those iron prongs find new targets.

TCHOCK! In a thick dead forearm. TCHOCK! In THE THING'S neck. Then, as THE CREATURE dodges to one side....TCHOCK!....into the meat of JOHNNIE'S left hand.

JOHNNIE

AAAAAAAACH....

JOHNNIE loses his grip. THE MONSTER rolls away. Blood flows profusely, alive and bright red, out of the wound in JOHNNIE'S hand.

JOHNNIE (cont.)

JESUS GOD, BARBARA!

These are the last words JOHNNIE will ever utter to his sister.... or to anyone else, for that matter. Despite the crisis, he spits them out acrimoniously, his need to degrade overriding his pain and confusion.

In a flash, THE DEAD THING is back....and it looks pissed. It pounds into JOHNNIE from the side, knocking him sprawling. Its teeth flash in a sudden explosion of LIGHTNING. They sink into JOHNNIE'S neck, pulling out a substantial chunk of flesh. JOHNNIE screams and lurches away. THE CREATURE pursues but JOHNNIE kicks it squarely in the face with both of his Florsheims.

Blood (both varieties, black and red) splatters onto BARBARA'S Simplicity dress, along with yellow drool and a small bit of flesh. Retching, she frantically tries to wipe away the stains.

JOHNNIE struggles to his feet. He presses a trembling hand to his neck. When he pulls that hand away, it has turned red.

THE DEAD THING is having a hard time trying to stand. JOHNNIE, enraged, grabs THE CREATURE by the shoulders of its jacket and pulls it to its feet. He hauls off and hammers THE THING with two consecutive rights to the jaw. THE MONSTER staggers but doesn't fall. JOHNNIE punches again....and again....and again. Each time THE CREATURE stumbles backward....then comes forward again, its hands clutching hungrily. JOHNNIE charges like a footballer and delivers a pulverizing kick to THE MONSTER'S dead balls. Still no reaction. THE DEAD THING grabs onto JOHNNIE'S shoulders, catching him off balance.

The TWO BODIES topple like trees, their arms entwined.

JOHNNIE can't break his fall. The side of his head THUMPS loudly onto the corner of a marble headstone. His skull caves in, like a hard-boiled egg shell. When he hits the ground, legs twitching, he is already dead.

THE MONSTER, sprawled atop JOHNNIE'S CORPSE, looks up. Another FLASH OF LIGHTNING, this one bright as a skyrocket, dances deep inside merciless eyes which have suddenly rediscovered....

....BARBARA, who sits on her haunches and stares, wide eyed, not believing.

BARBARA

(Tentative) Johnnie....?

THE DEAD THING slithers over JOHNNIE'S CORPSE and starts to crawl, on all fours, toward BARBARA.

BARBARA backs away, pushing with her feet, her butt sliding along the ground. She slams into another headstone. It stops her. Her feet keep trying to push but the heels of her sensible Kinneys just slip in the grass.

THE MONSTER tries to struggle to its feet....fails....keeps coming on all fours.

BARBARA, her heels digging ruts now, is still going nowhere. She clutches the remnants of her sympathy arrangement, all bedraggled and stained with blood.

THE MONSTER draws nearer....nearer....

BARBARA strikes with those iron prongs. TCHOCK! TCHOCK! THE MONSTER bats at the air trying to fend off the attack, but the blows keep coming, fast and furious, TCHOCK! TCHOCK! TCHOCK!. No reaction, no apparent pain (nerves are dead....tee hee).

With a SCREEEEEEAM of frustration, BARBARA raises her "weapon" high in the air and, using both hands, brings it crashing down with all her might. The prongs sink deep, at a downward angle, into THE MONSTER'S left pectoral. The arrangement stands there, planted, a grim corsage. its torn ribbon whipping in a wind made suddenly wild by the approaching storm. Another FLASH OF LIGHTNING shows us clearly that THE MONSTER has been uninfluenced by the stabbings.

BARBARA backs away. She hits that headstone again. This time she squirms around it.

THE MONSTER follows. It hits the headstone, too, and is momentarily confused.

BARBARA turns to run. She turns so quickly that one of her practical shoes gets caught in the thatch. It comes clean off her foot but the action sends her sprawling.

Luckily, THE MONSTER is hung up on that headstone. It can't seem to decide whether to move right or left around the thing.

BARBARA kicks off the remaining shoe.

THE DEAD THING finally chooses to move left. It circumnavigates the headstone and comes shambling on.

Crawling forward, looking back, BARBARA slams into another monument, this one a crumbling statue of a Guardian Angel, its expression fierce and determined. BARBARA grabs onto the angel's pikestaff with one hand, one of its wings with the other. She uses these to pull herself up off the ground.

THE DEAD THING is getting closer.

KERRRRR-AAAAAAKKKK!!!! A HUGE SOUND startles us all! The Guardian Angel has cracked apart at its base. It topples forward taking BARBARA with it.

WHU-DUUMMMMPH!!!! The angel hits the ground and shatters. That fierce and determined stone face leaves the head it has adorned for so long and goes rolling away like the coin of an ancient realm.

THE MONSTER pounces on BARBARA. She SCREAMS, KICKS, PUNCHES...and scrambles away. THE MONSTER has a hard time getting to its feet.

BARBARA is quicker. She runs away, shoeless, thorns and stones chewing on her bare feet, making them bleed.

THE DEAD THING follows. But it's so slow.

EXT THE CEMETERY DAY

MONTAGE: SEVERAL ANGLES, as each second widens the gap between THE WALKING CORPSE and its prey. BARBARA is huffing and puffing, fighting for breath. She's starting to fail.

EXT THE CEMETERY DAY

There's Johnnie's white CAR! Only fifty yards away! Salvation!

Energized by the sight, BARBARA finds more speed. But before she reaches the car, something else catches her eye. She slows down... almost stops.

EXT THE CEMETERY (BARBARA'S P.O.V.) DAY

There on the other side of the road....walking right toward her.... wearing a formal mourning suit....A MAN!

EXT THE CEMETERY DAY

BARBARA changes course. She turns away from Johnnie's car and runs, full tilt, at an angle across the road.

BARBARA

HELP! HELP US! OH GOD, PLEASE HELP US!

She stops shouting when she notices....

EXT THE CEMETERY (BARBARA'S P.O.V.) DAY

....the TWO CARS that we saw earlier, the limousine and the Crown Vickie. Now, from this angle, we can see something else behind those cars:

A GRAVE SITE, newly dug....and, resting on brass runners, A COFFIN, not yet lowered into the ground. The lid is open....pushed back.

THAT MAN....the one in the mourning suit....has climbed out of that coffin. He's one of the living dead.

EXT THE CEMETERY DAY

BARBARA slows....slows....stops. The hope goes out of her eyes. The horror returns.

EXT THE CEMETERY (BARBARA'S P.O.V.) DAY

THE DECEASED is starting to cross the road now. We can hear it GROANING, wheezing through fluids that are stagnant in its chest. We can see the pallor of death behind its all too perfect funeral parlor make up.

EXT THE CEMETERY DAY

Operating on pure instinct, BARBARA backs away from this new threat, her eyes scanning left....right....

EXT THE CEMETERY (BARBARA'S P.O.V., ANOTHER ANGLE) DAY

Way off in the distance....SILHOUETTES....THREE OR FOUR MORE FIGURES moving sluggishly among the trees on the horizon line. Are they alive or dead? Good question. A BOLT OF LIGHTNING arcs down from the sky. LOUD THUNDER follows.

EXT THE CEMETERY DAY

It starts to RAIN. Big heavy drops splash onto BARBARA'S face, re-vitalizing her somewhat. Her exhausted body switches to "reserve tanks". She turns away from the oncoming monster and dashes back toward the little white sport car. She can see....

EXT THE CEMETERY (BARBARA'S P.O.V., ANOTHER ANGLE) DAY

....THE ORIGINAL MONSTER, the one with the sympathy arrangement planted in its chest, stumbling toward her from the other direction.

EXT THE CEMETERY DAY

The rain is thicker by the time BARBARA makes it to the CAR. Bare feet on mud....she almost falls. The handle on the driver's side door is wet. Her hand slips once....twice.

INT JOHNNIE'S CAR DAY

(SHOT THROUGH SIDE WINDOW) Finally BARBARA gets a grip on the handle. She pulls the door open, jumps in, slams the door shut. It's teeming now. THE SOUND OF RAIN on the roof is deafening. BARBARA looks down at the steering column.

Shit. No keys in the ignition.

WHUMMMMMMP!!!! The ominous SOUND of something heavy hitting the car. BARBARA looks up.

(SHOT THROUGH WINDSHIELD) CORPSE #2, the one in the mourning suit, has reached the left front fender and is now walking its hands along the rain soaked side of the car.

BARBARA realizes....

....THE DOOR LOCKS are showing red. "UNLOCKED".

BARBARA twists in her seat. She pushes the lock mechanism on the driver's side door just as THE WALKING CORPSE thuds against that door's window.

The wrinkled palms of two dead HANDS POUND on the glass. Fingers squeak in the wet. And behind those fingers....DEAD EYES. Black fluid wells in the eyelids and overflows onto pale pink cheeks. (It's not blood. The rain is melting the mortician's make up.)

WHUMMMMMMP!!!! ANOTHER HEAVY SOUND. BARBARA looks around.

THE OTHER DEAD THING has arrived at the passenger side door.

(Note: This entire sequence should be shot from inside the car to better convey the claustrophobia, the feeling of being trapped.)

BARBARA lunges across the gear shift, which is on the floor between bucket seats. Her fingers reach for the lock on the passenger side. Too late! The door is opening!

BARBARA

NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

There's an ensuing tug-o-war, BARBARA pulling on the inside handle, THE MONSTER pulling on the door frame. That stained sympathy ribbon (Rest in Heavenly Peace) paints BLOOD on the wet window glass.

THE CORPSE in the mourning suit has pulled away from the driver's window. It walks its hands toward the rear of the car where it looks down....sees something....bends over....comes up clutching a large rock in its right hand.

BARBARA manages to SLAM the passenger door shut. DEAD FINGERS are sandwiched, crushed. THE MONSTER outside doesn't react. It just stares at BARBARA and drools hungrily.

With the FINGERS obstructing it, the door won't latch. BARBARA can't let go. She pulls hard on the handle while she shifts her body more solidly into the bucket seat on the passenger side. When she gets situated, she takes two deep breaths....then pushes out on the door with all the strength she can muster.

THE DEAD THING falls away from the car, arms splayed, like a sky diver, and falls flat on its back in the mud.

BARBARA locks the door. Then THWAAAKKKKK!!!! A LOUD SOUND startles her. She looks up.

THE MONSTER in the mourning suit is banging on the driver's side window with that large rock. THWAAAKKKKK!!!! THWAAAKKKKK!!!!

BARBARA looks down and registers on....

....THE EMERGENCY BRAKE, a lever between the buckets.

BARBARA scrambles over the gear shift again and flops into the driver's seat, grabbing the steering wheel with her left hand, the emergency with her right. But before she can release the brake....

KERRR-RRRRRAAAAAAASSSSSHHHHH!!!!!! THE SIDE WINDOW SHATTERS. Bits of safety glass explode into the car....followed by a driving sheet of rain....followed by two wrinkled hands. BARBARA tries to pull away but one of those hands has her by the hair. Squirming like a trapped animal, BARBARA rolls completely over, scrunching herself off the seat and down onto the floor near the pedals.

THE DEAD THING drops the rock and leans in through the opening. It grabs onto the hem of BARBARA'S dress.

Screaming, BARBARA twists free. She pulls the brake release.

EXT THE CEMETERY DAY

THE CAR starts to drift....backwards. THE CORPSE in the mourning suit staggers along beside it, still reaching in through the open window.

INT JOHNNIE'S CAR DAY

THE MONSTER grabs onto the steering wheel, turning it. Claspíng her fingers together into a single, two-handed fist, BARBARA pounds on THE MONSTER'S arms. It lets go of the steering wheel and tries to catch her hands.

EXT THE CEMETERY DAY

THE CAR is picking up speed. THE MONSTER grabs onto the window frame. Its feet slip in the mud but it manages to hang on.

INT JOHNNIE'S CAR DAY

BARBARA struggles up off the floor. She realizes the car is drifting backwards. She grabs the steering wheel....looks out the rear window.

THE MONSTER is still hanging on, drooling and making a horrible, hungry sound.

EXT THE CEMETERY DAY

THE CAR rolls faster....faster. THE MONSTER is being dragged now, its feet making ruts in the mud. Finally its fingers slip off the window frame and it falls, rolling over, in the road.

INT JOHNNIE'S CAR DAY

BARBARA tries to climb into the driver's seat. Her hands slip on the steering wheel and it turns errantly.

EXT THE CEMETERY DAY

THE CAR swerves to the left. Its rear tires jump up onto the grass. KERRRUNNCH!! Its back end slams into a tree and it stops dead.

INT JOHNNIE'S CAR DAY

BARBARA looks back. Realizes that she's stuck.

EXT THE CEMETERY DAY

THE WALKING CORPSES are struggling up onto their feet.

INT JOHNNIE'S CAR DAY

BARBARA lunges for the glove compartment. She opens it and roots around inside. Papers, maps, an owner's manual. No keys. Nothing to use as a weapon.

RAIN pounds on the WINDSHIELD. Through the wetness, distorted images of THE TWO MONSTERS can be seen. They're on their feet now, and advancing toward the car. LIGHTNING flashes at their backs.

BARBARA flings open the driver's door.

EXT THE CEMETERY DAY

BARBARA spills out into the rain. She slips, falls.

THE MONSTERS are getting closer. They're twenty yards away. Maybe less. Their MOANING VOICES can be heard over the rolls of THUNDER.

BARBARA gets to her feet and runs.

EXT THE CEMETERY (VARIOUS ANGLES) DAY

BARBARA runs....runs....runs....blindly through the storm.

THE MONSTERS stumble after her, their dead limbs stiff beneath them, unable to quicken their pace.

BARBARA runs through rows of headstones.

At the edge of the cemetery, SHE RUNS into a thickly wooded area.

EXT THE WOODS DAY

A sharp drop-off takes BARBARA by surprise. She can't catch herself. She pitches forward and ROLLS DOWN....

....DOWN. . .

....DOWN A WOODED HILLSIDE. She bounces off a tree....tumbles over a large boulder....and finally....

....she comes to rest at the bottom, near the edge of a running stream. SHE LIES THERE a moment, hurt and bleeding. She looks up.

There, on the other side of the stream, is A DIRT ROAD.

Panting, BARBARA struggles to her feet. A flash of LIGHTNING is followed by A LOUD CLAP OF THUNDER....and as that thunder rolls off on the wind....BARBARA can hear the DISTANT MOANS of the walking dead. She turns and looks back....

....up THE SLOPE. It's gotten very dark. TREES SWAY like giant demons in the wind. There's A LOUD RUSTLING SOUND. Are the monsters coming after her?

BARBARA backs away, barefoot, through the stream. Then she turns and starts to run again, up onto the road, and off toward the horizon.

EXT THE COUNTRY ROAD DUSK

BARBARA runs....desperate....her eyes wide, darting. She runs past A WOODEN FENCE. There's a break in that fence where A SIDE-ROAD leads off to the left. BARBARA stops and sees....

EXT FARM HOUSE DUSK

....a white clapboard FARM HOUSE, about five hundred yards away, across a wide open field. It's like something out of a Norman Rockwell painting. Neat, welcoming. A wisp of smoke rises from its chimney. Not far from the main house, there's an out-building, A TRACTOR SHED, complete with an old-fashioned GASOLINE PUMP.

EXT THE COUNTRY ROAD DUSK

BARBARA runs off the road, across the open field.

EXT FARM HOUSE DUSK

WIDE SHOT: as BARBARA runs toward the house, RAIN falling in sheets around her.

SHE RUNS past the TRACTOR SHED, past the GASOLINE PUMP, across a wide yard....

....and up onto the porch of the MAIN HOUSE. She throws herself at the front door. It's locked. She pounds on it with both fists. No answer. She looks around at....

....the OPEN FIELDS which surround the place. No sign of life anywhere.

SHE POUNDS on the door again. Still no answer. She moves off the porch and looks up at....

....THE WINDOWS. There are no lights on inside.

SHE LOOKS UP at....

....the roof. The CHIMNEY. SMOKING.

SHE MOVES AROUND to the side of the house. Then around to the back. She finds ANOTHER DOOR....and this one is wide open. Without thinking, she runs toward it....

....but when she reaches the threshold, SHE STOPS. Odd that the door is open wide. And it's so very dark inside. Dark and strangely quiet.

BARBARA has no choice. She crosses the threshold....

INT THE KITCHEN DUSK

....into an old country KITCHEN. A BUBBLING SOUND ATTRACTS HER and she looks at....

....THE STOVE, where TWO POTS, one of them boiling over, sit on gas burners that are lit.

BARBARA moves over to the stove and instinctively turns off the burners. For a moment there's nothing but the SOUND OF THE RAIN.

Then....from somewhere within....comes the CREAK of straining wood.

BARBARA stops breathing. She listens. There it is again. CREAK.

BARBARA

Hello.

Thick silence.

BARBARA (cont.)

Hello. Is anyone there?

More silence. Then another CREAK.

TWO ARCHWAYS lead out of the kitchen on perpendicular walls. No doors, just open archways. Dark shadows beyond.

BARBARA moves through one of the openings into....

INT THE LIVING ROOM DUSK

....a large LIVING ROOM. Old furniture, sparse and spartan. No taste. No aesthetic at all. The room stretches to the far end of the house where the front door remains locked. There's a slight glow coming from a fireplace where a small fire, almost dead, is burning.

CREAK. There it is again. Is it just the old house straining in the wind....or is it the sound of something moving?

There's A CORRIDOR that runs off to the right between the living room and the kitchen. At the far end of that corridor is the foot of A FLIGHT OF STAIRS that leads up to the second floor.

BARBARA starts down the corridor.

INT THE CORRIDOR DUSK

LIGHTNING causes shadows to dance. THUNDER follows. BARBARA freezes, waiting for the rumble to die. As it does....there's another CREAK.

THE STAIRWAY climbs a few steps then turns up along the side wall leading to a landing which is almost directly above....

....BARBARA'S head. She looks up. SOMETHING DRIPS from above onto her dress....something that's dark red. She recoils. Looks down.

There's a small pool on the floor. Oh, my God, it's BLOOD!

BARBARA looks up again.

THE BLOOD IS RUNNING from between the uprights of A BANNISTER on the landing overhead. And there's something else. Something moving in the shadows. It's....A HAND. Pale. Its fingers rigid. It reaches out between the bannister rails and suddenly....DROPS OVER THE SIDE.

IT FALLS FREELY....directly toward....

BARBARA. She bats it away.

IT HITS THE WALL AND FALLS heavily to the floor with a wet, thumping sound. It lies there, severed at the wrist, still bleeding.

BARBARA SCREAMS!

ON THE LANDING above, A FIGURE lurches into view. The figure of A MAN, a farm type in biballs and a tattered plaid shirt which has dark red stains all down the front. His mouth and hands are covered with BLOOD. He's been dead for some time now and he looks it. He lunges, reaching hungrily for BARBARA. He hits the bannister rail with all his weight. The old wood CRACKS loudly, splintering. The bannister opens like a gate and THE DEAD MAN pitches forward into mid air.

BARBARA dodges to the side. THE BODY THUDS onto the floor beside her, ending bent and twisted....but still very much alive.

BARBARA backs away.

THE DEAD FARMER scratches and squirms, like an insect trying to right itself.

BARBARA turns and runs back toward....

INT THE LIVING ROOM DUSK

....THE LIVING ROOM. She turns the corner into the archway that opens on the kitchen, but FREEZES WHEN SHE SEES....

....that she has left THE BACK DOOR open wide. Outside, in the RAIN AND LIGHTNING, is the figure of a man, ANOTHER FARMER, dead, drooling, lurching toward the house.

BARBARA looks around.

THE DEAD MAN that fell IN THE CORRIDOR has struggled into a seated position on the floor. Another moment and he'll be on his feet.

BARBARA turns and bolts toward the front door.

SHE STRUGGLES with the locks, manages to flip them open, and flings the door open wide.

EXT THE FARM HOUSE DUSK

BARBARA runs out onto THE PORCH.

Holy shit, there's ANOTHER ONE! Lurching across the yard. And a few yards behind it....STILL ANOTHER.

But what's that? A FLASH OF LIGHT! The ROAR of an engine! AN OLD PICK-UP TRUCK comes barreling into the yard. It smashes brutally into the WALKING CORPSE that's nearest to the house, catching it from behind. There's a sickening CRUNCH! THE MONSTER folds backward unnaturally at the waist. It flips up over the hood of the truck and is suspended against the windshield for a moment before it finally rolls off onto the ground.

THE TRUCK comes to a skidding stop just a few feet from the porch. The driver's door opens and A TALL BLACK MAN comes jumping out clutching A TIRE IRON.

BARBARA is dumbstruck. She stands on the porch, trembling.

The BLACK MAN looks back at THE CORPSE that was hit by the truck. It's still alive, writhing on the ground, but its back is broken. It's not going anywhere.

The other DEAD THING, ten yards behind, is still on the march, advancing steadily.

The BLACK MAN tightens his grip on his tire iron. Should he go after the walking corpse or not? He looks back at BARBARA.

BLACK MAN

(Talking fast) Anyone else inside? You got any guns in there? Hunting rifle? Shotgun?

BARBARA tries to speak but can only stutter.

BARBARA

I....I don't....I don't know, I....

No time for this. The DEAD THING is getting dangerously close. The BLACK MAN leaps up onto the porch. Grabbing BARBARA'S arm, he steers her inside and slams the door.

INT THE LIVING ROOM DUSK

The BLACK MAN throws the bolts, locking the door. He turns to look at BARBARA, but before he can speak he sees....

....THE DEAD FARMER that's staggering into the kitchen through the back door.

The BLACK MAN goes running through the archway into the kitchen.

INT THE KITCHEN DUSK

He charges at the DEAD THING, lifts one powerful leg, and kicks it squarely in the chest. THE THING flies back through the open doorway but miraculously stays on its feet.

The BLACK MAN slams the door shut but the WALKING CORPSE blocks it with one of its arms. The BLACK MAN slams the door on that arm again and again but the DEAD THING, feeling none of the pain, keeps trying to push its way inside.

INT THE LIVING ROOM DUSK

BARBARA, alone for the moment, remembers the thing that fell from upstairs. She looks around the living room.

Standing beside the fireplace is A SET OF STOKING TOOLS.

BARBARA steps over and grabs A HEAVY IRON POKER. Armed, she inches toward the corridor.

INT THE KITCHEN DUSK

The BLACK MAN throws all his weight against the back door, trapping the DEAD ARM tight. He looks around the kitchen. No weapons in sight. Nothing better than the tire iron he already has.

INT THE LIVING ROOM DUSK

BARBARA approaches the mouth of the corridor. Her face is twitching. Her mouth turns down in a vicious sneer. That lust is returning. The lust we saw in her before. At the cemetery. The lust for violence. For some sort of revenge.

WHAM! IT COMES HEAVING OUT OF THE DARKNESS, its neck twisted from its fall. It's covered with BLOOD, its own and someone else's. It stares at BARBARA with something like surprise in its eyes. Then it moans hungrily and takes a step forward.

BARBARA swings the poker hard, with all her might. Iron contacts the DEAD THING'S head. It staggers backward. BARBARA swings again. WHOMP! BLOOD flies from A WOUND that opens. The DEAD THING slams back against the wall, stunned. BARBARA swings again. The blow lands squarely on the MONSTER'S forehead, just at the hairline, punching a deep crease in its skull. THE THING starts to slide down the wall. BARBARA continues to swing the poker. Beating THE THING, pounding it, pummeling it, until it ends in a seated position on the floor. It's dead now. Really dead.

INT THE KITCHEN DUSK

The BLACK MAN gets a firm grip on his tire iron. Then he flings the back door open wide. The DEAD FARMER comes spilling into the kitchen. Before it can get its bearings, the BLACK MAN grabs it by the shirt and flings it back against the open door. With both hands, using the tire iron like a giant spike, the BLACK MAN drives the chiseled end of the weapon into THE MONSTER'S head, impaling it against the wood.

Then, with a single efficient move, he extracts the iron and, using the door, pushes the collapsing body out into the night. The door slams shut solidly. The BLACK MAN throws the dead bolt. He stands there for a moment, breathing heavily. Something behind him catches his eye. He spins, raising the tire iron, ready for another attack.

But it's only BARBARA. She's standing in the archway, still flushed with the adrenaline of rage, still clutching that bloody poker.

THE BLACK MAN sees the blood. He rushes to BARBARA'S side.

INT THE LIVING ROOM DUSK

The BLACK MAN steps into the living room, looks around, and sees....

....THE CORPSE sitting on the floor at the mouth of the corridor.

BLACK MAN

Who is he? Did you know him?

BARBARA shakes her head just enough to say "no". The adrenaline is receding and she has started to tremble. THE BLACK MAN puts a strong hand on her shoulder.

BLACK MAN (cont.)

It's alright. You did what you had to do.
Did you know any of them? The ones outside?

This time there's no response at all. The trembling is worse.

BLACK MAN (cont.)

This isn't your house? You don't live here?

Again no response.

BLACK MAN (cont.)

Talk to me, girl. Do you have a car?

This gets BARBARA'S attention. She remembers the car....in the cemetery....Johnnie's car.

BARBARA

I....we....

THE BLACK MAN tightens his grip on her shoulder. He leans in closer, staring her in the eyes, trying to force her to focus.

BLACK MAN

(Urgently) Do you have a car?

She shakes her head again.

BARBARA

No. Not....not here. We....

THUMP! BARBARA is interrupted by the sound. She and the BLACK MAN turn toward....

....THE FRONT DOOR. THUMP! THUMP! The knob rattles. Something is trying to get in. Must be the dead thing from the front yard. The one the black man chose not to attack.

THE BLACK MAN steps away from BARBARA. He moves slowly, quietly, through the shadows, heading for the front door.

THUMP! THUMP! THUMP! Then silence. The sound of the storm outside. The LIGHTNING is dimmer, the THUNDER more distant than before. The storm is receding.

Now FOOTSTEPS. Heavy, lurching. Out on the front porch. The dead thing is moving away from the door. Off to the left. Off toward the....oh, my God....toward the window.

THE BLACK MAN looks around the room. There are THREE WINDOWS in all, old ones, big ones with large, unobstructed panes of glass.

BLACK MAN

The windows. They're not strong enough to get through the doors, but they can break through the window glass.

THE SILHOUETTE OF THE DEAD MAN appears at the window to the left of the front door. THU-BUMP! It slaps the glass with its hands.

THE BLACK MAN moves quickly. He rushes to the door, unlocks the bolts, and steps outside....

EXT THE FARM HOUSE DUSK

....onto THE PORCH.

THE DEAD THING sees him. It pulls away from the window and starts to walk toward him.

THE BLACK MAN looks around.

THE TRUCK. THE YARD. THE FIELDS beyond. No other figures in sight. THE ONE WITH THE BROKEN BACK is still writhing where it fell, but it poses no immediate threat.

THE BLACK MAN faces THE THING on the porch. It reaches out with its arms. It opens its mouth and an odd, wheezing sound comes through the drool. It lurches to within a few feet before the BLACK MAN finally strikes.

Three rapid fire blows to the head with the tire iron. THE THING staggers against the wall of the house. Three more blows. THE THING'S head caves in becoming pulp. Its knees buckle.

Before it can fall, the BLACK MAN grabs it by the shirt and pushes it out toward the night.

It hits the porch rail, pitches forward, but doesn't topple over. It hangs there, its belly on the rail, like a limp sack. THE BLACK MAN grabs its feet and heaves it over onto the grass.

A MOANING SOUND. THE THING with the broken back is trying to pull itself through the grass. Grotesque, hideous, a monster. Yet because it is, or was once, one of us, it looks pathetic.

THE BLACK MAN rushes down onto the yard. He drops to his knees on the ground beside THE DEAD THING. He lifts his tire iron with both hands and drives the spiked end down through THE MONSTER'S skull.

Was this a mercy killing or an act of anger? Not even the BLACK MAN knows for sure, I think.

BLACK MAN

God damn you! God damn all of you!
Whoever you are! Whatever you are!

Rage, frustration, repulsion. They hit him in waves. His nostrils flare. His eyes well up with tears.

A SOUND, behind him. He turns and sees....

....BARBARA standing in the open front doorway of the house.

He turns away from her to wipe his eyes with a shirt sleeve. He unbuttons his collar and loosens his tie. Yes, he's wearing a tie. No jacket, but his conservative dress shirt and navy blue pants, the bottom half of a suit, tell us that this is no truck driver. He looks around again.

NIGHT HAS FALLEN. The sky has gone completely black. A dim flash of LIGHTNING shows that the horizon is still clear. Nothing coming. Five seconds later, THUNDER growls. The storm has moved into the next county.

THE BLACK MAN pulls in a long, deep breath of air. Fighting, he manages to defeat his emotions. All but the anger. He allows the anger to drive him. When he stands, his face is stern, severe. He walks quickly toward the house, pushes BARBARA back inside, and slams the door.

INT THE LIVING ROOM NIGHT

THE BLACK MAN turns the bolts, locking the door.

BLACK MAN

Truck is out of gas. Can't take the chance
of runnin' dry out there in the middle of
nowhere. We'll hole up here. Hope that
some help comes.

BARBARA nods weakly, like a frightened child listening to a parent. She is still trembling. THE BLACK MAN softens his tone in an effort to contact her.

BLACK MAN (cont.)

My name is Ben. What's your name?

BARBARA

Barb....Barbara.

BEN

Now look here, Barbara, I don't want you
fallin' apart on me, you understand?
I saw what you did over there.

He nods in the direction of THE CORPSE that's sitting on the floor.

BEN (cont.)

I know you can fight when you have to. Well,
you have to now. Right now. Fight what you're
thinking. Fight what you're feeling. That
fight'll keep you strong. Keep you thinkin'
straight.

He reaches past her and flips A LIGHT SWITCH on the wall. A SINGLE
LAMP COMES ON in the living room. He turns away and rushes toward
the kitchen.

BARBARA

What's....what's happening?

BEN

I don't know. Nobody knows.

INT THE KITCHEN NIGHT

BEN steps into the kitchen, flicks ANOTHER WALL SWITCH. AN OVERHEAD
GLOBE fills the room with LIGHT. Ben rummages quickly through the
drawers. He opens cabinets. It's a reconnoiter, a superficial
inspection to see what's available for use.

BEN (cont.)

Radio in the truck. All I heard was trash-
talk. Same as always. People tryin' to sound
like they know what's goin' on when they really
don't know shit. Same as always.

There are no cabinets beneath the sink. Just a storage space draped
with old kitchen curtains. BEN pushes the curtains back. He finds
a small LUMBER SUPPLY, boards, two-by-fours. There's an old-fash-
ioned TOOLBOX and....here's something: a large can of kerosine.
BEN picks it up. It feels and sounds pretty full. He flips the
toolbox open and finds the usual, a HAMMER, some SCREW-DRIVERS,
several pairs of PLIERS. He leaves them for the moment and moves
on, through the second archway, into....

INT THE DINING ROOM NIGHT

....A DINING ROOM. He flicks on ANOTHER LIGHT. Not much here. Table and chairs, a hutch, an old dry sink serving as a buffet.

BEN (cont.)

One guy, he says there's escaped prisoners on the loose from up at Hennessey. Another guy says there's some kind of chemical spill drivin' people crazy. They don't know shit.

TWO MORE BIG WINDOWS in here. Ground level. Vulnerable to attack. BEN moves over to one of them and looks out.

EXT THE REAR FIELDS (BEN'S P.O.V.) NIGHT

NOTHING OUT THERE. Safe for the moment.

INT THE DINING ROOM NIGHT

BEN moves over to A CLOSET and opens the door. A quick inspection shows nothing of immediate value.

BEN (cont.)

How do they explain a man walkin' around with his neck broken? A man shot full of holes and still comin' at you?

INT THE LIVING ROOM NIGHT

BARBARA steps around THE CORPSE that sits on the floor. She moves into the corridor. Looks down at the POOL OF BLOOD. The SEVERED HAND that lies nearby. She looks up at....

....THE LANDING overhead. BLOOD STILL DRIPS, with ominous rhythm. Plip. Plop. Plip. Plop. What's up there? What other horror?

BARBARA prods THE SEVERED HAND with her poker. Then she swats the thing, once, twice, moving it toward the living room, toward the seated corpse.

BEN (cont. o.s.)

Assholes were tryin' to round 'em up. State troopers and some of the good old boys down at Evans City. Out for a good time with their guns and their six-packs.

(NOTE: Intercut BARBARA and BEN here, as necessary, to space the dialogue comfortably over their parallel actions.)

BEN (cont. o.s.)
 Assholes tryin' to round those things up in trucks. Like they know what they're gonna do with 'em.

THE SEVERED HAND flops, like a dead fish, against the legs of the seated CORPSE. BARBARA steps closer. Now she prods the CORPSE on the shoulder. It's head bobbles lifelessly. It remains leaning against the wall. BARBARA hooks the poker behind the CORPSE'S neck and pulls it away from the wall. It tumbles slowly over onto the floor, on top of the severed hand which now can't be seen.

BEN (cont. o.s.)
 They had ten...maybe twenty of 'em in the back of this panel truck. Opened the door to throw another one in. They came spillin' out of there like bugs.

THE CORPSE is lying, face down, on A LARGE THROW-RUG. BARBARA flips up the outer edges of the rug, covering the body. She moves around to the other side and, setting down the poker, she grabs the leading edge of the rug and starts to drag it toward the kitchen.

BEN (cont. o.s.)
 That's when the shit hit the fan. Guns goin' off everywhere. Assholes not carin' what they hit.

BEN appears at the far end of the corridor, near the foot of the stairs. He sees BARBARA struggling with the rug, comes down the corridor to help.

Together, they drag the rug, with its load, through the archway....

INT THE KITCHEN NIGHT

....into the kitchen. Beside the back door, just over the sink, there's A SMALL WINDOW. BEN takes another look outside. The coast is still clear. He unlocks the back door and opens it cautiously.

EXT THE FARM HOUSE NIGHT

There's a CORPSE out there, but it's lifeless. It's THE FARMER that Ben fought off earlier. There's nothing else in sight.

BEN and BARBARA drag THE THROW-RUG out through the door onto the back stoop. BEN kicks it over and it rolls down onto the grass. THE CORPSE within never comes completely uncovered. The severed hand remains invisible.

BEN steers BARBARA back into the house.

INT THE KITCHEN NIGHT

BEN grabs THE Kerosine CAN from under the sink. He picks A FEW SMALL PIECES OF LUMBER, some furring strips, two short one-by-ones, and carries them, with his trusty tire iron, into the living room. BARBARA follows.

INT THE LIVING ROOM NIGHT

BEN tosses THE WOOD into THE FIREPLACE. He squirts a few shots of kerosine around the dying flames which spring hungrily back to life.

BARBARA leans against a wall. Her trembling has subsided. Now she just looks exhausted, beaten. She stares, trance-like, into the flames.

BEN remains stooped for a moment. He talks quietly, remembering things he would rather not have seen.

BEN (cont.)

I was in a diner. Windows got shot out. Lady next to me....shot dead. Others, too. I saw six or seven go down. Car exploded outside. My car caught on fire. It was like....like a war. Some of those....things made it inside the diner. Started comin' after us. This good old boy comes chasin' 'em. Mean sonuvabitch, got some kind of hot shit gun, like an M-16 or somethin'. Starts shootin' wild. Bullets tearin' up the place. I saw one of those things take thirty hits and keep on comin'. Damn thing had to be dead, but it kept on comin'. 'Til it took a hit in the head. That brought it down. Only way to stop 'em. You gotta get 'em in the head.

BEN feels himself slipping into despondency. He uses his tire iron to stoke the fire. The action helps him fight off the emotion.

BEN (cont.)

Some of us ran out the back. I found that truck out there. Driver was dead. Shot. I took the truck and lit out.

He looks up at BARBARA.

BEN (cont.)

I don't know what's goin' on, but it sure as hell ain't no prison break. And there's no kind of chemical that I ever heard of can make a dead man walk. This is somethin' nobody knows about and has never seen before. This is hell on earth. This is pure hell on earth.

BEN feels anger rising again and, again, he uses it for fuel. He stands and rushes through another archway into....

INT THE STUDY NIGHT

....A SITTING ROOM, the last room to be explored on this floor. It lies, adjacent to the living room, at the front of the house. Like the living room, it has THREE LARGE WINDOWS. There's a big old desk and, on it, A TELEPHONE. BEN rushes over and lifts the receiver. He dials 911. He gets only AN EMERGENCY SIGNAL, an electronic siren.

BEN (cont.)

Damn. Doesn't take long for shit to fall apart, does it?

He looks around the room. Scattered furniture. HUNTING TROPHIES on the walls. TWO DEER and A WILD BOAR.

BEN (cont.)

There's gotta be guns in this house.

BEN opens the top drawer of an old dresser that's lined with cheap knick-knacks and family photos. (We might recognize a picture of the dead farmer that Barbara destroyed with her poker.)

Amidst the clutter in the drawer, BEN finds A BOX OF RIFLE SHELLS. He looks around again and this time notices....

....A GUN RACK on the wall. But it's empty.

INT THE CORRIDOR NIGHT

THE STAIRWAY, BEN stops, lights a cigarette, and starts up the stairs.

BEN (cont.)

Maybe upstairs. I'm gonna go take a look around

BARBARA joins him at THE STAIRWAY.

BARBARA

There's something up there.

Motioning with her poker, BARBARA points to the BLOOD dripping from the BANNISTER and the OVERHEAD. BEN cautiously starts up the stairs.

INT STAIRWAY OVERHEAD NIGHT

As BEN reaches the top of the stairs, he sees the CORPSE of a young man. It is sitting upright and motionless. It is holding a rifle in it's right hand. It has a large bullet hole in it's head, as if the young man has shot himself. It's left hand is missing, and the left arm ends in a bloody stump. BEN takes the rifle from the CORPSE.

BARBARA (O.S.)

What is it?

BEN

It's all right.

BARBARA (forcefully this time)

What is it?!

BEN

It's nothing. It's....it's alright.

With the rifle barrel, BEN probes the CORPSE'S ARM where the hand was severed. It's A BLOODY MESS. It looks as though it's been chewed.

There are THREE DOORS that lead off the landing. BEN cocks the rifle. It's a lever action. A spent shell ejects.

BEN moves cautiously through one of the doorways into....

INT THE UPSIAIRS BEDROOM NIGHT

....A BEDROOM. Nothing alarming. A peaceful country bed where the dead farmer once slept.

INT THE LIVING ROOM NIGHT

BARBARA moves slowly toward the fireplace, her eyes locked on the flames.

There is A DOOR at the mouth of the corridor. If shut, it would close the corridor off from the living room. But it's open wide, masking the wall behind it.

Slowly, almost imperceptibly, THE DOOR BEGINS TO MOVE on its hinges.

It's behind BARBARA'S back. She doesn't see.

THE DOOR comes steadily away from the wall....six inches....a foot. A HAND appears from behind. Fingers close around the edge of the wood. The hinge SQUEAKS!

BARBARA spins around.

THE DOOR FLIES OPEN. There's ANOTHER DOORWAY behind it. It leads through the wall into A RICKETY STAIRWAY that runs down to the cellar. TWO MEN come bursting out.

BARBARA screams.

INT THE UPSTAIRS BEDROOM NIGHT

BEN hears THE SCREAM and goes rushing out of the bedroom.

INT THE LIVING ROOM NIGHT

One of the men is young. In his late teens. Wearing work clothes. He's carrying A SHOTGUN. The other is middle-aged. Wearing an expensive-looking sport coat and showing lots of gold. He's clutching A BASEBALL BAT. The younger man, TOM, takes a few steps toward BARBARA.

TOM

It's alright. It's alright. It's just us.

THE CORRIDOR DOOR has swung shut, blocking the corridor from view. Suddenly IT FLIES OPEN again as BEN comes bursting into the living room. THE MIDDLE-AGED MAN is caught squarely by the swinging door and he goes reeling.

MIDDLE-AGED MAN

AAAH! Jesus Christ!

Seeing BEN'S rifle, TOM holds his own weapon high in a gesture of surrender.

TOM

Don't shoot, mister. It's just us. It's just us.

BEN

Who the hell is 'us'?

TOM

Tom Bitner. That's me.

A WOMAN'S VOICE calls from the cellar.

VOICE (o.s.)

Harry?

TOM

This here's Harry Cooper. That's his wife callin'. Got a sick little girl down there in the cellar. My woman's down there, too. That's Judy Rose Larsen and that's all of us.

This guy's a real bumpkin.

VOICE (o.s.)

Harry?

HARRY'S not answering. He's too busy making a show of the pain he's suffering.

HARRY

Mind if we ask who the hell you are, now?

BEN

Girl's name is Barbara. I'm Ben.

HARRY

You damn near broke my arm, Mister Ben.

VOICE (o.s.)

Harry? For God's sake!

BEN

Aren't you gonna answer her?

HARRY

(Calling) It's alright. We're alright. There's more people up here.

BEN

Didn't you hear all this shit that was goin' on up here? We could have used some help.

HARRY

Maybe you can see through walls, Mister Ben. I can't. We heard some bangin' around. Could have been those things for all we could tell. We just heard some bangin' around, that's all.

TOM

That ain't right. We heard the girl callin' out. Askin if anyone was here. We was just scared, if you want the truth. We was scared to shit.

He may be a bumpkin, but you can't help but like TOM. Simple, honest, made of good stuff.

BEN

You live here, Tom?

TOM

Naw, this here's Uncle Rege's house. Him and my cousin, Satchel. Old Uncle Rege.... he died. Just today. Swear to God, he died.

I seen him. Touched him. He was stone dead,
and that's the truth.

VOICE (o.s.)

Harry?

HARRY

Let's go. We can talk down in the cellar.

TOM

Me and Judy Rose, we walked on over to be
with Satchel, you know. Radio said there was
some kind o' trouble, but we didn't see nothin'.
All the way. Home to here. Didn't see nothin'.

HARRY

Christ. We heard all this before.

BEN

I didn't hear it before, Cooper. Go on, Tom.

TOM

Well....me and Judy Rose....we wasn't here
more'n ten minutes when Mr. Cooper come
bangin' on the door.

BEN

(To Harry) How'd you get here? You don't
look like neighbors.

HARRY

You're tryin' to find out if somebody has
a car. Don't you think we've been through
all this? Mine's broken down up on the
Interstate and the kid here doesn't own one,
if you can believe that.

BEN

Damn.

HARRY

How did you get here, Mr. Ben? You don't
exactly look like neighbors, yourself.

BEN shoots daggers. It's all he can do to keep from throttling this
man. He manages to keep cool.

BEN

Truck. Outside. Out of gas.

HARRY.

Evans City is less than five miles away.
We could make five miles running on fumes.

BEN

What if we don't make it? You willin' to take that chance? Besides, Evans City's a war zone. I've been there. It's gonna take us a hell of a lot more than five miles before we find any real help.

TOM

There's a gas pump out by the shed, but Uncle Rege, he keeps it locked.

BEN

You know where the key is?

TOM

Sure don't. We could hunt for it.

BEN

We will. But not now. Could take too long. Might never find it. We gotta figure out what we're doin' first. Finish your story.

TOM

Well, like I said....

HARRY

This is bull shit. If we're gonna do something, let's do it. If we're gonna stand around and bull shit, we can do that in the cellar, where it's safe.

BEN

I don't know if the cellar's such a smart move.

HARRY

What do you mean?

BEN

I mean....I don't know if locking ourselves down in that cellar is a smart move, and I am not going down there until I know what all the options are.

HARRY

What options? And who the fuck gave you the right to decide things for the rest of us?

BEN

I'm not deciding for you or anybody else. I'm thinkin' about my own ass. You wanna go down the cellar, go. Nobody's stoppin' you.

VOICE (o.s.)

Harry? What's going on?

HARRY

(Shouting) God dammit, Helen, will you shut up! I can't think straight with you shouting!

BEN looks at HARRY with disgust.

BEN

I've only been around you a minute or two, Cooper, but that's enough for me to know that I don't like you very much. Now, I'm sure you feel the same about me, so let's just try to stay out of each other's way, alright?

Pregnant silence. Then BEN turns back to TOM.

BEN

Go on, Tom. What else you got to tell?

TOM

Well, like I said, Mister Cooper come bangin' on the door. We let him in, him and his wife. Seen their little girl was hurt. We tried to call for help but the phone was makin' this funny sound, you know. We tried and tried but couldn't call nobody.

Through all this, BARBARA has been drifting around the room, listening to the talk, watching the fire. Now she moves toward one of the front windows and looks outside.

TOM

That's when Uncle Rege....Uncle Rege.... he come walkin' out o' the bedroom. He

was dead a minute before. Swear to God, he was. But he come walkin' out.

HARRY

He wasn't dead. He couldn't have been dead. You're wrong, that's all. You made a mistake.

TOM looks squarely at BEN.

TOM

He was dead. I know he was.

BEN

What happened?

TOM

Uncle Rege....he went after my cousin, Satchel. Went after him like....I dunno.

BEN

Anyone else in the house?

TOM

No. Just them.

BEN

I'm afraid your cousin's dead, Tom.

TOM

Oh, I know. He shot himself. Just went crazy, I guess. Uncle Rege comin' after him and all. I....I run down here. Got the shotgun. But what could I do. Couldn't shoot Uncle Rege. Couldn't imagine doin' that. I got everyone down the cellar. It was my idea to go down there.

BARBARA

Look.

Everyone turns toward BARBARA who is staring out at the yard.

BARBARA (cont.)

Look outside.

HARRY rushes to one of the front windows, BEN rushes to the other one, where BARBARA is standing. TOM pulls up behind BEN.

EXT THE FRONT VIEW (THEIR P.O.V.) NIGHT

Faint against the night sky, there are THREE FIGURES on the horizon. Stumbling, lurching figures, quite far away, and moving very slowly, but definitely headed this way....right toward the house.

INT THE LIVING ROOM NIGHT

HARRY

Jesus! Get in the cellar! Quick!

BEN

The cellar's a death trap. Those things don't have much strength, but get enough of 'em and they might be able to break through the door. We'd be cornered down there. No way out. We'll do better fightin' 'em off up here where we got some way to escape.

HARRY

You're crazy. A way out is a way in. The windows.....

BEN

Maybe we can board 'em up.

Hearing this, BARBARA rushes off to the kitchen.

HARRY

We don't have time. Those....those things....

BEN

There's just three of them. I handled more than that by myself. And without these two guns. I'm worried about more of them coming. That cellar door won't hold 'em.

HARRY

But the windows will, huh?

BEN

I don't need this, Cooper. I told you before. You wanna go downstairs? Go on. Git. You can be the boss down there. I'm boss up here.

BARBARA reappears dragging A PIECE OF ONE-BY-FOUR, A HAMMER, and SOME NAILS. BEN goes to help her.

BEN

What you gonna do, Tom.

TOM looks back and forth at the two other men. Making a decision, he rushes over to the open cellar door.

TOM

(Calling) Judy Rose. Come on up. We need some help up here.

HARRY

You're crazy. You're out of your fucking minds.

HARRY goes to the cellar door and ducks inside. Just as he does, A YOUNG GIRL appears from below. A gum-chewing teenager wearing tight pedal-pushers and a Levi jacket over a tee-shirt.

TOM

This here's Judy Rose. Judy, help get some wood out o' the kitchen.

JUDY

What are we doin' now?

TOM

We're gonna board up them windows. Go on, hurry up.

JUDY

Board up the windows. Jesus Lord, Tommy, are you sure we're....

TOM

There's more of 'em out there. More of 'em like Uncle Rege. Now hurry up and fetch that wood, Judy Rose. Do what I tell ya.

JUDY moves off to the kitchen. HARRY grabs the cellar door and starts to swing it shut.

HARRY

If I shut this door, I don't open it again until somebody comes who can get us out of here.

BEN

If somebody like that comes, we'll try to remember to call you.

HARRY

You....stupid sons of bitches!

He slams the door.

INT THE CELLAR STAIRWAY NIGHT

There are two heavy metal "U"s mounted to the wall on either side of the door. HARRY sets down his BASEBALL BAT, snatches up A TWO-BY-FOUR and drops it into those mountings.

VOICE (o.s.)

Harry?

Taking the bat, HARRY moves down the stairs.

INT THE KITCHEN NIGHT

BARBARA and JUDY ROSE are dragging MORE LUMBER out from under the sink. TOM and BEN come rushing in.

BEN

There's just that one hammer. Here....

BEN pulls A WRENCH out of the toolbox and finds A MEAT MALLET on the counter. He distributes them.

BEN

....use these. Nail 'em up quick and dirty. Get the windows covered as fast as you can. Then we can go around and reinforce them. Anybody finds any keys, hang on to them.

INT THE CELLAR NIGHT

THE CELLAR is a dreary place. Cinder-block walls that are dirty and sweating. The usual boiler, water heater. A washer and drier. Crates and cartons stacked everywhere along with old furniture. An endless array of junk collected over the years.

In the center of all this, AN OLD WOODEN DOOR has been stretched across TWO SAW HORSES. A young girl, SARAH, ten or twelve years old, is lying on top, shivering, her eyes wide and darting. She's got some sort of WOUND ON HER ARM. It's wrapped in A BANDAGE torn from a pillow case. The bandage is thick but BLOOD is seeping through. Hovering over the girl is her mother, HELEN COOPER. Her face, once attractive, is now harsh and lined with bitterness. The years of living with Harry have taken all the softness out of her.

HELEN

What's happening?

HARRY

They decided to stay upstairs.

HELEN

What about us?

HARRY

It's safer down here.

HELEN

What about Sarah?

HARRY

It is safer down here, Helen.

HELEN

How many people are up there?

HARRY

Two more.

HELEN

And they've got the gun.

HARRY

They've got two guns. There may be a hundred guns up there for all I know. It doesn't matter. It is safer down here.

HELEN moves around the makeshift bed.

HELEN

We're going up. We've got to get help for Sar....

HARRY grabs her by the arm, lifting his BASEBALL BAT menacingly.

HARRY

I am not opening that door, Helen, and neither are you. If you try to, so help me, I'll....

She meets his gaze defiantly.

HELEN

You'll what, Harry?

He lets go of her arm and steps away. He flings THE BAT angrily into a corner.

HELEN (cont.)

That is your daughter lying there. We have got to get her to a doctor.

HARRY

There are no doctors upstairs, Helen. And there is no way out of here. Not one of these fuckin' yo-yos has a car. Christ, what a place to be stuck. The middle of fuckin' nowhere with a bunch of yo-yo's.

He paces furiously in a tight circle. He ends facing the makeshift bed. He looks down at his daughter.

HELEN

Fever's gotten worse.

HARRY

She'll be alright. Somebody'll come. We'll get out of here. We're all gonna be alright.

THE SOUND OF BANGING, HAMMERING, from upstairs. HARRY looks up, listening.

HARRY

They're crazy. They're fuckin' out of their minds. Bunch of yo-yo's.

INT THE LIVING ROOM NIGHT

BANG! BANG! BANG! BARBARA, grimacing, that fury back in her eyes, swings the hammer with a vengeance, as though swinging it at an enemy. THE CAMERA PULLS BACK to find TOM and JUDY working at the same window. They've got it pretty well covered, but it's taken FIVE OR SIX PLANKS to do the job. And there are still GAPS.

BEN comes into the living room hauling MORE LUMBER. He dumps it in the center of the floor.

BEN

This is the last of the big stuff.

He looks at the boarded window.

BEN (cont.)

Not gonna do it.

He gets an idea.

BEN (cont.)

Tom. Gimme a hand.

They go rushing off to....

INT THE DINING ROOM NIGHT

....THE DINING ROOM. BEN goes directly to THE DINNER TABLE. He flips up the edges of THE TABLECLOTH, forming a sack around the CANDLE HOLDERS and KNICK-KNACKS that are sitting on top. He lifts the things and tosses them aside.

BEN

Turn it over.

TOM grabs one end of the table and he and BEN quickly turn it upside-down. BEN stands on the table's underside. He pushes out on one of the legs until it breaks off with a loud snap. TOM follows suit and, within seconds, the table is a legless slab.

BEN (cont.)

In there. The front room.

The two lift the tabletop and carry it through the archway, past the foot of the stairs, into the study.

INT THE STUDY NIGHT

BEN

Front window. Right there.

TOM and BEN carry THE TABLETOP into the room and stand it on end in front of one of the two windows that face out over the porch.

(There's another window on the side wall, for a total of three in the room.) TOM goes running off to fetch hardware.

The tabletop isn't centered perfectly over the glass. There's a gap. BEN can see into the front yard.

EXT THE FRONT YARD (BEN'S P.O.V.) NIGHT

Those LURCHING FIGURES, the three that we saw earlier, are much closer now. The closest is within twenty yards, or so, of the house. Behind them, TWO MORE have appeared on the far horizon.

BARBARA (o.s.)

They're so slow.

INT THE STUDY NIGHT

BEN looks to his left. BARBARA is standing at the other front window, looking out. Her voice is strangely calm, serene, as though she's in a trance or under sedation.

BARBARA (cont.)

We could walk right past them. We don't even have to run. We could just....walk....right past them.

TOM comes rushing back with THE MEAT Mallet and a handful of NAILS. BEN centers the tabletop so that it completely covers the window glass.

BEN

Couple nails, is all. Just get it up. We'll strengthen it later.

BEN holds the table up while TOM begins to pound.

BARBARA

We have the guns. If we're careful....we can get away.

BEN looks at her. Is she serious? Is she sane?

BARBARA (cont.)

You told me to fight. I'm fighting. I am not panicking. It isn't safe here. Upstairs or down. We should leave. Before it's too late.

BEN and TOM look at each other skeptically. Then BEN looks back at BARBARA.

BEN

Look. I know you wanna get out of here. So do I. And....we're gonna do it. We'll figure a way to get that gas and we'll be gone. Now, you're doin' fine. We're all doin' just fine. We're gonna make it. If we're careful....like you said....we gotta be careful.

TOM

How 'bout them doors?

TOM is pointing at A CLOSET on the other side of the room.

TOM (cont.)

Take them doors down and nail 'em up.

BEN

That's it! Nice goin', Tom. (He looks around the room.) Two more windows in here.

He goes darting through the archway into....

INT THE LIVING ROOM NIGHT

....the living room. TOM follows on his heels..

BEN

Three more in here. That's five.

TOM

Hallway door is two.

TOM rushes past JUDY ROSE, who has been listening to their conversation. Tossing her head toward the study, JUDY speaks under her breath.

JUDY

Is she crazy, or what?

TOM ignores her. He follows BEN into the kitchen.

INT THE KITCHEN NIGHT

BEN regards the windows.

BEN

Forget the little one. They can't get in through there. This big one here is six.

They move into the dining room.

INT THE DINING ROOM NIGHT

BEN

Seven. Eight.

TOM

This closet here makes three doors.

BEN

Let's get 'em down. C'mon.

INT THE KITCHEN NIGHT

They move back into THE KITCHEN. BEN attacks the toolbox. Pulls out TWO SCREWDRIVERS and TWO PAIRS OF PLIERS.

INT THE STUDY NIGHT

BARBARA looks out through the unprotected front window.

EXT THE FRONT YARD (BARBARA'S P.O.V.) NIGHT

The closest of the DEAD THINGS is just a few feet from the porch. The two behind it are twenty and thirty yards back. There are more on the horizon, now. Five or six more.

INT THE STUDY NIGHT

JUDY ROSE has pulled up behind BARBARA and seen the threat.

JUDY ROSE

Jesus Lord. Get them guns in here. Get them guns in here.

INT THE DINING ROOM NIGHT

At the closet door, BEN works on the top hinge, TOM works on the bottom. They pop the pins quickly. Then TOM holds the door while BEN attacks the third hinge in the middle.

EXT THE FRONT YARD NIGHT

The closest DEAD THING stumbles up onto the porch. It almost falls. It staggers into the front of the house with a loud THUD!.

INT THE STUDY NIGHT

JUDY ROSE panics at the sound. She starts to run this way and that around the room.

JUDY

They're comin'! They're here! Get them guns! Bring them guns!

BARBARA holds her ground at the window. The dead thing is momentarily out of view, off to the left, but it can be heard STUMBLING, SCRATCHING on the wall.

INT THE DINING ROOM NIGHT

BEN pops the hinge-pin and he and TOM pull the closet door free. BEN drops his tools and hefts the door, rushing off toward the study. TOM picks up the tools and the guns and follows.

INT THE STUDY NIGHT

KA-WHAM! THE DEAD THING slams into view at the window, its hands flat against the glass.

JUDY

Oh, Lord! Oh, my Lord! Oh, Jesus Lord!

BARBARA holds her ground, staring at the thing with contempt.

BEN comes rushing in with the door from the dining room.

THE DEAD THING bangs the window again. The glass rattles.

BARBARA steps aside making room for BEN, who foots the door into the baseboard below the window.

THE DEAD THING hauls its arms back to bang the glass again. Just as its hands come flying forward, BEN slams the door into place and throws his weight against it. From behind the door comes the KERRRRRAAAAAAASSSSHHHH of glass shattering.

BEN

Nail it up! Nail it up!

The others all start pounding nails through the door into the window frame. More glass shatters on the other side.

EXT THE FARM HOUSE NIGHT

THE DEAD THING on the porch is determined to smash its way through but it doesn't have the strength. It POUNDS, SCRATCHES, MOANS.

INT THE STUDY NIGHT

THE DOOR is being held in place by half a dozen nails now. BEN pulls away.

BEN

Get a few more nails in there and get some more into the tabletop.

BEN snatches up HIS TOOLS and rushes over to THE STUDY CLOSET where he goes to work on the door hinges there.

EXT THE FARM HOUSE NIGHT

Outside, the DEAD THING moves away from the doored-off window and stumbles over to the one where the table hangs. It lifts its hands and smashes them through the glass.

INT THE STUDY NIGHT

KER-RAAAAAAAAAAAAAASSSSHHHH! THE TABLETOP, hanging on only a few nails, wobbles. THE NAILS CREAK in the wood.

TOM rushes over and throws his weight into the tabletop, driving it back. The others come over and start pounding more nails.

BEN has popped two of the hinge pins on the closet door. He can't pop the third without help.

BEN

Tom.

TOM pulls away from the tabletop. It seems to be holding. The girls continue to drive nails while TOM rushes over to help BEN. Quickly, they pop the last hinge. They haul the door into....

INT THE LIVING ROOM NIGHT

....the living room, and slam it up against the unprotected front window there. They start to drive nails. (All the front windows, the ones that face the porch, are covered now.)

EXT THE FARM HOUSE NIGHT

THE DEAD THING at the tabletop window hears the pounding from the living room. It turns and goes shambling down the porch in the direction of the sound.

WIDE SHOT: from the horizon line, looking toward the farm house. In the foreground, A DEAD THING turns toward the house, toward the distant sound of hammering.

There are SIX OR SEVEN OTHERS scattered across the fields, all converging on the farm house which looks small from this distance. Small and insignificant in the vastness of the night.

THE DEAD THING on the porch reaches the living room window. It lifts its hands and smashes the glass.

INT THE LIVING ROOM NIGHT

KER-RRRRRAAAAAAAAAAASSSSHHHH! TOM recoils.

BEN

It's alright. It'll hold for now. (Calling to the girls.) Keep workin'. Reinforce all of these. (To Tom.) Over here. C'mon.

They rush over to THE CORRIDOR DOOR and go to work on the hinges.

INT THE STUDY NIGHT

THE WOMEN keep driving nails.

EXT THE FARM HOUSE NIGHT

The second of the WALKING CORPSES has made it to the front porch. It stumbles up the steps and moves over to where the first one is pounding on the living room window.

INT THE LIVING ROOM NIGHT

BEN and TOM pop the last hinge-pin on the corridor door. They haul the door over to one of the side windows, one that doesn't face the porch. Quickly, they bang in a few nails. Then BEN pulls away.

BEN

Five more windows. (Calling.) We're goin' upstairs. We'll leave the guns.

He and TOM take off down the corridor.

INT THE CORRIDOR NIGHT

BEN and TOM reach THE FOOT OF THE STAIRS. BEN takes a few steps up, stops himself, and turns around.

BEN

Wait a minute. Don't go up.

BEN rushes into THE DINING ROOM. He snatches up THE TABLECLOTH, dumps out the candle holders and knick-knacks, and comes rushing back. He starts to climb.

BEN (cont.)

Wait here a minute.

At the top of the stairs, Ben tosses the tablecloth over THE BODY that's lying on the landing.

BEN (cont.)

Alright. Come on.

TOM starts to climb. He stares at the mound under the cloth, at the BLOOD that has splattered the walls.

BEN (cont.)

Don't look at it.

TOM keeps climbing, but he's clearly a little shaken.

INT THE STUDY NIGHT

BARBARA moves away from the tabletop. THE GUNS are lying on the floor. BARBARA steps over, picks up THE RIFLE, and carries it with her out of the room. JUDY ROSE notices, but keeps working.

INT THE LIVING ROOM NIGHT

BARBARA goes to THE SIDE WINDOW, the one most newly doored-off. She carefully props THE RIFLE against the wall, within easy reach, and she starts to pound more nails.

INT FIRST UPSTAIRS BEDROOM NIGHT

BEN

Shit. What is this, all new up here?

TOM

Last year.

BEN swings A CLOSET DOOR open. It's made of plywood, hollow, light.

BEN

No good.

TOM

Better'n nothin'.

BEN swings his HAMMER into the wood. It cracks open like a peanut shell and A HOLE appears.

BEN

No good.

The door to the landing is the same. Hollow, flimsy.

As the men move out of the room, the CAMERA lingers for a moment on A CORD that dangles from above. It's a pull-handle for A TRAP-DOOR that's flush in the ceiling. Neither BEN or TOM notice it.

INT SECOND UPSTAIRS BEDROOM NIGHT

The situation is the same in the other bedroom. New doors. Not strong enough to be of use.

BEN spots A TELEVISION.

BEN

TV. See if anything's on.

TOM goes to the television and fiddles with the dials. BEN moves out onto the landing where he goes to work on the hinges of A BATH-ROOM DOOR which is old and solid.

ON THE TV SCREEN: static, white noise. TOM flips from channel to channel. More of the same. Finally, he gets an image. Just lettering on the screen. Computer type. Across the top, it reads CIVIL DEFENSE EMERGENCY NETWORK. Beneath that is the heading: RESCUE STATIONS. Scrolling, bottom to top, almost too fast to read, are the locations of emergency rescue shelters: BUTLER CITY FIRE HALL, DRAVOSBURG FIRE HALL, EDISON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, etc.

TOM

Got somethin'.

BEN steps into the room and looks at the screen.

TOM (cont.)

Tellin' you where to go, I think.

BEN

Jesus. This must really be big.

TOM

(Recognizing a name.) Zelionople. That's only about twelve miles.

BEN

Might as well be a hundred.

There's a blinking message at the bottom of the screen. It says: STAY TUNED FOR LIVE UPDATE.

TOM

Says they're gonna come on live.

BEN

Well, we can't wait for 'em. Come on gimme a hand over here.

INT THE UPSTAIRS LANDING NIGHT

They move out of the bedroom and attack THE BATHROOM DOOR. TOM holds it while BEN works on the last hinge pin.

BEN

Five more windows. This'll get one of 'em.

TOM

Downstairs! Shit, if I ain't a stupid son-of-a-bitch!

BEN

What?

TOM

The old doors. The ones that come off up here. They're all down the cellar.

The hinge pin pops free. BEN hoists the door, moves to the edge of the landing, and heaves it over. It drops to the floor below and hits with a mighty BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!

INT THE CELLAR NIGHT

HARRY startles at the sound. BITS OF PLASTER AND DUST fall from cracks in the ceiling.

HELEN

What are they doing?

HARRY

Assholes.

HELEN

Harry. What are they doing up there?

HARRY

How do I know what they're doing? They said they were gonna board it up. Board the place up.

HELEN

And you refused to help them.

HARRY

That's right, Helen. I refused to help them. Right. Goddam right.

HELEN pulls away in supreme frustration. She paces, wringing her hands.

HARRY (cont.)

They are wrong, Helen. It's a stupid idea. This cellar is the only safe place in the house. You watch. You just watch. They're gonna come begging for us to let them in down here before this is over.

HELEN

And what will you do then, Harry? Will you open the door then?

A loud BANGING on the door at the top of the stairs.

TOM (o.s.)

(Calling) Mr. Cooper.

HARRY looks up the stairs. Looks back at his wife. Doesn't answer.

HELEN

Harry?

TOM (o.s.)

Mr. Cooper. We wanna get them old doors that's down there. We wanna use 'em to board up these windows.

HARRY looks toward a dark corner.

THREE WOODEN DOORS stand leaning against the wall. (A fourth, as we've seen, is being used as a bed for the Coopers' daughter.)

HARRY looks back and forth nervously, indecisively.

HELEN

Harry, for God's sake!

INT THE LIVING ROOM NIGHT

BEN and TOM are standing outside THE CELLAR DOOR.

TOM

Mr. Cooper? Can you hear me?

BEN

That fuckin'....

BEN pulls away. He rushes into the study, where JUDY ROSE is still pounding nails. He grabs up THE SHOTGUN from the floor and returns to the cellar door.

BEN (cont.)

Cooper. You open this door, right now!

BARBARA has reinforced the side window. She picks up THE RIFLE and walks into the kitchen.

INT THE KITCHEN NIGHT

BARBARA moves to THE LITTLE WINDOW over the sink and looks out.

BEN (cont. o.s.)

Cooper!

EXT THE BACK YARD (BARBARA'S P.O.V.) NIGHT

THREE OR FOUR FIGURES can be seen lurching out of the night, slowly approaching the house. The closest is fifty yards away.

INT THE LIVING ROOM NIGHT

BEN (cont.)

Cooper! I got a shotgun up here! Open this door, you motherfucker, or I swear I'll blow it to shit!

INT THE CELLAR NIGHT

HARRY is sweating.

HELEN

What are you doing? What do you hope to...

HARRY

Shut up, Helen.

HELEN

What do you hope to accomplish by....

HARRY

I said SHUT UP!

BEN (o.s.)

I'm countin' to three, Cooper, then I'm comin' through!

HELEN suddenly rushes toward the stairs.

HELEN

(Calling) We're going to open.

BEN (o.s.)

I'm countin'. That's one.

HARRY grabs his wife by the arm. She tries to pull away. He holds her. She tries again. He slaps her hard across the face and pushes her back away from the steps. She stares at him with loathing. She's hurt, but is determined not to show it. HARRY stares back at her with something like a satisfied smirk. (He may be losing the battle of the cellar door, but he can still dominate HELEN.)

BEN (cont. o.s.)

What you gonna do, Cooper? That's two.

Finally, HARRY turns and goes tromping up the steps.

Tears well up in HELEN'S eyes. She tries to wipe them away.

At the top of the stairway, HARRY lifts that TWO-BY-FOUR out of the iron "U"s that hold it in place. He opens the door. BEN steps inside with his SHOTGUN leveled. He stares at COOPER, long and hard, without speaking. TOM pushes through from behind and goes down the steps, taking two at a time.

BEN (cont.)

From now on, you leave this door open. We may want to get down there. We may need to get down there if those things break in.

HARRY

Sure. You want the best of both worlds. You get cornered up here, you want to be able to run downstairs. Well, that's not the way it works. You want to get in that cellar, you get in now, or you can forget it.

BEN

I am not boxin' myself in down there until there is absolutely no other choice.

HARRY

And I am not going to gamble with my daughter's life. You want to stay up here, that's your decision. Just don't count on me to....

BEN

I'm not countin' on you for shit, Cooper. That's why I'm not gonna let you shut this door on me again.

JUDY ROSE has appeared in the living room behind BEN'S back.

JUDY

This is our house. It's Tommy's house. And here's you all playin' rooster with it. Like to know where you all'd be if we didn't let you in here.

TOM starts back up the steps carrying AN OLD DOOR.

TOM

Judy Rose.

JUDY

Where'd you all be if we kicked you the hell out?

TOM

We're not kickin' anybody out, Judy Rose. We're not gonna do nothin' like that. Now, come on. Let's try to work together, here, and get some damn shit done.

BEN and COOPER move down onto the steps, hugging the wall so TOM can pass by them with his load.

BEN reaches the bottom first. He sees HELEN hovering over the makeshift bed that holds her daughter, SARAH. The young girl is trembling badly. Much worse than before. Her eyes stare upward without seeing.

BEN

Y'oughta keep her covered. Get something from upstairs. Blankets or....

COOPER steps in close, removing his sport coat. He drapes it over his daughter. It's an obvious statement of self-reliance. BEN lets it pass.

BEN (cont.)

How'd she get hurt?

HELEN

One of those....people. Bit her on the arm.

BEN can't quite hide his alarm at this. He turns quickly away and moves to where THE OLD DOORS are stored leaning against a wall. There are only two. BEN looks at the makeshift bed, which has been made from the same kind of door.

HARRY

You wanna take that one, too?

BEN stares angrily at COOPER but doesn't respond. He grabs one of the other doors and starts up the stairs.

HELEN

We've got to get help. We've got to get Sarah to a doctor.

BEN

We're gonna try. Since you ain't doin' nothin', Cooper, maybe you wanna start lookin' for those keys.

BEN disappears above.

HELEN

What keys?

HARRY

To the gas pump out back.

HELEN

You mean....there's a car?

HARRY

It's out of gas. The pump is locked. The keys could be anywhere.

HELEN rushes past her husband and on up the stairs.

EXT THE FRONT YARD NIGHT

THE WALKING DEAD are converging in greater numbers. A half dozen or so are moving in from the far field. Four or five are on the porch, pounding on the door and the reinforced windows.

INT THE LIVING ROOM NIGHT

BEN drops THE DOOR he is carrying. He looks at the front windows. The sound is awful....BANGING, SCRATCHING, MOANING....but the fortifications seem to be holding.

TOM rushes past, heading for the cellar to get the remaining door. As he goes down, HELEN comes up. She is shocked by the sight of the boarded windows, the sound of the ghouls on the porch.

HELEN

Oh, God. Oh, my God.

BEN gathers TOOLS, checks the LUMBER SUPPLY.

BEN

It's alright. It'll hold. For a while, anyway.

He tosses a few small strips of WOOD ONTO THE FIRE in order to keep it burning.

BARBARA comes rushing out of the kitchen. She goes to help JUDY ROSE, who is struggling with THE FIRST DOOR that TOM brought upstairs. Together, they drag it toward the unprotected SIDE WINDOW.

BEN (cont.)

Don't start bangin' 'til we're all here to help. Gotta be able to work fast. Sound'll bring 'em around from the front.

BARBARA

They're coming around. From out back.

BEN hoists THE SECOND DOOR and rushes into THE KITCHEN. THE SIDE WINDOW there is ten feet down the same wall as the unprotected living room window.

HELEN, frantic, goes running into the study.

INT THE STUDY NIGHT

HELEN throws open A DRAWER and starts to rummage, looking for the keys.

INT THE LIVING ROOM NIGHT

BARBARA and JUDY ROSE stand their DOOR on end and lean it against THE LIVING ROOM WINDOW.

INT THE KITCHEN NIGHT

In the kitchen, BEN struggles to turn his DOOR around in a tight space blocked by A REFRIGERATOR. He manages to stand it on end, but he is positioned between it and the window.

KA-BAAAAAM! Behind BEN'S back....A DROOLING FIGURE slams into the glass. BEN struggles to spin the door around. He manages to foot it against the baseboard below the window, but before he can push the top end up against the frame....

KER-AAAAAAAAAAAAASSSHHH!....THE DEAD THING outside punches through the glass.

BEN ducks the FLYING SHARDS.

THE DEAD THING leans in through the opening.

BEN pushes on the door, covering the window, but the DEAD THING'S ARM is caught there, reaching into the room, its fingers clawing the air.

JUDY ROSE sees what's happening. She rushes into the kitchen. BARBARA follows, bringing her RIFLE. JUDY ROSE throws her weight, with BEN'S, against the door.

BEN

No. No. Ease up. Ease up.

BEN bangs on THE INTRUDING ARM with his HAMMER. The arm doesn't withdraw. The hand keeps clawing, clutching.

INT THE LIVING ROOM NIGHT

TOM comes up from the cellar carrying THE THIRD DOOR. HARRY COOPER comes up behind him. TOM hears the commotion, drops the door, and runs toward the kitchen archway. Just then....

KER-AAAAAAAAAAAAASHHH! SHATTERED GLASS flies from THE WINDOW IN THE LIVING ROOM. THE DOOR the girls left there is just standing free, not nailed....and it's being PUSHED FROM OUTSIDE. It's leaning into the room. It's going to fall!

TOM dives at THE DOOR and catches it just in time. He slams it back against the window frame and holds it in place with his body.

COOPER'S eyes go wide with fear.

HARRY
HELEN! WHERE ARE YOU? WE'VE GOT TO
GET DOWNSTAIRS!

TOM has nothing to work with.

THE TOOLS are lying, out of reach, near the lumber pile.

TOM
Cooper. Get me some nails. Over there.
And that wrench.

HARRY
HELEN!

TOM
I can't let go, Cooper. You gotta help
me out.

HARRY moves over to where THE SUPPLIES are lying.

TOM (cont.)
That wrench, there. The big one. And a
bunch o' them long nails.

HARRY gathers the things and brings them over to the window. TOM jams THE NAILS into his mouth, holding one out. He sets that one in position and, keeping his weight against the door, starts to hammer it in with THE WRENCH.

HARRY looks into the kitchen where THE OTHERS are still fighting to drive off THE INTRUDER.

HARRY
This isn't going to work. This is never
going to work. Helen!

HARRY goes rushing out of the room into the study.

INT THE STUDY NIGHT

HELEN is at the desk, tearing the place apart. Things are strewn everywhere.

HARRY

Helen! Helen, come on!

She keeps searching.

INT THE KITCHEN NIGHT

BEN grabs hold of THE INTRUDER'S ARM and tries to push it, bend it, twist it through the opening between the door and the window frame. PALE GRAY FINGERS wrap around BEN'S wrist. He recoils, trying to pull away. The fingers grab onto his shirt sleeve.

BARBARA jumps in with her RIFLE. She jams the barrel out through the opening and pulls the trigger. BLAM! The shot misses clean. THE DEAD HAND keeps trying to grab.

INT THE LIVING ROOM NIGHT

HARRY, drawn by the gunshot, runs back into THE LIVING ROOM. Looking through the kitchen archway, he sees....

INT THE KITCHEN NIGHT

....THE DEAD HAND close around THE RIFLE BARREL. BARBARA fights to pull the weapon free. BEN grabs on to help. THE DOOR comes further away from the window frame. JUDY ROSE pushes with all her might but the gap widens....and A SECOND HAND comes through the opening.

INT THE LIVING ROOM NIGHT

HARRY rushes back into the study.

INT THE STUDY NIGHT

HARRY

We have got to get downstairs, Helen!
Now! Right now!

He grabs HELEN by the arm. She pulls away violently, grabs A WOODEN BOX from the desk, and holds it up as a weapon.

HELEN

Take your hands off me! TAKE YOUR HANDS
OFF ME! TAKE YOUR HANDS OFF ME!

HARRY backs away. HELEN hurls that wooden box angrily across the room.

It hits the floor hard and its lid flies off. Inside is A MUSIC BOX with the works exposed. It begins to play A MELODIC LITTLE WALTZ.

HELEN pulls out the center drawer and dumps its contents out on top of the desk.

THE WILD BOAR, its teeth bared, and THE OTHER TROPHY HEADS on the wall, look on, mute witnesses.

(NOTE: This tinkling little waltz will be heard faintly over the following actions.)

INT THE KITCHEN NIGHT

BEN and BARBARA, pulling together, finally manage to wrench THE RIFLE free....but the action causes BEN'S weight to come away from the door.

THE DOOR pushes into the room. JUDY ROSE can't hold it. It leans, starts to topple. BEN makes a grab for it, but misses.

It falls into the kitchen and the DEAD THING comes with it.

BEN

Jesus!

The window ledge catches the DEAD THING at mid-thigh. Losing its balance, it pitches forward, flailing.

THE DOOR hits the floor, flat, and the DEAD THING lands, SMACK on its face on top of it. Its legs remain outside, kicking weakly.

JUDY

Mr. Magruder. It's....it's Mr. Magruder....
from the Legion Hall.

BEN moves to grab THE THING by its shirt, thinking to heave it back out through the window, but BARBARA steps quickly in with her RIFLE. She plants the end of the barrel at the base of the CREATURE'S skull and fires. BLAM!

Surprisingly little damage. THE BULLET PUNCHES CLEAN THROUGH THE SKULL, through the door, and into the floor. The DEAD THING stops moving. BLOOD POOLS slowly from under its downturned face.

JUDY

Oh, Lord! Oh, Jesus Lord!

HARRY appears in the living room, again drawn by the gunfire.

JUDY (cont.)

You shot him!

BARBARA

Look at his back.

JUDY

You shot Mr. Magruder!

BARBARA

Look at his back! I didn't do that to him.
Look there.

BARBARA pokes the rifle barrel at A SERIES OF EXIT WOUNDS where someone else's bullets have torn through the corpse's back.

HARRY

That's....that's....impossible.

TOM has driven enough nails to hold the living room window. He rushes into the kitchen to help the others.

TOM

Just like Uncle Rege. He was dead, but
he was comin' for us.

HARRY

It's impossible. It just can't be.

BEN

(To TOM.) Grab the top of the door.
We'll push him up and over.

BEN and TOM grab the top end of THE DOOR and lift together. It doesn't work the way it's supposed to. THE CORPSE slides down the incline. Its weight pushes the foot of the door away from the wall. The force causes the top of the door to pitch forward into the window. It smashes through and ends jutting out through the opening.

BEN (cont.)

Pull back. Pull it back in.

They pull THE DOOR back into the room and stand it against the opposite wall.

TOM

We'll heave him out. Grab on. We'll just heave him.

THE MEN grab THE CORPSE under its arms. They lift....and push.... until it goes toppling over the window ledge out of sight.

Oh, no! There's ANOTHER ONE! Stumbling toward the opening! This one is A WOMAN, dressed in a bathrobe. Her head is lolling to one side. Her neck is bent grotesquely. A piece of bone protrudes.

Before the others can react, BARBARA raises THE RIFLE, aims, and fires. BLAM!

THE BULLET PUNCHES THROUGH THE WOMAN'S CHEST, just to the left of center. She staggers back a few steps....then starts forward again.

BARBARA

Is she dead? Tell me.

BLAM! BARBARA fires again.

ANOTHER HOLE IN THE WOMAN'S CHEST. Still she comes.

BARBARA (cont.)

Is she dead? You're all seeing this.
Is she dead?

BEN

Alright. Stop it.

BEN grabs THE DOOR and moves it toward the window.

BLAM! BARBARA fires again. Same effect.

BEN can't move THE DOOR into the line of fire.

BEN (cont.)

Stop it! You're losin' it! You are losin' it, girl!

BARBARA

You think so?

She cocks the lever, takes aim, and fires one last time.

THIS BULLET DRILLS A HOLE IN THE DEAD THING'S FOREHEAD and it drops, limp, onto the grass.

BEN jams THE DOOR against the window frame, covering the opening. TOM starts pounding nails immediately. There's a small, splintered HOLE IN THE WOOD where the bullet that finished Mr. Magruder punched through. BLOOD RUNS down from that hole in a single, slow rivulet. It looks as though the door itself is bleeding from a wound.

BARBARA looks at BEN squarely.

BARBARA

Whatever I lost, I lost a while ago.
And I don't plan on losing anything else.
You talk to me about losin' it when you
can stop shouting at each other like a
bunch of Goddam two-year-olds.

She turns to TOM.

BARBARA (cont.)

How many bullets does this thing hold?

TOM

I dunno. Twenty, maybe. No tellin' if
Satchel had it full up. There's bullets
in there. In the readin' room. Just
push 'em in....there, see that slot
there in the side. (He points.) Push
'em in there 'til it won't take no more.

BARBARA leaves, heading for the study. She shoots HARRY a nasty look as she passes him.

TOM continues banging nails. Feeling a little sheepish, BEN turns to JUDY ROSE.

BEN

You alright?

She nods, shakily.

BEN (cont.)

We got two more doors to put up. We'll
have to use the rest of that lumber there
for the last window. Maybe you oughta
get that started. It's gonna take the
longest.

JUDY and BEN move into the living room. JUDY starts to drag BOARDS into the study. BEN grabs THE LAST OF THE DOORS FROM THE CELLAR, hauls it back through the kitchen, and into the dining room.

TOM, having driven enough nails at the kitchen window, rushes off to help JUDY.

COOPER stands indecisively in the center of the living room. THE MUSIC BOX WALTZ winds down, hits one last note in the middle of a stanza, and stops....leaving the HORRIBLE SOUND OF THE NIGHT CREATURES that are trying to force their way in.

EXT THE FRONT YARD NIGHT

There are MORE OF THEM now. More on the horizon. More on the porch, CLAWING, SCRATCHING, HOWLING like the damned souls that they are.

INT THE DOWNSTAIRS CORRIDOR NIGHT

COOPER lifts THE DOOR that Ben pitched down from upstairs. He drags it through the corridor archway into the dining room.

INT THE DINING ROOM NIGHT

BEN has his DOOR up in front of ONE OF THE DINING ROOM WINDOWS. He is starting to drive nails.

COOPER drags his DOOR over to THE SECOND WINDOW. Struggling, he stands it on end and covers the vulnerable spot.

INT THE STUDY NIGHT

TOM and JUDY haul MORE BOARDS into the study. JUDY goes back to the living room for one final load while TOM nails one of the boards, the biggest, in place across THE SIDE WINDOW, the last one that needs to be fortified.

Having exhausted her search of the study, HELEN moves off to the dining room.

BARBARA carefully pushes BULLETS into THE RIFLE. When it's fully loaded, she collects her OTHER TOOLS and moves off after....

INT THE DINING ROOM NIGHT

....HELEN, who is pulling the dining room apart now, searching for those keys.

BEN continues to reinforce his window.

HARRY holds his door in place with his body.

BARBARA steps up and starts to drive nails into HARRY'S door. No one talks. The air is thick with unspoken recrimination and guilt.

HARRY moves slowly out of the room.

INT THE DOWNSTAIRS CORRIDOR NIGHT

HARRY drifts out into the corridor. When he reaches THE FOOT OF THE STAIRWAY....he hears something....A HUMAN VOICE....faint....too faint to be heard by the others over the sounds of their pounding. HARRY looks....

....UP THE STAIRS. It's coming from up there, alright. It sounds like....a radio, or a TV....it sounds like a news broadcast.

HARRY starts to climb.

NEWSMAN (o.s.)

....the brutal attacks that have been occurring over much of the nation tonight. Reports of homicide, decapitation, even cannibalism, have been pouring in from coast to coast. Hospitals are deluged. These apparently random acts of violence are being committed by people in a trance-like or hypnotic state. They have lost their ability to communicate and reason. They do not respond to command or authority.

INT THE UPSTAIRS LANDING NIGHT

HARRY reaches THE UPSTAIRS LANDING. He sees THE CORPSE which lies covered on the floor. He steps cautiously around it, hugging the wall, moving in the direction of the VOICE.

NEWSMAN (o.s.)

Civil forces and the military have been mobilized, but the violence is so widespread that it is impossible for rescue services to respond with any efficiency. People left to defend themselves are caught in the grip of mounting panic and confusion.

THE SOUND is coming from one of the bedrooms. HARRY moves inside.

INT THE UPSTAIRS BEDROOM NIGHT

NEWSMAN (o.s.)

That confusion is being compounded in the cities by looting, rioting, and in rural areas by citizens who, faced with the collapse of local police and fire departments, have taken the law into their own hands. Civil and social services have been disrupted or suspended. Most communities are without telephones. Many are without power. Some are without gas and water.

Tom left the TV tuned to the emergency network. This is the live report that was promised earlier. ON SCREEN: A NEWSMAN sits at a desk reading copy from sheets of paper. His tie has been loosened, his shirt collar is open, and he needs a shave. Other than that, he's presentable. He's calm, cool. There's a comforting air of normality despite the horror that's being reported.

NEWSMAN (cont.)

The scientific community is focusing on the phenomenon, specifically on that trance-like state that seems to characterize the assailants. Clearly a behavioral disorder. But what could have caused so widespread and dramatic a condition as the one we are facing tonight?

HARRY approaches THE TV, an old-fashioned twenty-one-inch model that sits on a rolling stand in one corner of the room.

NEWSMAN (cont.)

We've heard speculation on everything from the ozone layer and chemical weapons to voodoo, mysticism, and organisms from space.

HARRY crouches in front of the screen.

NEWSMAN (cont.)

Biologists in Stockton, California, have released a report stating that the bodies of the recently dead are returning to life driven by an unknown force that enables the brain to continue to function.

The NEWSMAN reads this with an editorial smirk. HARRY snickers in response.

NEWSMAN (cont.)

Doctors at the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta reject that theory, calling it "preposterous beyond belief". They feel the only reasonable explanation is a germ, a bacteria or a virus, that has a mind-altering effect on its victims. Though how such a germ could have been delivered so quickly and over such a vast area remains a mystery.

HARRY stands again. He traces the TV's POWER CORD to where it is plugged into an extension under a bureau. He fishes the extension out.

NEWSMAN (cont.)

It's being called "Judgement Day" by religious leaders who are asking for prayer, forgiveness and understanding tonight in the face of this....

HARRY pulls the plug. He curls the power cord on top of the TV and lifts the set off the rolling stand. It's heavy, unwieldy. HARRY adjusts his hands for a better grip and goes hurrying out of the bedroom.

INT THE DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY NIGHT

HARRY comes down the stairs as fast as he can carrying THE TV. When he reaches the bottom, he turns down the corridor toward the living room. BEN, working in the dining room, sees HARRY turn the corner, sees what he's carrying.

BEN

Hey! Where you going with that?

BEN drops what he's doing and gives chase.

INT THE LIVING ROOM NIGHT

HARRY comes chugging up the hallway into THE LIVING ROOM. BEN comes running after him. Just as HARRY comes abreast of THE OPEN CELLAR DOOR, BEN catches him from behind, grabbing his arm.

BEN

That stays up here, pal.

HARRY

Jesus Christ, will you GET OFF MY BACK!

HARRY pulls away. BEN jogs around him and grabs THE TELEVISION. HARRY holds on. There's a brief tug-of-war before HARRY loses his footing. He hits the door frame and stumbles, backward, into the cellar stairway. He loses his grip on the TV. BEN tries to catch it, but it's too heavy. It falls. HARRY grabs THE POWER CORD.

INT THE CELLAR STAIRWAY NIGHT

THE TV hits the floor. THE POWER CORD is torn out of its back. It spills over the edge of the landing, tumbles down the steps, and CRASHES onto the cement floor below. The cabinet flies open, bits of electronics fly. It's wrecked.

HARRY

Nice goin', asshole! That was our only way of finding out wha....

BEN grabs HARRY and drags him out into the living room.

INT THE LIVING ROOM NIGHT

BEN

You were taking it downstairs, you....

HARRY

I wasn't taking it....

BEN

You stupid....

BEN pulls him away from the wall and hauls back his right fist to throw a punch. HARRY breaks loose and swings at BEN with the POWER CORD, using it like a whip.

TOM comes running in from the study, carrying his SHOTGUN.

JUDY ROSE appears at the far end of the corridor.

HARRY backs away, stumbling over furniture. BEN comes after him, on the attack.

HARRY

I wasn't taking it downstairs.

HARRY swings the power cord again. This time BEN catches it. He uses it to pull HARRY closer. He raises his fist again.

HARRY (cont.)

I WASN'T TAKING IT DOWNSTAIRS!

BEN holds his punch.

HARRY (cont.)

We wouldn't get any reception down there.
I was bringing it in here. I was bringing
it into the living room here.

BEN yanks at the power cord angrily, pulling it out of HARRY'S hand.

HARRY (cont.)

Big man! Big macho, fuckin', black, son-
of-a-bitch, asshole! You smashed it! That
was our only way of finding out what the
fuck is going on out there, and you smashed
it to shit!

TOM

What the hell is she doin'? HEY!

TOM has spotted BARBARA through the kitchen archway.

INT THE KITCHEN NIGHT

BARBARA is unlocking THE BACK DOOR.

TOM runs to stop her, but he's too late. She throws the door open and steps out into the night. TOM goes after her.

BEN and HARRY appear in the living room archway. JUDY ROSE comes up behind them.

HELEN looks in from the dining room.

EXT THE FARM HOUSE NIGHT

TOM catches BARBARA before she steps off the stoop. He grabs her, holding her back.

EXT THE BACK YARD NIGHT

FOUR OR FIVE OF THE WALKING DEAD are advancing over the field. They're scattered, spread out. The closest is fifty feet away.

EXT THE FARM HOUSE NIGHT

TOM tries to pull BARBARA back into the house. She resists.

BARBARA

Is that your uncle?

She points at....

....THE CORPSE that's lying on the grass beyond the stoop. The one that's partially wrapped in THE LIVING ROOM RUG.

TOM looks. Swallows.

TOM

That's him. That's Rege.

BARBARA

You think he might have a set of keys in his pocket?

It makes sense. TOM stares down at the corpse. Then looks up at...

EXT THE BACK YARD NIGHT

....THE DEAD THINGS that are shambling out of the dark. They're moving slowly. And they're far enough away.

EXT THE FARM HOUSE NIGHT

TOM pushes BARBARA back toward the door and goes for THE CORPSE himself. He slings THE SHOTGUN'S STRAP over his shoulder, kneels, and reaches into one of the corpse's pant pockets. Digging, he comes up with some change, a few bills, a pocket knife, but nothing more. He struggles to roll the body over so he can get to the pockets on the other side.

BARBARA stares out across the field. Her mouth falls open at what she sees. Her brow furrows. That rage returns to her eyes. Suddenly, she walks off the stoop and starts out across the grass.

BEN rushes forward to stop her.

TOM rolls THE CORPSE. The rug kicks up and something flies out. It's the SEVERED HAND.

It flops onto TOM'S leg, leaving A BLOODY IMPRINT.

TOM recoils. Pitching backward, he catches the edge of the stoop and goes sprawling. THE SHOTGUN comes off his shoulder, slides across the wooden decking, and topples into the grass on the side of the house.

EXT THE BACK YARD NIGHT

BARBARA steps up to within ten feet of the nearest DEAD THING.

We see it clearly now....and recognize it. It's THE MOURNER from the cemetery. The one that killed Johnnie. BARBARA'S COMMEMORATIVE is still planted in its chest, the ribbon flapping.

EXT THE FARM HOUSE NIGHT

TOM recovers and goes to retrieve THE SHOTGUN.

Something lurches out of the shadows at the side of the house. It's A NAKED DEAD MAN with a morgue tag on its wrist.

TOM jumps back.

The DEAD THING steps forward. ITS FOOT comes down on THE SHOTGUN. THE STRAP CATCHES around its ankle.

Down along the side of the house, THREE OTHER FIGURES are attracted by the action. They start to move in TOM'S direction.

TOM makes a move to retrieve the weapon.

BEN

No, don't try it. I'll get something.

BEN runs back into the house.

EXT THE BACK YARD NIGHT

THE DEAD MOURNER lurches toward BARBARA. Standing her ground, she lets it come. The corners of her mouth turn down in a contemptuous sneer. Finally, she lifts THE RIFLE, aims it, point-blank, at the MONSTER'S head, and pulls the trigger. BLAM!

BLOOD AND BITS OF BONE fly from the back of the CREATURE'S skull. It drops to its knees, remains there for a moment, that ribbon flapping in the wind....Rest in Heavenly Peace. Then it pitches forward onto its face.

INT THE KITCHEN NIGHT

BEN finds his trusty TIRE IRON. He runs back outside.

HELEN

The keys! Get the keys!

HELEN makes a move toward the back door. HARRY holds her back.

HARRY

Stay back! Stay back!

JUDY ROSE pushes past them, runs out the door, and starts to dig in Rege's pockets.

EXT THE FARM HOUSE NIGHT

BEN goes after THE NAKED DEAD THING, his TIRE IRON raised, but BARBARA gets there first. Stepping forward, she aims HER RIFLE and fires again. BLAM!

THE NAKED BODY flies back into the grass, THE SHOTGUN still strapped to his ankle.

TOM rushes in to retrieve the weapon.

BARBARA stares at BEN. He looks around the yard.

EXT THE BACK YARD NIGHT

THE WALKING DEAD are advancing, but they're so slow, so feeble.

EXT THE FARM HOUSE NIGHT

BARBARA

We can get away.

BEN

No. No, it's too....too dangerous.

TOM untangles THE SHOTGUN and rejoins the others.

BARBARA

I'm telling you, we can make it.

BEN

Five miles. We got that kid. Cooper's kid.

BARBARA

Leave them here. We can bring help.

TOM

Let's do some damn thing. We're drawin' a crowd here.

THE DEAD THINGS at the side of the house are getting dangerously close.

BARBARA

(To Ben.) You know I'm right. We can walk right through them. We can....

JUDY

I got 'em! I got the keys!

JUDY has pulled A KEYRING from Rege's pocket. It contains THREE KEYS.

BEN

Alright! Get in the house! Quick!

BARBARA is still reluctant.

BEN (cont.)

We gotta try for the gas. It's our best chance.

BARBARA takes another look around. Finally, still skeptical, she steps up onto the stoop and moves into the kitchen. The others follow.

INT THE KITCHEN NIGHT

BEN slams the back door and throws the bolts.

BEN

Got any of those boards left?

TOM

A few.

BEN

Nail a few of 'em up across this door.
Leave the front door alone. We'll have
to go out that way to get to the truck.

INT THE STUDY NIGHT

IN THE STUDY, BARBARA pushes TWO MORE SHELLS into THE RIFLE, replacing the ones she just used.

TOM comes into the room, collects the last of THE BOARDS from the floor, and steps over to THE SIDE WINDOW. Here, as in the living room, the boards have been nailed up to prevent entry, but there are GAPS. TOM peers out through one of these.

EXT THE SIDE FIELD NIGHT

THE TRACTOR SHED is about two hundred yards away. There's another storm brewing. THUNDER cracks and DISTANT LIGHTNING paints the landscape blue. In that flash of blue, we can see THE GAS PUMP.

We can also see the WALKING DEAD. A dozen or so. Widely scattered from the near field to the far horizon.

INT THE STUDY NIGHT

TOM

Awful dark. Can't see worth shit.

INT THE LIVING ROOM NIGHT

BEN gets an idea. He rushes off down the corridor.

TOM comes back through the living room carrying THE BOARDS. He and JUDY ROSE rush to reinforce the back door.

HARRY stands in the living room, nervously biting his lip, wringing his hands. Ineffectual, as always.

HELEN ducks down the cellar steps.

INT THE CELLAR NIGHT

From the steps, HELEN looks over toward the makeshift bed.

Young SARAH lies still now. The trembling seems to have stopped.

INT THE LIVING ROOM NIGHT

BEN returns with one of the dining room TABLE LEGS and A KITCHEN TOWEL. He sits on the arm of the sofa, tears the towel halfway down the middle, and starts to wrap it around the end of the table leg.

BARBARA steps into the room from the study.

BEN

(To BARBARA.) I want you to stay inside. Keep the rifle.

BARBARA

You can't go out there without the guns.

BEN

We have Tom's gun. I want that rifle in here. Somethin' happens and we have to get back, I don't want any locked doors between me and this guy.

HARRY

For Christ's sake, you think I'm gonna....

BEN

Shut up, Cooper. I don't wanna hear another fuckin' word outa you. (To BARBARA.) The only way I'm goin' out there is with you and that gun keepin' this son-of-a-bitch from doin' somethin' to fuck me up.

He finishes wrapping the towel, ties the torn strips in a knot to keep it secure on the table leg, gets up and moves to THE FIREPLACE.

BEN (cont.)

Let's go, Tom. It's you and me.

BEN douses the wrapped towel with KEROSENE. He's making A TORCH.

JUDY and TOM continue the boarding of the back door.

JUDY

I'm comin' with you. I can drive.

TOM

I don't think so, Judy Rose. You better stay inside.

JUDY

Somebody's gotta drive. Somebody's gotta do the gas. Somebody's gotta ride shotgun. That means three of us goes out. I can drive. Tell him I know how to drive, Tommy.

TOM

Her daddy has trucks. She's been drivin' 'em since she was little.

The back door secure with three boards, TOM and JUDY move into the living room. HELEN appears in the cellar doorway. They're all gathered now.

BEN

Alright. (To TOM.) You sure that thing is loaded? (referring to the shotgun)

TOM

Yessir. Got a pocketful o' spares, too.

BEN walks over to the left front window, the first one that was boarded with the lumber. He looks out through one of the gaps.

EXT THE FRONT YARD (BEN'S P.O.V.) NIGHT

THE DEAD THINGS are converging, but most of them are still quite far away. There are only a few near THE TRUCK.

INT THE LIVING ROOM NIGHT

BEN

Can't tell how many are on the porch. That'll be the toughest. Gettin through those. We get out to the yard, we oughta be alright. Not too many out there.

A sudden FLASH OF LIGHTNING and a KERRRRRAAAAAAASSSHHH! THE GLASS SHATTERS on the window. SHARDS FLY. A DEAD HAND comes through one of the gaps between the boards.

BEN jumps back.

EVERYONE in the room tenses, ready for action.

HARRY

There's no way. It's crazy. You'll never make it.

ANOTHER HAND smashes through....and ANOTHER. A renewed chorus of HUNGRY MOANS rises from the dead.

TOM moves toward the window with his SHOTGUN.

BEN

No. It's alright. This'll draw them away from the door.

MORE HANDS invade. Dead EYES, drooling MOUTHS can be seen now.

BEN (cont.)

Let's go. You ready?

TOM nods.

JUDY

Truck keys.

BEN

In the ignition.

JUDY hands Rege's KEYRING to TOM, who pockets it.

BEN pokes THE TABLE LEG into THE FIREPLACE and THE WADDED TOWEL BURSTS INTO FLAME.

THE THREE COMMANDOS meet BARBARA at the front door. BARBARA, her RIFLE ready, turns the lock-bolts.

BEN (cont.)

(To BARBARA.) Keep an eye on us. Out the side. We get the gas and start drivin' back, you get that kid up here, fast.

BARBARA nods.

BEN (cont.)

(To Judy.) Go right for the truck, get in, and get it started. Don't stop. No matter what happens. Tom and I'll keep those things off o' you. Just go.

TOM

Let's do it.

BEN nods at BARBARA. She pulls the door open.

HARRY pushes HELEN back into the cellar stairway.

EXT THE FARM HOUSE NIGHT

BEN rushes out with JUDY and TOM right behind him.

A DEAD THING strikes from the side, grabbing BEN'S shirt. BEN jams his TORCH into the MONSTER'S face. It staggers back, its HAIR ON FIRE.

There are SEVEN OTHER CREATURES on the porch. They pull away from the windows and start after the humans.

ONE OF THEM notices BARBARA in the open doorway. It turns toward her. She slams the door on it quickly.

INT THE LIVING ROOM NIGHT

The door won't close. THE DEAD THING has stepped over the threshold and is blocking it. BARBARA pushes with all her might, but the DEAD THING'S HAND reaches through and grabs the edge of the door.

EXT THE FARM HOUSE NIGHT

BEN pushes JUDY and TOM on ahead of him.

THE MONSTERS in the yard are getting closer.

JUDY and TOM make it to THE TRUCK. TOM helps JUDY up into the cab and slams the door behind her.

INT THE LIVING ROOM NIGHT

BARBARA drops back from the front door, releasing it slightly.

The DEAD THING starts to push through.

BARBARA throws herself bodily at the door. The DEAD THING is driven back, but ITS HAND gets caught in the jamb. BONES SNAP loudly and FINGERS BEND backward, but they still prevent the door from closing.

INT THE CAB OF THE TRUCK NIGHT

JUDY turns the key in the ignition. The engine churns but doesn't catch.

EXT THE FARM HOUSE NIGHT

BEN waves his TORCH at the CREATURES around him, holding them off.

BEN

(Calling to TOM.) Up in the back. Jump
up in the back.

TOM starts to climb up into the flatbed. One of the WALKING DEAD grabs him from behind. TOM kicks at the thing, knocking it away.

There are TWO MORE DEAD THINGS AT THE FRONT DOOR of the house now, pushing to get inside.

INT THE LIVING ROOM NIGHT

BARBARA can't hold the door. It's opening wider....wider.

HELEN pushes past the frozen HARRY, crosses the room, and joins BARBARA at the door. Together they push.

EXT THE FARM HOUSE NIGHT

BEN sees what's happening. He jumps back up onto the porch. Grabbing one of the DEAD THINGS from behind, he pulls it away from the door and shoves it back into TWO OTHERS that are advancing from the front study window.

TOM tumbles, head over heels, into the flatbed of the truck. The DEAD THING from the yard reaches in after him. TOM recovers quickly; aims his shotgun and BULLAAAAMM!

THE THING'S head turns to jelly.

JUDY keeps trying the engine. It whines....sputters....almost catches, but dies.

On the porch, BEN pokes his TORCH into THE SECOND DEAD THING at the door, driving it back. He grabs THE THIRD CREATURE and tries to pull it away, but its hand is still caught in the jamb.

BEN
EASE UP! I GOT IT! EASE UP!

INT THE LIVING ROOM NIGHT

BARBARA pushes HELEN away. Then she throws the door open and raises her RIFLE.

Outside, BEN pulls hard on the DEAD THING'S shirt. THE MONSTER flies back against the porch rail, crashes through the old wood, and tumbles out onto the grass.

Another of the CREATURES approaches BEN from the side. BARBARA aims her RIFLE and fires. BLAM! THE MONSTER drops.

BEN takes off for the truck. BARBARA slams the door, locks it, and goes rushing over to the boarded window. The hands have all withdrawn and she can see out through the gaps.

EXT THE FRONT YARD NIGHT

BEN drives another DEAD THING away with his torch. He starts to climb up into the flatbed.

JUDY ROSE turns the key again.

JUDY
Start, you piece of shit. Start!

THE ENGINE ROARS to life. JUDY ROSE slams the gear shift into reverse.

The truck backs away from the porch.

TOM falls flat on his back.

BEN, not yet aboard, hangs on to the side, his legs dragging.

JUDY ROSE switches into drive.

In the brief moment between reverse and forward, TOM manages to recover. BEN pitches THE TORCH into the flatbed and uses both hands to pull himself up. TOM reaches for BEN'S arm but, just then, the truck lurches forward and he loses his balance again.

THE TRUCK turns a tight corner. The right front fender catches the edge of the porch, taking off another piece of railing, but the truck punches through into the clear.

JUDY ROSE hits the gas hard and....

....THE TRUCK goes roaring out across the field.

INT THE LIVING ROOM NIGHT

BARBARA

Jesus.

HARRY

What's happening?

Without answering, BARBARA runs into the study. She goes to the side window and looks out through the boards. HELEN goes after her.

HARRY (cont.)

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

EXT THE FIELD with THE TRUCK NIGHT

THE TRUCK bounces across the rough terrain.

BEN struggles to hang on, but he can't. TOM tries to grab him, but misses. BEN loses his grip. He drops....

....ONTO THE GRASS, somersaults, rolls several yards.

THE TRUCK rumbles on without him.

TOM

JUDY! JUDY, STOP!

INT THE CAB OF THE TRUCK NIGHT

JUDY can't hear over the roar of the engine. She keeps her foot to the metal.

EXT THE FIELD NIGHT

BEN stands up. He looks after the truck....then back toward the farm house. Which way should he go? There's no clear decision. He's almost exactly halfway between the house and the shed. LIGHTNING flashes. THUNDER growls ominously.

THE DEAD THINGS are advancing on all sides. The ones from the house are bunched thicker than....

....the ones in the fields.

EXT THE SHED NIGHT

THE TRUCK pulls up beside THE GAS PUMP and comes skidding to a stop.

JUDY ROSE shuts off the engine and jumps out of the cab.

TOM slings his SHOTGUN, grabs THE TORCH, and hops down out of the flatbed.

TOM

We lost Ben.

JUDY

What?

She looks across the field, sees....

....BEN out there in the distance....

....and only now realizes what happened.

JUDY (cont.)

Jesus Almighty Lord, why didn't you stop me?

TOM

I was hollerin' at ya. Go on. Go pick him up.

TOM pulls out Rags's KEYS and approaches THE GAS PUMP. He pitches THE TORCH safely away into the grass, and he goes to work with the keys, trying one, then another, in the lock on the nozzle.

JUDY looks across the field.

BEN has started to run toward the shed.

JUDY

He's comin'. What should I do, Tommy?
I don't wanna just leave you out here.

TOM

I'm alright, Judy Rose. Go pick him up.

SHE CLIMBS BACK into the cab, turns the key, but the engine refuses to start.

TOM tries the last of the keys. It doesn't fit.

TOM

Wrong keys! Shit! Do you believe it's
the wrong Goddam keys!

JUDY

What?

TOM

WRONG GODDAM KEYS!

He unslings his SHOTGUN and jams the barrel right up against the lock. He turns his face away, closes his eyes, and pulls the trigger. BULLAAAAAAMMM!

METAL FLIES.

Oh, God! THE HOSE HAS RUPTURED! GASOLINE is drizzling out in a fine spray, like that from a garden sprinkler.

PHOOOOOMMPH! THE GRASS CATCHES ON FIRE near the torch.

EXT THE FIELD NIGHT

BEN sees the flames. Stops in his tracks.

BEN

PULL AWAY! PULL THE TRUCK AWAY! GET
OUT OF THERE!

EXT THE SHED NIGHT

JUDY keeps turning the key, but THE ENGINE JUST WHINES.

TOM tries to stomp out THE FIRE with his feet.

EXT THE FIELD NIGHT

BEN starts running again, heading for the truck.

BEN

GET OUT OF THERE! GET THE HELL OUT
OF THERE!

EXT THE SHED NIGHT

THE GAS HOSE breaks clean from the nozzle. It enakes around in the air, like a cobra. A GUSHER OF GASOLINE comes spurting out.

TOM IS DRENCHED. HE CATCHES FIRE. HE SCREAMS....and a split second later....KA-B000M!

A HUGE EXPLOSION lights up the night.

EXT THE FIELD NIGHT

BEN stops dead, his eyes wide.

EXT THE SHED NIGHT

LONG SHOT (BEN'S P.O.V.): as Tom, Judy, the truck, the pump, and a good part of the shed are reduced to BITS AND PIECES which rocket skyward out of the fireball and drop, smoking, into the fields.

INT THE STUDY NIGHT

THE HUMANS in the house watch in stunned silence. After a moment, HARRY grabs HELEN'S arm and pulls her away from the window.

HARRY

Downstairs. Now.

HELEN

But....we....we can't. We....

HARRY

It's over, Helen. We are going downstairs. If we had stayed down there in the first place, this would never have happened.

BARBARA stays at her post, keeping watch at the window.

EXT THE FIELD (BARBARA'S P.O.V.) NIGHT

BEN stands in the distant field. He stares at the fire, steps toward it, steps away. Finally, he turns and starts to run back toward the farm house.

INT THE STUDY NIGHT

HARRY

I want you down in that cellar, Helen.
There is nothing we can do up here.
Not now.

BARBARA

Go ahead. Do what he says. We're going
to try to make it to town. At least I am.
If I can find help, I'll be back.

EXT THE FIELD NIGHT

BEN dodges around the WALKING DEAD.

Some of them try to go after him, others, drawn by the fire, move off toward the burning shed.

INT THE LIVING ROOM NIGHT

HARRY pushes HELEN into THE CELLAR STAIRWAY.

HELEN

Maybe we should wait until Ben....

HARRY

I'll wait. I'll wait as long as I can.
I want you down there where it's safe.

HELEN

Maybe we should....

HARRY

Downstairs, Helen! Now! This instant!

HELEN moves onto the steps, reluctantly, slowly..

EXT THE FIELD NIGHT

BEN runs around a small knot of the DEAD THINGS. He throws a body-block at another one that meets him head on. It flops into the grass like a broken marionette.

INT THE STUDY NIGHT

BARBARA punches THE RIFLE BARREL through the glass at one of the gaps and opens fire in support of Ben. BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

HARRY appears in the living room archway. He moves slowly, deliberately, toward BARBARA, who's back is turned.

She senses him, looks over her shoulder, sees him coming.

HARRY

I want that gun.

BARBARA

(Disgusted) God.

She looks back out the window. Resumes firing. BLAM! BLAM!

HARRY moves closer.

INT THE CELLAR NIGHT

IN THE CELLAR, HELEN puts a hand on HER DAUGHTER'S forehead. It feels cold. HELEN touches the girl's cheeks. Horror comes into her eyes.

HELEN

Sarah! SARAH!

She slaps the girl, gently at first, then with urgent force.

HELEN (cont.)

Oh, my God! SARAH!

SARAH opens her eyes. She looks up at her mother...hungrily.

EXT THE FIELD NIGHT

BEN fights bravely through the ranks of THE DEAD. One or two of the CREATURES ARE HIT BY BULLETS from Barbara's gun.

(NOTE: Ben's battle will be choreographed for maximum effect. All these parallel actions will be intercut as best suits the pace. The director will know what to do. Won't you, Tom?)

INT THE STUDY NIGHT

HARRY

I want that gun.

BARBARA

Give it up, Cooper. Crawl back down
in your hole and....

WHAM! DEAD HANDS appear outside. Four....five....six of them. They push on the boards. They reach through the gaps. They grab onto THE RIFLE BARREL.

BARBARA can barely hold on. DEAD FINGERS scratch at her arms, her face. She fires wildly. BIAM! BIAM! BIAM!

HARRY sees THE RIFLE slipping away. He rushes toward the window and grabs onto the stock. He and BARBARA pull together.

THE BOARDS are taking a pounding. Some of the nails are coming loose.

And....oh, God! THE LIGHTS! The lights have suddenly gone out in the house. The struggle goes on in darkness, punctuated by occasional flashes of lightning.

INT THE CELLAR NIGHT

HELEN has gone insane, I think. She's backing away, shaking her head in denial. Odd little clucking noises are rising out of her throat.

The thing that was once SARAH is sitting up on that makeshift bed. It swings its legs down onto the floor. It stands.

HELEN

No....oh, baby....oh, my baby....

It's coming after her now, moaning, drooling, reaching for her with its arms.

HELEN trips over THE SMASHED TELEVISION SET at the foot of the stairs. She feels herself falling. She twists around to catch

herself, but she can't. She drops, face down, onto the wooden steps. A SHADOW engulfs her.

THE SARAH THING hits her from behind, drops on top of her. For a moment, it looks as if they are cuddling, as if the SARAH THING is nuzzling into its mother's back.

HELEN looks over her shoulder, the briefest flicker of hope in her eyes.

THE EYES that look back, from inches away, are dead, merciless.

Hunkering down, like a vampire bat, the SARAH THING reaches with its teeth and tears a large strand of flesh from the back of HELEN'S neck. HELEN screams, but....

INT THE STUDY NIGHT

....no one hears her. THE MOANS of the dead, THE POUNDING, are drowning everything out. HARRY and BARBARA are winning now. The rifle is coming back into the room.

EXT THE FRONT YARD NIGHT

BEN fights on. He's getting close to the house, twenty yards out.

INT THE STUDY NIGHT

HARRY and BARBARA pull THE RIFLE clear of the window. They're not struggling with the dead anymore. They're struggling with each other. HARRY is trying to wrench the weapon away. BARBARA is bravely trying to hang on.

HARRY

Give it to me! GIVE IT TO ME!

EXT THE FARM HOUSE NIGHT

BEN comes tromping up onto THE PORCH. TWO OF THE DEAD THINGS are hot on his heels. He reaches THE FRONT DOOR. Finds it LOCKED.

BEN

Sonuvabitch! COOPER! COOPER!

INT THE STUDY NIGHT

BARBARA slams an elbow into HARRY'S gut. He doubles over but hangs on to THE RIFLE. He throws an arm around BARBARA'S neck and pulls back in a strangle-hold.

EXT THE FARM HOUSE NIGHT

THE DEAD THINGS are approaching the front porch. The closest one is wearing a uniform. It used to be A POLICEMAN.

BEN drops back and flings himself at the front door. It doesn't give. He tries again. It holds solid.

The POLICEMAN starts to climb the steps.

BEN

COOPER! COOPER!

INT THE STUDY NIGHT

With all her strength, BARBARA pushes HARRY away. He slams back into the side window. DEAD HANDS find him. They clutch at him, grab his hair, his shirt. He screams.

BARBARA pulls away. Abandoning the rifle, she runs into the living room.

INT THE LIVING ROOM NIGHT

BARBARA runs to THE FRONT DOOR, unlocks the bolts, and pulls the door open. BEN comes spilling inside. Right behind him comes the POLICEMAN. BEN tries to slam the door, but the POLICEMAN is leaning in with the whole top half of its body.

INT THE STUDY NIGHT

HARRY breaks away from the window, wide-eyed and wild with fear. He turns and fires at the boards. BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

The bullets do nothing but further weaken the wood. THE DEAD THINGS are starting to BREAK through.

INT THE LIVING ROOM NIGHT

BEN tries to push the POLICEMAN clear of the front door.

BARBARA

THE GUNS! GET THE GUNS!

The POLICEMAN is wearing A GUN BELT full of bullets. TWO HOLSTERS hang at its side, EACH OF THEM CARRYING A PISTOL.

BEN grabs the DEAD THING by the shirt and wrestles it down, down. It grabs onto BEN'S legs. It snaps with its teeth. BEN lifts one foot and sets it in the DEAD THING'S back. He pushes it's body down and holds it on the floor.

BARBARA throws her weight against the door, which has the DEAD THING trapped at the knees.

BEN tries to grab one of THE PISTOLS. The DEAD THING catches his hand. BEN pulls away.

INT THE STUDY NIGHT

THE STUDY WINDOW is about to be breached. The DEAD THINGS are pushing their way through.

HARRY moves toward the living room. He sees the battle at the front door but does nothing to help.

INT THE LIVING ROOM NIGHT

BEN glances around the room. He spots....

....a short length of leftover TWO-BY-FOUR.

He goes for it. When his foot comes off the POLICEMAN'S back, the POLICEMAN rolls over and starts to reach for BARBARA.

She keeps her weight on the door, pinning the MONSTER'S legs.

A HAND grabs her ankle. The MONSTER pulls itself closer, reaching with its teeth.

WHOMP! BEN is back with THE TWO-BY-FOUR, swinging it at the MONSTER'S head. WHOMP! WHOMP! The thing stops fighting.

HARRY has moved into THE LIVING ROOM. He's feeling his way along the wall, heading for the open cellar door.

BEN kneels and goes for one of the POLICEMAN'S PISTOLS.

HARRY is only a few feet from THE CELLAR STAIRWAY when A SHADOW appears from inside. HARRY looks and sees....

....THE THING that was his daughter. Its mouth and the front of its dress are stained with Helen's BLOOD.

HARRY

Sarah?

HARRY backs away. The SARAH THING comes after him.

BEN

Shoot it!

HARRY

No. No, I....

BEN

Shoot it, Cooper!

HARRY

But....it's....it's my....

BEN comes up with A PISTOL. He raises it. Aims.

HARRY (cont.)

NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

HARRY turns THE RIFLE on BEN and fires. BLAM!

BEN IS HIT in the left shoulder. He falls back.

HARRY fires again, this time missing.

BEN dives for cover behind A LARGE, STUFFED CHAIR. He reaches around and fires back with THE PISTOL.

HARRY runs into the study.

BEN shoots again.

HARRY IS HIT on the right side of his back. He screams, spins around, shoots.

STUFFING FLIES OUT OF THE CHAIR. BEN comes crawling out, heading for the study, firing as he goes.

BARBARA looks on incredulously.

BARBARA
STOP IT! STOP IT! ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR
MINDS? STOP IT!

She is shocked, appalled, but she can't take the time to intercede.

THE SARAH THING is coming after her.

Keeping her weight against the front door, BARBARA unbuckles the POLICEMAN'S GUNBELT.

INT THE STUDY NIGHT

KER-RRRAAAAAAASSSHHH! THE DEAD THINGS have finally broken through into the study. They're starting to climb over the window ledge.

HARRY runs through the other archway, in the direction of the dining room.

BEN comes through from the living room. LIGHTNING flashes. BEN catches a glimpse of....

....HARRY, running away.

BEN fires.

The bullet chops into the wall, missing. HARRY disappears.

INT THE LIVING ROOM NIGHT

BARBARA pulls on THE GUNBELT but can't get it out from under the POLICEMAN. She looks up.

The SARAH THING is only a few feet away, reaching, drooling through its mother's BLOOD.

WHAM! Another DEAD THING hits the door from outside.

BARBARA jumps to her feet. She pulls up on THE GUNBELT. The POLICEMAN rolls over and the belt comes away in BARBARA'S hands. She draws THE REMAINING PISTOL, aims it at the SARAH THING and fires. BLAM!

The SARAH THING falls away in a heap:

INT THE DINING ROOM NIGHT

HARRY runs into THE DINING ROOM.

Oh, no! They're breaking through in here, as well. THE DOOR that's mounted over the rear window is coming loose at the top.

With a groan, THE NAILS PULL OUT of the wall and THE DOOR TOPPLES forward into the room. DEAD THINGS start to claw there way inside.

HARRY looks behind him and sees....

....BEN in the study archway.

HARRY aims THE RIFLE and shoots.

BEN IS HIT AGAIN, in the side. This time it looks serious. He falls against the archway and fires back.

HARRY is trapped. Nowhere to go but....

....up! Up THE STAIRWAY!

HARRY fires again, to cover himself, as he goes charging up the steps.

INT THE LIVING ROOM NIGHT

BARBARA stands alone.

BARBARA

Madness. Madness.

WHUMP! THE FRONT DOOR flies open. A DEAD MAN enters.

BARBARA raises her PISTOL. Calmly, coolly, with no remorse evident, she fires a bullet through the DEAD MAN'S skull.

When THE THING falls back, clearing the doorway, OTHERS can be seen....five, six, seven others....climbing up onto the porch.

BARBARA backs away slowly.

INT THE DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY NIGHT

BEN staggers over to the bannister rail and looks up. There's another flash of LIGHTNING and he catches a glimpse of....

....HARRY, making for one of the upstairs bedrooms.

BEN fires, three quick rounds in a row. BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

INT THE UPSTAIRS BEDROOM NIGHT

HARRY runs into THE BEDROOM. Bullets splinter the door jamb behind him. He looks around, his heart pounding. He notices....

....that PULL-CORD that runs up to the flush door in the ceiling.

HARRY grabs the cord and tugs. Pain stabs at him from the wound in his back. The door returns to the ceiling on springs. He tries again. This time, A SET OF FOLDING STAIRS drops down.

INT THE DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY NIGHT

BEN slowly comes to his senses but, of course, it's too late. He looks into the dining room.

INT THE DINING ROOM NIGHT

THE DEAD THINGS are climbing through.

INT THE STUDY NIGHT

As they are in the study.

INT THE DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY NIGHT

BEN starts down the corridor, toward the living room.

INT THE LIVING ROOM NIGHT

THE WALKING DEAD are on the porch now. They will soon reach the open front door.

BARBARA backs away, turns, and disappears through the kitchen archway.

INT THE KITCHEN NIGHT

BARBARA reaches THE BACK DOOR. Holy shit! It's BOARDED UP!

BARBARA pulls on one of the boards. It gives, but only slightly. She looks into....

....THE DINING ROOM. TWO OF THE WALKING DEAD have tumbled in through the open window there. ANOTHER is perched on the ledge. They're stumbling, walking on each other, defeating their own progress, but they've spotted Barbara. It won't be long before they'll be on her.

BARBARA holsters her PISTOL. She grabs a long METAL FILE from out of the toolbox, sets it behind one of the boards, and pulls.

Leverage does the trick. One end of the board comes free. BARBARA grabs on and pries the board back, wrenching the other end out of the door jamb. She pitches it aside and starts to work on board number two.

THE DEAD THINGS are moving in from the dining room.

BARBARA pulls down the second board and goes to work on the third and last.

THE DEAD THINGS are in the kitchen.

BARBARA pulls one end of the third board away from the wall.

ONE OF THE DEAD THINGS is just about on top of her when, BLAM! THE BACK OF ITS HEAD EXPLODES.

BEN is firing from the living room archway. BLAM!

ANOTHER DEAD THING DROPS.

BARBARA pulls the last board down and tosses it aside. She unlocks the bolts and flings open the back door. She turns to look at....

....BEN, a slumped silhouette in the darkness.

BARBARA

Are you coming?

BEN

No.

BARBARA

We can still make it.

BEN

No. I....I can't. You go.

MORE OF THE DEAD THINGS are stumbling in from the dining room.

Still, BARBARA hesitates.

BEN (cont.)

I'm hurt bad. I can't do it. Go on.
Get out of here. Go.

BARBARA backs away through the open door.

BEN (cont.)

GO!

BARBARA

I'll bring help if I can.

She turns and disappears into the night.

BEN staggers around into the living room.

INT THE LIVING ROOM NIGHT

THE DEAD THINGS from the front door are coming after him.

OTHERS are lumbering in from the study.

Clinging to the wall that backs on the kitchen, BEN moves slowly into THE CELLAR STAIRWAY and closes the door.

INT THE CELLAR STAIRWAY NIGHT

Weak, bleeding badly, BEN sets THE TWO-BY-FOUR into its iron "U"s.

INT THE LIVING ROOM NIGHT

THE DEAD THINGS attack THE CELLAR DOOR. It holds. They are unable to break through.

EXT THE BACK YARD NIGHT

THE DEAD THINGS are converging. Twenty....maybe thirty....moving across the field.

BARBARA faces them. She slings the policeman's GUNBELT over her shoulder, pulls out two bullets to replace the ones she fired, and calmly reloads THE PISTOL. Then she starts to walk, deliberately, boldly, off into the night.

One of the DEAD THINGS stumbles in close.

BARBARA raises her arm and, without breaking stride, aims THE PISTOL squarely at the THING'S head. But she doesn't shoot. She just keeps walking.

The DEAD THING reaches for her, but misses. It comes stumbling after her but she's walking too fast. The gap between them widens.

BARBARA aims at another of the CREATURES. Again she holds her fire. And again she walks right past.

INT THE UPSTAIRS BEDROOM NIGHT

HARRY climbs up into AN ATTIC. He pulls the steps up after him, taking in the cord so that no one can follow easily.

INT THE ATTIC NIGHT

It's as dark as the inside of a coffin. HARRY curls into a ball, trembling. He hugs THE RIFLE close to his chest. He can still hear THE POUNDING, THE DISTANT VOICES OF THE DEAD.

EXT THE FIELD NEAR THE SHED NIGHT

There are FIRES BURNING where the gas pump exploded. THE TRUCK is lying on its side, a blackened cinder. THE DEAD are clustered all around, some standing, some sitting on the grass.

BARBARA stares at them as she passes. Slowly, she realizes what she is seeing. She stops walking. Her face goes flush with horror.

THEY'RE EATING. They have found BITS OF HUMAN FLESH and they are gathered, in little clusters, like a pride of lions, feeding.

BARBARA gags. Bile comes up into her throat. She coughs, spits, gasps for air. She starts to panic, to back away.

Something looms up behind her. BARBARA spins around.

It's A WOMAN, in a housedress and apron. Its hair is disheveled, its make up smeared. It's been shot several times in the neck, chest, and abdomen. It has a sad look on its face. It's clutching a baby doll.

BARBARA starts to cry.

The DEAD WOMAN comes closer....closer....

BARBARA raises THE PISTOL and fires a round through the THING'S brain.

Tears are flowing in rivers now, streaming down BARBARA'S cheeks. She looks back at....

....THE FARM HOUSE. It stands pale in the night. Once a shelter, now a lie.

BARBARA turns and walks away. THE CAMERA TRACKS her.

She walks past TWO MORE OF THE DEAD, aiming at their heads but not firing. She continues to let herself cry, to let it all come out, as she walks quickly, steadily away from the horror.

BARBARA

We....feed on each other. We feed on each other.

INT THE CELLAR NIGHT

BEN reaches the bottom of THE CELLAR STEPS. He staggers over the BROKEN TELEVISION and falls against a wall.

It's as dark as pitch. BEN feels his way around. He pushes on something. A PILE OF OLD JUNK, once precious, clatters to the floor. The noise in the dark is terrifying.

He comes to THE MAKESHIFT BED. He knocks over the saw horses and the door falls with another frightening sound.

He moves on, feeling his way. He comes to A WORKBENCH. He feels a toolbox, a table saw and, on the wall....A RECHARGEABLE FLASHLIGHT.

He takes the thing from its cradle, gropes for the button, and clicks it on.

Oh, Jesus! There, in the beam! Coming at him from the side! It's HELEN COOPER! Bleeding! Dead!

BEN aims his PISTOL and fires.

The bullet blows out the back of THE HELEN THING'S skull. She stumbles on into the workbench, pitches forward onto the tabletop, and rolls off the side, taking the toolbox with her to the floor.

There's movement on the wall. BEN shines the light at....

....A PEG-BOARD. It was bumped by the workbench when the HELEN THING fell. Tools are swaying....and other things....smaller things. KEYS. An entire row of them. They all have tags.

BEN looks closer.

One of the tags reads, "GAS PUMP".

Something else catches BEN'S eye. Hanging from a wrist-strap is A SMALL PORTABLE RADIO.

BEN takes it down and clicks it on. Static. He spins the channel selector. Finds a signal. Tunes it in and hears A VOICE. Not a polished voice, like that of the Newsman we heard earlier. This voice is typical of the volunteers who man the emergency broadcast system. In an emotionless monotone, stumbling over words, the voice reads an official advisory.

VOICE

Citizens of Butler, Westmoreland, and Allegheny Counties are asked to stay in their homes and wait for further bulletins from the Office of Emergency Preparedness. Do not attempt to reach friends or family. Do not attempt to reach any of the rescue stations identified in previous advisories. They may no longer be in operation.

BEN stumbles through the darkness. Pain hits him hard and he buckles over. He leans against a wall, slides down to the floor, and sits.

VOICE (cont.)

Repeating this advisory, number nine, from the Office of Emergency Preparedness, dated

eleven P.M., August twenty-third, nineteen eighty-nine. It has been confirmed that the bodies of the dead are being re-activated by forces as yet unknown.

BEN

We got that right, anyway.

BEN starts to laugh.

VOICE

These re-activated bodies are weak and un-coordinated, but are capable of inflicting damage on people and on property. They are to be considered extremely dangerous, especially when encountered in large numbers. These bodies can be disposed of in only one known manner. That is by incapacitating the brain.

BEN

We got that right, too.

He's really laughing now. Despite the terrible pain, he is rocking with belly laughs. He can't stop himself.

VOICE

These re-activated bodies will attack warm-blooded animals of all species, including human beings, without provocation, and will devour the flesh of any prey. It has been confirmed that acts of homicide and cannibalism reported through the afternoon and evening hours of August twenty-third, nineteen eighty-nine are attributable, at least in part, to these re-activated bodies.

The laughter stops gradually, and BEN slumps. He sets THE RADIO on the floor, curls his legs up into his chest, and starts to tremble.

VOICE (cont.)

Civil and military patrols are moving through western Pennsylvania in a systematic search for those who might be in need of assistance. MASH units, provided by the military, are traveling with many of these patrols. Do not attempt to reach a permanent medical facility. Those that are operational are seriously over-burdened and may not be able to offer prompt

attention. Citizens of Butler, Westmoreland,
and Allegheny Counties are asked to stay in
their homes and wait for further bulletins....

The message starts to repeat.

BEN

What have we done? What have we done to
ourselves?

EXT SOMEWHERE NEARBY NIGHT

BARBARA walks on. She has stopped crying now, and her face is grim
with determination. She walks and walks until....

....there....in among the trees....she sees A DARK FIGURE....then
ANOTHER....and still ANOTHER. Moving toward her.

Without breaking stride, BARBARA pulls more bullets from her
gunbelt.

One of the DARK FIGURES stops moving. It lifts its arms. It's
holding something. A RIFLE. BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

BARBARA dives down into the grass.

BARBARA

WAIT! NO! STOP! DON'T SHOOT!

DISTANT VOICES, calling to each other urgently. TWO OF THE FIGURES
come running out from the trees. They are both young men, unshaven,
armed to the teeth with crossed ammo belts, pistols, rifles, M-16's,
AK-47's. These are HONDO and BULLDOG, good-old-boys, part of a
vigilante force.

BARBARA stands slowly, cautiously.

HONDO

Jesus Goddam holy lovin' shit! What
in the name o' Jupiter's balls are
you doin' out here alone, little lady?

BARBARA stares at him.

We DISSOLVE from her weary face to....

EXT SOMEWHERE IN PENNSYLVANIA MORNING

....THE EARLY DAWN. Birds sing. Trees sparkle in the sunlight.

A LONG LINE OF HUMANS, stretching from horizon to horizon, snakes across the hilly countryside. There are some NATIONAL GUARDSMEN, and a few POLICE, but most are CITIZEN VIGILANTES, hooting, hollering, cat-calling, singing "SOUND OFF, ONE, TWO, SOUND OFF, THREE, FOUR..."

EMERGENCY VEHICLES bounce along behind the line. Jeeps, trucks, ambulances. Two HELICOPTERS circle overhead.

MONTAGE: A SMALL CLUSTER OF THE WALKING DEAD is flushed out of the trees. Heavily armed VIGILANTES open fire with everything they've got. THE DEAD THINGS are cut to ribbons.

A DEAD THING is lassoed by A BULLROPE. The rope is pulled tight by A VIGILANTE who drags the DEAD THING through the grass.

SIX DEAD THINGS, ropes around their necks, are HUNG FROM TREES.

GUNMEN use the HANGING CORPSES AS TARGETS, making a sport of it, betting on who might be able to blow off a finger, a hand, an ear.

EXT A RAVINE NEAR THE LINE MORNING

BARBARA looks out across the fields. In the background, GUNMEN are tormenting A SMALL COLLECTION OF THE WALKING DEAD, prodding them with poles, beating them with ropes and chains, playing "chicken", stepping in close, jumping back when a DEAD THING lunges, then shooting it, point-blank, in the head. The air is filled with HOWLS and WHISTLES and LAUGHS.

BARBARA

They're us. We are them....and they are us.

HONDO (o.s.)

What say?

BARBARA looks up.

BARBARA

Hmmm? Oh. Nothing.

HONDO and BULLDOG have brought coffees. BARBARA takes one and sips.

BARBARA (cont.)

Havin' fun?

HONDO

Gimme a break.

EXT THE FARM HOUSE MORNING

THE FARM HOUSE stands in the sunshine, looking quite a bit sturdier than it did in the night. BODIES OF THE DEAD are lying where they fell in battle.

MEN from the patrol are using MEAT HOOKS to haul the corpses to a spot in the field where LOGS HAVE BEEN PILED for a bonfire.

INT THE LIVING ROOM MORNING

Inside the house, MEN sink HOOKS into the body of SARAH COOPER and into the slain POLICEMAN. BULLDOG checks the POLICEMAN'S belt.

BULLDOG

Shit. Somebody got his gun.

BARBARA looks around the familiar rooms.

HONDO and a few OTHER MEN are chopping down THE CELLAR DOOR with FIRE AXES. The top of the door falls away. One of the MEN leans inside, sees the two-by-four, reaches over and lifts it out of the iron "U"s.

WHAM! Something steps suddenly out of the shadows. It's one of the WALKING DEAD now. Last night it was known as BEN.

HONDO levels his M-16. Eight or ten rounds spit, rapid-fire.
BUDDABUDDABUDDABUTT!

A dotted line writes across the BEN THING'S forehead. The wall behind it turns dark red. The BEN THING falls.

HONDO

Drag that outa here. Go on downstairs.
Watch yer asses. Might be more of 'em.

MEN sink HOOKS into BEN'S corpse and drag it out through the front door. BARBARA turns, unable to watch, and walks down the corridor toward the foot of the central stairway.

BULLDOG and a few of the OTHERS go tromping down to the cellar.
HONDO and the remaining MEN move around into the kitchen.

INT THE DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY MORNING

BARBARA looks up toward....

....THE SECOND FLOOR LANDING. Nothing. No movement.

She starts to climb the stairs. She sees....

....COUSIN SATCHEL'S BODY, still covered by the tablecloth.

Without warning, A PALE FIGURE lunges out of a bedroom upstairs..

BARBARA looks up.

It's COOPER. He stumbles forward. Catches himself on the bannister.

HARRY

You....you came....you came back.

He's in bad shape. He's lost a lot of blood. But he's still alive.

BARBARA raises her PISTOL and fires a round into his head.

COOPER'S BODY flies back out of sight.

HONDO comes running in from the dining room.

BARBARA looks down at him and calmly says....

BARBARA

Up here. Two more for the fire.

EXT THE FIELD OUTSIDE MORNING

SHOCK CUT: as THE BONFIRE IS SET ABLAZE. CORPSES piled on the logs turn black in the flames.

BARBARA watches. Her face is without passion. She slowly reloads her PISTOL as THE CAMERA MOVES IN ON HER DEAD EYES.