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PROD. #83495
(Formerly: #85780)
November 19, 1982 (F.R.)
Rev. 11/23/82 (F.R.)
Rev. 11/24/82 (F.R.)
Rev. 11/26/82 (F.R.)
Rev. 11/29/82 (F.R.)
Rev. 12/01/82 (F.R.)
Rev. 12/03/82 (F.R.)
Rev. 12/07/82 (F.R.)
Rev. 12/21/82 (F.R.)
2nd Rev. 12/21/82 (F.R.)
Added Scs. Rev. 1/ 4/83 (F.R.)

NIGHTMARES

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NIGHTMARES

TITLE SEQUENCE

FLASH DIRECTLY INTO

AN AERIAL SHOT IN A BRILLIANT PLACE

-- the light so hot it almost burns away the image. With it there is a screaming, ominous sounding single-pitch chord of a hundred violins.

The image darkens slightly and we can see:

We're in billowing cumulous clouds above a gently rolling landscape, moving lazily in the breeze. We're above farmlands; rich, green, fertile -- extending all the way to the horizon.

But now something odd is slowly beginning to happen. The clouds are beginning to roll and tumble -- quickly gathering speed -- unnatural speed (time lapse effect).

Now we dip earthward, racing from the clouds into a head-long powerdive, speed gathering until it's obvious that we're going way too fast to avoid hitting the ground.

But we do. At the last instant we change our downward motion into horizontal speed and we're moving across the surface of the Earth like a Cruise Missile.

Under the pitch of violins a percussive rhythm has begun; crude, primitive, hypnotic. It's carrying us somewhere. Where?

We approach a city, it looms on the horizon and comes toward us. The city is under us then, we begin racing down boulevards, tall buildings on either side.

Suddenly we pull up -- up into blue sky; the clouds are gone.

We angle down. Funny. We're above a desert now, hot and barren. We race to its surface and level out. We move along the desert floor toward the mountains in the distance.

We reach the mountains and rise -- following them into the heavens. Peaks are on both sides of us -- snow-covered, a gorgeous vista. We leave them now, moving into blue sky.

We nose down again: The South Bronx is below us; the slums. The dirty streets.

Nose up again: Blue sky.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

Down: A suburb -- who knows where. Nose up.

Down: The Everglades in Florida; grim, primeval. Nose up.

Down: Another American landscape. Nose up:

And this time we're not going down again -- we're going all the way up to the Cosmos. We push up through the blueness of the sky until there is only darkness. Not even stars.

The peel of violins, the rhythm and motion -- all of it suddenly stops.

The title graphic comes up with the sound of an unearthly rush of wind.

N I G H T M A R E S

FADE OUT

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NIGHTMARES

THE BISHOP OF BATTLE

Written

by

Christopher Crowe

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NIGHTMARES

THE BISHOP OF BATTLE

CAST

J.J. COONEY
ZOCK
EMILIANO
PEDRO
MAZENZA
JEFFREY

ROOT
Z-MAN
PHYLLIS
WILLIE
MRS. ADELE COONEY
MR. COONEY

SETS

INTERIORS:

DOWNTOWN L.A.
 GAME-O-RAMA CENTER
 SPACE INVADER GAME
 SPACE INVADER SCREEN
 SPACE INVADER SCOREBOARD
RTD BUS
FOX HILLS SHOPPING CENTER
 THE WHOLE GAME-O-RAMA CENTER
 THE LIMBO GAME ROOM
 THE GAME-O-RAMA CENTER
 GAME ROOM
 BISHOP'S VIDEO SCREEN
 VIDEO MONSTERS
SUBURBAN HOME
 J.J.'S BEDROOM
 MR. AND MRS. COONEY'S
 BEDROOM
ZOCK'S PARENTS' HOME

EXTERIORS:

DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES
 BUS STOP
 CITY STREET
 GAME-O-RAMA CENTER
FOX HILLS SHOPPING CENTER
 VENTURA BOULEVARD
 PARKING LOT
SUBURBAN HOME

NOTE: PHIL IS NOW CHANGED TO PHYLLIS THROUGHOUT SCRIPT.

NIGHTMARESTHE BISHOP OF BATTLE

FADE IN

1 OUR "CRUISE MISSILE" VIEW (EFFECT) 1

Landscapes unroll beneath us at unnatural speed. It is day. The credits begin rolling as we arrive over Los Angeles and speed along its surface.

A voice comes up -- a voice that speaks to us from the void. The voice belongs to J.J. Cooney, age fourteen years.

J.J.

(haltingly)

I don't know what happened. What the hell happened? Nothin' that I caused -- I can say that with a clear conscience...

(beat)

Hell, all I did was play the game. I'm a competitor! Is there anything wrong with that? They taught me to be a competitor in school! Ha! Somethin' oughta be changed.

(long pause)

Hello? Hello? Am I all alone in here? Where are all the rest a you competitors?

(pause)

Damn.

(softly)

Where are you guys?

We've arrived over:

2 OMITTED 2

2-A DOWNTOWN L.A. - STOCK 2-A

Suddenly we dip earthward and stop:

2-B EXTREME LOW ANGLE - SLOW MOTION VIEW - YOUNG MENS' LEGS - CONTINUOUS - DAY (CREDITS SEQUENCE) - TRAVELING 2-B

The legs walk through urban streets. One set of legs (J.J.'s) bounce cockily, screw around, pogo (slam dance) into the owner of the other set of legs (Zock's) -- all

CONTINUED

2-B

CONTINUED

2-B

activity geared to the rapid beat of West Coast punk music.

As the boys walk we see an out-of-focus city tableau behind them. Cars in motion, street lights, store lights, other traveling pedestrians, none of them moving quite as energetically or as colorful as Zock and J.J.

The shot is continuous; the boys can round corners, move down curbs, arrive on new sidewalks -- but we have one continuous shot that lasts a full three minutes.

3

OMITTED

3

3-A

THE CITY - DAY (ALREADY SHOT)

3-A

Full figures of J.J. and Zock walk.

(X)

ZOCK

I dunno, J.J.

J.J.

(can't hear
under the
headphones)

What?

ZOCK

I say, I don't know.

J.J.

What?

4

INT. GAME-O-RAMA CENTER - DAY

4

It's filled with machines and kids, urban kids, a lot of tough guys. Zock and J.J. enter, Zock reaching out to turn down J.J.'s walkman. J.J. pulls off his headphones.

(X)
(X)

ZOCK

I'm not sure of this, J.J. We're a long way from the Valley.

J.J.

That's the idea.

(starts
away)

Come on -- the place is right around the corner.

CONTINUED

4

CONTINUED

4

ZOCK

(sighs)

Man. One of these times our luck is gonna run out.

J.J.

You got a better way for me to get money to beat the Bishop?

Zock doesn't. He sighs before both boys start up the street, Zock still looking damned apprehensive.

5

ON A SPACE INVADER GAME

5

Emiliano, a tall fifteen-year-old Chicano kid plays, shooting down the various monsters from outer space with great aplomb. Zock and J.J. stand watching, J.J.'s walkman headphones draped around his neck. The game finishes and J.J. checks the score.

CONTINUED

5

CONTINUED

5

J.J.

Hey. Pretty good game. Wanna maybe play?

ZOCK

Come on, J.J. -- you'll end up losin' that ten-spot you got for cuttin' Brill's lawn.

(X)

Emiliano kind of sparks at this; he looks over at the two rubes from suburbia.

J.J.

(to Zock)

Shuddup, Zock -- I don't always lose.

(to Emiliano)

How 'bout it?

EMILIANO

(after

appraising him)

Wouldn't wanna give ya lessons unless you're willin' to play buck a game, five games minimum....

ZOCK

Uh-uh, J.J. -- let's git.

J.J.

That's pretty steep.

He pauses, considering. Emiliano shrugs, inserts another quarter into the machine. Pause.

J.J.

Okay. Five games, buck a game.

(smiles, shrugs)

Who knows? I might even win.

Emiliano nods. J.J. slaps his first dollar onto the machine and Emiliano does likewise, almost chuckling: Valley kids are such suckers.

DISSOLVE TO

6

A SPACE INVADER'S SCREEN

6

Monsters are getting shot, then a series of misses, and finally:

7

J.J. COONEY

7

He's at the machine's controls. He looks awkward, but he's concentrating hard.

We pull back to show the scene. Two or three other kids have gathered around to watch as the gambling continues. One of the kids, a little guy named Pedro, keeps looking at J.J., perplexed. It's as if he knows him but can't quite place him.

Finally J.J. slaps at the machine. His turn and the game is over.

J.J.

That was close. I'll win the next one.

As Emiliano smugly collects his two dollars from the machine:

ZOCK

No! That's six bucks already. And I gotta get home to supper.

J.J.

Just one more game. One more.

ZOCK

I gotta go!

J.J.

Won't take ten minutes.

Zock doesn't say anything, but he appears frustrated. J.J. now turns to Emiliano.

J.J.

Tell ya what. Since we gotta go after this game, how 'bout raisin' the stakes a little bit?

EMILIANO

How much?

J.J. pauses, takes out and checks his wallet. He looks up.

J.J.

Like how 'bout maybe twenty-five bucks.

Zock's hands fly to his face in huge horror.

CONTINUED

7

CONTINUED

7

ZOCK

Are you out of your mind? If you
wanna give away money, why don't ya
just give it to me?

Emiliano just looks at J.J., waiting to see if he's
serious. When it's obvious he is:

EMILIANO

Lemme see if I can cover it.

Emiliano drifts over to another Chicano kid at a nearby game,
a big sixteen year old named Mazenza. Mazenza is the
toughest dude in the place...he'd be the toughest dude in a
lot of places. Emiliano whispers something in his ear (MOS).
Mazenza listens, glances to J.J. and Zock, then both he and
Emiliano start toward the suburbanites at Space Invader.

8

AT THE SPACE INVADER GAME

8

as Emiliano and Mazenza arrive. As they do, other kids begin
drifting up to the game, it's obvious something is up. They
know what it is when Mazenza puts twenty-five dollars on the
machine.

EMILIANO

Me first?

J.J.

(big smile)

Totally.

DISSOLVE TO

9

THE LARGE CROWD OF SPECTATORS

9

watching the game. We pan, finally stopping at Pedro -- the
little guy who's been constantly studying J.J. He's still
looking at him, and still looking perplexed.

10

ON THE SPACE INVADER SCOREBOARD

10

as one player's turn finishes. We see that one competitor
has seventeen thousand points, the other has nine hundred.

11

THE WHOLE SCENE

11

Emiliano, smiling, offers J.J. his turn at the machine.
Zock and J.J. look pretty subdued.

CONTINUED

11 CONTINUED

11

ZOCK

Last turn, J.J. You'll never make it.

J.J.

Thanks for the encouraging words in time of need.

J.J. takes the machine's controls.

12 ON EMILIANO AND MAZENZA

12

They're leaning back smiling, planning how they're gonna spend their money. Then just as J.J. begins his turn, a kid drifts up to them, the little guy, Pedro. Whispered:

PEDRO

I remember now. Tall dude's named J.J. Cooney. He's the best, man -- best who ever was. You guys are gettin' hustled!

Emiliano and Mazenza lose their smiles, perk up a little bit to watch J.J.'s game.

13 THE SPACE INVADER GAME

13

as J.J. puts his walkman headphones over his ears like a gunslinger adjusting his holster. He then springs into action, nothing awkward anymore, he's suddenly in total concentration, firing and killing space invaders, dodging around at the controls to the sound of blaring punk music, he looks like an ace fighter pilot, a complete virtuoso, and ---

14 THE SPACE INVADER SCOREBOARD

14

lighting up as J.J. scores point after point after point, he's up to three thousand already, and then ---

15 J.J.'S HANDS

15

wrists twisting from one control to the next in an absolute blur of movement, and ---

16 J.J.'S FACE

16

Nothing geeky or whimpy anymore, he looks like the Sundance Kid, and then ---

- 17 THE SPACE INVADER SCOREBOARD AGAIN 17
J.J. has it up to twelve thousand and it's climbing -- and now ---
- 18 ZOCK 18
He's the one who's smirking now -- just planning how he's going to spend his cut, and then back to:
- 19 EMILIANO AND THE MONSTER MAZENZA 19
looking on in disbelief, and then finally:
- 20 THE SPACE INVADER SCOREBOARD 20
as J.J. eclipses Emiliano's seventeen thousand and wins the game.
- 21 THE WHOLE SCENE 21
as the gang of kids begins to mumble and murmur, disbelief in their eyes, voices. J.J. removes his headphones.

J.J.
Boy, I don't know what came over me...I really got the hang of it there for a second.

J.J. reaches out to the fifty dollars on the machine. But Mazenza's hand reaches out to pin the money down. He looks directly into Cooney's eyes. Pause.

MAZENZA
Hey, dude. Your name Cooney?

Cooney and Zock look at each other, faces going ashen. Pause. Then suddenly J.J. grabs the fifty dollars and bolts toward the exit, hurling kids out of his way as he moves. Zock follows in disbelief, terror.
- 22 EMILIANO AND MAZENZA AND ABOUT FOUR HUGE FRIENDS 22
start racing after J.J. and Zock, Mazenza leading the charge, literally hurdling a "Galaxina" game just before he moves out the door.

- 23 EXT. CITY STREET - DAY 23
J.J. and a bug-eyed Zock move through the throngs on the fly.
- 24 EXT. THE GAME-O-RAMA CENTER - DAY 24
as Mazenza and Emiliano and the rest of their gang tear after the two Valleyites, and now:
- 25 A NEW STREET 25
as J.J. and Zock appear and find an RTD bus waiting at the stop. J.J. races on board, Zock following. The bus door slams shut behind them and the vehicle starts away from the curb in a cloud of diesel smoke.
- 26 A NEW ANGLE 26
as Emiliano, Mazenza and the boys round the corner and stop, all of them looking to the bus as it pulls away. Mazenza kicks over a trash container in his frustration.
- 27 INT. THE RTD BUS - DAY 27
J.J. is looking out the back window and beginning to laugh like a hyena. Zock just looks at him, thoroughly pissed:
- ZOCK
We coulda gotten killed!
- J.J. just continues to laugh. He lifts up the fifty dollars, waves it in the air.
- ZOCK
We don't even know where this bus is goin'!
- J.J.
We'll get home eventually.
- He continues laughing, almost crazily. Zock sits down in a seat, angry, nothing more to say.
- DISSOLVE TO
- 28 EXT. THE VALLEY - LATE DAY 28
Open on the Fox Hills shopping mall sign. (X)
An RTD bus pulls up and Zock and J.J. alight.

29

CLOSER

29

as J.J. starts headin' toward the Shopping Center. Zock sees this, stands his ground, says:

ZOCK

Where ya goin'?

J.J.

Gonna go sneak in a couple games with the Bishop. I'm feelin' hot. Maybe today's my day to make the Thirteenth Level.

ZOCK

Don't ya get it, J.J.? The Thirteenth Level doesn't even exist. Just a scam to get suckers to spend their money.

J.J.

It exists. I heard a kid out in Jersey got to it twice.

ZOCK

Baloney. Gimme my cut, J.J. My ma'll kill me if I don't get home.

J.J.

Come on -- two or three games.

ZOCK

Which turns into ten games which turns into all night. Gimme my money, J.J. I mean it.

J.J.

(cool)

You want your cut?

Zock nods, evenly.

J.J.

You won't come in for just a couple of games?

Zock shakes his head, again evenly. J.J. stares at him for a long moment, then finally reaches into his pocket. He produces a ten dollar bill, thrusts it harshly at Zock -- who takes it.

CONTINUED

29

CONTINUED

29

ZOCK

(soft)

Thanks. Gotta go....

He turns.

J.J.

Go. Go all the way to hell for all
I care.

J.J. spins and starts quickly toward the entrance to the
mall. Zock watches him, almost sadly.

ZOCK

You're nuts, J.J.! That machine's
made ya into some kind of fiend!

J.J. never even looks back.

CUT TO

30

INT. THE FOX HILLS SHOPPING CENTER - DAY

30

Same kind of thing as seen before, all the video games, all
the kids. Only this time the kids are suburban.

31

MOVING WITH J.J.

31

as he walks into the place and starts making his way toward
a particular machine in the center of the room. As he
moves, various kids at various video games greet him. He is
the undisputed king of this place -- everyone wants to be
his friend.

JEFFREY

Hey, J.J. How ya doin', champ.

J.J.

Great.

ROOT

J.J.! Hey. You gonna play the
Bishop?

J.J.

Not even!

ROOT

Mind if we watch?

CONTINUED

31

CONTINUED

31

J.J.

I want witnesses. I'm goin' to
Level Thirteen.

ROOT

Awesome!

Drew and a couple of other kids join J.J. as he moves toward
the game room at room center.

PHYLLIS

Howdy, J.J. You gonna try the
Bishop again?

ROOT

He's goin' all the way today!

Other kids join up, there's quite a pack now moving with the
master.

32

A NEW ANGLE

32

as this gang approaches the machine that looks in the
extreme f.g. of the shot. The game is called "The Bishop of
Battle". It's a large, lavish, somehow ominous-looking
machine. A young kid, Z-man, is playing it. He sees the
gang approaching, continues to play. As J.J. arrives, he
catches Root's eye and indicates Z-man: Remove him! Root
nods.

ROOT

You're gone, kid. J.J.'s playing
this machine.

Z-MAN

But I ain't done.

Root grabs little Z-man by the scruff of the neck, liter- (X)
ally picks him up and removes him from the game. Z-man
struggles, flails, but it's to no avail, he's only seven or
eight years old and tiny for his age at that.

ROOT

Sorry, Z-man.

We notice a young woman J.J.'s age watching J.J. and these
proceedings with interest. Her name is Moon and she doesn't (X)
seem to approve of Z-man's unfair treatment. She almost

CONTINUED

32

CONTINUED

32

says something but doesn't as she momentarily catches J.J.'s intense eyes. J.J. quickly breaks the stare. The game free, J.J. steps up to Bishop's controls. He cancels the Z-man's game. When he does:

33

THE BISHOP

33

as the machine begins to speak in its halting, mechanical voice.

THE BISHOP'S VOICE

Greetings. Earthling. I. Am. The.
Bishop. Of. Battle. Master. Of.
All. I. Survey. I. Have.
Thirteen. Progressively. Harder.
Levels. Try. Me. If. You.
Dare. Insert. Coin.

JEFFREY

Go for it, J.J.!

ROOT

Blow his doors off, man!

J.J. smiles, inserts his quarter.

THE BISHOP'S VOICE

You. Are. On. Level. One.
Let's. Begin.

J.J. pauses then puts on his Walkman headset. He pushes the machines "start" button. The video screen comes to life and J.J. begins to play.

DISSOLVE TO

34

EXT. THE MALL - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING

34

It is dark. Hours have passed.

35

A VIDEO SCREEN

35

and deafening sound. We see a tiny video astronaut inside a maze on the screen round a corner and confront a video monster. The astronaut fires his laser. A loud blasting sound and then the monster begins to flicker, screaming in his death throes. Kids quietly cheer, mutter their "not evens," "awesomes," "totallies."

36

J.J. COONEY'S FACE

36

The picture of concentration at the controls of "The Bishop of Battle". He sweats prodigiously, fires his lasers, kills another monster to the sound of the music in his headphones. (X) The kids around him react, cheer. The pressure on J.J. is enormous.

37 THE WHOLE SCENE

37

as Cooney continues to play the game, surrounded by what has become a huge mob. The other kids watch him -- watching him the way the other pool players watched Minnesota Fats in The Hustler. Cooney kills yet another video monster. This time the kids really let out a cheer and then the machine begins to speak:

THE BISHOP'S VOICE

You. Have. Just. Reached. Level.
Twelve. Welcome. Let's. Begin.

Talk from the spectators begins -- wild lines that establish that only once or twice before has someone reached Level Twelve on "The Bishop of Battle". There is terrific excitement.

38 ON COONEY

38

He relaxes for a moment, waiting to begin his new level. He looks haggard, but still game. He finally turns to the screen again, set to go.

39 ON ROOT

39

He steps up, raises his arms, hushes the crowd.

ROOT

Please, everyone. Let the master
concentrate.

39-A ON MOON

39-A
(X)

-- watching quietly.

40 ON COONEY

40

He pauses...then pushes the button that will begin Level Twelve.

41 CLOSE - THE VIDEO SCREEN

41

as Level Twelve begins. The astronaut starts to shoot, and kill, but the monsters move at incredible speed on this level, and ---

42 ON COONEY'S HAND

42

deftly moving the direction level then firing the laser button with lightning speed, and ---

43 THE VIDEO SCREEN

43

as the last of the monsters suddenly kill the astronaut, the mighty Cooney has struck out, and ---

44 ON COONEY

44

stunned, removing his headset, unable to move as he hears:

THE BISHOP'S VOICE

You. Are. Good. Earthling. But.
Not. Good. Enough. I. Am. The.
Bishop. Of. Battle. Master. Of.
All. I. Survey. I. Have. Thirteen.
Progressively. Harder. Levels. Try.
Me. If. You. Dare. Insert. Coin.

45 THE WHOLE GAME-O-RAMA CENTER

45

as the gang of kids sigh and pat Cooney on the back and offer their condolences as a number of them begin heading back to their own machines.

PHYLLIS

Good try, Cooney!
Awsome try.

JEFFREY

Never saw anybody get
that far, J.J.

ROOT

I don't think the Thirteenth Level
even exists....

COONEY

(softly;
strangely)
Yeah, it does...Guy out in Jersey
did it twice....

Only now do Cooney's eyes rise from the machine. He sees the crowd leaving him. Only Moon stays.

(X)

COONEY

Hey -- I got more quarters! Stick
around!

ROOT

Gettin' late, J.J. ---

CONTINUED

45

CONTINUED

45

Cooney pauses, his anger growing as he watches everyone moving away from him.

COONEY

(frantic)

Whatsa matter with you guys! I'll make it! I'll make it this time!

PHYLLIS

Have to go, J.J.

COONEY

Then go on! Who needs you talentless geeks anyway....

Root looks at him as if he's crazy. J.J. just inserts another quarter into the machine. Root shakes his head, exits.

Moon watches for a moment, then steps forward.

(X)

MOON

Come on, J.J. -- let's go get a pizza like we used to.

(X)

J.J.

Forget it, Moon. I don't have time for that crap anymore.

(X)

He turns away, drops a new quarter into the machine.

46

ON THE BISHOP OF BATTLE

46

coming to life in response to the new quarter J.J. has inserted.

THE BISHOP'S VOICE

Greetings. Earthling. I. Am.
The. Bishop. Of. Battle. Master.
Of. All. I. Survey. I. Have.
Thirteen. Progressively. Harder.
Levels. Welcome. To. Level. One.
Let's. Begin.

46-A

ON MOON

46-A

She watches for a sad moment, then turns and leaves J.J. there.

(X)

47 ON J.J.

47

crazed, angry, starting to play the machine. He begins dispatching monsters -- it's easy on Level One.

48 AN OPEN SHOT

48

The Game-O-Rama Center is emptying, the last kid's moving out the door ushered by Willie, the twenty-year-old manager. He's about to close the door when he hears something. He looks to J.J. in the distance, sighs, starts heading that way.

49 AT THE BISHOP OF BATTLE

49

J.J. continues his intense play as Willie strides up.

WILLIE

Come on, J.J. I gotta close.

J.J.

(glances up)

Lemme finish this game.

WILLIE

Can't J.J. You're only on the First Level. I'll give ya a refund.

J.J. just ignores him, continues playing. Willie watches for a moment, decides J.J. just isn't going to quit on his own. He bends down to the Bishop's power cord, pulls it out of the wall.

50 ON THE VIDEO SCREEN

50

as it suddenly grows dark.

51 THE SCENE

51

as J.J. looks up, violated. He pulls off his headphones.

J.J.

Hey!

WILLIE

(shrugs)

Gotta close, J.J.

CONTINUED

51

CONTINUED

51

J.J.

I'm feelin' hot! Plug it back in,
man -- I mean it!

WILLIE

(angering)

We've been through this before
Cooney. Tomorrow's another day.

J.J. sizes up Willie, even takes a step toward him -- as if to physically confront him. But Willie towers over him -- and he stands his ground. Pause. Then suddenly J.J. breaks, wildly angry, and begins striding fast to the exit. Willie relaxes, watching J.J. as he goes.

52

A WIDE SHOT

52

J.J.

No way to treat your best customer!
You'll get yours, Willie! I'll see
to it! Hear me? Got it?

He exits.

53

ON WILLIE

53

He shakes his head: The kid's crazy. Willie finally picks up his broom and moves to shut the door.

CUT TO

54

EXT. A SUBURBAN HOME - NIGHT

54

Nice place, typical suburbia, but nice. Vaguely, from inside, we hear the chime of raised voices. We can't make out the words.

55

ON J.J.

55

slouched in an overstuffed chair, sullen, bored looking as he listens to:

MR. COONEY'S VOICE

(booming)

How are you going to improve your grades when you spend all your time playing those damn games! No, J.J., I'm afraid this is it. As of now you're grounded. The game room is off limits, period.

as J.J. sighs big, sinking further into his chair. We're in the den, Mr. Cooney standing at one end of the room with a report card in his hand. Mrs. Cooney stands at the other end, arms folded and pained looking. Both parents are youngish, probably not yet forty.

J.J.

Ah, Dad -- be reasonable!

MR. COONEY

This report card isn't reasonable.
Nope. No more discussion.

J.J. suddenly rockets to his feet.

J.J.

But I got a deal for ya! Ya gotta hear it at least!

MR. COONEY

You're grounded. No deals.

J.J.

But ya can't ground me now -- I'm at my absolute peak. Don't you see? I'm so close!

MRS. COONEY

You're not making any sense, J.J.
Close to what?

J.J.

The Thirteenth Level on the Bishop of Battle. If I don't make it now, I may never make it.

Both parents sigh big, the youngster is absolutely impossible. Quietly:

MR. COONEY

I think you'd better go to your room, J.J.

J.J.

Listen to me, Dad! -- Just gimme a week -- a couple days even. Ground me then. 'Cause when I make the Thirteenth Level, I'm gonna quit the games completely. Hear that? After that I'll retire -- a clean break. Grades'll come up -- no more stealin' quarters -- no more ---

CONTINUED

56

CONTINUED

56

MR. COONEY

-- Enough. Just go to your room.
Go.

Pause as J.J. looks at his parents, tears welling up in his eyes. He breaks, racing toward the stairway that leads to his room.

J.J.

All right, forget it! Forget every-
thing! I hate ya both! I mean that!
Hear me?!

And then he's gone. Both parents pause, looking terribly upset. Mrs. Cooney stands, about to follow her son.

MR. COONEY

Let him go, Adele. It's for his own good.

MRS. COONEY

He's not himself lately.

MR. COONEY

He'll cool down....

Mr. Cooney grabs the evening paper. From off we hear J.J.'s bedroom door slamming so hard it rocks the whole house. Mrs. Cooney sighs, rubs at an aching head.

57

J.J.'S ROOM

57

-- the usual posters, etc. J.J. lies on his back on his bed, eyes drilling into the ceiling in his anger, frustration.

J.J.

All of it...down the drain.

J.J. rolls over, strikes at his pillow in his pain. He begins to softly cry.

58

EXT. THE COONEY HOME - NIGHT

58

Lights are out. Time has passed.

59

INT. J.J.'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

59

J.J., fully clothed, is asleep on his bed. The camera begins moving in toward his face.

DISSOLVE TO

60

INT. THE LIMBO GAME ROOM - NIGHT - SLOW MOTION

60

The camera starts at one end of this large room filled with dark, playerless video games and moves on a thin carpet of fog toward a young man standing at a particular game in the distance.

We are high off the floor as we move -- there is no sense that this is anyone's point of view. Our shot is omniscient, unreal: The color is unbalanced, the focus soft, the lighting muted but for that one area of the room where fourteen-year-old J.J. Cooney stands locked in battle with the machine called, "The Bishop of Battle". That area is bathed in a shroud of inexplicable yellow light. A light that seems to come from heaven. Or could it be from hell?

We move ever closer. We see Cooney under his headphones, concentrating as he plays, concentrating so hard the sweat rolls off him. No fourteen-year old was never meant for this kind of intensity....

SUDDEN CUT TO

61

A NEW ANGLE - J.J. AND THE BISHOP - LIMBO

61

J.J. fires three shots in rapid succession and then suddenly his eyes go huge, and ---

62

THE VIDEO SCREEN - LIMBO

62

as the Bishop's face suddenly appears full frame. Its lips move and its mechanical voice speaks.

THE BISHOP'S VOICE

You. Have. Reached. Level.
Thirteen. Earthling. No. Human.
Has. Ever. Done. This. Before.
Now. You. Must. Battle. Me.
And. My. Master. Minions, Are.
You. Ready.

63

ON J.J. - LIMBO - FULL SPEED MOTION

63

He's sweaty, strained, but damn confident. Softly:

J.J.

Totally, dude. I'm the best that
ever lived.

64

INT. THE LIMBO GAME ROOM - NIGHT - SLOW MOTION

64

as the Bishop speaks his final pregame words.

CONTINUED

64

CONTINUED

64

THE BISHOP'S VOICE

I. Am. The. Bishop. Of.
Battle. Master. Of. All. I.
Survey. Let's. Begin.

The game starts, J.J. dodging and feigning at the controls, firing his laser again and again.

As this happens the camera slowly retreats through the fog, moves further and further away from the battle. Finally then, when J.J. and the Bishop are small in the frame, we see J.J. suddenly jump from the machine, his arms in the air like a boxer who's just won a world title. He literally jumps for joy. It's obvious he has finally beaten the Bishop of Battle.

CUT TO

65

J.J.'S FACE

65

as he awakens in his bedroom. He looks around, slowly swings his feet to the floor. He thinks for a moment, thinks. Finally he rises and moves to his desk, takes a screwdriver from a drawer. He then crosses to the window and opens it, climbs outside.

66

EXT. THE COONEY RESIDENCE - NIGHT

66

J.J. climbs down the lattice work from the second story and hits the ground. Silently, he starts off down the street.

67

INT. THE GAME-O-RAMA CENTER GAME ROOM - NIGHT

67

It is dark, peopleless, the machines stand quiet. After a moment we think we hear something. Our angle changes slightly to show a shadow outside one of the windows, a shadow of someone working, prying at the window sill. After a moment the window is shoved open and J.J. Cooney moves into the room.

He chucks his screwdriver, walks a few steps and stops. He looks to:

68

THE BISHOP OF BATTLE

68

dark, but still somehow ominous.

69 THE SCENE

69

J.J.

This is it, you low-rent bucket a
transistors. Tonight's my night.

J.J. moves to the machine, reaches down and plugs in the
cord. The machine comes to life.

THE BISHOP'S VOICE

I. Am. The. Bishop. Of.
Battle. Master. Of. All. I.
Survey. Insert. Coin.

J.J. squares himself in front of the video screen and
inserts a coin. He puts on his headphones and switches
on his walkman.

THE BISHOP'S VOICE

Welcome. To. Level. One.
Earthling. Let's. Begin.

70 THE VIDEO SCREEN

70

as the game begins and J.J. begins killing monsters.

71 ON J.J.

71

The camera slowly moves in on him as he plays, very intense.

CUT TO

72 INT. MR. AND MRS. COONEY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

72

They are asleep as the phone begins to ring. Finally
Mrs. Cooney stirs, reaches over and answers it.

MRS. COONEY

Yes.

Intercut as needed:

73 INT. ZOCK'S PARENTS' HOME - NIGHT

73

Zock is in a dark hallway, dressed in his pajamas as he
quietly and nervously speaks.

ZOCK

Mrs. Cooney?

CONTINUED

73

CONTINUED

73

MRS. COONEY

Is this Zock?

(checks her
watch)

Do you know what time it is?

ZOCK

Yeah. Is J.J. there, Mrs. Cooney?

MRS. COONEY

Zock, he's asleep. You should be
too.

ZOCK

(embarrassed)

Yeah...I just, uh -- me an' J.J. had
kind of a fight, Mrs. Cooney. He's
been -- well, I dunno. I had this
nightmare about him and I couldn't
get back to sleep.

MRS. COONEY

Zock. Honey ---

ZOCK

But he's been actin' real strange
the last couple days, Mrs. Cooney. I
guess I just wanted to know if he got
home okay and all ---

MRS. COONEY

He's here, Zock. He's fine. I'm sure
you'll make up tomorrow. Go back to
sleep now.

ZOCK

I'm sorry, Mrs. Cooney. I will.
Sorry. Bye.

He hangs up the phone.

Mrs. Cooney hangs up her phone too, but she looks concerned
as she lays her back onto the pillow.

MR. COONEY

(groggy)

That was the Maxwell boy?

CONTINUED

73

CONTINUED - 2

73

MRS. COONEY

Uh-huh.

MR. COONEY

Good Lord.

Mrs. Cooney rises from the bed, putting on her robe.

MR. COONEY

Where are you going?

MRS. COONEY

To the bathroom....

She exits. Mr. Cooney rolls over to go back to sleep.

74

INT. J.J.'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

74

Mrs. Cooney rounds the corner yawning, moves into the room, fully expecting to see her son asleep on the bed. She looks to:

75

THE BED

75

Empty...and then to the open window, curtains moving lazily in the breeze.

76

ON MRS. COONEY

76

her face dropping as she calls out.

MRS. COONEY

Jerry? Jerry.

CUT TO

77

THE BISHOP'S VIDEO SCREEN - NIGHT

77

Level Twelve appears.

THE BISHOP'S VOICE

You. Have. Just. Reached.
Level. Twelve. Earthling.
Welcome. Let's. Begin.

78 ON J.J.

78

He's sweating, absolutely ravaged-looking as he stands at the controls of the machine. He looks near to insane as he pushes the button that will begin Level Twelve.

J.J. pushes the start button.

J.J.

(crazed)

Tonight's my night, you sonovabitch.

We intercut between the video screen, J.J.'s shooting hand and his ragged face as the battle on Level Twelve begins.

79 THE SCREEN

79

as the monsters appear in the maze, a lot of them, moving like lightning, but then to ---

80 J.J.'S HAND

80

It moves even faster, flicking the control stick to the right, to the left, then firing three quick laser shots, bam-bam-bam, and ---

81 J.J.'S FACE

81

reacting, he's gonna beat this bastard, and ---

82 THE SCREEN AGAIN

82

Two more monsters go down, there are only six of the original twelve left, and ---

83 J.J.'S HAND

83

firing three quick shots and now:

84 THE SCREEN

84

as two more monsters are dispatched, and ---

85 J.J.'S FACE

85

illuminated in the light of the screen, eyes bulging as he fires six more shots, and now:

86 THE VIDEO SCREEN 86

One monster left. That monster begins moving slowly, staying way up at the top of the maze, out of the astronaut's firing range.

87 J.J. 87

watching the monster.

J.J.

Sorry Bishop. Your boys aren't good enough to protect you tonight. I'm gonna see ya on Level Thirteen.

88 J.J.'S HAND 88

suddenly bolting into action, flicking the control knob hard to the left and firing a single shot, and ---

89 THE VIDEO SCREEN 89

as the last monster is hit and the screen goes absolutely insane with a brilliant pyrotechnic display of exploding colors and violent sounds. It builds, gets louder and louder, until:

90 ON J.J. 90

The entire machine begins to shake on its legs, swaying back and forth and there is smoke coming out of it, sparks and smoke, and then finally the whole thing begins disintegrating in front of him -- the leg buckles and the machine falls to the floor. All except for one part of it: the control stick and the top of the front console which J.J. still holds in his right hand.

J.J. looks at the machine, bug-eyed, almost scared. Then he looks to the piece of the machine in his hand. Funny. It almost looks like a laser gun.

91 ON THE SMOLDERING MACHINE 91

THE BISHOP'S VOICE

You. Are. Very. Very. Good.
Earthling. You. Have. Reached.
Level. Thirteen. Welcome. Let's
Begin.

92

THE SCENE

92

as J.J. looks down on the machine and slowly begins to laugh. This builds to something almost maniacal.

J.J.

I couldn't loose tonight! I beat
ya! You're a stupid machine! I'm
John Henry himself!

But then suddenly a lightning bolt seems to hit the room, the whole place suddenly strobes white and there's a thunderous crash. J.J. hits the floor in terror.

93

ON J.J.'S CONFUSED, HORRIFIED FACE

93

as the room flashes again and there's thunderous explosion. Then suddenly J.J. reacts, screaming as he sees:

94

THE VIDEO MONSTER ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE GAME ROOM

94

-- only it's not like the video monsters seen on the screen, it's absolutely huge, maybe six feet tall and four feet wide, a translucent video-like image that moves between two video machines making a terrifying buzzing sound, a sound like the sound they make on the video screen but maybe twelve times as loud. The monster now moves out of sight, behind one of the other machines.

95

ON J.J.

95

catatonic in terror, then suddenly rubbing hard at his eyes -- could he possibly have seen what he thought he did? Then there's a flash of light coming from another area of the room. J.J. whips around to:

96

ANOTHER VIDEO MONSTER

96

This one's not as shy as the other one -- it's coming fast toward us, growling like a freight train, and ---

97

J.J.

97

By instinct he raises the part of the video game in his hand and fires. A laser beam shoots at the video monster and the monster explodes in a shower of psychedelic sparks.

98

THE ROOM

98

as another video monster appears in another area and J.J. spins to fire at that. He misses three times, the wild shots striking the walls and other machines and creating large explosions that hurl plaster and game components in all directions.

The video monster hides behind another machine. J.J. fires and fires in terror, trying to blow the machine away so he can get to his quarry. Then, suddenly, from behind him, another video monster appears. J.J. spins and fires, dispatching it to video game heaven. Then there appears another monster. J.J. whirls and fires, hits, then spins back the other way as yet another video monster moves in for the kill. With this, three other video monsters appear and J.J. begins screaming and running and dodging, and firing in all directions, destroying large parts of the game room.

Finally J.J. makes his way to the open window through which he entered, turns, fires at and kills three approaching video monsters, then climbs all the way out the window, still screaming in horror.

99

EXT. THE FOX HILLS SHOPPING CENTER - NIGHT

99

as J.J. drops from the second story to the pavement of the alleyway below, his laser gun still in hand.

100

TIGHT ON J.J.

100

panting and sweating, nearly insane as he looks back up to:

101

THE GAME ROOM WINDOW

101

It's quiet; there's nothing that would tell us that anything out of the ordinary has gone on.

102

J.J.

102

relaxes slightly, tries to get his breath as he looks out to the street maybe a hundred yards away:

103

VENTURA BOULEVARD

103

is Ventura Boulevard. Nothing out of the ordinary, traffic as usual.

104 J.J. AGAIN

104

He looks to the laser gun in his hand, still breathing hard. The gun is out of the ordinary. Suddenly, J.J. drops the gun -- as if he wants nothing to do with it. He starts off up the alley away from Ventura Boulevard, toward home. Once he begins to move he gathers speed quickly, running faster and faster, trying to get distance between him and the game room as quickly as he can.

105 A SHOPPING CENTER PARKING LOT

105

as J.J. comes sprinting around the corner to arrive on the scene, suddenly skidding to a horrified stop. He is bathed in a brilliant blue light, which he shields from his eyes with a raised forearm. J.J. begins backing up.

J.J.

No...no...please....

106 WHAT HE SEES

106

Hovering the parking lot maybe twenty yards away is an absolutely massive video monster, it's maybe thirty feet high. We recognize the monster. We've seen his crude drawing on the side of the video game. It's the Bishop of battle himself.

THE BISHOP

Welcome. Earthling. I. Am. The.
Bishop. Of. Battle. Master. Of.
All. I. Survey.

The Bishop begins moving closer to J.J., closing in for the kill.

107 TIGHT ON J.J.

107

backing up in disbelief, the blue light from the Bishop's luminescent body showing brighter and brighter on J.J. as the ultimate monster moves ever closer. Finally J.J. trips and falls to the cement, raising his arm to shield his eyes from the godawful blue light.

J.J.

No. No! Nooooooooo! Nooooooooooooo!

The screen begins turning brilliant blue, as the Bishop moves closer and closer. Finally, there's no image left at all, just blue.

DISSOLVE TO

108 OMITTED

108

108-A EXT. DOWNTOWN SEVEN-ELEVEN STORE - NIGHT

108-B

Behind the glass, video games can be seen; adults are playing them.

Zock then emerges from the store, moves to the car parked at the curb out front. Mr. and Mrs. Cooney are waiting there; Mr. Cooney leaning against the car on the driver's side.

ZOCK

Not there, either.

Mr. Cooney looks off in disgust. He and Zock both get into the car.

108-B EXT. THE CITY - DAWN - MOS

108-B

Mr. Cooney walks out of a downtown establishment, a rough-looking game room. He shakes his head at Zock and Mrs. Cooney waiting in the car.

108-C EXT. THE CITY - EARLY DAY

108-C

Zock and Mr. Cooney can be seen inside yet another establishment where there are video games. Zock is speaking to someone playing a machine, that someone shaking his head at him -- he hasn't seen J.J.

Zock and Mr. Cooney turn to exit.

108-D INT. THE COONEY CAR - EARLY DAY

108-D

Mr. and Mrs. Cooney are in the front, Zock in the back, riding with his head propped on the back of the front seat. Everyone looks terrifically forlorned.

MRS. COONEY

Is there anywhere else?

Zock looks at his watch.

ZOCK

The Game-O-Rama'll be opening in a couple minutes. I doubt he'd go there if he were runnin' away, but ---

MR. COONEY

Let's give it a try.

CUT TO

109 EXT. THE FOX HILLS SHOPPING CENTER PARKING LOT - DAY 109

The Cooney car pulls into the area seen the night before, stops. Only a few other cars can be seen -- it's still early. There is no evidence of J.J., the Bishop -- or anything else out of the ordinary. People begin to alight.

110 EXT. THE FOX HILLS GAME ROOM - DAY 110

The mall is almost empty, just a few shoppers. At the game room, however, is a gang of kids, waiting for the manager to arrive and open the doors. Zock and the Cooney parents arrive and begin looking through the crowd for J.J.

111 CLOSER 111

MR. COONEY

He's not here.

ZOCK

Nope.

CONTINUED

111 CONTINUED

111

Behind we see Willie arrive and begin opening the game room doors. The gang of kids cheer a little bit.

MRS. COONEY

I guess we'd better call the police.

Mr. Cooney nods, starts to walk away. Just then there's a gasp from Willie and the assembled crowd. Everyone turns. They see:

112 INSIDE THE GAME-O-RAMA CENTER

112

The place is an absolute horror from the night before; it looks like a battleground. The walls have laser burns, the games are lying on their sides, broken and battered. Only one game remains upright. Upright and in perfect repair. The Bishop of Battle.

113 THE SCENE

113

as people move slowly into the place, dumbfounded, trying to figure out what's gone on. Wild lines like "Wow," "Holy Cow," "What happened?" "Somebody better call the cops," etc.

114 ON ZOCK

114

He's looking at something in particular, looking at it with a strange, intuitive dread:

115 THE BISHOP OF BATTLE

115

standing there gleaming, it looks like it did when it left the factory.

116 THE SCENE

116

MR. COONEY

Vandals. Let's go, Zock....

But Zock doesn't seem to hear...he's drifting toward the Bishop, mesmerized.

117 AT THE BISHOP

117

as Zock arrives and looks down onto the machine's video screen. Pause. Then suddenly Zock's eyes go huge in disbelief.

CONTINUED

117 CONTINUED

117

ZOCK

No!

Another pause as a confused Mr. and Mrs. Cooney begin moving in Zock's direction.

118 ON THE BISHOP'S VIDEO SCREEN

118

There are the usual monsters moving in the usual maze -- but our camera zooms in tight on one of them -- one we haven't seen before.

This monster wears a walkman headset and is dressed exactly like J.J. Cooney.

119 ON ZOCK'S HORRIFIED FACE

119

reeling back from the machine in anguish.

ZOCK

J.J.! Oh, J.J. -- No! He's got you! The Bishop's got you!

120 ON THE BISHOP

120

THE BISHOP'S VOICE

I. Am. The. Bishop. Of.
Battle. Master. Of. All. I.
Survey. I. Have. Thirteen.
Progressively. Harder. Levels.
Try. Me. If. You. Dare.
Insert. Coin.

FADE OUT

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PROD. #83495
(Formerly: #85780)
November 19, 1982
Rev. 11/23/82 (F.R.)
Rev. 11/24/82 (F.R.)
Rev. 11/26/82 (F.R.)
Rev. 11/29/82 (F.R.)
Rev. 12/21/82 (F.R.)
2nd Rev. 12/21/82 (F.R.)

NIGHTMARES

NIGHT OF THE RAT

Participating Writers

Jeffery Bloom

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NIGHTMARES
NIGHT OF THE RAT

CAST

BROOKE HOUSTON
CLAIRE HOUSTON
STEVEN HOUSTON

MR. KEEFER

SETS

INTERIORS:

THE HOUSTON'S HOUSE
LIVING ROOM
MASTER BEDROOM
KITCHEN
BROOKE'S BEDROOM
SECOND-FLOOR HALL
ATTIC
GARAGE
UPSTAIRS HALLWAY
GUEST BEDROOM
PANTRY
STAIRWAY

EXTERIORS:

QUIET RESIDENTIAL STREET
THE HOUSTON'S HOUSE
ONE SIDE OF THE HOUSE
BACKYARD
GARAGE

NIGHTMARES
NIGHT OF THE RAT

FADE IN

1 OUR "CRUISE MISSILE" VIEW (EFFECT) 1

America races beneath us. It is night. The credits role.

As they do a voice comes up -- a voice that is speaking from the void. An echoing, distant place. The voice belongs to a little girl named Brooke Houston, age seven years.

BROOKE'S VOICE

(haltingly)

He's not what you'd exactly call a bad man, I don't think. I mean he gets mad a lot. But then I get mad sometimes too. I wonder if I caught that from him? Sometimes when I get mad it's because I'm really scared. I get mad and then I'm not scared anymore. Is that what Daddy does? What in the world could he be scared of?

We're moving above a suburban street. Suddenly we dip Earthward and stop:

2 EXT. A QUIET RESIDENTIAL STREET - WINDY NIGHT 2

The houses lining the street are largish and nicely done; most of them as new as the money that bought them. The setting is dark but for the streetlights that cast their light onto the new Chevy station wagons, Porsches and BMWs that sit in the various driveways. It's a lovely environment; comfortable, secure, placid.

Placid except for that wind -- the sound of which is just a little bit unnatural, eerie.

3 ONE HOUSE IN PARTICULAR 3

The camera pushes slowly in toward the home owned by one Steven Houston. When the structure fills the frame, the camera stops its push. Hold a moment.

4 THE SIDE OF THE HOUSE 4

And again the camera moves, pushing in toward the screen that covers the entrance to the crawl space under the house.

CONTINUED

4

CONTINUED

4

Although it's partially obscured by bushes and hard to see, the screen is hanging askew and moving in the wind. It's been opened recently.

The camera stops when the ajar screen fills the frame. The sound of the wind grows. Two tiny red eyes can be seen in the distant darkness.

Now the red eyes begin to move, they move deeper into the darkness beneath the house and out of sight.

CUT TO

5

INT. THE HOUSTON LIVING ROOM

5

The wind is far from us here, barely heard. A cat sits atop a grand piano at one end of the large living room and looks down at the floor, screwing its head one way then the other, as if to listen to something we cannot hear.

The cat then jumps to the floor and moves across the carpet -- as if following something beneath the floor. The cat arrives at the wall and stops. The cat looks at the wall, reacting to a scratching sound that seems to move slowly up the wall and finally disappears into the ceiling.

6

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

6

Claire Houston is awake in the bedroom, her eyes focused on the wall beside her where a tiny scratching sound is heard. The sound sends a shiver up her spine. She tries to awaken her husband.

CLAIRE

Steven? Steven?

His eyes open, then close again. He mumbles a dry-mouthed question, but even though his words are unintelligible, his annoyance is clear.

CLAIRE

I heard it again. Can rats get between the walls?

Steven opens his eyes again, just briefly. The shadows on the wall bend and straighten; the sound of the wind is hushed but audible.

STEVEN

(mushy)

No rats. The wind.

He closes his eyes and rearranges the pillow under his head.

CONTINUED

6

CONTINUED

6

STEVEN

Branches need a trim.

And then he's asleep again. Claire lies back and stares up to the ceiling. She pulls the covers up under her chin and huddles in archetypal dread.

7

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

7

Rosie, the cat, perches like a ceramic on the piano, keeping the watch. The camera moves toward the animal as its head continues angling one way then the other; it's now looking up -- just listening.

CUT TO

8

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

8

Bright and spacious. Brooke Houston, age seven is dressed for school seated at the breakfast table eating her cold cereal, engrossed in the special offer printed on the back of the box. Claire is preparing her daughter's lunch and packing it into her lunch pail. Steven, dressed in a suit and tie, is speaking to someone on the phone. Agitated, he wanders in and out of the kitchen as he talks. Claire is visibly upset by the nature of the conversation and the cold intransigence of her husband's position.

STEVEN

(on phone)

Look, turn off the violins, will you? This isn't the first time the son of a....

He glances surreptitiously at his daughter, then turns his back and lowers his voice. The intensity remains the same.

STEVEN

(on phone)

...The nitwit screwed up again, Bill --

(pause)

His wife is expecting -- that isn't the issue! The man's an employee. He works for us -- he represents us -- and I'll be damned if I'm going to let him embarrass us again! We're on the line here too.

9

FAVOR BROOKE

9

Bored with the back of the cereal box, she's now turned to read the printed matter on the side.

CONTINUED

9

CONTINUED

9

BROOKE

Mommie? What's...
(syllable by
syllable)
...pyri-dox-ine-hydro-chloride?

CLAIRE

(distracted;
muttered)
God knows.

BROOKE

Am I eating it?

10

FAVOR STEVEN

10

STEVEN

(on phone)
No! No notice. Give him two weeks'
severance and get him out. Bill,
I'll be in in half an hour and I
want Higgins gone.

He returns the receiver to the cradle with brutal finality.
Claire stares across the room at him.

CLAIRE

Jim Higgins?

He glares at her. He's in no mood for this.

STEVEN

(a cold warning)
You don't know anything about this,
Claire, so don't start.

CLAIRE

But Jim used to be your best sales-
man. Do you know that Nancy's
pregnant?

Steven doesn't listen. He's noticed the opened Yellow Pages
on the counter. The ads feature rodent exterminators.

STEVEN

What's all this about?

11

FAVOR BROOKE

11

BROOKE

Daddy? What's pyri-dox-ine-
hydro-chloride?

CONTINUED

11

CONTINUED

11

STEVEN

It's a vitamin. Don't worry about it. It's good for you. Finish up, peanut; we've got to get going.

BROOKE

I'm not a peanut.

STEVEN

(to Claire)

What's with the exterminators?

12

FAVOR CLAIRE

12

CLAIRE

We have rats. I heard them in the walls and then later I heard them in the attic. You wouldn't wake up.

BROOKE

Are they white ones?

STEVEN

So go out and buy a couple of traps. I'll set 'em up tonight and that'll be the end of it.

CLAIRE

I just thought you wouldn't want to be bothered with....

STEVEN

We still want the swimming pool, don't we?

CLAIRE

(stops;
confused)

What?

STEVEN

The swimming pool in the backyard. I take it we still want to put one in?

BROOK

Yes, Daddy -- yes! Of course we do!

STEVEN

Well, we're going to get it, peanut.
(pointedly
to Claire)

But the way we're going to get it is by not squandering hard-earned money

CONTINUED

12

CONTINUED

12

STEVEN (Cont'd)
on things like cleaning ladies twice
a week and shyster rat catchers
who'll come out and look for drop-
pings once a month. We agreed
we're going to start doing certain
things around here all by ourselves
-- didn't we Claire.

Claire and Steven look at one another. Claire wishes she
could go to bed and start her entire day over again.

BROOKE
(oblivious)
If you catch the rat, can I keep it,
Daddy?

STEVEN
Tell you what, sweetheart -- if
Mommy says it's okay, you've got
yourself a deal.

Claire glares at her husband. He smiles, pleased with
himself.

CUT TO

13

EXT. HOUSTON HOUSE - DAY

13

Steven backs his Cadillac down the driveway. Brooke sits in
the seat beside him. They drive away.

CUT TO

14

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

14

Claire has finished washing the breakfast dishes and now
begins to put things away. She returns the milk and butter
to the refrigerator. She takes the cereal box to the
pantry. She opens the pantry door, a sudden, terrifying
flurry of movement from behind a stack of dishes and a
double row of glasses. Claire leaps back with a shout.
Dishes and glasses lurch forward and cascade to the floor
in a splintering crash.

15

WIDER ANGLE - CLAIRE

15

Huddled, half-crouched beside the refrigerator, she stares,
pale and trembling, at the shattered china and glass on the
floor.

CUT TO

16

EXT. HOUSTON HOUSE - NIGHT

16

The street is quiet. The house is ablaze with light.

CUT TO

17 INT. SECOND-FLOOR HALL - NIGHT

17

Claire and Brooke watch as Steven climbs up the trapdoor ladder into the lightless attic, anxiously staring after him like the family of a daring scout who must scale the side of a perilous cliff to search for savage Indians.

18 INT. ATTIC - NIGHT

18

Steven switches on his flashlight and sweeps the intense beam of light from side to side. He carries a pair of baited traps in his left hand. It's very quiet.

CLAIRE'S VOICE

Do you see anything?

STEVEN

Insulation.

19 INT. SECOND-FLOOR HALL - NIGHT

19

Claire and Brooke continue to stare up at the darkness beyond the open trapdoor.

BROOKE

Mr. Thompson has two rats in a cage.

CLAIRE

Who's Mr. Thompson?

BROOKE

Billy Nobel's teacher. One's named Annie, and the other - he's the boy -- is named Pinto 'cause he's got these little pink spots all over.

20 INT. ATTIC - NIGHT

20

Having placed one trap, Steven now crosses to the opposite side of the attic to place the other.

21 INT. SECOND-FLOOR HALL - NIGHT

21

Claire and Brooke listen to Steven's heavy, creaking tread as he passes over their heads.

BROOKE

(gesturing)

Billy says Pinto's this big.

Claire makes the mistake of looking down at her daughter's hands -- spread as wide as if she were holding an invisible cocker spaniel.

CONTINUED

21

CONTINUED

21

CLAIRE

Please, Brooke.

Brooke stares down at her own hands, failing to understand her mother's reaction.

22

INT. ATTIC - NIGHT

22

Steven carefully places the second trap. He stands, appraises his handywork, shines the flashlight around the attic a final time. He walks to the trapdoor and begins to climb back down the ladder.

CLAIRE'S VOICE

Did you do it?

STEVEN'S VOICE

Tough job. Took all of a minute and a half.

BROOKE'S VOICE

Can I watch TV now?

Steven pushes the ladder back up into the attic from below, then closes the trapdoor. The attic becomes totally dark and still. For a moment, nothing. Then, from somewhere, a slight skittering sound. Then, quiet again.

CUT TO

23

INT. BROOKE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

23

Brooke has been tucked in. Rosie, the cat, sleeps curled up at the edge of the bed. As always, Brooke is surrounded by her stuffed animals and dolls. One of them is a very large, very cute grey and white rat.

24

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

24

Steven and Claire are in bed. The lights are off.

Steven snuggles in behind Claire, kisses her on the back of the neck. It's obvious he wants to make love to her.

CONTINUED

Claire doesn't respond however; she just lies there stiff, eyes open wide.

STEVEN

What's the trouble here?

CLAIRE

No trouble.

STEVEN

Seems to me there's been this kind of trouble around here for a month.

CLAIRE

How would you know? You're never around. You're either traveling or at the office or ---

STEVEN

I'm here right now.

He begins kissing her neck again. She bristles and pulls away from him.

CLAIRE

Steven you're not even here when you're here anymore. Do you know how...hard you've become? Most of the time you use a sledge hammer when just a word or two would do ---

STEVEN

(turns away)

There are people who get things done and people who don't get things done, Claire.

Claire rises quickly from the bed, she's going to leave the room. As she puts on her robe:

CLAIRE

Well not everyone is as perfect as you are, Steven. Jim Higgins wasn't and I guess I'm not either. Which is why they invented a thing called compassion.

Steven is about to respond when a resounding snap reverberates through the house.

25 WIDER ANGLE - STEVEN, CLAIRE 25
reacting, their eyes turning toward the ceiling.

26 CLOSER ANGLE - FAVORING CLAIRE 26
She listens, painfully, to a muted flopping as a small body thrashes from side to side over their heads.

27 FAVOR STEVEN 27
The sound fades. He grins with private satisfaction.

STEVEN
All of our problems should be solved so easily.

28 FAVOR CLAIRE 28
Rigid, tense.

CLAIRE
(brittle)
Please take it out.

STEVEN
What?

CLAIRE
Please? Tonight.

STEVEN
Now?

CLAIRE
I won't be able to sleep knowing it's up there, bleeding all over the ceiling.

STEVEN
Claire, I'm not going to get dressed and ---

CLAIRE
(angry)
Steven. Please!

Steven stares at her, finally, angrily, he nods.

STEVEN
(curt)
Okay. Right. At your service.

29 WIDER ANGLE - STEVEN, CLAIRE 29
He climbs out of bed, reaching for his robe.

CONTINUED

29

CONTINUED

29

STEVEN

Your hero humbly accepts his
thanks, by the way.

She looks at him.

CLAIRE

Two kills in one day.

Cuts between the two as they just stare at one another.

CUT TO

30

INT. ATTIC - NIGHT

30

Armed with his flashlight, now wearing gloves and carrying a white ice cream bag, Steven finds the sprung trap and stuffs it -- along with the lifeless little shape attached to it -- into the bag.

CUT TO

31

EXT. GARAGE - NIGHT

31

Steven crosses to the row of trash cans alongside the garage. He opens one and sticks the folded bag deep into it.

CUT TO

32

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

32

Claire steps from the bathroom. Steven is sitting on the edge of the bed, removing his slippers. Claire crosses the room and sits beside him. For a beat, a silence. Then:

CLAIRE

I'm sorry about saying what I said.

Steven nods.

STEVEN

I'll accept your apology on one
condition.

CLAIRE

What?

STEVEN

That you think about letting Brooke
keep that rat I just....

Steven throws something dark and furry onto the bed.

33

CLOSE - CLAIRE

33

She screams and stumbles backwards.

34 FAVOR STEVEN 34
He nearly falls off the bed laughing.

35 CLOSE - CLAIRE 35
She looks down at the bed.

36 ANGLE - BED 36
Her mink stole lays there in a quiet heap.

37 WIDER ANGLE - STEVEN, CLAIRE 37
She's white and trembling.
Steven can hardly speak for laughing; he can barely catch his breath.

STEVEN
I'm sorry. I am ---

Claire rises from the bed and runs into the bathroom slamming the door behind her.

CUT TO

38 EXT. THE SIDE OF THE HOUSE - NIGHT 38
Contrasting silence. Rosie, the cat, creeps stealthily across the driveway toward the crawl space and stares through the broken screen.

39 SHOOTING PAST ROSIE 39
Nothing but an unpenetrable gloom.

40 CLOSER - ROSIE 40
She squeezes through the opening and, within a few steps, disappears into the darkness.

41 MED. SHOT - CRAWL SPACE 41
An intense silence. Camera slowly pushes in toward the broken screen, and then past it, moving into the crawl space and under the house. The movement stops. A final pause. Then, as if hurled forward, the camera rushes a dozen feet through darkness, only stopping, abruptly, as a spine-chilling squeal echoes hideously through the subterranean gloom. Then, a terrible snarl and violent thrashing, finally bitten into silence by a chattering, bone-snapping crescendo.

CUT TO

42

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

42

Sunlight streams in through the windows. Brooke enters to find her mother standing at the counter preparing Brooke's lunch for school.

BROOKE

I can't find Rosie.

CLAIRE

What'd you say, hon?

BROOKE

Rosie. She's gone.

CLAIRE

You mean she wasn't in your room when you woke up?

43

FAVOR BROOKE

43

BROOKE

No. And I'm scared.

CLAIRE

Brooke, she's just out somewhere.

BROOKE

She never just goes away.

CLAIRE

Sometimes she does.

44

FAVOR STEVEN

44

He enters the kitchen.

STEVEN

Somebody got a problem?

BROOKE

Rosie's gone. Mommy says she goes away sometimes, but she doesn't. I'm afraid something's happened to her.

Steven turns to Claire.

STEVEN

(can't remember)
Wasn't Rosie fixed?

45

FAVOR CLAIRE

45

CLAIRE

She was fixed almost a year ago.
It doesn't mean she can't go out
and ---

BROOKE

She wouldn't go out for that. I
know her. Rosie wouldn't go out for
that at all.

Steven laughs. Claire then turns away, grabs a carrot,
turns on the faucet to rinse it off. The water only
dribbles out.

STEVEN

Finish your breakfast, peanut. We
gotta go. Don't worry about Rosie.
She'll be back by the time you get
home tonight.

46

CLOSER - CLAIRE AND FAUCET

46

She turns the pressure up higher, then turns the hot water
on as well. The water still only dribbles out.

47

CLOSE - FAUCET

47

A torrent of pressurized water explodes from the tap,
carrying with it a compacted mass of black rat hair.

48

CLOSE - CLAIRE

48

She jumps back with a horrified shout.

49

WIDER - GROUP SHOT

49

Brooke and Steven react. Steven rushes to the sink and
quickly turns off the water. Brooke jumps up from the table
to see what happened. Claire turns her back to the sink,
her body shuddering with chills.

CLAIRE

It's disgusting!

50

FAVOR BROOKE

50

She peers into the sink.

BROOKE

What is it?

CONTINUED

50 CONTINUED

50

STEVEN

Nothing to worry about, sweetheart.
Just some old rat hair. I'm surprised
that little guy wasn't bald.

BROOKE

(sickened)

I thought you said it was a white
rat.

Brief pause.

CUT TO

51 EXT. BACK YARD - DAY - LATER

51

The garage door is open.

CLAIRE'S VOICE

Here, kitty, kitty.

52 INT. GARAGE - DAY

52

Now dressed in jeans and a T-shirt, carrying the flashlight,
Claire briefly searches the garage.

CLAIRE

Rosie? Rosie? Here, kitty, kitty.

53 NEW ANGLE - RAT'S POINT OF VIEW - CLAIRE

53

It's a high, wide angle from a shelf against the rear wall.
We get the distinct, uneasy feeling that Claire is being
watched.

CLAIRE

Here, kitty, kitty.

CUT TO

54 EXT. THE SIDE OF THE HOUSE - DAY

54

Claire walks down the driveway, glancing left and right
at the shrubs and bushes, continuing to call the cat. She
sees something from the corner of one eye, then stops and
looks down.

55 CLAIRE'S POINT OF VIEW - THE BROKEN SCREEN OVER THE CRAWL SPACE

55

56 ANGLE - CLAIRE

56

She hesitates, then moves closer and kneels down. She separ-
ates the shrubs. The broken screen is open wide enough for
a cat to get through. Claire crouches lower, turns on the
flashlight, shines the beam through the screen.

CONTINUED

56 CONTINUED

56

CLAIRE

Rosie? Rosie? Here, kitty, kitty.

57 NEW ANGLE - CLAIRE

57

She sits back on her heels, her eyes fixed on the broken screen. Then, making a decision, she reaches forward, struggles with the frame, and then is able to pull it away from the opening to the crawl space.

58 CLOSER ANGLE - CLAIRE

58

She crouches down again and tries to pierce the gloom.

CLAIRE

Kitty? Kitty?

Nothing but silence in return. A final hesitation. Claire takes a deep breath.

59 INT. CRAWL SPACE - DAY - LONG SHOT - CLAIRE

59

We watch from twenty-five feet away as she slowly crawls into the gloom beneath the house. There's little to see other than stubby pillars and posts, curious mounds of earth, a sprinkling of cobwebs, and a single patch of daylight from the open square behind her. She is still being watched.

60 CLOSE - CLAIRE

60

She scoots her body further into the gloom, the flashlight out in front of her, the beam sweeping from side to side. Another few feet, and then she stops.

CLAIRE

Rosie? Rosie?

The sound of her voice is hollow; the forcefulness gone.

61 WIDER ANGLE - CLAIR

61

The beam from the flashlight flares in the watcher's eyes. They are red and absolutely huge -- much bigger than the eyes seen at the front of the piece.

62 CLOSE - CLAIR

62

Suddenly still; barely breathing. Do the eyes belong to Rosie?

CONTINUED

62 CONTINUED

62

CLAIRE

(softly now)

Rosie? Kitty? Here, kitty, kitty.

For a beat, nothing. Then, a mewing chattering, very uncat-like squeal -- deep-throated, terrifying.

63 EXTREME CLOSE - CLAIRE

63

Frozen in place; paralyzed by fear. She sees those red eyes in the distant gloom. They blink and the strange squeals continue.

64 WIDER ANGLE - CLAIRE

64

Summoning her courage, she begins to crawl backward toward the small square of daylight, but now jerks one hand aside as it comes in contact with something wet and sticky. She shines the beam at her hand.

65 CLOSE - CLAIRE'S HAND

65

splotched with a thick, dark red fluid.

66 CLOSE - CLAIRE

66

A scream is stuck in her throat. She shines the light into the gloom, her eyes wide. What in hell is the blood from?

67 CLAIRE'S POINT OF VIEW - THE BEAM FROM THE FLASHLIGHT

67

unsteadily sweeps the shadowy places beneath the house, then again picks up the red gleam from the huge pair of eyes.

68 CLAIRE

68

frantic, now, panicky, she scurries backward, too frightened to turn around, to turn her back to whatever's out there. Her body slides directly over something. With a terrified shout she pushes herself to one side.

69 NEW ANGLE

69

The beam of light plays quickly over something small and furry, broken and dead. Rosie, the cat.

70 WIDE ANGLE - CLAIRE

70

Her scream echoes like a siren's wail through the subterranean darkness.

She begins scrambling toward the exit.

71 CLOSE ON THE RED EYES

71

they just watch Claire as she moves.

CUT TO

72 INT. HOUSTON HOUSE - DAY

72

Through the front window we see Brooke hop from a car, wave gaily to several friends, then begin up the walk. Claire opens the front door and waves to the woman driving the car. The car drives away. Claire greets her daughter with a preoccupied kiss. She's showered and changed her clothes and seems to be fairly together.

CLAIRE

Did you have a good day?

BROOKE

Pretty good. Billy was lying about Pinto.

(gesturing)

He's only that big. Did Rosie come home?

Claire shakes her head. Before she decides to add more:

BROOKE

Can I go over to Cindy's after I change?

CLAIRE

Sure. If you get home before dark.

73 INT. SECOND-FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

73

Brooke reaches the door to her bedroom, which is partially ajar. She stares down at something, curiously.

BROOKE

Mommy? Look what Rosie did.

74 INT. KITCHEN - DAY

74

Claire whirls around and immediately begins back down the hall toward the stairs, her fear undisguised.

CLAIRE

Honey? Wait for me.

75 INT. THE UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

75

Claire rushes up the stairs, moves into the hallway and to her daughter's side.

CONTINUED

75 CONTINUED 75

Brooke points.

BROOKE

Look.

76 ANGLE - THE BASE OF THE DOOR 76

Deep scratches, claw marks, gnawed wood.

77 CLOSE - CLAIRE 77

reacting; very nervous.

78 WIDE ANGLE - CLAIRE, BROOKE 78

BROOKE

Why would Rosie do that?

Claire doesn't answer her, just stares at the partially open door. She reaches for her daughter and holds her by the shoulder.

BROOKE

What's wrong, Mommy? Are you afraid?

Claire slowly reaches out, very slowly, then touches the door and pushes it, quickly, as if it were a hot iron. The door swings back on its hinges.

79 INT. BROOKE'S BEDROOM - DAY 79

Shooting from the opposite side of the room, across the bed, to include Claire and Brooke in the open doorway.

In the f.g. of the shot, Brooke's stuffed animals and dolls, violently ripped to shreds and scattered across the bed as if by an explosion.

With confusion more than fear, and sadness more than either:

BROOKE

Why would Rosie do that, Mommy?

80 CLOSE - CLAIRE 80

She stares at the ruins, saying nothing. But now her eyes moves to something in particular.

81 CLAUDE'S POINT OF VIEW - ONE TOY 81

escaped the slaughter and sits upright against the pillows, smiling sweetly: The grey and white rat.

CLAIRE

Go over to Cindy's, honey. I'll clean this up. Go on.

82 WIDER ANGLE - ROOM 82

Inexplicably, menacingly, the ceiling light and the lamp beside Brooke's bed suddenly flash on.

83 CLOSER - CLAUDE AND BROOKE 83

Brooke reaches for her mother's hand. The lights go off. Then on again, they finally stay on. Brooke and Claire again look at the toy rat sitting smiling on the bed, both terrified.

CUT TO

84 EXT. HOUSTON HOUSE - DUSK 84

An old van is parked in front. It's a vintage thing, loaded with character. On the sides, it says:

MEL KEEFER
EXTERMINATION

There's a drawing of a large rat hanging from a hangman's noose -- tongue out, dead.

CUT TO

85 INT. KITCHEN - DUSK - CLOSE SHOT - MR. KEEFER 85

He's a craggy-faced, white-haired old man, age near to seventy, dressed in grey work clothes. Right now he's on his hands and knees, looking at an area of the wall near the baseboard where the plaster has been chipped away and the house's wiring is exposed. Rat hair and a strange, wet, mucousy substance is everywhere. Claire stands over Keefer, watching with dread.

KEEFER

The wires have been gnawed through.
That's what caused the flickering light.

86 INT. BROOKE'S ROOM 86

as Mr. Keefer reaches into his tool box for a flashlight so he can get a better look. Claire Houston stands above him.

CONTINUED

CLAIRE

Aren't the wires inside pipes or something?

KEEFER

(nods)

Didn't seem to bother this fellow.

CLAIRE

You mean he bit right through the pipes? A rat could do that?

KEEFER

I've seen a seven pound rat squeeze through a quarter-inch crack under a door without exhaling, Mrs. Houston. I've seen 'em living in mud huts along a river like beavers and nesting in trees like eagles. I've seen them as big as a medium-sized dog and as small as a big June bug. I'm no longer surprised by anything I see a rat do. Very special animals.

CLAIRE

Horrid animals is what they are. And this one was big and horrid.

KEEFER

You saw him?

CLAIRE

(nods)

I saw his eyes. He was looking at me when I was under the house.

Keefer stands, wiping plaster off his hands.

KEEFER

How long have you been on vacation or wherever?

CLAIRE

We haven't been anywhere.

KEEFER

(looks around)

But your little girl's been away....

CLAIRE

(confused)

No. Why?

CONTINUED

86

CONTINUED - 2

86

KEEFER

Well, it's pretty obvious your pest has been working at this for several weeks. How come you didn't notice till today?

CLAIRE

(pauses,
looking
at him)

That wall was perfect yesterday, Mr. Keefer. This damage was done sometime last night.

Keefer looks at her in surprise. Finally:

KEEFER

I think you'd better show me the cabinet he was into downstairs.

87

EXT. HOUSTON HOUSE - LATE DAY

87

Steven's Cadillac turns into the driveway. He sees the old van parked in front.

88

INT. THE KITCHEN - DAY

88

Time has passed. Keefer works on the kitchen cabinet where the rat was heard earlier. He works to remove the last screw that holds the cabinet to the wall.

The cabinet comes off and several huge holes in the plaster are revealed; they're maybe two feet in diameter, festooned with the same mucousy-looking substance and rat hair seen upstairs. Keefer drops the cabinet when he sees.

KEEFER

That, madame, was not done by your average rodent.

Claire is white with shock. There's a pause. Keefer then steps closer to the massive holes -- but not too close. He's almost afraid of it.

KEEFER

I've never seen this kind of destruction....

Suddenly the back door opens. Steven Houston enters.

CLAIRE

Steven.

CONTINUED

88

CONTINUED

88

Steven stares at Keefer, who extends his hand.

KEEFER

Mel Keefer, Mr. Houston.

Steven ignores the hand and turns back to Claire.

CLAIRE

It's worse than we thought, Steven.
Look.

She steps aside to reveal the wall.

KEEFER

You've got an unusually aggressive
visitor, sir. I've never really
seen anything like ---

CLAIRE

-- It killed Rosie, Steven. I found
her under the house.

(shivers)

I haven't said anything to Brooke.

89

FAVOR STEVEN

89

He turns back to Keefer.

STEVEN

(terse)

Apparently my wife misunderstood
me. I was under the assumption that
we'd agreed I was going to handle
the problem myself.

CLAIRE

Steven!

STEVEN

(ignoring her)

What do I owe you, Mr. Keefer?

KEEFER

Well, sir, you don't really owe me
anything. But ---

STEVEN

Thank you, Mr. Keefer. I apologize
for wasting your time.

93

CONTINUED

93

STEVEN

You know what your problem is, Claire? It's the same as ninety percent of the people in this world. It never occurs to you to help yourself.

She turns and walks out of the room.

CUT TO

94

EXT. HOUSTON HOUSE - NIGHT

94

The street is quiet and all but a few upstairs lights in the house are out.

CUT TO

95

INT. THE GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT

95

Claire sits on the edge of the bed. Brooke is under the covers.

BROOKE

Will Rosie come back?

CLAIRE

Do you know what I think, honey? I think Rosie may have gone to visit some friends.

BROOKE

But will she ever come back?

CLAIRE

Well, we'll just have to wait and see.

Claire leans down and kisses her daughter.

CLAIRE

Go to sleep now. Tomorrow's another school day.

She stands and crosses toward the door.

BROOKE

Don't close the door, Mommy.

CLAIRE

I won't. Good night.

CONTINUED

101 CONTINUED

101

CLAIRE

He told me an awful story.

STEVEN

What? To scare you into rehiring
him?

The silence is then suddenly shattered by a loud, long,
crashing, dissonant arpeggio of piano keys. Claire quickly
sits up, fully shaken.

Steven, concerned there may be an intruder, stands up.

CUT TO

102 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

102

A few lamps are on. Claire huddles in her nightgown.
Steven stands behind the piano, staring down at the keys.

103 ANGLE - PIANO KEYS

103

Steven runs his fingers across the keyboard. At least a
dozen keys have been scarred or broken.

104 FAVOR STEVEN

104

He looks up from the keys and across the room to Claire.

BROOKE'S VOICE

(small and
frightened)

Mommy? Daddy?

Steven and Claire turn.

105 FAVOR BROOKE

105

She's entered the room, clutching her last toy -- the grey
and white rat -- and now stands staring up at the armoire,
directly in front of her, as it trembles as if from an earth-
quake. The glass doors rattle, and inside, delicate china
and crystal faintly clink together.

106 CLOSE - CLAIRE

106

CLAIRE

Brooke!

107 FAVOR STEVEN

107

He runs toward his daughter.

- 108 ARMOIRE 108
It begins to topple forward.
- 109 WIDER - STEVEN, BROOKE 109
Steven hurls himself toward Brooke, sweeps her into his arms, and throws both of them aside.
- 110 ANGLE - ARMOIRE 110
If falls to the floor with a shattering, splintering crash. Behind where the armoire stood, there are several large rat holes -- filled with moist rat hair.
- 111 WIDER ANGLE - LIVING ROOM 111
The lamps are suddenly extinguished.
- 112 CLOSE - CLAIRE 112
She screams as a chilling rush of scratching claws fills the shadows with a horrible menace.
- 113 WIDER - ROOM 113
The lights flash back on. Claire huddles in a corner. Steven, still with Brooke in his arms, listens intently to the frightening silence. Suddenly then, a stereo turns on -- very loud. It stops as suddenly as it began.
- CUT TO
- 114 INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT - ANGLE - STEVEN 114
Steven is dressing in jeans, boots, and a heavy sweatshirt, his expression fixed; savagely determined.
- 115 ANGLE - CLAIRE AND BROOKE 115
The two of them are on the bed, Claire stroking her daughter's hair, trying to calm them both.
- 116 INT. FIRST FLOOR HALL - NIGHT 116
Steven unlocks the cabinet, removes a shotgun and a handful of shells.
- 117 INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT 117
Claire moves from place to place, slamming and locking windows. The overhead light flickers off. Claire's breath catches in her throat.

CONTINUED

126 ANGLE - PANTRY 126
The door explodes.

127 INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT 127
Claire clutches Brooke, the two of them shuddering with hysterical sobs.

128 INT. THE KITCHEN - NIGHT 128
Steven approaches the ruined pantry door and kicks it aside. He uses the barrel of the shotgun as a prod.
And then he stops, seeing something:

128-A STEVEN'S POINT OF VIEW INTO THE PANTRY 128-A
Amidst the destruction from the shotgun blast he sees fur -- it looks like the body of the dead rat.

128-B THE SCENE 128-B
as Steven, smiling, reaches inside. He grabs the fur, begins lifting it out.

128-C STEVEN'S FACE 128-C
It goes in abject anger.

128-D HIS HAND 128-D
He holds the mink stole used to scare his wife earlier in the piece.

128-E THE SCENE 128-E
as Steven tosses the stole away and stands, gun in hand and ready to kill.

129 INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT 129
The door opens and Steven steps in.

130 FAVOR CLAIRE

130

Barely in control, she lashes out, violently:

CLAIRE

You can't kill him, Steven!

STEVEN

What are you talking about?

CLAIRE

He's...Mr. Keefer said....
(stops)

131 FAVOR BROOKE

131

And now, overhead, the terrible sound of the rat.

132 WIDER ANGLE - ROOM

132

The three of them stare up at the ceiling in dread.

133 FAVOR CEILING

133

The sound is louder now, heavier, larger, almost unreal.

134 FAVOR STEVEN

134

He runs from the bedroom.

135 INT. ATTIC - NIGHT 135

Steven reaches the top of the ladder and steps into the attic, sweeping his flashlight beam from side to side. For a moment nothing. Then, moving the beam back to an area he just passed, he steadies it.

136 CLOSE - STEVEN 136

He stares in disbelief. He's started to sweat.

137 STEVEN'S POINT OF VIEW - THE FLASHLIGHT BEAM 137

has created a huge shadow against one area of the banked road -- a shadow of something grotesque and impossibly large.

138 FAVOR STEVEN 138

He strains to see, or to hear.

139 FAVOR SHADOW 139

Now, a strange, rasping breath. Then another. And now, suddenly, the shadow moves -- with blinding speed.

140 ANGLE - SHOTGUN 140

Steven pulls the trigger. Flames explode from the barrel. The report seems to shake the entire house.

141 ANGLE - ROOF 141

A ragged piece flies out into the night.

142 INT. SECOND-FLOOR HALL - NIGHT 142

Claire races into the hall from the master bedroom.

CLAIRE
(screaming)
Stop it! Stop it! You're going to
kill us!

143 CLOSE - BEDROOM DOOR 143

It slams shut.

144 CLOSE - CLAIRE 144

She spins around, horrified.

145 INT. MASTER BEDROOM - CLOSE - DOOR LATCH 145
The concussion causes the latch to drop.

146 INT. SECOND-FLOOR HALL - NIGHT 146
Claire rushes to the bedroom door and throws her weight against it. It won't budge. She begins shouting, crying, screaming her daughter's name, hammering on the door.

CLAIRE
Brooke! Brooke! Open the door!
Please! Brooke!

147 FAVOR STEVEN 147
He stumbles down the attic stairs and races toward the bedroom door.

148 ANGLE - STEVEN, CLAIRE 148
He pushes her aside, tries the knob, begins hammering on the door.

STEVEN
Brooke! Open the door, honey! Can
you hear me, Brooke!? Open the door!

Claire is slouched against the wall, sobbing pathetically. Steven suddenly raises the shotgun and aims at the lock.

CLAIRE
(screaming)
No! No! You'll kill her!

149 FAVOR STEVEN 149
He pauses, decides not to shoot. He raises his leg and begins kicking at the door. Over and over again his booted foot smashes against the door.

150 ANGLE - DOOR 150
It begins to splinter as Steven violently kicks at it.

151 WIDER ANGLE - STEVEN, CLAIRE 151
The door gives, then bursts open.

152 CLOSE - STEVEN, CLAIRE 152
frozen in place. Claire's hands cover her mouth to stifle a scream. The two of them stare in mute, wide-eyed horror.

- 153 SHOOTING PAST STEVEN AND CLAIRE 153
- The bedroom lights are off. A shaft of light from the hall plays across the room and the bed. Brooke is sitting on the bed, her back to the wall, her legs drawn up against her chest. She's immobilized, petrified by fear. The light from the hall casts her shadow against the far wall. Less than two feet away is another: The shadow of the rat, facing her.
- 154 CLOSER ANGLE - BROOKE 154
- Her eyes are wider and wild, fixed on the thing we can't see. The only sound we hear is from the rat, a wheezing, rasping hideous breath.
- 155 CLOSER - RAT 155
- The darkness-obscured detail. It's a hulking, amorphous thing -- it might weigh a hundred pounds. Its wide-set, blood-red eyes gleam fiercely, and short breaths steam from its nostrils like fire from the mouth of some terrible, mythological beast.
- 156 FAVOR STEVEN, CLAIRE 156
- STEVEN
(barely audible)
Oh my God.
- Claire shrieks.
- 157 CLOSE - BROOKE 157
- BROOKE
(a tiny, pathetically vulnerable voice)
Mommy? Daddy?
- 158 FAVOR STEVEN, CLAIRE 158
- Steven winces at the sound of the tiny, pathetic voice. Claire begins to weep in her terror.
- 159 CLOSE - BROOKE 159
- She stares at the rat almost as if hypnotized, almost as if somehow communicating with it.
- 160 EXTREME CLOSE - RAT'S EYES 160
- molten, fiery, unwavering.

161 FAVOR STEVEN, CLAIRE

161

STEVEN

(softly)

Brooke? Brooke? Listen to me. I
want you to move, Brooke...but very
slowly....

CLAIRE

(hissed)

No! No, Steven!

Steven ignores her. He slowly begins to raise the shotgun.

STEVEN

It'll be all right, Brooke. I just
want you to slide your....

CLAIRE

Stop it! Please, Steven, I'm begging
you! It's called a devil rat -- it
can't be killed. Steven, it won't
die! You have to give it what it
wants!

162 CLOSER - FAVORING STEVEN

162

He continues to raise the shotgun to a firing position.

CLAIRE

You'll hit Brooke!

163 CLOSE - BROOKE

163

BROOKE

(barely
audible)

I think it's trying to tell me
something.

164 FAVOR STEVEN, CLAIRE

164

Claire stares at Steven, then turns back to her daughter.

CLAIRE

What, honey? What is it trying to
tell you?

STEVEN

(steadily)

Slide your legs off the bed, Brooke.
Now!

165 FAVOR BROOKE

165

BROOKE

Bring baby.

Claire turns to Steven again.

CLAIRE

Oh my God, Steven!

Steven continues to aim the shotgun toward the bed.

BROOKE

Bring the baby.

166 CLOSE - BROOKE

166

Her eyes are locked in the creature's embrace.

167 CLOSE - RAT'S EYES

167

They continue to pierce the darkness with their silent, intense demand.

168 CLOSE - BROOKE

168

BROOKE

Hers. Bring her baby back to her.

(X)

169 FAVOR STEVEN, CLAIRE

169

Claire's eyes are filled with tears; her voice still barely more than a whisper.

CLAIRE

Steven, listen to her, please, I beg
you, put down the gun!

170 THE SCENE

170

The shotgun remains firmly posed in Steven's hands, his finger on the trigger.

STEVEN

(hushed
but brutal)
Shuddup, Claire.

(X)

Then suddenly:

- 171 THE RAT (MINIATURE) 171
as it flops back from Brooke and begins dodging insanely around the room, first hitting one wall and breaking huge holes in the plaster, then hitting the next.
- 172 ON BROOKE 172
screaming at the top of her lungs as the whole room shudders, and ---
- 173 STEVEN AND CLAIRE 173
as the monster rat flashes across the doorway in front of them and knocks both of them down, and now:
- 174 THE RAT AGAIN (MINIATURE) 174
as it hits another wall and the whole house shakes -- this time the wall nearly caves entirely away, plaster dust exploding into the air, and ---
- 175 BROOKE 175
again screaming and shouting:

BROOKE
Please, Daddy! Bring her baby back
to her!
- 176 STEVEN AND CLAIRE 176
rising as the rat's furious movements suddenly come to a stop. They again look into the shambles of the room.
- 177 THEIR POINT OF VIEW - THE RAT 177
has again taken its position in front of Brooke in her bed. It's breath is seen in the air again, it's breathing hot and hard now.
- 178 FAVOR STEVEN 178
His finger trembles on the trigger.

179 FAVOR CLAIRE

179

CLAIRE
Steven -- ! For God's sake, just
give it what it wants!

180 CLOSE - BROOKE

180

Motionless, breathless, staring.

181 CLOSE - RAT

181

The hot breath steams from its nostrils. The eyes burn.

182 CLOSE - STEVEN

182

He gets ready to risk a shot.

182-A ON CLAIRE

182-A

CLAIRE
No, Steven! It only wants its baby!
Think with your heart instead of your
anger for once! Please!

182-B STEVEN AGAIN

182-B

He, for some unknown reason, hesitates. Something in his
wife's words has given him pause. A moment passes. Then
slowly, painfully, in an agony of doubt, Steven begins to
lower his shotgun.

183 WIDER ANGLE - STEVEN, CLAIRE

183

She slowly releases a long-held breath. Steven continues to
lower the shotgun, then lays it down on the floor in front of
them.

BROOKE
Bring it now, Daddy. Bring her baby
back to her.

Steve begins to move for the door.

184 OMITTED

184

CUT TO

- 185 EXT. SIDE OF THE GARAGE - NIGHT 185
- Steven is frantically rummaging through the trash cans. Not remembering which one contains the dead rat, he must search through all of them. Oblivious to the muck, the insects, the odors, he rips things apart, overturns the cans, gets down on his hands and knees -- and only then does he find the white ice cream bag.
- 185-A INT. THE BEDROOM 185-A
- It's an impasse: Brooke is on the bed, the massive rat staring at her. Claire watches them both, frozen in horror as she prays for Steven's quick return.
- 185-B INT. THE LIVING ROOM 185-B
- Steven enters the house, carrying an open shoe box.
- He puts it down and quickly moves to the gun closet established earlier. He reaches inside and finds a nickle-plated Smith and Wesson snubnose .38. He checks to see if it's loaded, then secretes the weapon in his pocket.
- 186 INT. STAIRWAY - NIGHT 186
- Steven rushes up the stairs, carefully holding the open shoe box.
- 187 INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT 187
- Steven comes to the doorway, panting, out of breath. He tries to compose himself. Claire glances down at the thing in the box, then quickly turns away.
- 188 CLOSE - RAT'S EYES 188
- Watchful, burning, wary.
- 189 WIDER - ROOM 189
- Steven slowly steps into the bedroom. Claire holds her breath, her hands once again back over her lips. With his eyes never leaving the rat, Steven slowly crosses toward a window on the far wall.
- 190 CLOSE - BROOKE 190
- Transfixed.

- 191 CLOSE - CLAIRE 191
Statue-like.
- 192 FAVOR STEVEN 192
He unlocks the window and pushes it open. He reaches into the box, gently lifts the tiny body, and carefully places it onto the sill. He steps back and sets the empty box on the dresser. He looks down at the creature.
- 193 ANGLE - RAT 193
Motionless. The only sound is its raspy breath.
- 194 WIDER - ROOM 194
Steven very slowly begins back across the room, this time moving toward the bed. He stops when he's come to within arm's reach of Brooke. He turns to look back at the rat.
- 195 ANGLE - RAT 195
It moves, turning to go retrieve its dead offspring.
- 196 CLOSE - CLAIRE 196
Tears spill down her cheeks, she moves for her daughter.
- 197 FAVOR STEVEN 197
He realizes that Brooke's jeopardy is over. He reaches into his pocket and pulls out the .38, leveling it at the:
- 198 THE RAT 198
Somehow the huge animal knows what's going on behind its back as it moves closer to the open window. It stops, turns, rears up and offers its soft belly to Steven's handgun.
- 199 CLOSE - CLAIRE, BROOKE 199
-- both of them seeing what's about to happen, Brooke saying:
BROOKE
Let her go, Daddy -- she just (X)
wanted her baby.
- 199-A STEVEN 199-A
For some reason he deliberates. Claire whispers:

CONTINUED

199-A CONTINUED

199-A

CLAIRE

She's testing you, Steven. Please.
You have nothing more to gain.

(X)

Another beat, Steven deliberating. Finally he lowers his
weapon; he's not going to shoot.

200 OMITTED

200

201 ANGLE - RAT

201

It turns and climbs to a position on the window sill.
It turns again to look back at Steven and his gun.

202 ON STEVEN

202

looking back. He won't shoot.

202-A ANGLE - RAT

202-A

Suddenly it gives a horrendous shot -- loud enough to
break eardrums.

202-B THE HOUSTON FAMILY

202-B

-- wincing, grabbing their ears.

202-C THE RAT AGAIN

202-C

It glows white and then disappears.

202-D CLOSE GROUP SHOT - STEVEN, CLAIRE, BROOKE

202-D

Brooke reaches out for her mother as Steven arrives with
with her. Claire takes Brooke from Steven's hands, holds
her tightly and sobs. Steven turns to look at:

202-E ANGLE - WINDOW

202-E

The devil rat is gone from the sill.

203
thru
205

OMITTED

203
thru
205

206 ANGLE - STEVEN

206

He moves slowly back across the room toward the window,
a confused, vulnerable, mind-blown look on his face. He

CONTINUED

206

CONTINUED

206

stares at where the rat once stood, then quickly shuts the window. He blankly crosses to his wife and child and looks at them. Claire and Brooke now both embrace him. Through her tears:

BROOKE

Oh, Daddy....

Steven grips his family tightly. Somehow he is a different man from what he was a few days ago.

The camera now begins to retreat from the Houston family.

207

EXT. THE HOUSTON HOUSE

207

It looks as it did on our first view. But now the wind is still. We hear a voice speaking over:

BROOKE'S VOICE

Where do you suppose she's going next, Daddy?

No answer is forthcoming.

FADE OUT

NIGHTMARESTERROR IN TOPANGA

FADE IN

1 OUR "CRUISE MISSILE" VIEW (EFFECTS) 1

America moves quickly below us. We're over rocky terrain, moving from Malibu, California, inland.

As the credits role a voice comes up -- a voice speaking to us from the void. It belongs to a woman of thirty we'll know only as "The Wife." The only think distinctive about her is the raspiness of her voice. A smoker.

WIFE

(coughs)

Cigarettes. I am quitting them tomorrow ---

There's a pause, and in it you hear a cigarette being lit. The Wife inhales before:

WIFE

I think the whole thing was designed to tell me something. Going out in the middle of the night for cigarettes...so stupid.

(inhales, coughs)

I mean I used the milk as an excuse ...but it wasn't the milk, it was the cigarettes.

(pause)

For sure: I quit tomorrow.

(beat)

That's it. In fact, this is the last one.

(coughs)

I mean over and out.

We've arrived in Topanga Canyon. We angle down and come to an abrupt stop:

2 EXT. RUGGED TERRAIN - NIGHT - VARIOUS CUTS 2

Jagged hills. Grey, miserable foliage, as much dead as alive. The moon and the distinctive, eerie sound of wild coyotes.

And then our camera drops. We see an empty asphalt highway wending its way through these hills. Beyond the highway, in the distance, homes can be seen -- homes that are separated by substantial distance.

CONTINUED

2 CONTINUED

2

The point of all this is simply this: If you live in this place, you live in wilderness and you live isolated.

Words appear:

TOPANGA CANYON

Los Angeles County, California

3 EXT. A HOUSE - NIGHT

3

It's a nice, not-too-big contemporary. Kids' stuff -- bikes, balls, Big Wheels -- litter the driveway.

4 INT. THE HOUSE - THE DEN - NIGHT

4

There is a youngish Husband and Wife and two small children -- one maybe three, the other older, perhaps six. The parents watch the television, the children play on the floor. The kids are dressed for bed. The six year old rolls a ball at the three year old. The three year old, lying on his back, laughs when the ball hits him softly on the side of his face. Cute.

CUT TO

5 INT. THE DEN - LATER

5

The children are no longer there. The eleven o'clock news is on. the Husband reads People magazine, the Wife goes over the monthly bills, smokes a cigarette. We intercut the Husband, the Wife, and:

6 THE TELEVISION SCREEN

6

A pretty local Newswoman has begun delivering the news. Through the course of what follows we see both the Husband and Wife grow progressively less concerned with what they're doing and begin paying more and more attention to the television.

NEWSWOMAN

The Los Angeles Sheriff's Department continues in its search tonight for escaped mental institution patient William Henry Glazier, formerly of Chatsworth. Glazier is wanted for questioning in connection with the so-called "Canyon Slayings" -- the home break-ins and brutal knife slayings of five separate Los Angeles canyon area residents in recent weeks.

CONTINUED

6

CONTINUED

6

A perfectly miserable snapshot of Glazier comes up, his eyes in shadows -- it could be almost anyone.

NEWSWOMAN

Glazier, here, is twenty-five years of age, just under six feet tall and heavily built. When last seen he was wearing a light beard.

The Newswoman reappears, looking concerned.

NEWSWOMAN

Anyone seeing a man matching this description is asked to contact the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department immediately at 555-8000. That's 555-8000. Citizens are warned not to try apprehending Glazier on their own as he is thought to be armed and extremely dangerous...Frightening stuff, Jack.

(X)

The camera shifts to include a Newsman seated at the same desk.

NEWSMAN

Frightening indeed, Maureen...sure hope they find that guy....

(X)

The Newswoman nods, solemnly. The camera shifts to the Newsman, alone.

NEWSMAN

In other news from around the Southland ---

As the newscast continues:

7

INT. THE DEN - NIGHT

7

Husband and Wife look at one another, the Wife shaking her head slowly.

WIFE

Is it getting worse every day or is it just me?

HUSBAND

I don't think it's just you.

The Wife extinguishes her cigarette and sighs.

CUT TO

8 INT. THE KITCHEN - A CLOCK 8

It reads midnight. We open to show the Wife at the cupboard. She reaches inside for a carton of London cigarettes, finds the carton is empty.

CUT TO

9 INT. THE DEN - NIGHT 9

The Wife appears, putting on her coat. The Husband looks to her.

WIFE

Need anything from the store?

HUSBAND

(a beat; a sigh)

Can't you wait until morning?

WIFE

I'm out of cigarettes and we need milk for breakfast. I'll be right back.

The Husband looks at her -- pained.

HUSBAND

Come on, Leese. There's a nut out there somewhere. Forget it.

WIFE

I'll be gone ten minutes! He isn't attacking cars for heaven's sake!

The Husband begins shaking his head, this is building into an issue.

HUSBAND

Nope. You are not going out for cigarettes. You're a slave to the damn things.

(softer)

Lisa -- I mean it.

He rises, quickly, quits the room.

The Wife watches him leave, not saying anything.

CUT TO

9-A INT. THE KITCHEN - NIGHT 9-A

The Wife is bent over a garbage bag. She looks through the garbage for a good butt. Nothing. Zero. Everything she finds is burned right down to the filter.

CUT TO

9-B INT. A CLOSET - NIGHT

9-B

The Wife is going through the pockets of various jackets and coats. No cigarettes. One empty package, but it is indeed empty.

CUT TO

9-C INT. THE KIDS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

9-C

The Husband stands at the bedside of the little Girl, the little Girl saying:

GIRL

I can't sleep.

HUSBAND

(kneels, speaks
gently)

You have to sleep, curly. Do you
know what time it is?

CUT TO

10 INT. THE GARAGE - NIGHT

10

The Wife is sitting in the station wagon.

11 INSIDE THE CAR

11

The Wife punches the remote control button and the garage door begins to rise.

12 OMITTED

12

13 ON THE WIFE

13

She checks to see that her car doors are locked.

14 EXT. THE HOUSE - NIGHT

14

The station wagon backs into the drive and the garage door shuts. The vehicle moves out to the highway, stops before backing onto the public thoroughfare.

15 INT. THE STATION WAGON - THE WIFE

15

She looks in both directions, starts to back out, then for no good reason, stops. The Wife just pauses a moment. She looks back at her home. Could it possibly be stupid for her to leave here tonight? Naw. Dumb to be spooked.

The car begins to move when suddenly there's a flash of movement and a wicked thud as a body piles into her driver's door -- hard. The Wife gasps, spins wide-eyed toward:

15-A INT. LISA'S CHEVY - EXTREMELY TIGHT ON HER FACE

15-A
(X)
(X)

as she backs down her driveway, looking backward into the direction of travel (over right shoulder with complacent expression) then suddenly she spins toward the driver's side window, terrified, in response to sudden noise made by neighbor's German shepherd dog. Perhaps she actually screams or audibly gasps.

16 THE RAGING GERMAN SHEPHERD OUTSIDE HER WINDOW

16

-- teeth flashing and biting at the air, barking viciously,
and then suddenly:

17 THE WHOLE SCENE

17

The dog's owner scurries up, leashes the animal and quickly
quiets it. The man is a Neighbor, forty. The Wife, suddenly
relieved, slowly rolls down her window.

WIFE

Scared the hell out of me ---

NEIGHBOR

Sorry. I really shouldn't let him
off the leash.

The Wife is touching at her chest. Her heart is pounding.

WIFE

Wooo.

NEIGHBOR

Thought we'd just take a walk through
the neighborhood. They say that nut's
up here in Topanga somewhere.

WIFE

Really?

NEIGHBOR

Just on the news. A Sheriff's
deputy was slashed all to hell down
in Malibu. Guy who did it ran up
into the hills.

WIFE

Wow.

NEIGHBOR

(nods)

You probably shouldn't go out if ya
don't have to.

WIFE

Just going down to the store.

NEIGHBOR

Maybe you oughta send Bill.

WIFE

I think I'd rather have him stay here
with the kids, thanks.

CONTINUED

17

CONTINUED

17

NEIGHBOR

(nods)
Right.
(beat)
Take care ---

WIFE

I will.

She begins rolling up her window, stops.

WIFE

Tell Linda I have the wallpaper book
she wanted.

NEIGHBOR

Great. Night.

WIFE

Night, Norman.

Her window closes and she backs out into Topanga Canyon
Boulevard. The Neighbor watches until the car is gone, then
continues on his walk.

18

EXT. THE STATION WAGON - NIGHT

18

It appears, runs by. We're on a curvy stretch of canyon road.

18-1A
thru
18-1D

EXT. TOPANGA CANYON - NIGHT - FOUR SEPARATE SHOTS

18-1A
thru
18-1D
(X)

Arty runbys: Open on piece of lousy foliage or interest-
ing rock formation indigenous to Topanga-type canyon and
move around slowly to find Topanga highway. Lisa's Chevy
appears on the move. We follow as she runs by, heading
right to left in two of the shots, left to right in the
other two.

Aside from being time-cut, shot functions to establish fact (X)
that canyon area is desolate, uncivilized.

18-1E
and
18-1F

EXT. TOPANGA CANYON - NIGHT - TWO SEPARATE SHOTS

18-1E
and
18-1F
(X)

Two other canyon runbys, less elaborate. Shoot from low
angle at shoulder of road. Chevy comes toward us, passes.
Right to left one time, left to right another time.

18-A INT. THE TOPANGA HOUSE - NIGHT

18-A

The Husband moves out of the kids' room, shutting the door behind him. He moves down the hallway, toward the living room.

18-B INT. THE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

18-B

The Husband enters, looks around.

HUSBAND

Lisa?

And then his eyes catch sight of something on the coffee table:

18-C THE TABLE

18-C

on it there is a note.

18-D THE SCENE

18-D

as the Husband picks it up, reads.

18-E INSERT - THE NOTE

18-E

A woman's curly hand.

Non addicts cannot understand.
Be back in a minute.

Love, Lisa

18-F THE SCENE

18-F

The Husband sighs and tosses the note back onto the table.

19 INT. THE STATION WAGON - MOVING - NIGHT

19

The Wife reaches over, turns on the news, AM news -- a KFWB-type channel -- the clatter of the teletype machines heard under the Newscaster's Voice.

NEWSCASTER'S VOICE

-- the thirty-three-year-old Highway Patrolman was taken to Malibu Emergency Hospital with multiple knife wounds to the upper chest and face. Hospital spokesmen say he is in surgery at the moment and have declined to list his condition. Phillips' assailant may have been William Henry Glazier -- the escaped mental patient wanted in connection with the grizzly knife slayings of five Los Angeles canyon residents in recent weeks. Witnesses to the assault say the man matching Glazier's description was wearing grey institutional-type work clothes and escaped into the Topanga foothills where Sheriff's Department officials are now conducting an intense foot and helicopter search. KFCA reporter Clive Reynolds has a live report from Sheriff's Department Headquarters in ---

The radio goes to music, the Wife has suddenly changed to a music channel. She lights a cigarette. Last one in the pack.

20 CLOSE ON THE WIFE

20

driving. Just a little bit bothered.

20-A	EXT. TOPANGA CANYON INTERSECTION - NIGHT - HITCHHIKER	20-A
	A spooky-looking hitchhiker waits near a canyon intersection. He looks:	
20-B	UP THE ROAD	20-B
	to see Lisa's Chevy headlights approaching.	
20-C	THE HITCHHIKER	20-C
	Slowly, in an odd, ominous way, sticks out his thumb.	
20-D	INT. LISA'S CHEVY	20-D
	shooting past Lisa through windshield as the hitchhiker appears in her headlights. She sits in tension, locks her right side door as she stops at the stop sign.	
	Camera swivels to show the hitchhiker standing right outside her door. He thinks she's stopped for him and reaches for the door handle.	
20-E	ON LISA	20-E
	reacting in fear and stabbing the accelerator pedal.	
20-F	SHOOTING FROM BEHIND LISA AGAIN	20-F
	as the hitchhiker jumps back from the car, and ---	
20-G	EXT. THE INTERSECTION	20-G
	as Lisa's Chevy pulls quickly into the intersection and a car from the intersecting road has to slam on its brakes to avoid hitting her broadside, and ---	
20-H	LISA AT THE WHEEL	20-H
	steering out of harm's way, a look of total shock and fear on her face as the other car's horn blares at her.	
20-I	EXT. THE INTERSECTION	20-I
	as Lisa's Chevy continues on its way.	

- 20-J INT. LISA'S CHEVY - ON LISA 20-J
(X)
looking into her mirror and sagging in relief. It was a (X)
near-miss. She's shaky now.
- 21 INT. THE HOUSE - THE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 21
The Husband is taking off his shirt, getting ready for bed.
He stops, listens. It takes a moment and then we hear it
too: A clunking sound coming from somewhere off.
Scowling a little, listening hard, the Husband decides to
see what the hell it is. He moves out of the room.
- 22 INT. THE HOUSE - NIGHT 22
We follow the Husband down a hallway to a bedroom door. The
noise is faintly louder here. The Husband opens that door.
- 23 HIS MOVING POINT OF VIEW INTO THE NEW ROOM - THE KIDS' 23
BEDROOM
We move past the kids who sleep in the oddball positions
kids sleep in, move all the way to the open window where a
breeze is moving the curtains which in turn moves a large
toy, a mechanical robot or some such, back and forth against
a wall. This is the source of the clunking sound.
- 24 THE SCENE 24
as the Husband moves into the room, shuts the open window,
covers his youngest, exits.
- 25 EXT. TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD - NIGHT 25
The station wagon runs by. When it does, the camera cranes
up -- high enough to see over where the toad crests. Beyond
the crest Pacific Coast Highway can be seen -- the ocean and
lights. Civilization.
The station wagon disappears in that direction.
- 25-A EXT. INTERSECTION TOPANGA CANYON AND THE PACIFIC COAST 25-A
HIGHWAY - TWO SEPARATE SHOTS (X)
In one shot Lisa turns onto Pacific Coast Highway from (X)
Topanga Canyon. A sign establishes the PCH -- that she's
leaving the canyon area and entering lights, civilization.
- 26 EXT. TOPANGA CANYON BOULEVARD AND THE PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY 26
- TIME PASSAGE
The station wagon sits at the stoplight.

26-A EXT. CANYON STOPLIGHT - NIGHT 26-A

Lisa's car comes to a stop at the light.

26-B SHOOTING PAST LISA'S CAR 26-B

to what's approaching behind: A set of headlights. The car comes closer, stops beside Lisa.

27 ON THE WIFE 27

-- behind the wheel. She feels someone staring at her. We rack focus past her to the shadowy figure of a man in the car that's waiting at the light beside her. Slowly, trepidaciously, the Wife looks in the man's direction: a pause and then the figure in the other car leans into light. He's a business guy. Bespectacled, well-dressed, benign.

The Wife sighs, rubs at her neck. She knows her nervousness is ridiculous.

The light changes.

27-A INT. LISA'S CAR 27-A

She looks over to:

27-B THE FIGURE 27-B

behind the other car's wheel. A pause and then the figure in the other car leans into the light. He's a business guy. Bespectacled, well-dressed, benign. (Use same extra if possible.)

27-C ON LISA 27-C

sighing, rubbing at her neck. She thinks this nervousness is ridiculous.

28 AN OPEN SHOT 28

as the station wagon turns left to move up the Pacific Coast Highway.

28-A EXT. THE INTERSECTION 28-A

The light changes and the two cars continue on their way, toward PCH.

28-B LISA'S CHEVY

28-B

Full runby on PCH heading in direction of Seven-Eleven store.

29 AT A SEVEN-ELEVEN STORE - NIGHT - LATER

29

The Wife's station wagon is parked, with two or three other cars, in the lot out front.

30 INT. THE SEVEN-ELEVEN - NIGHT

30

Fluorescent-lit, nothing spooky about the place. Two or three people are lined up at the front check-out stand. An old fart is buying a Penthouse, (he leers at Lisa), a young couple laughing and snuggling as they buy their six-packs of beer. (X)

31 AT THE MILK COOLER

31

The Wife gets two quarts of milk. She starts toward the front of the store, grabs some orange juice on the way.

32 AT THE FRONT COUNTER

32

as the Wife arrives and the kids buying the beer exit. The Wife gives her items to the middle-aged Clerk, a weird, somehow ominous guy. (X)

WIFE

A pack of Londons too, please.

He produces the pack of cigarettes, begins totalling everything on the cash register.

CLERK

Three fifty-eight.

The Wife nods and begins withdrawing some dollar bills from her wallet.

CLERK

Hear about the Highway Patrolman gettin' stabbed up here?

WIFE

(nods)
Terrible.

CONTINUED

32

CONTINUED

32

CLERK

Happened just up the road. Shoulda
seen the cop cars. Those guys come
real fast when it's one of their own.

The Clerk rings up her money.

WIFE

I don't envy you having to work here
alone all night ---

CLERK

(cuts her)
-- I'm not alone.

He reaches under the counter, surreptitiously shows a
Smith & Wesson, four-inch barrel .38.

CLERK

I just wish that low-brow'd come
in here.

The Wife looks down at the weapon. It horrifies her:
Everyone is paranoid.

WIFE

I don't like guns.

The Clerk nods. The Wife quickly lights a cigarette, the
Clerk watching her. She sees his stare, says:

WIFE

Lousy habit.

She then picks up her groceries and heads for the door.

33

INT. THE STATION WAGON - NIGHT

33

The Wife reaches the vehicle and gets inside, placing her
bag of groceries on the seat beside her. She starts the
car's engine.

34

INT. THE STATION WAGON - LATER - MOVING

34

We're moving up the well-illuminated Pacific Coast Highway.
After a moment of listening to the music on the radio, the
Wife looks down at something on the dashboard. A small
double-take and she gets concerned:

- 35 HER POINT OF VIEW - THE GAS GAUGE 35
It's on dead zero. Empty.
- 36 ON THE WIFE 36
She sags.
- 37 EXT. A CLOSED FILLING STATION - PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - NIGHT 37
NIGHT - LATER
It's a big place, major brand, but closed and dark. We see the station wagon move up slowly.
- 37-A EXT. A CLOSED PCH GAS STATION - NIGHT 37-A
Lisa's car pulls into the drive and moves slowly by the pumps.
- 38 INT. THE STATION WAGON 38
The Wife finishes her look and drives on, even more concerned.
- 38-A INT. THE CAR 38-A
Lisa looking toward:
- 38-B SLOWLY MOVING POINT OF VIEW - THE "CLOSED" SIGNS 38-B
in the drive.
- 38-C INT. THE CAR AGAIN 38-C
Lisa reacting. She says:

LISA
Nuts.
- 38-D EXT. THE CLOSED GAS STATION 38-D
Lisa's car pulls out onto the PCH.
- 39 EXT. THE PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - NIGHT - LATER 39
The station wagon drives by, continues on its way back toward Topanga Canyon Boulevard.

- 40 INT. THE STATION WAGON - THE WIFE 40
- The camera moves up from the gas gauge to the Wife's now very concerned face. She sees something new.
- 41 HER POINT OF VIEW - ANOTHER MAJOR BRAND GAS STATION 41
- It's dark. Closed tight.
- 41-A EXT. ANOTHER CLOSED PCH GAS STATION 41-A
- Lisa's car pulls in, slows as she looks into the gas station building. The car leaves the frame and we rack focus to something blurring our view in the extreme f.g. It is a gas pump nozzle, padlocked into place.
- 42 EXT. THE GAS STATION - NIGHT 42
- The station wagon pulls into the deserted drive. It stops near some outdoor telephone booths.
- 43 ON THE WIFE 43
- She looks at:
- 43-A EXTERIOR - TIGHT ON LISA'S FACE - NIGHT 43-A
- She flicks her head on hearing a spooky sound in the bushes at the Pacific Coast Highway gas station with the telephone booth. (To be inserted.)
- Shoot this at Canyon gas station but tight enough so we have no idea of the surrounding geography.
- 44 THE BOOTHS 44
- dark, empty. Then we pan further, to the heavy foliage and shadows near the booths. Someone could be hiding in there.
- 45 ON THE WIFE 45
- making her decision. She drops the station wagon into gear.
- 46 EXT. THE GAS STATION DRIVE 46
- The station wagon pulls out on the Pacific Coast Highway again, pulls away.

- 47 THE INTERSECTION OF PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY AND TOPANGA CANYON 47
BOULEVARD
- The station wagon turns the corner, heading up into the canyon, in the direction of home.
- 47-A EXT. FROM PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY TO TOPANGA CANYON 47-A
(X)
In second shot Lisa turns onto Topanga from PCH, heading back home. A sign tells us: "Topanga Canyon". Please (X)
feature sign.
- Also, we mustn't be afraid to let these shots run long if (X)
they want to. They can be used as short musical sequences, to build tension. (Music is getting spooky as she reenters Topanga with an empty gas tank.)
- 48 ON THE GAS GAUGE 48
- If it was empty before, it's below empty now.
- 49 ON THE WIFE 49
- She knows she'll never make it. She hits at the car's steering wheel in anger.
- WIFE
(to herself)
Damn it. So stupid.
- 50 EXT. THE STATION WAGON 50
- It runs by, rounds the next corner, disappears.
- 51 INT. THE STATION WAGON - NIGHT 51
- The Wife drives for an instant, then reacts to the sight of something new.
- 52 HER POINT OF VIEW - UP THE ROAD 52
- There is a tiny gas station in the middle of nowhere -- a broken-down little rat trap with no-name brand gasoline. But the place is open. Incandescent lights, yellow and dim, illuminate the drive and small, shed-like station building.
- 53 IN THE GAS STATION DRIVE 53
- as the station wagon pulls in and the drive bell rings.

54 ON THE WIFE

54

sitting there. She reaches into her purse, pulls out a five dollar bill, waits. And then she realizes no one is coming. She looks:

55 INTO THE TINY STATION BUILDING

55

where the Attendant should be. No one.

56 THE WIFE

56

She gingerly tweets the horn. She looks again.

56-A CLOSEUP - LISA

56-A

Her terror building as she sits behind car's steering wheel.

57 THE TINY SERVICE STATION BUILDING

57

A shadowy figure of a man rises into view. He starts slowly out onto the drive, appraising the station wagon as he moves. As he moves slowly closer, we get a better look. He's dressed in dirty, grey work clothes and is maybe twenty-five or twenty-six years of age -- a stubbly beard darkening his cheeks and chin. He's maybe six feet tall, heavily built, strange looking -- indeed ominous: He looks a lot like the photo seen on television of William Henry Glazier. But then that photo looked like a lot of people.

AT "ZAK'S CANYON GAS"

For before Attendant appears:

57-A ATTENDANT'S FEET

57-A

moving over the shadowy pavement coming out of the shadows toward Lisa's car.

57-B LISA'S REACTION TO THIS

57-B

Does she or doesn't she hear something?

Various inserts to sell fact that Attendant has never before pumped gas in his life (cheat).

A) He can't get the pump nozzle into the Chevy's gas tank.

CONTINUED

57-B CONTINUED

57-B

B) He can't get the cap back onto the gas tank after the gas is in the car -- hands shaky. (X)

C) A cutaway to the gas pump, the dollars registering on the pump's readout. (X)

58 ON THE WIFE

58

as she reacts to what she sees, turns her eyes quickly forward. Could this possibly be Glazier? We rack focus as the Attendant arrives at the closed driver's side window.

He says nothing, just kind of stands there. The Wife must make a quick decision. Should she get the hell out of here? She looks to:

59 THE IGNITION KEY

59

A pause, and then her hand appears in frame moving slowly and inconspicuously toward the key.

ATTENDANT'S VOICE

Need gas?

The Wife's hand suddenly stops moving.

60 INT. THE STATION WAGON

60

The Wife turns to look toward the Attendant. She pauses. He looks back at her, holds out his arms as if to say, "What do you want?"

The Wife speaks throughout the still-closed side window:

WIFE

Five dollars, please.

The Attendant moves slowly back to the gas pump. The Wife sighs, tries to relax.

- 61 ON THE ATTENDANT 61
He inserts the nozzle of the gas hose into the station wagon, begins pumping gas.
- 62 CLOSE ON THE ATTENDANT 62
He is an odd one. He begins looking toward the woman behind the station wagon's wheel. He studies her.
- 63 ON THE WIFE 63
head facing forward, but nervous. Her eyes glance surreptitiously down to:
- 64 HER OUTSIDE REARVIEW MIRROR 64
The Attendant's image can be seen in the mirror, filling the tank and looking back at her. He just looks and looks and looks.
- 65 THE ATTENDANT'S EYES 65
Now he sees something that really catches his attention. We don't know what it is.
- 66 ON THE WIFE 66
She's still staring into the rearview mirror: She sees the Attendant finish pumping gas and pull the hose nozzle from her vehicle and move out of view. He's moving slowly, strangely.
- 67 ON THE ATTENDANT 67
He takes the hose from the car's tank, begins moving purposefully toward the car's driver's side window.
- 68 A NEW ANGLE ON THE WIFE 68
jumping slightly as she hears:

ATTENDANT

Five dollars.

The Attendant has appeared outside the side window. He still holds the heavy gasoline pump nozzle in his right hand. He's holding it like a weapon.

The Wife cracks her window about an inch. She moves the five dollar bill into the crack, proffering it.

69

AN OPEN SHOT

69

As the Attendant slowly reaches up to take the five dollars, stops short, pauses, and then, in the blink of an eye, swings the pump nozzle to clobber the driver's side window with all of his strength. The glass shatters, and the Wife lets loose with a deafening scream.

QUICK CUT TO

70

THE ATTENDANT'S HAND

70

again flailing out with the heavy nozzle, this time hammering the glass an even harder blast. The glass breaks and a hole appears -- a hole large enough for the Attendant's hand to reach in and unlock the driver's door.

QUICK CUT TO

71

THE WIFE

71

screaming like a cornered animal as she bolts across the car to the other door and begins trying to open it, but the lock is down. She first has to lift it, only by the time she does, the driver's door has been hurled open and the Attendant has her by the legs.

72

ON THE ATTENDANT

72

With a horrible grunt and one mighty yank, he pulls the Wife out of the car, screaming. She tries to struggle away, but it's no use -- he has her in an unbelievable grip. He begins carrying the struggling Wife quickly back toward the tiny station building.

72-A

INSERTS (SUBLIMINAL CUTS)

72-A

- 1) Attendant's hands on Lisa, pulling her roughly.
- 2) Her hands grabbing at the car's door, trying to hang on, to no avail.
- 3) Lisa's flailing feet dragging over the ground.
- 4) Lisa's face tight as she screams as she's being dragged.
- 5) Lisa's hands grabbing at the Attendant's hands, scratching, prying at them frantically.
- 6) Attendant's heavy boots slamming the ground as he pulls Lisa back to the building.

73 A MOVING SHOT

73

tracking with the Attendant and the Wife as they fly back toward the station building, the Wife fighting for all she's worth, trying to get away. She kicks, scratches, bites, flails, none of it to any avail until they reach:

74 THE STATION BUILDING THRESHOLD

74

where the Wife is somehow able to brace her feet against the door frame as they begin moving through. The Attendant loses his grip and the Wife falls to the cement, the Attendant continuing his head-long charge into the building.

75 ON THE WIFE

75

beginning to scurry to her feet when she suddenly stops, looking directly back into the station building with a look of total horror on her face.

WIFE

No...Please ---

76 HER POINT OF VIEW - THE ATTENDANT

76

is planted in the doorway, both hands wrapped around the grip of a .357 Magnum, in firing position. A pause and then the Attendant's eyes go big.

A beat and then the pistol bucks in the Attendant's hands, flames and sparks belch from the muzzle, and now:

77 THE WIFE

77

screaming, slumping, covering her head, then suddenly realizing she's not been hit. She spins to look to where the Attendant is staring at something behind her, staring at a place where a masculine grunt has come from, looking to ---

78 WILLIAM HENRY GLAZIER

78

standing almost directly above the Wife, grabbing for his bullet-wounded right torso (blood shows) and dropping a large knife from his right hand. (X)

Suddenly, Glazier screams at the top of his lungs, rolls his insane eyes and spins to begin moving quickly away from the Attendant and Wife, out toward the highway in front of the station. And then he drops hard to the pavement, goes quiet, lifeless, still.

79 ON THE ATTENDANT 79
His gun is still aimed, but then his arms begin dropping -- (X)
he's not going to fire again.

80 THE WIFE 80
shifting her shocked eyes from the Attendant back to:

81 GLAZIER 81
lying in a heap on the cement drive, a pool of blood growing
beneath him.

82 THE STATION DRIVE 82
as the Attendant puts his gun on the ground.

ATTENDANT
He was in your backseat with a
knife. (X)
The Attendant kneels beside the Wife.
The Wife is unable to speak through what have become deep (X)
sobs. (X)

ATTENDANT
It's over now...It's over...Let's
just call the cops....
The Attendant begins helping the Wife gently to her feet....

DISSOLVE TO

82-A EXT. THE TOPANGA HOME - NIGHT 82-A
A squad car pulls up into the drive.
The Husband, who's been waiting at the door, moves into the
front yard and crosses to the squad car.

82-B AT THE SQUAD CAR 82-B
The Wife gets out of the back, thanking the two patrolmen
in front. The Husband joins her, embraces her, waves to
the policemen as they back their car out of the drive.

82-C WITH THE HUSBAND AND WIFE 82-C
as they walk back toward the entrance to their house.

CONTINUED

82-C CONTINUED

82-C

WIFE

I was so shakey, I was afraid to
drive.

Another step.

WIFE

Are you mad at me?

He squeezes he shoulder, looks down at her with a small
ironic smile.

CONTINUED

82-C CONTINUED

82-C

HUSBAND

Get your cigarettes?

The Wife sags, stops dead in her tracks. She reaches into her purse, lifts out the unopened package of cigarettes, tosses them into the garbage can they are passing in the driveway.

WIFE

No more.

HUSBAND

No more.

82-D A LONG SHOT

82-D

They disappear into their home.

83
and
84

OMITTED

83
and
84

FADE OUT

THE END

EXEC. PRODUCER: Christopher Crowe
SUPV. PRODUCER: Alex Beaton
PRODUCER: Andrew Mirisch

PROD. #83495
(Formerly: #85780)
November 19, 1982 (F.R.)
Rev. 11/23/82 (F.R.)
Rev. 11/24/82 (F.R.)
Rev. 11/26/82 (F.R.)
Rev. 11/29/82 (F.R.)

NIGHTMARES
THE BENEDICTION

Written
by
Christopher Crowe

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NIGHTMARES
THE BENEDICTION

CAST

FATHER FRANK MC LEOD
FATHER LOUIS DEL AMO
THE BISHOP

MRS. RODRIGUEZ
THE SHERIFF

SETS

INTERIORS:

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
CATHOLIC CHURCH
THE BISHOP'S RESIDENCE
THE RECTORY
MC LEOD'S BEDROOM
KITCHEN
LIVING ROOM

EXTERIORS:

RED DESERT
THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
CATHOLIC CHURCH
THE GAS STATION
THE RECTORY
DESERT HIGHWAY

NIGHTMARESTHE BENEDICTION

FADE IN

1 OUR "CRUISE MISSILE" POINT OF VIEW - DAY - TRAVELING 1

The earthscape peels away beneath us as we move at incredible speed. We pass out of the city and nose up into blue sky. We nose down again and find ourselves above an entirely new setting.

2 RED DESERT 2

-- the entire landscape is bathed in red. Funny. Because it's also rather dark, even though it is high noon. Not your usual everyday desert.

We hear voices coming to us from this haunted place:

MC LEOD'S VOICE

Dominus vobiscum.

PEOPLE'S VOICE

Et cum Spiritu tuo.

MC LEOD'S VOICE

Panem de celo praestitisti eis.

PEOPLE'S VOICE

Omne delectamentum in se habentem.

MC LEOD'S VOICE

Oremus. Deus, qui nobis sub
Sacramento mirabili passionis tuae
mempriam reliquisti and tribue,
quaesumus, ita nos corporis et ---

We arrive over a tiny and impoverished Roman Catholic church in the middle of nowhere. We angle down, rocket toward the church and stop.

3 EXT. THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CATHOLIC CHURCH - DAY - EFFECT 3

The darkness and redness at high noon continues as we get our first look at this place. To one side of the church building is a small and dusty cemetery; on the other side sits a sagging rectory structure, the priest's quarters. A two-lane blacktop road passes in front of the buildings and extends all the way to the horizon in both directions.

- 4 ON THE MAN 4
- who hoes at the dusty earth in the pathetic tomato patch behind the rectory building. He's in his late thirties, large, physical looking, wearing a tattered Mexican laborer's hat and faded bib overalls. Under the overalls is a black shirt with cleric's collar. A priest. He hears something, looks up to see:
- 5 A WILD FAWN 5
- It's suddenly appeared at the edge of the tomato patch a few yards away. Odd. Deer aren't normally known to inhabit the desert.
- 6 THE SCENE 6
- as the priest pauses, looking at the animal, then picks up a handful of tomato leaves from his garden. He takes a couple of easy steps toward the fawn, offering the food.
- 7 THE FAWN 7
- big-eyed, cute, nose quivering, watching the priest as he approaches.
- 8 THE SCENE 8
- as the fawn takes a trepidatious step toward the priest to accept his gift. But then suddenly there's a loud rattling sound, and ---
- 9 THE PRIEST'S FACE 9
- eyes darting toward ---
- 10 THE RATTLESNAKE 10
- coiled at the fawn's legs and then suddenly the snake strikes out, fangs sinking deep into the fawn's tiny leg, and ---
- 11 THE FAWN - QUICK CUT 11
- falling as quickly as if shot by a high-powdered rifle, and ---

12 THE PRIEST 12
suddenly bringing his hoe into play and striking at the snake with a single quick, reflexive move, and ---

13 THE SNAKE - QUICK CUT 13
as the hoe comes down to sever its head, and now ---

14 THE SCENE 14
as the priest reaches quickly down to grab the snake's body and hurl it high into the air.

15 ON THE PRIEST 15
ripping back the hand that touched the snake in pain. He looks at his open palm.

16 WHAT HE SEES 16
the flesh of his palm is seared where the snake has touched him, seared as if the snake's body was a thousand degrees hot. The flesh is scorched and smoking and peeled back to reveal blood, gristle and bone.

17 THE PRIEST'S FACE 17
his eyes go wide in horror and he begins to shout.

QUICK CUT TO

18 FATHER FRANK MC LEOD - NORMAL COLOR, SOUND 18 (X)
as he jack-knives into a sitting position and consciousness on his bed, still shouting.
McLeod begins relaxing as his nightmare drains from his mind. He looks at his hand. It's not burned.
Another priest suddenly appears in the doorway of the bedroom, a younger man, a rugged-looking Mexican-American in his early thirties. This is Father Del Amo.

DEL AMO
You all right ---

McLeod doesn't immediately answer, he just shifts his feet slowly to the floor. We see he is fully dressed, his clothes badly wrinkled -- it's obvious he's slept in them.

CONTINUED

18

CONTINUED

18

MC LEOD
Nightmare. Horrible.

DEL AMO
What was it?

McLeod thinks a moment.

MC LEOD
Nothing. I'm sorry.

19

DEL AMO

19

He continues looking at the other priest, concerned. And then he looks to:

20

THE BOTTLE OF SCOTCH

20

lying empty on the floor near McLeod's bed.

21

THE SCENE AGAIN

21

as the priests look at one another. McLeod puts a finger to his temple and makes a circular gesture.

MC LEOD
It's all getting a little extreme.
Think maybe I should visit my local
parish priest?

But Del Amo doesn't smile. He's deeply concerned for his friend.

DEL AMO
It's almost nine o'clock, Frank.

McLeod nods. Del Amo quits the room. McLeod sags back onto the bed, a man in cosmic pain.

CUT TO

22

MC LEOD'S FACE

22

eyes closed, murmuring in Latin with great intensity and conviction. We pull back:

- 23 INT. IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH - DAY 23
- A funeral Mass is in progress, the church filled with poor-looking Mexican families. There is lots of crying going on -- on the altar is a small casket containing the still body of a four-year-old boy.
- McLeod is on the altar dressed in satin funeral vestments, sure and authoritative looking. Two young Mexican altar boys serve the Mass behind him.
- 24 TIGHT ON MC LEOD 24
- closing his eyes even tighter as he murmurs a Latin prayer, almost as if he's feeling some kind of internal pain. And then he stops. (X)
- 25 ON THE MEXICAN ALTAR BOYS 25
- They look at the priest, then to each other. What's the hold up?
- 26 ON MC LEOD 26
- forcing himself to begin praying in Latin again. He finishes the prayer. (X)
- 27 A NEW ANGLE 27
- as McLeod turns from the altar and moves to the pulpit to deliver the eulogy. People move from their kneeling positions to sit in the pews, ready to absorb.
- 28 ON MC LEOD 28
- pausing uneasily. He looks out to:
- 29 HIS PARISHIONERS 29
- the four-year-old's grieving mother and father, the confused brothers and sisters; the other relatives and friends. These are poor, simple, humble people -- a pathetic sight in their anguish.
- 30 MC LEOD AGAIN -- CLOSE 30
- bothered, looking down at his pulpit and trying to force himself to say something. But the words will simply not come.

FLASH TO

31 INT. THE BISHOP'S RESIDENCE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK - BLACK AND WHITE 31

McLeod sits in one elegant chair. The Bishop, a white-haired intelligent-looking man in red and black satin robes sits directly across from him. The two stare off, thinking. Both men's eyes are fiery, serious and alive with thought. Finally:

BISHOP

You're asking why we're given so many signs of Evil and so few signs of Good.

Pause.

MC LEO

I can't help but think that the entire concept of Good and Evil may be a fallacious one, Your Eminence. It's come to that.

CUT BACK TO

32 THE CHURCH - PRESENT TIME 32

people are beginning to wonder what the hold up is as McLeod stands before them dumbly.

33 THE DEAD CHILD'S FAMILY 33

also wondering, the mother and father glancing to one another, and then:

34 THE PULPIT AGAIN 34

Pause. Then suddenly McLeod stops searching for what he really feels and resorts to the age-old party-line:

MC LEO

(haltingly)

God works in ways we cannot understand.

(pause)

Natividad Rodriguez is with Him now...

(another pause)

He's in a better place....

McLeod blankly turns from the pulpit and begins moving back toward the altar. His eulogy is finished.

35 ON THE PARISHIONERS

35

looking to one another and murmuring softly in confusion. Slowly they begin moving to kneel for the Mass consecration.

36 ON FATHER DEL AMO

36

standing in the vestibule in the back of the church, watching all of this. He almost shakes his head, turns and moves away.

CUT TO

37 INT. THE RECTORY - MC LEOD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - THE BED

37

on it is a thread-bare suitcase, being filled with a few personal articles and clothing.

We open: Father Frank McLeod shuts the suitcase and takes a final look around his small room. His eyes stop at:

38 THE LARGE CRUCIFIX

38

that hangs on the wall opposite. Hold an instant.

39 MC LEOD AGAIN

39

only McLeod isn't standing there anymore. He's quit the room.

CUT TO

40 INT. THE RECTORY - NIGHT

40

McLeod moves to the aging Ford sedan parked outside the rectory. He tosses his suitcase into the trunk. (X)

Del Amo appears from out of the rectory, crosses to McLeod, a confused look on his face. Del Amo carries a large thermos container.

DEL AMO

Frank?

Del Amo sees the suitcase. McLeod shuts the car's hood and looks to his friend. He extends a hand.

MC LEOD

You've been a good friend, Louis.

Del Amo looks back at him, doesn't shake the extended hand. McLeod breaks to get behind the wheel.

MC LEOD

So long.

41

EXT. THE FORD - NIGHT

41
(X)

McLeod gets into the car. Del Amo moves to the driver's door.

DEL AMO

You're leaving?

MC LEOD

Uh-huh.

DEL AMO

Where are you going?

MC LEOD

I've got seventy-eight dollars in cash and a credit card with about a hundred dollars still left on it. I'm going to drive into the desert and I'm gonna keep driving until I can't buy gas anymore. Then I'm going to stop and I'm going to get some kind of job.

DEL AMO

Frank, everyone has a crisis of faith! I do, the Bishop does. St. Thomas did. It doesn't mean you just ---

McLeod sags over the top of the Ford and looks up into the dark sky. Del Amo stops talking and watches him.

MC LEOD

(looks over)

I respect your beliefs, Lou.
Respect my lack of belief.

DEL AMO

This is because of the Rodriguez boy's death?

MC LEOD

You're not giving me much credit.

Del Amo suddenly grabs McLeod's shoulder. For an instant it almost looks like the two priests could scuffle. Their eyes lock.

DEL AMO

What about the family? You're going to give them that pathetic excuse for a eulogy then just blow? Think what kind of message does that give them.

CONTINUED

41 CONTINUED

41

DEL AMO (Cont'd)

Frank you're supposed to be the shepherd! The least you could do is wait until their grief begins to dissipate. I don't care what you really believe. Those people are going to need counseling and you're their priest.

McLeod studies him for a long moment.

MC LEOD

The well is dry.

McLeod starts the car's engine. Del Amo studies him with antipathy. Stares.

42 A NEW ANGLE

42

as McLeod puts the car into gear then notices the thermos in Del Amo's arms. McLeod reaches out, takes it.

DEL AMO

No, Frank. It's holy water --
I was just taking it over to the church. It's been blessed.

Del Amo reaches out, expecting McLeod to turn the thermos over to him.

MC LEOD

(stone cold)

It's tap water and I've got a long drive across the desert in a car without air conditioning. Good-bye, Louis.

McLeod pulls out.

CUT TO

42-A EXT. A GAS STATION ON THE HIGHWAY - NIGHT

42-A

McLeod's Ford sits in the fluorescent light of the drive at one of the pumps.

42-B CLOSER

42-B

McLeod is out of the car, filling it with gas and looking down on a map he has spread over the car's trunk.

42-C EXT. THE GAS STATION - PRESENT TIME

42-C

as the gas hose stops pumping gas and McLeod pulls the hose from the car's tank. He puts the hose back onto the gas pump.

CUT TO

- 43 EXT. THE DESERT HIGHWAY - SMALL TOWN - NIGHT 43
- McLeod's Ford reaches the last stop sign at the edge of this small town. Another vehicle pulls to a stop at the stop sign on the intersecting road.
- 44 INT. MC LEOD'S FORD - SHOOTING PAST THE PRIEST 44
- He waits for the other vehicle to pull out onto the highway that heads into the endless desert.
- But that vehicle doesn't move.
- McLeod pulls out. As he does the other vehicle also suddenly pulls out, air horn blaring. We now see the vehicle is a gleaming black low-rider Chevy pickup truck, the flagship of some barrio fleet. Ominous looking.
- 45 EXT. THE INTERSECTION 45
- as McLeod's Ford comes to a quick stop to let the Chevy pickup be the first onto the desert highway. The big pickup accelerates quickly into the distance.
- 46 INT. MC LEOD'S FORD 46
- as the priest sighs; other drivers can be so impolite. He rolls out onto the highway and into the desert.
- CUT TO
- 47 EXT. THE DESERT HIGHWAY - MIDDLE OF NOWHERE - NIGHT 47
- McLeod's Ford rounds a corner to come into view.
- 47-A INT. THE CAR 47-A
- McLeod drives. He yawns, getting tired. He straightens in his seat, opens his window for some cool night air.
- CUT TO
- 47-B EXT. THE DESERT HIGHWAY - NEW AREA - NIGHT 47-B
- McLeod's Ford runs by.
- 47-C INT. THE CAR 47-C
- The radio is now on; a news station weeping out the problems of the world.
- McLeod becomes aware of something in his rearview mirror.

47-D MC LEOD'S POINT OF VIEW - REARVIEW MIRROR - NIGHT

47-D

In it, headlights can be seen weaving wildly. Drunk driver?

The lights momentarily come so close that they are lost behind the trunk of McLeod's Ford. The weaving stops.

47-E EXT. THE DESERT ROAD - NIGHT

47-E

The vehicle behind McLeod's Ford is the big black Chevy pickup seen earlier. We now notice the windshield and windows are dark; you can't see anyone inside.

Suddenly the pickup begins to brake, deliberating quickly, the Ford pulling away.

48
thru
50

OMITTED

48
thru
50

51 INT. MC LEOD'S FORD

51

McLeod glancing in the rearview mirror:

52 HIS POINT OF VIEW - REARVIEW MIRROR SHOT

52

The headlights of the Chevy get smaller and smaller in the distance. Finally they disappear.

53 ON MC LEOD

53

He relaxes and flicks off the radio. He rides for a moment.

54 INT. THE RECTORY LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK - BLACK AND WHITE

54

McLeod watches a basketball game on the television. Del Amo calls from o.s., terribly upset sounding:

DEL AMO (o.s.)

Frank ---

McLeod rises, moves fast.

55 INT. THE RECTORY KITCHEN - NIGHT - FLASHBACK - BLACK AND WHITE

55

as McLeod enters. Blood is everywhere. On the kitchen table lies four-year-old Natividad Rodriguez, bleeding from a terrific head wound. His mother is over him hysterical, out of control. The father cries, as well.

CONTINUED

55

CONTINUED

55

DEL AMO

They were at the grocery -- a holdup
-- there was shooting -- They want
the Last Rights ---

MC LEOD

Get an ambulance.

DEL AMO

He's gone, Frank.

MC LEOD

Do it!

Del Amo moves to the telephone, begins calling the ambulance. McLeod, in absolute horror, puts his head directly on the boy's chest to listen for a heartbeat. When he hears none, McLeod doesn't begin the Last Rights ritual. He frantically begins pounding on the child's tiny chest to induce a heartbeat.

CUT BACK TO

56

INT. MC LEOD'S FORD - NIGHT

56

McLeod reacts to the thoughts in his mind. He sighs, squirms in his seat, rides for a moment.

Pause.

Then suddenly:

56-A

MOVING POINT OF VIEW - THE FORD'S REAR BUMPER

56-A

as something charges toward that bumper, directly toward the bumper sticker there, the Catholic bumper sticker reading: "Faith Restores Peace".

56-B

MC LEOD

56-B

as his peacefulness is interrupted by an incredible impact from behind, there's a huge explosion of sound and McLeod is hurled back in his seat, and ---

56-C

EXT. THE FORD

56-C

as it arcs sideways in the highway, and ---

- 56-D SHOOTING FROM THE FORD'S REAR FENDER 56-D
- The rear bumper is now dragging on the pavement, sparks showering back and then suddenly a pair of headlights come on back there -- headlights that belong to the Chevy pickup seen earlier, and now:
- 56-E THE SCENE 56-E
- as the Ford angles off the road at good speed, dips into the ditch in a huge explosion of dirt and sand, finally coming to a hard impact with an earthen mound at the side of the road.
- 56-F MC LEOD 56-F
- jolting in his seat from the impact, clouds of dust all around. When the car is all the way stopped, McLeod looks to:
- 56-G THE CHEVY PICKUP 56-G
- accelerating up the road with its air horn blasting. After a moment, the pickup is gone, it has disappeared into the distance.
- 56-H MC LEOD 56-H
- ponders what has happened, trying to understand.
- A pause and then he looks front and back, wondering if the Ford will move.
- 56-J EXT. THE FORD 56-J
- as McLeod starts the Ford's engine and begins driving back toward the shoulder of the road. It takes a moment, but the Ford finally gets there.
- But one of the rear tires is flat. McLeod stops. He gets out of the car and moves back to look at the flattened tire.
- 56-K CLOSER 56-K
- as McLeod kicks at the dirt in anger and confusion. He looks around, then breaks to begin moving toward the car's trunk.
- 56-L AT THE TRUNK 56-L
- McLeod inserts the key, starts to open it, then stops when he catches sight of something off. He leans down, reaches out to:

56-M THE CATHOLIC BUMPER STICKER

56-M

on the Ford's twisted rear bumper. It almost looks as if this was the target of the Chevy's attack.

56-N MC LEOD

56-N

continuing to study the bumper sticker, and suddenly:

56-P INT. THE BISHOP'S RESIDENCE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK - BLACK AND WHITE

56-P

Same as before except McLeod is now on his feet speaking with great intensity.

MC LEOD

I see only anarchy. I see inexplicable, unfathomable anarchy and I see people ground up in the gears of this anarchy. I see people in anguish.

(looks up)

My deepest fear is that none of this is the work of the Devil because there can be no Devil if there is no God. And if there were an Almighty God he could never allow such suffering. I've come to believe we are living in a great void, Your Eminence. I've lost my faith.

(X)

The Bishop looks at him hard. McLeod's returned stare is unwavering.

CUT BACK TO

56-Q MC LEOD AGAIN

56-Q

He comes out of his trance and opens the Ford's trunk. He pulls out the spare tire.

CUT TO

56-R EXT. THE SHOULDER OF THE ROAD - LATER

56-R

The Ford is up on a scissors jack; the flat tire has been removed and the spare wrenched into place.

57
thru
60

OMITTED

57
thru
60

61 CLOSER TO THE ROAD 61

as McLeod begins jacking the car down onto its wheels.

Now. In the distance behind McLeod we see two tiny lights. They are a long way off.

McLeod continues to work. But huge lights are approaching fast, extremely fast. McLeod now becomes aware of the lights. He looks to:

62 THE LIGHTS 62

coming toward him at unbelievable rate, they grow larger in quantum leaps and there is now the accompanying scream of a large V-8 engine.

63 MC LEOD 63

freezes as the lights seem to angle toward where he kneels, working. McLeod quickly stands, eyes widening, and ---

64 THE SCENE 64

as the black Chevy pickup seen earlier arrives at supersonic speed and dips toward McLeod to try picking him off. McLeod dives onto the roof of his Ford at the last instant. The Chevy, however, hits the jack and sends it shooting through the air like shrapnel from an explosion. The Ford falls back hard to the ground.

64-A ON MC LEOD 64-A

atop the Ford and looking wide-eyed toward:

64-B THE CHEVY 64-B

coming to a stop a few hundred yards down the road.

64-C THE SCENE 64-C

McLeod scrambles down off the Ford's roof and gets behind the car's wheel. He fires the engine and gets the Ford moving as quickly as he can. Someone is trying to kill him.

The Ford accelerates quickly. Behind, the Chevy can be seen turning to follow. Huge road lights on the front of the pickup suddenly come to life.

64-D INT. THE FORD 64-D

McLeod, terrified, looks into:

65 thru 78	OMITTED	65 thru 78
79	HIS REARVIEW MIRROR	79
	The light from the Chevy is absolutely retina-searing -- so absolutely brilliant that it looks like McLeod is being followed by the sun.	
80	MC LEOD AGAIN	80
	-- confused, moving his rearview mirror down so the light is out of his eyes, and now:	
81	SHOOTING ALONGSIDE THE FORD	81
	The Chevy is now directly behind the Ford, a bank of quartz-halogen road lights turned on and illuminating the back of the Ford with the brilliance of a strobe-light stuck in the "on" position.	
	Then the Chevy pulls out, gets alongside the Ford.	
82 and 83	OMITTED	82 and 83
84	ON MC LEOD	84
	bothered, looking over to:	
85	THE CHEVY PICKUP	85
	The Chevy just remains there for a moment...and then it begins drifting over toward the Ford.	
86	ON MC LEOD	86
	steering quickly away to avoid being hit, moving onto the shoulder of the road, and now ---	
87	EXT. THE CARS	87
	-- shooting from the front as the Chevy backs off and McLeod's Ford moves off the shoulder into its proper lane.	

CONTINUED

87 CONTINUED

87

Then suddenly the Chevy dives at him again. McLeod's vehicle again dips quickly right, onto the dusty shoulder to avoid being hit. The Chevy backs off again and the two vehicles move side-by-side down the center of the highway.

88
thru 93 OMITTED88
thru 93
(X)
94

94 WITH MC LEOD

He begins looking over to the Chevy, finally shouting ---

MC LEOD

What do you want?

Pause. And then quickly:

95 EXT. THE CARS

95

as the Chevy makes a sudden dive toward the Ford and makes terrific contact, the little Ford is knocked sideways, almost off the road.

96 MC LEOD

96

jolted in his seat and steering for all he's worth to keep his car under control. He steadies the car and looks wide-eyed toward:

97 THE CHEVY

97

as it flies past Ford, accelerating as fast as it can and disappearing over a rise in the distance.

98 INSIDE THE FORD

98

McLeod reacting, wondering. He slows, then stops.

McLeod looks to:

99 THE RISE IN THE ROAD IN FRONT

99

You can't see over it.

100 MC LEOD AGAIN 100
deliberating. What waiting for him on the other side?
Finally he gets the Ford in motion.

101 EXT. THE FORD 101
The car slowly accelerates up the road and disappears over
the rise in the road.

102 INT. THE FORD - NIGHT 102
McLeod looks:

103 OUT TO THE HIGHWAY - BEYOND RISE 103
McLeod looks right and left. There is nothing to be seen
but flat desert. The Chevy pickup is nowhere to be seen.

104 ON MC LEOD 104
He nervously shuts off the Ford's engine. He listens,
listens hard. He then opens the Ford's door, listens
again. There is no sound.
McLeod is about to get under way again when he thinks he
hears something. A low, low rumbling sound -- like a
distant thunderclap.
McLeod freezes. The rumbling doesn't go away -- it seems
to be growing.
Instinctually, McLeod shifts his eyes to the desert floor
a few yards away:

105 MC LEOD'S POINT OF VIEW 105
as suddenly the Chevy literally bursts out of the earth at
maybe sixty miles an hour.

106 THE CHEVY'S DARK WINDSHIELD 106
Black, you can see no one inside, and then:

107 A POINT OF VIEW THROUGH THE CHEVY'S WINDSHIELD 107
as it whistles through the desert terrain to turn back
around toward the still stationary McLeod Ford.

CONTINUED

107 CONTINUED

107

Our point of view now shifts slightly; we see the crucifix hanging upside down from the Chevy's rearview mirror. From the crucifix there hangs a length of black ribbon.

We may now notice that the sound of the Chevy's engine has metamorphasized slightly; it sounds half-mechanical and half like the deep-throated growl of a demon from another world.

108 ON MC LEOD IN THE FORD

108

absolutely in shock as he sees the Chevy charging toward him from behind and floors the Ford to try to get away.

109
thru
113 OMITTED109
thru
113

114 THE APPROACHING CHEVY

114

it may be moving at seventy and still accelerating, and ---

115 POINT OF VIEW THROUGH THE CHEVY'S WINDSHIELD

115

We're ripping toward the Ford, the Ford growing larger and larger in the windshield frame and ---

116 THE INVERTED CRUCIFIX

116

hanging from the Chevy's rearview mirror, swinging, and now quickly:

117 MC LEOD IN THE FORD

117

bracing himself for the what will be a terrific impact, and ---

118 THE WRECK

118

as the huge Chevy tears into the Ford and knocks it off its wheels and onto its back with a huge explosion of dust and debris.

119 INT. THE INVERTED FORD

119

as it comes to a stop and McLeod, stunned, slowly begins coming back to rationality. He begins trying to get out of the car.

120 ON THE CHEVY 120
It is essentially undamaged from the incredible impact. It turns around to make another run at the Ford, engine rumbling hellishly.

121 ON MC LEOD 121
exiting the car and seeing:

122 THE CHEVY 122
it's begun approaching on the fly, trying to hit him.

123 THE SCENE 123
as the Chevy closes on McLeod and then the priest makes a sudden dive away, the truck missing him by a foot.
The Chevy doesn't, however, miss the upside-down Ford. It strikes one fender and the vehicle's gas tank ignites and there's a huge explosion that sends McLeod flying.

124 ON MC LEOD 124
hitting the ground and rolling. He comes to a stop near the gallon container of water introduced earlier. It was hurled from the Ford during the rollover.

125 ON THE CHEVY 125
It turns again and starts accelerating back toward the priest.

126 ON MC LEOD 126
looking up to see:

127 THE CHEVY 127
bearing down on him.

128 MC LEOD 128
can't run this time; his right leg won't support him. In a last-ditch thought, he picks up the gallon water container and gets set to hurl it at the truck, and ---

129 THE TRUCK 129
approaching, coming head on toward the priest, there's no way it's going to miss him, and:

130 THE SCENE 130
as McLeod hurls the water container at the last second, and it strikes the truck's windshield just an instant before the vehicle hits him, and ---

131 THE TRUCK 131
as the vehicle inexplicably goes white with heat (effect) and vaporizes into thin air.

132 ON MC LEOD 132
not believing his eyes, looking to where ---

133 THE TRUCK 133
should be but isn't. Just desert. And sudden silence . A silence that roars.

134 MC LEOD AGAIN 134
He tries to rise, then passes out, slumping to the desert floor.
Behind McLeod, the Ford can be seen burning in the desert.
Hold a moment.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO

135 EXT. THE SUN IN THE DESERT SKY - DAY 135
The camera moves down to:

136 THE DESERT 136
Three squad cars are parked unevenly at the side of the road near the burned-out hulk of McLeod's Ford. An ambulance is also there; roof lights lit.

137 THE BACK OF THE AMBULANCE - DAY 137
McLeod is in the back, sitting up. His forehead is bandaged, as is his leg. The ambulance attendant moves out the back of the vehicle and starts to shut the rear doors. The Sheriff appears and stops him. The attendant moves toward the vehicle's front leaving McLeod and the Sheriff alone. They look at one another.

CONTINUED

137 CONTINUED

137

SHERIFF

There are no tracks in the sand
anywhere. No paint on any of the
dents in your car. No evidence of
another vehicle anywhere.

MC LEOD

(perplexed)

You think I'm making it up?

The Sheriff looks off, pauses.

SHERIFF

I think you maybe fell asleep, went
off the road. Your car rolled over
and you were tossed out. They say
you have a mild concussion. I had
one once. Gave me the weirdest dreams.

(a beat)

Just like you....

(X)

138 ON MC LEOD

138

he starts to say something, stops.

FLASH CUT TO

139 INT. THE BISHOP'S RESIDENCE - NIGHT - BLACK AND WHITE

139

The Bishop sits in his chair. McLeod now paces back and
forth, upset, nervous.

BISHOP

You know, Father, in the history of
the Church only a few, a very few
individuals have been given a
literal sign. As at Lourdes.

McLeod nods, keeps moving.

BISHOP

That is why the word is faith. The
concept of transcending simple logic.
The leap of faith. A jump across
the gap between simple logic and
belief. It is something we must all
do. You haven't the right to ask
God for a literal sign.

McLeod stops moving, looks over at the Bishop.

CUT BACK TO

140

EXT. THE BACK OF THE AMBULANCE - THE DESERT - DAY

140

The Sheriff is looking at the cleric. Finally McLeod looks back at him.

SHERIFF

We're right smack dab between the hospital up in Bisbee and Travis General back where you were comin' from. Got a preference?

The priest thinks a moment.

MC LEOD

Take me back to Travis. That's where my parish is.

SHERIFF

Thought you said you were leavin' there.

McLeod shakes his head. The Sheriff nods and shuts the ambulance door.

141

EXT. THE DESERT - AN OPEN SHOT

141

The Sheriff finishes speaking to the ambulance driver and the ambulance pulls out, its siren coming to life. The vehicle makes a U-turn, begins heading in the direction from which McLeod came.

FADE OUT

THE END

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PROD. #85817-F
March 3, 1983 (Xerox)

NIGHTMARES

LUCKY MAN

Written

by

Richard Chapman

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NIGHTMARESLUCKY MAN

FADE IN

OUR "CRUISE MISSILE" VIEW (EFFECT)

A lush, green forest unrolls beneath us at an unnatural speed. It is day. The forest cloaks the valleys and rises up into the mountains -- it smothers the land like a tufted emerald quilt -- then, suddenly, unexpectedly, it ends with a ragged, frayed coastline. The white foam of breakers dissolves into an azure sea. The water shimmers in the brilliant sunlight.

From out of the void, we hear the voices of Robbie Becker and his friend, Jack Powell. They speak in amicable tones and with macho familiarity.

JACK (v.o.)

We forgive you, buddy. It's all in the past.

ROB (v.o.)

Jack's right. I would have probably died sooner or later of lung cancer. Remember that cough I had?

JACK (v.o.)

It's not too bad here. Plenty of booze -- good stuff too.

ROB (v.o.)

Cuban cigars. Take one. You'll like it. Sit yourself down. Put your feet up. Nothing else to do.

JACK (v.o.)

We can talk about old times -- college days -- our first lay -- our first million.

ROB (v.o.)

The 'Ambition!' What a lady! I'll never forget her as long as...I'll never forget the 'Ambition.' What about you, Ned? Huh?

EXT. THE "AMBITION" - DAY

We pull up and discover a sleek, forty foot sailboat named "Ambition" bobbing in the crystal clear water. We move closer and hover over the deck.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

A well-tanned, handsome man in his late twenties, Jack Powell, sunbathes on deck. A string of small, razor-sharp piranha teeth hangs around his neck. A cassette player sits nearby emitting soft rock music. Beside him sits an empty bottle of Scotch. After a beat, a shadow crosses his glistening, cocoa-butter-smeared chest and a Topsider deck shoe lands on it with a slap. Jack's eyes don't even open.

JACK

Medic -- I'm hit.

ROBBIE BECKER

Another young, less good-looking, slightly over-weight fellow about the same age has come up from the cabin below. He carries a bottle of Scotch.

ROB

Just lie still, son. All you need is a little plasma.

We pull back as Jack raises an empty glass. Robbie pours it full.

ROB

Where's Ned?

JACK

Where do you think?

Robbie scans the surrounding waters.

ROB

You're kidding. He's gonna grow his own fins.

JACK

He calls the sea 'man's ancestral home.' Says it's no coincidence that seventy percent of man's body is water and that's the same proportion as the surface of the Earth.

ROB

That true?

JACK

Damn if I know. Mine is seventy percent Scotch.

ROB

Think he's okay? How long has he been down this time?

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

JACK

Half hour. Don't worry about Ned.
He has a facility for always taking
care of himself.

Rob now reacts with panic at something he sees behind Jack
in the water.

ROB

Oh, my God....

Jack leaps up and both of them look over the side with alarm.

THEIR POINT OF VIEW - THE WATER

A growing cloud of blood floats up to the surface near the
boat. After a beat, the scuba diver appears from under the
boat and pops through the surface.

NEW ANGLE

He's quickly hoisted up on deck and Rob and Jack rip off
his gear. The diver flips up his mask, smiling broadly at
his shocked companions, now gaping at the gash on his arm.
His face is handsome, arrogant and flushed with excitement.
He is Ned Randall.

NED

(looking
at his arm)
This is nothing...
(beat;
grinning)
You shoulda seen the shark.

On their reaction:

CUT TO

EXT. THE "AMBITION" - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING

The sea is dark and calm. The sky is filled with stars.
Lighted lanterns are hanging on the deck and there are
lights glowing below in the cabin.

INT. GALLEY - NIGHT - EXTREME CLOSE ON PHOTO OF
LESLIE TURNER

on the inside top of an opened silver cigarette case. She
is a very lovely, classy lady.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

JACK (o.s.)

Not only is Leslie a gorgeous woman
-- she's got brains too.

We pulls back as Jack removes a cigarette from the case. The case sits on a table in the galley together with several bottles of half-empty Scotch, ashtrays, and the remnants of a meal. Seated around the table are Jack, the owner of the cigarette case, Robbie and Ned. Ned has a bandaged arm. All are in mellow spirits.

NED

You're a lucky guy, Jack.

Ned downs the rest of his drink.

JACK

Leslie and I...Well, we're glad
you're gonna be the best man.

They exchange a glance.

NED

Best man won. But I'm still envious
as all hell.

ROB

What I can't figure out is why marry
her? You work with her ten hours a
day -- see her every night -- why
make it legal?

JACK

Not only does Leslie practice law
but she believes in it. What more
can I say?

Rob grabs a cigarette and coughs a throaty cough as he
lights up.

NED

Any suggestions for where we go next
year?

JACK

The South Seas!

ROB

Pago Pago. Bora Bora.

NED

(grins)
I'll drink to that.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED - 2

Ned refills his glass and raises it.

NED

And here's to twenty million in
computer sales next year.

They clink their glasses and down their drink in one
collective gulp.

ROB

I'm gonna hit the sack.

NED

Not so fast. First, we draw straws
for the night watch.

Ned reaches over and gathers up some swizzle sticks from
the table. He arranges them in his hand, then extends
it to Rob, who draws a long one. Ned holds out his hand
to Jack, who smirks as he reaches down to draw his straw.
All react as they see it's also a long one. Ned smiles
and holds up the short straw.

NED

Rest easy, boys. You're in good hands.

Jack and Rob rise and head for the sleeping quarters.

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. DECK - NIGHT

Ned, at wheel, sips at the dregs of a wine bottle as he
keeps a light hand on the wheel. The quiet purring of the
boat engine mingles with soft trade winds and lapping water.
The wind kicks up; slightly shifting in direction and
Ned sniffs the air -- mildly reacting to something.

CLOSE ON ENGINE HATCH

Wisps of ominous smoke curl their way up from the engine
and slip out into the stillness of the night. The smoke is
getting thicker, hinting of a building pressure within.

RESUME NED

He momentarily leaves the wheel to poke his head in the
galley, searching for the smoky odor's origin. He returns
to the wheel as he hears the engine begin to cough -- as if
choking on the now thick smoke bleeding through the hatch.
Ned whirls and sees smoke pouring from the engine compart-
ment. He's about to move for the hatch as simultaneously....

NEW ANGLE - A BLAZING FIREBALL

throws open the hatch and licks at the night sky. Ned's scream of warning is obliterated in the ensuing explosion. Ned is knocked to the deck as the boat shudders with the impact of yet a more powerful blast.

FULL SHOT - THE BOAT

It's a blazing holocaust listing in the water.

NEW ANGLE - ON DECK - NED

rolls over and realizes he's still intact. As he regains his feet he now hears o.s. screams. Rob's voice is in full panic and Ned rushes to its source: the galley.

INT. GALLEY

Ned leaps in and sees it's partially ablaze. He shields his eyes, searching for Rob.

ROB'S VOICE

God, Ned -- Jack help -- over here...
Oh, Jesus, I'm stuck -- can't feel
my legs....

NED'S POINT OF VIEW - ROB

is trapped under a beam at the far end of the cabin. One eye droops out of a bloody socket. The other blazes out in frenzy as he sees Ned.

ROB

Ned -- quick -- get this thing off me
-- hurry. I can move it a little...
Ned -- what the hell're you doing?
Please....

Ned watches Rob a beat, but doesn't move toward him. Ned appears to be transfixed -- watching Rob slowly lose his senses. As the water pours in around Robbie it mixes with his blood -- so he is surrounded by a red watery pool.

ROB

For God's sake, Ned -- help me.
Get me out...you can do it...I'm
gonna die -- hurry.

NEW ANGLE - THE BEAM OF THE FLASHLIGHT

finds Jack ten feet away clinging precariously to the charred bow of the once proud "Ambition". His face is horribly burnt and scarred, having been exposed to the intensity of the blast.

CLOSE ON NED

He seems totally in control -- shining the light on Jack. The illumination of the moon makes Ned visible to Jack, who locks eyes with him, disbelieving, yet arriving at the inescapable conclusion that Ned is not going to save him. Ned stares back, emotionless as Jack's pleading voice is choked with water and coughing.

JACK

He's losing his grip on the piece of wreckage. The flashlight beam catches a glint of white from the jagged teeth around his neck.

JACK

You sonofa -- you're gonna leave me...why? Is it the company...? Leslie! You bastard! Don't do this! Ned! I'll ---

His voice is lost as he loses his grip on the wood and he begins to go under. The powerful flashlight beam plays on the water as Ned sees Jack's hand clenched in a last gesture of defiance -- and then it disappears beneath the surface. The light picks up the last few bubbles to reach the surface.

ON NED RANDALL

eerily illuminated by the glow of the powerful beam playing on the water. His eyes are glazed and unemotional. Then, as if something has clicked inside him, his face begins to show the realization of what he has done. Panic and fear creep into his eyes.

NED

(soft,
building
in volume)

Jack? Jack, where are you? Jack?

He scans the dark silent sea with the beam from the flashlight. His breathing becomes forced and heavy as terror begins to affect his respiratory. He starts to row furiously toward what remains of the "Ambition."

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

NED

Robbie! I'm coming for you! I'll
get you out....

There is a terrific explosion and bits of fiery wood and fragments of sharp metal rain down around him. Ned stands up in the dinghy -- his face cut now by the flying debris -- his eyes clouded by bewilderment. The fire from the wreckage diminishes as the "Ambition" slowly disappears into the sea. The night becomes dark and silent again, leaving us only with the sound of the water lapping against the rubber dinghy.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO

INT. SPECTRUM SYSTEMS/CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY - CLOSE ANGLE -
NED

looking well-tanned and healthy despite the trace of burn scars on his face and hands. He looks uncomfortable and nervous although he is trying hard to disguise his feelings. He stares down at a cane which he moodily and absently examines.

We pull back to reveal the other occupants in the plush, ultra-modern conference room. Seated around a long glass-topped chrome table with Ned are Ben Callan, a fiftyish man who is Head of Operation and Leslie Turner whose picture we saw on the boat.

CALLAN

As you know Ned, the cornerstone of the agreement between Jack and Rob, was based on the provision that upon the exit or death of any of the principals, the remaining partners would have the options to buy out their shares at book value. The company's recent growth makes that a very profitable...

(beat; to

Ned gently)

Ned...Ned, are you listening?

Ned looks up at Callan and Leslie, distracted, then returns to reality.

NED

I'm sorry....

CALLAN

If you'd prefer, we could go over this when you're more up to it.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

NED

No. I'll stay with it. I understand the provisions of the agreement.

He gets up and walks with the help of his cane to the window and looks out. There's a brief silence. Leslie crosses over to him.

LESLIE

Ned?

NED

You know, after the fire, when I was out there drifting...I prayed nobody would pick me up...I wanted to die too. I just kept thinking maybe there was something else I could've done....

LESLIE

That's self-destructive, Ned. There wasn't anything you could do to save Rob or Jack.

Ned looks over.

NED

The engine. If I'd just lifted the hatch....

LESLIE

(interrupting)

I hurt, too, goddamnit and it's not gonna bring Jack back is it?

Their eyes lock. Callan moves from behind the table.

CALLAN

(to Ned)

Maybe you ought to take some time off -- after the ordeal you've been through -- it's all still raw.

NED

(gaining steam)

That's exactly why I'll go crazy if I don't dive in right now and not give myself a minute to think about anything but business.

Ned moves back to the table.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED - 2

NED

I want to exercise the buy-out option right away. Give Joan all cash, be generous. I want the blue-prints for the Broadway Plaza on my desk in fifteen minutes. I want a day to day breakdown on every detail, every phone bill, every meeting that's occurred between these walls in the last eight weeks. I want it now.

Callan and Leslie exchange a look as we:

SLOWLY DISSOLVE

INT. NED'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Ned is at his desk, buried in paperwork. A personal computer sits on his desk. It is apparent that all the others have gone home and it is quite late. He has loosened his tie and taken off his jacket and is smoking heavily. Ned begins to input a new query into his computer system. The dim light from the screen of his terminal casts a strange ghostly light on his face. He watches the screen as the response appears.

TERMINAL SCREEN

A response is delivered. "The order was received by Mission Electronics, Dallas, Texas, 11-22-82."

NED

clears the screen and reaches over to pour himself a glass of water from a decanter. The filled glass slips out of his hand and breaks, spilling water over the computer monitor and his desk.

NED

Damn!

Hastily Ned begins to sop up the spilled water. He reaches into a desk drawer and pulls out some paper tissues to wipe the water off his terminal screen.

Making sure now the monitor is in proper working order, Ned punches in an inquiry. Static and electrical noise fill the screen. Again Ned repeats the process. The monitor goes completely dark and a series of words begin to appear... "WHY DIDN'T YOU HELP US?"

NED

He stares in disbelief at the screen. He clears the response. A beat goes by before he gets up his courage to input another query. He stares intently at the screen.

TERMINAL SCREEN

The letters begin to materialize with a blunt statement this time. "We're going to pay you back, Ned."

ANGLE ON NED

He pushes himself away from his desk and stares at the terminal. He reaches over and hits the "clear" key. The letters wipe away. He continues to stare at the blank screen.

CUT TO

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY - CLOSE ON PHOTO OF NED, ROB AND JACK

smiling, arms around each other's shoulders. The photo had apparently been taken when they were much younger; perhaps right out of college. We hear Ned's voice as we slowly pan other objects on a table; a photo of an old garage with Rob and Jack standing under a sign crudely painted "Spectrum," blueprints for the new factory, a framed contract for two million dollars, a model of the "Ambition".

NED

This is a special dedication for me. Seven years ago Spectrum Systems began as a dream of three college buddies. Our first work place was a rented garage in Inglewood. There were three employees then -- Robbie, Jack and myself. Today, we begin the construction of a new assembling plant that will employ a minimum of five hundred technicians -- and provide work for one hundred more in other departments. Robbie and Jack must be smiling down on all of us....

ANGLE ON ONLOOKERS

In attendance at the dedication ceremony are Ben Callan, Joan Becker with her five-year-old son, Kevin, Leslie Turner, several company executives, photographers and a contingent of bored hard hats.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

NED

...all the way because we've had the good fortune to make their dream a reality.

NED

stands at a large stone cornerstone holding a trowel and prepared to seal up the stone with ceremonial mortar.

NED

Joanie -- would you and Kev be by my side as I put the mementos into the time capsule?

Joan Becker and her son walk over to where Ned stands. He gives her a kiss on the cheek and they begin to place the objects into the cornerstone.

NEW ANGLE

Ben Callan stands with Leslie Turner. He leans over to her and says confidentially:

CALLAN

He credits a lot of this year's success to you.

She smiles.

ANGLE ON NED, JOAN, AND KEVIN

He has finished sealing up the stone. He gives Joan a warm hug and lifts Kevin up in his arms.

KEVIN

The boy is a spitting image of his father. His brilliant blue eyes look openly at Ned.

NED

(to Joan)

He's got Robbie's eyes. It's amazing.

NEW ANGLE

Ned puts the boy down and walks away toward Callan and Leslie.

CALLAN AND LESLIE

We pull back as Ned walks over to them.

CALLAN

Well done.

NED

(distracted)

Thanks.

CALLAN

Excuse me, I want to talk to Joan
before she leaves.

He walks away. We move with them as Leslie and Ned begin
to walk towards his car.

NED

Know what I need right now?

She looks at him.

LESLIE

I'd suggest a vacation after the
pace you've been going at.

NED

Short of that, I'll settle for a
drink.

(a beat)

Wanna come?

LESLIE

Busy.

NED

Be busy with me.

INT. SHANGHAI RED'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT - CLOSE ON CANDLE
FLAME

We pull back to see Ned and Leslie seated at an intimate
corner window table. The lights are low and there are
candles on the tables.

NED

An attorney with nothing to say.
That's a switch.

LESLIE

My favorite wine, flowers. I don't
get it. What are you up to, Ned?

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

NED

Why so suspicious?

LESLIE

With good reason. I've been down
this path with you before.

NED

I swear my intentions are honorable.

The waiter arrives with two fresh drinks.

NED

I just want you to handle my case.
That's all.

LESLIE

You're incorrigible.

NED

I take that as a compliment.

He raises his glass in a toast. She does too.

NED

Cheers!

As Ned begins to bring his martini to his lips we zoom into
his glass and see not an olive but a clear blue eye that
suddenly inexplicably turns to stare up at Ned. It is the
same shade of blue as Robbie and Kev Becker's eyes.

NEW ANGLE

Ned knocks the glass over on the floor. He's in horror.

NED AND LESLIE

LESLIE

You all right?

He's apparently quite shaken but begins to collect his
emotions.

NED

Yeah. Did you see that olive? Did
you see it?

LESLIE

What?

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

NED

In the martini.

He realizes he must sound like a madman.

NED

Never mind...it's ridiculous.

LESLIE

(concerned)

How about us getting you home?

CUT TO

EXT. NED'S HOUSE/POINT DUME - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING

The house sits on a high cliff overlooking the Pacific. It is architecturally modern with panoramic views of the ocean.

EXT. JACUZZI/SWIMMING POOL - NIGHT

Ned is in the Jacuzzi drinking from a bottle of Scotch. He is in a mild state of inebriation. He calls out to the yet unseen Leslie.

NED

(calls o.s.)

Hey, hurry up. The water's great.

He looks over to see Leslie approaching. She has on the skimpiest of bikinis.

NED

I told you this is all I needed.

She crosses to stand at the edge of the Jacuzzi.

LESLIE

Then you don't really need me, do you?

NED

Just sit with me, all right.

LESLIE

Thought I'd lost this bikini.

NED

It's my most prized possession.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

Leslie steps into the Jacuzzi and sits down in the bubbling waters.

NED

Too hot for you?

She doesn't answer.

NED

Scotch?

She shakes her head "no." He moves closer to her and kisses her squarely and deeply on the mouth. She doesn't resist at first but then pulls away -- her eyes searching his.

LESLIE

(simply)

I loved Jack.

NED

I did too. But what's happening here doesn't concern Jack anymore.

LESLIE

I think it's getting too hot in here.

She rises out of the water and starts to get out.

LESLIE

Going in for a cool shower.

He grins at her bleary-eyed.

NED

I'll be in in a minute. Want to do a lap in the pool.

She heads for the house. Ned drains the last of the Scotch in his glass, heaves his body out of the Jacuzzi, and walks to the edge of the pool. He does an expert dive into the water.

ANGLE - NED

as he swims in strong strokes through the water. Suddenly, he collides with something floating in the water.

NED'S POINT OF VIEW - THE OBJECT

It is a floating piece of debris: the torn, charred bow of the boat, the "Ambition" -- the same pitiful section Jack Powell clung to the night of the accident.

BACK TO SCENE

Ned stares in disbelief -- horrified. He pushes the debris away and swims frantically to the edge of the pool. He lifts himself out. He turns to look again at the debris.

NED'S POINT OF VIEW - THE POOL

Something is floating in the placid, dark water -- it is a frond from one of the palm trees lining the lawn. He cautiously reaches in...lifts it out and flings it away.

INT. NED'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Leslie is dressed in her terry-cloth robe and has a towel wrapped around her wet hair. At the moment, she is replacing her earrings on her ears.

Ned walks in through the terrace doors. He is still unsettled by what he has just experienced. Leslie doesn't notice his demeanor at first. She crosses to the telephone and lifts the receiver.

LESLIE

I thought I'd get a cab. No use you going out again in your condition.

She suddenly sees that Ned is more than drunk -- he is terrified. She replaces the receiver.

LESLIE

Ned?

He crosses to the sofa and sinks down on it...his face in his hands. She crosses to him.

LESLIE

What's wrong?

NED

(without
looking up)

Stay with me, Leslie. I need you to stay with me.

There is a long beat, then Leslie sinks down on the sofa beside him and puts her arms around his trembling body.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Ned snores peacefully for several beats and his hand reaches out to lovingly caress the empty pillow next to him. He reacts and wakes up with a smile, remembering the previous night.

NEW ANGLE

as Ned gets out of bed and walks into his bathroom. He reacts to something on his mirror.

INT. BATHROOM - ON MIRROR

In bold red lipstick, a message is scrawled across the face of the mirror: "Did you swallow my left earring? L."

NED

smiles broadly and opens the shower door. He steps in and remains visible through the half-door. He turns on the water and it cascades over him in loving warmth. He closes his eyes, savoring the glow of the previous evening.

CLOSER ON SHOWER

as, after a beat, the color of the water suddenly changes -- becoming blood red...thicker, more viscous. Ned, who's been enjoying the warmth, realizes a change and now opens his eyes in terror. He whirls and shuts off the shower, then leaps out...looking in horror at the stained tiles, then at himself, covered in blood. He grabs a towel and rushes for the mirror, examining himself. The white fluffy towel greedily absorbs the blood as he wipes off.

NEW ANGLE

Ned can find no cuts...not a scratch. He rushes over to the shower and looks in.

THE SHOWER HEAD

drips thick, solitary globs of blood...each one hitting the tile floor with a sickening splash.

NED

shrinks away from the gruesome sight and returns to the mirror. He looks at himself and is shocked to find no evidence of blood. He looks down at the towel in his hands. He reacts to the sight of pristine whiteness -- not a speck of red. In near panic, Ned moves back to the shower and looks in to see normal droplets of water dripping from the head, collecting in a small puddle near the drain. The stall's tiles are once again clean, bearing no evidence of the previous carnage. Hold on Ned, his face a boiling cauldron of confusion, horror and growing anger.

EXT. NED RANDALL'S MERCEDES - DAY - TRAVELING

Ned is on his car phone as he moves through traffic.

NED

(tense)

Jean, I won't be in today. Yeah,
cancel and reschedule...then tell
'em I'll see them the next time
they're in town...no, nothing's
wrong. Who? No, uh, tell her I'll
call her later.

Ned hangs up.

INT. DOCTOR'S EXAMINATION ROOM - CLOSE ON EYE

as a pencil point beam from a doctor's flashlight probes.
Pull back to reveal Ned seated on an examining table.
Dr. Charles, an affable gray-haired man in his early
sixties is giving Ned the once-over.

CHARLES

Seems you're healthier today than
you were before your accident.
Since this isn't a regular visit,
what were you hoping I'd find?

NED

Something.

CHARLES

That narrows it down. Come on, Ned...
Give me something to go on.

NED

I told you I'm having trouble
sleeping. I'm not myself...my mind
wanders...I'm not seeing things too
clearly. Maybe it's my diet.

CHARLES

Are you talking about hallucinations?

NED

(defensive)

No -- it's my perception...just
seems a little off. Things are
happening and I'm not sure -- I see
something then when I look
again...it's not there.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

CHARLES

I'm going to prescribe some tranquilizers but I'm also giving you a name. This is a guy you can really talk to...I want you to see him.

NED

I don't need to talk, dammit -- this thing has nothing to do with my mind. Don't you understand -- it's really happening.

The Doctor stares at him a beat, then shuffles through a Rolodex.

CHARLES

His name is Schuman -- let me give him a call....

The door slams just as the Doctor looks up and Ned is nowhere to be seen.

EXT. NED'S HOUSE - DAY

Ned's Mercedes screeches angrily into his driveway and stops abruptly. He gets out and stomps into the house.

INT. HOUSE - DAY - NED

moves through the house with grim determination. He crosses to the terrace doors leading to the pool and flings them open.

EXT. POOL - DAY - NED

storms out of the house and crosses to the pool. He stands confronting it a beat, then kneels down at the side.

He reaches out tentatively and puts his hand in the water, splashing lightly. He smiles as nothing happens, then puts his other hand in and splashes even more -- not caring his expensive suit is getting soaked to the elbows. He throws water on his face and stares down into the pool, grinning feverishly.

NED

So, okay -- I'm baptized.

The pool sits silent, motionless but for the calm ripples coming from its softly purring motor.

NEW ANGLE - NED

risers, satisfied. He stands a last beat looking down at the water in triumph, then turns to leave. Suddenly, a scarred, burnt hand reaches up from the edge of the pool and clamps onto Ned's ankle.

NEW ANGLE

as with a powerful thrust, the hand yanks Ned into the pool.

UNDERWATER - NED

is sucked down by a pair of grasping arms...joined by another pair. We don't see anything but these mangled, strong appendages as they struggle with the flailing Ned. Hands grasp at his tie, choking him down...while the other hands tug at his feet and Ned kicks at them, struggling to break free. He succeeds in grabbing the hands working at his tie and lapels and he kicks mightily to escape the others dragging at his shoes, which come off in the struggle.

NEW ANGLE - ON SURFACE

Ned explodes through the surface like a rocket and quickly swims for the edge. He heaves himself up onto the decking and gasps for air. He looks back to find the pool empty and tranquil. On his terror:

DISSOLVE TO

INT. DEN - NIGHT - NED

sits in front of the television, eyes staring rather than watching. He's in a bathrobe and has two days worth of beard on his haggard face. The room looks well lived in; trays of frozen dinners mingle with lots of orange peels. The phone is ringing, but Ned doesn't seem aware of it. After several more rings, he wearily rises and answers. He doesn't say anything, just picks up the receiver.

INTERCUT - NED'S DEN/LESLIE'S OFFICE

She is on the phone.

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

LESLIE

Ned...are you there?

NED

(beat)

Yes.

LESLIE

We've missed you at the office. Is everything okay?

NED

(testy)

Why wouldn't it be?

LESLIE

...Uh, the reason I'm calling is there's quite a bit piled up on your desk and a few things are bottle-necked. We can't move without you.

NED

Send it through telecommunications -- and I'll check it out on my CRT.

LESLIE

Ned, it'd be a lot easier if you could just come in in the morning. Look, it'll only take an hour, tops ...Ben needs to go over some things with you, too.

NED

(long beat)

Okay. I'll be in at nine. But send it through the computer anyway so I can get familiar with it.

LESLIE

I'll do it right away. Ned...?

There's a long pause as Leslie decides whether she ought to continue. She does.

LESLIE

Look -- I know you're going through some tough sledding...I just want you to know...well, about us -- if it was a little too much too soon, I understand. Okay?

CONTINUED

CONTINUED - 2

NED

(cold)

Fine.

LESLIE

(quickly)

Right, then we'll see you in the morning. Sleep well.

NED

He hangs up the receiver. He then crosses to the TV and snaps the picture off. He reaches over to the computer he uses for communication between his office and home. Ned turns it on. The CRT screen brightens. He types in a command and waits for Leslie's input. A video game title appears:

"AMBITION...a game of survival and greed."

Ned stares incredulously at the screen -- terrified, but unable to not watch. A graphic depicting a sailboat crosses a blue sea. It stops. Three men are seen moving on its deck. One represents Jack, one Robbie...and the other is unmistakably himself. Jack and Robbie retire inside the sailboat. A moon rises in the sky and bright specks twinkle for the stars. Then smoke appears in the stern of the boat where the engine is located. Little scarlet tongues of flame begin to lick up out of the hold and wind around the mast.

INTERCUT - NED/CRT SCREEN

Ned goes down into the cabins -- but emerges almost immediately and throws over a dinghy. Ned moves away on the dinghy -- away from danger. There is an explosion. Robbie expires and bleeps off. Jack jumps from the burning boat and swims toward the dinghy. But it is apparent he is not welcome aboard. Jack's computerized figure shakes his tiny fist at Ned. The "Ambition" explodes into hundreds of fragments...Jack bleeps off. The "Ambition" slowly sinks to the bottom of the screen. A statement of commendation is shown to Ned.

"You have survived. You are a lucky man.
Congratulations!"

On Ned's reaction....

SMASH CUT TO

EXT. NED'S HOUSE - DAY - ESTABLISHING

It is a brilliant, cloudless morning.

INT. NED'S BEDROOM

Ned lies on his bed, still in his robe. It's clear he has not slept a minute the entire night. A computerized clock by his bed suddenly announces in a mechanical voice.

"The time you've requested to be awakened has arrived. It is now 0800. Good morning."

He looks over at the clock suspiciously. He builds up his courage and rises.

INT. BATHROOM - AT MIRROR

Ned looks at the strange creature he is becoming. He shakes his head, wearily, then steels himself as he opens the medicine cabinet, removing his shaving gear. He lays out razor, cream, etc...anything to forestall the moment he knows is coming -- turning on the water. Next to his shaving kit sets the bottle of tranquilizers prescribed by his doctor.

ANGLE ON FAUCET

It innocently awaits his hands.

RESUME NED

He takes a deep breath, then with great courage reaches for the knob. He turns it...nothing. After a beat there's a tremendous rattling sound in the water pipes. Ned starts screaming.

ON SINK

A torrent of razor-sharp piranha teeth come rushing out of the faucet, filling the sink and ricocheting off the porcelain.

NED

leaps back as the jagged, sharp teeth bounce off the sink and onto his dark robe. As the teeth pelt him, he throws up his arms and covers his eyes. He opens them again and all that remains is an innocent faucet and his tranquilizers. He throws them across the room and retreats in horror.

CUT TO

EXT. NED'S POOL AREA - DAY

It has been drained. Adjust angle to find Ned, now a heavily bearded, long-haired, dishevelled spectre in a bathrobe, standing over a small wiry man in his midfifties. He is the Plumber, and he's putting the final touches to shutting off the house's water supply.

PLUMBER

This your way of getting back at the water and power company? Thought of doing the same thing. Wanted to turn off the electricity and use candles. But my wife didn't want to miss her story in the morning. Watches it every day -- talks about the people in them like they were neighbors.

He begins to put his tools away.

NED

What about the water heater?

PLUMBER

Drained. Just like you wanted. Faucets all plugged up, too.

Ned crosses to the edge of the pool and looks down in its waterless crater.

PLUMBER

Excuse me for asking -- but you do realize there's no water in any of your bathrooms? I mean you can't use the facilities. That could be a problem.

NED

I've taken care of that.

Ned directs the Plumber's attention to a Port 'O San portable toilet in a corner of the yard.

PLUMBER

(grinning)

Thought of everything, didn't you? Nothin' wrong with that. Had an outhouse when I was a kid. Didn't warp me psychologically or anything.

He starts to go.

PLUMBER

You got nerve, mister...that's all I gotta say. Wish I had the guts....

CONTINUED

CONTINUED

The Plumber gets into the cab of his pickup truck.

NED

Just send me a bill.

The Plumber waves and drives away down the driveway. Just then a convertible sports car enters the driveway and passes the pickup truck. Leslie is behind the wheel. Ned moves quickly toward the house as her car pulls up.

LESLIE'S POINT OF VIEW - NED - TRAVELING

as she drives up Ned's driveway. Ned is apparently panic-stricken by her arrival and he moves away quickly from the pool and hurries toward the concealment of the house. He goes inside.

BACK TO SCENE

Leslie gets out of her car and begins to cross over the pool area toward the house. She stops as she notices that the pool has been drained. She moves to the closed and curtained terrace doors. She knocks.

LESLIE

Ned? It's Leslie. Can I talk to you?

No answer. After a beat we move with her as she crosses to a window -- but it has also been heavily curtained. She walks around the corner of the house and goes to the front door. She rings the bell. After a long beat -- the door opens. Leslie is shocked at what she sees. He stands peering out at her -- blocking the door.

NED

(flatly)

I told Jean to send me the information through computer.

Leslie stares numbly at Ned's frayed, stained robe...he has been transformed into Rasputin.

LESLIE

Please let me in.

He looks at her a good beat and something in her eyes moves him. He steps out of the way and she enters.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

She walks into the semidark room -- Ned closes the door. The room is a total mess; food, old newspapers, etc. attest to the fact that Ned hasn't been out of the house in over a month. The one curious thing is the abundance of orange peels littered around the room...on tables, the floor, etc.

LESLIE

I've got to tell you everyone down at the office is a little concerned. Nobody's seen you in a month.

NED

They're all big kids. A good company runs itself.

LESLIE

Into the ground?

He sinks down into a chair.

LESLIE

Ned, I think it's all catching up with you. You never gave yourself time.

NED

Yeah, well it's too late now.

LESLIE

What're you talking about?

NED

Forget it...look...I've got things to do.

He gets up and walks away. He picks up an orange and begins to peel it.

LESLIE

Ned I want to help.

(beat)

There's something inside chewing on you....

NED

(exploding)

That's right...there is! It's people like you who want something to be wrong. You want to 'help' me, to 'save' me...you're the one with the problem, lady! Go help yourself!

Leslie heads for the door. She turns back to face Ned.

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LESLIE

It took me a long time to convince myself that Jack was dead. But it's a fact. You haven't come to believe that yet. I don't think you ever really came back from the accident. For some strange reason I don't think you ever want to.

(beat)

Good-bye, Ned.

She leaves. Ned crosses and sits down in a chair. He begins to eat the orange he has peeled. We hear Leslie's car door slam shut and hear it move off down the driveway.

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. NED'S HOUSE - NIGHT

We see Ned at the window looking out at the approaching black clouds. A soft, rolling thunder can be heard in the distance.

CUT TO

ON TERRACE DOORWAY

The doors suddenly fling open, revealing Ned. Thunder grumbles through the low threatening clouds. He looks out with feverish, paranoid eyes.

HIS POINT OF VIEW - THE SKY

suddenly comes alive with a magnificent stab of lightning in the distance...followed by a crescendo of thunder, then silence. Ned watches transfixed as an eerie calm takes over for an instant that seems like eternity. And then it begins...the first tiny, sporadic droplets of rain. Ned's head snaps around to see:

ANGLE - CLOSE ON DECK CHAIR

as several drops splatter the plastic cushion. More drops fall, gathering in little rivulets.

ON EMPTY POOL

Ned sees a fine drizzle striking the bottom of the pool with a tatooing sound gaining in volume.

ON NED

He's sweating, hair matted as if he's already been out in the shower. His eyes go wide with fear as the drizzle now intensifies into a full thunder shower. He retreats in the doorway, slamming the doors shut.

INT. NED'S DEN

He's on the floor, crouched in abject terror, aware of each sound in the room. The sounds of the storm abate slightly, and Ned eases a bit, but suddenly is aware of a new sound... coming from the living room. He slowly looks up and listens with increasing apprehension to the steady drip...drip...of what must surely be a leak. After a beat, Ned steels himself and rises.

NEW ANGLE

Ned emerges from the den as the dripping sound gets louder and closer. It's coming from the darkened living room. Ned slowly makes his way over to the light switch, unable to see exactly where the water is coming in.

FULL SHOT

Ned flips the switch and the room is bathed in light. Ned scans the room and in an instant finds what he's looking for. He gasps and recoils.

HIS POINT OF VIEW - THE PIANO

Heavy drops of blood drip down one by one and land on a framed photo of Ned laying the cornerstone for the new building. The frame is sitting in a growing pool of blood.

RESUME NED

He nervously looks around the room, wondering what to do as a wrenching sound tears the ceiling apart above the piano. Ned looks up to see it crack open slightly and a leg stabs through wearing a Topsider deck shoe. Ned whirls around as he hears something in the fireplace.

ANGLE ON FIREPLACE

Raining in through the fireplace is a deluge of what appears to be large marbles...buckets of them come streaming in, rolling all over the floor. We follow one as it rolls across to Ned's slippers. When it rests against his toe, we see it is an eyeball.

CLOSE ON NED

realizing the depth of the horror inflicted on him. He wheels from the room in panic, rushing out into the hallway.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Ned rushes through the hallway and stops dead in his tracks as he hears the sound of windows and doors rattling throughout the house. Also, barely discernable, but growing in volume, are guttural sounds...voices.

INT. DEN

He rushes in and tries to open his gun case, but realizing it's locked, he kicks in the glass and pulls out a hunting rifle. With shaking hands he loads it as he sees:

ANGLE AT WINDOW

The window has been opened and wind is pushing at the drapes. Ned hears a guttural voice which turns into a throaty whisper...He reacts as he recognizes the voice: Jack Powell.

JACK (v.o.)

(whispered)

...It's me, buddy boy.

Ned gets the rifle up as a figure begins coming in through the drapes. He fires and tears a giant hole in the drapes, glass flying everywhere, but only the rain streams through. The figure is not there.

VARIOUS SHOTS

- a) Ned going from window to window, firing randomly.
- b) He discovers wet, muddy footprints on his carpeting.
- c) Opening a closet and seeing clothes torn apart, bloodied.
- d) The leering faces of Jack and Robbie, scarred and bloodied, exactly as they were the night Ned left them to die, pressed against windows...coming from around corners in the house, etc.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Ned sees Robbie at the window. He fires and blows the window to smithereens. He couldn't help but have scored a direct hit. He relaxes slightly, only to hear a raspy voice behind him.

ROB

Hey, Ned...got a cigarette?

Ned whirls and finds the horrible mangled creature sitting on his couch. The twisted, scarred face leers at him.

NEW ANGLE

Ned fires and obliterates the couch, only to hear a crude rendition of "The Gang's All Here" played on the piano in the corner of the room. Ned wheels around and finds Jack -- who's wet and blue, a horrible drowned contrast to Robbie's burnt corpse. Ned fires and the piano explodes in flying wood fragments. Jack disappears as Ned sinks to his knees, spent. There's silence for a long beat, during which Ned breathes a hefty sigh -- he thinks he's home free. The TV suddenly blinks to life and Ned's pathetic body is bathed in blue light. He slowly raises his head as he hears Jack and Robbie's voices coming from the set, accompanied by music and applause.

ANGLE ON TV

The scarred, blistered bodies are staring straight out at Ned.

JACK

Hi, I'm Jack....

ROB

...and I'm Rob....

JACK

And...tonight we've got a very special friend in the audience. Our partner Ned Randall. Stand up, buddy.

ANGLE ON NED

He stands and aims the rifle at the TV set.

ROB (v.o.)

Attaboy, now take a bow.

Ned fires a direct hit on the center of the TV screen.

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COMPUTER

The computer screen lights up and a message appears:

"We're waiting for you, buddy."

ANGLE ON NED

Ned fires a shot at the computer.

FULL SHOT

The computer terminal explodes in a shower of sparks. Ned stands mutely watching as a spark jumps onto the nearby curtains and they immediately go up in flames. The room is ablaze in seconds as Ned reacts, heading out into the hallway.

NEW ANGLE

Ned flings open the front door but is met with the sight of teeming rain. He steps back and slams the door. He stands paralyzed...indecisive, debating which fate is worse -- fire or water. His fate is sealed as:

ANOTHER ANGLE

A giant, burning beam comes loose and falls into the hallway, trapping Ned under it. He feverishly tries to lift the weight off his legs. His eyes widen as he sees:

JACK AND ROBBIE

They casually saunter out of his living room, pausing to look down at the trapped friend, with grisly, ghoulish smiles. After a long beat of significant eye contact with Ned, Jack turns to Robbie, smiling.

JACK

I guess the old Randall luck just
ran out.

(looking down
at Ned)

See you around, buddy.

Robbie and Jack both sidestep the burning beam, and open the front door and leave. The door closes on:

NED

wild-eyed as the flames engulf him.

LONG DISSOLVE TO

EXT. MORGUE - DAY

CALLAN (v.o.)
No question -- that's him.

INT. MORGUE

Ben Callan and Leslie Turner, both shaken and emotionally spent, watch as coroner's Assistant replaces the sheet over Ned's body. The Coroner looks at his clipboard as Callan and Leslie sadly leave.

CORONER
(to Assistant)
Wanna hear a good one?

The Assistant joins him as he pulls back the sheet revealing a totally unmarked Ned.

CORONER
The entire house burned to the ground, and this guy doesn't have a blister on him.
(consults paper;
shakes head)
Normally, in circumstances like these, all we'd have to go on is a few bicuspid and we'd be lucky to get an ID.

ASSISTANT
So how do you figure it?

CORONER
Exactly what it is...Cause of death -- drowning.
(off Assistant's amazement)
His lungs were filled with sea water.

On the Coroner's perplexed look, we:

FADE TO BLACK

THE END