

ONE MISSED CALL

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EXT. ST. LUKE'S HOSPITAL - NIGHT

FADE IN:

...on part of the brick wall of a 100-year-old hospital. Soft, in the BG, the musical ring of a cell phone.

MOVE IN slowly on a dark window at the center. Another ring-tone, closer.

The dark window fills the screen. Now there's only darkness.

Another ring-tone, even closer, discordant. The darkness grows deeper as we press toward the glass and...

SUDDENLY, CLOSE, THE CONTORTED FACE OF A TERRIFIED CHILD!

The little girl hurls herself against the window, her mouth open on a scream but instead of a scream:

a screaming siren and...

CUT TO:

EXT. ST. LUKE'S HOSPITAL - MOMENTS LATER

NEW ANGLE: A fire truck races into the parking lot. The old building is being devoured by flames.

FIREMEN already on the scene hose the blaze. Others haul patients to safety. DOCTORS and NURSES run for their lives.

A battered Impala speeds into the chaos, brakes hard. Out steps JACK ADDERLY, 30's, a sharp, cool-eyed, first-through-the-door kind of cop.

Right now, he's focused on one thing only, searching the scene for the person he cares about most in the world.

Flashing his ID to get past the police lines, he MOVES through the crowd, searching. And as he does...

...FIREMEN rush by him carrying LAUREL LAWRENCE - the child at the window - a 6-year-old clutching a **TEDDY BEAR**.

We STAY with JACK, moving, searching. He stops by a cluster of NURSES who've escaped the flames. He touches one: NORA.

JACK

Nora! Have you seen Jean?

NORA shakes her head. JACK moves on, searching, calling...

JACK

Jean!

He passes a FIRE CAPTAIN talking into a mike.

CAPTAIN

We need beds. Every hospital in town. This one's gone. Three dead so far, but it's visiting hours: We don't know how many're in there.

JACK moves past. Catches an AIDE rushing past him.

JACK

Have you seen Jean Adderly?

The AIDE shakes his head, rushes on, coughing.

JACK keeps MOVING. Glances up at the hospital. Damn, it's burning hard. Not good. Searching. Then...

DR. BROWN (O.S.)

Jack!

JACK spins round to see DR. BROWN, 20's, an intern.

JACK

Doc! Have you seen my sister?  
Have you seen Jean?

DR. BROWN

It's all right. She's not here.  
She took a few days off. She went  
rock climbing upstate.

JACK

Rock climbing...

It takes a moment for the words to sink in. Then he lets his breath out as if he's held it for days.

JACK

How many times have I told her that  
stuff's too dangerous?

He gives an ironic smile, then looks at the hospital again...

...and the smile fades from his lips. He gazes at the devastation and...

...we PAN away, over the crowd, the DAZED and INJURED stumbling by, the FIREMEN rushing forward, SURVIVORS on cell phones calling their loved ones.

We come to rest on the smoke treatment truck at the outer perimeter of the scene. There sits little LAUREL, clutching her Bear. An EMS AIDE questions her.

EMS AIDE  
Is your mommy here? Do you know  
where she is? Does anything hurt?

But LAUREL sits silently... and turns a dead stare on...

The hospital... flames dancing at the windows... a shroud of smoke drawing down. As the darkness closes...

There's a harsh, gasping BREATH and we PULL BACK QUICKLY out of the smoke and...

CUT TO:

EXT. SERIES OF SHOTS: THE CITY

The smoke is now the steam rising from a manhole. OFFICE WORKERS pass on a city street, talking on cell phones.

Another harsh GASP as we SWISH PAN TO:

MOMS and SITTERS in the park, talking on cell phones.

Another GASP, another SWISH PAN TO:

DRIVERS caught in traffic, talking on cell phones.

And again to: A Bus going past, the PASSENGERS on cells.

And again: STUDENTS on the City College campus, on cells.

Ring-tones rise and play like a Toyland symphony, faster and faster, as we PULL UP over a billboard reading: "Connexion Wireless. Your Phone. Your Life."

KEEP PULLING UP as day and night pass in quick succession again and again and then slow to a longer day's journey into night with the whole city in a wide shot and then...

DRAW BACK from the city through a window...

CUT TO:

INT. THROUGHOUT BETH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

And PULL BACK from that window and its city view to...

TRAVEL through a ramshackle Victorian house where clusters of GRAD STUDENTS laugh, talk, drink shots, play "Scene It" as a drinking game, their voices rising over Alicia Keyes

As we TRAVEL from Living Room to Hallway to Dining Room to Kitchen we catch glimpses, hear snippets.

An ARTISTE chats with PALS in the Living Room.

ARTISTE

Beth? She's like the poster girl for Sanity.

PAL

Knows how to throw a party though.

TRAVELING ON to...

...the hall, where a PLAYER-GUY murmurs to his BUDDY.

PLAYER-GUY

...so now, I'm having sex and phone sex at the same time, okay...

And ON to...

...the Dining Room, where a gorgeous boy magnet we'll know as TAYLOR HUGHES gushes as if her heart were an open book...

TAYLOR

...and I'm trying to describe the plot of "Beloved" to him and I just start crying and crying...

We MOVE PAST her into...

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Where BRIAN SOUSA, 20's, a scraggly, intense film student, leans against the door, sipping wine and ogling TAYLOR.

Behind him at the stove, is BETH RAYMOND, 20'S, a psych grad. The serious type, her chopped hair and baggy clothes hide how beautiful she is. She always wears long sleeves.

Right now, like a sorceress over a cauldron, she's finishing a huge vat of spaghetti sauce. She glances at BRIAN.

BETH

You think you could crowbar your eyes off Taylor for two seconds and taste this for me?

He turns with a sigh.

BRIAN  
 Amazing. She seems to bounce even  
 when she's standing still.

He comes toward the stove with BETH's glare on him.

BRIAN  
 (kidding with her)  
 Hey. I'm a man. I have needs.

BETH  
 Yeah, that's why LeeAnn moved out.  
 So now you just go right on to the  
 next roommate?

BRIAN  
 Is there a problem with that?

He takes the spoon from her.

BETH  
 Brian. Taylor may be a little...  
 naive. But that doesn't mean she's  
 stupid.

BRIAN tastes - and a wistful look comes over him.

BRIAN  
 I can dream, can't I?

BETH swats at him playfully. Hands him a plate of tomato and mozzarella.

BETH  
 Drizzle the garlic and sprinkle the  
 basil, Romeo, all right?

CUT TO:

EXT. BETH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A three story Victorian on a quiet street near a city campus.  
 Lights are on at every window.

LEEANN COLE, 20's, a quietly thoughtful psych grad, is just coming up the front path to the door.

BACK TO:

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

BRIAN carries the tomato plate to a table cluttered with food and utensils; sits.

BRIAN

Y'know I can hear you analyzing me  
in your head. You might as well do  
it out loud.

At this point, the front door bell starts ringing.

BETH

Okay. I just think behind the  
whole Big Player routine, you're a  
hurtin' guy. You're hoping if you  
nose around Taylor, LeeAnn'll get  
jealous and come back.

BRIAN

Analyze me in your head again - I  
liked that better.

BETH

(of the bell)  
Is anyone gonna get that?

BRIAN

(of the garlic)  
Sprinkle; drizzle; what the hell am  
I doing here?

She leaves BRIAN muttering about sprinkling and drizzling.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The doorbell rings again as BETH moves to answer the door.

But here's something odd: she seems determined to look  
through the peephole - but she's frightened. She recoils...

Then, shaking off the moment, she opens the door to let in  
LEEANN. The two girls hug.

BETH

Hey, LeeAnn.

LEEANN

Hey. Is Brian...?

BETH  
In the kitchen. We'll go upstairs.

CUT TO: . . .

INT. STAIRWAY - NIGHT

They head upstairs past a GIRL on the bottom step, who's talking into her cell.

CUT TO:

INT. SECOND FLOOR LANDING - NIGHT

BETH leads LEEANN to her room. Pushes in.

CUT TO:

INT. BETH'S ROOM - NIGHT

The room is monk-cell-bare: a desk, a narrow bed, heavy psych books. No posters, nothing decorative.

Coming in, the girls surprise JOHN and MARY, who are busily going at it on the bed. JOHN jumps up in surprise.

JOHN  
She was... just showing me around.

BETH  
I noticed. Bye.

JOHN  
It's called "pleasure," Beth. You oughta try it.

BETH waggles a thumb at the door. JOHN and MARY get out.

LEEANN is on her cell. BETH, annoyed, shuts the door.

LEEANN  
(into the phone)  
Okay. Leave the alarm off.

She closes the phone, tosses it onto the bed. Sits on the window seat with a sigh, looking out at the night.

BETH drops into her desk chair, watches LEEANN.

After a second, LEEANN comes out of herself, turns to her friend, looking for something to say.

LEEANN  
So is Brian giving everyone a hard  
time?

BETH  
He's just Brian. He's intense.

LEEANN  
Yeah, you think?

BETH  
He's sorry he chased you away -  
plus he's a little pissed off you  
rejected him.

LEEANN  
He's just... too much to deal with  
right now, y'know?

LEEANN turns to the window again. BETH sees she's talking  
around what's on her mind.

BETH  
Hey...

LEEANN faces her.

BETH  
How was it?

LEEANN  
It was a funeral. It sucked. From  
now on, I only go to parties where  
no one gets cremated.

BETH  
How're Shelley's folks doing?

LEEANN  
Considering their 24-year-old  
daughter drowned in the backyard  
pond? They're great.

BETH  
What about you?

LEEANN  
What about me?

BETH  
Well, since you asked, I'd say  
you're using sarcasm to hide the  
fact that you're totally freaked.

Bingo. LEEANN fights tears.

LEEANN  
She wasn't crazy, Beth. I knew Shelley. We interned at St. Luke's together. She was not crazy.

BETH  
The way she was talking at the end...

LEEANN  
That doesn't mean she killed herself...

LEEANN is interrupted as the room is filled by the eeriest little tune ever played. Both Girls turn their eyes to...

...LEEANN's phone on the bed, the source of the tune.

The song seems to cast a spell on the girls. Neither moves to answer the phone. They just stare at it.

LEEANN  
That's... not my ringtone.

BETH takes action: gets off her chair, picks up the phone. Looks at the caller ID: "SHELLEY." The weird tune goes on.

BETH  
Says it's from Shelley.

She holds it out to LEEANN. LEEANN stares at it and...

...the phone stops ringing. The caller ID is replaced with a message: "ONE MISSED CALL."

The end of the tune seems to break the spell. LEEANN takes the phone from BETH. Flips it open. Looks at the message.

LEEANN  
Weird. It's dated Monday, 10:17pm.

BETH glances at a clock. It's Friday, 10:33.

BETH  
You must've set the date wrong.

LEEANN presses '1' for voice mail. Listens.

BETH  
Who'd be calling from Shelley's phone?

LEEANN holds up a finger. BETH falls silent. LEEANN listens to her message and...

...the blood drains from her face. Dazed, she hands the phone to BETH.

BETH takes the phone. The VOICEMAIL LADY is there...

VOICEMAIL LADY  
If you'd like to hear this message  
again, press '1.'

BETH presses '1.'

VOICEMAIL LADY  
Voice call received Monday, 10:17  
PM.

TIGHT ON BETH's face, CIRCLING her as she listens with dawning anxiety to LEEANN's distinctive twang on the line...

LEEANN  
(on the phone)  
I don't know. It's the weirdest,  
weirdest thing. Every time I look  
around there's... what...? What's  
happening? Oh my God, what's...?  
(and a shrieking scream)  
NOOOOO!

Then silence.

NEW ANGLE as BETH lowers the phone from her ear. LEEANN stares at her.

BETH  
That's your voice. That's you.

CUT TO:

EXT. RED LIGHT - NIGHT

We're outside a bad news tavern, music and noise filtering out to a littered street populated by BIKERS and PUNKS.

MOVING to the alley by the bar...

CUT TO:

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

...and DOWN the alley, past a DRUG DEAL, to where a GUY has a bargirl, JEWEL, against the wall.

He's leaning in close and they're purring at each other, as if deep in sexual negotiation.

But now we reach them, and we see the guy is JACK and while they look and sound just as if they're flirting, their words don't match their tone.

JEWEL

That's right, sweetie. PJ wants an alliance with the Stoners to move his tar through the South Side.

JACK

That's good. That's good stuff. PJ's back. With heroin now.

JEWEL

Right, Sugar.

JACK

That's real good, Jewel.

JEWEL

And you're gonna take care of me, aren't you, baby?

JACK

You know I will.

JEWEL

Anything I can do you personally?

JACK

Yeah? Would you do something really twisted?

JEWEL

Just for you, sweetie.

He pushes off the wall.

JACK

How about rehab?

He waves at her and moves towards us up the alley.

JEWEL

(smiling)

Perve.

As JACK nears the street...

His phone rings. He brings it out.

JACK

Adderly.

He listens - and his whole world turns tragic in a moment.

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

DR. JULIE COHAN is standing on the stage of a lecture hall, speaking to about 30 STUDENTS - one of whom is surreptitiously playing Bejeweled on his cell phone.

DR. JULIE

In cases of severe and repeated childhood abuse, the post traumatic stress model may be valid.

BETH is among the students taking notes.

LEEANN is next to her, trying to take notes. But she's disturbed. Her attention wanders to the window... and out to the campus beyond.

It's summer, the sky roiling. A magnolia in late flower stands on the lawn.

A wind blows and a shower of white petals obscures the view. When it begins to clear...

...a WOMAN IN WHITE stands by the tree, staring at LEEANN. Her face is blurred by the flowers - only her staring eyes are clear.

DR. JULIE (O.S.)

Long term effects may include sexual dysfunction, amnesia, dissociation, even hallucinations and multiple personalities.

As DR. JULIE drones on in the BG, LEEANN peers at the apparition. The WOMAN IN WHITE is obscured by the flowers and when they clear...

...the WOMAN IN WHITE is gone. The flowers drift.

Confused, LeeAnn turns back to the room. She notices...

...BETH's hand, on her notebook. And as LEEANN stares...

The flesh on BETH's hand bulges bizarrely as if something were being driven into it from beneath. And suddenly...

...a large, glistening needle breaks through the skin. Blood bubbles over BETH's hand as...

...LEEANN stares, horrified. Looks up at BETH's face, which remains calm.

When she looks down at her hand again, it's fine!

LEEANN swallows hard.

CUT TO:

EXT. LECTURE HALL - DAY

LEEANN steps out under a tortured sky of wind-whipped thunderheads. She begins to hurry away.

But BETH comes out behind her, calls to her.

BETH  
LeeAnn? LeeAnn, wait up.

LEEANN stops, turns, hyper.

BETH  
Wanna hit Starbucks or something?

LEEANN  
No. No, I... gotta go to the libe.  
I haven't even started my paper.

BETH  
You okay? Not to use technical  
psyche jargon, but you seem really  
weirded out.

LEEANN  
(a wan laugh)  
Haven't been sleeping too great...

BETH  
Well, call me tonight. I'll read  
you my paper on developmental  
perspectives in abuse cases. It's  
better than Ambien.

LEEANN manages a smile. Lifts a hand and heads away.

BETH looks after her, concerned. But what can she do? She walks off in the other direction.

NEW ANGLE ON LEEANN, walking away, **REFLECTED IN THE DARK WINDOWS OF THE BUILDING.** She has second thoughts. Maybe she should talk to BETH. She stops, starts to turn and...

...SHE GLIMPSES HER REFLECTION IN THE WINDOW - ONLY SHE'S A GRAY-FACED CORPSE WITH A BLOODY STUMP FOR AN ARM!

LEEANN gasps, faces the window straight on but...

...her reflection is normal!

She turns to see BETH walking off into the distance.

CUT TO:

EXT. RYDER COUNTY MORGUE - DAY

Establishing a concrete building in a rural county, JACK's Impala parked outside.

CUT TO:

INT. MORGUE HALLWAY - DAY

A stone-faced JACK walks down the hall with the Ryder CORONER, a sympathetic woman in her 50's.

CORONER

Detective Adderly, your sister was climbing alone when she fell.

They reach the glass wall of the Viewing Room. A corpse lies on a gurney covered by a body bag. A smaller plastic bag sits at the body's head, stenciled with the morgue's name.

JACK stops. Looks through the glass, his jaw tightening.

CORONER

Her body was out there for more than a week. There's no need for you to...

Without a word, JACK walks into the room.

CUT TO:

INT. MORGUE VIEWING ROOM

Through the glass: the Coroner moves away to give JACK privacy.

JACK steps up to the gurney. Stands over the body. Putting off the moment, he lifts the smaller plastic bag: his sister's belongings. He sets it on a counter behind him.

Then, with a steadying breath, he unzips the bag.

The decaying corpse peeks out.

A shuddering breath; he sneers back his emotions - he looks like a man who's been hit by a baseball bat but won't go down. His eyes move over the corpse and...

He sees a bulge in the body's cheek. Something in there. Looking around, he spots a box of plastic gloves. He grabs one. Pulls it on.

But then he hesitates. Another breath. It's tough, but it has to be done. Almost tenderly, he reaches into his sister's mouth.

He draws out a round, hard cherry candy.

JACK looks at it: *What the hell?*

CUT TO:

EXT. BETH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

POV through BETH's window: BETH works at her computer.

CUT TO:

INT. BETH'S ROOM - NIGHT

The glow from the monitor makes BETH's face pale in the dim room. On the monitor: her paper on child abuse.

CUT TO:

EXT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

The lighted white building from above. As we MOVE DOWN on it, the outer lights go out.

CUT TO:

INT. CARREL - NIGHT

LEEANN is writing in a notebook, books open around her.

She looks up as the interior lights begin to flicker out. The LIBRARIAN's voice comes over a loudspeaker.

## LIBRARIAN

We will be closing in five minutes.

LEEANN looks up at a clock on the wall: it's 9:55. . .

She gathers up her books. Glances at the window. Her own reflection worries her... but it's normal still.

Outside, streetlamps make a dim trail of light on the paths, but the rest of the campus recedes into deep shadow.

CUT TO:

EXT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

LEEANN steps onto the front steps as the library goes dark behind her. Tugging her book bag over her shoulder, she looks over the night campus.

Nervous, LEEANN starts walking away from the library.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMPUS - NIGHT

LEEANN walks anxiously along the lighted path, casting glances into the shadows to right and left.

She walks faster, heading for the city street beyond the campus gate and then...

She hears something moving nearby.

LEEANN stops short, searching the dark and...

...she hears labored breathing coming from behind her.

She turns and...

...she catches the quickest glimpse of a figure before it slips out of sight. Was it there at all?

LEEANN hurries away. She brings her cell phone out of her book bag. Dials.

CUT TO:

INT. BETH'S ROOM - NIGHT

BETH's cell phone rings. She sees LEEANN's name on the readout. She snaps it up.

BETH  
Hey, Lee.

CUT TO:

EXT. COLLEGE AVENUE - NIGHT

With relief, LEEANN comes through the campus gate onto a brighter street. Cars pass back and forth in front of her.

She's relieved to hear BETH's voice on the phone too.

LEEANN  
Hey! Hey! Sup?

BACK TO:

INT. BETH'S ROOM - NIGHT

BETH gets up, moves to the window, looks out.

BETH  
Just doing the deed on this paper.  
Where are you?

BACK TO:

EXT. COLLEGE AVENUE - NIGHT

LEEANN stays where she is a moment, where it's bright.

LEEANN  
I just got sprung from the stacks.  
My brain was mushing out...

She's starting to smile when...

...a bus goes by. A MAN WITH A WEIRDLY PALE AND PLASTIC FACE, GLASSY EYES stares out a window at her, then is gone.

Unnerved, LEEANN starts moving again, passing another Connexion Wireless billboard: "Your Phone. Your Life."

BACK TO:

INT. BETH'S ROOM - NIGHT

BETH smiles.

BETH  
I know what you mean.

CUT TO:

INT. COLLEGE AVENUE - NIGHT

LEEANN walks and talks, looking around nervously.

LEEANN

Listen. Beth. I didn't mean to ditch you after class today...

At a bus stop across the street - a weirdly out-of-date NANNY, deadpan, eyes sunk in shadow, holding the handle of an old pram - and staring at LEEANN!

A bus arrives, blocking her from view.

LEEANN walks faster - there's a canopied stairway to a train bridge up ahead. A train rattles past in front of her.

LEEANN

I've been... having some problems.

Now she notices: The WOMAN IN WHITE, her face invisible in shadow, keeping stately pace with her across the street.

LEEANN

Ever since... I don't know... Shelley drowned... then that bizarre phone call...

She looks up ahead at the canopied stairway and...

A childish laugh as a LITTLE CHILD's legs in jeans disappear into shadows at the top of the stairs.

LEEANN stops. Looks around. The WOMAN IN WHITE is gone.

LEEANN

I mean, that was my voice - screaming! And it was dated today.

CUT TO:

INT. BETH'S ROOM - NIGHT

BETH, realizing this is true, turns to the clock. 10:13.

BETH

Ten-seventeen...

CUT TO:

INT. COLLEGE AVENUE - NIGHT

LEEANN's voice breaks:

LEEANN  
Beth, something's wrong with me,  
with my mind. I'm... scared.

CUT TO:

INT. BETH'S ROOM - NIGHT

BETH looks out the window, really concerned.

BETH  
LeeAnn... where are you?

She grabs a sweater, starts pulling it on.

LEEANN  
(on the phone)  
I don't... I need help.

BETH  
Stay calm. Tell me where you are.

CUT TO:

EXT. COLLEGE AVENUE - NIGHT

LEEANN looks around her. Another bus rumbles past, obscuring her view. She heads toward the stairway.

LEEANN  
I'm... at the Metro stop on  
College. I've gotta get out of  
here. Something's happening...

CUT TO:

INT. BETH'S STAIRS - NIGHT

BETH comes down the stairs, the phone to her ear.

BETH  
That's just two minutes away. I'll  
be right there.

CUT TO:

INT. BRIDGE STAIRS - NIGHT

LEEANN comes to the foot of the metal bridge stairs. She looks up. There's dark at the top of the stairs. A clock on the stair canopy: 10:15.

LEEANN  
 I keep... seeing... things...  
 weird people... looking at me...

She starts up the stairs, clutching the bannister.

BETH  
 (on the phone)  
 Just hold on, LeeAnn. I'm coming.

LEEANN feels something. Looks...

...a thin line of some sticky, pus-like substance lies on the bannister under her hand. When she lifts her hand, it pulls at her, drips from her.

Disgusted, she yanks her hand free. Scrapes the stuff off.

She hurries to the top of the stairs.

CUT TO:

EXT. RAILWAY OVERPASS - NIGHT

LEEANN looks at...

...a well-lighted bridge, empty. There's a guard rail on either side, a padlocked gate in the rail to the left.

Somewhat relieved to be in the light, LEEANN starts slowly, cautiously across the bridge.

BETH  
 (on the phone)  
 LeeAnn. You still there?

LEEANN  
 (calmer)  
 Yeah. Yeah. I'm sorry. I didn't  
 mean to panic. I've just been  
 seeing really strange stuff...

CUT TO:

EXT. COLLEGE AVENUE - NIGHT

BETH is walking quickly down the street toward the train bridge. She can hear the RUMBLE of a train coming. And...

LEEANN  
 (on the phone)  
 I don't know. It's the weirdest,  
 weirdest thing.

BETH stops. She recognizes the phrase from the Voice Mail she heard before. She looks around and...

...a clock on a pizzeria wall shows the time: 10:17.

BETH starts running.

CUT TO:

EXT. RAILWAY OVERPASS - NIGHT

LEEANN walks slowly forward, talking on the phone.

LEEANN  
It's, like, every time I look  
around there's...

She hears a CREEE-EEAK to her left. Turns to see...

Right beside her, the gate is swinging open. The padlock is somehow hanging undone.

The RUMBLE of the oncoming train grows louder.

Suddenly, one of the lights on the bridge snaps out!

LEEANN looks up at it, afraid.

On the track below, the train's headlight appears, glaring.

LEEANN  
What's happening?

NEW ANGLE: BETH crests the stairs to the bridge.

She sees LEEANN turn to stare at the open gate again and...

...the light on the bridge comes back on as a trio of STUDENTS comes up the far stairs. STUDENT#1 is showing the other two his cell phone screen and they're all giggling at what they see there.

NEW ANGLE: LEEANN stares at the open gate and hears...

...one loud, labored GASP behind her.

She turns and...

ATTACKER'S POV: rushing at LEEANN as her eyes go wide in terror.

BETH'S POV: AS the STUDENTS watch...

...for one split second, something, someone, some disturbance in the atmosphere slams into LEEANN and...

LEEANN stumbles backward towards the open gate!

But before she goes over the edge, she manages to catch hold of the rail.

BETH

LeeAnn!

ATTACKER's POV: LEEANN clinging on for dear life as we rush at her.

BETH charges forward.

Her POV: Is there someone there, attacking LEEANN?

Then...

LEEANN

NOOOOOO!

NEW ANGLE OFF THE SIDE OF THE BRIDGE AS...

LEEANN PITCHES OFF THE EDGE, TUMBLES THROUGH THE AIR AND...

...THE TRAIN HITS HER A GLANCING BLOW AS SHE FALLS, THROWING HER OUT OF SHOT.

BETH reaches the spot where LEEANN was standing, stares over the bridge in horror - then keeps running for the far stairs.

CUT TO:

EXT. PLATFORM - NIGHT

BETH runs down the stairs to the train platform to see...

IN MEDIUM SHOT: The long train still passing, keeping her where she is and...

Through the rapidly passing gaps between cars, BETH sees - or thinks she sees...

...a barely discernible demonic face flashing out at her.

Then the train is past.

Quiet. CLOSE ON BETH, staring in horror then...

...a PUFF OF AIR right behind her.

BETH turns, startled, but no one's there. Slowly, she faces the tracks again and we...

...PULL BACK and BACK from her over the train tracks until...

...LEEANN'S hand appears CLOSE in the foreground, still clutching her cell phone. Slowly, painfully, her fingers begin to punch out a number.

PULL BACK MORE TO SEE: LEEANN'S hand - the hand holding the phone - is attached to a severed arm!

PULL BACK AGAIN to include LEEANN'S body, lying on the tracks, several feet from her arm.

CUT TO:

EXT. RAILWAY OVERPASS - LATER

DETECTIVE CHINA DAVIS, 40's, big, butch, cynical, interviews the STUDENTS, who seem to think LEEANN'S death was suicide.

FRESHMAN GIRL

It was like she just... threw herself off...

DRAW BACK TO INCLUDE: A PATROLMAN leads BETH back up onto the overpass. BETH moves away from him to the rail. Looks over it to see...

ON THE TRACK: A CSU GUY is bending over LEEANN'S body.

CLOSE ON: CSU GUY, as he reaches into LEEANN'S mouth and takes out a hard candy.

CSU GUY stares at it, puzzled as...

...BETH watches from above.

CUT TO:

INT. FUNERAL HOME - DAY

LEEANN'S MOTHER sobs before a closed coffin. LEEANN'S FATHER tries to console her.

BETH moves among mourning FAMILY and FRIENDS, looking at LEEANN'S MOTHER with compassion as she passes to the door.

CUT TO:

INT. RECEPTION ROOM - DAY

BETH comes into a Reception Room where MOURNERS are talking together quietly. She sees:

BRIAN, sprawled in a chair, brooding in one corner.

Near him, the wide-eyed bombshell TAYLOR is whispering with a small group of STUDENTS.

TAYLOR  
LeeAnn told me the same thing  
happened to Shelley before she  
drowned.

GIRL STUDENT  
That is so eerie.

As BETH approaches...

...BRIAN whispers harshly at TAYLOR.

BRIAN  
*Sst!*

She looks at him. He gestures at her as if to say: *Cool it.*  
She shrugs: *What's the problem?*

TAYLOR  
I'm just saying what LeeAnn said.

BRIAN  
Yeah, well, maybe this isn't the  
time, all right?

But a BOY STUDENT takes up the theme.

BOY STUDENT  
I heard Shelley got a phone call  
from an old advisor of hers...

TAYLOR  
I heard that too! Only it turned  
out the advisor was already dead.

BRIAN gets out of his chair, joins them, annoyed.

BRIAN  
Would you stop? Her parents are  
right in the other room.

BETH joins them.

TAYLOR

It's like... the dead people call you - and then you die too.

BRIAN

Shit, Taylor. Don't try to think, all right, you just make yourself look ridiculous.

TAYLOR's hurt. BETH defends her.

BETH

I heard it too.

Everyone stops to listen. BETH has that kind of authority.

BETH

LeeAnn's message. It came from Shelley's phone... but it was LeeAnn's voice and she was saying the exact same words she said the night she died.

TAYLOR

That's it. I'm officially creeped out.

BOY STUDENT

Did you tell the police?

BETH

(nods)

This woman detective who talked to me on the bridge.

BRIAN

This is insane! You can't believe this!

He looks around, meets blank stares: *What are you getting so worked up about?* Then, with sudden vehemence.

BRIAN

I mean, it's crap! All right? It's just total crap! Damn...

And he stalks out of the room.

BETH

Brian...

BETH goes after her friend. In the BG:

GIRL STUDENT  
What's his problem?

TAYLOR  
He had a thing for LeeAnn...

CUT TO:

EXT. FUNERAL HOME - DAY

BRIAN, upset, storms away from the Funeral Home across a small Common dotted with oak trees.

Anxious, he glances at one oak tree as he passes it. Makes a disgusted face as he sees...

...a red, convoluted burl, PULSING on the oak like a living thing, oozing some pus-like substance from its center.

BRIAN turns away and stalks on as...

BETH steps out of the Funeral Home behind him, spots him.

BETH  
Brian!

She goes after him.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET CORNER - DAY

BRIAN comes around the corner to a street of shops.

To his right: a three story building under construction; WORKERS welding girders; setting rebar.

As he glances over, he sees...

...A WELDER, who lifts his visor to examine his work. He looks down at BRIAN... and he has black, plastic eyes!

BRIAN stares, unable to believe what he's seeing. Then...

The WELDER snaps the visor down again. Goes back to work.

BRIAN swallows hard, moves across the street.

CUT TO:

EXT. STARBUCK'S - DAY

BRIAN sits sulking over his coffee at an outside table. BETH plunks down across from him.

BETH  
All right. What's up?

No answer. He drinks sullenly.

BETH  
I know how you felt about LeeAnn.  
You wanna cry or... put your fist  
through a wall, I get that. But  
treating Taylor like crap? That's  
not you, Brian. What's going on?

He snorts: she's sharp. Brusquely, he takes his cell phone out. Presses a button, shoves it across the table at her.

BETH hesitates - then picks up the phone, listens.

VOICEMAIL LADY  
(on phone)  
To listen to your messages, press  
one.

BETH glances at BRIAN. Presses one. Listens. And...

VOICEMAIL LADY  
Voice call received Thursday, 12:02  
PM.

BRIAN  
(on voice mail)  
Oh, damn it, I forgot. I swear, if  
I didn't have my head screwed on...

Then, a loud BLAM! that makes BETH wince. Then nothing.

Slowly, she lays the phone down on the table.

BRIAN  
Call came in three nights ago. It  
was from LeeAnn's phone.

BETH  
That was the night she died.

BRIAN  
Only the call was dated Thursday.

BETH  
Today. 12:02 p.m.

They both turn to look across the street at a clock mounted on a post: It's a few minutes before noon.

BRIAN, straining to be cynical, makes a horror movie noise:

BRIAN  
Oooooo-wooooo-ooooo...

It falls flat, even for him.

BRIAN  
I don't believe in magic, Beth. I don't believe in anything. But ever since I got that call, things have been... weird.

BETH  
Like what?

He doesn't want to talk about it.

BETH  
No, really, Brian. I mean, LeeAnn said the same thing before...

She stops. He gives her a long, sad look, then turns away.

Across the street, unnoticed in the BG, the WELDER at the construction site has set down his torch, moved off.

In the foreground, BRIAN sees:

...that strangely funereal NANNY slowly walking past the construction site, holding a LITTLE CHILD by the hand. BRIAN sees the LITTLE CHILD's deadpan face in profile. But as they pass, the LITTLE CHILD turns suddenly to face BRIAN and...

...the other half of its face is horribly contorted: a malevolent, agonized, demonic face!

BRIAN shudders, shuts his eyes.

BETH  
Brian? Are you okay?

He opens his eyes, looks...

The NANNY and LITTLE CHILD are gone.

Rattled, BRIAN wants to get out of here.

BRIAN  
Look. Forget it.

He gets up. Tosses his coffee cup into a trash basket.

BETH  
Brian. Don't. It's almost...

He begins to move away.

ANGLE, WIDE on BRIAN, watching from across the street, from the construction site as...

He steps between two parked cars.

NEW ANGLE ON BRIAN.

BRIAN  
These things work because they get in your head, Beth. You're the psych lady, you know that. If you don't think about them, they can't...

And he steps out from between the cars and...

BETH  
(screaming)  
Brian!

A horn screams. BRIAN shrinks back. A speeding CAR races by - its DRIVER talking on his cell. The car nearly kills him... but misses!

BRIAN takes a breath. Looks at BETH. Laughs.

BRIAN  
Like I said...

Carefully looking both ways, he starts across the street. He's almost at the far curb when...

BETH hears that noise again - a puff of air... she turns to see... no one's there but...

BRIAN's phone is still on the table.

BETH picks up the phone. Stands to wave it after BRIAN.

BETH  
Brian. Your phone.

BRIAN stops.

BRIAN

Oh, damn it, I forgot.

He comes back across the street.

BRIAN

I swear, if I didn't have my head  
screwed on...

He stops dead. He and BETH stare at each other as they realize he has spoken the words from the message and...

...BLAM!

BETH starts as a small blast goes off at the construction site. The WELDER's acetylene tank has exploded. A harmless shower of debris pours off the second floor.

BETH, looking around BRIAN, watches as the WORKERS rush to the scene. She can hear their voices: "How the hell did that happen?" "Man, you see that thing go flying?"

Relieved that the accident was minor, she turns back to BRIAN, starting to smile: *How silly we were to think...*

BRIAN stands staring at her, eyes full of grief and shock.

Slowly, BETH realizes something's wrong. Her gaze travels down from BRIAN's face to see...

...a piece of rebar, propelled by the explosion, has impaled him, coming right through the center of his chest!

Horrified, BETH looks up into BRIAN's stunned face.

BRIAN opens his mouth as if to speak to her and...

Blood comes pouring out of his mouth. He falls to his knees. As he gags on his own blood, a **HARD CANDY** comes out between his lips and drops to the sidewalk.

BRIAN starts to fall back - but the rebar sticking out of him keeps him upright. He kneels there, dead, staring, like some bizarre statue - with the clock behind him reading 12:02.

BETH gapes at him, frozen with horror.

CUT TO:

INT. DETECTIVE BUREAU - DAY

CLOSE ON: BETH sitting in numbed shock.

CHINA (O.S.)  
Welder's acetylene tank exploded.

DRAW BACK: We're in an open-plan room with four or five desks in it, DETECTIVES working at most of the desks.

BETH is seated beside one desk with CHINA tilted back in the reclining chair behind it.

In the BG, JACK is at a corner desk, writing on a pad.

CHINA  
Piece of rebar went flying. Your friend happened to be in the way...

BETH raises dull eyes to her.

BETH  
You think it's some kind of coincidence? What about LeeAnn? What about the voice mails?

NEW ANGLE ON JACK: he's not writing, he's doodling. He's also clearly listening to every word CHINA and BETH speak.

CHINA  
We checked that. There were no voice mails on your friends' phones. Either of them.

ANGLE ON BETH and CHINA.

BETH  
I heard them. Brian and LeeAnn - they both got them. They say it happened to Shelley too - Shelley Baum - before she drowned.

ON JACK, as he sits back in his chair, fiddling with his pen, listening, brooding on what he hears.

ON CHINA: she's heard enough. She gets up abruptly.

CHINA  
Well... thank you, Miss Raymond. We'll be checking on all this and we'll contact you if we need anything else.

Dismissed, BETH is about to protest. But there's no point. She gets up and leaves.

CHINA watches her go. Sniffs. Walks over to the coffee machine behind JACK.

JACK goes on fiddling with his pen. He speaks without turning, his back to CHINA's.

JACK  
What about the hard candies? Both these kids were eating 'em. My sister too.

CHINA snorts as she pours her coffee, shakes her head.

CHINA  
Wow. Three people in two weeks eating hard candy. Must be what you detectives call a "clue."

JACK  
The girl's right, China. There's some kind of connection here.

CHINA faces him, coffee in hand.

CHINA  
I'm sorry about your sister, Jack. I lost my sister? I'd take some personal time. Till my mind was working right again.

She heads back to her desk.

JACK broods over his drawing. He throws down his pen.

CUT TO:

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

BETH is walking across the parking lot toward a tree-lined street when JACK comes out of the station behind her.

JACK  
Miss Raymond?

She goes on, lost in thought. JACK hurries up behind her. Touches her arm.

BETH yanks away, grabbing herself as if he'd scalded her.

JACK  
Sorry. Didn't mean to startle you. I'm Detective Jack Adderly. I heard what you were saying in there.

BETH braces herself for more skepticism.

JACK

China - Detective Davis - she's a good cop. Just a little short on imagination.

BETH

(hopeful)

You saying you believe me?

JACK

Shelley Baum interned at St. Luke's with my sister Jean. Jean died in a fall a few days before Shelley drowned.

BETH

I'm sorry... but then... you see what I'm saying. All these people are linked to each other.

JACK hands her his card.

JACK

Listen. If you think of something else... whatever it is...

She takes the card gratefully. He nods. She watches as he walks back to the station.

CUT TO:

INT. BETH'S FOYER - NIGHT

Weary, BETH comes in. Glances down at a small table where the mail is sitting. Bills, catalogues and...

CLOSE ON: THE MAIL, as she lifts out a letter.

Addressed to Beth, it's covered with weird markings - a heart with a cross inside, a banner reading "Forgive." Triple underlined words: PLEASE OPEN!!!!

BETH coolly tears the letter into pieces. Drops the pieces into a waste basket. Then pauses...

...she hears someone crying softly within the house.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

TAYLOR sits on the sofa, sobbing. Her cell phone is on the cushion beside her.

BETH sees the cell phone. Her eyes go wide.

BETH sits down next to TAYLOR. Picks up the phone. Checks it. "NO MESSAGES."

BETH  
You didn't... get a call?

TAYLOR shakes her head.

TAYLOR  
But my number was in Brian's cell.  
I'm gonna be next. I feel it.

BETH  
You don't know that. My number was  
on Brian's phone too. Here.

She takes the battery pack off the phone. She takes her own phone out of her purse and pulls the battery out of that too.

She throws both phones face down on the sofa.

BETH  
No power. No problem. Any dead  
people call, we're not home.

TAYLOR tries to smile, but she's only somewhat comforted.

CUT TO:

EXT. BETH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

It's late. Dark. Silent.

CUT TO:

INT. BETH'S ROOM - NIGHT

BETH lies asleep in her bed, the covers pulled to her chin.

CUT TO:

INT. TAYLOR'S ROOM - NIGHT

TAYLOR's asleep too, clutching a pillow to her pink nightshirt. A valentine nightlight gives off a red glow.

A crucifix hangs on the wall, bathed in red light.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Starting from the far side of the living room, CLOSE SLOWLY on the sofa, where the girls' two phones lie face down without their batteries. Just as we reach the sofa...

...one of the phones starts to sing that eerie, eerie song!

CUT TO:

INT. BETH'S ROOM - NIGHT

BETH lies asleep as the song filters to her. Then...

...her eyes come wide open.

CUT TO:

INT. UPSTAIRS HALL - NIGHT

BETH steps from her room, hears the song playing downstairs.

She moves slowly down the dark hallway. She goes past TAYLOR's open door and...

...**TAYLOR STANDS JUST WITHIN!** Lit by the red nightlight, she is pale as a zombie, staring like a corpse.

It's a moment before BETH sees her. Then she jumps, gasps!

The two exchange worried looks as the eerie song continues.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

First BETH, then TAYLOR come downstairs into the living room. They move toward the phones. TAYLOR is close to hysteria.

TAYLOR  
Which one is it?

BETH doesn't know. They move to the phones. The song plays. BETH can see the batteries are still out of the phones!

Now, BETH reaches for her phone. Her hand hovers over it. She hesitates. Then... she picks it up. Opens it.

The readout: blank. She looks at TAYLOR.

Then they both look at TAYLOR's phone just as...  
 ...the song stops.

TAYLOR  
 Oh God. Oh God.

She picks up her phone. Opens it.  
 The readout: "ONE MISSED CALL."

TAYLOR  
 There are no batteries!

BETH looks over TAYLOR's shoulder.

BETH  
 7:06 PM. Tuesday.

TAYLOR  
 (despairing)  
 That's two days from now.

TAYLOR stares at the phone, paralyzed with fear.

BETH  
 It's a video file.

As they look, the file begins to download.

TAYLOR whimpers as the image forms: a picture of her own terrified face staring directly at us. Then...

...her mouth opens as if she's gagging and...

...as BETH and TAYLOR stare, horrified...

...her neck begins to bulge on one side as if something were pushing out from inside her throat!

TAYLOR lets out a cry. And before the video can finish, she throws the phone down on the sofa.

CUT TO:

INT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING UPSTAIRS HALL - DAY

We're in a hallway, looking through the glass panel of a door marked, "DR. JULIE COHAN, PSYCH DEPT. CHAIRMAN."

BETH is in there, on her feet, trying to explain what's happening. We can't make out her words through the glass, but we can see she's emotional, speaking forcefully.

DR. COHAN sits behind her desk, disbelieving, "handling" her, trying to calm her down.

Finally, frustrated, BETH comes out into the hall.

Wrapped in her own thoughts, BETH comes down the hall to the stairs, goes downstairs.

CUT TO:

INT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING ENTRY - DAY

Still on the stairs, BETH looks down and sees...

...TAYLOR pressed to the wall by a small mob of STUDENTS.

STUDENT#1

Look, it's not like we believe it.

STUDENT#2

You can't blame us for wanting to be safe.

TAYLOR, near tears, tentatively holds out her cell phone.

The MOB hesitates... but STUDENT#3 boldly snaps the phone up, deletes her stored number. Hands it back to TAYLOR.

STUDENT#3

(brusquely)

Look, I'm sure you'll be... fine.

With which STUDENT#3 turns and strides away.

The rest of the MOB pauses, embarrassed. But now TAYLOR thrusts the phone at them, one after another.

TAYLOR

Go on! Delete your number too.

Yours too. Go on, you all want to!

After a brief hesitation, one STUDENT takes the phone... and like insects, the other STUDENTS swarm over it, fighting for the chance to delete their numbers.

BETH watches, furious - then comes storming down the stairs.

She breaks into the crowd of STUDENTS, snatches the phone.

BETH

Stop it! Give it back. Stop!

She faces down the MOB.

BETH  
What the hell's wrong with you?

A long pause. The STUDENTS gaze at her abashed. Then:

STUDENT#1  
We don't want to be next.

TAYLOR hangs her head. But BETH takes her elbow.

BETH  
Come on. Let's get out of here.

CUT TO:

INT. VERIZON STORE - DAY

BETH and TAYLOR sit at the counter, facing a nerdy CLERK.

CLERK  
It'll cost you but, sure... we can  
cancel the contract. Don't you  
want to use your insurance, replace  
the phone?

The Girls hesitate but...

BETH  
No. No. Just cancel it.

CUT TO:

EXT. RIVER - DAY

Standing side by side on the grassy banks of the city's  
river, BETH and TAYLOR exchange a look. BETH nods and...

...TAYLOR hurls her cell phone into the river.

They watch it sink without a trace.

CUT TO:

EXT. BETH'S HOUSE - DAY

BETH and TAYLOR come around the corner to see...

...a MAN waiting on their doorstep.

The Girls hesitate, but the man sees them and approaches  
BETH. This is producer TED SUMMERS, 40's, respectably hip;  
cool, serious and sincere.

TED  
Miss Hughes? Taylor Hughes?

BETH hesitates. TAYLOR lifts a hesitant hand. TED grips it, shakes.

TED  
Ted Summers. I'm a television producer. I work on a program called American Miracles.

TAYLOR  
I've heard of that.

TED  
Some students called us about what's happening at the school. They told us about your problem.

BETH  
Excuse me. We're very busy. What do you want?

TED keeps his focus on TAYLOR.

TED  
We've been moved by your story, Taylor - and we think we might be able to help you.

TAYLOR  
(desperate)  
Help me? How?

BETH  
Taylor...

TED's eyes flick to the crucifix at TAYLOR's throat. He takes her arm, walks with her to the house in a way that shuts BETH out.

Not to be put off, BETH comes up alongside them.

TED  
Let me tell you a little bit about myself. I developed this show after my son suffered a kind of supernatural possession. Went on for months. It was devastating to our whole family.

(MORE)

TED (cont'd)  
 I've made it a point to build an  
 extensive resource of people who're  
 very successful in dealing with  
 evil influences like this.

TAYLOR's hand moves to her throat, her eyes hopeful.

TAYLOR  
 What do you mean? Like, you do  
 exorcisms? But I already talked to  
 my priest...

TED  
 I understand, believe me. Getting  
 the whole... church machinery in  
 motion on short notice is very  
 difficult but... I'm talking about  
 bringing in someone who can work  
 independent of all that.  
 Professional though. I don't deal  
 with con men. Like I said, I've  
 been through this myself.

BETH can see TAYLOR is eager to be convinced.

BETH  
 C'mon, Taylor. This is nonsense.  
 Let's go inside.

TED ignores her, hones in on TAYLOR.

TED  
 Do you have the phone with you?

TAYLOR  
 What? No, we...

TED  
 It'd be helpful... here...  
 (takes a cell from his  
 jacket)  
 Can you give me some idea of  
 exactly what happened when the call  
 came in?

BETH can't believe this is happening.

BETH  
 This is ridiculous!

She breaks in between TED and TAYLOR.

BETH

Look, thank you very much, but I don't think being on some *reality TV show* is what we need right now.

TED

I understand: you want to protect your friend - I admire that but...

The phone in TAYLOR's hand begins to sing that weird song.

BETH and TED stop and turn to TAYLOR.

TAYLOR looks helplessly from them to the phone. BETH and TED move so they can see the readout.

There's the video. The staring TAYLOR... gagging... her neck bulges... bulges more and...

TED

Jesus!

With a whimper, TAYLOR forces the phone back on TED.

TED glances quickly toward the curb; the van.

BETH recovers herself. Grabs TAYLOR's arm.

BETH

Come on, Taylor.  
(Then to TED)  
Thanks anyway.

BETH opens the front door, but as she drags TAYLOR inside...

TAYLOR casts a yearning look back at TED: that exorcism sounded really good to her.

CUT TO:

INT. BETH'S FOYER - DAY

BETH slams the door in TED's face. She pauses, breathing hard, close to tears.

BETH

Idiot!

TAYLOR

I don't know, Beth. He just wanted to help. Maybe an exorcism...

BETH  
 (a little too harshly)  
 You don't need an exorcism. Not  
 from that clown.

Cowed, TAYLOR looks longingly out the sidelights as TED retreats.

BETH, trying to come up with an idea, looks around, sees...  
 ...her phone still lying on the sofa in the living room.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

BETH strides to the phone, puts the battery back in. She works JACK's card out of her purse.

TAYLOR comes in after her more slowly.

TAYLOR  
 What are you doing?

BETH  
 I'm calling the police.

But again, TAYLOR looks longingly toward the door.

CUT TO:

INT. JACK'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Upstairs in a townhouse in a blue collar neighborhood. Functional. The TV plays news soundlessly in the background.

JACK sits on the sofa alone, confronting the plastic bag labeled "Ryder County Morgue" on the table in front of him.

Gathering his will power, he sits forward quickly, opens the bag. Starts taking out his sister's personal effects.

He brings out an envelope, empties some cheap jewelry onto the coffee table. He brings out a stained, bunched-up t-shirt; then a hiker's wallet with - unbearably - a photo inside of him and JEAN: a small version of the very photo framed on the shelf beside him.

We PULL UP to watch him from above: isolated, alone with the last objects his sister touched.

NEW ANGLE CLOSER: he brings JEAN's cell phone out of the bag.

CLOSE ON him as he opens the phone and stares at it. His mind is working. An idea starts to come to him. Slowly, his fingers move to touch the buttons and...

...a phone rings.

For one brief second, all kinds of fantasies go through his head - JEAN's calling - she's not really dead. Then he realizes: it's just the cell in his pocket.

He brings it out, brings it to his ear.

JACK  
Adderly.

INT. BETH'S ROOM - DAY

CLOSE ON: The clock. 7:00AM. The alarm goes off, a screaming buzzer.

PULL BACK TO SEE: BETH lying in bed, already wide awake, staring at the ceiling.

CUT TO:

INT. UPSTAIRS HALL - DAY

BETH walks down the hall and pauses at TAYLOR's room.

There's a Post-It on the doorframe: "Beth - going home for a while. Need to think. T."

The room's empty. There's an impression on the bedspread, but the bed's still made.

As BETH takes down the Post-It, the doorbell rings.

CUT TO:

INT. BETH'S FOYER - DAY

The bell rings again as BETH moves to the door. She's about to look through the peephole... but stops, afraid.

She pulls the door open. JACK's there.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

BETH paces, worried. JACK examines the note from TAYLOR, then lays it on a phone table.

JACK

It's not your imagination, Miss Raymond. The phone calls happened.

BETH

The other detective said no one could find the voice mails.

JACK

No one can. But I checked the records. Brian was called by LeeAnn, LeeAnn by Shelley. And Shelley was called by my sister. And each call came in after the caller was already dead.

BETH stops pacing, holds her head as if it might explode.

But then a thought comes to her. She looks at him.

BETH

But then - who called your sister? If we could find out who started this, trace it back to the source, maybe...

He smiles. She's sharp. He likes that. BETH sees his look.

BETH

You already know.

JACK

I spent most of last night tracking it down.

(pushing off the wall)

I'm on my way to talk to her now. When I find something out...

She moves in front of him.

BETH

Let me come with you.

He hesitates.

BETH

I can't just sit here. Please.

When he still hesitates, she goes to the foyer to get her coat.

JACK watches her with a small smile of admiration.

CUT TO:

EXT. MARIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

A decaying brick tower in what was once a good idea for public housing and is now a slum. Local PREDATORS lounge around, watching us balefully.

JACK (O.S.)

The call to my sister came from an aide at an old age home, a woman named Marie Lawrence.

NEW ANGLE: JACK and BETH get out of the Impala and begin to cross the street to the house. As they do, JACK protectively takes BETH's elbow. She pulls away sharply, rubbing her arm.

She doesn't stop. She crosses alone.

JACK lifts an eyebrow. He gets it now: She doesn't like to be touched.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - DAY

Graffiti on the wall, an argument behind closed doors, cigarette stubs on the floor...

The scarred elevator doors open and out come JACK and BETH.

JACK indicates 3C. They go to the door, ring the bell.

No answer. Then:

OLD LADY (O.S.)

I wouldn't hold your breath.

JACK and BETH turn to see a woman who looks as if she survived the Flood peeking out of her partly opened door.

OLD LADY

No one in there for more'n two weeks now. Not a soul.

JACK nods.

JACK

Thanks.

He's about to turn back to the door, but notices the OLD LADY hasn't closed her door yet. He turns back to her.

JACK  
(pointedly)  
Thanks.

Disgruntled, she gets the message. Shuts the door.

JACK  
All right. I guess I'll try to run down the super.

BETH  
That could take hours. We should just break in.

JACK  
I can't do that. I'm a cop.

BETH  
I'm not.

He hesitates - but he's likes her spunk. He takes out his wallet, takes out a special plastic card with a hooked top.

BETH looks at it.

JACK  
Oh goodness. Someone must've left this in my wallet.

BETH takes it. Takes it to the door. She's about to slip it in the jamb, then looks back at JACK: *Is this right?*

JACK rolls his eyes - he's impatient, doesn't want to get caught. He nods.

BETH works the card into the door. JACK watches impatiently as she tries to push back the latch. This is gonna take forever.

Finally, he steps up. Makes a quick check on the OLD LADY's apartment behind him - then he pistons the heel of his palm into the door, right under the knob. The door snaps open.

BETH  
I was getting it!

He takes the card back. Goes in. Annoyed - but only sort of - she follows.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

It's a shabby little room. The wallpaper is in washed-out pastels, colors from another era.

BETH and JACK have to step around the clothes and toys lying everywhere. On the table stands a basket of rotten fruit, like some sort of disgusting still-life.

BETH

Whoever Marie Lawrence is, she's  
not much of a housekeeper.

JACK presses the button on the answering machine and we hear:

BOSS

(on machine)

This is my last call, Marie. You  
don't show up for work today,  
that's it.

Looking around, BETH moves out of the room.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

BETH comes in; wrinkles her nose. The garbage stinks. Ants are everywhere. She looks in the sink and starts back as...

...a bold rat stares up at her.

CUT TO:

INT. HALL - DAY

JACK moves down an empty hall to a door.

CUT TO:

INT. NURSERY - DAY

JACK enters a drab, faded-green room set up for two little girls. Broken toys, a torn American Girl poster only make the place more pathetic.

He glances briefly through the window at: an oak tree with a red, convoluted burl. The thing is damp, oozing sap, crawling with ants, swarming with flies.

On a dresser by the window: an archaic NANNY doll with a pram. JACK picks up the NANNY - her eyes are missing.

We recognize - though JACK cannot - some of the images seen by the people who've died.

CUT TO:

INT. HALL - DAY

BETH comes out of the kitchen, moves to a door that's ajar.

She approaches it slowly. Is about to peek through - but recoils, frightened, as she is by peepholes.

She pushes in.

CUT TO:

INT. MARIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

BETH enters the small room. Unmade bed. Clothes on the floor. A workspace with a computer.

BETH finds a photo on the desk torn into four pieces. She assembles the pieces to see:

A picture of MARIE, a harried woman in her 30's. Dressed in the white uniform of a Nursing Home Orderly - the same white blouse and long skirt as the WOMAN IN WHITE.

With her are two daughters, ELLIE, 10, and LAUREL, 6. The names are scribbled beneath. ELLIE shows her profile as she looks at LAUREL.

As BETH studies the picture, there's a creaking noise behind her. She turns quickly to see...

...a cabinet high in the wall, the door ajar: a small, shadowy figure within, eyes glittering.

BETH stares at the staring eyes: What is that? Very quickly, she reaches out, yanks the door and...

...A LARGE, EERILY STARING, SMILING DOLL TUMBLES OUT ONTO HER! IT HAS THE SAME DEAD, PLASTIC FACE AS THE GLASS-EYED MAN LEEANN SAW ON THE BUS.

BETH instinctively catches the staring DOLL - then throws it down in disgust, turns away and...

...JACK is right next to her!

JACK (O.S.)  
You all right?

BETH gasps, startled - then she feels silly.

JACK's eyes move from her, to the DOLL, up to the cupboard.  
*What's this?*

He reaches up, comes out with a DVD.

CUT TO:

INT. MARIE'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

BETH looks over JACK's shoulder as he plays the DVD on  
 MARIE's computer.

A video comes on the monitor. A wide angle shot, with  
 halting, strobic movement, poor audio: ELLIE reading on her  
 bed; LAUREL playing with a doll.

JACK

Must be one of those nanny-cams -  
 to keep an eye on the children.

CUT TO:

INT. NURSERY - DAY

BETH and JACK come into the room. JACK moves to the bed.

JACK

Judging from the angle, the camera  
 would've been...

He moves to the bureau. No camera.

JACK

So where'd it go?

He begins looking around the room.

BETH's eyes move to a mirror over the bureau. She looks into  
 her own troubled eyes and...

...that sound - that puff of air she heard when LEEANN and  
 BRIAN died - comes right behind her!

Already nervous, she spins around, staring.

JACK looks surprised to see her fear. All he did was push  
 the button on a **CHILD'S ASTHMA INHALER**. He holds it up,  
 pushes the button again.

BETH, pale, hurries out of the room.

CUT TO:

EXT. MARIE'S HOUSE - DAY

JACK comes out, puzzled. Crosses the street to the Impala.

Her back to him, BETH leans against the car, her elbows on the roof, her fists clenched before her face.

JACK stands behind her a moment, uncomfortable. Then:

JACK

Miss Raymond... Beth. I can't help you, if you don't talk to me.

Slowly, she gathers herself to respond to his concern.

BETH

That noise. The inhaler. I heard it just before LeeAnn and Brian... Both times. But when I looked, there was no one there.

JACK looks at her, at a loss. She faces him.

BETH

What the hell is happening?

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE COMPUTER ROOM - DAY

CLOSE ON: a monitor photo of a BOY with a bullet in his head. Then it changes to a shot of a strangled WOMAN.

PULL BACK ON: JACK sitting at a computer in a small room of computers, empty but for him and...

BETH, looking over his shoulder, disturbed by the images.

JACK

This is the morgue file, the dead for the last month or so.

He pushes a key. A new picture: an OLD WOMAN, as if asleep.

JACK

If Marie Lawrence died, she did it in another city.

Another image: a MAN with multiple stab wounds.

BETH makes a noise, turns away. JACK glances at her.

BETH  
How do you stand this stuff?

JACK  
(going through the pictures)  
The dead ones don't usually bother me.

As he keeps looking, BETH moves away to look at a clock that reads 4:21.

JACK  
Hey, wait a minute.

She turns to see a photo of a 10-year-old GIRL's corpse.

JACK  
There. Not Marie. Ellie.

BETH  
The older daughter. In the snapshot. That's her?

JACK reads off the monitor - and his expression changes.

JACK  
She died in her apartment, of an asthma attack.

BETH reacts: the puff of air sound begins to fit.

JACK  
There's a CPS report attached.

BETH  
Child Protective Services? She was an abuse victim?

JACK  
It says the mother was questioned by a psychiatric nurse at...

He looks up at BETH.

JACK  
St. Luke's.

BETH  
Your sister.

CUT TO:

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - DAY

JACK lets BETH into the Living Room.

She looks around and sees...

...the muted TV still playing the news. A half-empty whiskey bottle on the floor by the sofa, an empty glass. Photographs lying around. Torn and crumpled notebook pages.

She glances at JACK. He turns away, embarrassed.

JACK  
I'll go get her stuff.

She nods. He goes out of the room.

As the news plays, BETH takes out her cell, dials TAYLOR's parents. She takes a look around.

There's a framed photo of...JACK and JEAN, smiling, hiking - loving siblings.

A tape machine picks up the phone. TAYLOR'S MOM.

TAYLOR'S MOM (O.S.)  
You've reached the Hughes'  
residence. Leave a message.

BETH  
Uh... hi. This is Beth for Taylor.  
Taylor, call me.

She hangs up. JACK returns with a large box. Drops it on the table.

JACK  
Jean's papers. I... haven't had  
time to go through them.

BETH watches him open the box. She can see it in the tight lines of his face: a hardboiled guy wrestling with grief.

JACK digs into the box, looking for something - and getting more and more agitated as he can't find it.

JACK

She always kept her own records in case she had to go to court or something. They're in here somewhere...

He can't find it, damn it. A quick flash of rage, as he frantically pulls at the stuff.

Then he stands over the box, releases a deep breath.

BETH realizes this is his form of mourning.

BETH

I'm so sorry, Jack.

He shakes his head as if to say: *It is what it is.* But then, looking at her:

JACK

She was the baby. I was supposed to take care of her.

BETH shakes her head, but she doesn't have to tell him: It just doesn't work that way.

When the moment becomes awkward, BETH looks down - and of course, there's the notebook, lying right on top.

BETH picks it up.

BETH

(gently)  
Is this it?

He gives a sorry laugh: it was in plain sight all along.

He opens the notebook on the table. They both look at it. BETH is so interested, she doesn't notice her arm rubbing up against JACK's. He notices though.

BETH

There. Marie Lawrence. Checked her daughter Ellie into the hospital for an asthma attack.

JACK

Here's the little one - Laurel: stuck a needle in her hand.

BETH begins turning pages.

BETH

Laurel checked in at City General.  
A burn on her leg. Ellie - another  
asthma attack.

JACK

Laurel again. Pesticide in the  
eye. And here, Laurel ingested  
detergent... Laurel, another burn.  
Look at this. Nine admissions in  
February and March alone.

BETH

Munchausen's syndrome by proxy.

JACK looks at her: *What by what?*

BETH

Mother injures her kids so they'll  
need medical treatment. She loves  
the attention she gets so she keeps  
hurting them, bringing them in -  
until someone like your sister  
catches on.

JACK

She couldn't give Ellie asthma,  
though, could she? That's what  
killed her.

BETH

She might've exposed her to  
something that set it off.

JACK

So Ellie has an asthma attack and  
dies. My sister starts asking  
questions. Marie gets scared  
she'll be found out, so she takes  
off with Laurel and disappears.

He snaps open his phone.

JACK

I'll get Missing Persons on them...

Just then, something catches Beth's attention on the  
TV...Taylor's face!

Beth UNMUTES the sound.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

A cell phone rings - and Death is on the line! A beautiful co-ed. A ticking clock of ghostly murder. Next Thursday, "American Miracles" takes you there as a famed exorcist tries to outrace the mysterious curse that has already claimed two lives.

They turn. On TV: shots of TAYLOR holding the phone outside BETH's house - clearly taken by a camera hidden in a car.

BETH

Oh, Taylor!

On TV: More TAYLOR, garish new shots emphasizing her fear... and her breasts.

Then a shot of a stately, stone church.

JACK

I know that place. Come on.

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH - DAY

ANGLE ON: A gigantic crucifix with the agonized CHRIST moving in front of a stained glass window.

PULL BACK TO SEE: STAGEHANDS pushing the CHRIST across the floor of an Episcopal cathedral, which is being redecorated to look more spooky and gothic.

TED directs the STAGEHANDS.

TED

Put him right behind the altar,  
that's good.

He surveys the place - bloody plaster saints, candles, etc. - and, of course, TV equipment, lights. He turns to the mousey female ASSISTANT beside him.

TED

This is great. Where'd you find  
this place?

ASSISTANT

Apparently they ran out of  
Episcopalians. They're tearing it  
down next month to build a mall.

TED  
Perfect. How's our girl holding  
up?

He moves over to get a look at...

...TAYLOR, sitting in a canvas chair in a corner, is  
fearfully fingering her rosary.

A MAKEUP GIRL approaches to touch her up, but TAYLOR shakes  
her off, too frightened. She glances over at TED...

...who gestures at her: *Stay strong.*

TAYLOR tries to smile bravely, but her eyes stray to a large  
digital clock, set up at the director's station: 6:24.

Nearly trembling, she looks around the church.

The place is lit to make a weird contrast between the  
illuminated faces of the dying martyrs and chapels set in  
deep, candle-lit shadow.

As TAYLOR's eyes scan the place...

The silhouette of the WOMAN IN WHITE peers at her from one of  
the shadowy chapels! It's hard to see, but it seems there's  
something wrong with her face.

TAYLOR starts and...

...a STAGEHAND moves a light so that it floods TAYLOR's face,  
blinding her a second. When she can see the chapel again...

...it's empty, the FIGURE seems to have melted away.

TAYLOR closes her eyes, murmurs her rosary frantically and...

...suddenly a thin hand clutches her shoulder.

TAYLOR jumps, looks up...

...it's the ASSISTANT, holding out a cell phone.

ASSISTANT  
For you.

Her hand shaking, TAYLOR takes the phone.

TAYLOR  
Hello?

CUT TO:

INT. IMPALA - NIGHT

BETH's on the cell phone as JACK drives.

BETH  
Taylor. It's me, it's Beth.

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

TAYLOR's glad to hear from her, but guilty for running off.

TAYLOR  
Beth! Listen, I'm really sorry.

BETH (O.S.)  
It's all right. Just hold on,  
okay? I'm coming to get you.

TAYLOR  
Beth. No.

BACK TO:

INT. IMPALA - NIGHT

BETH glances at JACK as she listens.

TAYLOR (O.S.)  
I have to do this.

BETH  
Taylor, these people are just  
exploiting you.

BACK TO:

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

TAYLOR, nearly hysterical, shakes her head.

TAYLOR  
It isn't like that. It's gonna  
work. I know it.

BACK TO:

INT. IMPALA - NIGHT

TAYLOR's voice comes over the phone.

TAYLOR (O.S.)  
There's nothing else I can do.

BETH  
Taylor, listen to me...

But she realizes the line is dead. She looks at JACK in frustration.

JACK  
Almost there.

BACK TO:

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

TAYLOR slowly lowers the phone to her lap and...

It rings with a lilting tune, reminiscent of the death song.

With a cry of fear, TAYLOR throws down the phone. It slides across the floor and comes up against...

...the digital clock. Which now shows 6:29.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CHURCH - LATER

The same clock, now reading 6:40.

ANGLE ON: EXORCIST ROGER PURVIS, in a canvas chair with a gold cross for backdrop. PURVIS is a youthful 30, thin, groomed, cornfed. No con man, but a young faith healer who believes every word he says:

PURVIS  
Spiritual energy exists on the same electro-magnetic spectrum as light or microwaves. It's no surprise it can travel through cellular phones.

NEW ANGLE: TAYLOR, her rosary dangling from one hand, slowly approaches the camera trained on PURVIS, watches from a distance as he explains.

PURVIS  
We may be dealing here with a vengeful spirit, too angry to move on to the next level. Separated from its body, it can only continue to live by using the phone to plant itself in the minds of its victims.  
(MORE)

PURVIS (cont'd)

It grows there like a seed until it manifests itself in hallucinations, spiritual disturbance... and finally death.

As he's talking, TAYLOR, feeling eyes on her, looks up and...

...the CHRIST on the crucifix behind PURVIS seems eerily to be staring directly at her.

TAYLOR turns to the next chapel to find...

...the martyred ST. SEBASTIAN is also staring at her and...

...upset, TAYLOR turns to find...

...bleeding ST. CATHERINE is staring at her and...

...the beaten ST. JUDE and...

...TAYLOR looks around, dizzily.

WE PAN DOWN to the rosary in her hand which dangles in front of the digital clock: 6:49.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHURCH - NIGHT

The Church stands surrounded by empty lots and TV trailers. JACK and BETH get out of the Impala at the curb and head for the door.

A SECURITY GUARD moves to cut them off.

GUARD

Hey. You can't go in now. We're doing Reality TV here.

JACK holds up his shield.

JACK

We're doing Reality Reality, pal, we outrank you.

The GUARD stands back as the two go in.

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

LOOKING THROUGH THREE MONITORS: TAYLOR's frightened face, PURVIS working, a cell phone on an altar.

PULL BACK to see TED at his station, watching the show on the monitors.

PURVIS

We cast out this unclean spirit...

NEW ANGLE: TAYLOR is seated at the "altar" while PURVIS stands behind it, gripped by the Holy Spirit, holding a Bible in one hand and shaking his other at the phone.

A mist machine creates added atmosphere.

PURVIS presses his hand down above the cell phone.

TAYLOR's eyes move nervously around the shadow-haunted room.

HER POV: As the mist thickens, the place darkens, becoming more menacing and mysterious.

TED sees something similar on his monitors, but when he looks up...

TED'S POV: It's just a church-turned-set full of TV equipment.

At the altar, PURVIS keeps pushing down at the phone as if against an unseen force...

On PURVIS directly as he charges the demon to depart.

PURVIS

...depart from here, Satan. Depart every demonic power, every infernal adversary, every legion...

ON TAYLOR: her eyes move around and she sees...

...A CHILD'S FIGURE in jeans and hoodie sweatshirt, her hands tucked in the front pocket, slowly walking past the canted, distorted cathedral walls, almost hidden in the mist and shadows.

NEW ANGLE: BETH and JACK enter at the edge of the set and see the exorcism. BETH looks at the clock: 7:01.

JACK moves forward as if to charge the altar, but BETH takes his arm, shakes her head: it's too late now.

From BETH's POV too - from everyone's POV but TAYLOR's - the place looks more like a church/set than a gothic cathedral.

NEW ANGLE: on TAYLOR, as PURVIS continues.

PURVIS

I command you in the name of God,  
in the names of all his heavenly  
angels, to be gone from this  
machine...

TAYLOR watches the CHILD'S FIGURE blend in with the cathedral shadows and vanish. Her eyes turn to...

...the bleeding ST. CATHERINE and...

...THE SAINT SEEMS ALIVE, BUT HER FACE IS NOW THE EYELESS  
NANNY'S FACE, STREAKED WITH BLOOD.

PURVIS

I command you, you serpent, by the  
judge of the living and the dead...

TAYLOR looks from saint to saint and...

THEY'RE ALL ALIVE, THEIR FACES THOSE OF THE DOLLS IN THE  
LAWRENCE NURSERY.

NEW ANGLE: BETH sees TAYLOR's fear, looks around, but can't  
see anything wrong.

ANGLE ON TAYLOR: Her eyes move to ST. JUDE. And on the  
plaster tree trunk beside his figure...

...the hideous red burl pulses, oozes.

NEW ANGLE: TED is looking at his monitors and on one:

...there's TAYLOR and the mist behind her. As TED watches...

...a FIGURE approaches from behind TAYLOR, coming slowly  
through the mist!

Startled, TED looks up at the real scene. Nothing there!

ON TAYLOR: she stares around as the cathedral becomes  
darker, mistier. And now...

...was that lightning in the fog?

ON TED: he's startled as a light shorts out, flashing.  
Other lights blink on and off erratically, giving the scene a  
slow strobic effect.

A CAMERAMAN looks up: *What the hell?*

TED

Keep shooting.

ON TAYLOR: she sees a lightning storm, flashing faster, the strobic effect quickening. She starts to sweat. Her heart pounding!

ON TED: more sparks, flashes.

TED  
Damn it. What the hell's going on?

An electrical connection shorts beside him, making him jump.

ON TAYLOR: a loud, crackling flash makes her leap up!

BETH and JACK start forward...

BETH  
Taylor!

In the quickening strobic flashing:

ATTACKER'S POV: COMING SLOWLY TOWARD TAYLOR'S BACK AND...

TAYLOR, shivering, strains to see through the dark and mist as an OBSCURE FIGURE approaches behind her, reaching for her!

PURVIS looks around him, frightened. He feels the presence of evil in a way he never has before - and he doesn't like it. He pushes on:

PURVIS  
...de... depart from this place...

He bumps into a light pole which...

...sends one of the lights shattering to the floor...

Terrified, PURVIS puts his hands up in front of him for protection, backing away into the dark.

The fallen light blocks JACK's progress toward TAYLOR.

BETH stumbles forward in the dark looking for TAYLOR.

A CAMERAMAN tries to keep his lens on TAYLOR, sees her on his view-finder dimly as...

TAYLOR comes forward looking for BETH as...

...the strobic effect becomes more intense as...

ATTACKER'S POV: Closing on TAYLOR, almost there!

ON TAYLOR as lights flash on to reveal: A FIGURE STILL ONLY DIMLY SEEN IN THE MIST BEHIND HER, REACHING OUT UNTIL...

...AS THE FLASHING LIGHTS REACH THEIR GREATEST INTENSITY...

THE FIGURE'S HAND TOUCHES TAYLOR'S NECK - THEN MELTS WITH THE FLESH OF IT, MAKING HER NECK BULGE AS IT DID ON THE VIDEO.

TED WATCHES A MONITOR IN FASCINATED HORROR AS...

TAYLOR GAGS AND THE BULGE IN HER NECK TAKES THE SHAPE OF FINGERS REACHING FROM WITHIN THE FLESH...

BETH

Taylor!

At one and the same moment...

...THE HAND IN TAYLOR'S NECK SUDDENLY CLOSES, CRUSHING HER ESOPHAGUS FROM WITHIN! AND...

...the lights flash and go out in a shower of sparks, forcing BETH back, her hands in front of her face and...

...the digital clock hits 7:06 and...

...the entire scene is plunged into darkness; silence.

A beat; silence.

Then STAGEHANDS start moving, shouting.

TED's shouting; he's lost his monitors.

TED

Get some lights on!

JACK searches desperately in the darkness.

JACK

Beth! Beth, are you all right?

BETH searches in the dark as...

...a light goes on. Then another. Then suddenly...

...A SPOTLIGHT GOES ON, LIGHTING TAYLOR - SPRAWLED IN A CANVAS CHAIR RIGHT IN FRONT OF BETH, HER HEAD TO ONE SIDE, HER NECK CRUSHED!

BETH can barely scream. She reels back, gaping.

The rest of the lights go on. Now everyone sees the body.

JACK rushes to BETH's side, puts his arm around her shoulders. They both stare at the dead TAYLOR as...

...a hard red candy forces itself out between her lips and falls with a soft plastic patter on the church floor.

BETH buries her face in JACK's shoulder. JACK stares down at the candy on the floor.

TED is frantically rewinding his tape but his monitor is blank. Wild-eyed, he looks to the CAMERAMAN.

TED

Where is it? You get it?

The CAMERAMAN, looking at his monitor, shakes his head: it's not there. Then...

NEW ANGLE ON BETH holding onto JACK as...

...that song begins, that eerie song.

Slowly, BETH pulls back and looks up at JACK, sick with fear.

They both look down at the pocket of BETH's jeans.

She reaches in... takes out her cell phone... They both listen as the music plays. The date is displayed: Wednesday. And the time: 5:55 pm.

BETH

Tomorrow.

CUT TO:

INT. LIEUTENANT'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The grizzled, meat-and-potatoes LIEU, 50's, sits behind his desk while CHINA and JACK make their cases in front of him.

CHINA

We don't have the manpower. I got half the force out reconvassing witnesses already...

JACK

You weren't there, China. You didn't see this. The girl needs protection.

CHINA

From what? A ghost in her cell  
phone? Tell her to call customer  
service.

She turns her back on him. It's up to the LIEU.

LIEU

Jack. You been under a lot of  
strain...

JACK lets out a strangled curse, throws his hands up.

LIEU

I gotta say, best use of people is:  
we find the doer here.

JACK stares at him, furious.

JACK

Right.

He walks to the door. Stops to look at them.

JACK

Only you're looking in all the  
wrong places.

CUT TO:

INT. CAPTAIN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Edgy, afraid, BETH waits on the sofa in the Captain's empty  
office. There's a a fish tank on a nearby bureau.

She looks up with faint hope as JACK comes in. When she sees  
the expression on his face, she sinks back into her fear.

JACK settles wearily into the seat next to her. Before him,  
on a coffee table: her phone.

He snaps it up. Looks at the message readout: 5:55pm.

He opens it. Presses the voice mail button. Listens.

BETH's tearful voice comes over the line:

BETH

(on phone)

Why? Please. Just tell me why.

Then silence.

BETH lifts a long, slow look of despair at him.

Furious, JACK jumps off the sofa, snaps the phone in half at the hinge and hurls it into the fish tank!

The phone's pieces sink slowly to the bottom.

CUT TO:

EXT. BETH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The Impala pulls up in front of the house.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The two come in the front door. With BETH's roommates dead, the empty house seems cavernous.

JACK

Isn't there somewhere else you can go? What about your family?

BETH

My father's dead.

JACK

What about your mother?

She moves to the foot of the stairs.

BETH

I hear she's dying somewhere too.

JACK eyes her: that was pretty cold. She softens it - a little.

BETH

She and I don't talk much.

(a beat)

Look, you don't have to stay.

JACK

Yeah, forget that. I'm not going anywhere.

She shrugs. He watches her go upstairs.

CUT TO:

INT. BETH'S ROOM - NIGHT

BETH sits on her bed; stares at the floor, dejected. A moment later, JACK comes to the doorway.

JACK  
Look, this isn't over.

BETH  
Not till 5:55 tomorrow night.

He comes in, stands over her.

JACK  
No.

He reaches down to put a hand on her cheek. She stiffens, but she doesn't pull away.

JACK  
We will find the answers.

BETH chokes down tears.

JACK sits beside her, holds her. She rests her chin on his shoulder, but her body's stiff, her eyes are open.

He pulls back. Smiles a little. Takes her hand, strokes it.

JACK  
I'm telling you. I'm gonna...

He stops. He's touched something under her sleeve. He pushes the sleeve up and sees...

**SMALL ROUND SCARS - BURN MARKS - ON HER ARM.**

BETH quickly stands up, pushes the sleeve down to cover the scars. She's trembling.

He gets up, moves toward her. She recoils. He calms her with a gesture. Trembling, BETH lets him push her sleeve up again. He looks at the burn marks.

JACK  
How old were you? Seven? Eight?

She manages to nod. He puts things together.

JACK  
Your mother. Ah God, Beth...

She moves away. Stares into the middle distance and...

*FLASHBACK: Faded colors, the picture almost monochromatic. For one second, the cruel, imperious face of BETH'S MOTHER as her cigarette hand darts out like a cobra, the burning tip incandescent red in the faded scene. The cigarette burns and crackles loudly.*

THE PRESENT: BETH flinches.

JACK  
Did your father know?

BETH meets his eyes and...

*FLASHBACK: IN BETH'S CHILDHOOD ROOM. From the CHILD BETH's POV: the looming MOTHER, snarling down at her.*

MOTHER  
When I call you, I expect you to  
come, you hear me?

CHILD BETH, 7, cowers beneath her.

MOTHER  
You hear me?

And again, the cigarette hand lashes out, burning CHILD BETH's forearm with the tip of the butt.

CHILD BETH grips her arm, crying silently.

MOTHER  
Oh, cry, sure, it hurts, so now  
you're sorry. Maybe next time  
you'll do what I tell you.

CHILD BETH cowers, gripping her arm, weeping - but silently.

THE PRESENT: BETH rubs her arms. Looks at JACK.

BETH  
My father knew.

*FLASHBACK: CHILD BETH cowers in a corner, her MOTHER towering over her, her rage finally spent.*

MOTHER  
Crybaby! You're disgusting.

Sneering with disdain, she moves to the door.

MOTHER  
 (sarcastic:)  
 Go cry to your father. Go on!  
 He'll protect you..

She laughs. Walks out of the room.

Slowly, CHILD BETH gets out of the corner, rubbing her bruised arm. She moves to the door, peeks out.

IN THE HALLWAY: Her MOTHER's gone. CHILD BETH comes out slowly, hurries on tiptoe down the hall.

There's an ATTIC STAIR at the end of the hall. CHILD BETH stands at the bottom, calls softly, afraid MOTHER will hear.

CHILD BETH  
 Daddy?

With a look over her shoulder, she starts up the stairs.

CHILD BETH  
 Daddy?

At the top of the stairs is an old wooden attic door. A creaking noise comes from behind it.

CHILD BETH presses up against the door.

There's a **KNOTHOLE** in the door - a natural peephole. CHILD BETH stands on tiptoe, puts her eye to the knothole, looks through and...

...HER POV, IN THE ATTIC, BETH'S FATHER HAS HANGED HIMSELF!  
 THE RAFTER CREAKS AS HIS DANGLING LEGS TURN.

THE PRESENT: BETH, overcome by the memory, begins to cry.

JACK comes to her, puts his arms around her. She lets herself go, sobbing violently as he holds her.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BETH'S ROOM - DAY

BETH lies asleep in her bed. PAN TO...

...JACK, asleep in an armchair nearby. And...

...a cell phone rings.

JACK and BETH both spring awake, frightened. It's JACK's phone. He pulls it out.

BETH, meanwhile, looks at the clock: 9:07AM.

JACK  
 (into the phone)  
 Yeah. Great. Thanks.

He hangs up.

JACK  
 Missing Persons. They found  
 Laurel. She's at a foster home.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOSTER HOME - DAY

It's a modest Cape Cod in a working class suburb.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

MRS. FORD, 40's, a harried but kind-looking woman, sits primly in an armchair, facing JACK and BETH on the sofa.

On the floor, several CHILDREN play in a mass of toys.

MRS. FORD  
 She was at St. Luke's when it  
 caught fire.

FLASH: The opening, LAUREL *pressed in terror to the window.*

*THE PRESENT:*

JACK  
 She was in the hospital?

MRS. FORD  
 Yes. She'd cut her arm and there'd  
 been a report to Child Protective  
 Services. They were holding her  
 there until she could be examined.

BETH  
 What about her mother? Do you know  
 where she is now?

MRS. FORD  
 She hasn't been seen since the  
 fire.

JACK  
Could we talk to Laurel?

MRS. FORD  
You can try.

CUT TO:

INT. NURSERY - DAY

MRS. FORD leads JACK and BETH into an upstairs room, decorated with magazine pictures of cartoon characters.

LAUREL sits there in a small rocking chair, looking out the window, her back to them.

MRS. FORD  
Laurel. There are some people here to see you.

BETH and JACK approach the child, come around the side of her chair until they can see...

...a beautiful, but very solemn child. She has a toy stethoscope around her neck. She's holding a Teddy Bear. **THE BEAR HAS THE SAME BLACK EYES AS THE WELDER AT THE SITE WHERE BRIAN DIED.**

JACK  
Laurel?

The child looks up, expressionless. JACK kneels beside her.

JACK  
Hey, Laurel. I'm Jack. Is that your bear?

LAUREL only stares at him.

MRS. FORD  
She hasn't spoken since the fire.

Frustration and fear cross BETH's face: her time is short.

But JACK keeps cool.

JACK  
What's the bear's name, Laurel?

Nothing from the girl.

JACK  
Laurel... I need to talk to your  
Mommy. It's very important.

She turns away. Uses the stethoscope to "listen" to the  
bear's heart.

Frustrated, BETH moves to one side. Turns to see: a clock  
on a bureau. It's 11:45.

JACK  
Laurel, do you know where your  
Mommy is now?

BETH stares at the clock. We CLOSE IN on the second hand,  
ticking away the moments of her life. In the BG:

JACK  
Do you know where Mommy went?

BETH stares at the second hand, her breath growing shorter.

Now JACK stands up, moves to MRS. FORD.

JACK  
Is there something you can do to...

And then, LAUREL presses her Teddy Bear's belly and...

...that song - the eerie cell phone theme - begins to play.

JACK stares at the bear. BETH slowly turns to stare in fear.

MRS. FORD  
What's wrong? It's just... the  
song. The song the bear plays...

Finally, BETH cracks. She wheels on MRS. FORD.

BETH  
For God's sake, can't you make her  
talk?

She stands over the child, fierce.

BETH  
Tell us where your mother is!  
You've got to tell us right now!

JACK rushes to her, takes her away from the child.

MRS. FORD moves to comfort LAUREL.

MRS. FORD  
It's all right, darling.

BETH runs out of the room. JACK goes after her.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOSTER HOME - DAY

JACK finds BETH outside the house. At first, he's ironic.

JACK  
Well, you sure got a way with  
kids...

But then he notices: She's shivering. The last thing BETH  
ever wants to do is be cruel to a child.

JACK  
Hey. It's all right.

BETH  
I didn't mean...

JACK  
I know. Of course you didn't.

BETH  
Six hours left. We can't find her  
in time.

JACK  
Yeah, we can. We will.

Still trembling, she turns away.

JACK takes a breath.

JACK  
Look. Let's go back downtown, hit  
the department computers. There's  
gotta be something. Everyone  
leaves a trail. Credit cards, ATM  
machines...

After a moment, BETH shakes her head.

BETH  
You go.

JACK  
Right. There is no way I'm letting  
you out of my sight.

BETH  
 You don't have to take care of me,  
 Jack.

He looks away, annoyed: that is what he's trying to do.

BETH  
 Anyway, I'm totally safe - until  
 5:55. Go back to the department.  
 See what you can find.

JACK  
 What're you gonna do?

BETH  
 Everything seems to start with the  
 hospital. I'm gonna see if I can  
 find out exactly what happened  
 there the day of the fire.

JACK hates to let her go, but it's a good idea.

CUT TO:

INT. IMPALA - DAY

They get in the car.

JACK  
 I'll meet you at the library, 5  
 sharp.

He opens the glove compartment. Brings out a cell phone with  
 a Police Department label. Hands it to BETH.

JACK  
 Call if you need me.

BETH takes the phone. As they drive off, she looks up at the  
 house where...

...in an upstairs window, LAUREL sits with her Teddy Bear,  
 staring down at them, expressionless.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

MOVING between shelves to where...

...BETH sits at a computer, working the keyboard.

MOVE IN to see: on the monitor, a newspaper story: "Five Dead In Hospital Blaze."

Weary, despairing, BETH gets up. She moves past shelves to the water fountain. A YOUNG GIRL is drinking. BETH waits. The GIRL straightens, turns and...

...The GIRL's left eye is enlarged, red, tearing, ugly.

BETH starts - but as the GIRL walks away, she looks back and her eye is fine.

BETH looks up. The clock reads: 3:40pm.

A MOMENT LATER, BETH moves back along the stacks and...

...The WOMAN IN WHITE watches her from the shadows of one of the stacks. She steps toward the light and for one instant, we glimpse her horribly disfigured face.

BETH doesn't notice her. She moves back to the computer. Sits down and...

...the page on the monitor has changed. Now it's on a different news story: "Death Toll Still Uncertain."

BETH looks around: Who changed the page? Then she reads the article and her eye lights on:

"...the fire struck during visiting hours."

BETH stares at the computer, an idea dawning. Resolved, she quickly gathers her things.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL LOUNGE - DAY

CLOSE ON: a clock reading 4:35. PULL BACK over a Reception Desk to where...

BETH is talking to the RECEPTION NURSE.

Behind her, in plastic chairs, PATIENTS wait, talking on cell phones. One of them is weeping.

BETH  
Can't you ask him to hurry?

RECEPTION NURSE  
I've already called him twice...

DR. PAINTER (O.S.)  
Miss Raymond.

BETH turns to see DR. PAINTER, an earnest man in his 30's. . .

BETH  
Dr. Painter. You were on the children's ward the day of the fire at St. Luke's, weren't you?

DR. PAINTER  
That's right.

BETH  
Do you remember a child, a 6-year-old girl named Laurel Lawrence? She'd cut herself, and you kept her there until CPS could investigate.

As he thinks about it, BETH's phone - the PD cell - rings insistently in her pocket. She takes it out, turns it off.

DR. PAINTER  
Oh, wait. Sure. I remember. Her sister had just died and one of the psych nurses filed a report.

BETH  
What about her mother? Was she there too? Was she there when the fire started? It was visiting hours, wasn't it?

DR. PAINTER  
Yeah, but that wouldn't've made any difference. She was there all the time.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

JACK comes in, looking for BETH. As he passes the desk, we see the clock: five sharp, just as he said.

CUT TO:

INT. TAXI - NIGHT

BETH rides in back, thoughtful.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

Scanning the room for BETH, he dials her on his cell. An instant, generic message answers him:

VOICEMAIL LADY  
The party you are trying to reach  
does not answer...

CUT TO:

INT. TAXI - NIGHT

BETH remembers her phone. Takes it out, turns it on. Dials.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

JACK, worried, goes up to the LIBRARIAN at her desk.

JACK  
Excuse me. Have you seen a girl...

His phone rings. He answers.

JACK  
Where are you?

He looks up at the clock. It's well after 5:00.

CUT TO:

INT. TAXI - NIGHT

BETH starts talking.

BETH  
I think Marie Lawrence was at the  
hospital when it burned down. I  
think she might've died there.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

JACK moves toward the door.

JACK  
No. That's not right. All the  
bodies were identified.

CUT TO:

INT. TAXI - NIGHT

BETH shakes her head.

BETH

What if they didn't find her? What if she's still inside? She was a sick woman, Jack; an abuser. Maybe she died in there and her spirit is still moving through the phones...

CUT TO:

EXT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

JACK comes out onto the steps, blown by the night wind.

JACK

I'll come get you. Where are you?

CUT TO:

INT. TAXI - NIGHT

BETH hesitates. The Cab comes to a stop. The DRIVER speaks.

DRIVER

Here we are, Miss. St. Luke's...

CUT TO:

EXT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

JACK hears the words over the phone.

DRIVER (O.S.)

What's left of it anyway.

CUT TO:

INT. TAXI - NIGHT

BETH turns to look out the window and sees...

...St. Luke's Hospital: a charred gothic ruin, black, jagged and abandoned in the deepening dusk.

On the phone, JACK shouts at her...

JACK (O.S.)

(on the phone)

Beth! Wait for me. I'm on my way.

BETH looks out at the hospital, afraid but determined.

BETH  
Hurry. There's not much time.

CUT TO:

EXT. ST. LUKE'S HOSPITAL - NIGHT

The Cab drives off leaving BETH alone on a deserted street, staring up at the ruin of the hospital.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL HALL - NIGHT

Seen from inside: BETH approaches, tries the glass door. It's locked. She moves on.

CUT TO:

EXT. SIDE DOOR - NIGHT

BETH approaches a heavy metal emergency exit. This too is locked. She turns away and...

...inside the hospital, a cell phone rings - not the eerie song, but an insistent jangle.

BETH turns, frightened, and sees...

...the heavy door is now ajar.

As she stares, the cell phone stops ringing.

Afraid, BETH moves away from the door to look down the street, hoping JACK will arrive. No sign of him.

She turns back to the door. We see her from within, through the open door, half her face peeking in, framed in darkness.

She does not want to go in alone. But she looks at her watch: 5:31.

She pulls the door open.

CUT TO:

INT. UTILITY ROOM - NIGHT

BETH slowly steps into a small, cluttered janitor's room. It's very dark. She can just barely make out charred, broken furniture; mops; a dirty sink...

She moves forward slowly, her hand out, feeling her way. She touches the wall. Guides herself along it. As her eyes adjust, she sees...

...a circuit breaker box.

She moves to the box. Quickly, flips up every switch. Dim, emergency lighting bathes the room in an eerie reddish glow. Other lights flicker on and off.

Now she can see: a hallway leading out of the room, lit red.

From somewhere down the hall... the cell phone rings again.

CUT TO:

INT. HALL - NIGHT

Moving out into the red glow of the hall, she follows the sound to a stairway. The phone, ringing above, stops.

CUT TO:

INT. GROUND FLOOR HALL - NIGHT

BETH crests the stairs into a hospital hallway, streaked and broken with fire damage.

She stands, uncertain which way to go. Then...

...a long slow labored breath sounds loudly behind her.

She spins around, stares down a red-lit hallway and...

...a CHILD in jeans and hoodie enters the hall from a side hall, walks quickly away from BETH and goes through a door.

BETH watches as lights inside the door flicker on and off. Then she hurries after the child.

CUT TO:

INT. PREP ROOM - NIGHT

BETH comes into the doorway of the room to see...

...a white-tiled Prep Room. In the flickering light: charred hand-prints on the wall; a dangling fluorescent, flickering; a privacy curtain, blocking her view.

Slowly, BETH comes forward toward the curtain. Reaches out with a trembling hand... yanks the curtain back to reveal...

...a doorway into another room, blocked by a door hanging loose on its hinges.

She moves to the door. Reaches out for it. As her fingers touch it, the door swings in, wide open.

ZOOM ON: A gurney. A cell phone lies on it, broken in half. Her cell phone.

As BETH looks...

...the cell phone starts to play the death theme and the readout lights up: "5:44.01pm." Counting down the seconds.

Frightened, BETH backs away from the door. She trips over a chair. Turns. Runs from the room...

CUT TO:

INT. HALL - NIGHT

BETH stumbles across the floor into the wall. She hugs the wall as the eerie song follows her. Then...

...with a grinding noise, the hall lights die. The song stops. BETH looks down the hall into blackness.

A childish laugh - and a noise behind her as if someone had knocked something over!

Clinging to the wall, BETH peers in the direction of the noise. There's nothing there and...

...behind her, a hooded CHILD moves out of dim light into blackness. Unseen by BETH, its silhouette glides toward her. Its eyes burning, it floats closer, closer...

BETH senses it. Whirls around and...

...for one second, the CHILD's eyes burn into hers as it comes forward. But before it can break out of the shadows...

...it's gone, as if it were never there.

BETH backs away from the apparition. Backs toward...

...a door at the end of the hall with a window of pebbled glass. There's a broken section of glass to one side. BETH doesn't turn to look but...

...an obscure WOMAN IN WHITE stands behind the pebbled glass, waiting for her, lifting its hands as if to grab her and...

BETH backs into the door without seeing the WOMAN behind the glass. She stares into the darkness of the hall ahead and...

...the WOMAN's hands squeeze through the broken glass behind her. The glass strips burned flesh off them; blood pours from them as they reach out to close on BETH. But then...

BETH sees the bleeding hands. She screams. Runs.

AT THE STAIRS. She heads down the way she came. Panicked, she's getting the hell out of here.

CUT TO:

INT. STAIRWAY - NIGHT

She runs down the stairs.

CUT TO:

INT. HALL - NIGHT

She runs down the hall toward the utility room.

She comes up against the door. It's closed now - and locked!

BETH  
God... please...

With a panicked glance behind her, BETH runs down another hall, looking for a door.

CUT TO:

INT. ANOTHER HALL - NIGHT

There are gurneys, chairs, broken computers and debris in her way as she stumbles wildly down the hall to the end.

She hits the far wall! No way out! And behind her...

...a weird, organic, bubbling noise - coming closer.

BETH cowers against the door, terrified, staring into the impenetrable blackness.

The burbling gets louder, closer and...

...thick, sticky pus like the pus from the burl comes oozing toward her over the floor, a stream of it, bubbling right up to her. Then...

...the ooze stops, pulsing at her feet. BETH, staring at it, fishes her phone from her pocket. She opens it and...

...A BARELY SEEN FORCE YANKS BETH TOWARD THE OOZE!

The **PHONE** flies from her hand as BETH is dragged violently into the darkness, the pus melting away as she's pulled through it!

She screams, twists, claws at the floor, trying to stop, but she can't.

Seen for a split-second: A life-sized EYELESS NANNY stands against the wall, coldly watching her go by as...

...screaming, she's dragged swiftly down the entire length of the hall. For a second, we can see a blurred FIGURE has a hold of her. It pulls BETH through an open door.

BETH grabs hold of the door frame - and is instantly released. She turns to look. Hears...

...a laugh, as a pair of legs in jeans disappear around a door in the room.

BETH, really hysterical with fear now, jumps to her feet. She runs down the hall at top speed. Turns the corner and...

...a looming figure rears out of the darkness!

BETH screams as a light blinds her and...

JACK

Beth!

It's JACK! With a utility flashlight.

BETH collapses into his arms, weeping. The dead weight of her drags him down to the floor and he kneels, holding her, letting her sob.

BETH

She's coming. She's coming for me!

JACK looks at his watch. 5:51.

JACK

C'mon, let's get out of here!

He helps her to her feet. Shines the light down the hall.

JACK  
This way.

CUT TO:

INT. UPSTAIRS HALL - NIGHT

Following the light, JACK holds BETH's hand, leading her back the way he came. But where the hell's the exit?

He stops at a crossway. Shines the light both ways.

JACK  
There was a door...

BETH  
There.

She points toward a heavy metal fire exit.

AT THE METAL DOOR. JACK reaches it first. Pushes it. It gives a few inches but...

...a chain holds it fast from the inside.

JACK  
Damn it!

He rattles the door.

BETH reaches past him, through the crack in the door. Grabs the chain. She tries to pull it free and...

...a CHARRED HAND grabs her wrist, tries to drag her in!

BETH screams, pulled into the door.

JACK grabs her. Pulls her free. She falls to the floor, scuttling backwards in terror.

JACK yanks the door shut.

The door rattles. Rattles harder. Something's trying to get through, to get at them. It starts banging now, even harder, the door jumping and...

Now, amazingly, the heavy metal of the door begins to bulge outward as if this thing might just break right through.

JACK gapes - then runs. Rushes to BETH. Takes her arm. Pulls her to her feet.

They run down the hall.

CUT TO:

INT. OPERATING ROOM - NIGHT

They dash into a burnt-out OR, fearful the THING at the door may be right on their tails.

The room's in deep shadow. They hide just within the door, waiting, breathless.

The pause gives BETH a moment to calm down, to think.

There's no noise from the hall.

JACK

Awright. It's quiet. Let's go.

He starts forward - but BETH grabs his sleeve.

BETH

No. Wait.

He looks at her: *What???*

BETH

This is no good. Running away. We came here to find her. It's the only chance we've got.

BETH peers into the dark room.

BETH

She's close. I can feel it.

JACK looks at the room too. He lifts his flashlight, pans it around the room.

JACK

Maybe. But I don't see how we can...

AND FOR ONE INSTANT, THE LIGHT HITS THE SPECTRAL FIGURE OF THE WOMAN IN WHITE, STANDING RIGHT IN FRONT OF THEM. SHE LIFTS HER ARMS AND...

THERE'S AN INVISIBLE BLAST OF ENERGY. JACK IS BLOWN OUT THROUGH THE DOOR INTO THE HALL, THE FLASHLIGHT FALLING FROM HIS HANDS!

THE DOOR SLAMS SHUT!

BETH is alone in darkness broken only by the flashlight beam on the floor.

Terrified that the WOMAN is coming for her in the dark, she stoops, grabs the flashlight, shines it around the room.

Empty. The WOMAN is gone and...

Boom, boom, boom!

JACK is pounding on the door.

JACK (O.S.)  
Beth!

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL HALL - NIGHT

JACK tries fiercely to open the door. It won't budge.

JACK  
Beth! It won't open!

BACK TO:

INT. OPERATING ROOM - NIGHT

Terrified, BETH flings herself at the door.

BETH  
Jack!

She can't open it either. She pounds on it uselessly and...

...on a table right beside her, a cell phone lights up and begins to play the death song. Its readout: 5:52:30 counting away the seconds of BETH's life.

As JACK pounds and shouts on the other side of the door, BETH stares at the phone in helpless horror. Then...

She seizes it; smashes it to the floor as hard as she can.

It just goes on playing.

BETH turns to swing the flashlight around the empty room. Half in terror, half in rage, she cries out:

BETH  
Where are you?

In answer, there's a loud *thunk*.

BETH lifts the flashlight to the sound and sees...

...a vent access panel in the ceiling has dropped open.

The death song goes on playing. The cell phone counts down.

We can hear JACK still struggling with the door.

BETH stares at the open panel, her mouth dry, her limbs almost too weak with fear to move.

Then, with determination, she does move. She grabs a rolling instrument cart, pushes it under the panel. Kicks the wheel lock on.

She climbs onto the cart. Grabs the open panel. Hauls herself up into the air vents as...

...the phone plays the death song, counting down the seconds.

CUT TO:

INT. AIR VENT - NIGHT

BETH comes into the vent, shines the flashlight down it.

The light dances over the claustrophobic darkness, lighting charred walls and...

...a few yards away, a **black hand print**. As if someone with char-blackened palms had crawled here before her.

She begins to crawl down the vent, trying to keep the flashlight beam out in front of her.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL HALL - NIGHT

JACK, unable to open the door, searches in the debris until he finds a metal pole from a tray stand.

BACK TO:

INT. AIR VENT - NIGHT

BETH crawls on, the beam from the flashlight bouncing around erratically. She sees more prints and marks ahead of her. She crawls after them.

CUT TO:

INT. OPERATING ROOM - NIGHT

The phone plays. The seconds tick away.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL HALL - NIGHT

JACK wedges the pole in the door, trying to pry it open.

CUT TO:

INT. AIR VENT - NIGHT

BETH crawls toward an alcove at the end of a vent. The charred trail leads into the alcove and...

...her flashlight begins to flicker. She eyes it, worried, but crawls on, approaching the alcove, and...

...just as she gets there, the flashlight goes out!

BETH  
No! Damn it!

Once again, she shakes it and...

...IT GOES ON, ILLUMINATING MARIE'S BODY, A NIGHTMARE OF BURNED, RAW FLESH!

MARIE'S CORPSE is curled up in the alcove, wearing the remains of her white blouse and skirt.

BETH gasps, starting back in the cramped space, banging into the wall of the vent, dropping her flashlight. The CORPSE appears and vanishes and appears again in the rolling beam.

CUT TO:

INT. OPERATING ROOM - NIGHT

The cell phone now ticks over to 5:54 - and counting.

BACK TO:

INT. AIR VENT - NIGHT

BETH, whimpering with fear, grabs the rolling flashlight and points it at MARIE'S CORPSE, as if she were afraid it might suddenly come to life.

It doesn't. And now, BETH wills herself to courage. She examines the CORPSE in the light until the beam rests on...

...the cell phone, clutched in MARIE's skeletal hand. Despite the fact that it's burned black, the readout window is lighted with the word "calling..."

Her own hand trembling, BETH reaches for the phone. She touches it and...

...horribly, MARIE's hand drops to the vent floor!

BETH starts back. But the hand lies where it fell so she tries again.

Old burned flesh slides off MARIE's bones as BETH pries the phone out of her fingers.

BETH presses buttons trying to make the phone go off. It won't. She hits it against the floor. It's still calling.

BACK TO:

INT. OPERATING ROOM - NIGHT

The cell phone here plays the death song. It's 5:54:21.

BACK TO:

INT. AIR VENT - NIGHT

Desperate, BETH lays the phone on the vent floor. She lifts the butt of her flashlight, the beam playing crazily over the vent and the corpse behind her.

She slams the butt down onto the phone. Once. It goes on calling. Twice - *wham!* It goes on. A third time and...

...she smashes the phone. BETH lifts the flashlight again but stops with it held high when she sees...

The charred phone has gone off.

Uncertain, BETH begins to lower her arm. As she does, the flashlight beam comes down and falls on MARIE's corpse, behind her.

AND UNSEEN BY BETH, THE CORPSE'S EYES COME OPEN!

BETH turns the flash on the broken phone and we lose sight of MARIE! Looking at the phone, BETH breathes a sigh of relief.

Then she turns to check on MARIE'S CORPSE and...

THE CORPSE IS RIGHT THERE, CRAWLING TOWARD HER!

BETH screams. She scuttles back. MARIE crawls closer, flesh dripping off her grinning skull.

MARIE launches herself down the vent, crawling frantically into the dark and...

...a skeletal hand reaches out of the blackness behind her and grabs hold of her ankle with supernatural strength!

BETH screams again, and loses the flashlight, as the hand holds her fast, as the dripping, skeletal CORPSE crawls toward her.

BETH twists around, trying to get free, facing MARIE now. MARIE crawls on top of her, her burned skull of a face pressing down on her.

BETH is transfixed with crippling fear, staring at MARIE's staring eyes as they bear down on top of her.

BETH gibbers in a terrified whisper.

BETH  
No... don't... hurt me...

MARIE hovers above her, her eyes seem almost to caress her face. And as she stares down at BETH...

...a tear overflows her eye and runs down her dead cheek.

The tear falls on BETH. The dead MARIE and the terrified BETH seem almost to be communing in some way.

BETH  
...don't... please... Mama...  
don't...

MARIE wraps her arms around BETH, pressing close.

BETH  
Mama... Why? Please. Just tell  
me why.

MARIE'S CORPSE holds BETH fast, pressing closer and closer, her rotted features filling BETH's vision until there's nothing else.

CUT TO:

INT. OPERATING ROOM - NIGHT

The numbers on the telephone turn over to 5:55 and...

...the death song stops. The phone goes dark; silent.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL HALL - NIGHT

JACK is struggling with all his strength to pry open the OR door when suddenly...

...it swings open easily of its own accord.

Surprised, JACK stares at it - then goes in.

CUT TO:

INT. OPERATING ROOM - NIGHT

The room is obscured by shadow but a dim glow from the emergency lights in the hall leaks in.

JACK looks around, his eyes adjusting. He sees the cell phone lying silent on the floor. He sees the cart pushed to the middle of the room. Then, looking up...

...he sees the panel open in the ceiling.

CUT TO:

INT. AIR VENT - NIGHT

JACK pulls himself into the air vent. At once, he can see the flashlight flickering at the far end. He can see the two figures clasped together.

JACK

Beth?

He crawls toward them where they lie still, seeming to embrace each other.

JACK

Beth!

Just as he reaches them...

...MARIE'S CORPSE shifts in the flickering light!

JACK gives a shout and pulls up short but...

...it's not the CORPSE moving. It's BETH moving underneath, the CORPSE shifting above her!

They both look at each other.

CUT TO:

EXT. ST. LUKE'S HOSPITAL - NIGHT

CHINA exits the hospital. Flashing Cop Cars are parked outside. She approaches JACK, who's watching the scene.

CHINA

That body was up there for weeks  
and no one knew. How the hell did  
you two find her?

JACK looks at her with disdain. Then he walks away.

BETH is sitting against a wall, a blanket wrapped over her shoulders. She stares at the sidewalk, trying to process what she's been through.

JACK approaches. After a moment:

JACK

She must've been the first. She  
must've had my sister's number  
stored in her phone...

They're both quiet, thinking. Then:

BETH

It's weird. I know what she was  
but... in the end? I had this  
feeling like she brought me here...  
to protect me somehow.

JACK shakes his head. This doesn't figure to him.

BETH

Otherwise - why am I still alive?

They look at each other without an answer and...

We TRAVEL away slowly toward the hospital... past clusters of POLICE... in through the door...

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL RECEPTION - NIGHT

We MOVE through the hospital reception area as EMS WORKERS carry MARIE's body out in a body bag.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL HALL - NIGHT

We TRAVEL down the hall...

CUT TO:

INT. STAIRWAY - NIGHT

...down the stairs as a PATROLMAN trudges up...

CUT TO:

INT. HALL - NIGHT

...down to the lower hall where two CSU men, NORM and DAVE are packing up their kits.

DAVE

All right, I'm done.

NORM

I'm just gonna make a quick sweep of the other side.

DAVE

See you upstairs.

DAVE heads up the stairs.

NORM, using a flashlight, heads into the darkness of the hall, peeking into doorways as he goes.

He reaches a Storeroom near the end of the hall. He hears something moving in there. He shines the light in.

There's a rat, moving among the debris. NORM turns and...

...a figure looms up beside him!

NORM lets out a shout of fear - but it's only a PATROLMAN.

NORM

Jesus!

PATROLMAN

Looks like you missed something.

NORM shines the light where the PATROLMAN's pointing.

A cell phone lies in the dark at the end of the hall.

NORM

Hmph. Look at that.

NORM approaches the phone, taking an evidence bag from his pocket. He kneels down. Picks up the phone.

CLOSE ON the phone as NORM turns it in his hands. **WE RECOGNIZE THE POLICE STICKER: IT'S THE PHONE JACK GAVE BETH.**

CUT TO:

EXT. BETH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

As JACK walks a weary BETH to the door, thunder rolls above them. JACK glances up at a night sky filling with the clouds of a summer storm. A lightning flash.

JACK  
A dark and stormy night. Like in a ghost story.

BETH smiles.

BETH  
You wanna come in?

JACK  
Someone's gotta go tell Laurel that her mother's gone. Anyway, you look like you could use some sleep.

BETH smiles appreciatively.

On instinct, JACK puts out a hand to touch her cheek - but hesitates, remembering she doesn't like to be touched.

But BETH presses her cheek into his palm, holds his hand there for a long moment, her eyes closed.

Finally, she releases him. Opens her eyes. Smiles.

BETH  
Maybe you could call me sometime.

JACK  
How about tomorrow?

BETH  
Tomorrow would be nice.

Another long moment - he seems about to kiss her. But no, not yet. With a wave, he walks down the path to his car.

Watching him, BETH smiles to herself and...

It begins to rain. She goes inside.

CUT TO:

INT. BETH'S FOYER - NIGHT

BETH comes in, shuts the door. Sees mail, spilled through the door slot onto the floor. She stoops, picks up the mail.

...and there's a letter like the one she got before: marked with drawings, a heart, a cross, a plea: "Please Read This!" We know now: **IT'S FROM HER MOTHER.**

BETH stands, hesitates, about to throw the letter away. But she doesn't. She carries it into the darkness of the house.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. EVIDENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Standing at the front counter, HOWIE, the Evidence Officer, receives a cardboard box from a PATROLMAN.

HOWIE

More stuff from the hospital.

PATROLMAN

CSU'll go through it tomorrow.

AMONG THE SHELVES. HOWIE carries the box down a row of metal shelves with other boxes on them already.

He sets the box down. Heads back toward the counter and...

...the death song begins to play somewhere behind him.

HOWIE stops, returns to the boxes. Runs his hands over one box, another; finds the one from which the song is coming.

As HOWIE looks in the box... the song stops.

He finds the phone, the readout lit: "ONE MISSED CALL."

Baffled, HOWIE pulls some plastic gloves from a box on the wall. Puts them on. Opens the bag. Takes out the phone.

He reads the readout: 9:00pm. He glances at the clock: 8:25pm. Strange. He hits the voicemail button. Hears:

VOICEMAIL LADY

To listen to your messages, press one.

He presses one. Listens. His eyes go wide as he hears...

BETH (O.S.)  
No! No, wait! Don't! No!

And then BETH's blood-curdling scream makes HOWIE go pale.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOSTER HOME - NIGHT

A full-blown summer rainstorm lashes the house.

CUT TO:

INT. NURSERY - NIGHT

But it's safe and warm in here as a door opens and a shaft of light falls on LAUREL, asleep in her bed, clutching her bear.

CUT TO:

INT. HALL - NIGHT

MRS. FORD quietly closes the door. Turns to JACK.

MRS. FORD  
It's just as well. I'll tell her  
myself in the morning.

JACK nods. He glances at the wall. A crayon drawing is taped there. He recognizes the room, the dolls, the tree at the window:

JACK  
That's her nursery at home, isn't  
it?

Something arrests JACK's attention, but for another second, he's not sure what. Then he gets it.

He reaches up and touches the picture - **THE TEDDY BEAR ON THE NURSERY DRESSER** - where the nanny-cam should've been.

MRS. FORD  
What is it?

CUT TO:

INT. NURSERY - NIGHT

LAUREL lies sleeping. The Teddy Bear slips quietly out of her hands. She stirs, but doesn't waken.

JACK carries the Teddy Bear to the door.

CUT TO:

INT. HALL - NIGHT

MRS. FORD watches mystified as JACK brings the bear out. He turns the bear over. Opens the back. There's a mechanism inside, a disk. He removes the disk.

JACK

It's a nanny cam. It took pictures  
in the children's nursery.

CUT TO:

INT. MRS. FORD'S ROOM - NIGHT

JACK has the nanny cam disk in MRS. FORD's computer. It plays a video of the LAWRENCE nursery.

As before, the picture is wide angled, the movements jerky and broken, the sound distorted.

As JACK and MRS. FORD watch:

*THE VIDEO: The LAWRENCE nursery, empty. ELLIE - in jeans and hoodie - moves across the scene and is gone.*

*She returns, drawing little LAUREL by the hand - and all the while ELLIE's cooing, like a child playing Mommy.*

ELLIE

We'll come in here... and sit you  
down...

*She sits LAUREL on the floor. She goes out of shot again.*

JACK and MRS. FORD watch the video and...

*ON THE VIDEO: ELLIE comes back in the shot, carrying a long, thin **KITCHEN KNIFE**.*

ELLIE

Now this will only hurt a little.

*She kneels in front of the passive LAUREL. Takes her arm. Scrapes her with the knife.*

JACK and MRS. FORD both flinch.

MRS. FORD

My God.

ON THE VIDEO: LAUREL cries.

ELLIE  
Don't worry, I'll take care of you.

Then the sound of a door opening. MARIE comes in OS...

MARIE (O.S.)  
Hey, guys, I'm back early, we...

MARIE comes into shot, wearing her white uniform. She freezes as she sees LAUREL crying, ELLIE with the knife.

MARIE  
It was you. I should've known!

Caught, ELLIE starts to gasp, having an asthma attack.

ELLIE  
Mama...

MARIE snatches the knife out of ELLIE's hand, shoves her out of the way.

MARIE  
Get away from her!

MARIE grabs the crying LAUREL, carries her out of the room. She slams the door behind her and locks it. The slam of the door knocks over the nanny cam bear...

The bear starts to play the eerie death tune. It records the empty floor then...

ELLIE falls, gasping, into the shot. Her face is twisted in pain, turning blue. Her voice is failing...

ELLIE  
Mama...

She reaches into her pocket... takes out a cell phone. She lays it on the floor, presses a button.

ELLIE takes another short, labored breath, her discolored face contorting horribly.

Then she's dead, staring into the nanny-cam... staring at us as the eerie music plays.

JACK and MRS. FORD pull back from the monitor, shocked. And suddenly, MRS. FORD notices...

...LAUREL has come into the room! She stands gazing at them with a blank expression.

Slowly, JACK approaches her, kneels down in front of her.

JACK

It wasn't your mother who hurt you,  
was it? It was Ellie. It was your  
sister. Wasn't it?

LAUREL stares at him, silent. JACK's next words are a whispered appeal.

JACK

Tell me.

Slowly, LAUREL puts her hand in her pajama pocket. She brings it out in a fist.

LAUREL

But she always gave me candy.

She opens her hand to reveal a hard candy - the kind that fell from the mouths of the victims.

CUT TO:

INT. IMPALA - NIGHT

Driving through the thunderstorm, JACK steers with one hand, holds his cell phone with the other, listening to it ring.

JACK

Come on.

CUT TO:

INT. BETH'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Rain washes the windows. The phone rings. But no one answers because...

CUT TO:

INT. BETH'S ROOM - NIGHT

BETH - in her bathrobe after a shower - lies on her bed with headphones on. She's trying to blast the day out of her mind with Godsmack, but she lies motionless, staring at the ceiling, the memories still fresh.

The room is dark, but light drifts in from the hall through the open door, casting shadows.

CUT TO:

INT. IMPALA - NIGHT

JACK hears BETH's machine pick up.

BETH (O.S.)  
(on machine)  
Hey, it's me, leave a message.

JACK  
Beth, listen. Marie wasn't the first. It was the daughter - Ellie. She was the abuser. She died of an asthma attack, that's how it started. You were right. Marie wasn't trying to kill you in the hospital tonight. She protected you. She kept her daughter away.

PAN down from him to the dashboard clock. It's 8:54.

CUT TO:

INT. BETH'S ROOM - NIGHT

With the headset on, BETH doesn't hear the message - but she thinks she heard something. She turns off her iPod, takes off the headset. Listens.

Uncertain, she gets off the bed and when she does...

...WE SEE THE FIGURE OF A GIRL WATCHING FROM THE SHADOWS BEHIND HER!

CLOSE ON BETH as she turns on the room's lights. She turns around and...

...there's no one else in the room.

She's near her dresser. Sees the unopened letter from her mother lying there, in front of the mirror.

She picks up the letter, considers it. As she does...

...she hears a violently labored breath in the hall.

Oh no - what the hell? BETH moves out into the hall.

Behind her, the bedside clock reads 8:57.

CUT TO:

INT. HALL - NIGHT

Just as BETH steps into the hall...

...a SMALL FIGURE moves from the stairs into TAYLOR's room.

It happens so fast, BETH can't be sure she saw it.

BETH  
Is someone there?

No answer.

She moves slowly down the hall, clutching her robe shut.

The door to TAYLOR's room looms larger as she approaches.

Just as BETH reaches the door...

the front door buzzer goes off loudly, making her jump.

Then there's a pounding at the front door.

BETH turns and hurries downstairs, past...

...TAYLOR's room, where the clock reads 8:59.

CUT TO:

INT. BETH'S FOYER - NIGHT

BETH moves to the front door quickly. She hesitates before opening it. She's about to look through the peephole. She can't quite do it.

Louder knocking on the door.

Gritting her teeth, she overcomes her fear - what could be more frightening than her night at the hospital? She forces herself to look through the peephole and...

THROUGH THE PEEPHOLE, there's JACK, in the hard rain.

With a sigh of relief, BETH pulls open the door.

JACK is swept in by the storm, shutting the door behind him. He has his phone in his hand. He takes BETH's shoulders.

JACK  
Are you all right?

BETH  
I think so. What's wrong?

JACK  
It wasn't Marie. It was Ellie.  
The whole time it was...

Then... at the door. Boom. Boom. Boom. Loud, slow, insistent knocking.

BETH  
What's that?

JACK turns to the door.

Again: Boom. Boom. Boom.

Slowly, JACK steps to the door.

The clock in the living room chimes nine o'clock.

JACK looks through the keyhole and he sees...

...ELLIE'S HOODED FACE, CONTORTED AND DISCOLORED AS IN DEATH, DISTORTED BY THE PEEPHOLE'S FISH-EYE LENS.

SHE LIFTS THE KITCHEN KNIFE SHE USED ON LAUREL!

ON BETH, as she watches JACK look through the keyhole.

Suddenly, a premonition...

BETH  
No! No, wait! Don't! No!

TOO LATE. THE KNIFE SLAMS THROUGH THE KEYHOLE, SPLINTERING THE DOOR AND DRIVING STRAIGHT INTO JACK'S EYE!

JACK reels back away from the door, his eye gone, the knife through the keyhole dripping gore.

For a second, JACK stands there - but he's already dead.

BETH lets out a bloodcurdling scream.

JACK falls to the floor, the cell phone falling from his slack, open hand.

BETH stares in terror and...

...THE DOOR CRASHES OPEN AS IF BLOWN IN BY THE STORM! AT THE SAME INSTANT, THE WINDOWS OF THE HOUSE SHATTER! THE RAIN BLOWS IN!

AND ELLIE WALKS THROUGH THE DOOR TOWARDS BETH, HER LABORED BREATHING LOUD IN THE WINDSWEPT ROOM!

BETH stares as the child approaches. ELLIE's face is dark, twisted with death and rage, its asthmatic gasp terrifying.

The wind blows the mail off the table, blows over lampstands, lifts pictures and pencils until...

...we realize it's not just the storm but the force of ELLIE's rage mirrored by the wind, thunder and lightning. And as much as it whips around her, ELLIE remains untouched by it, frighteningly still as she comes forward.

BETH gapes, helpless, as the furious ELLIE approaches.

ELLIE lifts one hand, reaching for BETH's throat as she reached for TAYLOR's. We can almost feel the supernatural power in that hand as...

ELLIE strains to get at BETH, her twisted face twisting more in an agony of unfulfilled rage.

But she can't quite close the distance. Some force holds her back, protecting BETH.

Then, suddenly, ELLIE cries out in fury and pain. Her figure atomizes and is swept back against her will, swept away with the wind and funneled down into...

...JACK's cell phone.

The wind and rain stop. And in the sudden quiet...

...a hard candy falls out of JACK's open mouth.

BETH stares and...

...his cell phone's buttons press down mysteriously.

BETH looks up from the phone to the window and...

...that asthmatic breath sounds again as we SHOOT quickly out the window into the night, with BETH visible, watching, through the pane.

CUT TO:

## EXT. NIGHT MONTAGE

The rain has stopped. As we come outside, a car drives by in Slo-Mo with a TEEN at the wheel, talking on her cell phone.

More labored breathing as we MOVE down the street to where a WOMAN walks her dog, talking on her cell phone.

As the breathing quickens, we MOVE FASTER, to the corner. A bus goes by, several passengers talking on their cell phones.

The scene and breathing speed up more. PEDESTRIANS pass, talking on phones. Cars go by with DRIVERS on phones.

From this angle, we see down the street to the city skyline.

A PRETTY GIRL with dark, intense eyes walks toward us. She's wearing a necklace with a large pendant. As she comes closer, we see...

...it's not a pendant at all. It's a cell phone worn on a lanyard. She comes even closer and we stay centered on the phone. The phone fills the screen and...

...for the briefest second, the phone's readout lights up, showing ELLIE's contorted face!

Then...

BLACKNESS.

But the labored breathing continues a moment. Then the breathing stops short and...

The death song begins to play.

BLACKNESS for another second. Then...

CREDITS