

s. Darko

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2nd Draft w/ revisions

Property of Silver Nitrate Ent.

EXT. WHEAT FIELD - MORNING

SAMANTHA DARKO (18) opens her eyes. She squints as the summer sun shrinks her pupils to pinhole size. She sits up slowly, looks around... and finds herself in midst of an endless wheat field.

Sam is pretty and demure. Her coppery hair flows past her shoulders. Disoriented, she stands and gazes at the infinite golden shimmer. Amber waves of grain. Patches of forest in the distance. It's quiet. Serene. Beautiful...

She smiles, and starts walking.

EXT. ARKANSAS HIGHWAY 40 - MORNING

She emerges at the shoulder of a rural stretch of highway in Arkansas. Adjacent to her position, on the other side of the deserted lanes, is a TRUCK STOP.

EXT. TRUCK STOP - MORNING

Amongst the TRACTOR-TRAILERS parked in the back lot is a white, late-80s model CHEVROLET CELEBRITY. Sam makes her way across the asphalt toward the vehicle...

INT. COREY'S CHEVROLET - MORNING

COREY RICHARDSON (18) is asleep, curled up in the reclined driver's seat of the car. She awakens when Sam gets in on the passenger side and slams the door shut.

Corey has the look of a typical rebellious teen: dyed hair, piercings, a little grungy. She rubs the sleep from her eyes, greeting the new day with something less than enthusiasm. She finds a soft pack of CIGARETTES and lights one.

COREY

What time is it?

SAM

Early...

Corey adjusts her seat. She takes a long drag and chokes, then spits out the window. She starts the car...

I/E. COREY'S CHEVROLET/HIGHWAY 40, VARIOUS - DAY

Corey's car cruises along the flat, open road. She cranks up the VOLUME on the car's CASSETTE DECK, nodding her head to early-90s ALT. ROCK (*suggestion: Into Dust, by Mazzy Star*)...

Sam looks out the window at the passing scenery: FARMERS at work in the fields; a BILLBOARD advertising a local restaurant; ROADSIDE DITCHES filled with trash...

She fixates on a MINIVAN travelling in the slow lane. It contains the all-American NUCLEAR FAMILY: MOTHER, FATHER and three SIBLINGS, one of them being a YOUNGSTER. The Youngster makes a face at Sam as they pass by...

INT. COREY'S CHEVROLET - LATER - DAY

Corey glances at the CONTROL PANEL when she HEARS the engine start to RATTLE. She sees that the TEMPERATURE GAUGE has hit the red and her CHECK ENGINE LIGHT is on.

COREY

Shit...

EXT. OKLAHOMA HIGHWAY 40/COREY'S CHEVROLET - DAY

By the time they pull over on the side of the empty highway, steam billows out from under the hood. Sam gets out of the car to check on it while Corey remains behind the wheel.

Sam peeks under the hood, trying to clear the air of the steam. It sounds like someone is rhythmically TAPPING the inside of the engine with a hammer.

SAM

Turn it off.

COREY

(poking her head out the window)

What?

SAM

Turn off the car.

Corey does so.

SAM (CONT'D)

Doesn't look too good...

COREY

How do you know?

SAM
It smells funny.

Sam looks up when she HEARS a PICK-UP TRUCK coming toward them. Corey watches as she steps out to wave it down...

The pick-up pulls over ahead of them. CHRIS HOLT (24), a brawny, attractive young man, gets out. When Corey sees him she gets out too.

SAM (CONT'D)
Thanks for stopping. Our car's
messed up.

CHRIS
What happened?

COREY
My check engine light came on, then
it just started smoking, and
ticking and shit.

As Chris pokes around under the hood, Sam and Corey exchange looks. Chris pops opens the COOLANT CAP and burns his hand on the steam explosion.

CHRIS
(shaking it off)
Blew your water pump. Can't drive
it.

COREY
Fuck me...

CHRIS
El Reno's just a couple miles up
ahead. Can call for a tow there.
C'mon, I'll give you a lift.

I/E. CHRIS' TRUCK/EL RENO, VARIOUS - DAY

All three crammed into the cab of the pick-up, they drive through the center of El Reno, Oklahoma (population 16,000) and see some of the locals out and about [MUSIC MONTAGE fueled by early- to mid-90s era GRUNGE ROCK (*suggestion: Come As You Are, by Nirvana*) -- reminiscent of the 'Middlesex Middle School Montage' in *DONNIE DARKO*]:

AGATHA DOWDY (54), an employee of the local DINER, sits on a bench in front of the establishment smoking a cigarette. The manager, TED MONCTON (50), calls her back inside...

RANDY EVANS (21), RUTH GIBBENS (18) and JEFF (21) and MIKE JIMENEZ (20) loiter in the parking lot of a LIQUOR STORE...

TRUDY POTTER (39) flirts with FATHER HOMEIJER (54), a Catholic priest, outside the BANK. A BANK SIGN shows the TIME -- **12:00 PM** -- then flashes to the DATE -- **JUNE 18, 1995**...

OFFICER RYAN O'DELL (31) has pulled over a PRETTY LADY and uses his uniform to impress more than intimidate...

They come up on VIETNAM TOM (48), who ambles along the side of the road against traffic, and he waves to them as they pass. He wears old, weather beaten clothes and a multi-colored SKI MASK over his head and face...

[END MONTAGE]

Sam swivels her head to watch Tom. ANOTHER CAR passes and he waves to it as well. Chris picks up on her curiosity.

CHRIS

He waves to everybody... Just kinda walks up and down.

COREY

Resident nutcase?

CHRIS

People call him Vietnam Tom.

SAM

He was in the war?

CHRIS

He thinks he was... kind of a joke, ya know?

Sam continues to stare until he disappears out of sight... PAN DOWN to a PUDDLE by the side of the road. As a CAR TIRE splashes through it, PAN UP TO FIND:

I/E. DUSTY'S GARAGE/HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Dusty's auto repair shop, which is nothing more than a big garage attached to his old two-story house. Corey's car has been towed there, and DUSTY GIBBENS (37; father of Ruth Gibbens), the lone mechanic, tinkers around under the hood.

Sam and Corey sit on the front steps of the house waiting, bored as hell. A PIT BULL laps at a nameless treat wedged into a crack in the walkway. The girls are forced to get up when Ruth (from outside the liquor store) comes to the door.

RUTH
Can I get out?

Sam and Corey move so that she can exit the house. Ruth's look is hardened, rough around the edges -- she appears older than her 18 years.

The girls watch as she enters the garage to see her father. She whispers something in his ear, and Dusty hands her some CASH, which she pockets then kisses him on the cheek. After this, Dusty wipes his hands on his greasy jeans and comes outside to address Corey and Sam.

DUSTY
Yeah... it's the water pump.

COREY
So what do we do?

DUSTY
I can order you up a new one.
Probably be a couple days.

COREY
Great. This the only show in town?

DUSTY
Cheapest and the best. But you want me to call the tow guy back here, no problem. Probably charge you another hundred bucks, but he'll get ya wherever you wanna go.

COREY
Just go ahead and fix it.

INT. MOTEL LOBBY - AFTERNOON

Phil Coulter (48), the proprietor of a dingy little roadside motel, looks up from a hardcover copy of Stephen King's GERALD'S GAME when the girls enter. They each have a SMALL SUITCASE and a BACKPACK in tow.

PHIL
What can I do for you?

COREY
We need a room.

He gets out a notebook and lays it out on the counter. Corey finds a pen and starts to fill out a registration form... A NEWS BULLETIN about the O.J. SIMPSON TRIAL plays at a LOW VOLUME on a TELEVISION in the b.g.

SAM
How much is it?

PHIL
\$39 a night. How many you stayin'?

COREY
Just a couple, we hope.

He takes the KEY to ROOM 15 off the rack.

PHIL
Well... welcome to El Reno.

EXT. LIQUOR STORE - NIGHT

Sam and Corey arrive at the liquor store, which is down the street from the motel. Ruth, Randy Evans, and Jeff and Mike Jimenez are loitering in the parking lot in a similar fashion to how they were earlier in the day.

RUTH
You get checked into the motel
alright?

COREY
Yep.

Randy seems surprised that Ruth has already made their acquaintance. He wastes no time in introducing himself.

RANDY
My name's Randy. This is Mike and
Jeff. Guess you already know Ruth.

COREY
Corey.

SAM
I'm Samantha.

They shake, and Corey seems at ease mingling with the strangers. Sam hangs back a little.

COREY
One of you guys mind pickin' us up
a bottle of something?

RANDY
I think I can manage that. What do
you want?

COREY
I don't know. Vodka, whiskey,
whatever.

Corey looks to Sam, who produces some cash. Randy takes the money and heads for the store.

RANDY
Be right back...

After he's gone, there's an uncomfortable moment of silence in which Mike and Jeff ogle the girls mischievously. Ruth stares at them in a different way. She seems somewhat resentful of their presence.

RUTH
From Virginia, huh?

COREY
Yep.

RUTH
I saw your plates...

Corey and Sam both nod in mundane acknowledgment. Another beat of uncomfortable silence.

RUTH (CONT'D)
Where to?

COREY
What?

RUTH
Your obviously just passin' through
here.

SAM
We're on the way to Vegas.

Ruth snickers.

RUTH
Well... you need anything besides
booze, you just lemme know.

Randy comes out of the store with a bottle in a brown bag. He passes it off to Corey, along with some change.

COREY
Thanks a lot, man.

RANDY

No problem. You guys wanna come back to my place for bit? Bring your bottle, we got some weed...

Corey looks like she's considering it, but --

SAM

I'm really tired.

She takes Sam's signal.

COREY

Yeah, I think we'll just head back. Been a long day, ya know?

RANDY

That's cool.

EXT. BANK - LATER - NIGHT

The clock on the BANK SIGN shows **3:30 AM** -- then flashes to -- **JUNE 19, 1995...** It changes again, this time to a countdown to the **JULY 4TH FIREWORKS CELEBRATION: 15 DAYS, 17 HOURS, 29 MINUTES, 57 SECONDS... 56 SECONDS... 55 SECONDS...**

INT. MOTEL ROOM 15 - NIGHT

Sam awakens suddenly from a nightmare. She lies atop the blankets wearing a T-SHIRT and BOXER SHORTS. She looks over and sees Corey passed out on the other full-size bed.

TWO PLASTIC CUPS, EMPTY SODA CANS, and the BOTTLE are on the nightstand between them, the liquor partially consumed. There's a digital CLOCK/RADIO that reads 3:30 AM.

The TV is on, and a late night INFOMERCIAL for the GEORGE FOREMAN GRILL plays. Sam stares at the screen as the images WARP and RIPPLE in a way that coincides with an increasingly loud, rumbling TREMOR from outside...

In a daze, she gets up and slowly walks closer to the television. She reaches out with her RIGHT HAND, about to touch it... A strange, abrupt HARD CUT TO:

EXT. GRASSY FIELD BEHIND MOTEL - NIGHT

Sam is in a grassy field behind the motel, moving away from the building. She wears a HOODED SWEATSHIRT, JEANS, and her RIGHT HAND is wrapped in some sort of MAKESHIFT BANDAGE.

There's a GASH in the side of her forehead by her temple, with what looks to be a SHARD OF METAL partially embedded under the skin and protruding from the wound.

She is without expression, and her movements are rhythmic and fluid. A tall AERMOTOR WINDMILL towers in the distance...

SAM'S LUMINOUS POV - THE GRASSY FIELD

A glimpse of the field through Sam's eyes shows a phosphorescent PLANE OF DESTINY -- an intricate grid in which objects organic and inorganic dwell in assigned positions, and move according to a framework of set paths.

A JACKRABBIT follows a silvery VECTOR SPEAR like prophetic life-gel to its burrow... COSMIC ENERGY burns around a CLUSTER OF STONES... Miniature VECTOR SPEARS lead a SWARM OF INSECTS around in a circle and then BUZZING right past Sam's field of vision...

It's infinitely complex, but Sam sees through it clearly. She has no vector spear of her own to guide her, but she is cognizant of her path... She moves toward the WINDMILL.

EXT. WINDMILL - NIGHT

Sam appears at the foot of the windmill tower. A giant WATER TANK squats beside it. Remaining stoic, she looks up and sees Vietnam Tom sitting atop the windmill platform, more than 30 feet up, staring back down at her through the eyes holes of his ski mask...

ANGLE: WINDMILL PLATFORM

Tom peers over the edge of the small platform, the surface of which is littered with TATTERED CLOTHING, a WATER BOTTLE, CANS OF FOOD and SCRAPS OF A TARP. He cradles a RIFLE in his arms...

His focus shifts from what is at the foot of the windmill to what is sitting right beside him --

REVEAL Sam. Her legs dangle over the side of the platform, and she stares off into distance.

SAM

The sky's so beautiful here...

Tom looks in the direction that she stares and then back at her. Sam turns to meet his gaze...

SAM (CONT'D)
But we can't stay.

SAM'S LUMINOUS POV - VIETNAM TOM

Sam sees through to the core of his physical being, the DYNAMIC CENTER of which lingers pulsating in a translucent circle around his chest.

Magnified NEURONS in TOM'S BRAIN send ELECTRIC IMPULSES that release NEUROTRANSMITTERS, which excite OTHER NEURONS...

Tom slowly reaches out to touch Sam, but an invisible FORCE FIELD makes contact impossible. RIPPLES swell throughout the clear plasma-like barrier from where he touched it, and his hand remains glued to the spot.

Sam extends her bandaged right hand, and presses it to Vietnam Tom's as if she were touching a mirrored image of herself.

The contact generates more RIPPLES, and as TREMORS begin to shake the windmill a DISTORTED VOICE echoes throughout the cosmos:

DISTORTED VOICE (V.O.)
15 days... 18 hours... 45
minutes... 6 seconds. That is when
the world will end.

A CYLINDRICAL PORTAL opens up below them, gaping and swirling like God's eye on the mouth of a liquid tornado. As Sam and Tom stand in unison to peer into it, a HEXAGONAL PLATE OF WHITE LIGHT emanates from within --

EXT. BELOW WINDMILL - NIGHT

They appear near the foot of the windmill, sprinting away from it together. Tom has his rifle, and he looks up to the sky as he runs...

...there's a brilliant flash of GREEN LIGHT -- deafening THUNDER -- a blinding EXPLOSION --

EXT. BUS STOP - MORNING

Sam awakens to the morning sun blinding her. She struggles to peer through the harsh whiteness at a looming figure that stands over her. Her eyes adjust to discover that it's a policeman -- Officer O'Dell.

OFFICER O'DELL
'Fraid you can't sleep here, miss.

Sam sits up and realizes she's on a bench at a bus stop near the side of the road. O'Dell's tone is innocuous, and when she looks up at him again she sees that he's grinning.

OFFICER O'DELL (CONT'D)
Got anyplace to be?

Sam manages to find her voice.

SAM
The motel.

She takes his hand and rises.

I/E. O'DELL'S CRUISER/MOTEL - MORNING

O'Dell's cruiser pulls into the motel parking lot, which is uncharacteristically full. A FIRE TRUCK is parked by the side of the road. Just then, a call comes in on the POLICE RADIO:

DISPATCH (V.O.)
We got some kinda situation at
Frank Haley's farm...

OFFICER O'DELL
Copy that. I'm here now...

EXT. GRASSY FIELD BEHIND MOTEL - MORNING

Where the towering windmill once stood is now only a CRATER about 5 feet deep and 10 feet in diameter, with charred bits of wood and metal strewn everywhere. GROUND WATER spurts from the broken WELL SEAL...

And a cantaloupe-sized METEORITE sits in the center of the crater.

Two FIREMEN haul out the meteorite with gloved hands as Sam and O'Dell arrive on the scene. Corey is already there looking on, as well as Chris Holt, who gave them a ride into town, Phil Coulter from the motel, and other local CITIZENS. FRANK HALEY (54), the farmer who owns the land, is fuming.

FRANK
Un-fuckin'-believable...

The Firemen drop the porous, misshapen clod by his feet.

FIREMAN #1
It's still warm.

FRANK
You know how much it's gonna cost
me to replace this goddamn
windmill?

Officer O'Dell steps up beside him and kicks the meteorite
with his boot.

OFFICER O'DELL
Sell this thing off to some
meteorologist nerd club, I bet you
could do okay.

FRANK
Ya think?

Sam looks down at a CAN OF FOOD on the ground amidst some
scorched CLOTHING. O'Dell takes note of some other CANNED
GOODS and SCRAPS OF TARP.

OFFICER O'DELL
What's all that stuff, Frank?

FRANK
That whack job Tom's been squattin'
up there the last couple a' months.
Thinks he's the goddamn town
watchman...
(beat)
You think he got blown up?

Everyone scans the ground for signs of human remains until
Phil pipes up:

PHIL
I saw him out in front of the motel
early this morning, alive and well.

FRANK
(sarcastic)
Oh, well, thank heavens...

Sam turns and peers up at the WATER TANK. It's marred by BURN
MARKS and DENTS from the explosion. As she tilts her head and
looks closer, she can almost pick out a shape created by the
damage -- a negative image like the Shroud of Turin...

...in the form of a bizarre, toothy-grinned FACE OF A GIANT
MONSTER BUNNY.

EXT. MOTEL - MORNING

Sam and Corey are on their way back to the motel room when they turn and see that Chris has followed them.

CHRIS
Hey...

SAM
Hey.

CHRIS
So you guys stayed here last night?

COREY
One of us did.

Sam gives Corey a look. Chris decides to ignore the comment.

CHRIS
What's up with your car?

COREY
It's gonna take a couple days.

CHRIS
For a water pump?

Sam and Corey shrug.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
None of my business, but...

He's distracted when a brand new '95 BMW pulls up and parks nearby. JEREMY FRAME (25), a thin, pale young man hops out and hustles into the field toward the crash site.

SAM
What?

Chris regains his train of thought:

CHRIS
I was just gonna say, if you
wanted, I could give you a ride
back.

He looks right at Sam when he says this. He then glances over at Corey, as if just remembering she was there.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
You too. I mean, I could give you
both a ride.

COREY
To Middlesex, Virginia? Do you have
any clue how far that is?

CHRIS
(sheepish)
I got some time...

Sam looks as though she's about to say something but Corey overpowers her.

COREY
We're not goin' back. Even El
Reno's better than there.

Chris makes eye contact with Sam again. She maintains it for a moment and then looks away.

EXT. JUNKYARD - DAY

Vietnam Tom explores a cluttered junkyard, gathering materials. He scours amongst the PILES OF REFUSE, RUSTY MACHINES and crumbling STORAGE SHACKS.

He bends to pick up a SCRAP OF METAL and adds it to a collection he's making in a worn SATCHEL...

EXT. DINER - DAY

As Sam and Corey are about to enter the diner, Trudy Potter, a bank teller, is on her way out.

The girls move to the side so she can exit, and take notice of a MISSING PERSONS SIGN posted next to the door -- BILLY MOORCROFT'S (10) dark, empty eyes stare at them from the BLACK & WHITE PHOTOGRAPH.

TRUDY (O.S.)
Isn't that just awful?

Trudy has stopped and is looking over their shoulders.

TRUDY (CONT'D)
His poor mother...

INT. DINER - DAY

The girls sit at a booth, sipping Cokes.

COREY
How much money do we have left?

SAM
Not a whole lot.

COREY
I can't believe your fucking
parents wouldn't give you anything.

SAM
They totally flipped out that I was
even going. They weren't about to
give me money for the big trip.

COREY
We should've waited till the end of
the month when my mom gets her
check.

SAM
She wouldn't have given you
anything.

COREY
I know where she keeps her cash.
What's she gonna do, send her
boyfriend after me?

Corey pokes at the crushed ice in her glass with her straw.

COREY (CONT'D)
Doesn't matter. As soon as we get
to Vegas, we'll be set. My cousin
said sometimes she makes two grand
in a week.

SAM
Jesus.

Sam is impressed, but something about her subdued reaction
exhibits reservations... Just then, Agatha Dowdy arrives with
plates of BURGERS AND FRIES.

AGATHA
Here you go. Where'd you two say
you were from again?

SAM
Virginia.

AGATHA
You hear that, Ted?

She calls to Ted Moncton, who is busy behind the counter.

TED

What?

AGATHA

These girls are from Virginia.

TED

I'll be damned. I'm from Reedville,
if you know whereabouts that is...

Neither Sam nor Corey give much of a hint as to a yes or no.

TED (CONT'D)

Well, have yourself some ice cream
when you're done, on the house.

COREY

Okay.

SAM

Thank you.

AGATHA

Anything else you need, give a
holler.

Agatha moves off, and Sam and Corey start to dig into their
food...

Momentarily, someone else enters and takes a seat at the
counter by their booth. It's Jeremy Frame, the driver of the
BMW. He raises a finger to alert Ted of his presence.

JEREMY

Just a coffee, please.

Ted nods and pours him a cup... After he receives his coffee,
Jeremy turns and stares at the girls. They both notice him
doing it, but Corey is the first to speak.

COREY

Can we help you?

JEREMY

No, no... it's just that I
recognize you. I saw you by the
motel. Pretty amazing, huh?

COREY

I guess.

JEREMY

I just made a deal with Frank Haley
to buy it for seven-hundred fifty
dollars.

COREY

Whoop-dee-doo. What the hell are you gonna do with a friggin' meteor?

JEREMY

Meteorite, actually...

Corey rolls her eyes at being corrected. Sam smirks and munches on a french fry -- she's enjoying their conversation.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

I'm gonna study it. I'm a grad student at Redlands... we've actually got a pretty cool geology lab there.

Corey focuses on her lunch, ignoring him, but Jeremy goes on.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

I've gotta do some tests, but if I had to guess, I'd say it's a siderite. They're composed primarily of iron and nickel.

COREY

Have fun.

JEREMY

My name's Jeremy.

COREY

That's nice.

Sam glances up at Jeremy, expecting him to be hurt or embarrassed by Corey's snub. But he's not. He's smiling at her, and she can't help but smile back.

EXT. FATHER HOMEIJER'S HOUSE/CHURCH - AFTERNOON

Each licking an ICE CREAM CONE, Corey and Sam walk past the home of Father Homeijer. The priest is outside working in his flower garden, wearing his CLERICAL COLLAR. An old CATHOLIC CHURCH rests on the same lot as his house, looming behind it.

When Father Homeijer sees the girls walking by, he rises from his work, takes off his gloves and wipes sweat from his forehead. Sam and Corey both notice him eyeballing them.

COREY

What's his problem?

SAM
Just keep walking.

Corey waves to him in a sarcastic, exaggerated manner... The priest doesn't wave back, but continues to gawk at them until they go around the corner.

COREY
Freak...

EXT. JUNKYARD, STORAGE SHACK - AFTERNOON

Vietnam Tom crouches in a decrepit SHACK covered by a piece of CORRUGATED ROOFING. He works with great focus, arranging VARIOUS BITS OF METAL into some sort of small SCULPTURE...

EXT. LIQUOR STORE - LATER - AFTERNOON

Having finished their ice creams, the girls pass the liquor store on the way back to the motel. They find Randy, Ruth, Jeff and Mike at their usual post.

RANDY
Hey, what's up?

COREY
Not much... just getting stared down by creepy priest boy back there.

JEFF
Father Homeijer?

MIKE
Don't worry, you're a little old for his taste.

JEFF
Yeah, he's a fuckin' perv.

COREY
(to Randy)
You got an extra cigarette?

Randy takes a pack from his pocket and offers her one.

RANDY
I'm throwin' a big party at my house tonight, you guys should come by. No excuses this time...

Sam and Corey look at each other, considering.

RANDY (CONT'D)
You're gonna be stuck in El Reno,
you might as well have some fun,
right?

EXT. RANDY'S HOUSE, BACKYARD - NIGHT

The party at Randy's teems with LOCALS, ages ranging from early teens to late-20s. On the back deck is a KEG OF BEER and a BOOMBOX blasting MUSIC. There's a slimy-looking POOL, and a few people swim in the greenish water.

Randy and Ruth make their rounds as a pair. They stop off so Ruth can sell a BAG OF WEED to some eager KIDS. Corey and Sam hang with Mike and Jeff, drinking beer.

COREY
You guys gotta come visit the club
when we get all set up. We'll give
you the VIP treatment, man...

Mike and Jeff are both excited about this proposition.

MIKE
Sounds good to me.

COREY
Give us a little time, me and
Sam'll be runnin' that place, no
doubt... right?

SAM
Yeah. Definitely.

Corey is relaxed, enjoying their newfound friends, while Sam appears more out of place. She drains the better part of her cup for some liquid courage.

Randy and Ruth converge back on the group just as Officer O'Dell creeps into the backyard wearing plainclothes. Ruth notices him first.

RUTH
Fuck.

RANDY
What?

RUTH
That pig, O'Dell.

RANDY

Don't worry about Ryan. He might be
a cop, but he still likes to party.

Randy's theory is proven when O'Dell takes a FLASK from his pocket and has a snort before approaching a pair of TEENAGE GIRLS... But Ruth is still not satisfied.

RUTH

I think that asshole knows I deal.
You know how fucked that is?

RANDY

From what I hear he's got a little
somethin' goin' on the side
himself.

RUTH

Fucking pig's a pig.

They're all distracted when somebody does a cannonball into the pool and splashes them.

MIKE

Fuck!

JEFF

Bastard!

SAM

What the hell...

Sam bends to wipe some of the water from her pants. Ruth watches her, smirking.

RANDY

We might as well all go in now,
we're already wet.

RUTH

Good idea...

Without warning, Ruth shoves Sam backwards into the pool --

ANGLE: BENEATH THE WATER

She sinks into the murky water in SLOW-MOTION. All SOUNDS are DROWNED OUT and everything is tranquil, completely detached.

Through her blurred vision, Sam can see Randy's PORCH LIGHTS glimmering beyond the surface of the water... TRANSITION TO:

INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

The SPOT LIGHTS are blinding from the perspective of the STAGE. Through the WHITE BLUR an auditorium full of PEOPLE can be seen...

In SLOW-MOTION and perfect synchronicity, YOUNG SAMANTHA (11) and the "SPARKLE MOTION" GIRLS are in the midst of their dance performance... BACK TO:

EXT. RANDY'S HOUSE, BACKYARD - NIGHT

A HAND reaches into the pool, grabs onto Sam's arm and pulls her up --

She breaches the surface of the water, gasping for breath -- back to reality. She sees that Randy is the one responsible for pulling her out.

RANDY

You fall asleep down there?

He, Ruth and the others are looking down at her, laughing. Sam is lost in thought, struck by her vision...

She snaps out of it when she sees Corey tear off her top and jump into the pool beside her. Many of the PARTYGOERS hoot in approval, and Randy, Mike and Jeff strip down and leap in right behind her.

Sam swims toward the far side of the pool where the steps are, and fewer people. When she arrives there, she's surprised to find Chris Holt waiting for her with a towel.

CHRIS

Thought you could maybe use this.

As Chris hands her the towel, he notices a wide SCAR on the inside of Sam's RIGHT WRIST... but doesn't mention it. Sam wraps the towel around her sopping wet body.

Corey looks over and sees her getting out...

EXT. RANDY'S HOUSE, PORCH - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

Chris and Sam stand by the keg with fresh beers.

CHRIS

So what's so wrong at home that you had to take off?

The question takes Sam by surprise.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I'd love to get outta here someday too... just don't know quite where I'd go.

Sam decides to open up a little.

SAM

I hate it there. It's like everyone knows everything about me, but I'm invisible at the same time. It's like the worst of both worlds.

CHRIS

Small towns. How 'bout your family?

SAM

They didn't want me to leave... well, they did, but they wanted me to go away to Harvard or something like that, like my sister.

Sam takes a big sip of her beer, showing signs of tipsiness.

SAM (CONT'D)

Sometimes I think it would've been easier if... I just, after my brother-

Sam stops herself.

CHRIS

What?

SAM

(changing gears)

That's why I love Corey, she just doesn't give a shit. She does what she wants and she doesn't care what people think.

CHRIS

You just gotta be yourself, that's all. What is it you wanna do exactly?

SAM

I always thought I'd be a dancer, like in a troupe or something...

Sam is self-conscious after admitting this.

SAM (CONT'D)

That sounds kinda stupid probably.

CHRIS

No...

SAM

When I was younger, my dance team was on Star Search.

CHRIS

Really?

SAM

Yeah... but I didn't go.

CHRIS

Why not?

SAM

I didn't end up dancing in the talent show where they got discovered... I didn't really feel like it at the time anyway.

CHRIS

Huh...

SAM

But that's why we're going to Vegas. There's lots of opportunities there.

Chris glances over to the pool where Corey is topless, splashing and goofing around with some BOYS.

CHRIS

(smirking)

Yeah, good place for it. Gettin' some practice on the way, too.

Sam takes offense, getting drunk and sensitive.

SAM

Is that supposed to be like some kind of judgement or something?

CHRIS

No, I was just-

She takes her beer and storms away from him.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Sam, wait... hey, come on...

EXT. RANDY'S HOUSE, SIDE ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Sam finds a STOOP at the side of the house where she can be alone. She can HEAR the PARTY going on in the backyard, but no one else is in sight.

Still soaking wet, she plants herself on the stoop and starts to pound the rest of her drink...

A strange, abrupt HARD CUT TO:

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF RANDY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Sam lies in the middle of the street in front of Randy's. A lone, flickering STREET LIGHT intermittently bathes her in an orange glow.

She is completely dry, wearing her HOODED SWEATSHIRT and JEANS, with the MAKESHIFT BANDAGE wrapped around her right hand. The SHARD OF METAL protrudes from the GASH in her forehead...

A CAR suddenly screams right past her prostrate form, missing her by inches. She sits up slowly and looks toward the front of Randy's house, which is about 20 yards away.

SAM'S LUMINOUS POV - DRUNK GUYS

Two DRUNK GUYS exit the house and enter the complex, phosphorescent grid that is Sam's field of vision. VECTOR SPEARS jut from their chests and precede all their movements as they open the gas tank of a PARKED CAR, insert a SIPHON, and begin to drain the gas into ANOTHER VEHICLE.

DRUNK GUY #1

Hurry up...

Although she is close by, they take no notice of Sam whatsoever. ANOTHER CAR speeds by, again nearly crushing her, but she doesn't flinch...

She stands, and turns deliberately to face the opposite side of the road where, unlike the Drunk Guys, there is someone who is completely focused on her -- Vietnam Tom crouches in a DITCH near a CULVERT --

ANGLE: CULVERT

Sam appears with him in the tenebrous ditch. Tom stares at her wide-eyed through the eyeholes of his ski mask.

From one end of the broad, open culvert they can see straight through to the other side...

A PORTAL starts to take shape within, swirling around the circumference. Soft, BLUE LIGHT touches their faces from the phosphorescent glow, and a gust of WIND is nearly strong enough to make them falter.

On the opposite end of the culvert, a PLATE OF WHITE LIGHT flashes for an instant then transforms into an image of FATHER HOMEIJER'S CHURCH --

EXT. CHURCH - NIGHT

Tom and Sam stand outside the church. The STEEPLE reigns over them. Sam is stoic as she watches Tom climb the STONE STEPS and approach the great WOOD DOORS...

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

Sam sits like a statue in one of the PEWS. Tom strides past her in a daze, moving toward the PULPIT...

Beside the ALTAR stand THREE BARE CROSSES in imitation of Calvary, each standing over 4 feet tall.

Sam looks up to a HIGH CORNER, above the pulpit to the right, where two walls and the ceiling meet...

SAM'S LUMINOUS POV - CONVERGENCE POINT

The three planes come together at an irregular angle, with the WALL ON THE RIGHT SIDE SLANTING INWARD, and the CEILING SLOPING SLIGHTLY DOWNWARD.

PHOSPHORESCENCE burns in the three queerly pitches lines, with a concentration of heightened energy at the juncture.

A VECTOR SPEAR bulges from Vietnam Tom's chest where he stands below it, reaching higher and higher...

As Tom's SPEAR gets closer to the convergence point, the BIZARRE ANGLING becomes more exaggerated because the planes start to DIP and SWELL with impossible elasticity --

ANGLE: BETWEEN THE WALLS

Sam and Tom find themselves squeezed between the inner and outer walls. Claustrophobic, dusty and obscure.

Dilapidated WIRING snakes around them, and Tom barely has enough space to reach forth and touch it with his finger...

COSMIC ENERGY jolts through the WIRE. A SPARK. A BLUE FLAME...

Heat and pressure build. The old dry wood begins to CREAK and SNAP -- FADE TO WHITE.

OVER WHITE...

The SHARP SOUNDS echo and fade away... then become present again. Louder now, and different. A BANGING...

INT. MOTEL ROOM 15 - THE NEXT DAY

Sam pulls back the CURTAIN OF WHITE -- a SHEET over her face. She's lying on the floor of the motel room in between the beds.

She's alone, and naked except for the sheet. Her WET CLOTHES are in a heap beside her. Her head is throbbing...

BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!

She scrambles to put something on so she can get the DOOR...

I/E. MOTEL ROOM 15 - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

Having thrown on some wrinkled clothes, Sam opens the door to find Phil, the motel owner. He does not look pleased.

PHIL

You plannin' on checkin' out today?

SAM

(groggy)

Uh... I, I don't know yet.

PHIL

Well, it's already way past checkout time, so you'd better figure it out quick.

SAM

I've just gotta find Corey... and check on the car.

PHIL

You do whatever you have to, but if
you're stayin' another night I
wanna see some money up front.

EXT. BANK - DAY

Sam approaches the bank, and when she sees the tall SIGN with the digital clock, she stops and stares up at it. It strikes a chord but she doesn't know why...

The sign reads **12:48 PM** -- and then -- **JUNE 20, 1995**. It changes to the **FIREWORKS COUNTDOWN: 14 DAYS, 8 HOURS, 11 MINUTES, 22 SECONDS... 21 SECONDS...**

INT. BANK - DAY

Sam enters the small bank, and as she approaches the counter she sees that Trudy Potter is in tears. Some of her FEMALE CO-WORKERS are consoling her.

TRUDY

I don't believe it... I still just
don't believe it.

FEMALE CO-WORKER

It's gonna be alright. You'll see.

Trudy looks up and sees Sam waiting uncomfortably.

TRUDY

(dabbing at her eyes with
a tissue)
Can I help you?

SAM

Is everything okay?

TRUDY

No, it's not... Mount Calvary
burned to the ground last night.

SAM

Mount Calvary?

TRUDY

Father Homeijer's church.

SAM

Oh... How did it happen?

TRUDY

The police are looking into it,
but... I know it was arson.

Trudy leans in to talk quietly to Sam.

TRUDY (CONT'D)

It's no secret to me how people in
this town feel about Father
Homeijer. The horrible accusations
that have been made against him...
But it's just a lot of nonsense. El
Reno's changed so much since I was
a kid growing up here. The young
people nowadays...

(beat)

No offense.

She places her hand on top of Sam's.

TRUDY (CONT'D)

But with all the drugs and the
crime... I just don't know what
this world's coming to anymore.

Sam tries to redirect her focus.

SAM

Are you able to get money wired
here from my bank back home?

TRUDY

We don't usually work with other
banks like that.

SAM

I need to check my balance and get
my money out. How do I do that?

TRUDY

You'll have to call and arrange it.
You could always use Western Union.
Where's your bank?

SAM

Virginia.

TRUDY

Oh... 'cause they're gonna need to
have a signature.

Disappointed, Sam turns to leave...

ANGLE: NEAR EXIT

As she's on her way out, she notices a BULLETIN BOARD with another MISSING PERSONS SIGN for BILLY MOORCROFT.

She stands before the picture, staring into the young boy's dark, empty eyes. Though it's just a low quality black & white photo, Billy's face emotes profound hopelessness and despair.

EXT. BANK - DAY

As Sam comes out of the bank Jeremy rolls up in his BMW and parks in the lot. He gets out and approaches her.

JEREMY

Hi there.

SAM

Hey.

JEREMY

I didn't get your name at the diner.

SAM

I'm Sam.

JEREMY

Jeremy.

They shake, and Jeremy holds her hand for a little longer than what is generally comfortable.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

So what are you up to?

SAM

Trying to get money... not very successfully.

JEREMY

I've gotta pick up some cash too. Need some supplies for the lab. I don't think I've even slept since I got my hands on that meteorite. You should come by the lab with me and check it out.

SAM

I can't...

Sam starts to walk away from him.

JEREMY

I could let you borrow some money... if you need some.

SAM

I don't even know you.

JEREMY

That's okay. I trust you.

SAM

Thanks anyway.

JEREMY

You're sure you don't want to check out the lab?

SAM

Sorry... I've gotta find Corey.

Sam turns to leave.

JEREMY

Maybe some other time.

I/E. RANDY'S CAR - AFTERNOON

Corey rides shotgun in Randy's car, chewing on some greasy FAST FOOD, looking quite content. Randy is behind the wheel with a BEER in his hand, and Mike, Jeff and Ruth are packed into the back, passing around a JOINT.

MIKE

How many cheeseburgers did we get?

RUTH

Like eight.

Mike passes the joint up to Corey and she takes a big hit, chases it with some beer...

JEFF

Wait, did we get smokes?

Everyone in the car is stunned into momentary silence when they turn a corner and see what's left of the church.

MIKE

Whoa!

RANDY

Jesus Christ...

POV FROM THE CAR - THE CHURCH RUINS

POLICE and FIREMEN swarm. Father Homeijer stands with Officer O'Dell, gazing at the soggy ruins. The only things standing amid the charred mess are the THREE BARE CROSSES of Mount Calvary. But they aren't completely intact --

EXT. CHURCH RUINS - CONTINUOUS - ANGLE ON - DEFORMED CROSSES

All three are bent drastically forward, sagging down toward the murky ground...

OFFICER O'DELL (O.S.)
Musta' melted from the heat.

Father Homeijer looks down at the metamorphosis, beside himself with bitterness and sorrow.

FATHER HOMEIJER
They're made of silver-plated steel. A simple fire couldn't do that.

OFFICER O'DELL
What are you sayin'?

FATHER HOMEIJER
This is an extension of Satan's own hand... I've seen it coming.

Rolling his eyes, O'Dell walks away, leaving the priest to grieve for his church in private.

EXT. JUNKYARD, STORAGE SHACK - AFTERNOON

Vietnam Tom continues to toil over his SCULPTURE, but progress has been made...

It has begun to take on a recognizable form: a GROTESQUE COUNTENANCE with TWO LONG EARS, BULGING EYES and a devilish, TOOTHY GRIN...

EXT. RANDY'S CAR/STREET IN FRONT OF DEPARTMENT STORE - AFTERNOON

Sam is walking in front of a DEPARTMENT STORE when Randy's car pulls up beside her. Corey sticks her head out the passenger side window.

COREY
What happened to you?

SAM

What happened to me...? Where the hell've you been?

COREY

I crashed at Randy's. We just got food. Want a burger?

SAM

My stomach's fucked up.

JEFF

Awww...

MIKE

Poor tummy...

Jeff and Mike taunt her from the back. Ruth leers.

SAM (CONT'D)

We gotta talk about what we're gonna do.

COREY

Don't worry about it so much.

SAM

The motel guy came to the room this morning all pissed off. We're probably not even gonna have enough money to pay for the car.

Corey sighs, debating weather or not to get out. Before she can reach a decision, something in the department store's parking lot catches her eye: a LITTLE BOY with dark hair, wearing a BIRTHDAY HAT...

But she blinks and he's gone, having disappeared between two parked vehicles.

Confused, Corey rubs her eyes and gets out of the car.

RANDY

Should I wait a minute?

JEFF

We gotta get some smokes...

COREY

Just go ahead. I'll catch up with you later on.

RANDY

Alright. Later.

Corey gets out and shuts the door. Randy speeds off toward an intersection about 20 yards ahead...

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - AFTERNOON

Chris is at work, stocking shelves inside the department store...

He checks his watch, stops what he's doing and grabs a PACK OF CIGARETTES from his breast pocket -- time for a smoke break.

EXT. INTERSECTION NEAR DEPARTMENT STORE - AFTERNOON

Sam and Corey meander toward the intersection where Randy's car is stopped at a red light.

SAM

We just gotta figure out what we're gonna do. I don't think-

COREY

(abrupt)

Lemme guess, you wanna go home.

SAM

What?

COREY

You wanna run back to mommy and daddy and say sorry so they can put you through college. Well that's real big of you, Sam, but I don't have that option.

SAM

(taken aback)

What are you talking about?

COREY

I'll go home and get the shit kicked out of me, and get my ass grabbed by my mom's boyfriend...

They're almost to the light, which is still red, and coming up on Randy's car. Jeff, Mike and Ruth stare out at them from the backseat, smelling the drama.

COREY (CONT'D)

I knew you'd bail on me eventually, but not this quick.

SAM

I'm not bailing on you. Would you just-

COREY

You can fucking sleepwalk back to Middlesex for all I care. I'm not driving you... you're a fucking drag.

The light turns green, and Randy's car peels across the intersection, making a left...

SAM

Fuck you, Corey.

Sam wheels on her and steps out into the street, storming straight across. Corey starts to follow... but something stops her in her tracks: BILLY MOORCROFT.

He stands on the opposite side of the intersection, in the trajectory that Sam is walking -- but Sam doesn't see him.

Billy wears a BIRTHDAY HAT, SLACKS and COLLARED SHIRT. He looks pale and weak, and is covered with BRUISES. He stares right back at Corey, as transfixed as she is... TIME SLOWS DOWN. [Note: Sam's position is in the middle of the road. Randy's car has made the left but is still in the vicinity of the intersection.]

Bewildered, Corey tries to step out into the street but something blocks her -- an invisible FORCE FIELD makes forward progress impossible.

RIPPLES swell like waves throughout the barrier where she hit it. She looks up, following the ripples with her eyes, and watches as they disappear beyond her realm of vision, into infinite space.

She reaches forth with her hand, wanting to feel the barrier once again... Just as she touches it... REAL TIME RESUMES --

KA-BOOM!

FROM OUT OF NOWHERE AN OLD JALOPY SAILS RIGHT IN FRONT RANDY'S CAR! He jerks the wheel -- and the JALOPY hits on the front passenger side -- completely smashing it in --

Sam spins when she HEARS the deafening CRUNCH...

Randy careens into the opposite lane, and an ONCOMING CAR smacks him dead on. The inertia from the oncoming vehicle plows his car into a FIRE HYDRANT by the side of the road.

The hydrant goes flying through the air like a bullet --

-- AND STRIKES SAM RIGHT IN THE HEAD!

The world goes SILENT.

CHRIS RUNS TOWARD THE DESTRUCTION, DROPPING HIS CIGARETTE...

WATER ERUPTS LIKE A GEYSER FROM THE PIPE WHERE THE HYDRANT USED TO BE...

SAM'S BODY IS CRUMPLED IN THE STREET, MOTIONLESS...

BILLY MOORCROFT IS GONE. THE FORCE FIELD IS GONE. COREY STANDS FROZEN, HORRIFIED... IN UTTER SHOCK.

INT. POLICE STATION - AFTERNOON

Corey signs her STATEMENT on Officer O'Dell's desk, the expression of shock still glued to her face. O'Dell sits facing her.

OFFICER O'DELL

You're sure you didn't see a driver?

COREY

No...

He takes the statement from her.

OFFICER O'DELL

Well, you're one lucky girl to have gotten outta the car when you did. Front passenger side was wiped right out. Coulda' been two dead girls today instead of one.

Corey nods, taking this in.

OFFICER O'DELL (CONT'D)

I talked to Randy and sent him home a little while ago. He's pretty shook up.

Corey doesn't respond. O'Dell leans in to speak to her in confidence.

OFFICER O'DELL (CONT'D)

Both of us know he'd been doin' some drinkin' today. But we also know he's not at fault here. That old beater cut right in front him.

COREY

Can't you just look up the license plates?

OFFICER O'DELL
No plates on the vehicle. We're
investigating the VIN, but that
could take a little more time,
depending on the history of
ownership. We'll find him.

Corey seems somewhat hesitant to bring up the next subject:

COREY
What about the missing boy?

O'Dell shifts in his chair.

OFFICER O'DELL
You really think it was him, huh?

COREY
He was on the side of the road
right before the accident.

OFFICER O'DELL
I'm no psychiatrist, but I do know
sometimes shock does funny
things...

COREY
You think I was hallucinating?

OFFICER O'DELL
We were on the scene five minutes
after the accident. I think
somebody woulda noticed a little
boy wandering around.

He sees how troubled Corey is.

OFFICER O'DELL (CONT'D)
Why don't you stop in and see Dr.
Peters on your way out... right
down the hall there. She'll give
you somethin' to make you feel
better.

Corey nods and gets up to leave. As she's on her way out,
O'Dell's voice stops her.

OFFICER O'DELL (CONT'D)
Oh, uh... is there anything you
wanted to say to Samantha's
parents?

Corey's expression is blank.

COREY
Like what?

EXT. POLICE STATION, BACK PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON

Corey walks out of the police station and finds herself in a secluded back parking lot. She holds a PRESCRIPTION for anti-depressants.

She is frightened when she notices a PAIR OF EYES staring at her from the bushes close by -- it's Vietnam Tom. He's wearing his ski mask and he's got his rifle.

Corey backs away as Tom slowly creeps toward her... She's about to scream for help when Chris Holt comes out of the police station behind her.

CHRIS
Get the hell outta here.

Grateful for his presence, Corey moves to stand behind Chris. Tom shuffles away.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Should know better than to be
carrying his rifle around town like
that...

Corey takes a breath, recovering from her scare.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
You okay?

COREY
What're you doing here?

CHRIS
I had to put in a statement too.
Can I give you a lift?

I/E. CHRIS' TRUCK/MOTEL - EVENING

Chris and Corey pull up to the motel in his pick-up. They've gotten Corey's prescription filled, and she has the BOTTLE OF PILLS in her hand.

CHRIS
I'm real sorry about Sam.

Corey nods.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

It's such a waste. Just a horrible, freak thing.

COREY

I said some pretty shitty things to her right before it happened.

CHRIS

I'm sure she knew you didn't mean it.

Corey gets out of the car and walks toward the motel room.

INT. MOTEL ROOM 15 - EVENING

Corey swallows two of her PILLS with some liquor from a plastic cup. She sits down on one of the full-size beds where Sam's belongings are spread out.

She opens Sam's backpack and discovers THE PHILOSOPHY OF TIME TRAVEL book, by Roberta Sparrow...

As Corey studies the cover, her image is reflected by the CLOSET DOOR MIRRORS. The angle of the mirrors creates double image reflections for other objects in the room. Strangely, Corey's reflection is only present in one of the panes.

The digital CLOCK/RADIO shows 6:30 PM...

There are PICTURES of Sam's family tucked away inside the book, between the pages: Sam with her mother and father, ROSE and EDDIE DARKO; YOUNG SAM with ELIZABETH and DONNIE; an old photo of the whole Darko family together -- Young Sam holds ARIEL, a STUFFED TOY UNICORN.

Corey removes the pictures and sets them on the nightstand... She then looks down and notices that the book is open to: CHAPTER THREE - THE FRAGMENTARY UNIVERSE.

COREY

Fragmentary Universe...

She pours over the text, some of which reads: *When the fabric of the fourth dimension within a Tangent Universe becomes corrupted, a highly unstable and volatile Fragmentary Universe can occur, sustaining itself for no longer than several days...* FADE TO BLACK.

INT. MOTEL ROOM 15 - LATER - NIGHT

Corey awakens to the sound of a little boy CRYING. She sits up in bed. The clock/radio reads 3:30 AM. The CRYING is faint but steady and sorrowful, and sounds as though it's coming from outside...

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

Corey follows the distinctive CRYING toward the VENDING MACHINES on the side of the building...

...until Billy Moorcroft emerges from behind them. Corey freezes a few feet away from the boy, who wears the BIRTHDAY HAT, SLACKS and COLLARED SHIRT. He is pale and bruised.

Corey sees that he is not crying -- it's coming from elsewhere in the cosmos, far away. The WAILS taper off to a faint, DISTORTED WHISPER as Billy speaks:

BILLY MOORCROFT
You need to save me, Corey.

Corey stares at him in disbelief.

BILLY MOORCROFT (CONT'D)
You need to save me... and save the world.

COREY
Why can't anyone see you?

BILLY MOORCROFT
If you tell them about me they'll think you're a dummy.

COREY
Why me?

BILLY MOORCROFT
I didn't pick you. Just like you didn't pick me either.

Corey stands before him in awe, transfixed.

BILLY MOORCROFT (CONT'D)
We shouldn't even be here. Nobody should...

Corey takes notice of the vending machines behind him. Where the prices should be, NUMBERS flash in a rhythm that seems to coincide with the ululations of the distant CRYING: 2... 10... 16... 44... -end-... 2... 10... 16... 44... -end-...

BILLY MOORCROFT (CONT'D)
You don't have much time.

Corey is about to respond when the sound of a DOOR OPENING stops her. The FLASHING NUMBERS on the vending machines go back to normal PRICES, the CRYING SOUND CEASES, and Billy disappears.

PHIL (O.S.)
What's goin' on out here?

Corey looks over and sees Phil dressed in nightclothes, having come out of a room near the lobby. She's dumbstruck.

COREY
Nothing... I-I don't know.

PHIL
Go back to your room and get some sleep. You've had a tough day.

Phil goes back inside, leaving her alone.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

Corey wanders through the aisles of the department store, looking peaked and jittery. She comes upon Chris stocking some shelves near the back of the store.

CHRIS
Hey... how ya feelin'?

COREY
Not so good.

CHRIS
Is there anything I can do?

COREY
I need some cigarettes... and maybe some food. But I don't really have any money right now.

CHRIS
I'm off at 3:30. Meet me out behind the store.

EXT. BEHIND THE DEPARTMENT STORE - LATER - AFTERNOON

Corey waits on the cement steps by the loading dock. She shoots up when Chris comes out the back entrance with a PLASTIC BAG...

Corey takes it from him and looks inside: CANDY BARS, a BAG OF CHIPS, some PEANUTS, a pack of CIGARETTES.

COREY

Thanks.

She tears open the cigarettes and lights one. Chris lights up one of his own, and notices Corey's hands are shaking.

CHRIS

Shouldn't you go back home?

COREY

There's nothing for me to go home to. Trust me.

CHRIS

What about Sam's funeral?

Corey looks conflicted, but she takes a harsh stance:

COREY

What's the point? She's gone, that's it. Nothing's gonna change that...

Chris lets it go.

COREY (CONT'D)

Is there a library around here?

CHRIS

(puzzled)

Yeah... you need a book?

COREY

Is it walking distance?

CHRIS

I can take you.

COREY

I think I'd rather walk.

EXT. STREET - AFTERNOON

Corey and Chris stroll together along a quiet street.

CHRIS

So you guys were real close, huh.

COREY

When I moved to Virginia Sam was like the only person I could even stand to talk to.

CHRIS

How long had you been plannin' your trip together?

COREY

Not too long... kind of a last minute thing. It was good timing, 'cause I don't like to stay in one place for too long, ya know?

CHRIS

Huh...

COREY

I was really surprised when Sam wanted to come, actually. I just kinda brought it up one day, and she was down...

Corey reflects for a beat.

COREY (CONT'D)

If it wasn't for me, she'd still be alive right now.

CHRIS

You can't think like that.

COREY

It's true, isn't it?

Chris doesn't respond.

INT. LIBRARY, MICROFICHE RESEARCH BOOTH - AFTERNOON

Corey and Chris sit before a screen in a cramped, dim booth near the back of the library. They stare at a MICROFILM ARTICLE from 1988 about DONNIE DARKO'S DEATH.

CHRIS

That was Sam's brother?

COREY

Yeah.

On the screen is a PHOTOGRAPH of the DARKO HOUSE with many PEOPLE gathered in front of it. A JET ENGINE is being lifted away by a CRANE.

CHRIS
Her parents must be going through
hell.

COREY
Sam said once she wished it landed
on her room instead of Donnie's.

Chris thinks on this.

CHRIS
I saw something on Sam's wrist the
other night... it looked like a
scar.

COREY
She told me it was from some
accident. Put her hand through a
window or something.

CHRIS
Did you believe her?

Corey doesn't answer. She pulls up ANOTHER ARTICLE, one that
chronicles a MAN who was IMPALED BY A METAL PIPE with no
known origin...

A THIRD ARTICLE is about a LITTLE GIRL who was DECAPITATED BY
A MANHOLE COVER that was inexplicably flying through the
air...

CHRIS (CONT'D)
God...

Chris is horrified. Corey is totally engrossed.

She brings up a FINAL ARTICLE that tells the story of a BOY
who was CRUSHED BY A DUMPSTER that fell from the sky. A
PICTURE shows his legs sticking out from under it like the
Wicked Witch of the East when Dorothy's house fell on her in
Munchkinland.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
I don't understand why we're
lookin' at this stuff.

COREY
They still never found a driver to
that car that hit Randy... I was
standing right there. I didn't see
anyone.

CHRIS

I was pretty close too, but everything was all crazy. Whoever it was must've jumped out and took off.

COREY

I found this book in Sam's backpack last night. There's a chapter where it talks about stuff like this happening. Like a guy being killed by an arrow that nobody shot, and a swordsmith getting killed by a sword he hadn't made yet. Unexplainable things, but it says there's a reason why they happen.

CHRIS

A book...? I don't get what your talkin' about. What was the reason?

COREY

It didn't say.

Corey thinks, trying to figure out the right way to express something...

COREY (CONT'D)

Last night, and right before the accident, I saw...

CHRIS

What?

COREY

Nothing.

Corey sighs and turns back to the screen.

COREY (CONT'D)

You already think I'm a freak show.

INT. LIBRARY, FRONT DESK - AFTERNOON

As Chris and Corey are on the way out, they notice Jeremy Frame at the counter checking out a STACK OF BOOKS.

In putting them down, he accidentally drops half of them onto the floor. He looks frazzled as he begins to pick them up, and he scratches compulsively at his LEFT FOREARM...

I/E. DUSTY'S GARAGE/HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Chris and Corey pull up to Dusty's auto repair shop in Chris' truck.

They get out and start to walk up to the garage, but they're cut off by the unchained PIT BULL -- it's growling and barking in a frenzy --

RUTH (O.S.)

Darielle!

The dog heels at the sound of the voice, and Ruth bolts out of the house and takes her by the collar. She's got a bandage over a cut on her forehead.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Come to check on your car?

COREY

Yeah...

Hearts still thumping in their chests, they follow Ruth into the garage... COREY'S CHEVROLET is parked in the same spot it was when she left it the other day. The hood is propped open.

RUTH

Randy's been a wreck since the accident.

CHRIS

He should be. He was driving around shit-faced and somebody got killed.

RUTH

You can just fuck off...

She gets right up in his face with such intensity that Chris retreats a step or two.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Prima donna motherfucker think your shit don't stink?

Corey steps in:

COREY

She's right...

Chris gives her a look.

COREY (CONT'D)

I mean, there's nothing Randy could've done.

Ruth turns and goes into the house through a GARAGE ENTRANCE.

RUTH
I'll get my dad.

The door slams shut behind her, and Corey and Chris glance at each other...

Momentarily, Dusty comes out, a partially eaten SANDWICH in hand.

DUSTY
Got some bad news for you...

He walks them over to the car, finishing off his sandwich and wiping his hands on his greasy jeans.

DUSTY (CONT'D)
Your engine seized up when your water pump blew.

COREY
I need a new engine now?

DUSTY
I can get one in there for you.
Cost you about fifteen hundred.

Corey's face drops.

COREY
I don't have anywhere near that much money.

CHRIS
That's probably as much as the car's worth.

DUSTY
I understand. But, I already ordered the water pump, and I'll have to get paid for my time. That comes to about three-hundred total.

COREY
I don't have that much either.

Dusty is perturbed.

DUSTY
You think I do this for charity?

CHRIS

You didn't do anything. What's she
want a water pump for if she
doesn't have an engine?

DUSTY

I see how it is... couple a' punks.
You don't plan to pay what you owe,
you can get the hell off my
property right now.

Corey glares at him, furious, but Chris takes her by the arm.

COREY

(under her breath)
Asshole.

CHRIS

Let's go...

I/E. CHRIS' TRUCK/MOTEL - AFTERNOON

Chris' truck pulls up in front of the motel and parks. At the
same time, Father Homeijer and Trudy come out of the FRONT
OFFICE carrying a COLLECTIONS JAR.

As they approach the truck Chris slowly rolls down the
window.

FATHER HOMEIJER

Good afternoon.

TRUDY

We're taking collections to help
rebuild Mount Calvary after the
tragic fire.

FATHER HOMEIJER

Any small amount you could manage
would really help.

CHRIS

Sorry.

Father Homeijer and Trudy look over to Corey in the passenger
seat but she just stares back at them.

FATHER HOMEIJER

God bless you.

They turn and walk away, and Chris rolls his window back up.

CHRIS
Everybody wants somethin'...

COREY
What about you?

CHRIS
What do you mean?

COREY
You wouldn't give me stuff and
drive me around if you didn't want
something in return.

CHRIS
Why not?

COREY
'Cause that's just not how it
works.

CHRIS
Maybe you're wrong about that.

Corey nods, but still doesn't believe him.

COREY
See ya.

She gets out, and Chris eyes her as she walks to her room.

INT. MOTEL ROOM 15 - NIGHT

Corey lays on her stomach in bed, her head buried in The
Philosophy of Time Travel book. The TELEVISION is on in the
b.g. (out of focus), playing a repeat of the FOREMAN GRILL
INFOMERCIAL...

Suddenly, there is a slight TREMOR from outside and RIPPLE
runs over the TV screen.

Corey looks around, taking no notice of the odd change on the
television -- instead of GEORGE FOREMAN'S VOICE, HULK HOGAN
is HEARD promoting the brand new HULKSTER GRILL...

Just then, there is a KNOCK at the door. She gets up to
answer it and finds Randy -- he looks distraught.

RANDY
Do you hate me?

COREY
Huh?

RANDY
You think it's my fault she's dead.

COREY
No...

RANDY
You mean it?

COREY
Yeah... it wasn't your fault.

Randy sighs as if a big weight has been lifted.

RANDY
What's that?

Corey looks down and realizes that she's still holding The Philosophy of Time Travel book in her hand.

COREY
Oh, it's just... something of Sam's.

Randy nods. Corey tosses the book onto the bed.

RANDY
You wanna get outta here for a while? I got my dad's car.

I/E. RANDY'S DAD'S CAR/LOOKOUT - NIGHT

RANDY'S DAD'S CAR navigates a DIRT ROAD up a WOODED HILL to a VANTAGE POINT where the whole of El Reno can be seen. SPARSE LIGHTS flicker over about 80 square miles of civilization.

There are a few OTHER VEHICLES parked at the lookout, most containing COUPLES with MUSIC playing low.

Randy pulls into a more SECLUDED CLEARING, away from the other cars but still with a nice view.

RANDY
I've been comin' up here since I was a kid. Good place when you wanna just get away from everything.

Randy pushes in a TAPE (*suggestion: River of Deceit, by Mad Season*), then takes a JOINT from his pocket and sparks it up.

COREY
Is Ruth your girlfriend?

Randy passes the joint to Corey and she hits it.

RANDY

Naw, we're just friends. She's pretty weird sometimes. Too like... intense, or something.

COREY

Seems like you guys are pretty close.

RANDY

Yeah... don't worry about Ruth.

Randy takes another hit and holds it in.

COREY

Do you ever have a hard time telling what's real and what's not real?

Randy exhales and looks over at her, perplexed.

RANDY

Sometimes... sometimes something can feel really real, but it's just your mind playing tricks on you.

COREY

I've got so much shit in my head right now... I've never felt so outta control. I think I'm really goin' psycho.

He passes her the joint.

RANDY

I got some acid from my buddy one time... this like flying eagle pyramid shit. I took two hits, and man... next thing I knew I was on the floor, curled up in ball, and Mike and Jeff were just standing there lookin' down at me. I could see this like glowing grid cutting through my brain, and I knew when it got all the way through I'd be this sketched out vegetable. I could picture my dad staring down at me in the hospital in my straightjacket, crying and shit...

Corey blows out a hit, captivated...

RANDY (CONT'D)

The whole time my esophagus was like twisting and turning in my throat and cutting off my air supply... it was terrible.

COREY

Jesus.

RANDY

I can still slip back into it sometimes, but I know now that my brain is what's making it real... and that's like a blessing and a curse, man, 'cause that means you have to decide what's real and what's not.

COREY

The things that feel the most real right now are... impossible. More like a dream.

Corey passes him the joint and he stamps out the roach in the car's ashtray.

RANDY

I know what you mean. The scariest part is thinking you're not the same person anymore. Something's changed... like your identity.

COREY

What if the change is for the better?

Randy finds an INHALER in his pocket and takes a puff.

RANDY

That's fucked up.

COREY

I don't think I even care if I'm crazy.

Corey turns and looks into his eyes. Randy leans forward... They're about to kiss, when --

COREY (CONT'D)

What the fuck?

A DARK SHAPE scurries to an enclosed area at the edge of the forest where there's a TARP, some WATER BOTTLES, CANS OF FOOD and a RIFLE...

It's Vietnam Tom, and he's brought some supplies to his NEW SQUATTING GROUND.

COREY (CONT'D)
That fucking guy again...

Randy and Corey both laugh, relieving the tension. But Tom's proximity has spoiled the mood.

RANDY
Let's get outta here.

INT. RANDY'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mike, Jeff and Ruth sit on a ratty couch in Randy's living room, watching BEAVIS AND BUTT-HEAD on MTV. Some EMPTY BEER CANS and a HOMEADE BONG litter a coffee table. When the FRONT DOOR OPENS and Corey and Randy enter, none of them budge.

As Corey and Randy walk to Randy's bedroom, Ruth follows them with her eyes...

INT. RANDY'S HOUSE, BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Randy shuts the door to his messy room. A TAPESTRY hangs from the ceiling. Corey is drawn to a DESK next to the bed. Above it is a DEATH SHRINE to KURT COBAIN -- MAGAZINE CUTOUTS, POSTERS and TICKET STUBS arranged decoratively.

A large BLACK & WHITE POSTER showing a CLOSE UP of COBAIN'S FACE is the centerpiece, and a sloppy BULLET HOLE drawn in RED MARKER marks the center of his forehead. The words 'I'M NOT AFRAID OF DYING' are scrawled across the bottom of the poster in the same BRIGHT RED.

COREY
This is cool.

RANDY
Thanks.

Randy puts his hands on her hips, running them up her torso. Corey turns to face him...

They kiss...

...and fall back onto the bed...

INT. RANDY'S HOUSE, BEDROOM - LATER - NIGHT

A DIGITAL CLOCK on Randy's DESK shows 3:30 AM. There's a SLIGHT TREMOR and the numbers shift, changing briefly to 01:10:23:08, then back again to 3:30.

Corey wakes suddenly from a nightmare. She sits up and looks around, remembering where she is. She discovers Randy asleep by her side. She finds a pile of clothes on the floor beside the bed and grabs her shirt...

...after she pulls it on over her head, she freezes -- because Billy Moorcroft is standing right there in his BIRTHDAY HAT, staring at her.

BILLY MOORCROFT
Only one day left.

Corey turns and looks down to Randy. He's still fast asleep.

COREY
What am I supposed to do?

As soon as she utters her question she notices a silvery, liquid VECTOR SPEAR protruding from the center of her chest.

Billy is now gone, but her SPEAR beckons her out of the room, elongating to illustrate her path. Corey is in awe...

INT. RANDY'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Her SPEAR leads her through the living room, and past the sleeping bodies of Mike, Jeff and Ruth. Following her path leads her to step on RUTH'S FOOT as she goes by...

Corey doesn't even notice, but one of Ruth's eyes pop open as she treads out the door...

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Corey follows Billy, who walks in the middle of the road about 15 yards ahead of her. The residential street is guarded by great, OLD TREES on either side.

The dark sky above starts to BEND and WARP, and a BUCKLE in space-time materializes.

There's a simultaneous flash of LIGHTING and sharp CRACK OF THUNDER, and Corey looks up to the VORTEX -- a massive, swirling MAELSTROM gapes open like a tunnel to the inter-dimensional realm of darkest night.

The VOID brightens, and ominous STORM CLOUDS and TORRENTIAL RAINS are visible within...

Corey peers up into the MOUTH of it and sees DUSTY'S HOUSE AND AUTO REPAIR SHOP being doused and beaten by the STORM --

INT. DUSTY'S GARAGE - NIGHT

In contrast to the street, all is nearly SILENT in Dusty's garage. Corey watches as Billy moves along the perimeter WITHOUT SOUND, ghostly... JUMP CUTS and TIME CUTS.

Her CHEVROLET sits in the bay. Some of the PARTS have already been harvested -- the CATALYTIC CONVERTER sits next to it on the floor.

Corey approaches a UTILITY SINK next to a SHOWER in the corner...

BILLY MOORCROFT
You can do it.

COREY
How?

BILLY MOORCROFT
It's easy.

Corey focuses on the sink, and it begins to tremble. The pipes beneath it CREAK and MOAN. WATER starts to bubble up from the sink drain, also in the shower...

Billy stands atop her car, watching her. His perpetually morose expression transforms into a smile.

The SINK BASIN suddenly cracks from pressure. As Corey stares into the drain... WE PLUNGE DOWN INTO THE PIPE --

POV OF TELEKINETIC ENERGY - INSIDE THE PIPE

We travel through meters and meters of DANK PIPING until we hit the WATER MAIN. There's a sound like a TIDAL WAVE CRASHING --

EXT. STREET/DUSTY'S GARAGE/HOUSE - LATER - DAWN

-- WATER POURS out from under the garage door down to the street. PULL BACK TO REVEAL --

The entire driveway and the street in front of the house are covered with water. FIRE TRUCKS, POLICE CARS and an AMBULANCE are gathered in front of the property.

ANGLE: DOWN THE STREET

Ruth runs toward her house. When she turns a corner and it comes into view, she stops dead in her tracks. Her face shows sheer terror --

Because her father Dusty is handcuffed and being loaded into the back of a cruiser by Officer O'Dell and another policeman, OFFICER HINES...

...the PIT BULL struggles against it's CHAIN, growling and barking frantically.

...and Billy Moorcroft, half-naked, soaking wet and shivering, is wrapped in a blanket and being tended to by PARAMEDICS.

FIREMAN #2

Lucky I heard him screamin', else
he woulda drowned down there.

Ruth keeps to the shadows and slinks toward a BACK DOOR...

INT. DUSTY'S HOUSE, FOOT OF THE STAIRS - DAWN

She sloshes through four inches of water and skips up the stairs...

INT. DUSTY'S HOUSE, RUTH'S BEDROOM - DAWN

Without turning on the lights, Ruth desperately rifles through her closet until she finds a SHOEBOX.

Inside it are several PLASTIC BAGS -- some filled with MARIJUANA, others with COCAINE...

INT. DUSTY'S HOUSE, UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - DAWN

Hands shaking, Ruth dumps a bag of coke into the toilet and flushes it. The WHITE POWDER disappears down the swirling SPIRAL OF CLOUDY LIQUID...

But the bowl doesn't refill.

RUTH

Shit!

She begins to stuff the other bags down her pants...

EXT. DUSTY'S GARAGE/HOUSE - DAWN

Having deposited Dusty in the back of the cruiser and shut the door, O'Dell's attention turns to an upstairs window of the house when he sees MOVEMENT.

INT. RANDY'S HOUSE, BEDROOM - MORNING

Randy rolls over in bed, opening his eyes to the new day. He looks around for Corey, disappointed to find her gone.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

Corey walks down an aisle of the department store. She finds Chris assisting a CUSTOMER.

CUSTOMER

I just checked aisle three.

CHRIS

They're there. At the front, by the Trapper Keepers.

The Customer moves off and Chris turns to find Corey standing beside him.

COREY

I'm outta cigarettes.

EXT. BEHIND THE DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

Corey waits behind the store until Chris comes out. She eagerly accepts TWO PACKS.

CHRIS

D'ya hear the news?

COREY

What?

CHRIS

They found that Billy Moorcroft kid. He was at Dusty's house...

Corey is floored.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Sick bastard had him locked up in
the basement. I can't believe we
were just over there yesterday.

Corey can't help it... A grin spreads across her face.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
I guess he's gonna be okay-

COREY
Everything's gonna be okay.

Corey cuts him off, and Chris looks at her strangely.

COREY (CONT'D)
I'm not crazy. I think everything's
gonna be okay.

INT. MOTEL ROOM 15 - NIGHT

Corey lays on her stomach in bed, studying *The Philosophy of Time Travel*. The book is open to: CHAPTER SIX - THE LIVING RECEIVER... *The Living Receiver is chosen to guide the Artifact into position for its journey back to the Primary Universe. No one knows how or why a Receiver will be chosen...*

She flips through the onion skin pages to: CHAPTER TEN - THE MANIPULATED DEAD... *The Manipulated Dead are more powerful than the Living Receiver. If a person dies within the Tangent Dimension, they are able to contact the Living Receiver through the Fourth Dimensional Construct...*

Corey glances over at the CLOSET MIRROR and sees Billy's image reflected. She flips over and finds him standing at the foot of the bed, clad in the same garb as all her visions.

COREY
I already saved you.

BILLY MOORCROFT
It's not over.

He points to the CLOSET MIRROR... She stares into her own reflection as BILLY'S DISAPPEARS.

HER IMAGE starts to FADE as well, and then the SURFACE OF THE MIRROR TRANSFORMS into a three-dimensional vision of a PARK. The focus is a SWING SET... and one of the SWINGS in particular, which rocks slowly back and forth. Empty. Void of life.

COREY
 (confused)
 Why?

INT. BILLY MOORCROFT'S HOUSE, DINING ROOM/DEN - DAY

Inside Billy Moorcroft's quaint, sanitary-looking home is a small gathering to celebrate his return. STREAMERS hang over a table supporting a partially eaten CAKE. A BANNER that reads 'WELCOME HOME BILLY!' is draped across the archway connecting the DINING ROOM to the DEN.

BILLY'S MOTHER (32), with her fair complexion and dark hair, is an older female version of Billy himself.

As she brings a POT OF COFFEE and a STACK OF CUPS into BILLY'S FATHER (35), BILLY'S AUNT and UNCLE, and a CHILD PSYCHOLOGIST who is moderating (50s; male) in the den, she looks as though she's barely keeping it together.

CHILD PSYCHOLOGIST
 (between bites of cake)
 The place for Billy to be right now
 is at home with his family...

Billy's Mother interrupts as she sets the coffee down.

BILLY'S MOTHER
 Excuse me.

CHILD PSYCHOLOGIST
 Oh, thank you.

The Psychologist accepts a cup.

CHILD PSYCHOLOGIST (CONT'D)
 It'll take years for him to work
 through what happened, but the best
 way to open those doors is to
 surround him with things that are
 familiar...

Billy's Mother passes her husband a cup, and they hold a long, painful moment of eye contact.

INT. BILLY MOORCROFT'S HOUSE, BREAKFAST NOOK - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

Billy sits at a table in the sunny, HEXAGONAL ROOM. He wears the BIRTHDAY HAT, SLACKS and COLLARED SHIRT.

He appears clean and groomed, but his face and neck are marred by BRUISES and other ABRASIONS. Before him is a packet of COLORED PENCILS and some sheets of PAPER.

His Mother walks up behind him, and peeks over his shoulder at the DRAWING that he's working on.

BILLY'S MOTHER

Are you sure you don't want some
more cake?

Billy nods. His mother caresses his head as she watches him color. After a moment she sits down in a chair beside him and tries to get his attention.

BILLY'S MOTHER (CONT'D)

Billy... I-

Before she can go on, she's interrupted by the DOORBELL. Billy never looks up.

I/E. BILLY MOORCROFT'S HOUSE, FRONT DOOR - DAY

Billy's Father answers the door and finds Corey.

BILLY'S FATHER

Only family and close friends are
welcome here today.

Billy's Mother hovers behind her husband, curious about and wary of the stranger.

COREY

I understand... I just wanted to
say that I'm sorry about everything
that happened to Billy. And I know
it doesn't seem like it, but
everything happens for a reason...
and it'll all work out in the end.

Billy's Father stares her down until she turns to leave uncomfortably. Billy's Mother starts to cry... CUT BACK TO:

INT. BILLY MOORCROFT'S HOUSE, BREAKFAST NOOK - DAY

...the breakfast nook. Billy is gone.

Left on the table is his completed DRAWING. It's a neatly executed rendition of a SWING SET -- identical to the one from Corey's vision in the closet door mirror.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Billy walks through the empty park, still wearing his birthday hat. He makes his way past a SAND PIT with a JUNGLE GYM.

Balanced on one of the jungle gym's bars is a PRESCRIPTION BOTTLE...

Billy picks it up. The name on the prescription is COREY RICHARDSON. JUMP CUT TO:

The SWING SET. Billy leans back as far as he can as momentum propels his body forward and back through space. He looks up to the sky where SUPERNATURAL BLACK CLOUDS are forming...

He swings back and forth... back and forth...

ANGLE: PARK BENCH

Corey sits nearby on a park bench, watching Billy. He looks back at her, showing no signs of recognition... JUMP CUT TO:

The SWING. No longer a little boy sitting in it. It dangles erratically from the ropes, still gripped by inertia...

PAN DOWN to the sandy ground below -- FIND the bottle of pills, now empty. Billy's unmoving, OPEN HAND...

EXT. OKLAHOMA HIGHWAY 40/EL RENO EXIT - AFTERNOON

A TRACTOR-TRAILER TRUCK gets off the highway and heads into El Reno. It's load is a batch of beat up, OLD CARS.

The JALOPY is on the TOP RACK, CLOSEST TO THE END...

EXT. MOTEL ROOM 15 - AFTERNOON

Randy peeks in the window of Corey's motel room but sees nothing. He pounds on the door and calls for her:

RANDY
Corey...

EXT. INTERSECTION NEAR DEPARTMENT STORE - AFTERNOON

Corey arrives near the intersection where the accident took place. The BLACK CLOUDS overhead have become more vast and oppressive. A cold WIND blows...

The TRACTOR-TRAILER TRUCK breaches the crest of a hill and comes into view, descending on the intersection.

Above it the CLOUDS begin to transform and take the shape of an ASTRONOMICAL WORMHOLE that reaches down toward the earth...

EXT. DEPARTMENT STORE - AFTERNOON

Chris comes outside and gazes up at the foreboding sky...

EXT. INTERSECTION NEAR DEPARTMENT STORE - AFTERNOON

As the TRACTOR-TRAILER TRUCK approaches the intersection, Corey fixates on the JALOPY on the back...

CLOSE ANGLE: JALOPY

The CHAINS that hold the junker in place SHAKE and RATTLE...

EXT. THE ETHER - AFTERNOON - POV INSIDE PORTAL

We plunge through the PORTAL as it twists through the ether...

EXT. INTERSECTION NEAR DEPARTMENT STORE - AFTERNOON

The WORMHOLE extends down to the JALOPY. Gracefully. Like an eel moving through water, confidently pursuing it's prey... mouth widening to swallow...

Corey is riveted.

As it passes through the intersection, the TRACTOR-TRAILER hits a POTHOLE -- CUT TO:

KEY SCENES IN REVERSE

PILLS COME OUT OF BILLY'S MOUTH AND INTO HIS HAND --

HIS DRAWING OF THE SWING SET STARTS TO DECONSTRUCT --

RUTH'S COCAINE FLIES OUT OF THE SWIRLING TOILET WATER --

DUSTY STEPS BACKWARDS OUT OF THE POLICE CRUISER --

RUTH'S EYE CLOSSES BEFORE COREY'S FOOT STEPS OFF OF HERS --

COREY STEPS AWAY FROM THE KURT COBAIN POSTER WITH 'I'M NOT AFRAID OF DYING' SCRAWLED ON IT --

MICROFILM PAGES FLIP BACKWARDS --

PICTURES OF THE DARKO FAMILY ARE PUT BACK INTO THE PHILOSOPHY OF TIME TRAVEL BOOK -- TRANSITION TO:

EXT. RANDY'S CAR/STREET IN FRONT OF DEPARTMENT STORE - AFTERNOON

Sam is walking in front of the department store when Randy's car pulls up beside her. Corey sticks her head out the passenger side window.

COREY

What happened to you?

SAM

What happened to me...? Where the hell've you been?

COREY

I crashed at Randy's. We just got food. Want a burger?

SAM

My stomach's fucked up.

JEFF

Awww...

MIKE

Poor tummy...

Jeff and Mike taunt her from the back. Ruth leers.

SAM (CONT'D)

We gotta talk about what we're gonna do.

COREY

Don't worry about it so much.

SAM

The motel guy came to the room this morning-

COREY

(interrupting)

I don't give a fuck.

SAM

Excuse me?

COREY

I said, I. Don't. Give. A. Fuck...

She annunciates every word like a true bitch.

COREY (CONT'D)

I'm tired of listening to you whine
about everything.

Giggles from the peanut gallery in the car.

SAM

Corey, you're still drunk. Don't be
a fuck-ass.

JEFF

Did she just call her a fuck-ass?

MIKE

What's a fuck-ass?

Everyone cracks up, including Corey. Sam is humiliated. She
backs away from the car, anger burning in her eyes. Randy
revs the engine, expressing his will to take off.

COREY

See ya later, Sam.

Sam says nothing, but watches as Randy's car peels off toward
the intersection. She's confused and hurt, frozen to the spot
where she's standing.

As Corey stares back at Sam from the car, her smile fades...

INT. RANDY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Corey turns to face the approaching intersection. Resolute.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - AFTERNOON

Chris is at work, stocking shelves inside the department
store...

He checks his watch, stops what he's doing and grabs a PACK
OF CIGARETTES from his breast pocket -- time for a smoke
break.

EXT. INTERSECTION NEAR DEPARTMENT STORE - AFTERNOON

Randy's car is stopped at the red light. Sam strolls toward it ever so slowly. Jeff, Mike and Ruth gawk at her from the backseat.

She slows down even more, having no interest in subjecting herself to any more of their mockery...

The light turns green, and Randy's car peels across the intersection, making a left. Sam's still 10 or 15 feet away from stepping into the street...

She quickens her pace, almost there when --

KA-BOOM!

FROM OUT OF NOWHERE AN OLD JALOPY SAILS RIGHT IN FRONT RANDY'S CAR! He jerks the wheel -- and the jalopy hits on the front passenger side -- completely smashing it in --

Sam spins when she HEARS the deafening CRUNCH...

Randy careens into the opposite lane, and an ONCOMING CAR smacks him dead on. The inertia from the oncoming vehicle plows his car into a FIRE HYDRANT by the side of the road.

The hydrant goes flying through the air like a bullet and skitters harmlessly across the intersection --

The world goes SILENT.

CHRIS RUNS TOWARD THE DESTRUCTION, DROPPING HIS CIGARETTE...

WATER ERUPTS LIKE A GEYSER FROM THE PIPE WHERE THE HYDRANT USED TO BE...

THE JALOPY IS FLIPPED OVER ONTO ITS SIDE...

SAM STANDS PEERING AT THE WRECKAGE... THE AREA OF THE CAR WHERE COREY WAS SITTING IS VIRTUALLY NONEXISTENT. SHE DROPS TO HER KNEES.

INT. POLICE STATION - AFTERNOON

Sam signs her STATEMENT on Officer O'Dell's desk, her eyes red and puffy from crying. O'Dell sits facing her.

OFFICER O'DELL
I just gotta ask you one more
time... you're sure you didn't see
a driver?

Sam shakes her head no, and he takes the statement from her.

OFFICER O'DELL (CONT'D)
Well, we'll find him, one way or
another.

Sam nods in acknowledgement. O'Dell sees how much this has
traumatized her.

OFFICER O'DELL (CONT'D)
Why don't you stop in and see Dr.
Peters on your way out... right
down the hall there. She'll give
you somethin' to make you feel
better.

EXT. POLICE STATION, BACK PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON

Sam walks out of the police station and finds herself in the
secluded back parking lot. She holds a PRESCRIPTION for anti-
depressants...

A pair of eyes peek out of the bushes close by -- it's
Vietnam Tom. He's wearing his ski mask and he's got his
rifle. He sees Sam, but she doesn't see him.

Sam wells up with emotion, about to breakdown, and Tom
watches her with empathy. It looks as though he's about to go
to her when something stops him -- Chris comes out the door.

CHRIS
You okay?

Sam is still too choked up to speak. Tom sneaks away
unnoticed...

INT. CHRIS' TRUCK - AFTERNOON

Sam sits in the passenger side of Chris' truck and cries and
cries. Major emotional release.

Chris looks like he wants to say something, but doesn't have
the words.

I/E. CHRIS' TRUCK/MOTEL - EVENING

Chris and Sam pull up to the motel in his pick-up. They've
gone to get her prescription filled, and Sam has the BOTTLE
OF PILLS in her hand.

CHRIS
I'm really sorry, Sam.

She doesn't respond.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
It's horrible... but sometimes
these things can happen for a
reason. Sometimes good can come of
it... growth, ya know?

SAM
What the fuck are you talking
about?

Sam's benumbed expression doesn't change, but her tone is
caustic.

CHRIS
All I meant was, sometimes-

SAM
I know what you meant, and it's
bullshit. When someone dies for no
reason you can't just make one up
to fill the void and make yourself
feel better. It sucks, and it fucks
everything up, but it doesn't mean
shit beyond that.

CHRIS
I'm sorry, I-

SAM
You've obviously never lost anybody
like I have, 'cause if you did
you'd already know that.

Chris doesn't try anymore. Sam immediately feels bad.

SAM (CONT'D)
Thanks for the ride.

She gets out of the car and slogs toward her room.

INT. MOTEL ROOM 15 - EVENING

Sam swallows her PILLS with some water, and sits down on one
of the full-size beds by her BACKPACK...

She reaches inside and pulls out THE PHILOSOPHY OF TIME
TRAVEL book, by Roberta Sparrow. As she studies the cover,
her image is reflected by the CLOSET DOOR MIRRORS.

The angle of the mirrors creates double image reflections for other objects in the room... and Sam's reflection is present in both of the panes.

The digital CLOCK/RADIO shows 6:30 PM...

She looks at the PICTURES OF HER FAMILY tucked away inside the book: Sam with her mother and father; Sam as a child with her sister and brother; an old photo of the whole Darko family together...

Tears come to her eyes as she focuses on an image of Donnie, and she puts them all down. She touches the SCAR on the inner part of her right wrist...

She then glances down and notices that the book is open to: CHAPTER NINE - REMNANTS.

SAM

Remnants...

A portion of the text includes: *Like Dreams that the Manipulated can have after journeys into Tangent or Fragmentary Universes, sounds and images may be transferred from one Tangent or Fragmentary Universe to another, as all corruptions exist on relative cosmic planes...*

EXT. JUNKYARD - NIGHT

Sam wanders through the junkyard clad in her HOODED SWEATSHIRT and JEANS, with the MAKESHIFT BANDAGE wrapped around her right hand. The SHARD OF METAL protrudes from the GASH by her temple.

SAM'S LUMINOUS POV - THE JUNKYARD

She sees the junkyard as the phosphorescent DESTINY PLANE. DEAD CARS, MACHINERY and piles of SCRAP METAL glow as stationary objects within the complex grid. A PAIR OF RATS follow their VECTOR SPEARS as they shimmy up the side of a RUSTY TRACTOR...

Sam treads effortlessly through the darkness, past the heaps of junk toward the decrepit STORAGE SHACK marked by the CORRUGATED ROOFING...

ANGLE: STORAGE SHACK

She stands before the shack, having discovered Vietnam Tom. He squats in the darkened corner of the scrappy shelter, and looks back at her through the eyeholes of a new mask --

He wears on his face the SCULPTURE made of SCRAP METAL, which has been formed into the COUNTENANCE OF THE MONSTER BUNNY.

SAM

Hi, Tom. I like your new mask.

Tom trembles like the frightened animal he personifies as Sam runs her fingers down one of the LONG, METALLIC EARS, down to one of the SHARPENED INCISORS of the EVIL-LOOKING GRIN...

SAM (CONT'D)

Are you scared?

As this contact is made the tarnished metal becomes transparent, and the NEURONS in TOM'S BRAIN can be seen sending ELECTRIC IMPULSES, in turn RELEASING NEUROTRANSMITTERS and exciting OTHER NEURONS...

SAM (CONT'D)

I know you can hear me...

A PORTAL forms around the shelter like a giant cylinder, enclosing them. Tom rises, afraid... Sam takes his hand...

The PORTAL shrinks and squeezes the walls until they bend inward, then begin to CREAK and RUMBLE --

EXT. BENEATH OVERPASS - THE NEXT MORNING

Sam awakens to a fierce RUMBLING overhead.

It happens again, and when she looks around she realizes that she's underneath a highway overpass in BOXER SHORTS and a T-SHIRT, barefoot, lying on a FLAT AREA atop the CEMENT SLOPE that leads down to the road below.

Alarmed by both the height and sanitation of her current position, she shifts her body and starts to slide down the SLOPE...

Once on even ground, she notices a brand new '95 BMW coming toward her.

SAM

Perfect...

Jeremy pulls up next to her and rolls down his window.

JEREMY

Sam? Are you okay? What are doing?

SAM

I'm... yeah, I'm okay.

Jeremy gets out of the car and puts his hand on her shoulder.

JEREMY

You shouldn't be out here like
this. C'mon, get in.

She allows herself to be led to the passenger side...

INT. JEREMY'S BMW - MORNING

Sam leans her head back against the headrest as Jeremy drives.

JEREMY

You do that a lot?

SAM

I think it's genetic or something.

JEREMY

That's interesting... I've never
heard of a specific genetic marker
for sleepwalking.

SAM

It's just that my brother used to
do it too.

JEREMY

He doesn't anymore?

SAM

No.

JEREMY

I think it's more common in
children. When did your brother
stop?

SAM

When he died.

EXT. FIELD BEHIND MOTEL - MORNING

Some WORKERS are in the process of rebuilding the WINDMILL. A
MAN WITH A HOSE sprays the side of the WATER TANK in an
attempt to wash off the burn marks resembling the nearly
imperceptible image of the MONSTER BUNNY'S FACE...

I/E. JEREMY'S BMW/MOTEL - MORNING

Jeremy pulls into the motel parking lot. Sam hesitates for a moment before getting out.

JEREMY

I heard about your friend...

Sam doesn't say anything, so he goes on.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

I wasn't gonna say anything... but then I thought I probably should, because if I didn't, it might be inconsiderate.

SAM

Well... okay. Thanks.

A beat.

JEREMY

So... what are you gonna do?

SAM

I don't know yet.

Sam brushes her mussed hair out of her face, still not wanting to go inside the motel room.

SAM (CONT'D)

Do you believe that everything happens for a reason?

JEREMY

I know that for every action there's an equal and opposite reaction.

SAM

Yeah... I learned that in science.

JEREMY

And everything in the universe is in constant motion, as the universe is constantly expanding...

SAM

Yeah, but do you believe that everything happens for a reason, like in life?

JEREMY

You mean like destiny?

Jeremy thinks on this for a moment.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

I think everyone has a purpose.
Something they're meant to do. Like
potential, but more clear-cut. For
instance, I was destined to get my
hands on the meteorite.

SAM

Really.

JEREMY

I'm making amazing discoveries
every day, practically sleeping at
the lab...

While he talks and becomes more excited he scratches
nervously at his left forearm. It draws Sam's attention away
from what he's saying.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

I'm still doing some tests, but
there's a metallic substance that's
not showing up on the elemental
charts-

SAM

What happened to your arm?

Jeremy stops scratching. A small area on the inner part of
his wrist is RAW and RED, partially SCABBED OVER.

JEREMY

It's just a rash.

Sam starts to get out of the car.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

Sam, wait. Here...

He offers her a wad of cash. Sam hesitates.

SAM

But-

JEREMY

I know you need it. It's no big
deal.

She accepts the money.

SAM

Thank you.

INT. LAUNDROMAT - DAY

Sam shoves a load of her wet clothes into an industrial DRYER. She plugs in some quarters, presses the button, and sits back in a chair in front of the machine.

As she stares into the whirling cylinder, her eyes defocus and she goes into a daze... TRANSITION TO:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT - CLOSE UP - TOY UNICORN

ARIEL, the STUFFED TOY UNICORN spins on a ROTATING CHAIR...

YOUNG SAMANTHA (V.O.)

Donnie!

DONNIE DARKO (V.O.)

(mocking)

The Last Unicorn, by Samantha Darko!

YOUNG SAMANTHA (V.O.)

Give it back!

DONNIE DARKO (V.O.)

There was once a unicorn named Ariel...

The SOUND of CRINKLING PAPER.

YOUNG SAMANTHA (V.O.)

Donnie! You wrinkled it.

DONNIE DARKO (V.O.)

It's not wrinkled Sam. Just, ya know, flatten it in a book or something...

The chair is re-spun by an O.S. hand... and the UNICORN topples off onto the floor. BACK TO:

INT. LAUNDROMAT - DAY

Sam snaps out of her vision when she hears Trudy and Father Homeijer going around, asking for change.

FATHER HOMEIJER

Any small amount you could manage would really help.

They hover over a FAT MAN, holding out the COLLECTIONS JAR.

FAT MAN
Piss off...

FATHER HOMEIJER
God bless you.

As they move down the line and approach Sam, she tenses up. Trudy is about to go into her spiel when she recognizes her.

TRUDY
Oh... hello.

She smiles at Sam politely, trying not to be too awkward. It doesn't work.

Aware of Sam's financial situation, she gives Father Homeijer the hint to move on. He follows her lead.

FATHER HOMEIJER
(to Sam)
God bless you.

Sam watches as they move on to the next person, suddenly filled with sadness...

EXT. PAYPHONE OUTSIDE BUILDING - AFTERNOON

Sam stands outside at a payphone, listening to it RING... Someone on the other end finally picks up:

ROSE DARKO (V.O.)
Hello?

When Sam HEARS her MOTHER'S VOICE, it brings tears to her eyes. As if feeling her emotion over the phone line, Rose can be HEARD starting to WHIMPER.

ROSE DARKO (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Samantha?

EDDIE DARKO (V.O.)
(in the background)
Who is it, Rose?

ROSE DARKO (V.O.)
(crying)
Is that you?... if it's you, please come home.

EDDIE DARKO (V.O.)
Rose?

Although it looks like she wants to, Sam doesn't speak.

EXT. LOOKOUT, VIETNAM TOM'S SQUATTING GROUND - NIGHT

Vietnam Tom sits at his new squatting ground, looking out over all of El Reno. He peers at the twinkling lights through his scrap metal BUNNY MASK, and cradles his RIFLE in his arms like a soldier at rest.

He slowly turns and sees that Sam is sitting right next to him, facing the landscape. She wears her HOODED SWEATSHIRT, JEANS and the BANDAGE. The SHARD OF METAL is lodged in her forehead.

SAM
You wanna know what happens when
you die?

Tom shakes his head no.

SAM (CONT'D)
I wish it was me.

She looks at Tom.

SAM (CONT'D)
I really want... to die.

Tom aims his gun at her face...

He realizes that a FORCE FIELD has formed in between them, because when the barrel of the gun touches it, the barrier bends and becomes slightly opaque.

Sam is expressionless. Tom's finger trembles as he places it on the trigger.

He aims down the gun's sights, directly at Sam's RIGHT EYE, and sees a PHOSPHORESCENT GRID take shape like a coordinate system on the force field. Sam's eye is in the CENTRAL QUADRANT...

Tom pulls the trigger. TIME SLOWS DOWN.

A liquid VECTOR SPEAR shoots out of the gun barrel. Immediately after, a BULLET is discharged and follows it...

The VECTOR SPEAR passes cleanly through the grid, but when the BULLET reaches it, the entire force field curves to accommodate the penetrating force...

The spear juts out until it nearly touches Sam's eye... but then it stops. The bullet catches up and freezes at the same spot, centimeters from her face --

SAM (CONT'D)
(disappointed)
Not today.

I/E. MOTEL ROOM 15 - DAY

A HAND bangs on the door to room 15...

After a beat, Sam opens it. She's got some makeup on, and has spent more time on her hair than usual.

SAM
(surprised)
Hi.

Chris lingers in front of the door, looking slightly uncomfortable.

CHRIS
I just stopped by to see how you
were holdin' up.

SAM
I'm okay.

CHRIS
Sorry about the other night... I
didn't-

SAM
I was just upset. I shouldn't have
snapped at you like that.

Chris nods, grateful for her forgiveness.

CHRIS
So what are you still doin' here? I
figured you woulda hopped on a bus
by now.

SAM
I'm gonna be taking off soon, I
think. I just gotta figure some
stuff out. It's quiet here.

CHRIS
I don't know if you're doin'
anything later on, but...

He trails off when he HEARS a CAR pull up and park by his truck. He turns and sees that it's Jeremy in his BMW.

SAM
I was just on my way out. What were
you gonna say?

CHRIS
Nothin'.

SAM
Okay, well... I'll see you later?

CHRIS
Yeah, sure.

He steps out of the way so Sam can shut and lock the door.

SAM
Bye.

CHRIS
Bye.

Chris stares down Jeremy as Sam gets into his car and they
drive off together.

INT. LAB - DAY

Jeremy turns on the overhead florescent lights in the lab.
There are ROWS OF DESKS with MICROSCOPES and some PRECISION
ROCK SLICING EQUIPMENT.

As he walks to a desk near the back, he can barely contain
his excitement. Sam follows, taking note of a LARGE RABBIT in
an extremely SMALL CAGE...

JEREMY
Here's my station.

He unlocks a drawer in the lower portion of the desk and
retrieves a BOX containing a tiny SLICE OF ROCK with a grid-
like PATTERN OF METALLIC CRYSTALS embedded in it.

SAM
That's it?

JEREMY
The rest is locked away somewhere
else... somewhere safe. Everyone's
gonna want a piece of this thing
pretty soon.

He takes it over to an SCANNING ELECTRON MICROSCOPE and turns
it on. He places the meteorite slice in the microscope's
VACUUM COLUMN through an AIRTIGHT DOOR.

JEREMY (CONT'D)
You ever seen one of these?

SAM
No.

JEREMY
It's a scanning electron
microscope. It uses electrons
instead of light to scan the image.

A BLACK & WHITE IMAGE appears on the microscope's MONITOR --
it's a geometric collage of all shapes and shades.

JEREMY (CONT'D)
At first I thought it was a
siderite, but then I saw it was
more than that. Much more. It does
have a percentage of nickel and
iron in it as I first suspected.
But it also has something else.

He waits for Sam to take the bait.

SAM
And what's that?

He points to cluster of BRIGHT WHITES on the monitor. Their
shapes are strangely different than the others surrounding
them.

JEREMY
An unrecognizable element. I've
done all the tests. It doesn't
exist on the periodic table.

Jeremy is practically beaming.

SAM
So this is pretty major.

JEREMY
This is history. I'm thinking of
calling it framium.

SAM
Framium?

JEREMY
For my last name... Frame.

SAM

What if it's like... proof of some alien life-form from another galaxy or something.

Jeremy's tone becomes serious, and he starts to scratch at his left forearm as he talks.

JEREMY

It's very important you promise me you won't tell anyone else what I've showed you. I have to wait till just the right moment. NASA, or some secret government organization could come in here and take it away from me...

As Jeremy gets more worked up, he scratches harder...

JEREMY (CONT'D)

And then later on, years from now, take credit for the discovery themselves.

SAM

I won't say anything.

JEREMY

Good.

Sam stares at him for a long beat, as if examining him.

SAM

There's this book I think you'd like... I got it from my physics teacher in high school.

JEREMY

The study of physics has unraveled some of the most profound mysteries of the universe.

SAM

It's called The Philosophy of Time Travel.

JEREMY

Time travel?

SAM

Yeah, but it's not really that. It's more like one scenario, or one type of scenario. I don't completely understand it...

Sam gazes at the cluster of white shapes on the monitor.

SAM (CONT'D)
Another mystery.

JEREMY
What do you mean?

SAM
My life seems to be full of them.

JEREMY
Mysteries are what make life
interesting...

Sam doesn't agree or disagree. She's become tense, because
Jeremy's face is now in close proximity to hers.

JEREMY (CONT'D)
You're a mystery to me, Samantha.

He goes in for a kiss, but Sam gently pushes him away.

JEREMY (CONT'D)
Ow...

Jeremy retreats, shielding his left arm. Sam looks down and
sees that the red, raw area has turned into a much bigger
RASH, covering a large part of his wrist and extending onto
his forearm.

SAM
That doesn't look good.

JEREMY
I should get some Hydrocortisone.

He looks pathetic, and Sam feels sorry for him.

SAM
(regarding the attempted
kiss)
Sorry about that.

JEREMY
I'm sorry. I should've know better.
You barely know me, right?

SAM
And nobody really calls my
Samantha. Just my mom and dad.

Jeremy manages a smile, and Sam smiles back.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - AFTERNOON

Chris is at work, stocking shelves inside the department store...

He checks his watch, stops what he's doing and grabs a PACK OF CIGARETTES from his breast pocket -- time for a smoke break.

EXT. INTERSECTION NEAR DEPARTMENT STORE - AFTERNOON

The TRACTOR-TRAILER TRUCK carrying the JALOPY breaches the crest of the hill, descending on the intersection...

EXT. DEPARTMENT STORE - CONTINUOUS

Chris lights up a cigarette...

CHRIS' POV - TRACTOR-TRAILER TRUCK

He watches as the TRACTOR-TRAILER hits the pothole, but passes safely through the intersection, making a right.

Something about the sight of this strikes Chris so much that his cigarette falls out of his mouth.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Father Homeijer and Trudy stroll down a quiet street with their COLLECTIONS JAR, and arrive at a fork in the road.

FATHER HOMEIJER
You take this street, I'll take
that one?

Without warning, Trudy kisses him on the cheek.

TRUDY
Good luck.

Father Homeijer blushes, but Trudy smiles at him in a friendly manner. They move off in separate directions...

EXT. DUSTY'S GARAGE/HOUSE - DAY

Father Homeijer raps on the door of Dusty's house. No answer.

INT. DUSTY'S GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

The priest lets himself into the garage, which is open but deserted. He notices COREY'S CHEVROLET. He steps up to the GARAGE ENTRANCE and knocks...

No one comes to the door, but he notices that it's slightly ajar.

FATHER HOMEIJER

Dusty?

He can hear COUNTRY MUSIC playing low within.

FATHER HOMEIJER (CONT'D)

Are you home, son?

He lets himself inside...

INT. DUSTY'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

Father Homeijer walks into the dingy kitchen. The SINK is full of DIRTY DISHES. A coating of GRIME over everything.

INT. DUSTY'S HOUSE, LIVING - CONTINUOUS - ANGLE ON - PIT BULL

The sleeping PIT BULL stirs...

INT. DUSTY'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The priest sees that the COUNTRY SONG is coming from a STEREO that sits on the kitchen counter.

FATHER HOMEIJER

(calling out)

Dusty? I'd like to trouble you for
a small donation...

The COUNTRY SONG comes to a close, and the tape runs out. With the music gone, the priest cocks his head to a new sound -- soft, distant CRYING.

He looks curiously toward the CELLAR DOOR... [Note: The CRYING SOUND should be identical to the one that drew Corey out of the motel room.]

INT. DUSTY'S HOUSE, BASEMENT - DAY

Father Homeijer slowly descends the rickety BASEMENT STEPS. At the bottom, he finds a STRING that connects to a bare overhead BULB...

He creeps along the dusty cement floor, past an old WASHER/DRYER, continuing toward the source of the CRYING, which has become more pronounced. He wrinkles his nose at a foul smell...

FATHER HOMEIJER

Who's there?

He rounds a corner, and when he sees Billy Moorcroft he's nearly frozen in shock --

The boy is locked inside a large, METAL DOG'S CAGE. He sits on the floor of the cage, rocking back and forth.

He is pale, bruised and slick with sweat, clothed only in a pair of SOILED BRIEFS. Beside him is an aluminum WATER BOWL and some scraps of WHITE BREAD. The floor beneath him is soaked with URINE and scattered FECES.

Father Homeijer makes the sign of the cross.

EXT. DUSTY'S GARAGE/HOUSE - LATER - DAY

Dusty's place is surrounded by FIRE TRUCKS, POLICE CARS and an AMBULANCE. Billy Moorcroft is wrapped in a blanket and being tended to by PARAMEDICS.

Father Homeijer stands near the boy, being interviewed by a DETECTIVE.

Dusty is handcuffed and being loaded into the back of a cruiser by Officer O'Dell and another policeman, OFFICER HINES (28).

OFFICER O'DELL

Get in there, you sick fuck...

Dusty says nothing as O'Dell shoves him in and slams the door...

The two officers turn when they see RANDY'S DAD'S CAR pull up next to the property. Randy is in the driver's seat, looking confused. Ruth hops out of the passenger seat and darts toward the house --

-- but she is cut off and grabbed by a POLICEMAN. ANOTHER OFFICER goes to talk to Randy in the car.

Wheels turning, O'Dell addresses Hines:

OFFICER O'DELL (CONT'D)
(regarding Dusty)
Let him rot in there for a few
minutes, maybe till the news guys
show up... I'm gonna go finish
checkin' upstairs.

INT. DUSTY'S HOUSE, RUTH'S BEDROOM - DAY

O'Dell lets himself into Ruth's bedroom. It's a mess -- her CLOTHES are all over the floor, and crinkled ROCK POSTERS litter the walls.

Next to her bed is a FRAMED PICTURE of she and Randy. O'Dell starts to rifle through her desk drawers, one after another --

He tosses the closet, throwing out clothes and shoes... until he finds the SHOEBOX. He opens it up, satisfied...

ANGLE: OUTSIDE THE BEDROOM DOOR

Officer Hines stands by the door, looking in at O'Dell covertly.

INT. MOTEL ROOM 15 - MORNING

Sam lies in bed in front of the television. A NEWS BULLETIN comes on about Billy's Moorcroft's rescue:

TELEVISION ANCHOR
We have an update this morning on
our breaking news of Billy
Moorcroft, the El Reno youth who
was kidnapped over 15 months ago,
and rescued yesterday afternoon by
Father Homeijer of Mount Calvary
Church. Billy's condition at this
time is considered stable...

Sam stares at the television, dumbfounded. The news cuts to the scene of the rescue, where Father Homeijer is being interviewed:

FIELD REPORTER
Father, what led you to this
particular house on this particular
day?

FATHER HOMEIJER

I was out collecting donations in order to help rebuild my church, Mount Calvary, which recently burned down. Clearly the Lord works in mysterious ways. This is nothing less than divine intervention...

EXT. MOTEL - MORNING

As Sam's walking away from the motel, she looks up to the sky at a PASSING JET...

AGATHA (V.O.)

No matter how well you think you know somebody, you just never really know...

INT. DINER - MORNING

Sam sits at the booth where she and Corey sat before, and Agatha sets down a glass of ORANGE JUICE.

AGATHA

Dusty Gibbens has been comin' in here for coffee ever since I can remember... gives me the shivers.

Ted pipes up from behind the counter:

TED

They should hang guys like that. Only thing bothers me is how many of 'em are still out there...

Chris enters the diner and catches the end of Ted's rant.

TED (CONT'D)

Hang 'em all.

AGATHA

(to Sam)

I'll be right back with your breakfast.

As Agatha moves off, Chris sees Sam and approaches her table.

CHRIS

May I?

SAM

Sure.

CHRIS
I guess you heard.

SAM
Yeah.

CHRIS
It's so messed up... I feel bad
that I recommended him now.

Agatha notices that Chris has sat down with Sam.

AGATHA
What can I get you, honey?

CHRIS
Uh... sausage, eggs, coffee,
please.

AGATHA
White or wheat?

CHRIS
Wheat toast, please...

He refocuses his attention back on Sam.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
If I had kids, I'd be worried sick
about 'em in a world like this. I'm
sure your parents must be.

SAM
Hey, you could've been some crazy
rapist serial killer.

Agatha is there with his coffee just in time to hear this
last part. She gives Chris and Sam each an odd look before
setting the coffee down and leaving.

SAM (CONT'D)
You turned out okay.

CHRIS
Yeah, but everybody doesn't.

SAM
I can take care of myself.

CHRIS
I'm sure you can... but I wouldn't
feel right if I didn't tell you
about Jeremy.

SAM
What about him?

CHRIS
I don't know what you have goin'
with him... but you shouldn't be
hangin' around him. Let's just
leave it at that.

SAM
What makes you think you can tell
me who I can and can't hang around
with?

CHRIS
It's just that I know him better
than you do. He lived in my
neighborhood when we were kids.

SAM
So?

CHRIS
So he used to do weird stuff... to
animals.

Sam waits for him to go on.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
My sister lost her pet rabbit once,
and we went all over the
neighborhood lookin' for it. We
were just about to call it quits
when we heard something comin' from
Jeremy's garage. He'd stuck it in a
trash can and put the lid on.

Sam looks shocked and a little disgusted.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
It was half starved by the time we
got it home. Died just a few days
later.

SAM
How old was he?

CHRIS
I don't know, just a couple years.
Cute little black and white-

SAM
No. Jeremy.

CHRIS
He was like nine, probably.

SAM
He was just a kid, he didn't know
what he was doing.

CHRIS
When you were nine years old did
you know it was wrong to put a
living creature in the trash can
and leave it there?

Sam's had enough.

SAM
Chris... you're a nice guy, but you
don't have to be looking out for
me. You're not my dad, you're not
my big brother...

Chris hangs his head, frustrated.

INT. JAIL CELL - AFTERNOON

O'Dell stands at the bars of Dusty's jail cell. Dusty lies on
his cot and stares up at the ceiling.

OFFICER O'DELL
You know what they do to faggot-ass
perverts like you in maximum
security, dontcha?

O'Dell chuckles, enjoying this immensely.

OFFICER O'DELL (CONT'D)
Disgusting fuckin' piece a' shit
like you...

EXT. POLICE STATION, BACK PARKING LOT - EVENING

O'Dell, now dressed in plainclothes, is on the way to his CAR
in the far corner of the back lot. He HEARS someone come out
the door behind him, but doesn't turn until he HEARS his
VOICE.

OFFICER HINES
Hey, O'Dell...

OFFICER O'DELL
I'm on my way out... what do you
need?

Hines catches up with him and they walk and talk.

OFFICER HINES
I'm not gonna bullshit ya.

OFFICER O'DELL
Okay...

OFFICER HINES
I saw you snatch the drugs outta
that house.

O'Dell's face grows cold but he doesn't slow his pace.

OFFICER O'DELL
I don't think I know what the hell
you're talkin' about.

OFFICER HINES
Don't bullshit me either...

Hines grabs his shoulder to stop him. O'Dell eyes his hand.

OFFICER HINES (CONT'D)
I don't wanna turn you in.

OFFICER O'DELL
Then what do you want?

OFFICER HINES
How much you think you'll get when
you unload it?

O'Dell keeps cool, but resents being muscled.

OFFICER O'DELL
Depends.

OFFICER HINES
I'll take forty percent this time,
but from now on it's fifty-fifty.

OFFICER O'DELL
What do you mean from now on?

OFFICER HINES
I got a pretty good idea this ain't
the first time you done this. Won't
be the last, will it?

Hines extends his hand and smiles. O'Dell shakes it.
Grudgingly...

After Hines turns on him and jogs back to the station house, O'Dell kicks the ground angrily.

OFFICER O'DELL

Shit!

When he looks up, he's startled by a pair of eyes that peer from the bushes nearby. Upon closer inspection, he sees that it's Vietnam Tom in his SKI MASK.

Nervous about how much he's heard, O'Dell takes an aggressive stance.

OFFICER O'DELL (CONT'D)

Come on outta there. Now!

He becomes tense when Tom emerges, because he sees that he's got his RIFLE.

OFFICER O'DELL (CONT'D)

What the fuck you doin' carryin'
that around in the town proper?

O'Dell realizes that he's not holding it in a threatening manner, but cradling it in his arms.

OFFICER O'DELL (CONT'D)

Hand it over. Right now!

Tom steps toward him ever so slowly. O'Dell reaches out and Tom hands him the gun, stock first.

OFFICER O'DELL (CONT'D)

I should arrest you and throw you
in jail, you know that? Crazy
sonofabitch...

Tom looks at the ground, hunched over meekly.

OFFICER O'DELL (CONT'D)

Get the fuck outta my sight.

O'Dell looks around as Tom shuffles off, making sure no one witnessed the transaction.

EXT. LOOKOUT - SUNSET

Sam trudges up the wooded hill to the vantage point, carrying The Philosophy of Time Travel book. It's quiet and peaceful, and everything's bathed in golden light.

EXT. LOOKOUT, VIETNAM TOM'S SQUATTING GROUND - SUNSET

She comes upon Tom's new squatting ground in a secluded area near the lookout, and looks around before approaching.

When she sees the handmade BUNNY MASK lying among his things, she puts the book under her arm and reaches down to pick it up.

She runs her fingers down the long, shiny ears, nose, and jagged teeth...

She doesn't realize that Tom is standing close behind her. When she senses his presence she's startled.

SAM

Sorry...

She sets the BUNNY MASK down where she found it. Tom says nothing. He seems neither surprised nor irritated to find her there. He walks up beside her and sits, facing the view.

After a long beat, Sam sits down beside him. To her surprise, Tom begins to speak:

VIETNAM TOM

My mom told me someday everybody would understand. She said it was my job to look out for the town... so that's what I do. That's what I always do.

Sam listens to him intently.

VIETNAM TOM (CONT'D)

They don't know why. They don't even want me here, but I still have to protect them.

SAM

They're lucky to have someone to protect them.

VIETNAM TOM

I'm used to it... I'm lucky to have a job to do. Some people don't have any reason to be here at all.

SAM

I know what you mean...

Tom turns and looks at her strangely.

VIETNAM TOM

You're more important than all of
us.

Sam peers into Tom's pale blue eyes through his ski mask.
Without knowing why, she reaches out and touches the mask...

When she starts to pull it off Tom grabs her hand, stopping
her -- not too rough, but forceful.

Sam's scared for a moment, but Tom lets her go. His eyes
drift down to The Philosophy of Time Travel book by her side.
Sam sees him staring, so she picks it up and hands it to him.

When Tom sees the cover, his cold eyes are filled with
emotion. Sam sees how struck he is, but doesn't understand.

SAM

Do you like to read?

Tom says nothing.

SAM (CONT'D)

You can borrow it...

Again, Tom does not speak. After a beat, Sam gets up slowly
and walks away, leaving Tom with the book.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

Jeremy is at the department store in the FIRST AID SECTION,
picking out some GAUZE and DISINFECTANT. When he looks down
the aisle and sees Sam, he moves toward her quickly...

He disturbs her while she's looking at some FEMININE HYGIENE
PRODUCTS.

JEREMY

Sam...

When he sees the items that she's shopping for, he seems much
more embarrassed than she does.

SAM

Oh, hi Jeremy.

JEREMY

Hi... sorry.

SAM

That's okay, what's up?

JEREMY

Nothing... just that I haven't see you around for the past few days. I was worried. I thought you might've taken off.

SAM

No... I've been around. Going for lots of walks.

JEREMY

I stopped by the motel.

Sam finds his manner a bit odd.

SAM

Like I said, I've been in and out.

JEREMY

Well, there's something I wanted to ask you. You know that book you mentioned?

SAM

Yeah...

JEREMY

I'd really love to check it out.

SAM

Oh...

Sam's face darkens, and Jeremy picks up on it.

JEREMY

You said you'd show it to me sometime, and I've got a hunch it could really help me in some of my studies related to-

SAM

I don't have it anymore.

JEREMY

What?

SAM

I kind of... gave it to someone.

JEREMY

To who? Why?

SAM

I'm sorry. I just... forgot that I said you could borrow it, and this guy-

JEREMY

What guy?

SAM

Well... that Vietnam Tom guy.

Jeremy is furious.

JEREMY

Vietnam Tom!? You gave away the book to Vietnam Tom!?

Sam backs away from him. He's getting louder and out of control.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

I don't fucking believe what you're telling me!

SAM

It's just a book...

JEREMY

He's a fucking bum! And you chose him over me!?

SAM

No... I just-

Suddenly, a hand comes down on Jeremy's shoulder. He turns and finds Chris standing behind him.

CHRIS

That's enough.

Sam is relieved. Jeremy glares at Chris.

JEREMY

This is none of your business.

CHRIS

It is, actually. You're disturbing my customers. Get out.

Jeremy brushes past Sam as he leaves, and she and Chris are left alone. There's a definite "I told you so" aura.

SAM
(muttering)
You didn't have to do that.

CHRIS
Just doin' my job.

Sam starts to walk away, at first forgetting the products she needed. She comes back to get them, slightly flustered. Chris turns and leaves her in peace.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
(as he's walking away)
You're welcome.

INT. FATHER HOMEIJER'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Father Homeijer and Trudy are sitting on the couch in the living room of his quaint house, sharing a BOTTLE OF CHAMPAGNE.

TRUDY
I never had any doubts in you, or
in the Lord.

FATHER HOMEIJER
I know that. And we both truly
appreciate all your faith and hard
work...

They sip their champagne. Trudy glows.

FATHER HOMEIJER (CONT'D)
We needed a miracle, but we got two
instead.

Trudy grabs the bottle and tries to refill his glass, but the priest puts his hand over it.

FATHER HOMEIJER (CONT'D)
I think I've had enough.

TRUDY
One more glass won't hurt you. You
deserve it, Father...

I/E. O'DELL'S CAR/ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

O'DELL'S CAR pulls up to an old warehouse and parks.

OFFICER HINES
Where the hell are they?

Hines is nervous. He lights a cigarette.

OFFICER O'DELL
They'll be here. Just take it easy.

EXT. DEPARTMENT STORE - LATE NIGHT

Tom wears his metal BUNNY MASK. Sam wears her HOODED SWEATSHIRT and JEANS, and her right hand is BANDAGED. The METAL SHARD is embedded under the skin of her forehead...

They move slowly and methodically until they reach the center of the empty lot. There are lights on in the closed department store, but the parking lot is mostly dark.

VIETNAM TOM
Why do you talk to me?

TOM'S VOICE is MUFFLED behind his mask.

SAM
Same reason you talk to me...

Tom cocks his head, unsure of the answer.

SAM (CONT'D)
Because I can see how special you are.

VIETNAM TOM
Why can't other people?

SAM
They will. Only one day left.

They both turn toward an area in the lot where the SHOPPING CARTS are stored. The METAL STORAGE RACK starts to tremble and burn with COSMIC ENERGY...

INT. FATHER HOMEIJER'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Father Homeijer finishes his glass of champagne. Trudy is already done with hers, and she takes his glass and sets it on the coffee table. She moves closer to him on the couch...

FATHER HOMEIJER
Trudy...

She puts her hand on his leg.

TRUDY
I see the way you look at me,
Father...

She moves in closer... He looks uncomfortable.

TRUDY (CONT'D)
I want you too.

She's about to kiss him, but Father Homeijer stops her.

TRUDY (CONT'D)
I can't do this. I'm a man of the
cloth... and you'd regret it.

He takes her by the hand, reminding her of the WEDDING BAND
on her finger.

EXT. DEPARTMENT STORE - LATE NIGHT

SHOPPING CARTS start to roll out of the RACK by themselves,
following their own liquid VECTOR SPEARS.

Tom stands staring at them. He is flanked by Sam...

EXT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Officer Hines walks to the edge of the woods beside the
warehouse and unzips his pants...

ANGLE: O'DELL'S CAR

With GLOVED HANDS, O'Dell grabs VIETNAM TOM'S RIFLE out of
the trunk...

INT. FATHER HOMEIJER'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Trudy's head is buried in her hands and she bawls.

TRUDY
I feel like such an idiot...

Father Homeijer doesn't know what to say.

EXT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Hines finishes relieving himself and comes out into the open
from the side of the building. O'Dell is waiting for him.

OFFICER HINES
What the fuck-

BOOM!

O'Dell shoots him in the chest. He is cool and calm. He throws the rifle down on the ground...

EXT. DEPARTMENT STORE - LATE NIGHT

The SHOPPING CARTS whirl in an circle of ever-increasing speed around Vietnam Tom and Sam. The RUBBER WHEELS squeal on the cement until they start to melt...

The VECTOR SPEARS lead the carts in a spiral that hones in closer and closer to the two of them. Sam is stoic. Tom is in awe...

EXT. THE ETHER - NIGHT - POV INSIDE PORTAL

We travel at breath-taking speed through a PORTAL as it weaves through millions of STARS, then an ATMOSPHERIC BARRIER...

EXT. DEPARTMENT STORE - LATE NIGHT

When it looks like they'll be crushed by the scudding metal, or combusted by the cosmic energy, the WORM-LIKE PORTAL from the sky reaches down and encloses Tom and Sam like a vacuum.

There's a brilliant FLASH OF LIGHT -- TRANSITION TO:

EXT. DEPARTMENT STORE - THE NEXT MORNING

CHRIS' TRUCK pulls into the lot early in the morning, and he gets out wearing his work uniform. Still groggy, he's about to walk into the store when something catches his eye...

CRANE UP to FIND a STRUCTURE made of all the SHOPPING CARTS, as chilling and impressive as a crop circle, in the shape of an immense FIBONACCI SPIRAL. The metal of the carts has been fused together, and they're stacked in an ascending manner that reaches an apex in the center, like a cone.

Chris is mystified... CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

Two POLICE CRUISERS speed down a street in town...

EXT. PARK - AFTERNOON

COPS, including Officer O'Dell, converge on Vietnam Tom in the park, where he sits on the SWING in his ski mask...

COP #1
Get down on the ground!

Tom looks up at them calmly, without fear.

COP #1 (CONT'D)
Get down on the ground, now!

He obeys them and two Cops jump on him and put him in cuffs. One of them pulls up his head and rips off his ski mask --

Tom's face is a mass of SCARS. Both his cheeks, forehead and chin are marred by scar tissue born from long, deep gashes.

O'Dell looks into his sad, blue eyes...

INT. POLICE STATION, VARIOUS - AFTERNOON

Tom is slammed against a table. An OFFICER takes his hand roughly and sticks his fingers into some ink to take his prints -- JUMP CUT TO:

POLICEMAN (V.O.)
Name?

Tom stands for his booking photos -- JUMP CUT TO:

POLICEMAN (CONT'D)
(getting angry)
What's your name?

The POLICEMAN stands over Vietnam Tom, who sits defeated in a chair. A YOUNG OFFICER approaches.

YOUNG OFFICER
We found this on him...

He passes the Policeman a set of DOG TAGS on a CHAIN. The name on the tags is: THOMAS WARD SPARROW.

EXT. MOTEL - EVENING

Sam walks toward the motel, wearing JEANS and a T-SHIRT...

When she sees JEREMY'S BMW parked in the lot she stops short. But it's too late -- he's already seen her and is getting out of the car. He's got a bouquet of FLOWERS.

JEREMY

Hi, Sam...

He passes her the flowers.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

I hope you can forgive the way I acted.

SAM

That was pretty weird.

JEREMY

I know. I just...

Jeremy is awkward and shy.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

I've been so wrapped up with the meteorite. I haven't been eating or sleeping much. I think I'm just drained... but that's no excuse.

SAM

It's alright.

JEREMY

I was wondering if you'd let me make it up to you.

SAM

You don't need to-

JEREMY

Please... let me take you to watch the fireworks tonight.

SAM

I don't think so.

JEREMY

It's gonna be spectacular. There's gonna be a meteor shower that coincides with the show... I mean, how often does that happen?

Sam still isn't sure.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

I just wanna be your friend.

SAM

I was supposed to see 'em with Chris, but... he's stuck at work.

JEREMY

So, what do you say? Will you go with me?

SAM

Gimme a sec. Lemme grab my sweatshirt...

Jeremy beams.

EXT. DEPARTMENT STORE - EVENING

Chris is in the department store parking lot with a crew of EMPLOYEES. They work together to pry apart the numerous SHOPPING CARTS with CROWBARS. They've made some progress, but still a long way to go.

Chris is distracted by JEREMY'S BMW as it cruises through the nearby intersection...

After it passes, Chris looks up at some OMINOUS CLOUDS congregating in the darkening sky.

From the CLOUDS above the store -- PAN DOWN TO FIND:

EXT. LOOKOUT - EVENING

The lookout, and Jeremy's car riding up the hill. There are OTHER CARS parked to watch the upcoming display, but Jeremy drives to a more SECLUDED AREA... *(Music suggestion: 4th of July, by Soundgarden.)*

EXT. WOODED GROVE NEARBY - EVENING

Jeremy spreads a blanket on the ground of a private grove. He wears a LIGHT JACKET, and sets down a GROCERY BAG. Sam has her HOODED SWEATSHIRT tied around her waist.

SAM

Shouldn't we go back out there where we can see?

JEREMY

No, this'll be perfect. See right there?

He points to an area near the tops of the trees.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

That's right where the fireworks'll come up.

(MORE)

JEREMY (CONT'D)
And we can see the meteors better
without all the lights from the
town.

Sam sits down on the blanket and checks her watch. Jeremy
pokes around in the grocery bag.

SAM
So what's in the bag?

JEREMY
You'll see...

Sam takes her HOODED SWEATSHIRT from around her waist and
puts it on to fight the cold...

JEREMY (CONT'D)
There's one!

Sam spots a METEOR as it streaks across the sky --

EXT. WOODED GROVE NEARBY - LATER - NIGHT

JEREMY'S HAND holds a flaring ROMAN CANDLE --

JEREMY (O.S.)
Here it goes!

A SPARKLING GREEN BALL shoots out of the stick into the air.
Sam looks up at it and smiles. Jeremy shoots off colorful
ball after ball, aiming in different directions.

SAM
They're pretty.

After his stick fizzles out:

JEREMY
You wanna try one?

Sam shrugs... He grabs another out of the grocery bag, and
Sam gets up slowly. He passes her the ROMAN CANDLE, and she
accepts it with her RIGHT HAND...

JEREMY (CONT'D)
Just hold it straight up.

Sam holds it and Jeremy flicks his LIGHTER. The WICK
catches...

JEREMY (CONT'D)
It's goin'!

Sam smiles and holds the stick as far away from her face as possible. She closes her eyes...

But the wick burns down extremely fast. The FIRST BALL gets stuck at the top and implodes, causing the whole thing to catch fire.

SAM

Ow!

JEREMY

Drop it!

He runs over and stamps it out as quickly as he can...

JEREMY (CONT'D)

Fucking faulty one...

Sam nurses her burned hand.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

SAM

I think so...

Jeremy inspects her hand -- there's a large BLISTER.

JEREMY

You need to get that covered...

Jeremy takes off his jacket. He then removes his T-shirt and starts to tear off a piece.

SAM

What are you doing?

JEREMY

It's okay...

EXT. BANK - NIGHT

The bank sign shows **8:59 PM**. The display flashes to: **JULY 4, 1995...** It changes to the countdown: **00 DAYS, 00 HOURS, 00 MINUTES, 03 SECONDS... 02 SECONDS... 01 SECONDS...**

EXT. WOODED GROVE NEARBY - NIGHT

Jeremy finishes wrapping the piece of his T-shirt around Sam's hand, creating the MAKESHIFT BANDAGE.

JEREMY
How's it feel?

SAM
A little better...

The FIREWORKS suddenly begin, and fill the sky above the grove with bursts of bright, multi-colored lights. Sporadic METEORS rain down at the same time. It's magnificent.

After a beat, Sam looks over at Jeremy...

The fireworks illuminate his torso, and she is appalled to see that the raw, reddish RASH has spread to cover the greater part of it.

SAM (CONT'D)
Good God...

Jeremy looks down as if he'd forgotten, then quickly picks up his jacket and puts it back on.

SAM (CONT'D)
(alarmed)
Is that from the meteorite?

JEREMY
I barely even notice it anymore.
I'm sure it'll go away soon.

He zips up his jacket tight.

SAM
Are you fucking kidding me?

JEREMY
Do you think I'm disgusting?

The question takes Sam by surprise.

SAM
No... I just think you should get
it looked at-

Before Sam can finish, Jeremy crams his mouth into hers for a forceful kiss...

Sam shoves him away sharply.

SAM (CONT'D)
What the hell are you doing?

JEREMY

So you do find me disgusting. Which is it, Sam, I can't take much more of this shit!

SAM

Jesus Christ...

He tries to grab her, but Sam turns and runs --

JEREMY

Come here!

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Sam tears through the woods, Jeremy close behind her. The FIREWORKS CRACK and POP in the sky above...

JEREMY

Sam! Stop!

Sam jumps over a fallen log in the dark... Jeremy hits it dead on with his shins and goes head over heels --

JEREMY (CONT'D)

FUCK!

He picks himself up and charges even faster --

INT. JAIL CELL - NIGHT

Tom sits alone in his jail cell, morose, staring at the floor. He looks up when he senses someone approaching...

EXT. LOOKOUT, VIETNAM TOM'S SQUATTING GROUND - NIGHT

Sam sprints by the area of Vietnam Tom's squatting ground. FIREWORKS continue to EXPLODE and shower overhead, and some PEOPLE can be HEARD LAUGHING and SHOUTING from the main parking area, not far away...

Sam runs toward the VOICES --

But Jeremy grabs her from behind and spins her around!

SAM

Why are you doing this?

JEREMY

I just wanna talk to you!

She struggles against his grip. The EXPLOSIONS and the RUCKUS from CROWD mask their noise.

JEREMY (CONT'D)

Stop it!

Sam raises her knee and connects hard with his groin. He starts to double over, but recovers quickly and smacks her across the face --

JEREMY (CONT'D)

Fucking bitch!

Sam is stunned, and Jeremy takes her by the shoulders and shoves her hard --

Sam stumbles backwards and falls, cracking her head on the metal BUNNY MASK. She rolls over onto her back, REVEALING the SHARD OF METAL that protrudes from the GASH by her temple...

She struggles no more.

INT. JAIL CELL - NIGHT

Tom stands in his cell to meet the entity that approaches...

EXT. DEPARTMENT STORE - NIGHT

Chris and the other Employees stop working and look up at the sky, now roiling with sinister, SUPERNATURAL CLOUDS...

EXT. LOOKOUT, VIETNAM TOM'S SQUATTING GROUND - NIGHT

Jeremy slowly creeps to where Sam lies... Her eyes are open and she is completely still.

JEREMY

Sam?...

Jeremy crouches beside her, and when he puts two fingers to her neck to feel for a pulse, he starts to tremble...

The raining METEORS and FIREWORKS illuminate the SMOKE and the BLACK CLOUDS overhead...

INT. JAIL CELL - NIGHT

Vietnam Tom walks up to the CELL BARS...

He comes face to face with Sam.

She stares back at him through the bars from the other side. She wears her HOODED SWEATSHIRT and the BANDAGE. Light glints off the METAL lodged in her HEAD WOUND.

I/E. JEREMY'S BMW/LOOKOUT - NIGHT

Jeremy speeds frantically down the hill, away from the parking area and the continuing fireworks display. Tears stream down his cheeks...

He cuts the wheel when a pair of HEADLIGHTS blind him and a vehicle cuts him off. His car skids out, and he sees it's CHRIS' TRUCK that has almost hit him.

Chris jumps out, yanks open Jeremy's door and grabs him by the shirt collar. He yells over the FIREWORKS:

CHRIS
Where the hell is Sam?

JEREMY
(frantic)
I don't know... I don't know...

Jeremy stomps on the gas pedal, and Chris is forced to unhand him as his BMW navigates around the truck and barrels down the hill...

EXT. LOOKOUT, VIETNAM TOM'S SQUATTING GROUND - LATER - NIGHT

As Chris approaches Vietnam Tom's squatting ground, the FIREWORKS DISPLAY is in the midst of the GRANDE FINALE. Showers of light BURST and CRACKLE in steady succession. PEOPLE SCREAM in approval from the parking area nearby...

Chris comes upon Sam's lifeless form.

CHRIS
No...

He stoops by her, picks her up and hugs her limp body close...

As he does this, Vietnam Tom approaches from behind him. Chris turns to face him but says nothing, still holding Sam. The WIND picks up and blows in gusts around them...

Tom looks down at the two of them for a moment, then reaches down and picks up his BUNNY MASK. The EVIL GRIN is red with SAM'S BLOOD, and one of the teeth is missing...

The last of the fireworks display occurs, leaving the night full of SMOKE, HELLISH CLOUDS and an increasing number of bright-tailed METEORS -- the APOCALYPSE.

Amongst the churning clouds, a tornado-like PORTAL cuts through the sky and touches down somewhere in the town. It's swirling and vast, stretching down from limitless space...

SAM (V.O.)
15 days... 18 hours...

Tom puts on the BUNNY MASK...

SAM (V.O.) (CONT'D)	VIETNAM TOM
45 minutes... 6 seconds...	45 minutes... 6 seconds...

And focuses on a single METEOR that plummets toward the yawning VORTEX, using telekinetic power to guide it...

EXT. THE ETHER - NIGHT - POV INSIDE PORTAL

The METEOR blazes through the WORMHOLE --

KEY SCENES IN REVERSE

THE BARS TO THE JAIL CELL STRAIGHTEN --

THE WORDS 'THOMAS WARD SPARROW' ARE LIFTED FROM THE BOOKING SLIP --

SHOPPING CARTS SWIRL IN A DECONSTRUCTING SPIRAL --

O'DELL GIVES TOM BACK HIS RIFLE --

FATHER HOMEIJER PLACES BILLY MOORCROFT BACK IN HIS CAGE --

SAM PICKS UP THE PAYPHONE --

THE CHURCH REBUILDS ITSELF OUT OF FLAMES --

THE THREE CROSSES IN IMITATION OF CALVARY RIGHT THEMSELVES --

SAM'S FACE DIPS BENEATH THE SURFACE OF RANDY'S POOL --
TRANSITION TO:

EXT. BANK - NIGHT

The clock on the BANK SIGN shows **3:30 AM** -- then flashes to --
JUNE 19, 1995... It changes again, this time to a countdown to the **JULY 4TH FIREWORKS CELEBRATION: 15 DAYS, 17 HOURS, 29 MINUTES, 57 SECONDS... 56 SECONDS... 55 SECONDS...**

INT. MOTEL ROOM 15 - NIGHT

Sam awakens suddenly from a nightmare. She lies atop the blankets wearing a T-SHIRT and BOXER SHORTS. She looks over and sees Corey passed out on the other full-size bed.

TWO PLASTIC CUPS, EMPTY SODA CANS, and the BOTTLE are on the nightstand between them, the liquor partially consumed. The CLOCK/RADIO reads 3:30 AM.

EXT. WINDMILL PLATFORM - NIGHT

Vietnam Tom sits atop the platform, more than 30 feet up, wearing his ski mask and holding his rifle. The surface of the platform is littered with TATTERED CLOTHING, a WATER BOTTLE, CANS OF FOOD and SCRAPS OF A TARP.

Relaxed and at peace, Tom looks up to the clear night sky. As a TREMOR starts to build, he takes off his ski mask and gazes out over his town...

He smiles.

Suddenly, there's a brilliant flash of GREEN LIGHT -- deafening THUNDER -- a blinding EXPLOSION -- CUT TO:

CHARACTER MONTAGE

Dusty sits and stares at his CELLAR DOOR... Trudy holds a PICTURE OF FATHER HOMEIJER and cries... Ruth snorts some COKE in her room... Jeremy scratches his LEFT FOREARM in his sleep... Billy Moorcroft shivers from the chill in his CAGE... Officer O'Dell sits alone in his patrol car, fingering the trigger of his PISTOL... TRANSITION TO:

EXT. FIELD BEHIND MOTEL - THE NEXT MORNING

Where the towering windmill once stood is now only a CRATER about 5 feet deep and 10 feet in diameter, with charred bits of wood and metal strewn everywhere. Ground water spurts from the broken well seal.

A cantaloupe-sized METEORITE sits in the center of the crater...

Two FIREMEN haul out the meteorite as Sam and O'Dell arrive on the scene. There are PARAMEDICS, a CORONER and other POLICEMEN there as well, and a large area has been cordoned off with POLICE TAPE.

Corey is there looking on, as well as Chris Holt, Phil Coulter, and other local CITIZENS. TOM'S REMAINS are carried off in a BLACK BAG...

SAM

Oh my God...

Sam moves to stand by Corey. The overall mood is grim, and Frank stands peering at the wreckage with a long face.

FRANK

I don't believe it...

The Firemen drop the porous, misshapen clod by his feet.

FRANK (CONT'D)

This is just a tragedy.

Officer O'Dell steps up beside him and kicks the meteorite with his boot.

OFFICER O'DELL

Sell that thing off to some meteorologist nerd club, I bet you could do okay.

FRANK

Do I look like the type of guy that's gonna try and profit off another man's death? You should be ashamed of yourself.

OFFICER O'DELL

(embarrassed)

I was just sayin'...

Sam looks down on the ground and sees Tom's multi-colored SKI MASK...

She picks it up.

COREY

What are you doing?

As she caresses the fibers with her fingers, she is filled with unwarranted emotion...

EXT. MOTEL - MORNING

Sam and Corey are on their way back to the motel room when they turn and see that Chris has followed them.

CHRIS
Hey...

SAM
Hey.

CHRIS
So you guys stayed here last night?

COREY
One of us did.

Sam gives Corey a look. Chris decides to ignore the comment.

CHRIS
What's up with your car?

COREY
It's gonna take a couple days.

CHRIS
For a water pump?

Sam and Corey shrug.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
It's none of my business, but...

He's distracted when JEREMY'S BMW pulls up and parks. He hops out and hustles across the field toward the crash site...

SAM
What?

Chris regains his train of thought:

CHRIS
I was just gonna say, if you
wanted, I could give you a ride
back.

He looks right at Sam when he says this. He then glances over at Corey, as if just remembering that she were there.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
You too. I mean, I could give you
both a ride.

COREY
To Middlesex, Virginia? Do you-

SAM
(interrupting)
I'll go.

COREY
(pissed)
What?

SAM
I think I wanna go.

COREY
Things get a little tough, you're
just gonna give up?

SAM
It's not like that... You should
come too.

COREY
Fuck that. I'll wait for my car and
stick to the plan. Do whatever the
fuck you want.

Corey turns and goes inside the room.

SAM
Corey...

Sam looks back to Chris, who is uncomfortable for causing the
conflict.

CHRIS
Sorry to screw you guys up.

SAM
It's alright. She can take care of
herself... she's good at it. I've
gotta go home.

INT. FRANK'S BARN - DAY

The METEORITE sits in a dark corner of the barn, collecting
dust...

INT. CHRIS' TRUCK - DAY

Sam leans her head against the window of Chris' truck as they
cruise along the highway...

She gazes up at the bright, open sky.