

THE DEAD ZONE

Screenplay

by

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Based on the Novel

by

STEPHEN KING

FIRST DRAFT
November 17, 1980

THE DEAD ZONE

FADE IN:

BLACK SCREEN...TITLE APPEARS:

WILLOW POND, FEBRUARY 1952
John Smith

EXT. WILLOW POND (DURHAM, MAINE) - DAY
where the local kids come to skate.

ANGLE ON A SIX-YEAR-OLD BOY

JOHNNY SMITH. He arrives at the pond with skates slung across his shoulder. He pauses for a moment to watch.

JOHNNY'S POV

A group of older boys -- teen-agers -- play a rambunctious game of hockey. Old sticks wrapped with friction tape. Potato baskets for goals.

The younger kids -- Johnny's age -- keep their distance from the game, scooting around the ice on bowed ankles, arms frantically pinwheeling for balance.

Two rubber tires burn aimlessly in a far corner of the pond belching pungent black smoke into the clear winter sky. Adults gather there for warmth. They pass around a bottle of Jack Daniels and watch over their kids. CHUCK SPIER is there: a likable looking rube in a Pendleton jacket and green flannel snow pants.

Now TIMMY BENEDIX sails INTO FRAME. Only a year older than Johnny, he skates with uncommon assurance...pivoting cleanly, he begins to skate backwards.

RETURN TO JOHNNY

watching with awe. Impressed by Timmy's prowess on the ice. Challenged by it. He glides out onto the ice. Skating slowly around the edges. Getting the feel of his skates. Listening to the ICE THUD and CRACKLE mysteriously under the snow cover farther out.

He begins to pick up confidence and speed. His blades slice rhythmically over the ice. He catches Timmy Benedix' eye. The two boys exchange a look, then... Johnny turns, begins to skate backwards. Clumsily at first, but gaining in grace.

He's thrilled. Exhilarated. But heedless of his direction and speed.

A VOICE (OFF)

Hey! Watch it, kid!

ANGLE ON A TEEN-AGE HOCKEY PLAYER

A big lummoX of a kid, barreling blindly across the ice in pursuit of the skidding puck...on a collision course with Johnny.

ANGLE ON CHUCK SPIER

puffing warm breath into cupped hands; turning; seeing the impending accident.

CHUCK

Oh, shit...

ANGLE ON JOHNNY

looking up, but not in time. The hockey player slamming into him. Johnny flying, arms flailing. His head connecting with the ice. The terrible THUDDING sound on impact.

SCREEN GOES BLACK.

EXT. WILLOW POND - DAY

Seated nearby the burning tires, Johnny comes to. His nostrils fill with the acrid smoke. A handful of kids and concerned adults look on. Groggy and still dizzy, Johnny looks up at them.

AD LIBS

-- he's comin' around. He's okay --
 -- he should'a watch out f'hissself --
 -- you sure took a shot, kid --
 -- lookit that bump! --

Johnny touches the tender knot rising on his forehead. Chuck Spier bends down to him.

CHUCK

You okay, Johnny-boy?

Johnny turns to Chuck slowly, regarding him with an expression that is oddly blank -- distant and cold.

JOHNNY

Your eye, Chuck...the acid...the explosion...

CHUCK

Huh...? What'd he say?

JOHNNY

Don't jump it, Chuck. Don't jump it.

Chuck looks perplexed and disturbed. He rises to his feet, backing away slightly from Johnny. One of the other ADULTS drapes a blanket over Johnny's shoulders.

THE ADULT

Give 'im time to clear his head.

But Chuck just gives Johnny a wary glance as he slides the bottle of Jack Daniels from his jacket pocket.

In the b.g. a pulp TRUCK RUMBLES across the bridge on its way to U.S. Gypsum in Lisbon Falls.

EXT. CHUCK SPIER'S FARMHOUSE - DAY

Chuck drives up to the house in his panel truck and parks it hood-to-hood with his old '48 De Soto. He climbs out of the truck's cab with a pair of jumper cables in hand and slams the door with obvious annoyance.

He cracks the hood on both vehicles and attaches the clamps to the truck's battery.

As he attaches the first clamp to the De Soto's battery, a HOT-ROD filled with teen-agers ROARS by madly HONKING its HORN.

Chuck looks up from his work with an irritated expression, then attaches the final clamp, unaware that he has crossed the wires.

The BATTERY EXPLODES. His face is showered with corrosive battery acid. He reels away, clutching at his eyes.

INT. JOHNNY'S BEDROOM - DAY

At the moment of the explosion -- a good mile across town -- Johnny looks up from his "Marvel" comic book. He feels something. He knows something. But he just isn't sure what...

CAMERA MOVES IN SLOWLY on his face.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

BLACK SCREEN...TITLE APPEARS:

BREWER COLLEGE, MARCH 1971

John Smith

EXT. BREWER COLLEGE - ESTABLISHING SHOT - DAY

A small, community college. Brick buildings. Ivy-covered walls. Grassy quadrangle. Strolling students.

INT. COLLEGE CLASSROOM - DAY

Johnny Smith stands before his American Literature class rattling a piece of chalk in one closed hand. At twenty-five years of age, Johnny is not that much older (in age or appearance) from his freshman students.

JOHNNY

...For Monday, I want you to read the two Stephen Crane stories which begin on page...

(consults the text-book on the desk in front of him)

...183. 'The Blue Hotel' and 'The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky'.

ANGLE ON ONE OF JOHNNY'S STUDENTS
SARAH BRACKNELL.

As her classmates jot down the assignment, she gazes at Johnny with loving eyes.

RETURN TO JOHNNY

JOHNNY

Be prepared to discuss Crane's use of irony.

A STUDENT (POTTER)

What's that?

JOHNNY

Good question, Mr. Potter.

(to the class)

Who can answer that for us? Who can give me an example of irony?

Silence.

JOHNNY

(with a sly grin)

How about this: getting dental floss caught between your teeth.

A sea of blank faces. Johnny's smile fades.

JOHNNY

Well, think about it...

The clock moves and the BUZZER sounds.

JOHNNY

Have a good weekend.

They gather up their books and swarm toward the exit door. Sarah and Johnny exchange a look before she is swept off into the hallway with the tide of underclassmen.

INT. GIRLS' DORM - SARAH'S ROOM - SATURDAY MORNING

Posters of the period adorn the walls: a black radical, a rock group, a French movie actor, etc. Coeds in bathrobes and towel-wrapped heads pass by the open doorway with regularity. Various RADIOS pound out the current HITS.

Roommate KAREN paints her toenails as her friend, MOLLY, flips through the new semester's course catalogue. Sarah is hastily getting dressed.

EXT. BEHIND THE DORM - DAY

A motorcycle -- a big, ugly Triumph with a bright yellow gas tank -- pulls up to the rear of the building. The rider has the fur collar of his leather aviator's jacket turned up and is wearing dark glasses.

He's trying to appear incognito -- but we recognize him immediately as Johnny. He REVS the MOTOR and BEEPS the HORN.

INT. THE DORM ROOM

Sarah -- now dressed in Levis and a workshirt -- responds to the honking horn outside her window. She scoops up her handmade leather purse with one hand and her Mexican poncho with the other.

SARAH

(as she leaves)

See ya later, gang.

KAREN

Break a leg, kid.

MOLLY

(to Karen; puzzled)

What's that all about?

KAREN

(without looking up
from her toenails)

Sarah's 'mystery' boyfriend.

Curious, Molly goes to the window and looks down.

MOLLY'S POV

Johnny astride the Triumph two floors below. Sarah appearing from the rear stairwell and climbing on behind Johnny. The MOTORCYCLE ROARING off in a swirl of leaves.

EXT. THE MOTORCYCLE - TRAVELING SHOT - DAY

speeding along some picturesque New England road. Johnny's hair whipping in the wind, Sarah's secured with a bandana. Her arms clinging tightly around Johnny's waist.

Johnny takes off his dark glasses, tucks them into his shirt pocket. Sarah folds down his upturned collar. A mile from campus now, there is no further need of disguise.

EXT. JOHNNY'S RESIDENCE - DAY

They arrive at the four-story turn-of-the-century clapboard house where Johnny occupies the lower front apartment.

INT. JOHNNY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Sarah and Johnny enter. The place is pleasant and bright, but generally nondescript. The best feature being a floor-to-ceiling bay window that looks out upon the Big Val-U gas station across the street.

Johnny's few modest sticks of furniture have been pushed to the center of the room and the walls cleared of pictures and posters. Gallon cans of paint, brushes and rollers are observed.

As Johnny removes his jacket, Sarah routinely administers a pinch of food to Johnny's pet turtle.

SARAH
(as she feeds
the turtle)
The girls in the dorm can't imagine
who it is I've been seeing.

JOHNNY
(intrigued)
Oh, yeah?

SARAH
My roommate is convinced you're
A.W.O.L. from the Army or a draft
dodger or something.

JOHNNY
Does it bother you, Sarah?

SARAH
Heck no. Let 'em think what they
want.

JOHNNY
I mean the secrecy...
(employing his dark
glasses to make the
point)
...does the secrecy bother you?

She doesn't answer. She doesn't have to. Johnny seems saddened,
but Sarah brightens, picks up one of the gallon cans of paint.

SARAH
You didn't tell me...what color did
you decide on?

JOHNNY
Well...I'm not sure. I asked the
guy at the hardware for three
gallons of whatever he had on sale.

Sarah gives him a smile of affectionate toleration, then yanks
off her poncho.

JOHNNY
There's some wine in the fridge for
later.

SARAH
(teasing him)
Did you buy that on sale, too?

JOHNNY
When you have a taste for fine wine,
price is no object.

NEW ANGLE ON THE APARTMENT

Sarah and Johnny have their backs to each other as they paint opposite walls. Johnny uses a brush, Sarah a roller.

Sarah glances at Johnny, then sneaks off. We FOLLOW her into...

THE KITCHEN

where she heads for the refrigerator. Opening the door, she is greeted to the sight of two garishly green bottles of Apple Zapple. She can't help but laugh out loud.

ANGLE ON SARAH

returning with two glasses of Apple Zapple and some sliced cheese all neatly arranged on a soda fountain tray.

She stops in her tracks -- sees something -- lets the tray CRASH to the floor.

ANGLE ON JOHNNY

standing in the middle of the room. Frozen in place. White as a sheet. Eyes focused on nothing. Dripping with a cold sweat.

ANGLE ON THE WALL

A freshly painted number 39 scrawled in menacing, two-foot high letters. Dripping wet. Streaking. Running down to the baseboards.

ANGLE ON SARAH

rushing to Johnny's side.

SARAH

Johnny! What is it? What's wrong?
Talk to me, Johnny!

He looks at her glassy-eyed.

SARAH

(gasping)
Johnny...

Then, he snaps out of it. Breathing heavily, he throws open a side panel of the bay window, filling his lungs with fresh air.

SARAH

Johnny, my God, what happened?

He turns slightly, catches sight of the number painted on the wall. He still seems a little dazed.

JOHNNY

Did I...did I do that?

Sarah picks up the paint roller and obliterates the number with several quick strokes.

INT. MIKE'S PIZZA PARLOR - EVENING

No franchise this, but an authentic Mom 'n' Pop pizzeria. Mike's clientele consists of an equal mixture of local high-schoolers and blue-collar workers from surrounding mills. The JUKE BOX PLAYS ROCK 'N' ROLL.

Sarah and Johnny eat their way through one of Mike's Everything-on-it Killer Specials. They sit side-by-side in a wooden booth. Everyone in town, it appears, has taken a turn carving their initials into the table top.

Johnny contends with a particularly messy slice of pizza and Sarah wipes the tomato sauce from his chin.

SARAH

You really had me scared, Johnny.
What happened to you?

JOHNNY

I don't know... I felt cold. And
this smell, something from my
childhood...tires burning.

Sarah looks even more puzzled.

SARAH

What about the number? Thirty-nine?
Does it have any special meaning
for you?

Johnny just shrugs and shakes his head.

JOHNNY

I don't know...

A distant RUMBLING of THUNDER is heard. Johnny glances at his wrist watch.

JOHNNY

It's late, Sarah. I've got to take
you back.

SARAH

(hesitantly)
You...you don't have to take me
home tonight...I mean, not if you
don't want to.

Silence. Johnny doesn't know what to say. Sarah feels suddenly embarrassed and upset with herself.

SARAH

(turning from him)
Why'd I say that? I don't know why
I said that.

JOHNNY

Sarah...

He wipes his mouth quickly with a napkin, then gently takes hold of Sarah's chin, turning her face back towards him. He kisses her. Sweetly. Tenderly.

JOHNNY

I don't want to take you home, but
I have to.

EXT. THE PIZZA PARLOR - EVENING

The sun is nearly set. A cold wind moves storm clouds down from the North.

Johnny and Sarah exit Mike's and move toward the Triumph. Sarah pulls the hood of her poncho up over her head and ties it under her chin. Johnny zips up his aviator jacket, slips on his riding gloves, and mounts the motorcycle. Sarah climbs up behind him as a clap of THUNDER BOOMS loudly overhead.

Johnny kicks the starter and the cycle's MOTOR ROARS to life.

EXT. BEHIND THE GIRLS' DORM - NIGHT

Rain comes down in sheets. Johnny's motorcycle appears out of the darkness and parks. Johnny and Sarah dash for the shelter of the alcove that leads to the rear stairwell.

ANGLE ON THE ALCOVE

Sarah and Johnny are drenched and out of breath. They smile at each other. The alcove is small and intimate. Their bodies are pressed together. Johnny brushes back a few wet strands of hair from Sarah's face.

They look into each other's eyes. He kisses her. Passionately. She responds. Their lips part, reluctantly.

JOHNNY

You won't be my student forever,
Sarah...I...I...

SARAH

I love you, Johnny.

Now that it's out, it's easier for him to say.

JOHNNY

I love you, too.

He kisses her again. They could probably do this all night.

SARAH

I better go inside now.

JOHNNY

(sweetly)
Okay.

She takes out her key and opens the stairwell door.

SARAH
 Oh, Johnny. I almost forgot...
 (takes something
 from her purse)
 ...I picked it up at the student
 store.

She gives him what appears to be a piece of paper rolled into a tight cylinder. Johnny unravels it. It's a bumper sticker:

ENGLISH TEACHERS ARE NOVEL LOVERS

Johnny smiles. So does Sarah.

JOHNNY
 Now, if only I had a bumper to stick
 it on.

He gives her one last quick kiss.

SARAH
 Please be careful in this rain.

JOHNNY
 Don't worry about me.

But she does.

JOHNNY
 Go on. Off with you now. Up to
 bed.

SARAH
 G'night, Johnny.

And with that, she disappears behind the door.

EXT. THE MOTORCYCLE - TRAVELING SHOT - NIGHT
 Johnny barreling along in a torrent of rain.

INT. BATHROOM - GIRLS' DORM - NIGHT
 Karen appears from the showers to discover Sarah leaning over a sink, all color drained from her face.

KAREN
 Jeeze, Sarah, what's wrong?

SARAH
 I don't know. I feel sick.

EXT. A ROAD - NIGHT
 Rain pours down. Johnny slows his motorcycle. A police car with a swirling red light blocks his path. An OFFICER in a hooded yellow rain slicker brings Johnny to a halt.

OFFICER

Can't get through here. Flash
floods. Road's washed out.

JOHNNY

How can I get back to Cleaves Mills?

OFFICER

Turn yer bike around. Backtrack
about a mile or so 'til ya reach the
highway connector. Take a left and
that'll put ya on the right road.
Helluva night to be out, I'll tell
ya that.

JOHNNY

Yeah, thanks.

He begins to turn his bike around.

EXT. ANOTHER ROAD - NIGHT

The road is dark. It seems to lead nowhere. Johnny wipes the
rain from his face.

NEW ANGLE ON JOHNNY - TRAVELING

He spots some lights up ahead glowing through the rain. Auto-
mobile headlights. He heads for it.

NEW ANGLE ON JOHNNY - TRAVELING

as he merges off the feeder road onto the four-lane highway.
Several automobiles pass, spraying him with water.

CLOSE ANGLE ON JOHNNY

wet and tired, but relieved to be on the right road heading
home. Then...a road sign is reflected in his headlight beam.

ANGLE ON THE ROAD SIGN

INTERSTATE 39 - SOUTH

CLOSE ANGLE ON JOHNNY

terror-stricken. He glances straight ahead -- his eyes widen...

JOHNNY'S POV

A killer in the road -- coming at him in SLOW MOTION. A Peter-
bilt eighteen-wheeler. As big as they come. Headlights flaring.
Toplights glowing. AIRHORN SCREAMING...

...jackknifing on the highway only yards ahead. Its trailer
swinging out across the center divider like the tail of a giant
serpent...swinging out for Johnny.

CLOSE ON JOHNNY

at the top of his lungs...

JOHNNY

Nooooooooooooo!!!!

ANGLE ON THE MOTORCYCLE

braking. The wheels lock. Burning rubber. The Triumph skids across the wet pavement flying out from between Johnny's legs, mangled beneath the wheels of the trailer-rig. The horrible sound of METAL being twisted and torn.

ANGLE ON JOHNNY

hurtling through space. His head smashing into the cement abutment of a highway overpass. Falling back in an oozing pool of mud and oil. The rain beating down on his lifeless form.

ALL IS BLACK. (pause) A TELEPHONE RINGING.

INT. A DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Three o'clock in the morning. The PHONE JANGLING off the hook. A light comes on at the top of the stairs. HERB SMITH, Johnny's father, appears in a pair of plaid pajamas, rumbles down the stairs, answers the phone.

HERB

Hello?

He wipes the sleep from his eyes and listens.

HERB

Yes it is...

Herb looks like a man who has made his living with his hands. He continues to listen.

HERB

(a note of concern)

Yes I do...

(a beat)

...dear God, no.

VERA SMITH appears at the top of the stairs fastening the cord of her faded bathrobe.

VERA

Herb, what is it?

Herb doesn't respond. He listens intently to the voice on the other end of the line. Vera hurries down the stairs to be at Herb's side.

VERA

Is it Johnny?

HERB

It's Johnny.

VERA

He's dead?! Johnny's dead?!

HERB
 (putting his hand
 over the phone)
 No! He's not dead.

Vera falls to her knees.

VERA
 O God we most heartily thank Thee
 and ask that You show Thy tender
 care and loving mercy to our son
 and --

HERB
 -- Vera, shut up!

EXT. THE MAINE TURNPIKE - DAWN
 Day's first light. A '66 Ford stationwagon on the move.

INT. THE FORD - TRAVELING - DAWN
 Herb behind the wheel, his expression resolute. Vera beside
 him, bolt upright in the passenger seat. A Bible on her lap.

INT. HOSPITAL CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY
 Herb looks drawn and wary. Vera clutches her Bible. DR. MANDERS
 enters. He clearly has just come from the operating room.

DR. MANDERS
 Mr. and Mrs. Smith --

VERA
 -- is he dead? Is our son dead?

DR. MANDERS
 No, Mrs. Smith. Your son is in a
 coma. He's sustained a very serious
 head injury. Brain damage as well,
 but we don't know how much. An
 operation was necessary to relieve
 the pressure and also to remove the
 bone splinters from his brain.

VERA
 God has spared him.

HERB
 Is there hope, Doctor?

DR. MANDERS
 At the moment, Mr. Smith, that's all
 there is.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR
 Herb leads Vera down the corridor. They pass through a pair of
 glass doors into the lobby. We (the CAMERA) REMAIN on the other
 side of the glass, in the corridor.

We SEE a nurse point out Herb and Vera for Sarah. She approaches them. Introduces herself. The moment is awkward for everyone. A few words are exchanged. A pause. Then...

...Herb puts his arm around Sarah's shoulder and she begins to sob.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - ANGLE ON JOHNNY
as he is wheeled out of the post-op recovery room. Head bandaged. Eyes closed. I.V. solution inserted into his arm. We watch until he is nearly out of sight.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE COMA SEQUENCE:

MUSIC begins. Time passes...

- Herb enters the house through the screen door, discovers Vera praying on the kitchen floor.
- Sarah keeps a vigil at Johnny's bedside. A nurse enters, begins to change the I.V., requests Sarah to leave.
- Sarah and Herb share a box-lunch on a park bench across from the hospital. Vera sits on another bench reading her Bible.
- A physical therapist (MAVIS) works Johnny's legs and arms. Johnny shows no outward signs of life.
- Sarah and Herb pack up Johnny's personal belongings from the apartment. Sarah looks wistfully at the freshly painted walls, picks up the turtle bowl and closes the door behind her.
- Vera looks through the family photography album. Pictures of Johnny as a healthy young boy bring tears to her eyes.
- Sarah is alone with Johnny in the hospital room. She bends down and kisses him good-bye.
- A taxi pulls up to the hospital steps. Herb opens the rear door for Sarah. They look at each other with emotion-filled expressions and embrace. Sarah climbs into the back seat. The taxi pulls away. Sarah glances out the window at Herb... we realize that she is not coming back.
- Herb walks through the autumn woods, head lowered. Pensive. A big yellow hound dog trails after him.
- Sarah at home. She goes to answer the door, but stops first to check her appearance in the entry-way mirror. She seems to have a case of "first date jitters". She opens the door and greets WALT HAZLETT, a tall, good-looking Ivy Leaguer.
- Johnny lies in his coma while a nurse watches television in the darkness. A luminous glow flickers across Johnny's lifeless face.

- Sarah and Walt kiss beneath a lamppost in the park.
- Mavis, the physical therapist, works on Johnny's legs and arms. Bending them, working them, trying to stave off the inexorable deterioration of ligaments and muscles.
- Sarah gives birth at home to a squawling baby boy. Life goes on.

END OF SEQUENCE.

Music down...

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

BLACK SCREEN...TITLE APPEARS:

TOWN COMMON, OCTOBER 1975
The Killer

EXT. TOWN COMMON (CASTLE ROCK, MAINE) - DUSK
ALMA FRECHETTE, coming off shift from the Coffee Pot Cafe, threads her way through the benches that surround the bandstand in the center of the common.

It gets dark early about this time of year and Alma is anxious to get home.

A VOICE (OFF)

Alma...!

She turns to see THE KILLER sitting on one of the benches. Had he not spoken up, he would have gone unnoticed: the hooded black rain slicker he wears blends into the background in the fading light.

He gets up and approaches her slowly. She is unafraid. She knows him.

ALMA

What's that get-up supposed to be?

He just smiles.

THE KILLER

Wanna see something, Alma? It's the goddamdest thing...

ALMA

What?

THE KILLER

On the bandstand. Have a look.

She hesitates.

THE KILLER

C'mon. You won't believe it.

ALMA

All right. But I gotta get home.

They climb the steps to the bandstand, their FEET making hollow, dead ECHOES across the floorboards. Alma looks around, puzzled and impatient.

ALMA

Well...?

The Killer smiles. We SEE that he is holding a long twig. He picks up something on the end of it, pokes it toward Alma's face.

THE KILLER

Lookit this, Alma.

A used condom is draped over the end of the twig like a shriveled snakeskin. Alma turns away in revulsion. The Killer grabs her arm.

ALMA

Let go! Is this your idea of a joke?

THE KILLER

No joke...you nasty-fucker.

Alma's eyes fill with fear. She breaks away, tries to escape. The Killer lunges after her, grabs her cheap cloth coat by the collar and yanks back on it. The MATERIAL RIPS with a low PURRING sound.

Alma opens her mouth to scream, but The Killer slams his hand over her face, mashing her lips against her teeth.

She claws at him, but her nails slip harmlessly across the slick surface of the plastic raincoat.

He throws her to the floorboards. His hand slips from her bloody mouth. She tries to scream again, but he drops on her with all his weight, driving the air from her lungs.

He unbuckles his pants and forces her legs apart. Alma's eyes are alive with panic. He begins to choke her.

THE KILLER

Nasty-fucker, nasty-fucker...

Her eyes roll up into the back of her skull. He slams her head against the floorboards. Again and again and again...

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

BLACK SCREEN...TITLE APPEARS:

EASTERN MAINE MEDICAL CENTER, JANUARY 1976
Dr. Weizak

INT. JOHNNY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

A NURSE enters carrying a tray of hospital implements. She checks on Johnny routinely.

We SEE -- but the nurse does not -- Johnny's eyelids flutter and roll open. He struggles valiantly to focus his eyes.

The nurse moves toward Johnny's head to adjust his pillow. He looks up at her with a bewildered and uncomprehending expression.

JOHNNY
(his voice raspy
and weak)
Where am I...?

Startled, the nurse jumps back. Her TRAY drops, CLATTERING loudly against the hard linoleum floor. She rushes out of the room.

JOHNNY
Where am I...!

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR
as the nurse hurries for assistance.

INT. THE HOSPITAL ROOM - JOHNNY'S POV
A face comes slowly INTO FOCUS...the face of DR. BROWN.

ANGLE ON DR. BROWN
bending over Johnny's bed. The nurse standing nearby.

DR. BROWN
Ahh. You can see me now?

JOHNNY
(his voice still
thick and dry)
Where am I?

DR. BROWN
Eastern Maine Medical Center. Do
you remember what happened to you,
young man?

JOHNNY
I...I...

He draws a blank.

DR. BROWN
Do you remember your name, then?

JOHNNY

My name?

DR. BROWN

Yes. Your name. Do you remember your name?

JOHNNY

Of course I do.

(beat)

My name is...my name is John Smith.
John Howard Smith.

DR. BROWN

Very good. Do you recall where you live, Mr. Smith? Your address.

Johnny doesn't like getting the third-degree.

JOHNNY

Who are you?

DR. BROWN

I am a doctor, Mr. Smith.

JOHNNY

I live at 112 North Euclid Street
in Cleaves Mills. I teach at Brewer
College. I'm -- I'm twenty-five
years old. I --(voice begins
to falter)

-- what's wrong with my voice!?

DR. SAM WEIZAK comes up behind Dr. Brown.

WEIZAK

Nurse, help him up.

The nurse props Johnny's head up on the pillow as Weizak pours a glass of water and hands it to Johnny.

WEIZAK

Drink this. It'll help your throat.

Weizak has a ruffled, friendly sort of face with warm brown eyes and a shock of unruly white hair. Johnny looks up at him with a grateful expression, takes the water and begins to gulp it down.

WEIZAK

Slowly now. Not too fast.

Johnny does as he's told.

WEIZAK

My name is Sam Weizak, John. I'm a
neurologist.

(indicates Brown)

This is my colleague, Dr. Brown.

Johnny is about to speak. Weizak stops him.

WEIZAK

Finish your water first.

(turns to Brown

and the nurse)

I wonder if John and I could have
a moment alone.

Dr. Brown leaves the room and the nurse follows him out.
Johnny hands Weizak the empty water glass.

JOHNNY

What's going on here? What's wrong
with my voice? Who are -- where is --

WEIZAK

-- slow down, John. Slow down.

Weizak sits on the edge of the bed. This seems to have a
calming effect on Johnny.

WEIZAK

There's something I have to tell
you, John. You were involved in a
terrible accident. Do you remember?

JOHNNY

Yes. Yes...I think so.

WEIZAK

You suffered a tremendous blow to
your skull. You find it difficult
to speak now because you haven't
spoken in some time.

(beat)

You have been in a coma.

JOHNNY

A coma...?

WEIZAK

Yes...you have been in a coma for
a little over five years.

Johnny reacts.

JOHNNY

Five years? Five years! Omigod.
I'm -- I'm not twenty-five years
old then! I'm -- I'm --

WEIZAK

-- You're alive, John.

EXT. THE MAINE TURNPIKE - DAY

A Ford stationwagon speeds along carrying Herb and Vera Smith.

CLOSE SHOT - A GLOSSY BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOGRAPH featuring an overturned eighteen-wheeler lying across a rain-soaked highway. The photo drops away REVEALING a second photograph: the twisted remains of a Triumph motorcycle.

INT. JOHNNY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Johnny examines the above-mentioned police photographs with an impassive expression. A nurse is giving him a shave.

Weizak enters the room. Johnny looks up from the photos.

WEIZAK

How's the voice today?

JOHNNY

Better. What time is it?

WEIZAK

(with a smile)

They should be here soon.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - THE ELEVATOR

The elevator doors open and Herb and Vera step out. We FOLLOW them down the corridor toward Johnny's room. Dr. Brown approaches to greet them.

VERA

Praise be to God, praise be to God...

HERB

Vera...a word to the wise. You start in sermonizing and I'm gonna drag you outta there by your hair.

INT. JOHNNY'S ROOM

Johnny and Weizak. A KNOCK at the door. A NURSE pokes her head in.

NURSE

Mr. and Mrs. Smith are here.

Johnny fidgets nervously.

WEIZAK

Show them in.

Herb and Vera enter. Johnny looks up at them; they look back. Vera is the first to move, going to Johnny and giving him a hug.

JOHNNY

Mom...

VERA

Oh, Johnny. Thank God. Thank God.

Herb puts his rough, workman's hand on Johnny's shoulder.

HERB
Good to have you back, son.

Johnny smiles, his eyes brimming.

JOHNNY
You're lookin' good, Dad. You too,
Mom.
(to his dad)
New suit?

HERB
(awkwardly)
Well...new enough, I guess.

VERA
It's a miracle, Johnny.

JOHNNY
I know, Mom. I saw the pictures.
(changing the
subject abruptly)
Mom, there was a girl...

HERB
Sarah.

JOHNNY
Yeah, Dad. That's right. You
know her? Have you met?

HERB
Yes, and I talked to her this
morning. She's coming 'round to
see you.

Johnny looks visibly pleased.

VERA
God has a plan for you, Johnny...

JOHNNY
Huh?

HERB
Vera!

VERA
He has a plan for you, Johnny!
Even now you see His hand at work.

HERB
Vera -- this is a hospital!

Vera drops to her knees clutching Johnny's hand in both of hers.

VERA

O my God, you have delivered my son
back to me. Thy will be done.
Praise be to God! Praise be to God!

JOHNNY

Mom...

HERB

I warned you, Vera!

Herb pulls Vera up from her knees, begins to drag her out the door.

HERB

Sorry, son. Your mom's a little
worked up.

VERA

The doctors despaired, Johnny.
Everyone despaired! Not me. Turn
to Matthew, chapter nine --

Herb and Vera disappear into the corridor. Weizak and Johnny are left alone. The incident has clearly left Johnny unsettled.

JOHNNY

Is she crazy?

WEIZAK

(shrugs)

Hard to say. There are people down
South who handle snakes. Now them
I'd call crazy.

Johnny laughs, then groans in pain.

WEIZAK

What is it?

JOHNNY

My legs. I can't straighten them
out.

WEIZAK

Even though you've been exercised
regularly, the ligaments have
shortened during the coma.

JOHNNY

Will I be in a wheelchair?

WEIZAK

Not if I can help it.

(beat)

I won't bullshit you, John, your
therapy will be long and painful,
but you will walk.

A wave of affection for Weizak sweeps across Johnny. He reaches out for the doctor's hand.

As their fingers touch, something strange occurs. Weizak's face seems to stand out in relief for Johnny -- clear and understandable.

JOHNNY
Give me the picture?

WEIZAK
What?

JOHNNY
The picture. The one in your wallet. The picture of your mother.

Weizak looks startled.

WEIZAK
How did you --

JOHNNY
Please. Give it to me.

Weizak takes the wallet from his back pocket, opens it and produces the photograph. Johnny snatches it away.

He studies it for a moment, then presses it between his hands. His eyes roll back until only the whites are visible. He begins to moan softly. Then...

JOHNNY
...the wolf is loose. The wolf is loose in Europe. All dead. All dead. No match for them. No match for them!

Johnny has slipped into a trance. Weizak's expression fills with wonderment.

JOHNNY
...the boy is safe. The boy is safe.

Johnny begins to moan again, but it becomes a song. Johnny is singing, but with someone else's voice -- the voice of a woman. And in another language -- Polish.

Weizak looks astonished.

WEIZAK
My God...

The singing stops.

JOHNNY
The boy is safe. The boy is safe.

Exhausted, Johnny falls back against his pillow. Weizak immediately takes his pulse. Johnny's eyes open slowly.

WEIZAK

Are you all right, John?

JOHNNY

(after a pause)

Your mother is alive.

Weizak looks as if he's been slapped in the face. He removes the photograph from between Johnny's fingers and returns it to his wallet.

WEIZAK

My mother died in a concentration camp during the war.

JOHNNY

No, no. She survived. Just like you. She sent you away to safety. She survived the camp, but there was no way to find you. Where could she look --

WEIZAK

-- my mother is dead, John.

JOHNNY

She's alive. Her name is Borentz. She's remarried. Her name is Mrs. Helmut Borentz. She lives in Santa Rosa, California.

Weizak is disturbed. Troubled. Confused. He's a doctor, a man of science, but this he has no explanation for.

INT. HOSPITAL SUN PARLOR - DAY

The parlor is filled with a clear winter light. A nurse wheels Johnny in and helps him into a comfortable wing-back chair.

The nurse departs. Johnny adjusts his bathrobe, then looks up...

ANGLE ON SARAH

standing across the room. No longer an impressionable college freshman, she has matured into a self-confident young woman... and is lovelier than ever.

She moves toward Johnny carrying a stack of magazines under her arm.

ANGLE ON JOHNNY AND SARAH

They look into each other's eyes, but say nothing. Finally Sarah bends to kiss him. The moment is awkward. They don't know whether to kiss on the lips or the cheek...they settle for the cheek.

SARAH

Johnny, I'm so happy...so glad.

JOHNNY

You're beautiful, Sarah.

She sits down on the chair across from him -- rigidly, on the edge of the cushion. She rests the magazines in her lap and begins to pull off her glove, one finger at a time.

SARAH

You look so good, Johnny. It's almost as if nothing had --
 (stops herself)
 -- I mean...you can think and talk.
 We were so worried that when you came out of it you'd...

JOHNNY

I know -- Johnny the turnip.

SARAH

Are you feeling okay, Johnny? Are you in any pain? You've lost weight.

JOHNNY

It's the coma diet, Sarah. Lose weight while you sleep. Shed fifteen pounds in five easy years.

Sarah is thwarted by the bitter edge to Johnny's remarks. An uncomfortable silence ensues.

SARAH

(breaking the silence)

Oh, Johnny. Almost forgot...I brought you these.

She hands him the pile of magazines.

SARAH

Back issues. Had to sneak them out of the library. You won't believe what's been going on these last few years. Wait'll you read about Nixon. There's a great book on that I'll give you. They made a movie about it. And we're out of Vietnam finally, thank God. Have you had time to listen to the radio, Johnny? There's so many new groups now that --

JOHNNY

-- Sarah.

SARAH

(continuing)

-- I can't even keep track of them.
And I think there must be about a
half-dozen new football teams too,
but I don't really follow --

JOHNNY

-- Sarah.

She shuts up. Realizes she's been running on.

JOHNNY

You're married, aren't you, Sarah.

Sarah blanches. She notices that she has failed to remove the glove from her right hand. She feels ashamed. Ashamed for not being straight with him. Ashamed for being so obvious.

JOHNNY

You did the right thing.
(beat)
How long?

SARAH

Almost three years.

JOHNNY

Children?

SARAH

A boy. Denny.

JOHNNY

I'd like to meet him sometime.

Sarah snuffles and smiles. But the smile soon fades into an expression of sadness and melancholy -- an expression shared by Johnny.

JOHNNY

Sarah, I...

He stops himself.

SARAH

What, Johnny? Tell me.

JOHNNY

I was a fool, Sarah. A real prize
jerk. When I look at you now and
think that we...that we never...
that I never --

She knows what he's trying to say.

SARAH

Johnny, don't...

JOHNNY

It's just... I thought we had so much
time back then. That there'd be time
to --

SARAH

-- Please don't, Johnny.

JOHNNY

I let you slip through my fingers;
I let you slip right through my
fingers...

They sit in silence.

EXT. A CITY INTERSECTION - DAY

Sarah's mud-splattered gray Volvo rolls up to the intersection
and stops for a red light.

ANGLE ON SARAH

inside the car. Her eyes glisten with tears. She rests her
forehead on the steering wheel. The light changes. HORNS HONK.

SARAH

(raising her head)

All right. All right!

She puts the car into gear and lurches off.

INT. WEIZAK'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Weizak sits in the darkness, silhouetted against a moonlit win-
dow. Eventually, he leans forward and turns on the brass desk
lamp -- the variety with a glass shade, green in color.

Weizak deliberates for a moment -- consults his wrist watch --
pauses -- then picks up the phone.

WEIZAK

(into phone)

Yes. Can you give me the directory
assistance number for California?

...City? Uh...Santa Rosa.

(listens; jots
something down)

Thank you.

(dials the number)

Yes...for Santa Rosa, please. The
number of...

(he hesitates)

...do you have a listing for Borentz?
Helmut Borentz? I believe it's
spelled B-O-R-E-N-T-Z.

(MORE)

WEIZAK (CONT'D)

(pause)

You do...!

(takes it down)

Yes. Thank you. Thank you very
much...

Weizak slowly hangs up the phone. He studies the number in his hand. Anguishes over it. Decides to try.

TELEPHONE VOICE

(thick Austrian accent)

Hello?

Weizak's lips are dry. He wets them with his tongue.

WEIZAK

Hello. Is...is Johanna there please?
May I speak to her?

Long pause on the other end of the line. Then...

TELEPHONE VOICE

Just a moment.

Weizak takes a deep breath and waits. His heart is pounding in his chest. He fumbles with a pack of cigarettes but stops short as Johanna Borentz comes to the phone three thousand miles away.

JOHANNA'S VOICE

Yes? Hello...

Weizak closes his eyes.

INT. HOSPITAL THERAPY ROOM

Johnny works out on a massive Nautilus weight-lifting machine. (The kind favored by professional football teams.)

He strains against a ten-pound weight, attempting to raise it with his right leg. Mavis, his black physical therapist, supervises.

Defeated, Johnny lets the weight drop.

JOHNNY

That's it. Time out. No more.

MAVIS

That's only eight, honey. You owe
me two more.

JOHNNY

I can't. It's killin' me.

MAVIS

Never mind that. You owe me two
more.

JOHNNY
 (straining through
 clenched teeth)
 Mavis, you're a mean, spiteful, bad-
 tempered --

MAVIS
 -- I know, baby. That's nine. One
 more and you're out the door.

Groaning loudly, Johnny completes the tenth and final rep.

MAVIS
 Okay, honey, let's hit the whirlpool.
 Mavis offers Johnny her hand, pulling him to his feet.

JOHNNY
 (exhausted)
 I haven't had such a --

He stops in mid-sentence. The color drains from his face. His
 grip on Mavis' hand tightens until his knuckles turn white.

MAVIS
 What is it? Muscle cramp?

JOHNNY
 (softly)
 Oh, gosh...oh, no...

MAVIS
 What? What?

He lets go of Mavis' hand, hobbles away, turns back.

JOHNNY
 You better...oh, no...there's still
 time. Call the fire department!

MAVIS
 Say what?!

JOHNNY
 Call the fire department!

MAVIS
 Why!?

JOHNNY
 Your house...there's a fire! Don't
 just stand there.

She thinks he's crazy.

MAVIS
 (disgusted)
 Oh, shit.

Johnny marches off.

MAVIS

Hey!

TRACKING SHOT - JOHNNY AND MAVIS

We FOLLOW them across the therapy room and past the pool, their HEELS CLACKING hollowly on the tiles. Johnny moves with a noticeable limp.

MAVIS

Where you goin'?

Johnny doesn't answer. He moves resolutely toward the...

NURSES' STATION

Two NURSES are eating their lunch while a third talks on the telephone. Johnny enters, takes the phone away from her.

THIRD NURSE

Hey!

MAVIS

(to Johnny)

Shit! Don't I got enough to worry about without this!

Confusion. The nurses are all talking at once. Johnny tries to dial.

JOHNNY

How do I get an outside line?

No response.

JOHNNY

How do I get an outside line!

This gets their attention.

FIRST NURSE

Dial nine.

Johnny dials.

JOHNNY

(into phone)

Operator. This is an emergency. Get me the fire department.

SECOND NURSE

What's on fire?

MAVIS

My house, he says!

The nurses look dumbstruck.

JOHNNY
 (into phone)
 Hello! Yes, I want to report a fire.
 Wait a minute --

He turns toward Mavis, snapping his fingers urgently.

JOHNNY
 -- the address, the address!

Mavis hesitates, stammers.

JOHNNY
 Come on! You want your cats to fry??

MAVIS
 Forty-two Balcon Boulevard.

Johnny repeats the address into the phone.

THIRD NURSE
 How's he know?

MAVIS
 Some kinda voodoo shit.

JOHNNY
 (into phone)
 In the kitchen! It's in the kitchen.

Johnny hangs up the phone and steps OUT OF FRAME. Mavis picks it up and dials.

SECOND NURSE
 Who you calling?

MAVIS
 My neighbor. Gonna find out what's
 goin' on here once and for --
 (into phone)
 -- Patty? Mavis. Don't ask why,
 just look out at my kitchen window
 and tell me what you see.

INT. A KITCHEN
 PATTY puts down the phone and looks out her window.

PATTY'S POV
 Smoke billows from the window of the house next door. Fingers
 of flame dance above the sill.

ANGLE ON PATTY
 Her mouth drops open. She runs back to the phone.

INT. THE NURSES' STATION
 Mavis reacts as she hears the news.

MAVIS

(into phone)

No, no, no...that's okay. They
already been called. What?

(she listens)

Don't ask, honey. Don't ask. It's
too weird to go into now.

She hangs up the phone and looks toward Johnny.

ANGLE ON JOHNNY

backed into the corner of the station. Trembling. Shaking
from head to foot. Teeth chattering. Sweat pouring from his
forehead. He's exhausted...and scared to death.

INT. WEIZAK'S OFFICE - EVENING

Johnny looks out Weizak's office window as dusk settles upon
the town. Weizak sits behind his desk filling a briar pipe.

Johnny glances aimlessly around the office. He seems restless,
edgy.

WEIZAK

Wanna talk about it?

Johnny doesn't answer immediately.

JOHNNY

These things that are happening to
me...I don't understand them. They
scare the piss outta me.

WEIZAK

John, you're either in possession
of a very new human ability or a
very old one.

Johnny becomes more animated. He limps around the office as
he talks.

JOHNNY

When it happens...I see things
clearly...I know things...I
understand them. It's real, but
not like real life. More like a
dream or a memory. But...but...

WEIZAK

Go on.

JOHNNY

But there's always a part missing.
Something blocked out. Something
I can't quite see...like sitting
behind a pillar at the hockey game.
It's like...it's like a dead zone
of some kind.

WEIZAK

A dead zone.

JOHNNY

Yeah. I can't explain it. But it's there. It's black and cold and it smells like...it smells like burning rubber.

Silence. Weizak ponders this for a moment. Then, a KNOCK at the door and an ORDERLY enters wheeling in a serving cart.

WEIZAK

(indicating
the desk)

Right there, please.

The Orderly places the dinner tray on the desk and exits.

WEIZAK

Look at this, John. Baked potato, sweet peas and a porterhouse steak ...medium rare.

JOHNNY

Man, they don't feed the patients like that.

WEIZAK

I know --

(pulling out his chair)

-- that's why I ordered this for you.

Johnny smiles and eagerly takes the seat. Weizak watches as he cuts into the steak.

WEIZAK

(after a moment)

John... I never told you this, but you were right. You were right about my mother.

Johnny's fork stops in mid-air, poised between his plate and his mouth.

WEIZAK

Don't stop eating... I got the number from information. There it was. Right there in the phone book.

Johnny isn't a bit surprised.

JOHNNY

So you talked to her.

WEIZAK

She came to the phone.

(MORE)

WEIZAK (CONT'D)

She said hello.

(beat)

But I hung up. I couldn't talk to her.

Johnny gives him an inquiring look.

WEIZAK

I couldn't risk it, John. She's happy with her life. I'm happy with mine. Why upset that? Why tamper with that? Who knows what changes something like this might cause.

Johnny chews his food and listens patiently.

WEIZAK

John, I know one thing: every advancement carries its own liability. This gift of yours, this talent, this whatever-you-want-to-call-it...it has its price. That's certain.

Johnny thinks this over for a minute.

JOHNNY

Am I gonna die?

WEIZAK

(facetiously)

No. You're going to live forever.

JOHNNY

I'm serious. I heard that people who come out of long-term comas don't last so long. They lapse back. Like a light bulb going really bright before it burns out for good.

Weizak regards him with a strong look of disapproval.

WEIZAK

That sounds like something they'd say on one of those daytime soap operas.

JOHNNY

It should. That's where I heard it.

Weizak smiles slowly and runs a hand through his thatch of gray hair.

INT. SARAH'S KITCHEN - MORNING

Sarah and husband Walt sit around the breakfast table. Walt reads the morning paper as Sarah feeds DENNY, their two-year-old son, who is sitting in his high chair.

WALT

(reading a headline)
'Coma Victim Awakens With Psychic Powers'.

(puts down the paper)
Beautiful. What a gimmick. That ought to pay off a few outstanding hospital bills.

SARAH

What are you trying to say, Walt?
Do you think Johnny's a fraud?

WALT

No. Not a fraud -- a showman. And a pretty damn good one, too, I think.

SARAH

That was no act. He knew about that fire almost before it happened.

WALT

We do the same thing in advertising, only we call it consumer demographics.

Sarah fumes in silence.

WALT

Look, honey, don't be upset. I've got nothing against the guy. In fact, I respect him. I do.
(beat)

If he can turn a few bucks on his misfortune, then good for him.

Sarah continues to glower at Walt. But he smiles, takes her by the chin and plants a little kiss on her lips. She begins to melt.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM - DAY

Various electrodes are taped to Johnny's head. Their wires lead to a console whose many gauges, graphs and read-outs are visible only to Weizak.

Weizak holds up a card for Johnny's inspection. The side of the card facing Johnny is blank, but an apple is pictured on the side facing Weizak.

JOHNNY

I'm not getting anything.

WEIZAK

Concentrate.

As Johnny concentrates, Weizak monitors the console. The gauges flutter, the graph fluctuates slightly. Weizak makes notations on a pad.

JOHNNY

(finally)

A hammer. A sledge hammer. No.
Wait. A carpenter's hammer.

Weizak turns the card to show Johnny the apple. Johnny sighs. Disappointed. Exhausted.

WEIZAK

You really can't control it, can you?

Johnny shakes his head "no".

WEIZAK

Let's take a moment to rest.

As Johnny relaxes, Weizak's attention drifts to one of the gauges. The needle is nearly at rest -- then dances wildly for a moment. Weizak reacts and Johnny notices.

JOHNNY

What is it?

But the needle is at rest again.

WEIZAK

Nothing. I just thought...hmmm.

The PHONE RINGS. Weizak picks it up, listens a moment.

WEIZAK

It's for you.

JOHNNY

(into phone)

Hello...

Johnny listens, and as he does, an expression of dawning horror registers on his face.

WEIZAK

What's wrong, Johnny?

JOHNNY

(into phone)

Sure, Dad. Okay. I will. I will.
Okay...I love you, too.

Johnny hangs up the phone, begins to pluck the electrodes from his forehead.

WEIZAK

What's wrong??

JOHNNY

My mother. She's at Cumberland
General. She's had a stroke.

EXT. TURNPIKE - NIGHT

Weizak's Oldsmobile 88 glides smoothly through the night.

INT. THE OLDSMOBILE - TRAVELLING - NIGHT

They ride in silence. Johnny glances out the window, watches a full moon dance through the blurred limbs of the cottonwood trees that line the roadside.

JOHNNY

I never asked you, Sam...do you
have a wife? A family...?

WEIZAK

Children, you mean? No. No
children. I'm divorced. My work
keeps me so busy...my wife, you see,
saw the bed half empty rather than
half full.

(beat)

So she filled it with a variety of
other men.

Weizak shrugs his shoulders philosophically.

EXT. CUMBERLAND GENERAL HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Weizak's Oldsmobile pulls up to the entrance. Johnny gets out,
thanks Weizak, then watches as the car disappears into the night.

INT. CUMBERLAND GENERAL

Herb comes down the corridor to meet Johnny. He wears an old
pair of pants, shoes with no socks and his pajama tops.

JOHNNY

How is she, Dad?

HERB

Slippin' away. Slippin' away.
She read about you in the paper.
Thrilled, she was. Beside herself
with joy. Then, just like that --

(snaps his fingers)

-- down she goes on the floor. Her
poor old mouth openin' and closin'
like a fish outta water.

(pause)

Go see her, John. She's waitin' for
you. Room thirty-five, end of the
hall.

Johnny takes a deep breath and heads off down the corridor.

HERB
 (to no one in
 particular)
 Lord knows I spent most of my life
 lovin' that woman. Lord knows...

INT. VERA'S HOSPITAL ROOM
 Johnny pushes the door open and enters. A NURSE is taking his
 mother's pulse. She turns to him.

NURSE
 Are you Mrs. Smith's son?

Johnny doesn't answer. He moves to his mother's bedside.

VERA
 Johnny? Is that you, Johnny?

Her voice is a death rattle. It makes Johnny's skin crawl.
 He sees that her face is twisted into a snarling mask on one
 side and her hand is knotted like a claw.

JOHNNY
 (to the nurse)
 I want to be alone with her.

NURSE
 I'm sorry, but I can't allow --

Johnny has had his fill of hospital regulations. He takes the
 Nurse by the arm and pushes her out the door.

JOHNNY
 Get out!

VERA
 Is that you, Johnny?

JOHNNY
 It's me, Ma. It's me.

VERA
 The power of God works within you,
 Johnny. It's a great trust. You
 must be worthy.

JOHNNY
 I know, Ma.

VERA
 He has a job for you, Johnny. Don't
 run from him. Don't hide in a cave
 like Elijah.

JOHNNY
 I won't, Ma.

VERA
Heed the voice when it calls.

JOHNNY
I will.

VERA
Do your duty, John. Do your duty.

Her voice fades. Her eyes close.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

BLACK SCREEN...TITLE APPEARS:

MAY 1976
The Killer Returns

EXT. PARKING LOT - THE A&P SUPERMARKET - NIGHT
near closing time. Various cars, trucks and vans are scattered randomly around the enormous parking lot.

ANGLE ON THE KILLER
stepping out of the shadows, wearing his black rain slicker. He watches the market entrance. A woman shopper appears carrying a grocery bag under each arm. The Killer begins to stalk her.

TRACKING SHOT - THE WOMAN SHOPPER AND THE KILLER
As she moves across the parking lot, he closes in. The pools of light from the overhead lamps are few and far between, and The Killer avoids them with ease. He moves parallel to his prey, but inching ever closer. Then --

A car suddenly appears. The Killer is nearly caught in the headlight beam, but steps quickly back into the shadows. The woman shopper gets into the car and is whisked off to safety, completely unaware of the fate that awaited her.

ANGLE ON THE KILLER
Angry. Frustrated. He scans the parking lot for another victim.

KILLER'S POV
Another woman shopper, a pretty young brunette, is loading boxes of groceries into the back of her van.

A grocery clerk calls to her. He holds up a carton of milk that she has obviously left behind.

ANGLE ON THE BRUNETTE
as she heads back toward the market to retrieve her purchase. The grocery clerk meets her half-way. She thanks him. He smiles and gestures good night.

We FOLLOW her back to the van.

INT. THE VAN - NIGHT

The brunette slides in behind the wheel, placing the carton of milk on the seat beside her. She turns the ignition key, but the motor doesn't immediately fire up.

Then -- reflected in the rear view mirror -- we SEE the face of The Killer rising up behind her from the darkened recesses of the van's storage area.

And the brunette sees him too!

She tries to scream but his hand flattens against her mouth. He pulls her right out of her seat and drags her back into the van.

As they struggle on the floor, a box of groceries becomes overturned. CANS of dog food and Campbell's soup ROLL AROUND loudly. The brunette puts up a real fight.

THE KILLER

Nasty fucker! Goddamned nasty fucker!

He delivers a vicious punch to her side. Her painful moan is muffled beneath his hand. A box of cornflakes is crushed under The Killer's knee as he RIPS the brunette's SKIRT up the middle.

Again, she tries to scream. The Killer's eyes dart urgently from side to side. He sees a plastic bag filled with grapes. He shakes them out and slips the bag over the brunette's head.

Her eyes widen in terror as the bag clings to her mouth and nose, virtually sucking the life right out of her. The Killer opens his pants and slides onto her.

THE KILLER

Fucker! Fucking nasty fucker...

His face is pressed against hers. We HEAR her GASPING and GURGLING through the cellophane. He grinds his hips into her.

Remarkably, she has some fight left in her. She digs a thumbnail into his eye. The Killer ROARS back like a wounded bear. He picks up a BOTTLE of cheap dinner wine and SMASHES it against the van's inside wall.

THE KILLER

You fucker!! You nasty fucker!

Dazed as she is, she is conscious enough to be aware of the jagged bottleneck in his hand...and the horrible use he has in mind for it.

CLOSE ANGLE ON THE KILLER'S HAND

as the bottleneck traces a bloody line up her inner thigh toward her crotch.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE VAN - NIGHT
 parked along the edge of some deserted field.

INT. THE VAN
 The Killer sits behind the wheel drinking from the carton of milk. His Adam's apple bobs up and down as he swallows. Milk drips from the corners of his mouth and runs down his neck.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

BLACK SCREEN...TITLE APPEARS:

DECEMBER 1976
 Frank Dodd

EXT. THE SMITH FARMHOUSE - LONG SHOT - DAY
 Far in the distance we SEE a Sheriff's patrol car approaching the farmhouse, trailing a cloud of dust. It seems to take the car forever to come down the road and turn into the drive.

SHERIFF GEORGE BANNERMAN appears from the cruiser. He glances up at the metallic gray, snow-threatening sky, hitches up his belt and mounts the porch steps.

INT. THE FARMHOUSE
 Herb is decorating a Christmas tree when the KNOCK is heard at the door. He goes to answer it.

BANNERMAN

Mr. Smith?

Herb is surprised to see a police officer standing at his door.

HERB

Yes. I'm Herb Smith.

BANNERMAN

Mr. Smith, my name is Sheriff George Bannerman...from Castle Rock.

Bannerman offers Herb his hand. Herb switches the tinsel he is holding to the other hand and shakes with the Sheriff.

BANNERMAN

May I come in, Mr. Smith?

HERB

Yes...of course.

Bannerman enters the house. He removes his hat. Unzips his jacket. Observes the Christmas tree.

BANNERMAN

Mighty fine looking tree you've got there.

HERB

Oh, thanks.

(beat)

Is there something I can do for you,
Sheriff?

BANNERMAN

As a matter of fact --

JOHNNY

Dad, who's --

Johnny has entered from the bedroom, but he stops in mid-sentence upon seeing the Sheriff.

BANNERMAN

(to Herb)

Actually, it's your son I've come
to see.

(to Johnny)

John, my name is Sheriff Bannerman.

HERB

From Castle Rock.

BANNERMAN

That's right.

Johnny regards him warily.

JOHNNY

You want to see me?

BANNERMAN

Yessir. I've got...well, I suppose
you'd say I've got a proposal for
you, John.

JOHNNY

You sure you got the right address,
Sheriff? You sure it's me you want
to see?

BANNERMAN

You're John Smith, aren't ya? Well...

He hesitates, not knowing quite how to approach the subject.

BANNERMAN

...It's these murders. I'm sure
you've heard of the 'Castle Rock
Killer'. Been in all the papers
and the TV.

JOHNNY

What has that got to do with me?

BANNERMAN

Well, sir...

(he smiles and
shakes his head)

...you sure do make me spell it out,
don't ya?

HERB

Sheriff, would you like some coffee.

BANNERMAN

Why, thank you. I would like a cup.

Herb heads for the kitchen, but Johnny stops him.

JOHNNY

Don't bother, Dad. The Sheriff
won't be staying that long.

BANNERMAN

Now wait a minute, John. You
haven't heard me out yet.

JOHNNY

I don't want to hear you out.
I can't help you.

BANNERMAN

I think you can, John. I think you
can. Some decent young women --
from homes just like this -- have
met with terrible, unspeakable
deaths...

(beat)

...I'm just about at my wits' end on
this thing. All conventional methods
of approach have been exhausted.
Dammit, I know you can help me.

JOHNNY

You've made a mistake, Sheriff.
I'm sorry.

Johnny leads Bannerman toward the door. But Bannerman won't
give up. Noticing the many religious objects around the room,
he tries a new approach.

BANNERMAN

John, I see this is a Christian
house.

JOHNNY

(opening the door)
Good-bye, Sheriff.

Bannerman closes the door.

BANNERMAN

I'm not a religious man myself, but I know this much, God has seen fit to bless you with a --

JOHNNY

-- bless me?? God has blessed me?? I'll tell you what God has done for me lately, Sheriff. He sent an eighteen-wheeler at me on a rain-slicked highway that bounced me into never-never land for five years. When I woke up, my girl was gone, my career was gone, my youth was gone and my legs are damned near useless.

(rubs a hand
against his thigh)

Feels like there's crushed glass in my knee joints and a goddamned wooden splinter running from my ankles to my balls. And if that isn't enough, my mother read about me in the paper acting like a sideshow freak and died of a stroke. Yeah, God's a real sport, Sheriff. So, please...go back where you came from and leave me alone.

Silence. Herb looks at Johnny in shock. Bannerman puts on his hat, hands Johnny his business card.

BANNERMAN

If you change your mind, that's where you can reach me.

(tips his hat to Herb)

Good day to you, Mr. Smith.

INT. THE KITCHEN

Johnny turns on the tap. Water gushes out. He splashes some on his face and rubs his temples. His head is throbbing. He fills a glass with water, fumbles with a small bottle and removes two enormous brown pills. He takes them.

Herb enters. He still holds the tinsel in his hand. He and Johnny exchange a look.

HERB

Can't do it. Just don't have the knack. Was your mother always made the tinsel look so good.

He sighs deeply and lets the tinsel fall into the sink.

INT. JOHNNY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Johnny lies on his bed staring at the ceiling.

He gets up and removes a book from the shelf: BREWER COLLEGE YEARBOOK - 1971. He flips to the freshman class and locates Sarah's picture.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE HOUSE - DAY

A bitterly cold day, but the sky is clear and blue as only a winter sky can be. Johnny goes to the mailbox to retrieve the mail. He withdraws about a dozen letters, sorts through them quickly and opens one.

INSERT - THE LETTER BEING UNFOLDED

The message is spelled out in letters clipped from magazines and pasted onto the paper:

TELEPATHY, BULLSHIT! EAT MY
DONG, YOU PSYCHIC ASSHOLE!!!

RETURN TO SCENE

as Herb appears from the house carrying a toolbox. He notices the abstract look on Johnny's face as he ponders the letter in his hand.

HERB

(trying to sound
cheery)

Good news, I hope.

Johnny looks up abruptly from the letter.

JOHNNY

Huh...?

(folds it and
tucks it away)

Oh...no, Dad. Another lost dog story,
that's all.

HERB

Why don't people leave you the hell
alone, that's what I'd like to know.
Let 'em put an ad in the newspaper
if their dog's run off!

Herb gets in the car. The ENGINE MOANS uncooperatively, then ROARS to life. Johnny leans in the window.

HERB

Listen to that motor, son. Twenty
years old and she purrs like a kitten.
Remind me to dash off a note to Henry
Ford one of these days.

Johnny smiles and pats his father on the arm.

JOHNNY

See you tonight.

Herb waves and drives off. Johnny watches as the car reaches the end of the driveway and pulls out onto the main road.

EXT. THE ROAD - DAY

Herb's station wagon barrels along passing another car going in the opposite direction: a gray Volvo.

INT. THE VOLVO - TRAVELING

Sarah is behind the wheel. Two-year-old Denny is strapped into a car seat beside her.

INT. JOHNNY'S HOUSE - THE KITCHEN

Johnny throws together some breakfast for himself. He puts on a pot of coffee and empties the stale remains of three different types of dry cereal into a bowl.

From outside comes the sound of AUTOMOBILE TIRES CRUNCHING along the gravel driveway. Johnny goes to the window and is floored to see Sarah's Volvo pulling up to the house. At first he doesn't know what to do. He makes a quick pass at cleaning the kitchen counter, then checks his appearance in the mirror. His hair is unwashed and sticks out in several places. A hasty combing provides a partial solution.

He rushes to the front door.

EXT. THE HOUSE

Sarah is unbuckling the straps on Denny's car seat as Johnny appears from the house. Sarah slides out of the Volvo holding Denny in her arms. She and Johnny look at each other for a moment.

SARAH

(almost apologetically)
Surprise.

JOHNNY

Sarah...I...I didn't know you
were coming.

As usual, their meetings are awkward and emotion-filled.

SARAH

Of course you didn't know. That's
what makes it a surprise.

JOHNNY

(running a hand across
his unshaven chin)
Well, you see me the way I am in real
life...a slob.

SARAH

(she means it)
You look fine, Johnny. You look
wonderful.

JOHNNY

You think so?

SARAH

Would I lie to you?

Johnny smiles. He steps closer to her.

JOHNNY
I'm glad you came, Sarah.

Pause. A silence. Then, suddenly, Johnny becomes fully aware of the child in Sarah's arms.

JOHNNY
Hey, this must be Denny. Hi, Denny.

SARAH
Denny, say hi to Johnny.

Denny says nothing. He regards Johnny with an appraising look. Sizing him up carefully.

JOHNNY
He looks like you, Sarah. Can I hold him?

SARAH
He might get a little fussy.

JOHNNY
Let me hold him. He'll be fine.

Sarah agrees. Johnny takes Denny from her arms and holds him. To Sarah's amazement -- he's as contented as can be.

Sarah takes what she needs from the car -- her purse and Denny's tote bag containing his blanket, diapers, etc. -- and walks with Johnny toward the house.

JOHNNY
You just missed Dad. He's over at Charlene MacKenzie's house. Ever since her husband died she's had Dad over there building one thing after another.
(beat)
I think it's the company she needs more than the bookshelves, though.

Sarah looks up at Johnny and smiles. They climb the porch stairs.

MUSIC FADES UP.

ANGLE ON THE FRONT PORCH
Silent except for MUSIC. Johnny and Sarah rock on the porch glider as Denny plays at their feet.

ANGLE ON THE YARD
Silent. MUSIC continues. Johnny holds Denny in his lap as they swing in an old tractor tire suspended from a tree limb. Denny's eyes are wild with excitement. Sarah watches, sharing Denny's joy.

ANOTHER ANGLE ON THE YARD
Silent. MUSIC continues.

Johnny walks toward the house with an armload of firewood. Sarah carries a piece in each hand and Denny holds one that has been cut down to his size.

ANGLE INSIDE THE HOUSE

Silent. MUSIC continues. Johnny and Sarah drink Irish coffee in front of the fireplace. Sarah glances at Denny, who has fallen asleep on the rug beside them. She covers him with a quilted blanket, then turns to look at Johnny.

MUSIC DOWN.

SARAH

You're special, Johnny. You know that, don't you.

JOHNNY

No I'm not.

SARAH

All you have to do is look at me, and you know what I'm thinking.

Johnny laughs softly.

SARAH

It's true, Johnny. It's true.

JOHNNY

No it's not, Sarah. I can't read your mind.

(taps her forehead)

I don't know what's going on up there. But I'll tell you this... I wish I did.

SARAH

(after a moment)

I'm thinking about another time, long ago...before the accident.

She inches closer to him and rests a hand on his cheek.

SARAH

We made a promise to each other six years ago, Johnny...a promise that I want to keep.

Their lips are nearly touching now. Johnny presses his to hers, kissing her softly.

INT. THE BEDROOM

Sarah's clothes are neatly draped over a chair back. Johnny's are strewn across the floor. They lie naked beneath the sheets looking into each other's eyes. They have both waited a long time for this moment, and now it has arrived. They make love.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE BEDROOM - LATER

Johnny's eyes are closed and a smile plays upon his lips. Sarah nuzzles him.

SARAH

I have to check on Denny.

JOHNNY

Oh...okay.

Johnny's delighted eyes follow Sarah as she slides naked from the bed to claim a bathrobe behind the door.

INT. THE LIVING ROOM

Denny is still asleep on the rug. Sarah bends down to him, strokes his hair, kisses him on the forehead.

INT. THE BEDROOM

Sarah returns, sits on the bed next to Johnny.

JOHNNY

Still sleeping?

SARAH

He's had a busy day. He's very tired.

JOHNNY

So have I. But I'm not tired at all.

He smiles suggestively and pulls on the bathrobe draw-chord. They make love again.

INT. THE KITCHEN

Sarah, again wearing Johnny's robe, puts the kettle on to boil. She hears a TAPPING sound and looks up to see a face at the kitchen window. Startled, she drops a coffee can to the floor and runs out of the room.

ANGLE ON JOHNNY

hurrying up the hallway from the bedroom, dressing as he goes. He runs into Sarah.

JOHNNY

What is it?

SARAH

A man. Outside the house. He was looking in the kitchen window.

We FOLLOW Johnny and Sarah back into the kitchen. The man is still in the window. He points toward the front door, indicating that Johnny should meet him there.

SARAH

Who is he?

JOHNNY

I don't know. But I'm sure as
hell gonna find out.

Denny wakes up, begins to CRY from the other room. Sarah goes to get him as Johnny heads for the front door, tucking in his shirt as he goes.

EXT. THE FRONT PORCH - DAY

Johnny exits the house pulling on his wool jacket. The man in the window (CLEMENT DARDIS, a city slicker dressed in L.L. Bean sportswear) is there to greet him.

DARDIS

John Smith? My name is Clement
Dardis.

Dardis extends his hand, but Johnny doesn't take it. Dardis is undaunted.

DARDIS

I'm from 'Inside View' magazine.
(with a wink)
Hope I didn't interrupt anything.

JOHNNY

No interviews.

DARDIS

(chuckling)
I'm not --

JOHNNY

-- no interviews.

DARDIS

Hold your horses, my friend. I'm not
looking for an interview.

Johnny is silent. He regards Dardis with suspicion and distrust. Dardis takes a copy of a weekly tabloid from his briefcase.

DARDIS

I'm from 'Inside View,' Mr. Smith,
we specialize in the psychic view of
things. Our readers are out of their
gourds for the stuff. Three million
copies sold each and every week.
Available at every checkout stand in
America. How do we do it? We stick
with the upbeat, the spiritual, the
bizarre.

(studies Johnny
for a moment)

Now I can see, John, that you're the
type of fellow who likes to get right
down to business.

(MORE)

DARDIS (CONT'D)

So let me lay it out for you.
'Inside View' wants to put you
under contract for two years at
thirty thousand dollars per year.

(beat)

Now tell me if that doesn't roll
somewhere within putting distance
of the pin.

No reaction from Johnny. Dardis presses on.

DARDIS

All right. I know what you're thinking:
what does all this mean?

(beat)

In a nutshell, here it is: your picture
and a short column will appear once a
month in our magazine. And best of
all, you don't even have to lift a
finger. We do all the work.

JOHNNY

(shocked)

What?...

DARDIS

All the columns are staff written,
of course. Now, you're an educated
fellow, John, but some of these guys...

(opens tabloid to
show Johnny)

Take Gloria Jean Allen, for example.
Super popular. We started her out with
a contract just like this. And now she
pulls down more than two hundred big
ones a year. Even founded her own church.
The IRS can't get their hands on dime-one
of that money.

(pause)

John, you've got credibility. That's
what we're interested in. All we want
for our sixty thou is the right to your
name and likeness.

(grins)

And you go fishing for two years.

Johnny turns slowly to face Dardis.

JOHNNY

My mother read your publication, Mr. Dardis.
Never missed an issue in twenty-two years.

DARDIS

Well, isn't that nice.

JOHNNY

No. It's not. It's not nice at all. You see, she believed every word of it. Oh, yes. It was gospel to her. As you say, she was really 'out of her gourd' for the stuff.

Johnny's voice rises, fills with anger and rage. He advances on Dardis, who begins to back slowly down the porch steps.

JOHNNY

(continuing)

Every time you people would predict the end of the world, she'd give the furniture away to Goodwill. I used to leave for school wondering if my bed would be there when I got back!

DARDIS

(trying to calm him)

Now Mr. Smith...

JOHNNY

(continuing)

Before she died of a stroke, she was on her way to Oregon for a flying saucer symposium. A flying saucer symposium, Mr. Dardis! A grown woman selling homemade pies to strangers in the street so she could buy an airline ticket to Oregon to attend some goddamned flying saucer symposium because 'Inside View' claimed the Messiah would arrive from a planet outside our own galaxy!

(catches his breath)

I wonder which one of your clever staff writers dreamed that one up!

Johnny has Dardis backed right up against his rented Chevy, which is parked in front of the house.

DARDIS

You're missing the point, John. Let me explain --

Johnny doesn't want to hear his explanations. He grabs Dardis by the shirt collar and lifts him up onto tip-toes.

JOHNNY

You're a ghoul, Dardis. A vampire. A grave robber of people's dreams. Now get out. Get off my property. Beat it!

He throws open the Chevy's front door and shoves Dardis in behind the wheel -- he even reaches in and turns on the ignition key.

Dardis SQUEALS out of the driveway, throwing gravel in all directions.

INT. THE KITCHEN

Johnny leans over the sink. The water is running. He wets his hand and runs it through his hair. Sarah comes up behind him.

SARAH

Are you all right, Johnny?

JOHNNY

I'm fine.

He turns to face her.

SARAH

Who was that man?

JOHNNY

Nobody. A salesman.

Johnny notices that Sarah is fully dressed in her hat and coat. Denny, who she holds in her arms, is bundled in a warm snow-suit.

JOHNNY

You're leaving.

SARAH

It's getting late. I have to get back.

Johnny sighs. He knows she's right.

EXT. THE HOUSE

The sun is getting low in the sky. Johnny walks Sarah to her car. He carries Denny in his arms. Reaching the Volvo, he opens the door for her. She slides in, takes Denny and buckles him into his safety seat.

She turns to Johnny, who is bending down to her opened window.

SARAH

Give my love to your Dad.

JOHNNY

I will.

An awkward silence. Johnny tries to fill it.

JOHNNY

Oh, did I tell you -- I'll be back teaching at Brewer for the Spring Quarter.

SARAH

That's wonderful.

JOHNNY

Dave Pelson set it up for me.
Only one class a day to start,
but it's something.

SARAH

I'm happy for you, Johnny. I
mean it.

Johnny touches Sarah's arm, which is resting on the door.

JOHNNY

Will I see you again?

SARAH

(after a long pause)

Not like today, Johnny. Today was
for us. We owed this to each other,
to ourselves. But not again.

(beat)

We mustn't.

JOHNNY

I know. I know...

Another silence.

SARAH

I've got to go now. I'm picking Walt
up.

JOHNNY

Oh. Sure...

She starts up the engine.

JOHNNY

I'll think about you always, Sarah.

She looks at him, gestures for him to move in closer. He does,
and she kisses him -- a long, lingering one on the lips.

SARAH

Johnny...you've got a wonderful,
God-given talent. Make good use
of it.

JOHNNY

Goodbye, Sarah.
(reaches across to
touch his arm)
Goodbye, Denny.

SARAH

Goodbye, Johnny. Take good care
of yourself.

Johnny nods his head and steps back. Sarah puts the car into gear and drives off. Johnny watches as the Volvo reaches the end of the gravel driveway and turns onto the main road.

Johnny turns and walks back toward the porch. He climbs the steps and slumps down in the glider. He sways back and forth for a moment, then lowers his face into his hands.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE HOUSE - EVENING

Snow falling gently. The driveway buried under a dunelike progression of drifts. A light burning inside the house. Smoke rising from the chimney.

INT. THE HOUSE

INSERT: front page of "Inside View" magazine. A headline in the bottom corner reads: MAINE "PSYCHIC" ADMITS HOAX.

HERB (OVER)

(reading)

'It has always been the policy of this magazine to expose the tricksters and charlatans who have held back true advancement of legitimate psychic phenomena for so long...'

ANGLE ON HERB

as he continues to read from the article.

HERB

'...One of these tricksters, the so-called "psychic," John Smith of Pownal, Maine -- '

Johnny takes the paper from his father's hands.

JOHNNY

Don't read any more, Dad.

HERB

That's slander, Johnny. You could sue these people.

Johnny sits down on a chair in front of the fire. He balls up the magazine and throws it into the flames. In the b.g. the TV NEWS is playing softly.

JOHNNY

They did me a favor. If people think I'm a fake, maybe they'll leave me alone.

Herb sits down in the chair across from Johnny. He begins to fill his pipe.

HERB

You've never been too comfortable with it, have you?

Johnny looks up from the fire.

JOHNNY

No.

HERB

We've never talked about it much either.

Johnny says nothing. Herb puffs his pipe to life, shakes out the match and tosses it into the fire.

HERB

Guess you prefer it that way.

JOHNNY

I do, Dad.

(beat)

All I want is a normal life.

Herb sucks on his pipe for a moment or two, then gets up from the chair.

HERB

Tell you what...I'll fix the dinner tonight. How'd that be?

JOHNNY

Fine, Dad. That'd be just fine.

Herb disappears into the kitchen. Johnny goes to the television and turns up the sound on the evening news.

TV ANCHORMAN'S VOICE

...still at large at this time. We spoke with Sheriff George Bannerman outside the Castle County courthouse earlier today.

Johnny's attention is caught by the mention of Bannerman. He backs up into his chair, never taking his eyes from the TV screen.

BANNERMAN'S VOICE

I'm sorry, but we have no new leads at this time. Every available deputy has been assigned to the case. My boys are working 'round the clock on this one, but nonetheless, I call upon the help of this community, the citizens of Castle Rock and surrounding towns, to report anything they may see or hear of a suspicious nature. My line is always open.

ANGLE ON THE TV SCREEN

We SEE various bodies being covered with blankets, wheeled on stretchers, loaded into ambulances and Coroner's vans.

ANCHORMAN'S VOICE (OVER)

Thus far, nine separate murders have been attributed to the Castle Rock Killer, dating back as far as 1972. The most recent victim of this shocking wave of murder-rapes has been fifteen-year-old Debra Alice Linderman, sophomore from --

ANGLE ON JOHNNY

He switches off the set. He looks troubled and disturbed. A cold sweat has broken out on his forehead.

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

Johnny and Herb sit across the small kitchen table from each other, eating in silence.

EXT. A CEMETERY - DAY

Johnny trudges through the snow carrying flowers in one hand. He stops at one of the grave sites, bends down and wipes the frost from the headstone.

The grave belongs to his mother. He pauses for a moment, then puts the flowers in place.

INT. THE HOUSE - NIGHT

Johnny sits brooding in front of the fireplace. The dying embers glow brightly. Finally, he gets up from his chair, crosses the room, picks up the phone and dials.

EXT. A TUNNEL - NIGHT

Bannerman's patrol car is parked at the mouth of the tunnel.

ANGLE INSIDE THE TUNNEL

Johnny and Bannerman are illuminated by the tunnel's harsh yellow lights. The night is freezing cold.

Johnny surveys the scene, but isn't quite sure how to proceed. Bannerman observes him expectantly, eager to be of assistance.

JOHNNY

Maybe...maybe if you told me exactly what happened. Step by step.

BANNERMAN

Sure, sure. Our man waited here --

Bannerman stands at the mouth of the tunnel.

BANNERMAN

(continuing)

-- we counted nine or ten cigarette butts on the ground. All the same brand. Now, we don't know for certain they belonged to the killer, but who else would stand here on a bone-chilling winter morning long enough to smoke half a pack of cigarettes.

Bannerman indicates the convex mirror overhead that reflects nearly the entire length of the tunnel.

BANNERMAN

The sonofabitch could stand here out of sight and see every kid coming his way. Just waiting for that one girl who'd be alone.

In the b.g. an enormous orange snow-plow lumbers through the night. It distracts Johnny for a moment. He turns to look, then glances back at Bannerman.

JOHNNY

Go on.

BANNERMAN

Is this helping?

JOHNNY

I don't know.

(beat)

Why were the kids using this tunnel in the first place?

BANNERMAN

That's Castle Avenue above us. The tunnel runs underneath. It connects the library over here --

(gestures behind him)

-- to the high school. We had the students use the tunnel instead of crossing the road.

(sorrowfully)

We figured it'd be safer.

Johnny is silent. Bannerman continues...

BANNERMAN

Any kid needing to go to the library would be given a pass. The teacher would mark down the time the student left the school and the librarian would note the time he or she returned.

(MORE)

BANNERMAN (CONT'D)

(sighs)

I've studied the passes from that morning so often I feel like they're printed on my brain.

(pause)

Peter Ketchum and Melissa Loggins at eight fifty A.M., Timmy Knapp at nine fifteen. Mike Kwedris and Joey Loomis at nine twenty-five. And at nine forty-three...

(it catches in his throat)

...at nine fifty-four Susan Maloney and Lisa Bannerman came down this tunnel.

Johnny reacts.

JOHNNY

Your daughter?...

BANNERMAN

My daughter. She passed within ten feet of that cocksucking shit-heel. Do you know how that makes me feel?

JOHNNY

I think I do.

BANNERMAN

Do you have any children of your own?

JOHNNY

No. I...

BANNERMAN

Then you couldn't possibly know. It makes me feel sick and queasy and it fills me with horror.

Silence. Bannerman composes himself.

BANNERMAN

Debra Linderman's pass said ten oh five. Her body was discovered twenty minutes later by a couple of seniors. They found her here.

Bannerman goes to the spot and bends down. Darkened areas are visible where the blood has stained the pavement.

BANNERMAN

Her leotards and her underpants were yanked down. There was blood all over. All over her legs, her face. All over the walls...

Bannerman is getting pretty wrought up. Johnny touches his shoulder.

JOHNNY

Don't. You don't have to...

Bannerman rises back to his feet.

BANNERMAN

I've never seen anything like it, not in eighteen years of police work. He raped that young girl and that would have been enough to...to kill her, but then he had to smash her face in and leave her there with her underpants pulled down around her ankles...

Bannerman removes his glasses and rubs the tears from his eyes.

BANNERMAN

(softly)

Shit...

Johnny is moved...and angry. He seems determined to help.

JOHNNY

Have you got anything? Something he might have worn...or touched?

Bannerman looks up, his expression suddenly alive. He steps toward his car, reaches inside and removes something from the glove compartment. He shows it to Johnny: an empty pack of Marlboros sealed in a plastic bag.

BANNERMAN

This is the only real piece of evidence we have. We dusted it for prints, of course, but came up empty. We know his victims all put up a struggle, but there's never been a scrap of skin or one follicle of the killer's hair under their fingernails.

(indicating the
cigarette pack)

The city council'd have my ass if they knew I was carrying this around with me. But I brought it with me tonight on a hunch. Maybe you can do something with it.

Johnny hesitates. For the first time it seems important to him that his powers don't fail.

JOHNNY

Let me have it.

BANNERMAN

Wait a minute.

Bannerman rips open the plastic seal with his teeth, then hands the empty cigarette pack to Johnny.

Johnny holds the box in one hand and closes his eyes. The WIND WHISTLES and HOWLS through the tunnel nearby. He switches hands. Then he tries both hands. He waits for something to come...but nothing does.

BANNERMAN

No soap...?

JOHNNY

(shaking his head)

I'm sorry.

Bannerman looks crestfallen as he takes back the empty pack of Marlboros.

BANNERMAN

Well, shit...can't say we didn't try.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. A DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Sarah sits in the office, Denny on her lap. The DOCTOR enters.

DOCTOR

Sarah, congratulations. You tested positive. You're pregnant.

CAMERA MOVES IN CLOSE on Sarah's face. There is something lurking behind her expression. Something private and knowing.

EXT. THE HOUSE - NIGHT

Johnny carries an armload of firewood into the house. His father meets him at the front door, holds it open for him.

INT. THE HOUSE

Johnny enters.

HERB

Telephone for you, John. Sounds urgent.

Johnny tenses up as his life is intruded upon once again. He takes the logs to the fireplace and sets them down.

JOHNNY

Who is it? Did they say?

HERB

It's that Sheriff Bannerman.

Johnny perks up. He goes quickly to the phone.

JOHNNY

This is John, Sheriff. What's up?

EXT. A SMALL PARK - NIGHT

A murder scene. Newsmen are already there. Also an ambulance, a coroner's van and several police cars. Their whirling bubble lights cast a hellish glow across the snow.

Curious onlookers begin to appear. They are held back by Sheriff's Deputies.

Bannerman climbs out of his car followed by Johnny. A cold, biting wind whips the fallen snow around. It burns and stings the flesh.

A DEPUTY approaches Bannerman.

BANNERMAN

Where is she?

DEPUTY

Over here.

BANNERMAN

(to Johnny)

Wait here for a minute.

CAMERA FOLLOWS Bannerman and the Deputy to where the murder victim lies. Newsmen dog his tracks.

ANGLE ON THE MURDER VICTIM

lying in the snow, a young girl. Nearly naked. Covered with blood. Her pantyhose wrapped around her neck and face. Her skin a deathly pale blue color.

ANGLE ON BANNERMAN AND THE DEPUTY

BANNERMAN

Who is she?

DEPUTY

Don't know. No I.D. No purse.
No nuthin'.

The newsmen begin taking flash pictures.

BANNERMAN

Seal this area off! Get these people
out of here!

ANGLE ON JOHNNY

leaning against Bannerman's car, watching the commotion from a distance. The night is freezing cold. He turns up the collar on his jacket.

Bannerman approaches him as another police car pulls up and parks. The Deputy gets out.

CLOSE ANGLE ON THE DEPUTY

His name is FRANK DODD...but we recognize him as The Killer.

He walks toward Bannerman and Johnny.

DODD

(to Bannerman)

No sooner do I come on duty, than
I get the call over the wire. How's
it look?

BANNERMAN

It looks bad.

(turns to Johnny)

John, I want you to come with me.
All right?

JOHNNY

Sure.

Dodd turns, notices Johnny for the first time. He knows about him, knows about his reputation. Suddenly Dodd becomes very uneasy.

BANNERMAN

Frank, you know where Lillian
Norman lives, don't you?

Dodd is in a preoccupied daze.

DODD

Huh? Who...?

BANNERMAN

The high school principal. Do you
know where she lives?

Dodd nods his head.

BANNERMAN

Go to her house. If she's asleep,
wake her up. I want the school
annuals for the last three years.
This poor girl out here, whoever
she is, is bound to be in one of
those books.

DODD

I'm on my way...

But Dodd doesn't leave immediately. He lingers behind to watch as Bannerman leads Johnny toward the murdered girl.

TRACKING WITH BANNERMAN AND JOHNNY
Reporters fall into step with them.

REPORTERS (AD LIBS)

-- Isn't that John Smith, the
psychic? --

(MORE)

REPORTERS (AD LIBS) (CONT'D)

-- This your idea, Sheriff? --
 -- Can you break the case, John? --
 -- etc. etc.

Bannerman ignores the questions. An AMBULANCE DRIVER approaches.

AMBULANCE DRIVER

Nothing more we can do, Sheriff.
 We're heading back.

BANNERMAN

Okay, Del. Thanks.

The Deputy comes up next.

DEPUTY

Got it all roped off for ya, Sheriff.

BANNERMAN

Good. Now take every available man
 you can find and search the area.
 Cover every square inch of it.

DEPUTY

Right.

Bannerman and Johnny arrive at the roped-off area. A sign reads: POLICE INVESTIGATION - STAY OUT. Bannerman holds the rope up for Johnny to go under. Several reporters try to follow.

BANNERMAN

Stay back behind this line!

The reporters stop in their tracks, GRUMBLING loudly. Bannerman and Johnny continue on to the body. The county coroner is there waiting.

ANGLE ON JOHNNY

as he looks down at the body and reacts. He wants to look away, to turn and run...but more importantly, he wants to help. He bends down slowly to the body and touches the girl's cold flesh.

Bannerman gestures to the coroner to step back. Everything becomes quiet and very still. The only sound being the continuous HOWL of the WIND.

ANGLE ON FRANK DODD

He climbs into his patrol car, SLAMS the DOOR loudly and ROARS off, his tires spinning in the slush.

RETURN TO JOHNNY

kneeling in the snow beside the girl's body. He feels something stirring within him. Things begin to happen.

JOHNNY

He called her name. He knew her...
they knew each other. He called to
her...her name is Carol.

(in Dodd's voice)

Carol...Carol...Carol!

(in his own voice)

Omigod...the stop sign. He's holding
the stop sign!

(in Carol's voice)

Stop. Stop it. Stop it! Stop it!

Bannerman looks confused, perplexed. Johnny lowers his head,
then raises it slowly.

JOHNNY

(as Dodd)

I'm slick...I'm so slick.

BANNERMAN

What? What's that?

JOHNNY

(as Dodd; smiling
demonically)

I'm sooo fucking slick!

Bannerman takes a step back in horror. Johnny's black hair blows
wildly across his white face...a face that has gone suddenly
blank...a face that seems to give rise to another face...a face
that Bannerman recognizes.

JOHNNY

(as Dodd)

I'm too slick. Too slick for you.
You can't catch me 'cause I'm too
fucking slick!

(glances at
the dead girl)

Nasty fucker! Nasty fucker! I
killed her, Mom. I killed the nasty
fucker. What do you think of me?
What do you think of your precious
little boy now!

Stillness. Overhead, the winter WIND SCREAMS through the black
sky.

CLOSE ANGLE ON BANNERMAN

He looks as if he'd seen a ghost.

INT. BANNERMAN'S POLICE CAR - NIGHT

Johnny sits in the passenger seat, wrapped in a blanket but
shivering nonetheless. He drinks hot coffee directly from a
thermos.

Bannerman taps one finger against the steering wheel.

Through the windshield, we SEE the dead body being placed inside the coroner's van.

JOHNNY

(between sips
of coffee)

You never found any skin tissue or hair under their fingernails because of the raincoat. He always wears a raincoat. Black and vinyl, with a hood.

BANNERMAN

(after a moment)

John, do you have any idea who you're talking about?

JOHNNY

No.

BANNERMAN

You're talking about Frank Dodd... one of my deputies.

JOHNNY

What??

Johnny's head is throbbing and his legs pain him. He digs his fingers into his thighs. Bannerman is silent.

JOHNNY

What now?

Bannerman thinks for a moment, then leans forward and turns the ignition key. The MOTOR FIRES UP.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Bannerman's car comes down the street and parks across from a darkened, forbidding-looking two-story New England saltbox. Frank Dodd's patrol car is parked outside.

INT. THE POLICE CAR

BANNERMAN

(to Johnny)

There's his house...and there's his car.

(beat)

Let's go.

EXT. THE HOUSE - NIGHT

Bannerman and Johnny get out of the car and walk toward the house, Johnny limping badly.

INT. THE HOUSE - AN UPSTAIRS BEDROOM

Moonlight floods in through an uncovered window. Frank Dodd steps INTO FRAME. He is naked.

His twenty-seven-year-old body is wiry and well-muscled.

He moves to the window, looks out and sees Bannerman and Johnny below approaching the house.

EXT. THE HOUSE - NIGHT

Bannerman and Johnny reach the front door. Bannerman knocks and waits.

INT. THE UPSTAIRS BEDROOM

Dodd looks at his naked body in the dressing table mirror, then slips into his black vinyl raincoat. He pulls up the hood.

EXT. THE HOUSE - NIGHT

Bannerman knocks again. Finally, HENRIETTA DODD, a sickly looking old woman with yellow-gray skin comes to the door, opening it just a crack.

HENRIETTA

Who's there?

BANNERMAN

George Bannerman, Mrs. Dodd. I want to see Frank.

HENRIETTA

He's sleeping.

BANNERMAN

I want to see him now.

HENRIETTA

He's sick.

BANNERMAN

He didn't call in sick and as far as I'm concerned, he's still on duty.

Bannerman pushes open the door and Henrietta jumps back.

INT. THE UPSTAIRS BEDROOM

CAMERA PANS DOWN Dodd's arm to his hand. He reaches for a box on the dressing table. He opens the box and withdraws a straight razor. It glistens in the moonlight.

INT. THE HOUSE - THE ENTRYWAY

Bannerman and Johnny have entered the house. For the first time, Johnny gets a complete look at Henrietta -- an awful bloated-looking woman with a nearly reptilian eczema rash covering her hands and arms. Johnny sniffs the air and reacts to the sour smell.

HENRIETTA

(meaning Johnny)
Who's this?

BANNERMAN
(ignoring her)
I'm going upstairs, Henrietta.

HENRIETTA
No! Leave him alone. He needs his
sleep.

She reaches for Bannerman, but too late. He's already half-way up the stairs. Instead, she lunges for Johnny.

HENRIETTA
Leave my boy alone!

Her fingers wrap around his arm. It's as if he touched a live electrical wire. They look at each other in awful, perfect understanding.

JOHNNY
(a whisper)
You knew. All the time you knew.

HENRIETTA
You're the devil sent from hell.

Johnny tries to tug his arm free of her grasp.

JOHNNY
Let go!

Henrietta lets him go, then backs away from him, HISSING like a cat.

INT. A DARKENED ROOM
A closet? A bathroom? We can't tell. All we SEE is the black-vinyl clad Dodd methodically sharpening the straight razor against a honing stone. He moves the blade across the stone with a deliberate, unhurried motion.

INT. THE UPSTAIRS LANDING
Bannerman makes his way down the darkened hallway toward Dodd's bedroom door. His hand is poised on the butt of his gun. He reaches the door and stops.

BANNERMAN
Frank! This is George Bannerman,
Frank. I want to talk to you.
I'm coming in.

Bannerman turns the doorknob and slowly swings open the door. The room is in total darkness. Bannerman swallows hard and steps inside.

BANNERMAN
Frank? Are you awake, Frank?

No response.

Bannerman feels for the wall switch and turns on the light. He reacts to what he sees.

ANGLE ON JOHNNY

coming down the hallway to join Bannerman. He looks into Frank's bedroom.

JOHNNY

Good Lord...

ANGLE ON BEDROOM

A child's room. Dancing clowns and rocking horses on the wallpaper. A Raggedy Andy doll sitting in a child-sized chair. In one corner, a toybox. In another, a small maple bed with Frank's holstered gun hooked over the bedpost.

ANGLE ON JOHNNY AND BANNERMAN

They exchange a look.

JOHNNY

She knew. The mother knew all along.
She's been covering for him.

Then -- behind them -- a SCREAM. A SHRIEK. An ungodly ear-piercing ANIMAL CRY! Johnny turns. Henrietta Dodd looms up in the doorway -- her expression twisted and tortured -- her eyes snake-red -- her teeth exposed -- a lethal looking kitchen knife raised in one hand.

She brings the knife down with a mighty thrust. It cuts through the air toward Johnny. He twists away. The knife digs into his upper arm with a CHUNK. Johnny yells in pain. Blood spurts.

She turns the knife on Bannerman. His gun is out. His finger squeezes down the trigger. An EXPLOSION. A .32 caliber bullet tears into Henrietta's chest, ripping out her back, blowing her against the wall.

The hallway fills with gunsmoke. Johnny is doubled over clutching his bleeding arm. Henrietta is sprawled on the floor, her limbs twisted in unnatural directions. Bannerman is breathing hard.

Then...the bathroom door flies open and Dodd springs out into the hallway like a monstrous vampire bat. Wielding the straight razor and SCREECHING at the top of his lungs.

JOHNNY

Sheriff!!

Bannerman turns to fire his gun. Dodd's razor slices across his hand. Bannerman cries out and drops the gun. Dodd brings the razor back across Bannerman's chest, carving open his leather jacket but not drawing blood.

Bannerman lunges for the razor, grabbing Dodd by the wrist.

They struggle to the floor, Dodd fighting with the viciousness of a cornered rodent. He gets away from Bannerman and charges down the hallway toward Johnny.

Johnny looks terror-stricken as Dodd takes a swipe at him with the razor. Johnny ducks and the razor tears across the wall-paper just inches from his head.

Dodd draws back the razor to strike again, but Johnny rams into him with his uninjured shoulder. Dodd falls backwards off balance, trips over the body of his mother and falls flat on his butt.

Henrietta's hideous dead eyes stare up at him.

DODD

Aahhhhhh!!

Bannerman pounces on him, kicking the razor from his hand. He throws Dodd face forward against the wall and cuffs his hands behind his back.

Johnny pulls himself to his feet, looks toward Dodd. Dodd's raincoat has been pulled back in the struggle exposing his naked genitals. He glares at Johnny hatefully.

DODD

(to Johnny)

Judas! Judas! You killed my mother!
You killed my mother, you prick-
eating faggot!

BANNERMAN

Shut up!

DODD

(to Johnny)

I'll fuck you up the ass! I'll fuck
you up the ass!

He pumps his pelvis in a vulgar back-and-forth motion.

DODD

(to Johnny)

See you in hell, pussycat! Look for
me! Look for me!

BANNERMAN

Damnit, shut up!

Bannerman practically throws Dodd down the stairs. Johnny turns away. Groping for the wall, looking for support. The pounding in his head has climbed to a sizzling, nearly unbearable peak, and the pain in his arm and legs courses through his body like an electrical current.

FULL SHOT - A TELEVISION SCREEN

The popular network news magazine show "Here and Now" is in progress. We SEE correspondent ROGER DAVIS walking through the park where the murdered girl was discovered. It's a cold day in mid-March, a month or two after the incident.

ROGER DAVIS

...of course the snow is melted now, but this is where the body was discovered, Here. Between these two old poplar trees.

(beat)

Her name was Carol Danzinger and she was only eighteen years of age. The tenth and final victim of the so-called Castle Rock Killer.

(kneels down)

John Smith knelt down in the snow next to her; and -- through the simple act of laying his hand upon hers -- was able to identify her murderer.

Roger Davis gets up, walks TOWARD CAMERA.

ROGER DAVIS

Amazing? Of course. Impossible? Clearly not so. It may very well be that John Smith, of Pownal, Maine, is the first genuine psychic to be uncovered in this country since the famed Peter Hurkos.

SCENE SHIFTS to various "man-on-the-street-type" encounters. The FIRST MAN is an angry-looking redneck.

FIRST MAN

My wife run off three years ago with some nigger car salesman. If John Smith's so damned smart, why don't he find her for me? He's got my number. I mailed it to him. I'd give a week's pay to get my hands on that bitch again. Why don't you call me, Smith? What are you anyway, some kinda nigger lover?

The FIRST WOMAN is a dreadful-looking person with jet-black hair.

FIRST WOMAN

I am not a psychic. John Smith claims to be a psychic. I am a mentalist and a spiritualist. I challenge John Smith here and now to a show-down of extrasensory powers.

(MORE)

FIRST WOMAN (CONT'D)

Loser leaves town. Let's see if he's willing to face me. I'll pitch a tent outside his house if that's what it takes to draw him out.

The SECOND and THIRD MEN are a pair of hustlers.

SECOND MAN

We've got no personal axe to grind of our own. We're gonna cut Smith in on the deal of his life.

THIRD MAN

A sixteenth-century Spanish galleon sunken off the coast of Florida.

SECOND MAN

We know where it went down.

THIRD MAN

Almost.

The SECOND WOMAN is an ugly, overweight horror in a baseball warm-up jacket.

SECOND WOMAN

I want to bear John Smith's child. I want him to plant his seed inside me.

The FOURTH MAN is a religious fanatic.

FOURTH MAN

John Smith is the False Prophet! He is a con artist and a cheat, and he shall be cast into the Lake of Fire. He shall be consumed! He shall burn forever and ever!

SCENE SHIFTS to Brewer College. Roger Davis stands in the grassy quadrangle. Students pass by on their way to class.

ROGER DAVIS

Brewer College. The small community college where John Smith taught English before the tragic accident that began his bizarre ordeal more than six years ago.

(a beat)

Smith was to have returned here in the spring and resumed his teaching duties. Now...that all seems very doubtful.

SCENE SHIFTS to the office of DR. ROBERT GREGORY, president of the college. Roger Davis sits across the desk from him.

ROGER DAVIS
You fired him, is that it?

DR. GREGORY
Not at all, Mr. Davis. You're putting words in my mouth. There was never a signed contract between us and Mr. Smith.

ROGER DAVIS
You're playing games now, Dr. Gregory. You fired him before he even began. Let's face it.

DR. GREGORY
John Smith is far too controversial to be effective as a teacher. He attracts the wrong type of people. We can't have a bunch of weirdos and clackpots wandering the campus disrupting things.

SCENE SHIFTS to outside Johnny's house. Roger Davis stands next to the mailbox as the MAILMAN stuffs it with countless letters and envelopes.

ROGER DAVIS
This is where John Smith was born and raised. And he still lives here today, with his father, a retired handyman.

(turns toward mailbox)

As you can see, the mail just keeps pouring in. It's been this way, local postal officials tell me, for the last two months. Hate mail, love letters, you name it. Lonely voices crying out for help and assistance.

(beat)

But John Smith eschews the limelight, avoids the attention, downplays the notoriety. He would, in fact, not even return the numerous calls placed to him by the 'Here and Now' staff.

(pause)

But he's inside his house at this very minute. Let's see if we can't get a few words with him.

HAND-HELD effect as CAMERA FOLLOWS Roger Davis across the yard and up the porch steps. He knocks on the door. Herb comes outside.

HERB
What do you want?

ROGER DAVIS

Mr. Smith, I'm Roger Davis from
'Here and Now'. We'd like to talk
with your son.

Herb doesn't know whether to look at Davis or into the camera.

HERB

Johnny doesn't want to talk to anybody.

ROGER DAVIS

This is national television. He'll
have an opportunity to say anything
he wants to the people of this
country.

HERB

Nope. Sorry...

ROGER DAVIS

Just a moment of his time, Mr.
Smith. That's all we request.

Finally, Johnny comes to the door. We are shocked by his pale,
thin, almost emaciated appearance. His hair is longer, but
stringy and uncombed.

JOHNNY

Leave me alone! You people are
killing me! Killing me!

FREEZE FRAME on Johnny's face. Then...CUT TO the "Here and Now"
logo: a digital CLOCK, CLICKING away the minutes, the hours,
the days...

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

BLACK SCREEN...TITLE APPEARS:

NEW HAMPSHIRE - MAY 1977
Greg Stillson

INT. AN OFFICE SUITE - DAY

GREG STILLSON -- a healthy-looking man in his early forties --
is slumped in a leather sofa, his feet up on the glass-topped
coffee table. Seated across from him is ALFRED DUNLAP, a
distinguished banker with graying hair. SONNY ELLIMAN, a
reformed Hell's Angel and Stillson's right-hand man, hovering in
the b.g.

DUNLAP

Rice Burnham's an institution in
this state. He's been in Congress
twenty-five years or more. You're
not going to unseat him.

Stillson shrugs his shoulders indifferently.

DUNLAP

I'm sorry. If you're looking for a contribution, you're barking up the wrong tree. Good night.

Dunlap grabs his hat and prepares to leave.

STILLSON

Sit down a minute.

Stillson's voice is commanding and Dunlap does as ordered. Stillson moves toward him.

STILLSON

I'm a man of vision, Alfred. I don't just want a contribution... I want your endorsement as well.

Dunlap can't believe his ears.

DUNLAP

My endorsement??

STILLSON

That's right. Your name carries a lot of weight around these parts. I want you on my team.

DUNLAP

You must be joking.

STILLSON

Nope. No joke.

Dunlap can only shake his head in dismay and chuckle softly.

STILLSON

You're missing out on a good bet, Alfred.

Dunlap heads for the door.

DUNLAP

Good night, Greg.

STILLSON

My candidacy's the most exciting thing to happen in this state in years.

DUNLAP

(smiling)

Then I guess I'm just not that easily excited.

Dunlap reaches for the door handle.

STILLSON

That's not what Laura DeAngelo tells me, Alfie.

Dunlap stops dead in his tracks, his hand frozen on the door-knob. He turns slowly to face Stillson.

DUNLAP

What did you say?

Stillson doesn't respond, except to smile suggestively and lick his lips. He pulls some photographs from his shirt pocket and shows them to Sonny Elliman.

STILLSON

Take a gander at these, Sonny.

SONNY

Whoooie!

STILLSON

Didn't know you could get such good color from a Polaroid.

Dunlap has gone completely pale.

STILLSON

You're a real freak, Alfie. Did you take these?

Dunlap stumbles toward Stillson, lunging for the photos. Stillson turns away, ogling one photo in particular.

STILLSON

Lookit those nice pink titties, Alfie. No wonder you're grinnin' from ear to ear.

DUNLAP

Where did you get those! Give them to me!

STILLSON

Not so fast, Alfie-boy.

DUNLAP

Where did you get them...?

Stillson nods to one of his boys who opens the door to the adjoining room. LAURA DE ANGELO enters in all her pubescent glory.

DUNLAP

Jesus, Mary and Joseph...

STILLSON

(to Laura)

Honey, tell Alfie here how old you are.

LAURA

Fifteen.

Dunlap looks as if his heart had just attacked him.

STILLSON

And not a day over.

Dunlap sinks down into a chair. Defeated. Conquered. Stillson throws the photographs into his lap.

STILLSON

Look these over, Alfie. Make sure they're all there.

(to Laura)

Come over here, sweetheart.

He takes Laura aside and slips her something in a plastic bag.

STILLSON

Don't snort it all in one place.

Laura smiles, stuffs the dope into her purse, winks at Stillson and glides out the door.

STILLSON

(to Sonny)

I don't wanna have to worry about trusting her.

SONNY

Don't give it a second thought.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. A PARK - DAY

A beautiful spring day. Denny runs ahead of Sarah, anxious to play on the swings. Sarah touches her swelling belly, a wistful expression on her face.

JOHNNY (V.O.)

Dear Sarah, it's taken a while, but I think I've finally put that Castle Rock Killer business behind me. I'm living in New Hampshire now, working as a tutor...

EXT. THE STUART ESTATE - DAY

An ivy-covered Georgian-styled mansion. Various expensive cars parked in the drive. Manicured lawns and gardens. The feeling of old money.

JOHNNY (V.O.)

(continuing)

You should see where I'm staying.
You wouldn't believe it. My
student's name is Chuck Stuart.
His dad is Roger Stuart. Maybe
you've heard of him...

We SEE a black Mercedes 450 SEL glide up to the house. ROGER STUART appears from the car. He's trim and youthful at forty-eight years of age, and exudes wealth and privilege.

JOHNNY (V.O.)

(continuing)

I think he's worth about a hundred million. The family owns the Stuart Mills and Weaving and just about everything else in sight...

We SEE the grounds of the estate. A Vietnamese gardener PURRS by on a riding LAWNMOWER.

JOHNNY (V.O.)

(continuing)

They've got a twenty-room house in Durham with a pool, tennis court, gym, driving range, trout stream -- the works!

We SEE Johnny inside his quarters: a comfortable, well-furnished guest house. We FOLLOW him across the living room and into the kitchen, where he gets a glass of water and takes some pills. He rubs his fingers into his aching temples.

JOHNNY (V.O.)

(continuing)

I've got the guest house all to myself, Sarah. Guess you could say I'm living in the lap of luxury, all right. My only worries these days are making certain Chuck graduates from high school and passes his college entrance exams...

We SEE Johnny with CHUCK, an athletic-looking teen-ager, conducting a reading lesson on a sun-dappled patio.

CHUCK

(reading)

'Of course young Danny Ju...Juniper ...young Danny Juniper was dead, and I suh...suppose that there were few in the world who...who would say had he not...he had not de... duh...deserved his da...death.'

JOHNNY (V.O.)

(continuing)

He's got a bit of a reading problem,
but you'd like Chuck, Sarah. He's
what my dad would call a regular
guy...

We SEE Johnny watching as Chuck and Roger engage in a spirited tennis match.

JOHNNY (V.O.)

(continuing)

Speaking of Dad -- guess what? He's
getting married. You remember that
widow he was doing all the work for
-- Charlene MacKenzie? Well, they'll
be tying the knot this summer...

The tennis ball comes Johnny's way. He moves to catch it, but his legs buckle and he falls. Chuck goes to his assistance.

JOHNNY (V.O.)

(continuing)

You'll be glad to know that my health
is improving. Must be this clean
country air.

We SEE Johnny by himself, fishing in the trout stream that runs behind the house.

JOHNNY (V.O.)

(continuing)

No more headaches and the pains in
my legs are nearly gone. I do
feel a little twinge, once in a
while, where Henrietta Dodd
planted that knife. Otherwise,
I'm in tip-top condition.

We SEE Johnny, at night, sitting on his private porch, looking up at the stars, listening to the crickets.

JOHNNY (V.O.)

(continuing)

Nobody bothers me down here, Sarah,
I don't even think they know who I
am. You once said I had a God-given
talent, but it's for teaching...not
for knowing things I've got no
business knowing.

Johnny gets up and goes inside.

JOHNNY (V.O.)

(continuing)

Dad says you're expecting again --
congratulations.

(MORE)

JOHNNY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Meanwhile, give Denny a big kiss
 for me, and one for you, too.
 Write when you get a chance.
 Love, Johnny.

EXT. THE STUART ESTATE - THE POOL - DAY
 Johnny conducts his reading lesson poolside.

CHUCK
 (reading)
 '...then he hung his six-guns on
 the bunkhouse door, to use them
 nevermore.'
 (snapping the
 book closed)
 Okay! Last one in the pool's a --

JOHNNY
 -- hey, not so fast. Slow down. I
 want to ask you a few questions first.

Chuck's expression sours. Johnny picks up Chuck's book.

JOHNNY
 Chuck, who was the girl Sherburne
 went nuts for? Can you tell me?

Chuck's expression goes blank.

CHUCK
 Her name?
 (beat)
 Hell, I don't remember. I can't
 remember anything!

JOHNNY
 Don't be angry with yourself.

CHUCK
 Why not? I'm a dummy.

JOHNNY
 No you're not. Tell me how Red
 Hawk killed Danny Juniper.

Chuck shakes his head uselessly. He doesn't know.

CHUCK
 What's the use. I'm going for a
 swim.

JOHNNY
 In a moment. Just a few more
 questions first.

CHUCK

I can't remember anything I read.
You know that.

JOHNNY

Relax. I don't want to talk about
the book.

CHUCK

You don't?

JOHNNY

(indicates the car
parked nearby)
How do you like that Corvette your
dad bought you?

CHUCK

(smiling broadly)
How do you think? I fuckin' love
it.

JOHNNY

A real powerhouse, I'll bet.

CHUCK

Thirty-six hundred foot-pounds of
torque at two-hundred and sixty RPMs.

JOHNNY

No kidding.
(beat)
Chuck, what position did you play
in football? Halfback, wasn't it?

CHUCK

Quarterback. You know that.
Remember those clippings I showed
you?

JOHNNY

Frank Gifford used to be my favorite
quarterback.

CHUCK

Boy, you're really out of it, John.
Gifford didn't play quarterback.
Not for the Giants, anyway.

JOHNNY

Tell me about Red Hawk. How'd he
get past the guards and kill Danny
Juniper?

CHUCK

He got into the attic through the
skylight, then kicked open the
trapdoor in the ceiling.

JOHNNY

Then what?

CHUCK

He shot Danny Juniper and Tom Kenyon,
too.

Johnny smiles and it dawns on Chuck what has just happened.

CHUCK

Hey...I just read that in the book.
I remembered! You got me to
remember! Boy, that's some neat
trick.

JOHNNY

I didn't trick you. I just led you
to the answer through the back door.

CHUCK

Wow...

JOHNNY

The problem isn't licked yet, but
we're getting there.

Chuck looks up at Johnny, his expression filled with emotion.

CHUCK

I get so scared sometimes, John.
(smiles slightly)
That's a laugh, isn't it? A big
jock like me scared of some little
book.

Chuck sighs deeply, glances up toward the family's imposing
residence, then looks back at Johnny.

CHUCK

I think if I could just change my
last name some things wouldn't be
so difficult.

Johnny smiles sympathetically, then hears the MOTOR of Roger's
approaching GOLF CART.

JOHNNY

(to Chuck)

Go on. Take your swim.

Chuck leaps up, peels off his shirt and dives into the pool --
a perfect, soundless dive. Johnny watches him with a feeling
of pride, then turns toward Roger, who has just driven up.

ROGER

Heading back to the house? Hop in.
I'll give you a lift.

Johnny slides in next to Roger. CAMERA TRACKS with them as they travel up toward the house.

ROGER
Making any headway?

JOHNNY
As a matter of fact, we had something of a breakthrough today.

ROGER
Really? That's excellent.

JOHNNY
Chuck isn't stupid, Mr. Stuart. Not by any means. But he does have this reading block.

ROGER
Jackson's syndrome.

Johnny is taken aback by Roger's knowledge of the subject.

ROGER
I've been reading up on the matter.

JOHNNY
It's not exactly Jackson's syndrome.

ROGER
I see...

He steers the cart into the driveway and sets the brake.

ROGER
(continuing)
Then what exactly is it?

Johnny hesitates.

JOHNNY
I can tell you what a big part of the problem is.

ROGER
Please do.

JOHNNY
It's you, Mr. Stuart.

ROGER
What...?

JOHNNY
You must realize that Chuck is living in your shadow. He'd like to follow in your footsteps, but you've left some damn big ones behind you.

(MORE)

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

(pause)

Chuck's under a lot of pressure. He's afraid of failure. He's afraid of displeasing you. These feelings are bound to manifest themselves somehow.

(beat)

In Chuck's case, it's a reading disorder.

This has a sobering effect on Roger.

ROGER

What can I do about that?

JOHNNY

Nothing. Chuck has to do it himself.

EXT. THE DURHAM LIBRARY - DAY

Johnny and Chuck come down the library steps. Chuck carries a pile of books in his hand.

CHUCK

How am I supposed to read all of these?

JOHNNY

(with a smile)

One at a time.

Chuck groans. He doesn't think Johnny's much of a comedian.

JOHNNY

Start with this one.
(taking it from
Chuck's hand)
The Catcher in the Rye.

CHUCK

Baseball story?

JOHNNY

Read it and find out.

EXT. ANOTHER STREET - DAY

Chuck throws the books into the back of his Corvette. Johnny glances across the street toward the town square where a large, boisterous crowd has gathered.

ANGLE ON THE TOWN SQUARE

A Greg Stillson rally in full progress. Stillson's constituency is evidently wide and varied. A circus atmosphere prevails as Stillson performs atop a platform constructed in front of an impressive Minuteman statue.

STILLSON

When you send ole Greg Stillson to Washington, what's he gonna do? Stick his hand into the public till and go home!?

THE CROWD

No way!

STILLSON

Is he gonna sit there in Congress and vote like the powerbrokers tell him, and the big-wigs and the fat-cats?!

THE CROWD

No way!

STILLSON

Damn straight! When Greg Stillson gets down to Washington, he's gonna tell those bums out! He's gonna go throw those s.o.b.'s like a goose through a canebreak!

A tremendous, sustained ROAR of approval.

ANGLE ON JOHNNY AND CHUCK

working their way through the crowd to get a better look. All around them people are going crazy. Johnny seems a little overwhelmed by it all...and he's made uneasy by the sight of Stillson's motorcycle-riding henchmen standing guard all over the place.

ANGLE ON STILLSON

He tears off his workshirt revealing a T-shirt underneath with his picture on it.

STILLSON

Vote for the best -- wear Greg on your chest!

The crowd goes into a frenzy as a pair of Stillson's boys open the huge cardboard boxes on the platform and begin dispensing the T-shirts.

Stillson jumps off the platform into the crowd. His bodyguards clear a path for him. The crowd surges forward, reaching for his hand. Stillson shakes as many as he can reach.

ANGLE ON JOHNNY AND CHUCK

They're swept up in a tide of human bodies propelling them involuntarily toward Stillson. Johnny struggles to keep his balance.

Then, their forward progress is abruptly halted as the muscled forearm of a Stillson "stormtrooper" presses against Chuck's chest.

Johnny turns to see Stillson coming. Only several feet away now, shaking every hand in sight. He seems larger than life at this close distance. His smile broad and winning, his face tanned and rugged. His blue eyes dancing.

STILLSON

Good to see ya, good to see ya...

Stillson turns in Johnny's direction. Their eyes meet. Impulsively, Johnny extends his hand and Stillson takes it in both his own, shaking it vigorously.

STILLSON

Glad to see ya. Glad to...

He stops in mid-sentence, his smile fading. Johnny appears mesmerized. The moment seems endlessly protracted.

JOHNNY

(to himself)

Omigod...

Stillson is disconcerted by Johnny, he wants to get away as fast as possible. He lets go of Johnny's hand and moves on. Others, anxious to reach Stillson, push Johnny aside.

He watches Stillson disappear into the crowd.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ROGER'S STUDY - EVENING

Johnny enters. Roger is seated on the sofa watching television. Only the back of his head is visible to Johnny. Johnny clears his throat to attract Roger's attention.

It works. Roger turns around, sees Johnny and gets up from the sofa.

ROGER

John, listen to this...

He goes to bookshelves that occupy one entire wall and takes down a volume. He opens the book and reads from it.

ROGER

'Whenever I find myself growing grim about the mouth; whenever it is a damp, drizzly November in my soul; whenever I find myself pausing before coffin warehouses, and bringing up the rear of every funeral I meet; and whenever it requires a strong moral principle to prevent me from methodically knocking people's hats off -- then, I account it high time to get to sea as soon as I can.'

Roger snaps the book closed.

JOHNNY

Moby Dick.

ROGER

Yes. My favorite passage in all literature.

(beat)

Last night Chuck came in here, took down this book, opened it to that paragraph and read aloud. I mean, he sailed through it!

(beat)

I'm not ashamed to tell you, John, it brought tears to my eyes. You've done a remarkable job. Everything's going to be all right now.

JOHNNY

Well, we've still got a ways to go.

ROGER

Stop being so modest.

(takes an envelope
from his pocket)

Here. This is for you. I promised you a bonus if you showed results, and here it is.

Johnny opens the envelope to find a cashier's check for ten-thousand dollars.

JOHNNY

I -- I can't take this.

Roger begins to mix a couple of drinks.

ROGER

Certainly you can. You've earned it.

JOHNNY

(after a pause)

Thank you, Mr. Stuart. I can put it to good use.

ROGER

I'm sure you can.

Johnny doesn't follow, he looks at Roger quizzically.

ROGER

I'm speaking of your hospital bills.

JOHNNY

How long have you known?

ROGER

I knew before you moved in. I wasn't put off by all this psychic hoopla. Don't believe in it myself. But I did believe in you, John. Had a feeling you could handle the job, and I was right.

(slides him a drink)

Wet your whistle on that.

As Johnny and Roger sip their drinks, their attention drifts toward the television screen.

ANCHORMAN'S VOICE

...the wild card in this election is, of course, Greg Stillson, who is surely running one of the most eccentric races of this campaign year...etc., etc.

Roger smiles expectantly.

ROGER

Ever see this guy, Stillson, John?

JOHNNY

Yes...I have.

ROGER

(with a laugh)

He's crazy as a rat in a drainpipe...

The TV Anchorman babbles on about Stillson.

ROGER

(continuing)

Ex-Bible salesman, ex-housepainter, ex-real estate developer...one-time rainmaker.

JOHNNY

Rainmaker?!

ROGER

I kid you not. This guy's the real McCoy.

ANGLE ON THE TV SCREEN

We SEE Stillson -- dressed in hiking boots, faded jeans, Army fatigue shirt and hard-hat -- pitching hot dogs to a frenzied audience.

STILLSON

Hot dogs for every man, woman and child in America! And when you put Greg Stillson in the House of Representatives, you're gonna say: Hot dog! Someone gives a rip at last!

RETURN TO JOHNNY AND ROGER

Roger is genuinely tickled by Stillson's antics.

ROGER

Can you believe that? And he's
just getting warmed up.

Johnny watches in silence.

ROGER

What the hell...the guy's a clown.
This campaign can use a little
comic relief.

ANGLE ON THE TV SCREEN

We SEE on-the-spot correspondent, GEORGE HARVEY.

HARVEY

For CBS News, this is George Harvey
with the Stillson campaign in
Ridgeway, New Hampshire.

Harvey raises a hot dog to his mouth and takes a bite.

EXT. LOCAL MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

A warm summer evening. The show lets out and people stream
from the theater.

ANGLE ON LAURA DE ANGELO

walking with her boyfriend, his arm around her, both giggling
and laughing.

CAMERA TRACKS with them as they continue down the street and
turn into an alley where the boyfriend's battered VW beetle
is parked.

He fumbles for his keys, Laura kissing him all the while.
Finally he gets the door open and they slide inside.

ANGLE INSIDE THE VW

Laura laughs and bites his ear. The boyfriend smiles and slips
the key into the ignition.

CLOSE ANGLE ON THE IGNITION KEY

turning. A flash of white light.

ANGLE ON THE VW

exploding into a thousand pieces. Laura and her boyfriend blown
to bits.

INT. STILLSON'S HOTEL SUITE - DAY

Stillson eats a room service breakfast while listening to the
news on the radio.

RADIO

...meanwhile, on the local scene, two teen-agers were killed last night when their car exploded outside the Rialto movie theater. William Mizerak, seventeen, and Laura DeAngelo, fifteen, were both pronounced dead at the scene. No motive has been given in this gangland-style murder and baffled police officials say they are not hopeful --

Stillson switches off the radio, pours himself another cup of coffee and takes a second helping of pancakes and eggs.

EXT. DOWNTOWN DURHAM - A CANE SHOP - DAY

We SEE Johnny through the window being fitted for a walking stick. He selects one and the sales clerk demonstrates the proper way to use it.

NEW ANGLE ON JOHNNY

emerging from the shop, walking with the assistance of the cane. He seems awkward and uncomfortable as he makes his way down the street.

NEW ANGLE ON JOHNNY

crossing the street. His confidence with the cane seems to be increasing.

NEW ANGLE ON JOHNNY

turning a corner and stopping. A parade of some kind passes in front of him.

ANGLE ON THE INTERSECTION

A ten-piece banjo band seated atop a flat-bed truck is the first to pass. The BAND PLAYS THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND. A banner reads: GREG STILLSON FOR CONGRESS.

This is followed by six riders on gleaming chrome-plated Harley-Davidsons. They REV their MOTORS loudly.

Finally, a sound truck passes by. A large photo of Greg Stillson is attached to its side. The LOUDSPEAKER is BLARING.

LOUDSPEAKER

Do you want clean air and clean government? Are your taxes up and your hopes down?

ANGLE ON JOHNNY

listening with rapt attention.

LOUDSPEAKER

Is your nose to the grindstone but your back to the wall?

(MORE)

LOUDSPEAKER (CONT'D)

Then vote Stillson! Congressman,
third district.

(beat)

Live free or die -- here's Greg in
your eye!

Johnny watches as the sound truck continues on out of sight.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. A HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION CEREMONY - DAY

A sea of scarlet-colored caps and gowns. Names are being
called. Diplomas handed out.

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Margaret Louise Spencer...Joseph
Theodore Stevens...Charles Barton
Stuart...

Chuck scrambles across the stage to accept his diploma.

ANGLE ON THE AUDIENCE

Johnny sits with Roger. Both beam with pride.

EXT. THE STUART ESTATE - SAME DAY

A party is in progress on the South Lawn, near the pool. An
enormous blue and white tent has been erected. Dozens of Chuck's
friends and their parents enjoy the pleasant weather and ample
supply of food and drink.

Johnny stands apart from the others. He leans heavily on his
cane and watches the purple-bellied thunderheads gathering in
the western sky.

Chuck comes up to him with his girlfriend, PATTY.

CHUCK

Well, John...we did it.

Johnny smiles up at him.

CHUCK

I owe you, Johnny. Thanks a hell
of a lot.

Chuck puts his arms around Johnny and gives him a hug. Johnny's
expression changes dramatically. He pushes himself away.

JOHNNY

Oh, no...no, no, no!

CHUCK

Jesus. What is it? What's wrong?

Johnny turns his back on Chuck, his face a mask of misery and
pain.

CHUCK

John...

Chuck turns Johnny around, takes one look into his eyes and backs away.

JOHNNY

Can't get out...no way out...

(claws at his throat)

...can't breathe! Can't breathe!

(rubs his eyes)

My eyes! My eyes! I can't breathe!

All eyes have turned toward Johnny. The party has come to a complete stop. The guests stand in stunned silence.

JOHNNY

I can't...I can't...

Suddenly he screams and begins to slap his arms and chest.

JOHNNY

Omigod! Omigod! I'm on fire!

I'm on fire!

His body contorts in anguish. He throws his cane aside, takes two frantic steps and hurls himself into the shallow end of the swimming pool. SPLASH!

The party guests gasp aloud.

CHUCK

John!

Chuck jumps in after him, fully clothed. Others rush to the side of the pool. Johnny thrashes wildly in the water.

JOHNNY

It burns! It burns!

Johnny goes under and Chuck pulls him up, coughing and sputtering. He collapses with exhaustion in Chuck's arms.

INT. JOHNNY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Johnny lies in bed. Roger bends over him. The maid arrives with a tray of tea. She sets it down on the nightstand and departs.

Roger picks up the pot and pours a cup.

ROGER

I want you to drink this, John.

JOHNNY

What's 'Cathy's Place'?

ROGER

Drink this first.

Johnny is insistent.

JOHNNY

Please. Cathy's Place. What is it?

Roger gives in. He returns the teapot to the tray.

ROGER

It's a restaurant. Chuck's class in holding their graduation party there.

JOHNNY

When?

ROGER

Tonight.

JOHNNY

There's going to be a fire. It's going to burn. Cathy's Place will burn to the ground.

Roger's expression turns cold.

JOHNNY

You don't believe me.

ROGER

How can I? I live in the real world. The known world. I believe in what I can see, touch and smell.

JOHNNY

You don't have to believe me -- just humor me! Keep Chuck home.

ROGER

I can't do that. I won't do that.

JOHNNY

You must!

ROGER

I'm sorry. That boy sweated blood earning the right to attend this party tonight, and I'm not going to take that away from him.

JOHNNY

Roger, please. You don't understand.

ROGER

No! You're the one who doesn't understand. I'm not superstitious. I don't act on hunches, and I don't make decisions based on nonsense -- supernatural or otherwise.

(MORE)

ROGER (CONT'D)

I won't be ruled by the stars or the tides, John...

(gets to his feet)

...and I won't be keeping Chuck home tonight because it is impossible to know in advance things that have not yet occurred.

(beat)

It is not possible to see into the future.

Johnny is silent for a moment.

JOHNNY

I wish to God you were right.

INT. JOHNNY'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

Johnny stands by the window in his bathrobe. A THUNDERCLAP is heard in the distance.

JOHNNY'S POV OUT THE WINDOW

Chuck exits the main house dressed in his best suit. He crosses the lawn to the garage and climbs into his father's Mercedes. The sounds of the CAR DOOR SLAMMING and the ENGINE FIRING drift clearly toward Johnny through the crisp night air.

The Mercedes' taillights glow red as Chuck puts the car into reverse, turns in the driveway and heads out toward the main gates.

INT. CATHY'S PLACE - THE BANQUET ROOM - NIGHT

The graduation party is in full swing. Hundreds of celebrating teen-agers crowd the dance floor and surrounding tables. The walls vibrate to the ELECTRICAL THROBBINGS of a six-piece ROCK BAND.

Chuck and his friends pass around a pitcher of beer, drinking directly from it. Other merry-making is observed:

- The class clown doing a hula atop the bar.
- Various kids smoking pot.
- A pinball machine flashing TILT!
- Guys making out with their dates at the tables.
- Two guys fighting over one girl on the dance floor.
- Someone doing a "Steve Martin" balloon act.

ANGLE ON CHUCK

dancing with Patty, whispering something into her ear.

JOHNNY'S VOICE

(over loudspeaker)

Everyone. Please. Listen to me.
Listen to me!

Chuck turns toward the stage, his mouth drops open.

ANGLE ON THE STAGE

Johnny has taken the microphone from the lead singer's hand. He leans on his cane. Dark and drawn, he seems a specter of doom. The band grinds to a halt as everyone's attention is turned toward him.

JOHNNY

(into mike)

Everyone, please. You must leave this place at once. There's going to be a fire! Your lives are in mortal danger. Please, leave at once!

People groan and roll their eyes. Others boooo!

AD LIBS

-- Who let him out of his cage? --
 -- What's he high on? --
 -- Get 'im off the stage --
 -- Down in front! Beat it!

ANGLE ON CHUCK AND PATTY

Chuck can't believe his eyes. He feels ashamed and embarrassed for Johnny.

ANGLE ON THE STAGE

JOHNNY

(into mike)

Listen to me! You're all going to die if you don't get out! There's going to be a fire -- a fire!

The band begins to play again.

JOHNNY

(to the band)

No, don't! Don't play. Wait!

(to the kids)

You must listen to me! You must!

But no one does. They laugh and whistle and razz him unmercifully. Eventually the band drowns him out and two of Chuck's classmates usher Johnny from the stage.

ANGLE ON THE DANCE FLOOR

Johnny shoulders his way toward Chuck and Patty. Angry, poisonous looks are directed his way.

CHUCK

Jesus, John. What are you trying to pull?!

JOHNNY

(grabbing Chuck's arm)

C'mon. You're getting out of here.

(MORE)

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

(to Patty)

You too.

Chuck doesn't budge an inch.

CHUCK

Don't do this, John. We're having a good time. Lighten up a little.

JOHNNY

Chuck! Don't argue with me! You've got to leave now before it's too late.

CHUCK

Aw, Jesus. This is my graduation party. I don't know what's gotten into you today, Johnny. I wish I knew.

JOHNNY

Chuck, listen to me carefully. This building is going to burn down. I want you to leave -- now.

Chuck can't believe that he's serious.

JOHNNY

Please. If you think I've helped you, then trust me now.

Patty is growing alarmed. Johnny is getting through to her.

PATTY

(to Chuck)

Let's go. Let's do what he says.

Chuck glances at Patty, then back to Johnny. He seems to be weakening.

JOHNNY

You said you owed me, Chuck. I'm here to call on that debt.

Chuck thinks it over for a moment -- then decides.

CHUCK

I'm gonna feel like a jerk in the morning, but okay -- let's go.

EXT. CATHY'S PLACE - NIGHT

The Mercedes pulls out of the parking lot with Chuck, Johnny and Patty inside.

Overhead, the storm-threatening night sky is alive with electricity. It CRACKLES and SNAPS. Great, rolling THUNDERCLAPS CRASH in the distance like artillery fire.

INT. THE MERCEDES - TRAVELING - NIGHT
They travel in silence. Johnny sits in back by himself.

EXT. THE ROAD - NIGHT
The Mercedes travels a road that winds up a steep hill.

INT. THE MERCEDES - TRAVELING - NIGHT
Johnny glances out the back window. The restaurant is visible at the bottom of the hill.

EXT. THE RESTAURANT - NIGHT
A fiery bolt of lightning splits the night, illuminating the scene. A direct hit is scored on the large butane tank at the side of the restaurant. It EXPLODES in a ball of flame.

INT. THE MERCEDES - NIGHT
The explosion is reflected in the car's window glass. Patty screams hysterically. Chuck slams on the brakes. Johnny presses his palms hard against his temples, trying to hold back the oncoming pain.

EXT. THE RESTAURANT - NIGHT
engulfed in flames. Terrified CRIES are heard from within.

INT. THE RESTAURANT
Pandemonium. The curtains are ablaze. WINDOWS EXPLODE. Vinyl seat cushions melt into a hot, sizzling tar. A thick, suffocating smoke fills the air. People run wildly in all directions, their screams unbearable to hear.

The ROOF CRASHES in. The cool night air rushes in fanning the flames to an even greater frenzy. The exit doors heat up and jam. Bodies are piling up six and seven deep.

EXT. THE RESTAURANT - NIGHT
The place is an inferno. The lucky few rush outside. Some are human torches. SIRENS can be heard in the distance.

ANGLE ON THE MERCEDES
SQUEALING into the parking lot. Chuck hops out before the car even stops rolling. He runs toward the restaurant but is repelled by the heat and smoke.

He tries again, but must retreat. Johnny and Patty come up behind him. They are helpless to do anything but watch. Chuck sinks to his knees in grief. Patty sobs hysterically. Johnny just turns away.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE STUART ESTATE - DAY
An Oldsmobile 88 comes up the long drive and parks near the guesthouse. Sam Weizak gets out and glances around the grounds. There doesn't seem to be a soul in sight.

He turns toward the guesthouse as Johnny approaches.

Weizak is startled by what he sees. Johnny is more dependent on the cane than ever. His cheeks are sunken, his color anemic.

WEIZAK

Hi, John.

Johnny's bloodshot eyes fill with emotion for his old friend.

JOHNNY

It's good to see you, Sam.

They embrace awkwardly.

INT. THE GUESTHOUSE

Johnny and Weizak enter. The place is a mess, cluttered with books and newspapers, clothes lying where they fell.

JOHNNY

What brings you all the way down here?

WEIZAK

I came to see you, of course. It's been awhile, hasn't it?

JOHNNY

You look great, Sam.

(beat)

I'm really glad you're here.

Weizak smiles in response.

JOHNNY

Can I get you a beer or something?

WEIZAK

Sure. A beer would be fine.

Johnny nods and heads off toward the kitchen. Weizak glances around, clearly disturbed by Johnny's apparent indifference to tidiness and order.

An issue of "Time" magazine catches his attention. He picks it up. It's opened to an article about Greg Stillson. Weizak notices several other Stillson articles, clipped from newspapers, lying on the desk.

Johnny returns and Weizak puts the magazine down.

JOHNNY

Bottle or can?

(a beat)

I ran out of glasses.

Weizak takes the bottle.

WEIZAK

This is fine, thanks.

For a moment, they sip their beers in silence.

WEIZAK

Couldn't help noticing as I drove up -- the place looks deserted. You here alone, John?

JOHNNY

Just me and the gardener. Roger took Chuck to Europe for the summer. Said I could stay here long as I wanted.

(pause)

They just couldn't stick around after the fire.

WEIZAK

Yes. That was a terrible tragedy.

Johnny, quite obviously, has not gotten over it himself. He brings the can of cold beer to his pounding forehead.

WEIZAK

How have those headaches been?

JOHNNY

Worse. Much worse. Three and four a day sometimes. Whenever I think about that fire...

WEIZAK

Don't think about it.

JOHNNY

I can't help it. It haunts me. All those people killed. Kids, mostly. Teen-agers.

WEIZAK

You did all you could.

JOHNNY

Did I? I don't think so.

Weizak is silent. He sees it is no use to argue.

JOHNNY

I could have driven a car through the place that afternoon, or burned it down myself before the party.

(MORE)

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

(beat)

Shit! I could have paid the guy off to close down. I had the money. Roger gave me a bonus. I worked it out on paper: it only would have cost me thirty-seven dollars a life.

Johnny looks faint; he leans against a chair for support. Weizak puts an arm around him and helps him to sit down.

WEIZAK

Have you been taking those pills I sent you?

JOHNNY

Yes, I've been taking the pills!

(pause)

What's happening to me? I'm falling apart. Look at me.

WEIZAK

It takes time to recover. The healing process is a slow --

JOHNNY

-- bullshit, Sam! That's bullshit. Give it to me straight.

Weizak hesitates.

WEIZAK

How about the sugar-coated version?

JOHNNY

Oh, Sam...don't go soft on me now. Don't you think I know I'm dying. I can feel it going on inside me. At night, I swear, I can hear it. Please. Level with me.

WEIZAK

You are dying, John.

Johnny's expression is one of resignation. He gets up, moves toward his desk.

WEIZAK

There was nothing we could do. Oh, the pills, yes. The medication. But nothing really.

Johnny turns his back on him.

JOHNNY

How long?

WEIZAK

That's hard to say.

JOHNNY

It's even harder to hear. How long?

WEIZAK

It could happen any time.

Johnny closes his eyes tightly and swallows hard. He looks down at one of the newspaper articles. Stillson's image smiles up at him mockingly.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. AN ORNATE BRICK BUILDING - DAY

Home of the Hanover "Daily Tribune." Johnny makes his way up the building's steps with great difficulty.

INT. EDITOR-IN-CHIEF'S OFFICE

Johnny sits across the desk from HANK NEWELL, the paper's editor-in-chief. Newell leans back expansively in his chair, his hands clasped behind his head.

NEWELL

What can I do you for, Mr. Smith?

JOHNNY

I've been following the Stillson campaign...

NEWELL

Haven't we all.

JOHNNY

He's going to get elected.

Newell smiles and raises an eyebrow.

NEWELL

Now, this is news.

JOHNNY

I'm serious.

Newell leans forward.

NEWELL

I'm sure you are. You're a proven psychic, they say. All right. I'm a fairly open minded sort. You tell me Stillson's going to be elected and I'm inclined to believe you... however unlikely it may seem at the moment.

Johnny looks relieved.

JOHNNY

Thank God you believe me. But it's not too late. Not if we work fast.

NEWELL

Not too late for what?

JOHNNY

To stop him. He must be stopped. We have to stop him.

NEWELL

Stillson?

JOHNNY

Yes! Who else have we been talking about?

Newell looks confused.

JOHNNY

He's going to lead this country down a path of destruction. Not just this country, but the entire world. I'm talking about all out nuclear war. Greg Stillson is going to push the button!

Newell gives Johnny a highly skeptical look.

NEWELL

As junior Congressman from the state of New Hampshire?

JOHNNY

No -- as President of the United States. Sometime in the future, Stillson's going to become president. Did they teach you about Armageddon in Sunday school, Mr. Newell? Because that's what we're all in for if Greg Stillson isn't stopped now.

NEWELL

(after a pause)

Do you mind if I bring in one of my editors on this?

JOHNNY

(encouraged)

No. Of course not.

NEWELL

(into intercom)

Lloyd, get in here on the double.

Newell leans back and gives Johnny a reassuring wink. The door opens and LLOYD CARGILL enters: a portly man with a thick moustache and even thicker cigar.

NEWELL

John, this is Lloyd Cargill. Listen to this, Lloyd. Go ahead, John. Tell Lloyd exactly what you told me.

Johnny's trusting expression has vanished. He struggles to his feet.

NEWELL

Hey, where you going?

JOHNNY

I read your paper, Mr. Newell.

(to Cargill)

And I read your column, Mr. Cargill. Every day...in the sport pages.

(to Newell)

Sorry to spoil the joke.

(to Cargill)

You would have laughed your ass off, Lloyd.

Johnny exits the office.

EXT. CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF POWNALL - DAY

The CHURCH BELLS RING. Herb Smith and his bride, CHARLENE, come down the steps. Wedding guests throw rice. We SEE Johnny, Walt and Sarah. Denny stands with Walt; he's growing bigger every day. Sarah holds her second child in her arms: a three-month-old baby boy.

Walt and Charlene climb into the Ford wagon which is draped with crepe paper streamers. Sarah and Johnny exchange a look.

INT. THE VFW MEETING HALL

The wedding reception is under way. Herb and Charlene have their pictures taken. The STEREO PLAYS GLENN MILLER TUNES. People eat and laugh together. Walt takes Charlene for a spin on the dance floor. Presents are opened. Etc., etc.

ANGLE ON JOHNNY AND HERB

Johnny gives his father a hug. They part. Herb regards him with a look of concern.

HERB

Are you feeling all right, John?

JOHNNY

I'm fine, Dad.

HERB

You don't look so well.

JOHNNY

I'm fine. Just tired, that's all.

ANGLE ON JOHNNY AND SARAH

She holds the new baby in her arms for him to see. Johnny smiles as the baby grips his finger.

JOHNNY

(innocently)

Who do you think he takes after,
his mother or his father?

Sarah looks Johnny straight in the eye.

SARAH

I think he looks just like his father.

Sarah's meaning is clear to Johnny. A bittersweet smile plays upon his lips. He looks lovingly at the child.

ANGLE ON THE DINING TABLE - MUCH LATER

littered with the remnants of a three course meal. One guest rests his head on the table, snoozing.

Johnny and Walt finish off a bottle of cheap wine. Sarah sits between them bottle-feeding the baby. Denny gobbles down his third slice of wedding cake. Several other guests are seated around the table as well.

SARAH

Johnny, you come up with the
strangest ideas.

WALT

No, no. It's a fascinating notion:
if I could go back in time to Germany,
would I kill Hitler...

JOHNNY

Before he came to power.

WALT

(pondering)

Right. Before he came to power.
Hmmm.

A WEDDING GUEST

(with a laugh)

Does he get to escape afterwards?

JOHNNY

(deadly serious)

I don't think so.

WALT

It raises some very interesting moral
and philosophical questions, I think.

JOHNNY

It does?

WALT

Sure, John. Just think a minute about the historical ramifications of --

AN OLD CODGER

-- ramifications, my ass!

All eyes turn in the direction of the OLD CODGER sitting across the table.

OLD CODGER

(to Walt)

Don't raise no questions all all, young man.

He reaches deep into his pocket and withdraws an ancient, ivory-handled pocket knife. He unfolds it slowly, its naked blade reflecting the light.

OLD CODGER

See this? I'd seat this into ole Adolf's black, murderin' heart. I'd shove 'er in as far as she goes, then I'd give 'er a twist...only first I'd coat the blade with rat poison.

The table falls silent. The old man regards Johnny with a look that is oddly compelling -- knowing and challenging at the same time.

Johnny understands what he must do.

INT. THE GUESTHOUSE - JOHNNY'S BEDROOM

Johnny is packing in a rush. The dresser drawers are pulled out. He just stuffs his things into a suitcase. The RADIO is PLAYING in the b.g.

RADIO

...on Capitol Hill this morning.

(pause)

And this just in: Frank Dodd, more commonly known as the 'Castle Rock Killer,' is at large again...

Johnny stops what he's doing. Turns his attention to the radio.

RADIO

(continuing)

...Dodd escaped earlier today from the Upton Medical Facility where he has been undergoing psychiatric testing since his arrest more than eight months ago...

The PHONE begins to RING. Johnny answers it, but with one ear cocked to the radio.

JOHNNY

Hello?

INT. SHERIFF BANNERMAN'S OFFICE
Bannerman on the phone.

BANNERMAN

John? This is Bannerman. Sheriff
Bannerman. Have you heard the news?

INTERCUT the following:

JOHNNY

(calmly)

Just now. On the radio.

BANNERMAN

He walked out the back door! Can
you believe that! They put the
guy in a hospital instead of a
jailhouse. They want to test his
brain. Hell, any kid on the block
could tell you the man's a psycho!

Johnny is silent.

BANNERMAN

(continuing)

The reason I'm calling, John, is
to warn you. Dodd blames you for
everything. His arrest. His mother.
Everything. The guy's crazy, John.
I want you to watch out for yourself
until we can get him behind bars again.

JOHNNY

Don't worry. He'll never find me.
Not where I'm going...

INT. A GREYHOUND BUS - TRAVELING - DAY

Johnny's head rests against the window glass. The bus bounces
and bumps along the road as small New England towns pass into
the distance.

A SMALL BOY across the aisle from Johnny turns to his MOTHER.

SMALL BOY

Is that man sick? Is he, Mom?

MOTHER

Shhhh.

Johnny rolls his head listlessly in the boy's direction, his
eyes half open.

SMALL BOY
 (to Johnny)
 Are you dyin', mister?

MOTHER
 Tommy! Stop that.

Johnny just rolls his head back toward the window and looks out.

EXT. MIKE'S TAVERN - DAY
 Johnny hobbles down the street and enters the tavern.

INT. MIKE'S TAVERN
 Johnny sits up at the bar sipping a beer and watching the color TV behind the counter.

MIKE himself tends bar. Various regulars occupy other stools and tables. Some sort of political panel show is playing on the television.

TV COMMENTATOR #1
 ...what has really amazed most seasoned political observers, I think, is the increasingly impressive showings in the polls by Congressional candidate Greg Stillson.

TV COMMENTATOR #2
 That's right, Ted. As you recall, only two months ago, Stillson had been all but counted out by most --

An old woman BARFLY slams her fist on the countertop.

BARFLY
 Hey, Mike! You ever hear of service in this place?

Without taking his eyes from the television, Mike slides the Barfly another beer.

BARFLY
 Hey! Ever hear of service with a smile?

MIKE
 Shut up! They're talkin' about Greg on the tube!

BARFLY
 Fuck -- you!

Mike turns his back on her.

MIKE
 (to Johnny)
 I hate that cunt.

JOHNNY

You're a Stillson man, I take it.

MIKE

You bet. Look at this --

He points to an autographed picture of Stillson hanging behind the bar.

MIKE

He's stopped by here twice so far. Buys a round each time. Never had much use for politicians 'til Greg turned up. Sure, they're your buddy when they're running for office, but after they're elected it's 'chuck you, farley.'

(beat)

But not with Greg. Listen, some folks are too chickenshit to come right out and say it, but not me: Greg Stillson's gonna be president some day.

(beat)

But don't take my word for it. Come down to the meeting hall ten o'clock tomorrow morning. Greg's gonna talk.

Johnny nods his head, then quietly finishes his beer.

INT. A SPORTING GOODS STORE - DAY

The CLERK behind the counter hands Johnny a Remington 700, .243 caliber rifle.

CLERK

Now that's a very nice weapon. It's got a light kick and a flat trajectory.

Johnny hooks his cane over his left forearm and holds the rifle in firing position. He pulls the trigger -- CLICK.

EXT. TOWN HALL - LATE AFTERNOON

A fine old historical building. Johnny mounts the wooden steps and enters.

INT. TOWN HALL

Johnny enters the foyer. We notice a camera dangling from around his neck and a leather attache case in his hand. A large poster announces Stillson's appearance in the morning.

Johnny moves toward the doors that open into the meeting hall. A sign is posted there: DRIVER'S LICENSE EXAMS TODAY. Johnny opens the doors and goes inside.

INT. THE MEETING HALL

Testing paraphernalia has been set up: chairs, desks, eye charts, etc. Two or three applicants are filling out forms. A POLICE OFFICER turns to Johnny.

POLICE OFFICER

Taking the exam?

JOHNNY

Uh, no...I'm doing a book on New England town hall architecture...could I just wander around?...take some pictures?

The Police Officer checks his watch.

POLICE OFFICER

Okay. But we close up in twenty minutes.

Johnny steps a little further into the meeting hall. There are oak pews, as in a church, facing a speaker's rostrum. Johnny glances up and turns around toward the rear of the hall. He sees a gallery loft that looks down over everything. The gallery includes a waist-high railing with wide slats.

Johnny pretends to take a photograph, but clearly knows next to nothing about the camera.

NEW ANGLE ON JOHNNY

snooping around the hall. He lingers by one door in particular. When the Police Officer turns his back, Johnny opens the door and slips inside.

ANGLE ON A STAIRCASE

The door has opened onto a narrow staircase that leads up to the gallery loft. The BOARDS CREAK and GROAN under Johnny's weight as he mounts the stairs.

He arrives at a hallway with several doors on either side: Town Manager's office, Town Selectman, Tax Assessor, etc. He hurries by these doors, going to an unmarked door at the end. He opens it and steps into --

THE GALLERY

about sixteen feet above the floor of the meeting hall. Johnny moves toward the railing and looks down. The testing goes on directly beneath him. He steps back slightly, out of sight.

He glances across the hall to the speaker's podium where Stillson will be standing in the morning. He has certainly selected the perfect vantage point.

INT. THE MEETING HALL - LATER

The Police Officer is closing up.

The testing equipment has been stored away and lights have been turned off. The officer goes to the door that leads to the gallery and locks it shut.

His FEET CLICK across the hardwood floor as he heads toward the entrance foyer.

INT. THE GALLERY

Johnny sits in the semi-darkness listening for the officer to CLOSE the DOORS behind him on his way out. The sound is heard. Johnny is alone in the building.

He opens the attache case and begins to assemble his rifle. The sections SNAP together, the sound ECHOING through the empty hall.

Johnny puts the assembled rifle in his lap and settles in for the long wait until morning.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. A TOWN STREET - MORNING

A Lincoln limo rolls through the center of town.

INT. THE LINCOLN - TRAVELING - MORNING

Stillson sits in the spacious rear seat shaving with a cordless electric razor. Sonny Elliman sits next to him sorting through some papers.

SONNY

Say...what in hell's the name of this burg, anyway?

STILLSON

Cooter's Corners or Cooter's Nootch. Somethin' like that.

Sonny peers out the window.

SONNY

Haven't we been here before?

STILLSON

Fuck if I know. All these one-horse towns look alike to me.

Stillson tucks the shaver away and feels his face.

INT. THE GALLERY LOFT

A shaft of morning light burns through a high window, catching Johnny full in the face, awakening him from an uneasy slumber. He seems startled by his surroundings, but recovers immediately.

Below, the meeting house doors swing open with a resonant BOOM. Johnny tightens his grip on the rifle that lies across his lap.

FOOTSTEPS and VOICES are heard. People are entering the hall, coming down the center aisle and taking seats.

Johnny fumbles with a handful of bullets. He loads five of them into the rifle's magazine, but the sixth one gets away from him. It drops to the gallery floor, rolls in a near circular path and slips through a crack in the floorboards. Johnny clenches his teeth and holds his breath.

ANGLE ON THE MEETING HOUSE - GROUND FLOOR LEVEL

The bullet drops from above, falling unnoticed on the floor. A foot kicks it under one of the benches.

EXT. TOWN HALL - MORNING

Stillson's Lincoln drives up and Stillson hops out along with Sonny Elliman. Various bodyguards are there to meet them as townsfolk gather around. They call Stillson's name and reach for his hand.

INT. THE MEETING HALL

A LITTLE BOY in a blue and yellow sweater points Stillson out to his MOTHER.

LITTLE BOY

There he is! Here he comes!

MOTHER

Yes, dear. Here he comes.

Stillson moves down the aisle passing the mother and child. His bodyguards are packed tightly around him. Stillson shakes a few hands, then mounts the podium. The bodyguards step aside.

Stillson turns to face the crowd as Brownie cameras flash away.

STILLSON

Howdy, folks.

He smiles and the audience goes wild.

ANGLE ON JOHNNY

rising from his position behind the railing. His legs are cramped from the long wait, his KNEES POP like firecrackers. He brings the rifle to his shoulder and sights down the barrel. His head is throbbing and his heart pounds in his throat.

Someone sees Johnny and SCREAMS -- a man in the gallery with a gun! Stillson looks up and reacts. Johnny has him in his sights, pulls the trigger but the safety lock is on.

ANGLE ON THE MEETING HOUSE FLOOR

Stillson is frozen in place. Sonny Elliman has his hand under his coat, reaching for his gun.

SONNY

Get down, Greg! Get down!

Stillson ducks just in time. Johnny's RIFLE EXPLODES with a ROAR. The slug digs into a corner of the podium, peeling back the wood. Splinters fly.

ANGLE ON JOHNNY

pumping another cartridge into the chamber and FIRING again. This time the bullet hits the microphone, sending up an ear-killing electrical WHINE.

JOHNNY

Shit! Shit! Shit!

ANGLE ON THE FLOOR

Panic and confusion as people try to escape. A bottleneck of cursing, screaming men and women form in the double doorway.

Stillson's bodyguards have their guns out, they blaze away at Johnny.

ANGLE ON JOHNNY

BULLETS THUD into the gallery railing. One SCREAMS past Johnny's right ear. Another grazes his neck. Johnny ignores the pain, he finds Stillson in his sights, but another slug clips his shoulder, knocking him off balance. Blood spurts from his wounds.

ANGLE ON THE FLOOR

Gunsmoke fills the hall, obscuring vision. Stillson is on the move. He darts down the center aisle toward the double doors.

ANGLE ON JOHNNY

moving back toward the railing, sighting down on Stillson.

JOHNNY

(to himself)

Come on. Come on!

Johnny's finger squeezes down on the trigger, about to fire. BULLETS continue to WHIZZ around him.

ANGLE ON STILLSON

He can't get through the bottleneck at the door. He panics, frantically looking in all directions. He spots the boy in the blue and yellow sweater, snatches him from his mother's arms and holds him up as a shield.

ANGLE ON JOHNNY

He can't believe his eyes. His finger loosens on the trigger.

ANGLE ON STILLSON

The child squirms in his arms and the mother claws at him.

MOTHER

Give him to me! You bastard!

Give him to me!

Stillson pushes her to the floor, maintaining his grip on her son.

ANGLE ON JOHNNY

He feels his head swelling and expanding like a bladder. He tries to get a bead on Stillson, but can't risk hitting the child.

The bodyguard's PISTOLS EXPLODE in a terrible VOLLEY. A bullet slams into Johnny's chest propelling him backwards against a support post. He bounces away as a second bullet rips into his side, spinning him around into the gallery railing.

In SLOW MOTION, he crashes through the balustrade and plummets downward, turning twice in mid-air.

ANGLE ON STILLSON

also in SLOW MOTION. Lowering the child just slightly as Johnny no longer poses a threat.

ANGLE ON JOHNNY

still in SLOW MOTION -- falling. RESUME NORMAL SPEED at the moment of impact when Johnny strikes the heavy oak benches below. His backbone SNAPS and his legs shatter. The butt of the RIFLE -- held tightly in Johnny's hand -- hits against the bench and DISCHARGES.

CLOSE ANGLE ON STILLSON

as the bullet from Johnny's gun passes through his head. A look of astonishment that is almost comical registers on his face before he drops to the floor.

FULL SHOT - THE MEETING HOUSE

Crying hysterically, the mother grabs up her child and hugs him tightly. The smoke begins to clear. Johnny and Stillson lay only several yards apart.

A MAN

(bending over Stillson)

He's dead! They killed him.

A MAN

(bending over Johnny)

This guy's still alive!

EXT. THE INTERSTATE TURNPIKE - DAY

An ambulance speeds along, weaving in and out of traffic. Its SIREN WAILS. Its toplight flashes. Two police cars follow closely behind.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

INT. INTENSIVE CARE UNIT OF HOSPITAL

Johnny lies in bed, covered with bandages. Tubes run into and out of both arms and his nose. Various equipment monitors his heart and breathing. Several nurses attend to him.

ANGLE ON THE HOSPITAL CORRIDOR

Herb and Sarah wait in the corridor. Two police officers stand guard outside Johnny's room. Nurses come and go with a sense of urgency. A DOCTOR approaches.

DOCTOR

(to Herb)

His condition remains critical,
I'm afraid. There's nothing more
we can do at the moment.

Herb nods, then glances toward the police officers with obvious displeasure.

DOCTOR

I'm sorry. There's nothing I can
do about them. It's out of my
hands.

Herb notices Johnny's cane leaning against the wall near one of the cops. He goes to retrieve it. The cop gives him a dirty look.

HERB

(to the cop)

It belongs to my son.

The cop shrugs and gestures for him to take it.

INT. HOSPITAL CAFETERIA

appropriately stark and uncomfortable. Sarah and Herb sip cups of coffee across a small formica table. Both look weary and bone-tired.

HERB

(meaning the hospital)

Seems my Johnny's spent more time
in places like this than anyone has
a right to.

(beat)

Why'd he do this crazy thing,
Sarah? Why?

SARAH

I don't know. I just don't know...

INT. INTENSIVE CARE

Johnny lies near death.

INT. THE CORRIDOR

Sarah and Herb wait. Herb leans forward, rests his head in his hands.

NEW ANGLE ON HERB AND SARAH

They look in on Johnny, then turn away.

SARAH

I've...I've got to go now. My family...

HERB

Of course. Thanks for coming.

Sarah touches his arm sympathetically.

SARAH

Call me if anything...

HERB

I will. Let me walk you to the --

SARAH

-- no, please. Stay with him.

Herb nods understandingly.

NEW ANGLE ON SARAH

waiting for the elevator. She sighs deeply and pushes back a stray lock of hair. The elevator opens and she steps inside.

INT. THE UNDERGROUND GARAGE

Sarah appears from the elevator and walks across the deserted garage. Her FOOTFALLS ECHO loudly across the cavernous cement parking structure.

An eerie, inexplicable sense of danger communicates itself to her and Sarah quickens her pace. Her car seems miles away. There isn't another person in sight. Far in the distance, CAR DOORS SLAM and TIRES SQUEAL. She reaches into her purse, searches for her keys.

NEW ANGLE ON THE GARAGE

A dark black shadow. It moves.

ANGLE ON SARAH

walking briskly toward her car.

ANGLE ON THE SHADOW

It glistens. It looks wet. Slick and wet. Vinyl. Black vinyl. A black vinyl raincoat. Dodd! It's Frank Dodd! He slithers out from the darkness, a maniac's snarl twisted into his face like a screw into sheet metal.

ANGLE ON SARAH

She feels the hair on the back of her neck rise. She tries to shake the feeling, to dismiss it. But her HEELS CLICK faster across the pavement.

ANGLE ON DODD

sliding a gleaming surgical scalpel out from his coat sleeve. He darts between cement pillars and cars, appearing and disappearing with uncanny ease.

ANGLE ON SARAH

A shadow crawls across the ground. She hears FOOTSTEPS. She turns to look behind her...nothing. Then, turning back around ...Dodd! Face to face with her. Close enough to smell his foul breath. She gasps. Too frightened to scream. Too frightened to move.

DODD

I can't get to him, but I've got you. I'm going to cut your fucking cunt's heart out and drink your fucking blood.

Sarah screams and the SCALPEL SWISHES through the air, slicing across her cheek. Blood spurts from the gash. She holds out a hand to fend off the next attack and the scalpel blade cuts down her palm, nearly severing the hand from her arm.

Sarah sinks to her knees, dazed and in shock. Dodd plunges the scalpel into her stomach and pulls up hard, carving through organs and muscle. Blood rushes out in a torrent. Sarah's eyes roll lifelessly back into her head.

Dodd yanks back on her hair exposing her soft, pink throat. He prepares to cut her open from ear to ear.

INT. THE HOSPITAL - JOHNNY'S ROOM

He raises himself and screams!

JOHNNY

Sarah! Sarah! Nooooo!

ANGLE ON SARAH

still waiting for her elevator. Very much alive and in one piece. Her killing has only taken place in Johnny's fevered mind. She hears him screaming for her and hurries quickly down the corridor.

ANGLE ON JOHNNY

Herb rushes past the police guards, the first to arrive at Johnny's bedside. Johnny falls back. Herb bends over him.

HERB

Johnny, what is it?

JOHNNY

(in a whisper)

Dodd...Dodd...

HERB

What? What's that?

JOHNNY

...in the garage...

(louder)

The garage.

HERB

What? The garage? I don't...

Sarah rushes in. Johnny looks up at her, then his eyes roll closed.

SARAH

Nurse. Nurse!

The Nurse checks Johnny's pulse -- nothing. She consults the monitors -- all life lines have flattened out. The Nurse runs out.

NURSE

Doctor! Doctor!

Johnny has died. Sarah and Herb exchange a look. She begins to cry.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE HOSPITAL CORRIDOR

Herb walks Sarah toward the elevator, a comforting arm around her shoulder. He presses the button and waits. The elevator arrives. The door opens.

HERB

They...they want me to stick around
a while longer to...to...
(nearly in tears)
...hell, I don't know why.

Sarah hugs him and kisses his cheek. She steps into the elevator. The doors close.

Herb steps back. His eyes wander up to the lights above the elevator door: 5 -- 4 -- 3 -- 2 -- 1 -- Garage.

INT. THE UNDERGROUND PARKING GARAGE

Sarah crosses the empty garage wiping the tears from her eyes, her STEPS ECHOING loudly. The image is identical to Johnny's dream. Everything seems to be repeating itself.

We realize that the dream was actually a precognitive flash.

Sarah hurries across the garage. Her car an endless distance away. She opens her purse, fishes for her keys. She keeps on walking.

ANGLE ON DODD

moving out from the shadows -- a dangerous, hooded madman on the loose.

ANGLE ON SARAH

walking quickly toward her car.

ANGLE ON DODD

withdrawing the surgical scalpel from under his raincoat. Moving like a snake between light and shadow. Inching his way ever closer to Sarah.

ANGLE ON SARAH

A chill runs up her spine. She hears FOOTSTEPS behind her. She turns around to find nothing, then turns back to discover Dodd!

He smiles at her. A horrid, mocking, gargoyle's smile. She is frozen with fear.

DODD

I can't get to him...but I've got you.
I'm going to cut your fucking cunt's
heart out and drink your fucking
blood!

Sarah's eyes widen as Dodd advances, the scalpel poised above his head. This is for real! Sarah screams.

Then...suddenly...from nowhere...

A cane -- Johnny's cane -- slicing powerfully through the air toward Dodd's head, connecting with a gruesome THUD, halting his forward movement. Another forceful blow splits Dodd's head open, dropping him to one knee.

Herb is now REVEALED standing behind the injured Dodd, holding the cane like a baseball bat.

Sarah watches, stunned and astonished, as Herb beats Dodd again and again across the head until the cane splinters into pieces. Dodd sprawls senseless at Sarah's feet.

Herb throws down the broken cane-end and takes Sarah into the safety of his arms. She convulses in tears. Herb rocks her comfortingly.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END