

THE TOWN THAT DREADED SUNDOWN

Written by Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa

Inspired by the film by Charles B. Pierce

2/25/2013

DARKNESS.

THE CAMERA PULLING OUT TO REVEAL: A BRONZE, THREATENING-LOOKING BOWIE KNIFE. It PULLS OUT FURTHER, revealing that the knife is, in fact, a detail of the iconic bronze statue of Alamo hero JAMES BOWIE, crouched, in the center of Texarkana...

We PAN towards CITY HALL, on the TEXAS/ARKANSAS BORDER; Texarkana's literally a *double-town*, a town and its reflection...

NARRATOR

In the spring of 1946, in the small town of Texarkana, on the Texas-Arkansas border, a series of horrific murders were committed by a masked assailant known only as "The Phantom Killer."

As THE SUN STARTS TO SET, we begin "touring" the town, looking down on and tracking A LONE FIGURE, casting a long shadow, on the sidewalk in front of him. We follow him around a corner, start to descend to street-level...

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Though several arrests were made in connection to the brutal slayings, which ended as suddenly as they began, the killer's identity was never confirmed. Indeed, many people who lived through that nightmarish time believed the Phantom spent the rest of his days free, walking the streets of Texarkana, quietly and anonymously, until his assumed death.

...AND THEN HE'S GONE, but the Camera continues cruising Main Street, focusing on VARIOUS STORE-FRONTS, studying the REFLECTIONS in their windows. Something phantasmagoric happens: We see CARS and PEDESTRIANS from the 1940's driving/walking by; as the light changes, we're half-slipping into the past. The Camera continues snaking its way through the town...the monologue continues...and we transition into the 1970's, again reflected in various windows, some boarded-up...

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

In 1976, a film inspired by the infamous "Moonlight Murders" was released. Every year on Halloween, "The Town that Dreaded Sundown" is screened somewhere in Texarkana, in tribute to the Phantom's legacy of death and blood.

We round another corner...another time-shift...and we catch a REFLECTION OF THE ORANGE SETTING SUN IN A WINDOW. PUSH IN ON THE ORANGE so that it fills the screen...

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

The following is based on true events that happened in Texarkana last year.

...then we pull out and discover that, in fact, we're looking at the SETTING SUN that kicks-off the original "Town that Dreaded Sundown" movie. It's next to the OPENING TITLE CARD, but since we're *behind* a movie screen, we're reading it backwards...

The Camera pulls back to reveal--a GIANT, BEATEN-UP, MOVIE SCREEN, jerry-rigged between two towering cyprus trees. Moths and bugs buzz around the screen, attracted by the flickering light. We're at--

EXT. APACHE DRIVE-IN THEATRE - NIGHT (CONTINUED)

A field stacked deep with cars, motorcycles, pick-up trucks. Kids sit on blankets on the roofs of their cars; others loiter near the concession stand. There are groups of friends, five to a car. Lots of couples, too. There's a timeless quality to this scene of "Americana," so we shouldn't immediately know if we're in the past or present.

ONSCREEN, in the GRAINY, JUMPY MOVIE, housewife "Helen Reed" (played by Dawn Wells) is running through her farmhouse, pursued by the sack-wearing Phantom.

FROM THE AUDIENCE: SCREAMS and CHEERS, as we pan across the faces of kids watching from their cars. The crowd has a raucous energy. It's like a keg party or a "Rocky Horror" screening. Two teenage boys (ROY and JOHNNY) are walking from the concession stand back to where the cars are parked. As they pass--

INT./EXT. - COREY HOLLAND'S NEW MINI-COOPER - NIGHT

--the teens THUMP the trunk of Corey's car, startling:

Two country kids: COREY HOLLAND, 17, handsome, with JAMI LERNER, also 17, pretty, soulful, not quite sure how she's found herself on a date with one of the most popular, handsome boys at her school. Jami's a bit anxious--for her own private reasons, we'll discover--but Corey notices it.

COREY

Wanna get out of here?

A beat. Jami debates, decides, nods... Then, as Corey eases his car out of its spot, they pass--

--A TABLE SET-UP BY THE DRIVE-IN'S ENTRANCE. Advertising the local radio show "*Praise in the Night*," with Reverend Joseph Harding, sponsored by the Texarkana Fellowship Church. HARDING, surrounded by a gaggle of CHURCH LADIES, distributing flyers, objecting to the screening. Jami hears one of the ladies, MRS. SCOTT, tell a PIMPLY, AWKWARD COLLEGE STUDENT, walking in, wearing a "Town that Dreaded Sundown" T-shirt (PAUL MARTIN)--

MRS. SCOTT

...real people died, you know...

--Jami and the college student lock eyes, briefly...

INT./EXT. COREY'S COOPER - CRUISING THE STREETS - NIGHT

Rush's "Red Barchetta" plays on the radio as--the Cooper curves along Spring Lake Park Drive. The empty baseball diamond. The quiet lake. The deserted dance pavilion...

Both kids are enjoying the song, the night, the ride...

JAMI

Thanks for leaving the movie. But this is okay, right?

Corey smiles, takes Jami's hand, KISSES IT.

COREY

Seen it a hundred times.

The Cooper passes a sign on the side of the road: ROUTE 254 TEXAS LOOP.

In the car's rearview mirror, the built-up section of Texarkana SHRINKS. We're crossing into a part of the country that hasn't changed much in the last 60 years...

A DEER, eating grass in the woods, looks up as the Cooper cruises by, its headlights bright in the darkness.

EXT. RICHMOND ROAD - NIGHT

The Cooper, parked in a wooded, grassy cul-de-sac, a rest-stop off the highway, surrounded by trees. Isolated.

INT. COREY'S COOPER - NIGHT

Corey and Jami in the front seat, pipe-dreaming. She's snuggled into the crook of his arm.

COREY

...except I'd keep it open year-round.
Weekends, at least. Not just Halloween.
And I'd program double-features, like
they used to.

(then)

My parents would kill me if they knew.
You?

JAMI

No one reads it, but I like writing for
the paper.

COREY

I read your article about the Railroad
Museum. Made me wanna visit it before it
closes.

She smiles shyly, he touches her cheek.

COREY (CONT'D)

I'm glad you finally said yes...

Corey kisses Jami; THEY START GOING AT IT. Corey's eager,
Jami's hesitant; he's rubbing his hand up her leg; it
disappears under her skirt--

COREY (CONT'D)

(kissing all the while)

...let's just get in the backseat...

EXT. COREY'S COOPER - RICHMOND ROAD - NIGHT

From the woods, we see Corey and Jami climb out of the
car and then into its back seat...

INT. COREY'S COOPER - THE BACKSEAT - NIGHT

The two start kissing again; Corey's unbuttoning Jami's
shirt, when--

JAMI

Wait.

COREY

What? Did I do something wrong?

They break apart; Jami points through the windshield.

On the other side of the cul-de-sac, amongst the shadows of the trees, we see...

THE TALL, HULKING FIGURE OF A MAN. WEARING JEANS, A PLAID SHIRT, AND A WHITE SACK OVER HIS HEAD, WITH HOLES CUT OUT FOR THE EYE SOCKETS. HE LOOKS, OF COURSE, LIKE THE PHANTOM FROM THE MOVIE.

He's just *standing* there, staring at them. *Beyond* unnerving.

COREY (CONT'D)

It's Halloween, that has *got* to be a joke--
(then)
What the hell is he *doing*?

In a panicky FLASH, Jami locks the doors on the left-hand side of the car, front and back; Corey locks the ones on the right; then, almost in unison, they refocus on Sackhead...

...who hasn't moved. He continues standing there, eerily.

COREY (CONT'D)

He's--just a Peeping Tom...

They wait. A few moments pass. Nothing happens; Sackhead doesn't move. Then:

COREY (CONT'D)

He's not gonna *do* anything--

JAMI

We don't know that--

COREY

Hold up, hold up, look, he's--

Sackhead is walking *backwards*, slipping into the woods behind him... A quiet moment passes. Another.

COREY (CONT'D)

See? Just wanted a show. Prob'ly he's going to beat off.

Jami peers into the woods, searching for any movement.

JAMI

Let's go, Corey.

Corey climbs out of the car, stops. He's facing the woods, transfixed by...

JAMI (CONT'D)
What? Do you see something?

COREY
I thought...

JAMI
Corey, come on, get back in the car--

He goes to open the door on the driver's side, but it's locked. ('member, she locked the doors?)

COREY
Jami, unlock--

Jami reaches over and unlocks the door; Corey opens it--
and freezes...

On the other side of the car, standing maybe four feet from Corey, is Sackhead. *POINTING A GUN AT COREY.*

JAMI
(to Corey)
What? What is--?
(turning to see S.H.)
Oh, God... Oh my God...

SACKHEAD
(gravel in his voice)
Get out of the car.

COREY
Don't, Jami. Stay in--

SACKHEAD
Get out of the fucking car or I will
shoot him in the fucking face.

JAMI
All right, all right, I'm coming, I'm...

Terrified, Jami gets out of the car, stands next to Corey; Sackhead circles the Cooper, keeps his gun trained on them.

JAMI (CONT'D)
(pleading)
...please, please don't kill us...

SACKHEAD
(to Corey)
Take off your pants.

COREY
What?

SACKHEAD

Take off your fucking pants!

COREY

I don't under... (unsaid: "...stand.")

JAMI

Do it, Corey, just please--

COREY

All right, all right, I am, I'm--

Corey undoes his belt, lets his jeans drop so that they're around his ankles. Then:

SACKHEAD

(to Corey)

Get down on the ground. On your stomach.

COREY

(WTF?)

What? Come on, man, I can't--

Sackhead COCKS THE GUN--

SACKHEAD

Get down on the fucking ground--

JAMI

(losing it, crying)

COREY--

COREY

Okay, all right, I will, I'll--

Corey gets down on the ground, on his stomach.

COREY (CONT'D)

See? I'm on the ground now, I'm not gonna run anywhere-- Now please, man, can you please just--just let my friend go?

SACKHEAD

No.

(to Jami)

Turn around. Don't look back.

FROM THE WOODS, WE SEE, LEFT TO RIGHT: Sackhead...then Corey, on the ground...then Jami, turning around so her back is facing the two men...

COREY

(face in the ground)

If, if you want money...

SACKHEAD
I don't want money.

JAMI
(turning around)
What do you--?

SACKHEAD
Don't look back!

Jami snaps her head back, so that she's staring straight ahead, at the tree-line at the edge of the clearing. THE CAMERA STAYS ON JAMI'S FACE, SO WE HEAR (BUT DON'T SEE) WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH SACKHEAD AND COREY. THE SOUND OF MOVEMENT, A STRUGGLE.

COREY (O.C.)
What are you...?

SACKHEAD (O.C.)
Shut the fuck up.

COREY (O.C.)
Oh, God, no... Please... What do you want, what do you want...?

Jami's SOBBING. She's looking at the trees. If she could get to them, she could run for help. But she can't just leave Corey... A LOUD, SICKENING THUNK; Corey SCREAMS--

COREY (CONT'D)
NOOOOOOHHMYGODNOSTOPPLEASESTOP--

Jami SCREAMS, too. Starts to turn towards--

JAMI
C-corey?

SACKHEAD (O.C.)
Don't turn around--

She turns back to face-front, weeping. The line of trees, it's *right* there... Corey's MOANING. More appalling THUNK sounds... Then, quietly:

COREY (O.C.)
...oh...oh God...please...

SACKHEAD (O.C.)
Yeah...yeah...yeah...

As the SOUNDS continue, Jami struggles *not* to look back. But it's too much, whatever she's imagining. Stifling her sobs, she slowly turns away from the trees, towards...

SACKHEAD HAS STRADDLED COREY'S BACK, knees on either side of the boy's torso. Completely involved with what he's doing, Sackhead has put his gun down and is now holding a BOWIE KNIFE, STABBING Corey, in his back, his shoulders, his neck, over and over. It's violent, sexual.

Jami's eyes go wide in stark terror. She looks to Corey's face. His glassy, dead eyes. He's gone.

JAMI
 (a moan)
 ...noooooo...

Hearing her, Sackhead stops stabbing Corey, looks up, so that he's staring *right at* Jami.

SACKHEAD
 You looked.

Holy shit, Jami BOLTS. Starts RUNNING, towards the tree-line. Sackhead leaves the knife embedded in the boy's neck, grabs his gun, and takes off after the fleeing girl.

EXT. THE RICHMOND WOODS - NIGHT

Jami *tears* through the forest, out of control, screaming, losing first one shoe, then the other...

After a few frantic moments, she stops, tries to catch her breath, looks around. *Nothing.* Did she lose--?

She looks over her shoulder, at--Sackhead, barrelling towards her. Jami pushes off a tree, resumes running.

When she hits a thicket, she **SMASHES** through it; branches slap against her, tear her clothes, cut her bare arms, her legs. She hits a small, barely-there creek, **SLIPS** and falls, picks herself up--she's now dripping muddy water--keeps going...

Jami **STREAKS** through the night, like an out-of-control train, passing out of frame. Behind her, Sackhead's closing the distance between them... **HE STOPS RIGHT IN FRONT OF THE CAMERA.**

We focus on: **SACKHEAD'S FACE**; *he's just breathing...*

EXT. HOUSE ON A SUBURBAN STREET - NIGHT

Evening-mist hugs the dew-wet lawn of a nice, well-kept house. Its **RED FRONT DOOR** opens, and **A SUBURBAN WOMAN**, in her early forties, comes out, with her **DOG**, Dusty. She's wearing an iPod, starts to jog with Dusty...

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - NIGHT

The woman's jogging along a paved road through a wooded, park-like area. We're on her face as she slows down, stops.

SUBURBAN WOMAN

Oh, Lord.

She pulls out her earbuds; we PAN from her ashen face to:

Jami, emerging from the woods. An apocalyptic vision. She looks *utterly* wrecked. Her feet are bloody. Her clothes are muddy; her face is mud- and tear-streaked. *She's still screaming, but inaudibly, since her throat's so raw.*

She rushes up to the woman, right into the camera; Jami's face fills the screen, as WE SLAM TO:

THE TITLE: **THE TOWN THAT DREADED SUNDOWN**

THEN, DAWN BREAKS OVER THE TOWN as...

EXT. JAMES BOWIE MONUMENT - STATE LINE AVENUE - MORNING

A FARMER, driving his battered PICK-UP, making his morning deliveries. He's hitting various stations on his radio-- all retro, only classic oldies--then looks back out his windshield, *SCREECHES TO A HALT--*

He gapes at: The knife-wielding Statue of James Bowie, only someone has put a CLOTH SACK on his head and a DRIPPING RED SIGN around his neck that reads: **REMEMBER**

Draped across Bowie's feet: COREY'S FRESH CORPSE, face-down, his back *a pulped, bloody mess*; Sackhead's BOWIE KNIFE sticking in his neck. A THICK CLOUD OF BLACK FLIES SWARMING AROUND HIM...

SHERIFF DOYLE (V.O.)

Didn't call or text anyone, a girlfriend, or...?

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - CHRISTUS HOSPITAL - DAY

Jami, in bed. Her grandmother, LILLIAN, an attractive, formidable woman, sits in a chair next to her. SHERIFF DOYLE (50s), CHIEF DEPUTY TILLMAN (30s), and DEPUTY CLAYBOURNE FOSTER (late 20s, handsome) are there.

JAMI

No, sir.

SHERIFF DOYLE

And you don't have any friends or a boyfriend who might have been angry or jealous that you were at the movies with Corey Holland? Who might've followed you?

JAMI

No, sir.

TILLMAN

You weren't *going* with Corey, were you?

JAMI

No, sir. He'd asked me out before, but...

LILLIAN

She's shy.

JAMI

Grandma...

SHERIFF DOYLE

(gesturing towards him)

As a precaution, I'm gonna have Deputy Foster here parked in front of your house. He or his relief will be there twenty-four-seven.

LILLIAN

Appreciate that.

DEPUTY FOSTER

Anything you need, ma'am.

SHERIFF DOYLE

We'd just like to confirm a few things you told us about the attacker.

LILLIAN

She's barely got her voice back.

JAMI

It's okay, Grandma.

(to Sheriff)

It was the Phantom. Like in the movie.

Doyle and Tillman trade a look.

JAMI (CONT'D)

He wore a mask, didn't he? In real life? Or was that just in the movie?

TILLMAN
 (ignoring the question)
 Were you drinking? Doing any drugs?

LILLIAN
 (angry, lashing out)
 Did the doctors *find* any drugs in her?

JAMI
 How's Corey's mom?

LILLIAN
 Don't be worrying about that right now.

TILLMAN
 She's how you'd expect she'd be.

Lillian GLARES at Tillman. Then:

SHERIFF DOYLE
 Until we have more information, Ms.
 Lerner, we'd like to ask you *not* to
 discuss this with the press, with--

LILLIAN
 We're not talking to *anyone*--

TILLMAN
 You start shooting off about a guy wear-
 ing a sack, you cause a panic.

JAMI
 But people need to know.

EXT. THE TEXARKANA GAZETTE BUILDING - DAY

The HQ of Texarkana's daily paper, "The Gazette." WE'RE FOLLOWING: RICARDO CHAVEZ, a reporter, into the building, a paper folded under his arm...

INT. THE BULLPEN - TEXARKANA GAZETTE - DAY

Ricardo, walking through a labyrinth-like newsroom, old, decommissioned PRINTING PRESSES stacked high with bundled, undelivered papers. He weaves amongst the desks, cubicles until he gets to--

HIS CUBICLE. Cluttered, mounds of papers, notes, pictures of his DOG, etcetera. His phone is ringing; he answers--

CHAVEZ
 City, this is Chavez?

JAMI'S VOICE

(on phone)

Hi, is this...? Are you a reporter?

CHAVEZ

Trying to be. Look--

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - CHRISTUS HOSPITAL - SAME TIME

Jami, dressed to leave the hospital now, a bag of her stuff on the unmade bed, is on the phone. Furtively.

ON THE TV in the corner of her room: A News Report about the vandalized James Bowie statue. The mask. The sign.

JAMI

Mr. Chavez, I...I think I can tell you why that statue had a mask on it.

CHAVEZ

(on phone)

You can? Who is this?

Lillian appears at the door. Picking Jami up:

LILLIAN

Ready to go?

At his desk, Chavez has found a yellow pad of paper--

JAMI

(blurting it out)

The man who attacked Corey Holland and that girl was wearing a mask like the Phantom, he wants us to remember, that's what that sign was about, that's what you should ask the police about--

Jami HANGS UP, turns to her grandma. Who just stares at her.

LILLIAN

You're kiddin'.

EXT. JAMI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The MOON hangs in the sky, over a well-kept, modest house on a tree-lined, suburban street.

RONALD MURRAY (V.O.)

...look, I've shown it the last ten years, kids like gettin' scared on Halloween.

(MORE)

RONALD MURRAY (V.O.)

And "Town," that's jes' a story to 'em now, same as "Texas Chainsaw," same as "Friday the 13th," they weren't alive back then, when it happened, they don't know. It's jes' a scary movie to 'em--

INT. JAMI'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jami and her grandmother sit on the couch. Lillian's got a TV tray in front of her. They're watching the news--

NEWSCASTER (ON SCREEN)

--a movie, and a murder spree, that has cast a shadow over Texarkana for more than 60 years. Mayors Stephen Collins and Tom Holdridge issued a joint statement, condemning the annual screenings of the cult classic--

EXT. TOWN HALL - DAY

Texarkana's TWO MAYORS (one from the Texas-side, one from the Arkansas-side), stand at a podium, in front of the building:

ARKANSAS-SIDE MAYOR

Every year, this film, which exploits one of the darkest chapters in our history, is screened to the delight of our teens and our children.

TEXAS-SIDE HOLDRIDGE

There can be little doubt that its depictions of murder and mayhem have led directly to this grim, tragic affair--

EXT. JAMES BOWIE MONUMENT - STATE LINE AVENUE - DAY

NEWSCASTER

Radio personality and community leader Joseph Harding offered his condolences to the families of the victims:

EXT. TEXARKANA FELLOWSHIP CHURCH - DAY

Reverend Harding, in front of his church:

REVEREND HARDING

...our prayers are with Corey Holland, and his mother, and his father.

(MORE)

REVEREND HARDING (CONT'D)
 It is unreasonable to try and find meaning
 in such a grotesque, godless crime, but
 that is *exactly* what we must do as a
 community--

INT. JAMI'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

--the TV CUTS OUT. Lillian's holding the remote.

LILLIAN
 Least they can't say your name.

Jami stares at the dark television screen. Then:

JAMI
 I know you weren't born, Grandma...

LILLIAN
 No, I wasn't, mercifully.

JAMI
 ...but do you remember *anything* about the
 murders? Anything you heard, growing up?

LILLIAN
 Oh, baby girl, barely, that was so...
 (then)
 Of course, your great-grandpa and great-
 grandma were living in this house, when it
 happened. Sometimes, their friends would
 come over, and they would talk about how
 they would sit up to all hours of the
 night, at the kitchen table, drinking
 coffee, 'cause they were afraid to go to
 sleep... I remember my mother said once
 that it seemed like the town was being
 punished, but no one knew why. (Maybe
 that's a thing she told me later, I don't
 know...)
 (then)
 They were scared--*all* the grown-ups were,
 even years later--I remember *that*.

JAMI
 What about when they made the movie?

A beat. Something shifts in Lillian.

LILLIAN
 What about it?

JAMI
 Were people still afraid?

LILLIAN

Of the Phantom? He'd become less...real.
(then)

Most people, they didn't know exactly who he was, or what he'd done, only that he'd lived in our town, and hurt some teenagers who went parking on lovers' lane, and everyone was *supposed* to be scared of him...

(a beat)

Then the movie brought it all back.

(moving on:)

You sure you don't want to stay at the Comfort Inn for a bit?

JAMI

No, that's-- I don't think that would help, honestly.

LILLIAN

How 'bout my room tonight? Have a slumber party?

JAMI

(shaking her head)

I'll be okay, thanks, Grandma.

INT. JAMI'S HOUSE - JAMI'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Jami, in the shower, crying, releasing all the tension and horror of the last few days, getting it out of her system. These HUGE, RACKING SOBS. (Note: This is how Jami processes emotions: A raw, primal--but contained--expulsion.) CUT TO:

INT. JAMI'S HOUSE - JAMI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jami, in a robe, combing out her wet hair. No signs of the outburst in the shower. Controlled, contained. She hears-- A CAR CRUISING BY, IN FRONT OF HER HOUSE. Goes to the window. Sees: A rubbernecker. As the car slows to a crawl, ANOTHER CAR, parked on the *other* side of the street, FLASHES its lights, BLARES its siren for a quick, scary second. It's DEPUTY FOSTER'S POLICE CAR, there for protection. The Rubbernecker moves on; Foster's car goes dark again.

Jami gets back into bed, clicks off the light, rolls on to her side to sleep--

--which she does. When she opens her eyes again, IT'S MUCH LATER. She sits up in bed. *Did she hear something?*

JAMI

Grandma?

She slips out of bed, creeps to the window, looks outside for reassurance, but--*the Deputy's car is gone*. Jami scans the dark, deserted street, spots--

SACKHEAD, STANDING ACROSS THE WAY, UNDER A TREE, HALF-IN, HALF-OUT OF THE SHADOWS. It's hard to tell from the way the murk falls across his face, but...*Sackhead seems to be staring up at her.*

JAMI (CONT'D)

(gasping it out)

Oh, my God--

Jami retreats, presses herself against the wall next to the window. *Did he see her?* Sloooowly, she inches her way back, sneaks a peek--*Sackhead is still there.*

Panicked, eyes locked on Sackhead, Jami takes a few steps backwards. She turns, pivots *right into--Bloody Corey, standing in her room, knife sticking out of his neck.*

COREY

You looked.

Jami's eyes SNAP open. A nightmare. She gets out of bed, goes to the window. The Deputy's car is there. Quiet and dark, but it's there.

Heart thumping, Jami gets back into bed. This time, she keeps her eyes open.

INT. GAWLER'S FUNERAL HOME - TEXARKANA - THE NEXT DAY

A well-appointed parlor. Crowded. The women in dresses, the men in coats and ties. Lots of HIGH SCHOOL-AGED KIDS. A CLOSED CASKET. Next to it, a PICTURE OF COREY Holland rests on an easel. The quiet, somber whisperings of a viewing/wake.

THE CAMERA FINDS: A WOMAN IN HER FORTIES, a Texas grande dame, excusing herself from a conversation, slipping out of the parlor and into...

INT. GAWLER'S FUNERAL HOME - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The woman is having a private moment. Fighting to control her emotions. She hears--

JAMI'S VOICE

Mrs. Holland?

The woman immediately composes herself--she's steely, this one--turns to face...Jami, standing there, in her black dress, holding flowers, her face wet with tears.

MRS. HOLLAND

Yes?

JAMI

I don't mean to interrupt, but I just wanted to say... I'm so sorry about your son...

MRS. HOLLAND

(brave face)

Thank you... Are you one of Corey's friends?

Jami realizes: This poor woman doesn't know who she is.

JAMI

My name's Jami Lerner--

What little color there is in Mrs. Holland's face DRAINS.

JAMI (CONT'D)

--I, I was with Corey, that night, and I want you to know--

Mrs. Holland SNAPS. She starts *WAILING*, in grief, in rage; *it's a harrowing, primal sound*. She collapses to her knees. Wanting to help, Jami takes a step towards the stricken woman--

JAMI (CONT'D)

Mrs. Holland--

--as MOURNERS, hearing Mrs. Holland's cries, start POURING into the hallway. Including COREY'S DAD.

COREY'S DAD

Margaret? *Margaret?!*

Jami--*instantly* regretting her decision to come and pay her respects--turns on her heels and hurries away, tears streaming down her face--

INT. DOCTOR LINDSAY'S OFFICE - DAY

Jami, sitting in an easy chair. Opposite her: Trauma therapist DOCTOR LINDSAY, also sitting in a chair.

DOCTOR LINDSAY

Under these circumstances, I would typically prescribe something for you, to help with the nerves, with the anxiety, but I read in your file...

(it's in her lap)

...you've taken PTSD medication before?

JAMI

Yes, ma'am.

DOCTOR LINDSAY

You were in an accident.

JAMI

Yes, a, a car crash.

DOCTOR LINDSAY

Your parents--?

JAMI

(cutting her off)

Yes, ma'am.

Doctor Lindsay waits for Jami to say something else, but when the girl doesn't:

DOCTOR LINDSAY

So, have you thought about taking a break?

JAMI

From school? Yeah, I-- I don't think I'm gonna go back for a bit.

DOCTOR LINDSAY

I think that's all right. How about leaving Texarkana? Even for a few weeks, just until--

JAMI

I've always wanted to leave. Go some place-- *anywhere*--else. Just--out of Texarkana. But now...I don't. Maybe I'll change my mind, but I don't think it would make me feel better, and leaving because of *this*...

DOCTOR LINDSAY

(gets it)

Let's talk about these dreams. What do you think they're about?

JAMI

Corey asked me out, and I was...flattered, I don't really get asked out a lot... And I wanted to show him that I was, uhm...

DOCTOR LINDSAY

Grateful?

JAMI

(she nods, quickly)

So I...I suggested we leave the movie. Me. That was my idea. 'Cause I thought, if we went somewhere, even just to kiss, he...he'd like me more.

(the hard part:)

And if I hadn't, we would've stayed, and Corey would still... He would...

DOCTOR LINDSAY

Jami, I'm gonna stop you right there. You did *not* cause this.

JAMI

No, I know, I know, but then--

(tears spring into her eyes)

...then he let me live.

EXT. THE RICHMOND WOODS - NIGHT (**FLASHBACK**)

JUMPING BACK TO: Jami, being chased through the woods by Sackhead. Hysterical, she slips and falls. Exhausted, she can *barely* roll over on to her back, and when she does... SACKHEAD has caught up to her, looms over her.

DOCTOR LINDSAY (V.O.)

Is that what you believe happened?

INT. DOCTOR LINDSAY'S OFFICE - DAY

JAMI

He was on top of me, he *could've* killed me, Doctor, but...he *didn't*, he just said--

EXT. THE RICHMOND WOODS - NIGHT (**FLASHBACK**)

BACK TO: SACKHEAD, WHO NOW STRADDLES JAMI, looking down at her. She's crying, convulsing with fear.

Jami's POV: Sackhead, the cloth in front of his mouth rising and falling with his terrible breathing... He reaches down to CARESS Jami's cheek...

SACKHEAD

...Mary.

INT. DOCTOR LINDSAY'S OFFICE - DAY

DOCTOR LINDSAY

(referring to her notes)

Mary Jeanne Larey was the Phantom's first victim, back in 1946.

Jami nods; so she's been told.

JAMI

...I keep thinking, "Why? Why kill Corey and not me?" And I think it's 'cause he only needed one person to tell people what he wants them--us--to know.

DOCTOR LINDSAY

What's that?

JAMI

That he's back.

EXT. TEXARKANA NATIONAL BANK - MAIN STREET - DAY

On the corner, a building that's existed since the town's incorporation. Through it's front window, we see: Lillian, at her CASHIER'S STATION, on a stool, talking to...HER MANAGER, an officious little man.

MANAGER

How's Jami holding up?

LILLIAN

Getting through.

MANAGER

Look, Lillian. I, uh. Got your request for time off--

LILLIAN

Even a couple of weeks, to get away--

MANAGER

--if I gave your shifts to someone else, it would be hard to give 'em back.

We RACK TO SEE--reflected in the bank's window--

EXT. TEXARKANA PUBLIC LIBRARY (TEXAS) - DAY

Establishing. A squat, industrial building.

INT. TEXARKANA PUBLIC LIBRARY (TEXAS) - DAY (LATER)

Jami, at the library's check-out counter, a guy in his late teens, NICK, good-looking, a bit nerdy, manning it.

JAMI

Hey. The Gazette's online archives only go back the last ten years, so if I wanted an article from the fifties or forties...

NICK

About the Phantom?

JAMI

(surprised)

I-- Yes.

He pulls out a THICK FOLDER of Xeroxed articles, slaps it on the counter.

NICK

That's every article the Gazette published, back when it was happening. Then they did a retrospective fifty years after the fact. That's in there, too.

(then)

There's probably more stuff in the archives, in City Hall...

Jami starts flipping through the packet...

NICK (CONT'D)

I figured it would save me some time. It's normally twelve dollars for Xeroxing, but--don't worry about it.

JAMI

Oh. Thanks...

Jami's scanning the articles. Old-school. Gruesome, black and white pictures. Of the victims, the crime scenes. INSERT: Photo of Mary Jeanne Larey. Artists' sketches of the Phantom...

NICK

You're Jami Lerner, right?

Jami tenses; Nick puts up a hand in an "it's okay" way--

NICK (CONT'D)

My name's Nick. I went to Evans High,
too.

(she's silent, so...)

One of my friends posted that the girl
who was with Corey Holland was Jami
Lerner, and I was like, "I *think* I was in
Chem with her--"

Jami snatches up the packet and starts hustling away--

EXT. TEXARKANA PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

Jami rushes from the building down the sidewalk; Nick's
pursuing her--

NICK

Wait, wait-- *Hold up*-- I didn't mean--
(then)

When I recognized you, I was like, "*Holy
shit, that's her, I hope she's okay*--"

(the truth:)

I was just gonna ask, "Are you okay...?"

(beat)

Are you?

A beat. Jami looks at Nick. She believes him, but...

JAMI

I have to go.

EXT. MUSIC HALL THEATRE - DOWNTOWN TEXARKANA - EVENING

An old movie theatre; its marquee still has a few letters
advertising the last film shown then: "Close Encounters." An
OVERHEAD SHOT looking down on--DOZENS OF COWBOY HATS,
belonging to CONCERNED CITIZENS, heading into the theatre...

PRE-LAP: THE SOUND OF A RAPPING GAVEL...

INT. MUSIC HALL THEATRE - AUDITORIUM - EVENING

A beautiful old theatre, well-passed its glory days. The
MEETING is PACKED. On a stage: Two tables, next to each
other, behind which Texarkana's CIVIC LEADERS (including
ITS TWO MAYORS, the SHERIFFS, COUNCILMEN, etcetera) sit.
The rest of the room taken up by chairs, all occupied.
Angry, *scared* CITIZENS crammed in every corner, lining
the walls, including reporter Chavez and--

--Jami and Lillian, in the back row. A Councilman (with the gavel), trying his best to moderate:

COUNCILMAN
(rapping away)
--Sheriff, you were saying?

SHERIFF DOYLE
I just want to, uh, update you, and reiterate, the most important thing right now is to stay calm, not to overreact--

In the Front Row, a BIG LADY TOWNSPERSON leaps to her feet, outraged!

BIG LADY TOWNSPERSON
Not overreact? You ain't told us *shit*--
Is it the damn Phantom? *Is* he back?

SHERIFF DOYLE
Ma'am, he'd be close to a hundred years old. It is not--most definitely *not*--the Phantom.

Reverend Harding, in the audience, stands up. He is quite calm when he says:

REVEREND HARDING
It's the Angel of Death.

A beat of uneasy silence as this declaration hovers...

SHERIFF DOYLE
Well now, Reverend Harding, it is *not* the Angel of Death, we know *that* much.

TEXAS-SIDE MAYOR
If there's any specific insight you *could* share with us, Sheriff, I think there's a lot of scared people in this room--in this town--who'd appreciate it.

SHERIFF DOYLE
It's a man, probably local, who knows us and our history very well. And not just our history, but our...mythology.

One of the Church Ladies, MRS. SCOTT (from the Opening), holding a bible, stands up.

MRS. SCOTT
The Reverend's right, praise him this night! It is the Angel come to judge us for our sins, our fallen, fallen ways.

COUNCILMAN
 (trying to quiet her)
 Mrs. Scott, you'll have your turn--

Mrs. Scott goes to sit down, but then reconsiders, jumps back up:

MRS. SCOTT
 Everyone's acting all surprised, all shocked that the Phantom's come back. You can't keep a candle burning in the window for someone and then be surprised when he finally shows up.

Mrs. Scott finally sits; Sheriff Doyle stands:

SHERIFF DOYLE
 ...we want to *stress*: Despite certain opinions being expressed here tonight, there's no reason to believe that Corey Holland's death was anything other than an isolated tragedy, not the work of a serial-killer--

The FARMER, who drove his truck in the opening, stands.

FARMER
 I believe it's someone with an agenda, who put on that mask to send a message--

MRS. SCOTT
 (agreeing with him)
 Yes! *YES!* He is holding up a mirror-- He is saying, "You fornicate, you revel in bloodshed--"

FARMER
 (agreeing with her)
 In a way-- We show that *gee-dee* movie, every year, it's like a *gee-dee* party out there--

TEXAS-SIDE MAYOR
 As I've already said: That film will *never* be shown in Texarkana again, not on the Texas-side--

The other, ARKANSAS-SIDE MAYOR, nods in agreement:

ARKANSAS-SIDE MAYOR
 Not on the Arkansas-side, either. It was banned before, it'll be banned again--

FARMER

Good idea! And while you're at it, why don't you tear down the statue of James Bowie, too? I mean, he's holding a gee-dee Bowie knife, isn't he? Rip it down!

COUNCILMAN

All right, Luke, settle down--

FARMER

But *aren't* we, Ralph? Aren't we, with that statue, celebrating a killer?

The Crowd--led by both Mrs. Scott and the Farmer--is whipping itself into a frenzy. Lillian shakes her head...

LILLIAN

Bunch of crazies...

MRS. SCOTT

(spiralling)

And mocking the Lord! With our bars, and our drugs, and our fallen, godless ways--

FARMER

I think this guy, whoever he is, I think he's saying to us, "You think killing's *nothing*? You think it's a *statue*? You think it's a *movie*? Something you can *laugh* at? Well, then, you need to *remember*, what it's like to spill *real* blood--"

Lillian takes Jami's hand--

LILLIAN

All right, we're done.

--and starts leading her out.

MRS. SCOTT

Yes, *remember*-- And stop the sinning--

REVEREND HARDING

Praise, Sister. Amen.

MRS. SCOTT

You want the Angel of Death to pass over *your* house without killing your children, *you* shutter the bars--

REVEREND HARDING

(and OTHERS)

Amen.

MRS. SCOTT
 Burn down the meth dens--
 ("Amens" of approval--)
 Run out the fornicators--
 (More "Amens"--)
 And the sodomites, because they're here,
 too, oh, yes, even here--

Mrs. Scott continues her (steadily building) tirade; more and more of the Crowd joining in on the "Amen's"--as Jami and Lillian slip out of the meeting; we end with a C-U on REVEREND HARDING's face, taking it all in, pleased...

INT. JAMI'S HOUSE - JAMI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jami sits at her desk, hunched over all her Phantom research, including an old VHS of "Town." QUICK CUTS OF: Jami, on the internet, scanning articles about the killings (victims, locations, suspects)... ONE HEADLINE: **"A TOWN'S SINS."**

Finally, bleary-eyed, she takes a break, goes to window, looks out. We FOLLOW her gaze, over Foster's car, into darkness, and into...

...A DREAM, JAMI'S DREAM In Darkness, her POV, as she runs through a pitch-black, COVERED COUNTRY BRIDGE. She comes out the other side of the bridge--she's wearing what she was wearing that night with Corey--finds herself on...

EXT. LONELY COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT (DREAM)

...Jami, looking around, sees a LITTLE GIRL, 9- or 10-years-old, in pajamas, covered in blood. Traumatized. She's crying, but no sound is coming out. Jami goes to the girl, kneels down next to her, tries to calm her down. Nothing doing. In fact, the girl gets even *more* hysterical, as she starts to point at something OFF-CAMERA. Jami turns to look, sees--

A GRUESOME, HORRIFIC CAR ACCIDENT: A family-type of CAR, mangled beyond recognition, glass and metal *everywhere*. Two bodies, a man and a woman--JAMI'S MOTHER AND FATHER--mutilated, torn and twisted, one lying on the pavement, one half-in, half-out of the car, blood over *everything*--

Jami recognizes the accident--recognizes the little girl as her younger-self--takes YOUNG JAMI up in her arms, turns away from the wreck so that the girl won't be able to see the carnage--and comes face-to-face with her DEAD PARENTS, drenched in gore. She GASPS, and--

--THEN WE'RE BACK IN JAMI'S BEDROOM, IN THE PRESENT:
 Jami's CELL, on her night-table, BUZZING AND GLOWING.
 Groggily, half-asleep, Jami answers it:

JAMI

H-hello?
 (no response)
 Hello...?

VOICE

...I have to do it again.

JAMI

 (half-beat)
 What?

The CALLER hangs up--

EXT. UNION TRAIN STATION - EDGE OF DOWNTOWN - DUSK

A train has pulled in. The station's glass doors BURST OPEN, releasing--a THRONG of people into the waiting crowd, including POLICEMEN, patrolling, scanning faces. Among them...DANIEL TORRENS, a built, handsome man in his 20s. From what he wears, his short hair, the duffle bag slung over his shoulder, we can tell...this guy's in the service. He looks around, breaks out into a BIG GRIN...

...'cause he's looking at--KENDRA COLLINS, a beautiful, sexy woman, also in her early twenties, walking from her car to meet him. They reach each other, KISS.

KENDRA

Hey, baby. Welcome home.

DANNY

Happy Thanksgiving.

She kisses him again. Arms around each other, they head back towards Kendra's car...

They climb in--Danny's driving--but the camera lingers on THE HOLIDAY CROWD IN FRONT OF THE STATION. So many people, anyone could be getting on or off the train...

HARD CUT TO: A BIG, FAT, BLOOD-ORANGE SUNSET, filling the screen. We think: "*Oh, fuck.*"

EXT. SLEEPY TIME MOTEL - SUNDOWN

A run-down, low-rent, two-story motel not far from the train station. Only a couple of cars in the parking lot.

The neon "Vacancy" sign FLICKERS. We hear LOUD, RHYTHMIC THUMPING--

INT. MOTEL ROOM - SLEEPY TIME MOTEL - NIGHT

A dingy room. Kendra and Danny, fucking. Kendra's on top, very vocal. Moans, screams. The bed is BANGING against one of the room's paper-thin walls. Off the bedroom, there's a bathroom, as well as a COMMUNICATING DOOR that leads to an adjoining room. From that room, we hear a SURLY MAN yell, "*Shut the fuck up*"--

Without missing a beat, going at it even harder, Kendra and Danny yell back--

KENDRA/DANNY

FUCK YOU!!!

TIME-CUT TO: Kendra and Danny, spent, sweating, their naked bodies twisted in the sheets...

KENDRA

(tender)

Glad you made it back safe, baby...

He grabs her, suddenly, pulls her under him--

DANNY

Feel that? That's for you--

(grinding against her)

That...is...all...for...you--

KENDRA

(laughing)

Baby, I'm sore, I need a break.

(beat)

Can you get me a Coke? *Pleeeeeeease?*

Danny smiles--he's thirsty, too--slips on his boxers.

KENDRA (CONT'D)

There's a machine by the stairs.

DANNY

Yes'm. Just a Coke?

KENDRA

If they got cookies, get me some cookies,

I need the sugar--

(as he goes)

Money's in my purse, love you, baby--

Danny walks out, shirtless, shoeless; Kendra smiles after him... Then, as *soon* as he's gone, she DARTS over to the other side of the bed. Reaches down for her overnight bag, unzips it, takes out A BOTTLE OF CHAMPAGNE AND TWO GLASSES. Then she takes out a small velvet box, opens it, admires the ENGAGEMENT RING she's bought for Danny...

INT./EXT. SLEEPY TIME MOTEL - NIGHT

Danny walks along the open-air hallway that runs along the second-floor of the motel, overlooking the parking lot, hemmed in by a forest... Goes around a corner...

At the vending machines, Danny gets two Cokes. A pack of cookies. Smiles. Kendra loves her cookies... Starts back--

--but when he rounds the corner again, HE STOPS COLD. Half-way down the exposed hallway, SACKHEAD IS STANDING IN FRONT OF HIS MOTEL ROOM. Fiddling with the doorknob.

DANNY

(huh?)

What the fuck...?

Sackhead turns to looks at Danny, who starts running *towards* SH. (Angry, not scared; he's a damn soldier.)

DANNY (CONT'D)

What the fuck?!

Danny DROPS the cookies, the Cokes--(one can explodes)-- keeps barreling towards Sackhead, who stands his ground. Right as Danny reaches SH, there's a FLASH of steel--

Then: Danny's backing away from Sackhead, a WET, GURGLING SOUND escaping from the SLIT across his throat, where Sackhead sliced him. A TORRENT OF BLOOD STREAMS DOWN DANNY'S CHEST. He staggers backwards, sinks to his knees, in front of Sackhead, who holds a bloody Bowie knife...

Sackhead looks down at Danny...*close-up on those terrible black eye sockets...*he lifts his knife...then SLAMS IT DOWN, INTO DANNY'S SKULL WITH A CRUNCH!!

INT. MOTEL ROOM - SLEEPY TIME MOTEL - NIGHT

Kendra looks up. Did she hear...?

She gets out of bed--still completely naked--looks out her big picture window...there's nothing for a beat--

--then, suddenly, we see: Danny's HEAD being smashed against the window by Sackhead, CRACKING THE GLASS--

KENDRA

DANNY!

Sackhead SMACKS Danny's head into the window again; the crack widens; the head's turning to pulp--

KENDRA (CONT'D)

DANNY!!!

Kendra turns to her room's communicating door, throws it open. The adjoining room's door is shut and locked--

KENDRA (CONT'D)

Help! Help me! Open the door!

SURLY MAN

(through the door)

Fuck you! Shut the fuck up!

KENDRA

GODDAMNIT, FUCKING HELP ME!

Kendra grabs whatever she can--a shirt, Danny's jeans-- FLIES into the bathroom--

She locks the door behind her, but Sackhead is already pounding on it, trying to kick it in. Kendra's eyes zip around the bathroom. The only way out is the window. She pries it open, but it's one of those fucking child-proof windows that only allows five inches--

KENDRA (CONT'D)

OH, GOD--

Then, the bathroom door's SPLINTERING! Kendra takes a towel, wraps it around her fist, PUNCHES the window; her wrist CRACKS--the window *doesn't give*--she SCREAMS in pain! Another kick behind her, and a GIANT FISSURE appears in the door--

She PUNCHES AGAIN; this time the window BREAKS! As fast as she can, Kendra knocks the shattered glass out of the frame, just as Sackhead THRUSTS one of his arms through the door, searching for the knob to unlock it--

Kendra lifts herself onto the window's sill, shards of glass cut into her ass; again, she SCREAMS, as Sackhead gets the door open and forces his way into the bathroom--

It's a 20-foot drop, but Kendra JUMPS, slips through Sackhead's fingers, trying to grab hold of her hair. (In fact, he rips out a handful of Kendra's scalp as she falls.)

EXT. PARKING LOT - SLEEPY TIME MOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Kendra lands on her ANKLE; we hear a sickening *SNAP*, something *definitely* broke--

She looks around the deserted parking lot, back at the motel. Every room dark except for one, her neighbor--

KENDRA

Help! HELP ME!!!

At her screams, the lights in that one room GO OUT. Kendra looks back up at *her* room. The shattered bathroom window, but no sign of Sackhead. *Shit, where did he go?* She HOBBOLES towards her car, every step is *agony*, digging through the pockets of Danny's jeans to fish out the car keys.

She reaches the car, finds the keys. Across the parking lot, SACKHEAD REAPPEARS, emerging from the motel's shadows, *thundering* towards Kendra like a tank--

Kendra tumbles into the car, starts it, puts it into drive--

--even as Sackhead catches up to her, throws open the car door, *reaches* for Kendra, who is scrambling away from SH, climbing *into* the car--

LOOKING AT: THE PASSENGER'S SIDE OF THE CAR. The door SPRINGS OPEN; it's Kendra; it *looks* like she's going to make another break for it; but this time, Sackhead's too quick for her; his hands circle her neck and DRAG her back *into* the car, towards him.

WE'RE LOOKING AT THE CAR, as both doors are SLAMMED SHUT. Then, all we see is the HORRIBLE STRUGGLE, within the dark car, through its windows, as Sackhead does whatever he's doing to Kendra--and by the way, it's *awful*--who SCREAMS AND SCREAMS.

PAN FROM THE CAR TO THE MOON, SHINING DOWN ON EVERYTHING. Kendra's SCREAMS continue for a long, long time, until--

BLACKOUT. Then: SUNRISE, over:

KENDRA'S CAR, every window broken, the driver's side door thrown open. KENDRA'S CORPSE, half-in, half-out of the car. Lying draped over the front seat, so that her head's upside-down, dangling towards the pavement, her neck fairly sawed-through, barely connected to her body; a giant BOWIE KNIFE protruding from her bare chest...

SLOW PAN ACROSS...THE STILL-QUIET TOWN. Front-and-center: Texas State Highway 93. Nothing for a few moments, TOTAL, EERIE SILENCE, then:

A SERIES OF POLICE CRUISERS SPEED INTO FRAME, *shockingly loud*, one after the other. A whole LAW-ENFORCEMENT CONVOY headed towards Texarkana.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

Corporal Daniel Torrens was coming home to spend Thanksgiving with his girlfriend Kendra Collins when they checked into this motel behind me on Rural Route 2, near Union Train Station--

INT. BARBER SHOP - DOWNTOWN TEXARKANA - MORNING

Old-school shop. Two old-school BARBERS are buzz-cutting the heads of TWO YOUNG SOLDIERS; all four men watch the TV that hangs in one of the shop's corners...

SOLDIER ONE

(hang on...)

Holy shit, that's Danny...

NEWSCASTER

The couple was attacked and killed, their bodies mutilated almost beyond recognition--

SOLDIER ONE

They're fucking talkin' about Danny--

INT. JAMI'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Lillian's frying up bacon and eggs, watching the news on the kitchen's TV. ON THE SCREEN, the coverage continues:

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

Security footage from the motel reveal the suspect--

On the TV, we see GRAINY SECURITY FOOTAGE, recorded by a camera in the motel's stairwell, of: Sackhead, slowly, methodically, climbing the stairs... PULL OUT TO:

INT. DORM ROOM - COLLEGE OF TEXARKANA - DAY

The college kid from the drive-in, PAUL MARTIN, in his dorm, its walls covered with slasher movie posters. He's at his desk, *having a "multi-screen experience."* Watching the newscast on his TV; playing a video game on his desktop. Lots of demons, this kid...

NEWSCASTER (ON TV)
 Texarkana Sheriff Jim Doyle held an early-
 morning press conference--

Two COLLEGE JOCKS, in boxers, with towels, are passing in
 front of Paul's door, on their way to the showers--

COLLEGE JOCK 1
 Hey, faggot--

--then continue on their way. Paul doesn't even look at
 the dudes, remains transfixed by his screens...

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Sheriff Doyle, giving a press conference, with LAW
 ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS behind him...

SHERIFF DOYLE
 --all we can say at this point, except
 that we have every able-bodied, available
 man in our department on this case, we
 got city policemen and sheriff's
 departments on loan from neighboring
 counties, we got the Texas Rangers coming
 in--

INT. THE BULLPEN - TEXARKANA GAZETTE - DAY

The same reporter we met before, Ricardo, in his cubicle,
 at his computer, LOGGING IN. He has a dozen NEW E-MAILS.
 One is from: TEXASPHANTOM. Subject: RECKONING.

CHAVEZ
 Oh, shit.

He CLICKS the e-mail open, one big paragraph, no capital
 letters/punctuation. Ricardo reads; the e-mail text fills
 the screen as we hear A MAN'S VOICE:

MAN'S VOICE
 you didnt catch me 66 years ago and you
 never will i am not a human being i am
 not a spirit i am not an angel i am a
 full demon from the hottest hell of texas
 i come and go as i please and i kill when
 i please it will not be three weeks i
 promise you that you may think i am a
 horrible sick murderer but i am not i
 could be much worse believe me

As the V-0 continues, we see Ricardo PRINT the e-mail, then walk it through the newsroom, to his EDITOR's office...

MAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)

i wish to save the soul of this place i
love my neighbors and i wish them to stop
and let me soul rest in peace i did not
want to come back but you called me you
need me you need my knife

INT. EDITOR'S OFFICE - TEXARKANA GAZETTE - DAY

Ricardo, in a chair, while his EDITOR, gray temples, sits behind his desk, reading the e-mail. On the walls behind him, FRAMED FRONT PAGES FROM THE GAZETTE, its most famous headlines from the decades.

EDITOR

"...i am the reckoning foretold when you
are cleansed when you are pure i will
stop you have my word the phantom."

(then)

Crap.

CHAVEZ

It's what the Zodiac did in San
Francisco, what Son of Sam did in New
York, what the Axe-man did in New
Orleans. Taunt the press, get a message
out there--

EDITOR

(as he picks up the phone)

This is, more n' likely, a hoax.

CHAVEZ

Yeah, anyone can set up an e-mail address,
even a demon from hell...

EDITOR

Yeah, we still print it, though.

(into phone)

Sheriff Doyle?

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - WAR ROOM - DAY

DEPUTIES, POLICE OFFICERS, MARSHALS, sitting and standing around a conference table; Texas Ranger "LONE WOLF" MORALES (loud, obnoxious) at the head of the table, the man in charge, waving the latest edition of the Texarkana Gazette ("PHANTOM SPEAKS!") around like a madman--

LONE WOLF

--we are done speaking to the press, the press is not our partner. As you have seen, they are in the business of stirring up hornets' nests, and they *will* be trouble, believe me--

(beat)

Furthermore, since as of this moment, the Texas Rangers are in charge of this investigation--specifically, *I* am--if and when there is something of substance to report--

Morales looks at Sheriff Doyle as he says this--

LONE WOLF (CONT'D)

--for instance, either that we have *caught* this deviant or, preferably, that we have *killed* him--*I* will reach out to the press myself, and convey to them the pertinent facts. From now on, until our collective business is done, *I* am the public face of this investigation--

Some of the other officers trade looks; *who the fuck is this guy?*

LONE WOLF (CONT'D)

(then)

Getting down to business: I want a profile--

SHERIFF DOYLE

Of the Phantom?

LONE WOLF

I grew up in Texas, I know everything I care to about the Phantom, and we are not--repeat, *not*--hunting a ghost. We are going after a flesh-and-blood, cold-blooded killer who so far hasn't made any mistakes--

A series of packets--captured photos/stills and sketches of Sackhead--make their way around the room.

SHERIFF DOYLE

Due respect, Ranger Morales--

LONE WOLF

You can call me Lone Wolf, Sheriff.

SHERIFF DOYLE

...due respect, Lone Wolf, he was video-taped--

LONE WOLF

True, but I suspect he *wanted* to be seen, he *wanted* to be caught on tape--

(TCB:)

I want to visit the murder sites, past and present--

Doyle nods to DEPUTY TILLMAN, who pipes-up:

TILLMAN

I can take you there--Lone Wolf.

LONE WOLF

Thank you, Deputy-- Every street is to be patrolled. Every back road, every alley, every everything. If it's paved, it's fair-game. I want people to see us on the streets, but I do not want them to be *panicked*, I want them to be *comforted*. We've got two jobs, friends: Catching this bastard and keeping the good people of Texarkana from killing each other out of fear--

MONTAGE OF TEXARKANA GOING INTO LOCK-DOWN; ONE OF REVEREND HARDING'S FIERY SERMONS RUNNING UNDERNEATH THE IMAGES...

1) INT. GUN SHOP - DAY

A mom-and-pop gun store. Rows of rifles mounted along the walls. Crowded. With men, women, military, civilian. A poster behind the counter reads: **IT IS YOUR RIGHT TO PROTECT YOURSELF**. WE SEE: Jami and her grandmother, at the cash register--

LILLIAN

(to Cashier)

I need a service rifle and a handgun for my purse and the name of a firing-range where we can both practice.

REVEREND HARDING (V.O.)

...friends, I'll tell you what Heaven is...

2) EXT. LIQUOR STORE - DAY

Colter's on East 35th. People carrying bags and pushing carts of booze (bottles, kegs) out the doors. In the store's window, a sign advertising: **SACKFACE SPECIAL! Keg of Lonestar \$75!**

REVEREND HARDING (V.O.)
 ...it is a mansion, friends, the most
 glorious mansion you've ever seen...

3) INT. POLICE STATION - LOUNGE - DAY

The cops screening "Town that Dreaded Sundown," taking notes. Doyle and Tillman, stand against a wall, side-by-side. Doyle leans over, whispers:

DOYLE
 By the way, you just try to get between
 Lone Wolf and a camera...

Tillman laughs.

4) EXT. THE WOODS NEAR THE MOTEL - DAY

A SQUAD of LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS moving through the brush, armed with rifles, BARKING POLICE DOGS...

REVEREND HARDING (V.O.)
 ...repentance, that is a key, atonement,
 that's another key...

While that's happening, PAN TO SEE: Lone Wolf, giving a soundbite to a NEWSREPORTER and CAMERA MAN...

5) INT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY

People buying supplies with which to fortify their homes. Deadbolts. Chains for doors. Two-by-fours. Spotlights...

REVEREND HARDING (V.O.)
 ...with rooms, rooms of all kind...

6) EXT. HOUSE ON RURAL STREET - DAY

A FAMILY, packing up their station wagon 'cause they are getting the hell out of town-- Or moving *into* town, to--

REVEREND HARDING (V.O.)
 ...gold and silver, and they're just
 sitting there, waiting for you...

7) INT. LOBBY - CANDLEWOOD HOTEL - DAY

The CHECK-IN CLERK is at his counter, at his computer,
 talking to a YOUNG MOTHER, holding a TODDLER in her arms.
 (This lobby, too, is crowded.)

REVEREND HARDING (V.O.)
 ...provided you have the key, and what is
 the key?...

CHECK-IN CLERK
 (typing away)
 And where are you visiting from?

YOUNG MOTHER
 Oh, no, I live here.

8) INT. A CAJUN RESTAURANT - EVENING

Chavez, on a date with a PRETTY YOUNG COPY GIRL. They're
 splitting a *HUMONGOUS* bowl of crawfish...

CHAVEZ
 (laying it on)
 ...there's a theory that the "Moonlight
 Murders" stopped in Texarkana because the
 Phantom moved away--then resurfaced,
 years later, in San Francisco, as the
 Zodiac...

9) INT. ROOM AT THE COMFORT INN SUITES - NIGHT

Lone Wolf sits on the edge of his bed, a napkin around
 his neck, digging into a JUICY STEAK he's eating out of a
 Styrofoam container, off a side-table he's pulled up to
 his knees, while listening to HARDING'S PREACHING:

REVEREND HARDING (V.O. RADIO)
 ...*humility, devotion, sacrifice*, these
 are *all* keys to His Kingdom...

10) INT. THE HOLLAND HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Corey's MOTHER and FATHER sitting down to a somber dinner
 in their well-appointed dining room, CURTAINS DRAWN.

A bare PLATE noticeable set in front of an empty chair, a RIFLE by the door...

REVEREND HARDING (V.O.)
 ...now, *what's* gonna keep you out of this mansion...

11) INT. SOLDIERS' RUN-DOWN STUDIO APARTMENT - DAY

The TWO SOLDIERS from the barbershop sit at a small card table, heads bowed in prayer over their microwave dinners. A pair of RIFLES leaning in the corner...

REVEREND HARDING (V.O.)
 ...a heart full of hate, that'll do it, a heart full of vengeance, sin...

12) INT. FIRING RANGE - DAY

Pan across the lanes: Each one occupied with an unlikely person (a housewife, an older gentleman, etc.) practicing their shooting. In the last lane: Jami and her grandma (the one firing) wearing goggles and noise-mufflers--

REVEREND HARDING (V.O.)
 ...the *wages* of sins, friends, the wages of sin, which can only be paid one way--

END MONTAGE WITH:

INT. TEXARKANA CITY HALL - THE OLD JAIL - DAY

A COUNTY CLERK, with a clipboard, leads Jami down a hall, PRISON CELLS on both sides, every one of them stacked high with CARDBOARD BOXES, bursting with files, documents, etc.

COUNTY CLERK
 ...tell you what, it was a relief when they decommissioned the prison. Now we use it for storage, where we keep all our archives, our files...

They arrive at one particular cell, the Clerk checks her clipboard:

COUNTY CLERK (CONT'D)
 Everything from 1945 to 1952 would be in there.

Jami looks in at--A MOUNTAIN of FILE BOXES. She steps into the cell--AND A PIGEON FLIES OUT, STARTLING HER! A beat, then:

COUNTY CLERK (CONT'D)

Yeah, they get in sometimes. Good luck.

LATER: Jami, at a table, pouring through the REAMS OF MATERIAL. Yellowed originals. Articles, transcripts, depositions, personal effects, photographs...

INT. LONE WOLF'S OFFICE - POLICE STATION - DAY

An office the Lone Wolf's commandeered. As Lone Wolf and Tillman take their seats opposite Jami:

LONE WOLF

Sorry to keep you waiting, what can I do for you, Ms. Lerner?

JAMI

Uhm. Sheriff Doyle said if I remembered or thought of anything else...

LONE WOLF

Have you?

Jami slides her folder over to Lone Wolf. Who starts flipping through it as their conversation continues...

JAMI

Do you know who Yewell Sweeney is, Sir?

LONE WOLF

Should I?

Jami goes to answer, is interrupted by--

TILLMAN

He was a car-thief, arrested in 1946, here in Texarkana, for possession of a stolen automobile.

INSERT: STOCK, HISTORIC "FLASHCARDS" of Sweeney's arrest.

JAMI

They, uhm. Couldn't prove it, but a lot of people thought Sewell was the Phantom. Even more so 'cause the killings stopped after he was arrested.

LONE WOLF

How long was he in for?

JAMI
Thirty years--

TILLMAN
Thirty years--

TILLMAN
And then Yewell Sweeney *died*, Ms. Lerner.

JAMI
Last summer, in a hospital in Fort Worth.
This Halloween was the first showing of
"Town" since Yewell's death.

(then)
I called that hospital and spoke to a
nurse who's worked there since, since
before Yewell died--

TILLMAN
Oh, come on, we don't have time for--

LONE WOLF
(overriding him)
Go on, Ms. Lerner.

JAMI
This nurse said that a young man used to
visit Yewell. His son, they thought...
Who'd be in his thirties now, his late
thirties... So I started thinking...what
if it's his son?
(off their silence)
What if Yewell's passing set him off and
he's come back after all these years? To,
to finish his father's work?

Jami lets that hypothesis hang there. The two men look at
each other. Then:

TILLMAN
Yewell Sweeney *did* have a son, Ms.
Lerner. But he died in a bar fight two
years ago. Before Yewell, himself, did.

Jami's surprised, deflated. She thought she had
something.

JAMI
He, he did?

TILLMAN
(to Morales)
We checked all this.

LONE WOLF

Can I say something here? All this you've put together, it's impressive, young lady. I've been through every file that exists, and they are a *mess*. Half the murders happened in Texas, half in Arkansas, no one shared any information back then, it's no wonder they couldn't catch the son of a bitch...

JAMI

He, he *has* to have a reason...

LONE WOLF

You're looking for a connection, it's the human thing to do, especially after what you went through, but...

(shakes his head)

There is none, Ms. Lerner. No sane one. Common evil.

TILLMAN

He's what we call a "nonspecific-motive" killer.

JAMI

He, he sent that note to the paper.

TILLMAN

Someone did, sure. But we don't know--

LONE WOLF

Prob'ly, someone made himself a mask for Halloween, liked what he did to you and Corey Holland, so he's kept on doing it. Or maybe he's done it before, but this is the first time we're hearing about it because you lived to tell the tale.

INT./EXT. JAMI'S CAR - STREETS OF TEXARKANA - DAY

Jami drives, through the town... (Again, we're hearing a classic--only oldies play in Texarkana--on the radio...)

EXT. JAMI'S HOUSE - DAY

As Jami pulls up to her house, she sees...Nick, standing on the curb, holding a stack of books, braced against the cold. Deputy Foster stands outside his car, leans against it, keeping Nick *squarely* in view...

INT./EXT. JAMI'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM/PORCH - DAY

Inside, Lillian hovers near the window, making sure that all is well with Jami and Nick, who are--

OUTSIDE, on a bench, looking at--the street. The leafless tress. The dried grass. It finally feels like fall...

NICK

(chin-nodding to Foster's car)
He said he would shoot me if I got any closer.

(then)

It got cold.

JAMI

I like it.

(then)

I found an essay in the archives. Written by one of the original victims. Polly Anne Moore. She wrote it about a month before...

INT. TEXARKANA CITY HALL - THE OLD JAIL - DAY (F.B.)

At the table, Jami, holding the essay--which looks like a school project--each page in a piece of cellophane to preserve it. A black-and-white photo of a YOUNG GIRL on the "project's" cover. Haunting.

JAMI

It's all about her dreams. In real life, she was a straight-A student, but in the movie version, she's...a struggling waitress. Her brother, who's still alive, never got over that...

NICK

(suddenly)

I always wanted to talk to you.

JAMI

Why didn't you?

NICK

Didn't think I'd get far. I never saw you with a boyfriend, or--I mean--friends, I asked around, I was like, "What's her story?" And then someone told me...

JAMI

About my parents or about the fact that I spent the seven years totally out of it, on about two dozen drugs? At the same time?

NICK

Uh. Both.

(then)

I'm sorry. About...all that.

A searching moment between the kids. Nick wants to reach out and hug Jami, or hold her hand, or *something*...but that would be too fast, too soon, so instead he says:

NICK (CONT'D)

They're having a vigil tonight, at the school. For the soldier and his girlfriend. And, uhm. For Corey. Wanna go?

SMASH TO: ANOTHER SUNSET. Against which we hear A SIMPLE, PLAINTIVE SONG (perhaps George Harrison's "All Things Must Pass") being sung by an assortment of voices...

EXT. CENTRAL HIGH - NIGHT

Looking at the high school from a distance. It's later; many pinpoints of light (candles and candle-bearers) assembled in the parking lot. Surrounded by woods.

EXT. CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

THE CANDLELIGHT VIGIL: Teenagers and their parents, young kids, old folks, blacks, whites, Hispanics, coming together as a community. In prayer circles. Some people from the army--friends of Danny--in their military-wear.

THREE MAKE-SHIFT MEMORIALS: Photos of Corey, Danny, and Kendra, surrounded by flowers, votive candles. REPORTERS with cameras, conducting interviews and filming, in the BG. Representatives from the police there, but hanging back respectfully.

At Corey's memorial--(a sign reads: "We Miss You, Corey. You Are Still With Us")--Corey's parents are there, with other members from their church, praying. Jami and Nick pass by, keeping their distance. Other kids (who recognize her) STARING at Jami, who's feeling every set of eyes on her when she asks:

JAMI

Would it be...callous if I wrote about this?

NICK

This, meaning...?

JAMI

What happened to me and Corey, what's happening to the town...

(working something out...)

We--we don't deserve this. If someone's doing this to punish us? Like they say. Corey didn't do anything wrong.

Nick reaches out, takes Jami's hand.

NICK

He seemed like a good guy.

From the across the parking lot: SCREAMS. Nick and Jami stop, as people from that area of the vigil start to RUN, in every direction.

NICK (CONT'D)

The hell...?

MORE SCREAMS, MORE RUNNING; the cops, on the fringes, move into the crowd. One of them cautions another: "Do not fire--" Jami's instinct is to get closer to the commotion, but Nick steps in front of her, protectively--

The camera's ON JAMI, craning her neck, trying to see what's causing the mayhem. THE CAMERA CIRCLES HER as she turns around, because now the confusion seems to be coming from *another* part of vigil. Jami turns, and--

--holyshitholyshitholyshit--

IT'S SACKFACE, armed with a knife, moving through the SCATTERING CROWD, headed *towards* Jami, who is petrified--

EVERYTHING ELSE SEEMS TO FALL AWAY AND GO QUIET. **ONLY JAMI AND SACKFACE EXIST AS HE MARCHES TOWARDS HER--**

CLOSE ON JAMI; she can't *believe* this is happening, out in the open... Sackhead stops a few feet in front of her; it's a *total* horror movie moment, frozen in time: Laurie Strode and Michael Meyers; Nancy Thompson and Freddy Krueger; the Face of Innocence versus the Death-Mask...

Jami's POV: Something about Sackhead's mask, his profile, the knife he's holding, it's all...*off*...

BLAM! A gunshot-- One of the soldiers from the barber shop has shot Sackhead in the chest--

INSANE CHAOS, PEOPLE STAMPEDING, as Sackhead sinks to his knees... By instinct, Jami, too, drops to the blacktop-- The soldier is *all* adrenaline and rage--

SOLDIER ONE

You like that? Motherfucker! You killed Danny--

Against the unfolding pandemonium, the soldier SHOTS SACKHEAD AGAIN, sending him (S.H.) backwards--

POLICE SWARM the soldier, grappling him to the ground--

While that's happening, Jami crawls over to Sackhead, flat on his back; he's GURGLING, blood seeps out of his chest, he's having trouble breathing--

The soldier's being forced to his knees, hands cuffed behind his head by the cops, he's yelling--

SOLDIER ONE (CONT'D)

Arrest me! Arrest me, but I got him! I got his ass!

Next to Sackhead, shaking, Jami does the unthinkable... and pulls off Sackhead's mask, revealing--PAUL MARTIN, the messed-up kid from the dorm room. Though, of course, Jami doesn't recognize him, she knows, somehow, that this *isn't* the Phantom...

JAMI

Oh, my God...

As MORE COPS converge on her (and Paul), a hand--Nick's-- grabs Jami's shoulder, starts dragging her away from the crime scene--

NICK

Come on--

JAMI

I don't think that's him--

As Nick pulls Jami through the crowd, she tries to grab a PASSING POLICEMAN's attention--

JAMI (CONT'D)

That's not the Phantom, that's not--

NICK

Jami--

JAMI
 (trying another COP)
Please-- Listen to me-- That's not--

And then they're *gone*, vanished into the dissipating crowd, as THE CAMERA STARTS TO PULL BACK from that ABSOLUTE DISORDER to--

EXT. TEXARKANA COUNTRY CLUB (TEXAS-SIDE) - NIGHT

A trio of stately, Georgian-style buildings, surrounded by trees, an 18-hole golf-course. WE HEAR THE SOUNDS OF DINNER, OF SILVERWARE CLINKING, TAKING US INTO...

INT. TEXARKANA COUNTRY CLUB - MAIN BALLROOM - CONTINUOUS

Candle-lit tables, DINERS in coats-and-ties, nice dresses, having a subdued meal. WHITE-COATED WAITERS AND WAITRESSES move through the room...

On a stage, A BAND of YOUNG MUSICIANS (guys and gals) sit in their chairs, quietly playing their instruments; the dance-floor's EMPTY. (Not much to celebrate this year...)

THE CAMERA FINDS AND TRACKS--DEPUTY TILLMAN, snaking around the tables, until he reaches...THE TEXAS-SIDE MAYOR, sitting with his FAMILY, his wife, his kids.

CLOSE-UP ON: Tillman, WHISPERING into Texas-Mayor's ear. Texas-Mayor, taking in the news, asking a question; Tillman, nodding. Texas-Mayor stands; his wife grabs his hand.

TEXAS-MAYOR'S WIFE
 Maybe you should wait, Tom.

TEXAS-SIDE MAYOR
 Why in the hell...?

TEXAS-MAYOR'S WIFE
 Well, because you've had a few of *those--*
 (meaning his drink--)
 And because--
 (looking at the Deputy--)
 You said it *hasn't* been confirmed?

TILLMAN
 Not a hundred-percent, ma'am, but...

TEXAS-SIDE MAYOR

Well, I'm confused, then. Did you or did you *not* get the sick fuck?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. TEXARKANA COUNTRY CLUB (ARKANSAS-SIDE) - SAME TIME

Mirroring what's happening on the Texas-side. THE ARKANSAS-SIDE MAYOR is on the stage, in front of the band, standing at the microphone.

ARKANSAS-SIDE MAYOR

Ladies and gentlemen, ladies and gentlemen...

Club Members, looking up from their plates; waiters, stopping mid-service for the Arkansas-Side Mayor's words.

ARKANSAS-SIDE MAYOR

(CONT'D)

...one of my deputies has just informed me. The Phantom...the man pretending to be the Phantom, who killed Corey Holland, who viciously killed that couple last night...that man has been shot, I'm told--

CUT BACK TO THE TEXAS-SIDE COUNTRY CLUB FOR:

TEXAS-SIDE MAYOR

--he's been *caught*, I don't know what his condition is, but I *do* know that no one else was hurt, and that *that, finally*, is something to give thanks for--

Following the Texas-Mayor's lead, the DINERS APPLAUD. Then, the Texas-Mayor gestures to--

TEXAS-SIDE MAYOR (CONT'D)

Reverend Harding, would you lead us in a short prayer of gratitude?

REVEREND HARDING, in a black shirt and coat, joins the Texas-Mayor on the stage. Lifts his hands.

REVEREND HARDING

Let us pray.

Everyone in the ballroom bows their heads.

REVEREND HARDING (CONT'D)

Our Father, thank you for delivering us this night.

(MORE)

INT./EXT. JOHNNY'S CAR - THE HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Cruising Fall Creek Highway, Johnny drives, Roy rides shotgun, BOTH DRINKING BEERS, A DUDE SONG ON THE RADIO: Say, The Gaslight Anthem's "The '59 Song." NOTE, *and this is important, THEIR INSTRUMENTS ARE IN THE BACKSEAT.*

JOHNNY

(almost casually)

Betcha all the cops are over at the school...

ROY

(smiling)

Betcha you're right...

Johnny smiles, jerks the wheel to the right--making a sharp jag *off* the highway, on to a *LESS WELL-LIT ROAD*...

EXT. SILCO SALVAGE YARD - NIGHT

JOHNNY'S CAR, at the end of a gravel road, surrounded by DERELICT CARS. Piled high, on top of each other, like teetering pyramids. It should feel like an abandoned amusement park. CHAIN-LINK FENCE/BARBED WIRE indicate where public property ends and where the junkyard's property begins. Beyond the fence: WOODS.

INSIDE THE CAR: Johnny and Roy are still drinking, but the music, and the mood, are...mellower. The two guys even seem a little bit...*nervous?*

JOHNNY

We're nowhere near there, you know. Where he got Corey. That's the other side of town. The motel, too.

ROY

I know.

JOHNNY

In case you were scared...

ROY

I'm not.

They lapse into silence. Johnny looks out the window, at the junkyard's main gate. We can practically *hear* the wheels turning in this kid's head. He looks back to Roy and--

JOHNNY
The *fuck* you didn't--

ROY
I changed my mind, then--

JOHNNY
C'mon, you first, then I'll do you--

ROY
Oh, yeah, right--

JOHNNY
So you won't? You're *not* gonna?

ROY
Johnny--

JOHNNY
(all riled-up)
Fine-- All right-- But don't *EVER* say you
wanna do something when obviously you
DON'T-- Damn, I'm all--frustrated now--

ROY
Well-- Okay-- You wanna...I dunno...jerk
off together?

Johnny actually considers this, but...ehhhh, what's the
point?

JOHNNY
Screw that-- Least at home I got porn--

ROY
Are you sure? 'Cause maybe--

Roy stops. The color drains out of his face.

JOHNNY
Maybe you'll cocktease me some more?

Close on: Roy, who's looking at Johnny...and *past* Johnny,
out the driver's side window. *FUCKING SACKHEAD IS FUCKING
WALKING RIGHT UP TO THEIR FUCKING CAR! FUCK!!*

JOHNNY (CONT'D)
What's your problem?

ROY
(terrified)
D-DRIVE!

Johnny twists around and sees Sackhead, picking up his pace--

JOHNNY
HOLYFUCKINGSHIT--

Johnny finds the key, turns it, STARTS the car, and pulls out, on to the gravel road, leading out of the junkyard--

Too slow, though; Sackhead's running alongside the car. He's holding a PIPE, with which he SMASHES the driver's side window, sending SHATTERED GLASS into Johnny's face--

Roy and Johnny SCREAM like lunatics--

Sackhead's hanging on to the still-moving car--as it passes underneath the yard's main gate--trying to wrench the driver's door open, even as the car swerves madly, off the gravel road, into the trees--

Johnny's car SMASHES into a tree--

BLACKNESS AND SILENCE for a few moments, then--

FADE UP ON: Roy, still in the car (crumpled against the tree), sitting up. (No clue how long he's been unconscious. Seconds? Minutes...?) But his forehead's bleeding. He looks around; the driver's seat is empty.

ROY
John-ny...?

He looks out the CRACKED WINDSHIELD, sees:

Sackhead's crouched over Johnny's prone, motionless body. Slowly, methodically, BEATING JOHNNY'S HEAD OVER AND OVER AGAIN WITH THE PIPE. A WET THUNKING SOUND.

Roy manages not to scream. Until Sackhead pauses, lowers his pipe, grabs a handful of Johnny's hair and lifts his head...so Roy can see how *thoroughly* smashed and bloody Johnny's head actually is--

ROY (CONT'D)
Johnny--

Sackhead turns to Roy, starts lumbering towards the car--

ROY (CONT'D)
Fuck-- *FUCK--*

Panic; Roy goes to escape, but his door is *jammed shut--*

ROY (CONT'D)

No-- NO--

He slides over to the driver's OPEN DOOR, but only gets so far as the steering wheel before Sackhead reaches the car, grabs Roy--

--*strikes him across the forehead with the pipe, once, quick, so that Roy's dazed. Groggy.*

Sackhead starts to drag Roy (by the wrists), away from the car, over the ground, towards a tree.

ROY (CONT'D)

P-please...

As Roy's being dragged, his head's at ground-level, with a clear view of Johnny, who...*wait...is he moving? Is that possible?*

Sackhead gets Roy to a tree, pushes him up against it so that he--*Roy--is hugging the tree, his arms encircling its trunk.*

Sackhead reaches into a pocket, takes out A PLASTIC ZIP-TIE, LASHES Roy's wrists together, so that Roy's tied to the tree, his lower body resting on the ground, his upper-body against the tree.

Roy's out of his mind. He cranes his neck around--sees Johnny, *unbelievably* still alive, struggling to push himself up. Roy gasps out a warning:

ROY (CONT'D)

Johnny-- Johnny, run! RUN!

Sackhead SLAMS Roy's head against the tree, STUNNING HIM into silence, then stalks back towards Johnny and the car. Sackhead stops at his duffle-bag, unzips it, takes out a GUN WITH A SILENCER ON IT, then continues on to Johnny. Roy, returning to his senses, realizing--

ROY (CONT'D)

Oh, God, *oh, God--*

BLAMM!! With zero preamble, Sackhead SHOOTS Johnny in the head, executioner-style. Roy SCREAMS.

FROM ROY'S POV: Sackhead goes to the car, YANKS OPEN one of the doors to the car's backseat, pulls out Johnny's TROMBONE CASE.

ROY (CONT'D)
 (begging)
 Please... Pleeeeeease...

Sackhead goes back to his duffle-bag, pulls out a roll of DUCT-TAPE, moves just *beyond* Roy's line-of-vision.

ROY (CONT'D)
Please don't do this, please don't hurt me...

With a child-like quality, Sackhead takes Johnny's trombone out of its case, slides it, lifts it to his mouth, BLOWS into it.

ROY (CONT'D)
 What--? *What...?*

Satisfied with the trombone, Sackhead takes his trademark BOWIE KNIFE out of the sheath at his belt and DUCT-TAPES IT TO THE TROMBONE'S SLIDE, SO THAT THE KNIFE'S A BAYONET AT THE END OF THE SLIDE, A TRUE INSTRUMENT OF TORTURE.

Roy struggles to free his wrists--*forget it*--as Sackhead moves *directly* behind Roy, gets down on his knees.

ROY (CONT'D)
 Please-- Oh, God, don't-- *Don't--*

Sackhead lifts the trombone so its slide is aimed *right* at Roy's back...

Then Sackhead BLOWS into the trombone and PUSHES the slide out, IMPALING ROY IN THE NECK WITH THE BOWIE KNIFE; ROY SCREAMS IN AGONY!

Sackhead pulls the slide back; the Bowie knife retracts, now dripping Roy's blood.

Sackhead REPEATS the action, this time stabbing Roy in the back; MORE SCREAMS.

ROY (CONT'D)
 Please, God, *stop, STOP...*

A third time: Sackhead BLOWS on the trombone, STABS Roy in the back. *A fourth time. A fifth time. Over and over.*

Finally, Roy *stops* screaming, goes silent. He's dead, his face collapses against the tree's trunk, but Sackhead *doesn't* relent. He's enjoying it *waaayyy* too much. He continues blowing on the trombone, penetrating Roy's corpse. The rote-action builds into a sexualized frenzy.

From far above, AN OWL HOOTS.

Sackhead stops, looks up. At the owl, staring down at him in silent judgment. We see Sackhead's eyes through his hood's sockets. (They're blue...) The cloth in front of Sackhead's mouth RISES AND FALLS...

EXT. JAMI'S HOUSE - EARLY THE NEXT MORNING

Frost on the grass. The front door opens. Jami, in her PJs and a coat, freezing, holding a cup of coffee, comes out, walks over to Deputy Foster's car, knocks on the window. He lowers it; she gives him the coffee.

DEPUTY FOSTER

Thanks for this.

(after a sip)

Did you and your grandma get any sleep last night?

JAMI

(shaking her head "no")

Have you found out anything else about that guy from the vigil?

DEPUTY FOSTER

(hesitates, then:)

His name's Paul Martin, he was a freshman at Texarkana College. Messed-up kid, but...

JAMI

He's not the Phantom?

DEPUTY FOSTER

He left a suicide note in his dorm room, something like--he hoped his death would be an example to others, and that hopefully some good would come of it. Suicide by cop. In this case, soldiers.

JAMI

(shakes her head)

...horrible. But, how does that prove--?

DEPUTY FOSTER

--it *doesn't*, but...ahhh, Christ. You're gonna hear about it. There was another murder last night, two boys. We're checking security cameras at the scene, but looks like it happened after Paul Martin was shot.

EXT. DEVOL'S FUNERAL HOME - DAY (THE NEXT DAY)

In Arkansas, directly across the street from Gawler's Funeral Parlor, in Texas.

INT. DEVOL'S FUNERAL HOME - BASEMENT HALLWAY - DAY

JIM DEVOL, the undertaker, wearing EMBALMING WHITES, leads Lone Wolf and Deputy Tillman down a windowless hallway. Linoleum, harsh lighting.

INT. DEVOL'S FUNERAL HOME - EMBALMING ROOM - DAY

DeVol FLICKS ON THE LIGHTS as they come into the sterile room. A BLACK BODY BAG lies on a CERAMIC TABLE. Another body bag is on a metal gurney, next to the table.

He starts to put on rubber gloves, nods towards a PREP COUNTER, against the wall.

DEVOL

We got masks on that table there. I'd use 'em.

Morales and Tillman take up surgical masks, tie them around their mouths and noses.

DEVOL (CONT'D)

What were they doing at the junkyard? Was it drugs?

LONE WOLF

That's something private their families wouldn't want discussed, don't you think?

DEVOL

'Course, 'course...

Morales unzips the body bog on the ceramic table, revealing one of the boys' naked bodies.

DEVOL (CONT'D)

This is Roy Denning.

We see his bare back mostly; DOZENS OF DEEP INCISIONS ACROSS HIS TORSO. Gawler indicates with a CAPPED PEN:

DEVOL (CONT'D)

There are twenty-six puncture wounds, but your pathologist can confirm that...

LONE WOLF

Mm-hm.

DEVOL

Based on the depth of incision, and the dimensions of the Bowie knife's blade you gave me, they were made with that, that weapon you found at the scene.

TILLMAN

Must be strong as hell, given how he rigged that knife...

DeVol looks at Tillman. *No kidding, Sherlock.*

DEVOL

There was something else. When we took off his pants to get him cleaned-up...

DeVol unzips the body bag further, revealing the lower half of the corpse's body. CHUNKS OF FLESH MISSING FROM THE BOY'S LEGS AND BUTTOCKS.

TILLMAN

What in the hell is that?

LONE WOLF

Bite marks, Mr. DeVol, aren't they?

DEVOL

Yes, sir, they are.

Tillman leans in for a closer, *more gruesome* look.

TILLMAN

Jesus Christ, from what, an animal?

DEVOL

Not unless the animal took off Roy Denning's pants, put on a bib, had himself a snack, then put the boy's pants back on.

(then)

You'd know better than me, but I think you can get an impression made from some of these wounds--

(he points)

--maybe that one, or that one... You can start looking for him that way. Using dental records.

LONE WOLF

What about the other boy? Johnny Fisher?

DEVOL

He was hit with a blunt instrument, that pipe, and shot point-blank.

LONE WOLF

What about bite-marks?

DEVOL

Yes, sir. His pants were also taken off, he was also...bitten, and then his pants were replaced.

LONE WOLF

Bitten on his buttocks and legs?

DEVOL

No, sir, his genitals.

INT. DEVOL FUNERAL HOME - BATHROOM - DAY

Lone Wolf and Tillman, washing their hands at the sinks. Morales is frustrated, his composure's fraying.

LONE WOLF

This fucker's having a ball, isn't he? And what's hilarious *is*, he's not even recreating the actual damn murders, he's following the piece of shit movie.

TILLMAN

In the movie, after the trombone killing, it's another double-homicide, at a farmhouse.

LONE WOLF

Every damn house out here is a farmhouse--

TILLMAN

On the outskirts, yes, sir.

LONE WOLF

Okay, well, get me a map of these quote-unquote "outskirts." With residences that are actually occupied. We can't cover 'em all, we can at least do our best--

TILLMAN

Yes, sir. And you're still sitting down with--

LONE WOLF

(snapping)

I goddamn know, Deputy--

EXT. DINER ACROSS FROM FUNERAL HOME - LATER THAT DAY

LOOKING AT: Lone Wolf, at a table, in the diner's corner. Across from them, the two dead boys' fathers: MR. DENNING and MR. FISHER, both of them salt-of-the-Earth, grief-stricken. Ashen-faced, shell-shocked.

MR. DENNING

Why would he...why would *anyone*...do that to them?

Denning and Fisher are utterly raw. Unravelling...

LONE WOLF

Mr. Denning, Mr. Fisher...I wish I had better answers for you--you're owed that much, at least--but this man, if you can call him that, he has a sadistic imagination, he has sadistic impulses, and, quite simply, he acts on them.

(then:)

That's not a comfort to you, but I want you to have as much information as I can give you.

MR. FISHER

Could you tell? When he bit them...? Were they already...?

Mr. Denning is moments from *completely* losing it.

LONE WOLF

Yes, sir. We believe the boys had passed before the worst of it.

MR. DENNING

(quiet, almost a cry)

Oh, thank you, God-- Thank you, Jesus, thank you...

LONE WOLF

I have two daughters waiting for me back home. I swear to you: My team and I, we will do *everything* we can to see this man caught and punished for what he did to your boys.

MR. FISHER

Anything you need, money, anything...

MR. DENNING

If you find him--*when* you find him...

(simply)

He has to suffer.

The most calm we've seen Mr. Denning in this scene:

MR. DENNING (CONT'D)

So he knows what it feels like...make him suffer...*then* kill him.

LONE WOLF

My son was killed.

(long pause)

What's happening here...happens *every day*, on the border, and the people living there, they don't even talk about it, it's so common...

(looks at them, promises them)

It is my sincerest intention to catch this man and kill him for you...

INT./EXT. DINER - SAME TIME

The Camera pulls out, through the diner's picture window; we see the three fathers sitting in their booth. Time passes, the light changes, the men disappear...

WE SLIDE UP TO--THE SUNSET...then, a Sunrise...

JAMI (V.O.)

This town...where I was born, where I grew up, the only place I've ever known...

EXT. THE CENTER OF TOWN - MORNING

START BY LOOKING DOWN ON: Jami, walking the streets of Downtown, recalling the Opening Tracking Shot, but the light is different; and it's *her* reflection we're seeing in the shop windows, as the Camera follows her..

JAMI (V.O.)

...a monster lived here once. He didn't have a soul, he didn't have pity. For three months, he hurt and killed people, then--for no reason--stopped. Years went by. People thought the monster must be dead, but...

EXT. A PARKING LOT - MORNING

A blacktop mostly devoid of cars. Jami stands with her back to us, a low-rent SHOPPING MALL in the BG.

JAMI (V.O.)

...real monsters don't die.

(then)

Before moving away, I wanted to visit all the spots. I wanted to see if these places felt different, somehow. Evil, I guess. If you could feel that...history. I started with where he attacked the first couple, Mary Jeanne Larey and Jimmy Hollis, on February 22nd, 1946--

A SHOCKING JOLT, A QUICK FLASHBACK TO: Two kids, 1940's-style, in a car, parked in lovers' lane, at night. THE 1940'S VERSION OF THE PHANTOM SHOOTING THEM. INTERCUT WITH THE CORRESPONDING MURDER FROM THE ORIGINAL "TOWN THAT DREADED." Then, back to the parking lot as Jami's "terror trail" continues...

JAMI (V.O.)

There used to be woods there, but now it's a parking lot in front of Central Mall, which we call "Murder Mall." Which is a joke, but also...crazy.

EXT. A ONE-STORY HOUSE ON A RURAL STREET - DAY

Jami, looking at a nondescript house. The trees stark around it. A tire-swing, twisting in the wind...

JAMI (V.O.)

The first time I heard about the Phantom, it was at a sleep-over at my friend Chrissie's house. I was eight-years-old, and Chrissie's older brother Steven put a pillowcase on his head to scare us--

INT. ONE-STORY HOUSE ON A RURAL STREET - NIGHT (F.B.)

ANOTHER FLASH: In a living room, a TEENAGE BOY wearing boxers and a T-shirt, a white pillow case, eye-sockets cut-out, JUMPS INTO VIEW, arms lifted in a threatening way, YELLING, sending a gaggle of PAJAMAS-CLAD LITTLE GIRLS, including Young Jami (in pajamas), screaming and jumping--

EXT. A ONE-STORY HOUSE ON A RURAL STREET - DAY

Young Jami's Mother and Father, BARRELLING out of the house, towards their car. Young Jami (still in pajamas), crying, scared, in her father's arms.

Wearing the clothes they've worn in previous flashbacks, related to the car accident, THEY BLOW BY JAMI IN THE PRESENT, looking on...

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS AT THE EDGE OF DOWNTOWN - DAY

A FREIGHT TRAIN, rumbling along its tracks. Jami, writing in her journal, looks up as it passes...

JAMI (V.O.)
 People are saying the Phantom is back.
 That after sixty-some years, he's come
 back...

EXT. THE GRIM HOTEL - DOWNTOWN - DAY

The once grand hotel, now a boarded-up, condemned RUIN. Jami, passes a few HOMELESS MEN AND WOMEN, clustered in the hotel's porticos, its doorways...

JAMI (V.O.)
 ...but I don't think he ever left. I
 think we kept him here. With our stories
 and our legends and that stupid movie...

INSERT: Stock footage depicting the Texarkana of yester-year. Images of the people and landmarks, including...

JAMI (V.O.)
 The Grim Hotel, downtown, was where every-
 one in Texarkana would come to hear news
 about the Phantom. The police, the
 reporters, concerned citizens. Now, it's
 like this abandoned amusement park, this
 haunted house people walk by, without
 even looking at it...

EXT. THE TENNIS COURT - SPRING LAKE PARK - DAY

Jami, in front of the deserted tennis courts, the rest of the park stretched out behind them. Nets pulled down for the winter season. Weeds growing through the clay.

JAMI (V.O.)
 Same with the old tennis courts at Spring
 Lake Park. Those used to be a field...

The courts DISSOLVE, leaving the cleared-away, grassy field...

THEN, FLASH TO: Night. A 1940's car, parked in the middle of a grassy clearing. Leafy trees swaying in the breeze. 1940's Sackhead standing across from the car, gun raised, aimed at the car's front seat. TWO FLASHES OF BRIGHT GUNFIRE in the night; BLOOD SPLATTERING the windshield.

THEN, PAN TO REVEAL: THE FILM CREW (FROM THE 1970's) SHOOTING THE MOVIE VERSION OF THE MURDER WE JUST SAW.

EXT. THE TENNIS COURTS - SPRING LAKE PARK - DAY

Jami, at the chain-link fence that encircles the tennis courts...

JAMI (V.O.)
 ...the field where Richard Griffin and
 Polly Ann Moore were shot and killed...

INT. POLLY ANN MOORE'S BEDROOM - DAY (**FLASHBACK**)

A teenage girl's bedroom from 1946. 15-year-old Polly Anne sits at her small wooden desk, writing her essay, looking out the window...

JAMI (V.O.)
 "...what does it do to you, I wonder,
 growing up alongside those ghosts, in the
 "town that dreaded sundown"? Where the
 most important thing that ever happened
 is five people were killed, and then,
 thirty years later, they made a movie
 about it?"

As Jami's V-O continues, we SMASH CUT to Polly Anne's CRIME SCENE PHOTO, then quickly cycle through ALL THE VICTIMS' CRIME PHOTOS, then--

EXT. MUSIC HALL THEATRE - NIGHT (**FLASHBACK**)

Where we had our town meeting, only now the theatre's in its PRIME, decked-out for the premiere of the first "Town" movie. A HUGE CROWD (including the filmmakers), dressed to the nines, jockeying to get in. Which brings us back to the present for:

EXT. JAMI'S HOUSE - THE FRONT PORCH - DAY

Jami, sitting on the bench with Nick, reading from her pad. Across the street: The Deputy's car, stationed across the way, keeping surveillance...

The questions hangs there. Nick isn't sure if he should answer or what, so...

JAMI

That's how far I've gotten... I'm not sure what, exactly, it does...

(then)

I mean, it messes you up.

(then)

I'm messed up.

INT. JAMI'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

...Jami enters the house, to discover--Lillian, sitting on the couch, seemingly waiting for her.

Jami sees that the TV's on, that the end credits of "Town that Dreaded" are PAUSED on the screen. She glances down, at the coffee table. An old VHS copy of "Town."

LILLIAN

Found it in your room. Must've been the only person in Texarkana who hadn't seen it until tonight.

(she starts:)

I was fifteen when they came to town.

JAMI

When who did?

LILLIAN

All the movie people. They were making a movie called "The Phantom," that's what it was gonna be called at first, all about the lovers' lane killings, it was gonna be like, like *real* Hollywood, right here in our backyard, and everyone was *so* excited... Maybe *this* would fix the town. Maybe *this* would get us back on track. Maybe businesses would bounce back, maybe the train station start humming again... Maybe, maybe we'd all come together and, at least, have some *fun* for a change... Wouldn't *that* have been something...?

Jami sits down, opposite her grandmother, who is very *still* throughout this story. Clearly, she's tapping something deep and primal within her...

LILLIAN (CONT'D)

They put flyers up at all the local high schools--I was a junior at Texas High--and the director of the film, he said he was looking for kids, *real* kids, to be in a big spring dance scene they were gonna shoot at the VFW--which, by the way, is where we had our dances, our *real* dances... (Everyone kept using that word, "real.") So me and my girlfriends, we put on the most old-fashioned dresses we could find, and we went down to the Grim Hotel, where--I guess it was all the producers--had set-up shop, and we went into this room, some room where the director was, and...we didn't have to dance or anything, we just had to introduce ourselves, and talk a bit about our lives, where we were from, how old we were, and could we do a twirl for him...?

(she looks at Jami)

So I gave him my best twirl... And he said, Well, Lillian, you are by far the prettiest girl I've seen all day, so I'm gonna feature you in the dance scene, so you wear that same dress, and you make your hair nice, and do your make-up, and I'll make sure you're right in front, right in front of the camera... And I thought it was just gonna be so, oh, I don't know, special. I thought, "Oh, he's picking me."

JAMI

You're not in that dance scene...

LILLIAN

(after a few moments)

...the night they were getting ready to shoot that scene, we were all in the parking lot, waiting around, and this man, this good-looking man, comes up to me, and he introduces himself, and he says he's playing the Phantom, and I was surprised, I remember, but he had the mask--in his hand, he was holding it--and he was a well-respected member of the community, so when he said the director had given him permission to pick his co-star for a scene with lines, actual lines

LILLIAN (CONT'D)

I...believed him, and off I went with him. Somewhere quiet, he said, so we could talk.

JAMI

What, what was his name?

LILLIAN

No, I won't tell you that, not that, but I *will* tell you that he was lying about being the Phantom, he wasn't even in the movie, and that I did not share a tear for him when he died....

(then, grimly:)

...so no, I was *not* in that scene.

JAMI

Did you tell anyone what happened?

LILLIAN

What, that I'd gone parking with someone because they'd promised me lines in a movie? Because I thought that would help me get out of Texarkana? And that he'd taken advantage of me? In the worst way possible?

(shakes her head)

No, thank you, I was dumb, but I wasn't *that* dumb, and I thought, if I keep my mouth shut, the summer will end, and these movie people will go away, and we'll be talking about something else in the fall, and then, after senior year, I'll go away, and maybe nobody'll even see it, see the movie, but...they did see it, and I never left, and people have never stopped talking about it, least not here...

She grips Jami's hand, tightly.

LILLIAN (CONT'D)

...I should've *left*, after high school... Then I should've left--we should've left--after what happened to you--

(shaking her head)

I will *not* let this mess become the most important thing in your life.

JAMI

It already is--

LILLIAN

I talked to your uncle in California.
He's happy to have us, for as long as we
care to stay.

JAMI

Grandma--

LILLIAN

We're going, Jami.

INT. DOCTOR LINDSAY'S OFFICE - DAY

Jami, sitting opposite DOCTOR LINDSAY, in her chair.

JAMI

My grandma thinks I'm morbid.

DR. LINDSAY

When I was your age, I used to make
charcoal tracings of headstones. My
mother thought that was morbid, too.

(then)

Is it research for something you want to
write?

JAMI

It is. The Phantom's victims, they
shouldn't be forgotten, who they were,
who they would've become...

(a beat, then)

I tried to write about my parents. I
couldn't, not even in my journal.

DR. LINDSAY

Do you want to talk about that?

Jami evades:

JAMI

Nick's father also died in a car-crash.

(then)

Nick's nice. He's helping me.

DR. LINDSAY

With your project?

(Jami nods)

So the plan is...?

JAMI

Right after the holidays, we go to
California to stay with my uncle
until...it's over, hopefully.

EXT. REVEREND HARDING'S FELLOWSHIP CHURCH - DAY

Harding, bundled-up, at the ROADSIDE SIGN in front of his Church, inserting the SLIDING LETTERS to spell out the message: **'TIS THE SEASON, PRAY FOR FORGIVENE--**

Lone Wolf and Sheriff Tillman drive-up; they both get out of the car, approach Harding, who smiles warily...

REVEREND HARDING
Marshal. Hank. Merry Christmas.

LONE WOLF
Merry Christmas, Reverend.

TILLMAN
Merry Christmas, Steve.

REVEREND HARDING
How can I help you gentlemen?

TILLMAN
Can we go inside and talk, Joe?

INT. THE FELLOWSHIP CHURCH'S RECTORY - DAY

A CLOCK TICKING. Harding at his desk, holding a sheet of paper, a copy of the Phantom's e-mail. Morales and Tillman sit in chairs, waiting for him to say...

REVEREND HARDING
I didn't write this e-mail.

TILLMAN
The FBI traced it back to you, Joe.

REVEREND HARDING
I don't know what to tell you...

Tillman looks at Lone Wolf. *"Step in, please."*

LONE WOLF
Here's what *I* think: I don't think you killed anyone, Reverend. Hell, you were with the Mayor on Thanksgiving Eve. But I *do* think you sent that message. I've heard you at night, preaching. Not much else to do in my hotel room. I don't know if you're lookin' for publicity, or--

REVEREND HARDING
(quietly)
He's doing the Lord's work.

TILLMAN
 (a long beat)
 He's killing our kids, Joe...

REVEREND HARDING
 My Church is more full than it's been in
 years. People are coming to me, looking
 for--salvation. Redemption. They're
 scared, Hank. They want to be on the
 righteous path, again...
 (then)
 I want to call the Mayor, then I want to
 call my lawyer.

PRE-LAP: A HOLIDAY SONG, taking us into...

CHRISTMAS EVE IN TEXARKANA: NIGHT-TIME SHOTS OF HOUSES
 AND STORES, decorated for the holidays. Some tastefully:
 Wreaths, garlands, Nativity scenes, plastic reindeers,
 elves. Christmas in Small Town America...

INT. SACRED HEART CATHOLIC CHURCH - NIGHT

The church's lights are dimmed. Candles at the end of
 each pew give off a warm, yellow glow...

VARIOUS SHOTS OF: Residents in the over-crowded pews.
 Jami and Lillian among the SINGING WORSHIPPERS. Nick,
 too, apart from them. He sends Jami a text; she gets it,
 reads it, looks at him--*really?*

EXT. SACRED HEART CATHOLIC CHURCH - NIGHT

Post-service. The congregation leaving the church, shaking
 hands with the PRIEST at the top of the stairs. Jami and
 Lillian, making their way down; Nick joins them.

NICK
 (to Lillian)
 Merry Christmas, ma'am.

LILLIAN
 Merry Christmas.

Lillian goes. Nick pulls Jami away from the other people.

JAMI
 I got your text, what does it--?

NICK
 Mary Jeanne Larey's *alive*, Jami...

INTERCUT: An image of the "real" Mary Jeanne Larey from a black-and-white picture in the Gazette.

NICK (CONT'D)
 ...The first Mary, living in Arkadelphia,
 under a different name, Dorothy
 Bellweather--

JAMI
 How'd you find her?

NICK
 The library. Lexus-Nexus. Worth a trip,
 right?

JAMI
 Definitely, just--
 (beat)
 Nick...why are you helping me so much
 with this?

NICK
 (no hesitation)
 To give you a reason to come back to
 Texarkana.

Okay, *whoa*. And now Nick's digging a small, gift-wrapped box out of his coat pocket to give to her.

NICK (CONT'D)
 This is for you.

JAMI
 (totally surprised)
 Nick...

NICK
 Call me tomorrow. We can take your
 grandma to a Christmas movie.

Nick gives her a peck, then walks off, leaving Jami on the steps, not knowing quite what to do with herself...

EXT. NIP 'N SIP BAR AND LOUNGE - NIGHT

A dive bar on the Arkansas side of things. A string of colored Christmas lights along the edge of the bar's roof. A dozen cars in the parking lot...

INT. NIP 'N SIP BAR - NIGHT

Lots of sad, lonely CHRISTMAS DRINKERS. "Little Drummer Boy" plays on the huggy sound-system. Behind the bar: A framed, autographed, vintage "Town" poster. THE CAMERA FINDS: An *almost*-attractive woman, ARDELE, sitting at the bar, nursing a drink, having a cigarette... A man sidles up next to her. It takes us a few moments to recognize him since he's out of uniform: It's Deputy Tillman.

TILLMAN
(holding up his beer)
Every Christmas, Ardele.

ARDELE
(toasting him)
Every Christmas, Hank. They don't have you working tonight?

TILLMAN
Up till half an hour ago. Time and a half for my trouble.

ARDELE
Good for you, that's good money. You got plans for tonight?

TILLMAN
Just arrested one of Texarkana's most prominent citizens for sending an e-mail, so...getting drunk.

She laughs, then sees he's not kidding.

EXT. NIP 'N SIP BAR AND LOUNGE - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Tillman and Ardele, walk to their respective cars.

TILLMAN
You wanna follow me?

ARDELE
You been sneakin' me into your Momma's farm since we were kids, Hank, I remember the way.

TILLMAN
(smiling)
I guess you would...

They get into their cars. First Tillman, then Ardele pull out of the lot--OUT OF FRAME.

But the Camera remains FIXED. A few moments pass; then, the TAILLIGHTS on a car at the far edge of the parking lot TURN ON. *Uh-oh...*

EXT. THE TILLMAN FARM - NIGHT

Where Deputy Tillman's lived his entire life. His car and Ardele's car parked in the driveway, next to the house's screen-in porch. A PATROL CAR cruising by...

INT. TILLMAN FARM - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Slow pan across the living room, REVEAL: Tillman, in an easy chair, holding a bottle of beer. Ardele, in her bra and panties, on her knees, between his legs, head boppin'. Tillman's eyes are closed, his head's back...

He brings the bottle of beer to his lips, takes a long gulp, puts his hand on the back of Ardele's head...

TILLMAN

Oh, yeah...yeah, baby...

Nice rhythm... *Up and down, up and down...* Tillman sits forward a bit, starts stroking Ardele's hair, opens his eyes... *Up and down, up and down...*

Tillman's POV: Looking at his front door and the window next to it. Sackhead, standing on the porch, is looking back at him. *Had been staring at them, in fact.*

TILLMAN (CONT'D)

Fuck-- Ardele--

Sackhead lifts his gun, which has a silencer, FIRES. An almost comical *POP!* Tillman slumps back in his chair. Still between his legs, Ardele looks up at him.

ARDELE

Hank?

Ardele's POV: Tillman's left eye is just gone. BLOOD seeps down his cheek...

ARDELE (CONT'D)

Hank--?!

She stands up, wheels around. *SACKHEAD'S NOW POINTING HIS GUN AT HER.* She opens her mouth to scream; Sackhead FIRES.

THE BULLET HITS ARDELE IN THE FACE, TEARS THROUGH HER CHEEK, BUT *DOESN'T* KILL HER. Now she screams, AN *EXPLOSION OF SOUND, BLOOD, AND SHATTERED JAWBONE!*

Sackhead SMASHES through the window, as Ardele BOLTS, out of the living room, blood GUSHING from her face.

INT. TILLMAN FARM - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Hand at her cheek, Ardele lurches into the kitchen, trips over a chair, falls down. On her hands and feet, she scurries along the kitchen floor, towards A DOOR, leaving a RED SMEAR in her wake.

INTERCUT ARDELE'S FLIGHT WITH SACKHEAD'S HUNT:

As he moves through the living room, passes Tillman--

INT. TILLMAN FARM - GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Unfinished, with a concrete floor. Ardele slams the door shut behind her, beelines towards *another* door, this one leading to the outside world--

IN THE KITCHEN, SACKHEAD'S POV, looking down at the streak of blood, stepping over the toppled chair--

EXT. TILLMAN FARM - THE BACKYARD - NIGHT

Ardele bursts out of the back door, heads right for: THE CORNFIELD THAT ABUTS THE TILLMAN BACKYARD.

IN THE GARAGE, Sackhead's still following the trail. He passes a set of tools, leaning against the wall, out of frame...a beat...Sackhead returns, goes to the tools, SELECTS A PICK-AX, resumes his hunt...

EXT. CORNFIELD - NIGHT

FOCUS ON: Ardele, crawling through the winter corn. It's not too tall, but it *might* be enough to hide her...

FOCUS ON: Sackhead, entering the field, holding the pick-ax, striding up and down the rows of corn, scanning for Ardele... He stops, takes a moment, rests the pick-ax on his shoulder, strains to listen... ALL WE HEAR IS THE SOUND OF HIS TERRIBLE BREATHING BENEATH HIS MASK...

FOCUS ON: Ardele, in the dirt, trying *not* to scream, *not* to cry, as she *prays* Sackhead doesn't see her...

NOTE: Sackhead's in the BG of this shot; Ardele's COLD BREATHS--the vapor--in the F.G. NOTE: They are very close to each other, but then Ardele holds her breath, even *with* a shredded cheek, and--after a few tense moments-- Sackhead moves on, away from--

Ardele, letting out deep, silent breaths of relief. She resumes her crawl, away from the Tillman farm...

THE EDGE OF THE CORNFIELD: Ardele, dragging herself out of the corn. As she emerges from it, she sees--A HOODED FIGURE--SHE SCREAMS--but it's only a SCARECROW, keeping silent vigil.

FOCUS ON: Sackhead, deep in the corn, jerking his head around at the sound of Ardele's shriek. *Got her.*

BACK WITH ARDELE: She's gotten to her feet and is moving across a yard towards another farmhouse's back door. (Essentially, the mirror-image of Tillman's.)

Halfway across the yard: A VICIOUS, HUGE PITBALL CHARGES AT HER, BARKING LIKE CUJO. Ardele screams and jumps back, falling on her ass, but the pitbull's on a chain, so its teeth stop a few feet short of ripping out her throat--

FOCUS ON: Sackhead, picking up steam as he thrashes through the corn, towards the screams/barking--

Ardele scurries away from the pitbull, reaches the farmhouse, starts BANGING on the back door--

INSERT: A FLASH/FLASHBACK to the corresponding beat from the original "Town," which we saw at the drive-in--

A LIGHT within the dark farmhouse TURNS ON--

Over Ardele's shoulder: Sackhead's stomping out of the corn--

She screams; the pitbull LUNGES towards Sackhead--

--who swings the pick-ax in a clean arc, HITTING THE DOG IN THE DEAD-CENTER OF ITS HEAD, killing it instantly, pinning it (twitching in its death-spasms) to the ground.

Ardele SCREAMS some more, POUNDS some more, as Sackhead closes the gap between them...

INT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT (SAME TIME)

An OLDER FARMER and HIS WIFE, in their robes, woken up by this commotion, moving towards their Back Door, the Farmer gesturing for his Wife to hand him his rifle--

EXT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT (SAME TIME)

Ardele's pressed up against the side of the farmhouse, hitting the back door, but--she's running on fumes. Sackhead is suddenly two feet away from her. He reaches out a hand--she tries to bat it away, weakly--*he grips Ardele's throat...*

INT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT (SAME TIME)

Armed with his rifle, the Farmer's at the back door, about to open it; he orders his Wife--

OLDER FARMER

Call the police and do *not* come outside--

FARMER'S WIFE

Evan--

OLDER FARMER

Just close the damn door behind--

A LOUD *THUNK!* And then, suddenly, everything outside goes QUIET. No more screaming, no more struggling, no more whimpering.

The Farmer and his Wife freeze for a moment--*what the hell just happened??*--then, a whisper:

FARMER'S WIFE

Evan...

But he throws open the door and heads out.

FARMER'S WIFE (CONT'D)

Evan--

EXT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT - SAME TIME

The Farmer rushes out his back door, looks around. There's the dead pitbull. There's the scarecrow, there's the corn, swaying in the night-wind, but...no sign of anything else. Then, behind him, a SOB of horror:

FARMER'S WIFE

Eh-ewan...

Evan turns around. His POV: Next to the back door, Ardele has been IMPALED into the side of the house, ONE OF SACKHEAD'S BOWIE KNIVES STICKING OUT OF HER CHEST. She's like a butterfly pinned to a tray of wax...

The Farmer's Wife collapses into a distraught heap in the doorway; the Farmer lowers his rifle, defeated; the moon is three-quarters full over the corn... WE HEAR:

OLD WOMAN'S VOICE (V.O.)

My family wanted me to move, and I did, eventually, but not till a year or two after I was attacked...

INT. RESIDENT'S ROOM AT A NURSING HOME - DAY

Nick and Jami, sitting with--white-haired, bright-eyed, *vital* DOROTHY BELLWEATHER (aka Mary Jeanne Larey).

DOROTHY

You say you're going away?

(Jami nods)

Probably I should've done the same.

(then)

We're both lucky girls, though, aren't we? To be sitting here, together?

Jami nods.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

No one else really understood what it was like, afterwards. I had questions, as you do. "Why me? Why was I spared?"

JAMI

I-- Yes. Exactly.

DOROTHY

I've been asking myself that the last sixty-six years of my life, and I don't think I'm any closer to an answer. But-- you *do* need to ask, that's true.

JAMI

Just--anything you can remember...

DOROTHY

There was a curfew, 5:30 in the afternoon. If you were out and about, and you didn't have a purpose, they put you in jail, no questions asked...

(thinking about it)

People nailed boards on their windows so no one would be able to shoot into their homes... Wives set booby-traps, pans, empty cans of coffee, in front of their doors--you read about that?

(Jami nods)

Oh, it was hellish... We were so afraid...

JAMI

How long did it last?

DOROTHY

The fear? I still wake up some nights.

(then)

This is how it was: Before that summer, you left your door unlocked. After that summer, you saw a stranger, you didn't wave hello, you crossed to the other side of the street. Texarkana wasn't the same place, ever again.

JAMI

Mrs. Bellweather, some people believed that the Phantom was Yewell Sweeney--

DOROTHY

Oh, no. No, no. We knew Yewell, Yewell wasn't the killer. Oh, no, they railroaded him. They needed *someone* to be the killer--after not catching him themselves.

JAMI

How do you know for sure?

DOROTHY

Well, I *don't*, but I'll tell you. 'Bout twenty years ago, I got a call from Lucille Parker, she was a reporter for the Gazette, the one who interviewed me...

(beat)

...Lucille had been kind to me, we'd kept in touch, and she was coming to Arkadelphia for a family reunion, and-- did I want to have lunch?

JAMI

Lucille Parker wrote all those first articles...

DOROTHY

That's right. So we get together, and of course, you know, we started talking about the Phantom--mind you, this was forty years after the fact--and Lucille's telling me how, now that she's retired, she's thinking about writing a book about the Phantom, but only if she could tell the story of what happened to Earl McFadden...

Jami and Nick trade a look. Maybe *this* is something...

JAMI

Earl...?

DOROTHY

McFadden. A few days after the last murders, at the Stark farm, the police found a body on the Arkansas-side of the train tracks north of town. All in pieces, it looked like a train had run over it...

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS - DAY (**FLASHBACK, 1946**)

In the foreground, A 1940's-style TRAIN *streaks by*, right in front of the Camera. Once it's out of frame, we see-- in the BG--POLICE huddled around a MUTILATED BODY.

DOROTHY

This is the Arkansas police, by the by. Who say, "It's the Phantom, we were about to catch him, he felt the noose tightening, he felt guilty, so he threw himself in front of a train and committed suicide, no more Phantom."

NICK

Based on...what?

DOROTHY

Well, that was just it. Nothing. According to my friend Lucille, Earl McFadden's wife demanded an autopsy--took about a week to get it. Come to find out, McFadden *hadn't* been run-over, he'd been stabbed maybe two dozen times, *next* to the tracks--

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Close-on: Earl McFadden, lying on the ground, the 1940's Phantom straddling him, stabbing him viciously. (This scene plays like a "weegee" flipbook, stills coming to life almost "animation-style.") A few quick moments of this, then--*ANOTHER TRAIN whooshes by*, in front of this scene, carrying us back to THE PRESENT:

DOROTHY

...and that's how come he was all torn-up. Lucille's theory was, and it was a good one, the Phantom killed Earl McFadden, then hopped a train, went off to California or something...

JAMI

He should've been front-page news.

DOROTHY

Of course, everything about the Phantom was, believe me. But while the Arkansas police was finding McFadden, Texas police were arresting Yewell, so you had two different camps, both claiming they've got the Phantom, then they do the autopsy on McFadden--

Nick shakes his head, "*This is fucked-up.*"

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

--and the only person who's piecing together that Yewell was in custody when McFadden was murdered--proving that neither man was the Phantom--is Lucille, whose editor killed the story because no one--neither force--would cooperate with her. By this point, everyone wanted things to get back to normal.

JAMI

So Yewell went to jail, and McFadden...

DOROTHY

Well, he was dead.
(she sighs...)
So many lives ruined for no good reason...
(oh, well:)
At least Yewell got in the movie.

OFF Jami and Nick, *what the hell now?* HARD CUT TO:

INT. THE GAZETTE - RICARDO CHAVEZ'S OFFICE - DAY (LATER)

Ricardo, sitting at a conference table with Jami and Nick. The kids, rapid-firing:

JAMI

--Dorothy Bellweather--that's the name
Mary Jeanne Larey goes by now--

NICK

--she's in a nursing home in Arkadelphia,
and she--we--

JAMI

--we think you need to talk to her. About
Earl McFadden, one of the original
Phantom's victims--

NICK

--a forgotten victim, someone whose son,
or grandson, *might* have a grudge--

JAMI

--I have all her information, her number's
903-792-0983, it's written there on that
piece of paper-- We told the police, but
you should call her--

She slides it over to Chavez. Who looks at it, then:

CHAVEZ

--I will definitely speak with Ms.
Bellweather.

INT. JAMI'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

New Year's Eve. Jami and Lillian, pouring plastic cups of champagne, watching a NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY ON TV. As a Newscaster counts down:

NEWSCASTER (ONSCREEN)

...6, 5, 4, 3--

They take up their cups--

NEWSCASTER (CONT'D)

...2...1...*Happy New Year!*

ON SCREEN: CROWDS OF PEOPLE CELEBRATING. Lillian toasts:

LILLIAN

May we all be in a better place a year
from now.

They clink cups. Jami puts her arms around Lillian.

JAMI
I love you, Grandma.

LILLIAN
I love you, too, sweet girl. More'n
anything.

LATER. The two are on the couch, watching an old episode of "The Twilight Zone." "To Serve Man." Lillian announces:

LILLIAN (CONT'D)
I've seen this one. It's a cookbook. I'm
going to bed.

She gets up, looks at Jami:

LILLIAN (CONT'D)
Lots of packing and driving tomorrow...

JAMI
I'm just gonna finish this.

LILLIAN
You'll come kiss me goodnight?

JAMI
You'll be asleep.

Lillian goes. Jami waits a beat, pulls out her cell, sends a text...

EXT. DARK STREET NEAR JAMI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A lone figure, walking along the sidewalk, in the shadows of the darkened houses... The figure passes close to a house--a motion-sensor's tripped--and a SPOT TURNS ON, illuminating--Nick. Who keeps walking, triggers a *SECOND* SPOT... CUT TO:

INT. JAMI'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Nick's arm around Jami, on the couch. (This was the plan, to wait for Lillian to go to sleep.) They watch a few moments of "The Twilight Zone," then Jami touches the necklace around her throat. A silver chain, a moon pendant.

JAMI
I love this. I love the moon...

Tentatively, Jami leans over...KISSES Nick. Then:

JAMIE

You can stay over, we just have to be quiet.

INT. JAMI'S HOUSE - JAMI'S ROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

Jami and Nick, in Jami's bed, kissing, both kids eager...

NICK

Jami...

He leans her back onto the bed, eases on top of her. It's real, awkward, raw. There's fumbling--the kids are doing what they think they're *supposed* to be doing--but there's a naiveté, a tentativeness, as they undress and begin to make love...

EXT. JAMI'S HOUSE - NIGHT (LATER)

Looking at the house from, say, the POV of the police car across the street. Night-wind in the trees...

INT. JAMI'S HOUSE - JAMI'S ROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

Post-sex. Under the covers. Jami shivers, Nick wraps his arms around her...

NICK

Better?

She nods. Nick kisses her neck, closes his eyes, settles in for the night. But Jami's not there yet... *Something's* weighing on her still. She whispers:

JAMI

I left Corey in those woods...

NICK

(a beat, then)

You said he was--

JAMI

He *was*, I *think* he was. But maybe if I'd stayed--

NICK

If you'd stayed, you'd be gone, too.

Jami takes one of Nick's hands, pulls his arm tighter around her.

JAMI
I'm so...tired...

NICK
Sleep. You can sleep tonight.

She kisses him, then puts her head on the pillow. Closes her eyes, almost immediately slips into...

DARKNESS.

THEN: Looking at the kids. Nick, sound asleep...

Jami stirs awake, sits up in bed. Jami's POV, looking at the foot of her bed:

SACKHEAD'S THERE, framed by the window behind him. The moonlight turns him into--a shape, more than anything...

Sackhead's POV. Looking at Jami. THEN REVERSE IT, so it's her POV again--

Sackhead is now blood-covered COREY. In the same exact pose. Freaky. Jami's eyes well with tears.

JAMI
I'm sorry...

Corey starts to turn away from her...

JAMI (CONT'D)
Corey...

Corey is walking out of the room...

JAMI (CONT'D)
I'm sorry...

THE CAMERA FOLLOWS Corey out of the room, passing from Jami's life...

Once he's gone, the Camera slides back to Jami's bed. She's waking up. Again. For real this time.

Jami sits up; moonlight fills the room. But no Bloody Corey. No Sackhead. Just Nick, asleep next to her, his chest rising, up and down... *It feels over.*

EXT. JAMI'S HOUSE - THE NEXT DAY - EARLY MORNING

Nick slips out the front door, quietly. Walks down the porch steps, eyes the Deputy's car across the street.

He looks up at Jami's bedroom window. She's there, tries to smile, but--it's hard. They wave. What a *colossal* bummer.

EXT. JAMI'S HOUSE - DAY

New Year's Day. Cloudy; it might rain. Or snow.

Jami and her Grandma at the car, packed and ready to go. Grandma's already shotgun; but before Jami climbs in--

JAMI

One sec, I wanna do something--

Jami trots over to the parked POLICE CAR. Deputy Foster sits behind the wheel, drinking from a thermos of coffee. He lowers his window...

JAMI (CONT'D)

So, uhm. I don't know if anyone told you, but my grandma and I are taking off for a month or so.

DEPUTY FOSTER

I heard. That's why I'm on this shift.

JAMI

Should be better there. Not many people in California know us.

DEPUTY FOSTER

At least here in Texas you'll always be remembered for something...not everyone can say that. What part of California?

JAMI

Near San Francisco. We have--

Jami's looking at Deputy Foster's eyes. They're very, very BLUE... And now that Jami's really looking at them, she's wonders: Has she stared into them before...?

JAMI (CONT'D)

...we have relatives there. And, and my grandma's wanted to visit them for awhile, and...

It can't be. *Itcan'tbeitcan'tbeitcan'tbe...*

DEPUTY FOSTER

This'll be done by the time you get back.

Unnerved, Jami smiles, nods. It's a weird, paranoid moment, broken by--Lillian, calling from their car:

LILLIAN

Jami?

DEPUTY FOSTER

You drive safe.

Jami heads back to her car, climbs in, starts the engine.

She adjusts her rearview mirror, to see--FOSTER'S CAR. He's already pulling it into a U-turn, away from Jami...

JAMI

(relieved, muttering)

Stupid...

LILLIAN

What is? That we're heading out so late?
I agree, let's get a move on.

INT./EXT. JAMI'S CAR - STREETS OF TEXARKANA - AFTERNOON

Cruising through town. Deserted because it's New Year's Day and everyone's recovering. Or because...this is simply how it is now.

INT./EXT. JAMI'S CAR - THE HIGHWAY - AFTERNOON (LATER)

A few miles beyond town, Jami's driving past...THE APACHE DRIVE-IN THEATRE. She shudders, drives.

TIME-CUT TO: Jami, driving past a cornfield. Acres and acres of dry, winter corn husks. Jami keeps driving, a setting sun--they've been getting progressively bigger, more violent--reflected in the car's windshield...

EXT. REST-STOP - INTERSTATE 30 - AFTERNOON

The day's shading into dusk. In the BG, bare woods surround the rest-stop, its parking lot. Jami gets out of her car. As she walks towards the OPEN PAVILION, where there are a few picnic tables, restrooms, vending machines, Jami's grandmother lowers her window:

LILLIAN

Second thought, if they have those peanut butter crackers...

JAMI

Okay.

As Jami heads for the WOMEN'S ROOM, she glances at the only occupied picnic table. TWO TEENAGERS sit across from each other. The girl CRIES. The boy, clearly out of his depth, holds her hand, trying to comfort her. *And the world keeps turning*, thinks Jami.

INT. WOMEN'S ROOM - REST-STOP - MOMENTS LATER

A row of stalls; a row of mirrors and sinks. IN A STALL: Jami, on the toilet, peeing.

THEN, AT THE SINK: Jami, washing her hands... She hears a POP. Shuts off the water. Waits a beat, hears a SECOND POP. This one, more discernible; it sounded like...

Oh...fuck... Jami rushes to the door, pushes it open.

INT./EXT. REST-STOP - DUSK

Jami moves down the short hallway towards the picnic tables. At the corner, she hesitates, inches around to look, sees...

THE TEENAGERS, at the picnic table, slumped over, dead, their heads on the table, twin pools of blood spreading across it, red rivulets flowing down the table's sides...

CLOSE ON THE TEENS: The boy was shot in the back of the head; the girl, in the face.

Jami opens her mouth to scream, covers it with her hands. She takes a step out from around the corner, towards the dead kids--

BLAMM! A third shot! From the parking lot.

No hesitation, Jami SPRINTS in that direction--

JAMI

Grandma-- GRANDMA!

JAMI'S POV as she crosses the pavilion; HER CAR COMES INTO VIEW--

Sackhead stands at the passenger's side of the car, holding his gun, down at his side; the windshield is SPLATTERED WITH BLOOD; Jami SHRIEKS--

JAMI (CONT'D)

NOOOOOOO!!

Sackhead turns to Jami, starts walking towards her. She's *completely* reeling. She doesn't know what to do--run or--

Jami takes off, back towards the pavilion--

As she passes the dead kids, Jami WIPES OUT in the puddle of the blood next to the picnic tables, YELLS--Sackhead keeps advancing--picks herself up, sprints down the hall, back into--

INT. WOMEN'S ROOM - REST-STOP - CONTINUOUS

Jami locks the door behind her. A deadbolt, thank God. Shaking, Jami takes out her cell phone, manages to dial a number; the call RINGS...RINGS...A PICK-UP!

NICK (ON PHONE)

Hey, I was *just* thinking about--

JAMI

NICK! NICK, HE'S HERE!

INT. NICK'S KITCHEN - SAME TIME

Nick, on his cell; he'd been making himself a sandwich.

NICK

What?

INTERCUT WITH JAMI, IN THE BATHROOM:

JAMI

Oh, God-- I think he shot my grandma!

NICK

Jesus Christ, where are you? Tell me and I'll--

JAMI

I, I don't know-- The rest-stop on, on the highway--

NICK

What highway?

A SUDDEN, VICIOUS BANGING AT THE BATHROOM DOOR; JAMI SCREAMS--

JAMI

I don't know, on 30, on Route 30--

NICK

Where on 30? Where on--?

BLAM! BLAMM! TWO GUNSHOTS BLOW OUT THE DEADBOLT.

On Nick's end: The call DISCONNECTS.

INT. WOMEN'S ROOM - REST-STOP - CONTINUOUS

Armed with his gun in one hand, Bowie knife in the other, Sackhead steps into the bathroom, looks down its length. The row of stalls. No Jami in sight. S.H. walks to the first stall. Pushes the door open. Empty. The second stall, also empty...

The Camera, looking down, slides over the other empty stalls, revealing: JAMI, COWERING IN THE *LAST* STALL...

Sackhead tries the third stall, nothing. As he moves to the fourth stall--

JAMI'S CELL PHONE STARTS TO RING--*it's damn Nick, calling back--*startling both Jami and Sackhead--who turns towards the ringing. *Got her.*

But before S.H. can even step towards the last stall, its DOOR SLAMS OPEN. And out rushes Jami, shrieking, a war-cry, barrelling *towards* Sackhead--this is her only chance, to use this moment of surprise to her advantage--

--SO SHE SLAMS INTO SACKHEAD, AND THEY *BOTH* FALL TO THE GROUND; SACKHEAD'S GUN CLATTERS OUT OF HIS HAND--

JAMI IS SCURRYING OFF AND AWAY FROM SACKHEAD, TOWARDS THE RESTROOM'S BLOWN-APART DOOR--

Sackhead LUNGES, grasps Jami's ankle; she falls down again, *hard.* (Jami's cell's still ringing, by the way.) They're both on the ground, Sackhead is dragging Jami closer to him, HE SLICES AT HER LEG WITH HIS BOWIE KNIFE, cutting through her jeans, opening a GIANT GASH down her leg.

Jami *kicks* Sackhead in the face--*CRUNCH!* His nose caves beneath his mask. It's enough of a jolt that Jami can twist her leg free-- And get *UP* and *OUT* of the bathroom--

EXT. REST-STOP - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

As Jami DASHES across the pavilion, to her car, to her grandmother, she answers her phone--

NICK (ON PHONE)

Tell me where the hell are you and I will come get you--

JAMI

I, I don't fucking KNOW--

INT. NICK'S KITCHEN - SAME TIME

NICK

Jami, stop-- STOP and tell me what you see--

A moment of quiet, then Nick hears: DEEP SOBS COMING FROM JAMI, on the other end of the phone--

JAMI (ON PHONE)

Oh...God... Oh...oh no, no, no, no...

NICK

What? Jami? What is it?

EXT. REST-STOP - JAMI'S CAR - SAME TIME

Jami, standing by her car, looking down at SOMETHING OFF-PANEL; she's crying, she lets her hand (holding her cell) drop down to her side...

NICK (ON PHONE)

Jami? Talk to me, what's going on?

Jami's looking at: Lillian, shot, dead, her head cocked at a terrible angle. Her knitting blood-soaked; the purse in her lap OPEN, as if she'd been going for something in it...

JAMI

*(deep, wracking sobs)
Grandma... Oh, God, Grandma...*

NICK (ON PHONE)

Jami? Jami, what's happening?

INT. NICK'S KITCHEN - SAME TIME

Nick, trying to stay calm for Jami's sake--

JAMI (ON PHONE)
*He...he shot her... He shot my grandma...
 Oh, God...*

A beat as Nick tries to figure this out. *Whatwhatwhat?*

NICK
 Okay, Jami? Listen to me--

INTERCUT WITH JAMI AT THE REST-STOP:

JAMI
He shot her...

NICK
 I know, I know, but--
 (oh, God...)
 Where is he, Jami? Do you see him?

JAMI
 I...I don't know...

NICK
 Look around, Jami-- *Are you looking
 around?*

She looks back to the pavilion. No sign of Sackhead.

NICK (CONT'D)
 Do you see a sign anywhere? A sign that
 says anything?

Jami's eyes dart everywhere, looking for Sackhead, looking for a sign, anything, any movement, *anywhere*. Finally, they land on a STONE SIGN, its back towards Jami, its front facing the highway, at the entrance to the rest-stop's parking lot.

JAMI
 There's one--

NICK
 What does it say?

JAMI
 I--I can't read it, I'm behind it--

Nick practically punches a wall.

NICK
 Okay, Jami, you--you need to go to that
 sign and tell me what it says--

JAMI
But my grandma--

NICK
And then you will go right
back to your grandma, okay?
But you need to tell me
where you are so I can call
the police--

JAMI
I, I don't wanna hang up--

NICK
I'll stay on with you, and then I'll call
the police-- And then I'll come to you--
All right? Jami?

Jami, a wreck, nods.

JAMI
All right.. I--I just have to...

Jami reaches through the car's window. Gets her grandma's
purse. Opens it, pulls out LILLIAN'S GUN, which is what
Lillian had been reaching for when she was shot.

JAMI (CONT'D)
All...all right...

Jami takes a few steps, away from the car, towards the
sign...

JAMI (CONT'D)
Stay on with me...

NICK
I am, I'm right here-- Anything?

JAMI
No...
(barely hanging on)
Ni-ick...

NICK
It's okay, you're okay, just, just get to
that sign...

Even holding her grandmother's gun, Jami looks *incredibly vulnerable* as she walks across the empty parking lot,
towards the sign... Her leg is bleeding, remember, as she
keeps twisting around, trying to keep *everything* in view.
Her car, the pavilion, the back of the sign...

As she circles closer to it, the front of the sign *BEGINS*
to come into view. She looks back to the parking lot,
nothing. Back to the sign, its front is *almost* visible...

Back to the parking lot, the pavilion... Behind the structure, out of sight, the SOUND OF A CAR STARTING UP--

JAMI
(blood freezing)
Oh, my God--

HEADLIGHTS TURN ON--

NICK
Jami, are you there? What does it say?

She can *finally* read the sign--

JAMI
Redwater, I'm at Redwater--

NICK
Okay, great, Jami, I'm--

SUDDENLY, FROM BEHIND THE PAVILION, DEPUTY FOSTER'S CAR--
THE ONE THAT HAD BEEN PARKED IN FRONT OF JAMI'S HOUSE THE ENTIRE MOVIE--TEARS AROUND THE STRUCTURE--

JAMI
OHMYGOD--!!

NICK
Jami? What's happening?

THE CAR IS SPEEDING TOWARDS JAMI--

NICK (CONT'D)
(keeping focused, on task)
Listen to me, I have to hang up to call the police, but if that's him, you have to--

Jami BOLTS. Runs from the parking lot, on to the highway. Crosses it as the car (with, yes, Sackhead at the wheel) streaks out of the parking lot, headed *right* for her--

Once on the other side of the highway, Jami slides down a steep embankment that slopes down towards--WOODS; thick trees clumped together--

FOSTER'S CAR APPEARS BEHIND HER! Tears down the embankment, bearing down on Jami--

--Who makes it past the tree line *just* as Sackhead's car is about to run her over.

It SLAMS into a THICK TREE, however, which stops the car COLD, in a LOUD CRUNCH OF METAL.

Jami looks back. *Maybe...hopefully...the crash killed--*

Nope; though his car's totalled, Sackhead's already climbing out of it--

Jami takes off, deeper into the woods...

...but we stay on Sackhead, who opens up his car's trunk, hauls out his huge duffle-bag, drops it to the ground, unzips it, pulls out three pieces of black metal, starts assembling them into--A HUNTSMAN'S COMPOUND BOW. Holy shit, this fucker is CRAZY--

INT. NICK'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Nick is grabbing his keys, preparing to head out after Jami himself, on his phone, *RAGING--*

NICK

No, asshole, I need to talk to Marshal Morales directly, tell him I know where the fucking Phantom is--

EXT. THE REDWATER WOODS - NIGHT

Jami limping through the trees. The terrain's swampy and muddy, almost a bayou. She takes a minute, sits down on a tree, inspects her leg; it's bad, she's losing a *lot* of blood... She takes off her jacket, takes off her shirt, rips it into strips, ties off her leg--poorly, she's no expert--puts her jacket back on, gun in the waist of her jeans, resumes her Dario Argento-like flight...

QUICK CUTS OF: JAMI RACING THROUGH THE WOODS, BEING PURSUED BY SACKHEAD. Though we don't see him--and *Jami* doesn't--we should feel like S.H.'s *just* out of sight, mere moments from catching up to her. NOTE: This chase should feel evocative of our first one. It should feel like we're closing a circle, the serpent eating its tail...

As Jami *tears* through the woods, she sees, on the periphery of her vision, a LITTLE GIRL IN HER PAJAMAS, COVERED IN BLOOD--her 9-year-old self--running parallel to her, running from the past...

SHOTS OF: Jami and Young Jami *streaking past*--FLASHES OF HER MUTILATED PARENTS, staring on, silent witnesses...

Triggering a FLASH TO: THE CAR CRASH, playing in reverse, from Young Jami's POV in the backseat;

her mom and dad's bodies, flying back *into* the car, through the shattered windshield, reassembling itself...

EXT. CLEARING IN REDWATER WOODS - NIGHT

Panting, Jami limps into...a natural, circular clearing in the forest. Hemmed in by trees, it (bizarrely) almost feels like a sanctuary. Serene. She starts *across* the clearing, as fast as she can manage, to get back under the cover of the trees--

When she's halfway across it, we hear a loud--*FWOOMP!* Jami SCREAMS in and CRUMPLES to her knees. She looks down at her (sliced-up) leg, and--

--AN ARROW IS STICKING *THROUGH* HER LEG; went clean-through it.

JAMI

Oh, God-- Oh-- God--

She looks around. It came from *somewhere* in the woods, but which--?! *Fuck it, doesn't matter--* She tries to stand up--*somehow* makes it to her feet, wincing and whimpering with each step, resumes her hobbled march across the clearing, when--

Another *FWOOMP!* Jami SCREAMS, PITCHES FORWARD, face-down on to the ground. This time, THERE'S AN ARROW STICKING OUT HER LEFT-SHOULDER. *Sackhead's playing with her...*

Jami SOBS, she can only lift her head a few inches... HER POV: The edge of the clearing, the line of trees...

SACKHEAD'S BOOTS step into frame, he drops his duffle-bag. Jami lifts her head up a little higher so she can get a better look at him... He's regarding her with a terrible, uncanny stillness...

JAMI (CONT'D)

Wh...why me...?

Sackhead says nothing.

JAMI (CONT'D)

Why everyone else but not...me?

Sackhead unzips his bag, carefully takes out one of his Bowie knives. It's almost a ritual now.

JAMI (CONT'D)

N-o-o-o-o-o...

Sackhead walks out of Jami's line of vision, to get behind her. She knows: He's going to do to her what he did to Corey. *Doesn't matter*, she thinks; she's already losing consciousness... If she keeps her eyes fixed on the trees, if she doesn't have to look at him, it will all be over and done with, and...and...

In the woods, in the trees' shadows, a GHOSTLY FIGURE...

It's BLOODY COREY. *There...and then not there... There...and then not there...* Something from Jami's subconscious or--?

SACKHEAD'S BEHIND JAMI NOW. HE KNEELS DOWN, ONE KNEE ON EITHER SIDE OF HER TORSO, SO THAT HE'S STRADDLING HER.

In the woods: BLOODY LILLIAN JOINS BLOODY COREY... *There... and then not there...* Jami's blacking out, fighting for consciousness... *There...and then not there...* In the BG, Young Jami, wandering through the woods, as though she were looking for help...

THEN ON JAMI'S FACE, registering: One last attempt to do something, *anything*: She tries to twist around, onto her back, so she can see Sackhead, but it's hopeless. She's too weak.

WE'RE LOOKING UP AT SACKHEAD, who's already raised his knife up over his head, which he cocks to one side... Somehow...*affected* by Jami's efforts... And suddenly, he *wants* to be able to look into her eyes when he does it...

So he reaches down and *helps* Jami, eases her onto her back. (This makes the arrow in her shoulder hurt worse, a *stab of agony*, but it jolts Jami into further clarity...)

Sackhead is looking down at Jami; she is looking up into his face. His BLUE EYES, going saucer-wide, because they're seeing:

Jami's hands at her waist, holding the gun she got from her grandmother's purse, pointed directly at Sackhead. SHE FIRES IT--BLAMM!!

The bullet hits Sackhead in the chest, blowing him backwards, off her.

Jami pulls herself to her feet; going numb, the pain in a different place now, somewhere far way...

She staggers over to Sackhead, looks down at him... At his eyes, staring through their cut-out holes...

JAMI SHOOTS SACKHEAD A SECOND TIME, IN THE FACE.

In full shock, she turns from him, starts walking back the way she came...

WE STAY ON SACKHEAD, LOOKING DOWN AT HIM: Blood spreads across one side of his mask. One eye snuffed out, the other, dead and glassy, staring up at the night sky...

EXT. EDGE OF THE FOREST - NIGHT

Jami, arrows still sticking out of her shoulder, out of her leg, covered in blood and dirt (not dissimilar to how she looked the *first* time she emerged from the woods), staggers out of the forest, a half-dead horror-show.

The CAMERA PANS from her to the Highway... A DOZEN POLICE CARS ARE PARKED ALONG IT. AT LEAST 50 LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS THERE, INCLUDING LONE WOLF. NICK'S ALSO THERE.

Jami lurches towards them; one of Deputies finally sees her, starts yelling to everyone else. (NOTE: We don't hear any of this; this is all in dumb-show.) They rush forward to help Jami; Nick gets there first. He puts his arms around her waist, supports her. Morales is asking her something; she gestures to the woods behind her: *There, in there.*

A group of ARMED MARSHALS heads into the woods; they have BLOODHOUNDS with them. Nick helps Jami to an ambulance...

THE CAMERA PANS UP TO THE BLACK SKY. No stars tonight, NO MOON... THEN, THE CAMERA PANS BACK DOWN TO--

EXT. THE STREETS OF TEXARKANA - DAY

The town, waking up from its collective nightmare. Shops opening, people walking the streets. LIFE RESUMING...

JAMI (V.O.)

A thorough search of the Redwater bayous yielded nothing, no body...

INT. LONE WOLF MORALES'S HOME - LIVING ROOM (LAREDO) - DAY

Back in hometown. Lone Wolf's on his couch, his hat on the end table next to him. He's got a paper folded on his lap; he *was* doing a crossword, but now...he's looking at his TWO DAUGHTERS, playing in front of the TV...

JAMI (V.O.)

Texas Ranger Lone Wolf Morales speculated that despite his injuries, the man who had been impersonating the Phantom-- Deputy Clayborn Foster--retreated deeper into the swamps and subsequently fled the state...

INT. TEXARKANA POLICE STATION - DAY

Sheriff Doyle and OTHER POLICE MEN going about their day-to-day business. In the BG, on a bulletin board of WANTED POSTERS and FLYERS, we find: A half-covered POLICE SKETCH of Sackhead, looking on, impassively...

JAMI (V.O.)

Clayborn Foster was born in Plano and lived in Texas all his life. His mother, deceased, was Ann Foster. His grandmother, also deceased, was Ruth McFadden, wife of Earl McFadden, who had been stabbed to death alongside a set of train tracks in Texarkana, in 1946...

EXT./INT. A RAMSHACKLE SHACK IN THE MOUNTAINS - DAY

Isolated and remote. A FIGURE, with his back towards us, is walking *into* the CABIN, a plume of smoke curling up from its chimney...

JAMI (V.O.)

Foster's current whereabouts remain unknown...

WE FOLLOW HIM INSIDE; the figure passes through the door-- we catch a quick, distorted glimpse of him, reflected in a piece of beveled glass, but half his face is *definitely* scarred, and he wears an eyepatch--but FOCUS ON: A piece of dirty, white cloth, stained pink (faded blood) hanging on a nail...

JAMI (V.O.)

...and three months after the events of New Year's Day, no arrests had been made in connection to the second string of horrific "Moonlight Murders," which took the lives of at least eight people...

EXT. TEXARKANA - CENTER OF TOWN - DAY

In the FG, the statue of James Bowie. In the BG, City Hall. People going about their business...

JAMI (V.O.)

And once again, Texarkana is best known as..."The Town That Dreaded Sundown."

EXT. A BLUFF OVER THE OCEAN - DAY

We're very clearly *NOT* in Texas. California, let's say. But Jami's sitting on the hood of her car, looking out at-- THE SUN, dipping towards the sea, behind low clouds...

JAMI (V.O.)

I carry a copy of Polly Anne Moore's essay with me, wherever I go. I re-read her last words every day now...

As the V-O continues, Jami gets into her car...

JAMI (V.O.)

"Sometimes, though it may be many years from now, I hope to be a typist or do some kind of business. With this war going on, no one can make too many plans for the future... Next year, if nothing happens, I will graduate from high school at the age of 16, and will I be glad!"

Jami starts the car, begins driving, down a winding road, away from the bluff...

JAMI (V.O.)

This story I'm writing down is for Polly Anne Moore and all the others, who didn't get the chance I got...who didn't live to see another sunrise...

PULL BACK FOR A LONG-SHOT of JAMI DRIVING, as the SUN passes from behind the clouds. It's suddenly HUGE, deep orange-- APOCALYPTIC. It fills the screen--

--as "Red Barchetta," the song Jami and Corey heard on their night-drive, so long ago, starts to play...

END OF MOVIE.

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