

RING

by
Ehren Kruger

Revised Draft by
Scott Frank

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Shooting Script

**For Educational
Purposes Only**

FADE IN:

1
BLINDING SHAFT OF LIGHT

1

Opens a horizontal DOOR in the blackness.

A black MONOLITH slides inside, blocking out the light.

With mechanical WHIRS, the monolith's surface flips open. Metallic PRONGS swing toward it and rise -- retracting to pull a shiny RIBBON free.

The ribbon unspools, as the monolith LOCKS home with a thunderous ECHO. It slinks around golden ROLLERS and GUIDES. Wedges snug against CAPSTANS and MAGNETIC HEADS.

A street map of CIRCUITS and TRANSISTORS shimmers beneath the ribbon. FORESTS of WIRES snake into the blackness. A steady, pulsing HUM fills the world.

As a RED SUN labeled "Record" blazes to life.

DISSOLVE TO:

2
BRILLIANT WHITE ORB

2

The red now white -- a perfect circle in a field of black.

A fierce WIND rises...

As an sphere's SILHOUETTE slides across, blocking the light from the orb. Creates a CRESCENT of light, then a SLIVER. And then a total ECLIPSE.

And as the wind becomes deafening...

A shimmering RING OF LIGHT surrounds the eclipse. Like a celestial force, glimmering, flickering...

...unwilling to be silenced.

SMASH CUT TO:

3
TELEVISION SCREEN

3

Filled with STATIC. Then ZHSSIP! A channel-change.

A3
A hair-care commercial has GORGEOUS MODELS prancing in slo-mo.

A3

KATIE (O.S.)
TV gives me headaches.

ZHSSIP! Cooking show.

B3

C3

ZHSSIP! Nick-at-Nite. ZHSIIP!

C3

3

3

KATIE (O.S.)

I heard there's so much like magnetic waves in the air because of TV's and telephones that we lose like ten times as many brain cells as we're supposed to.

D3 There's a perfume commercial on now. Perfect beauties emerge from a swimming pool. They get zapped -- ZHSIIP! D3

3 REVEAL INT. KATIE'S BEDROOM 3

A teenage refuge. Two girls in private school uniforms, cute KATIE and plain BECCA, 16, watch TV on floor pillows.

KATIE

Like all the molecules in our heads get all unstable. And the companies know, but they're not trying to stop it.

BECCA

(slides her the remote)

You can pick something, I don't care--

KATIE

You have any idea how many electro-rays are passing through us every second?

BECCA

I got a better one. Have you heard about this videotape that kills you when you watch it?

Katie looks at her.

KATIE

What kind of tape?

BECCA

A tape, a regular tape. You rent it, I dunno. You start to play it and it's, like, somebody's nightmare. Then suddenly this woman comes on.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BECCA (cont'd)

Smiling at you, right? Seeing you.
Through the screen.

(a macabre beat)

And as soon as it's over...your phone rings. Someone knows you watched it. And what they say is..."You will die in seven days."

(smiles)

And exactly seven days later...

KATIE

Who told you that?

BECCA

Somebody from Revere, I dunno--

KATIE

Who told you?

Becca sits up straight, frowning. Katie's tense.

BECCA

What's your problem?

KATIE

I watched it.

BECCA

It's a story, Katie--

KATIE

No-- me and Josh saw it, last weekend. We were with some friends of his--

BECCA

I thought you were with your parents--

KATIE

I wanted to tell you--

BECCA

You were with Josh all weekend?

KATIE

His friends rented this place, in the mountains...and one of them found this video. We thought it was just some sick joke. Until the phone rang.

Becca quiets. Katie looks toward her TV, troubled:

(CONTINUED)

KATIE (cont'd)

Ever since...I haven't felt right...

BECCA

You're trying to scare me.

KATIE

It was a week ago...a week ago
tonight...

Becca studies her, worried, but shaking her head:

BECCA

I'm not falling for it. No way.

She waits for reassurance. But none comes. Becca looks worried...as Katie swallows, eyes frightened...and then suddenly clutches her own throat, SPASMING and CHOKING--

KATIE

(gasping)
...help me...

--and falling into Becca's lap, eyes bugged out and laughing. Becca shoves her off--

BECCA

You're a freak.

KATIE

You went for it--

BECCA

Your parents know you were with Josh?

KATIE

They think I was at Mina's.

BECCA

I wanna know everything you did and where you did it!

Katie shrugs, looks away.

BECCA (cont'd)

You did... didn't you?! TELL ME!

Becca tackles her, rolling off the pillows as they both yelp and giggle and the PHONE RINGS. Sharp and shrill.

Katie freezes. She wrests herself up, pale, staring at a clock (reading 10:00 PM)... as Becca slowly realizes:

(CONTINUED)

BECCA (cont'd)
You really watched a tape...

KATIE
Yeah. I really did.

A portable phone RINGS on the counter. Becca and Katie tumble in, with trepidation. It TRILLS again. The two of them stand there watching it ring. And ring... and ring...

BECCA
This is so lame...

She reaches for the phone.

KATIE
Wait, don't--

But Becca's already there. She swallows...then grabs it--

BECCA
(extra cheerful)
Embry residence.

A terrible silence...and then looks at Katie...

BECCA (cont'd)
She's right here.

Becca shaking, hands the phone to Katie who looks at her: "Who is it?" Becca, scared, gives her an "I don't know."

Katie slowly takes the phone...

KATIE
Hello?
(long beat, looks at Becca)
Hi, Mom...

BECCA
Sucker.

Katie flips her off.

BECCA (cont'd)
Ask her where she keeps the Vicodin.

And with that, Becca heads back up the stairs.

(CONTINUED)

KATIE

Yeah, Becca's over. Okay. Okay.

Yeah, yeah... I will.

(then)

No, I won't.

(then)

Bye, mom.

She hangs up. She stands there, shakes her head, then grabs a glass and heads for the fridge.

Suddenly we hear the sound of a soft POP behind her. Then o.s. WHITE NOISE. She looks off...

There's light FLICKERING in the doorway that connects the kitchen to the living room.

5

INT. LIVING ROOM

5

Katie steps in, frowning. Darkness save for the room's big-screen TV. Now on. Filled with STATIC.

KATIE

Quit being a bitch, Becca, where's the remote?

No answer from upstairs. Just muffled bedroom MTV.

Katie eyes the hissing screen nervously, then steps forward and shuts the power off at the source. She marches back--

6

INT. KITCHEN

6

--when there's the POP again. The HISS of STATIC behind her. She jumps up: the TV's on again in the living room.

KATIE

Becca! Quit it!

7

INT. LIVING ROOM

7

She edges in again, to face the big-screen video snow. Beneath the STATIC, a new sound rises. A faint, mewling tone. Scratchy, a sort of WHISPER-KEENING--

--and the sound of it makes Katie pale. She rushes forward, shoves a chair away and YANKS the TV cord from the wall.

The screen goes black.

Katie calms herself. Takes in the silence. And then becomes aware of just how silent the whole house is...

(CONTINUED)

7

CONTINUED:

7

KATIE

Becca?!

8

INT. DOWNSTAIRS HALL

8

Katie steps in slowly. Some shadows upstairs, no sounds.

KATIE

(nervously)

You hear me?!

9

INT. STAIRS/UPSTAIRS HALL

9

Katie ascends -- hearing the WHISPERY KEENING again, getting louder as she climbs. Trembling now, she rounds the banister to see her CLOSED BEDROOM DOOR.

--and sees the carpet beneath it is WET. Discolored and soaked like something's spilled out from within--

The scratchy KEEN is getting louder -- its source beyond the door. Katie trembles closer, footsteps SQUELCHING. Heart in her throat, she summons resolve. Takes a bold step closer and reaches for the knob--

--and thrusts open the door!

INT. BEDROOM - UNKNOWN POV

10

--as ANGLE immediately RACES AT HER from across the room, FLYING for her terrified eyes as she readies a scream--

--that never comes.

SMASH CUT TO:

11

BLACKNESS

11

We see a BLUE CRAYON enter frame and we begin to PULLING BACK to...

REVEAL A BLUE-GRAY SEASCAPE

A crayon drawing. As a child's hand adds a whirlpool in black, spiraling up from the depths, wider and wider to now...

REVEAL INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

A BOY, 6, is alone at his desk. His matronly TEACHER, a woman in her sixties, her hair in a long braid, works on tomorrow's lesson plan. We hear A DOOR SLAM DOWN THE CORRIDOR and the teacher looks up at the boy...

(CONTINUED)

RACHEL (O.S.)

Listen, Harvey, you punctilious prick!
You touch paragraph two and I'm coming
down there and poking your fucking
eye out with that little red pencil
you like so much!

The teacher looks at the boy, but he keeps to his drawing.

RACHEL (O.S.) (cont'd)

I am being objective! The congressman
is a lying sack of shit and I'm saying
so in my piece! Objectively.

And now the boy looks up at his teacher.

RACHEL (O.S.) (cont'd)

You will not bury it-- you will keep
it where it is, above the fucking
fold, or I'll call Jameson and--
(then)

Harvey-- do not touch my column!
Shit!

And now the door bangs open to reveal RACHEL KELLER, 27, a
knockout in a dark suit. She drops her cellphone into her
purse and smiles serenely at the boy.

RACHEL (cont'd)

Hey.

AIDAN

Hey.

He starts to get his things together.

RACHEL

Sorry, I'm late.

TEACHER

No worries.

AIDAN

I'll wait in the car.

Rachel looks at him, then sees the teacher getting up from
her desk. Uh-oh. The older woman smiles.

TEACHER

Have you got a moment, Ms. Keller?

(CONTINUED)

RACHEL -

Uh, sure. Call me Rachel.

She watches the kid quietly march out the room. The teacher gestures to one of the kid sized desks.

TEACHER

Please. Sit down.

Rachel starts to sit at the desk, but decides she doesn't want to regress that far and sits on top instead.

TEACHER (cont'd)

He's certainly very independent, isn't he?

RACHEL

Yeah. He... certainly is.

TEACHER

I never have to tell him to do anything.

RACHEL

Well, if that's a problem, you'd be the first teacher in history to say so.

Rachel chuckles at her own joke, but the teacher just gives her a polite smile.

TEACHER

No, it's not a problem. Nor I suppose is it a problem that he spends all his free time alone at his desk, drawing. Or that he doesn't talk to the other kids...

Rachel looks at the teacher.

TEACHER (cont'd)

Aidan just seems more comfortable being by himself.

RACHEL

Well, sooner or later in life, I think that's a good skill to have.

Another polite smile. A now very self-conscious Rachel looks around the room.

(CONTINUED)

TEACHER

Ms. Keller--

RACHEL

Rachel.

TEACHER

I know that Aidan recently lost his cousin--

RACHEL

Yes, and I'm working on finding him some day care. It's just that right now I'm kinda--

TEACHER

That's not what I meant. By all means, take your time.

(then)

I know they were very close. Aidan and his cousin.

RACHEL

She stayed with him a few times a week.

TEACHER

Has he talked to you about her death?

RACHEL

Like you said, he's not the talkative type.

TEACHER

That doesn't mean he has nothing to say.

RACHEL

(beat)

He knows I'm there.

TEACHER

Yes, I'm sure he does, but he may be expressing himself in... other ways.

(moves to her desk)

I'd like to show you something...

She grabs a stack of papers from her desk, carries them back to Rachel, lays them out for her. They're a child's depictions of a SLEEPING GIRL, in a bed of flowers, in a shimmering lake, in a cloudscape in the sky.

(CONTINUED)

RACHEL

That's his cousin. That's Katie.

She looks at them, clearly saddened.

RACHEL (cont'd)

Looks like she's sleeping.

(thoughtful)

Huh...

TEACHER

Ms. Keller, I bothered by these drawings.

Rachel looks up at the teacher. Smiles.

RACHEL

Listen, I appreciate your concern, but two nights ago he lost his best friend. He's just trying to deal with it.

She slips off the desk.

TEACHER

I understand, but the pictures--

RACHEL

Are just Aidan's way of working it out. Of expressing himself, like you said.

She starts for the door now...

RACHEL (cont'd)

He'll be okay.

TEACHER

(looking at the pictures,
flat)

She died two nights ago.

Rachel pauses in the doorway.

RACHEL

That's right.

The teacher taps the drawings.

TEACHER

Aidan drew these last week.

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED: (5) 11

Rachel freezes. And off her look...

12 INT. RACHEL'S CAR - DAY 12

As Aidan sits quietly in the passenger seat, fiddling with a laminated card on a chain that reads PRESS. Rachel gets in the car and looks at him. He looks up at her.

AIDAN

What?

RACHEL

(beat)

Nothing.

She then turns and starts the car.

13 INT. BOSTON ROWHOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY 13

Rachel's in t-shirt and panties, searching her closet.

RACHEL

Hey, have you seen my black church dress anywhere? Aidan?

14 INT. DOWNSTAIRS - LIVING ROOM 14

A small townhome, middle-class clutter. Rachel descends to check a coat closet at the base of the stairs--

RACHEL

Have you seen my...

--and then turns to see little Aidan standing on a chair in front of a mirror tying his own tie. Reflected in the mirror, we see...

RACHEL (cont'd)

...church dress...

A BLACK DRESS draped over the couch, beside a string of pearls and a pair of black heels. She stops short.

AIDAN

It's a little wrinkled.

RACHEL

It's... fine.

She looks at him, then comes over and pulls it over her head.

(CONTINUED)

RACHEL (cont'd)

Zip me up?

He finishes knotting his tie and comes over zips up the back.

RACHEL (cont'd)

Thanks.

15

EXT. BOSTON SUBURBS - DUSK

15

A single-family development, grassy lawns, setting sun. One house has a cluster of cars, GUESTS in black entering. Among them are Rachel and Aidan.

16

INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - DUSK

16

A post-funeral reception. Rachel and Aidan join the milling MOURNERS. A card table bears bouquets of flowers, beside a framed photo of "Katie Embry."

Rachel helps Aidan set his carnation by her niece's picture. He shakes off her assistance, does it himself.

17

INT. LIVING ROOM - DUSK

17

Where the grieving parents, RUTH and her HUSBAND (40's), are comforted by friends. The Husband sits in a leather chair staring off into space. Rachel approaches, passing--

MOURNER #1 (O.S.)

What, a stroke? Kids don't have strokes unless they're on drugs--

MOURNER #2 (O.S.)

Shh. Not here--

MOURNER #1 (O.S.)

So then why the closed coffin, if a stroke's all it was. Why weren't we allowed to see her?--

Rachel meets the gossippers' eyes, silencing them. Then reaches Ruth, who opens arms at the sight of her--

RACHEL

Ruthie...

--and accepts her sister's embrace.

RUTH

Oh, God, Rachel, I miss her so much.

(CONTINUED)

RACHEL

Me, too.

Rachel looks at Ruth's husband in the leather chair, his expression forlorn.

RACHEL (cont'd)

You all right, Dave?

He looks at her a moment, smiles, too broadly.

DAVE

Oh yeah. I'm fine.

(then, chipper)

How are you?

18

INT. KITCHEN - SAME

18

Aidan shuffles past some KIDS, surveys the refreshment table. A freckled GIRL eats cookies.

COOKIE GIRL

I'm double-jointed, wanna see?

She bends her elbow to and fro. Aidan stares blankly.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME

19

As Ruth looks at her husband, leads Rachel away from the group...

RUTH

He sleeps all day. He doesn't move.

It's too much for him...

(then)

It doesn't make any sense, Rachel.

She was a good girl.

RACHEL

Yes, she was.

RUTH

We keep asking how this could happen.

A girl her age just doesn't... die.

RACHEL

They must have some theory.

RUTH

They do. But...

(CONTINUED)

But she doesn't share them. Ruth looks at her sister a moment.

RUTH (cont'd)
She was close with you.

RACHEL
And Aidan.

RUTH
She confided in you.

Rachel looks at her sister, understands what she's getting at.

RACHEL
She never said anything. Nothing that would... help explain what happened.

RUTH
Can you find out? What happened?

RACHEL
Me?

RUTH
It's what you do isn't it? Ask questions?

RACHEL
Not enough, according to my editor.

RUTH
Please, Rachel.

20 INT. DOWNSTAIRS HALL - SAME 20

Empty, shades drawn, away from the gathering. Aidan steps in, regards the staircase. Near darkness above.

21 INT. DOWNSTAIRS - SAME 21

As Ruth takes Rachel's hand...

RUTH
I need to know the truth. No matter what it is.
(then)
I need to know what happened to my daughter.

The closed door to Katie's bedroom is at hall's end. Aidan mounts the steps and moves closer.

At the door, the carpet underfoot is discolored, like from a widespread dirty-water stain.

His little hand grasps the doorknob. Turns.

Darkness. Rock posters, beauty mags, stuffed animals. And on a messy desk, the 19-inch TV.

Aidan regards its black reflective screen. He frowns slightly, steps closer.

With the hall's dim-light, he reflects in the TV screen. Behind him, there's a BLUR, an abstract wisp of white. Aidan spins. But behind him is only a white-curtained window. The curtains blow slightly; the window ajar--

--but as he turns back to the TV, ANOTHER FIGURE now reflects, suddenly blocking the door--

RACHEL

Aidan!

She comes in, dropping to his level--

RACHEL (cont'd)

What're you doing in here?

He doesn't answer.

RACHEL (cont'd)

C'mon. You shouldn't be in her room.

AIDAN

It's not her room anymore.

As he leaves, she surveys the darkness. On the desk, there's a photo of happy Katie with her arms around a laughing Aidan.

Rachel lifts it, causing a spiral NOTEBOOK to fall over. The book's cover-graphic shows sunbathing models. Someone's pen-scratched long black "hair" over their faces.

Rachel steps onto the porch, takes out a cigarette. But she's not alone in the backyard--

GIRL'S VOICE (O.S.)

I heard there's someone who follows it. He keeps track of who watches and kills them, one by one--

2ND GIRL'S VOICE (O.S.)

I heard it's not just in Boston. I heard there's more than one tape--

--as Rachel's attention is drawn to the shadows--

--where five TEENS sit together, sharing cigarettes -- two boys in rumpled suits, three girls with streaked makeup.

STONER TEEN

Man, it's not the tape, awright? I know a guy in Newton who saw it and he's fine--

GOTH GIRL

Then what's Becca so scared of?

STONER TEEN

Katie probably O.D.'d on some X and it freaked Becca out--

ASIAN GIRL

Somebody knows Katie watched it, Billy. That's why she's dead--

STONER TEEN

She's not dead 'cause of a videotape!

RACHEL

Hi.

A reply of silence. They all look at her. She calmly takes the cigarette from the stoner, lights her own with it.

RACHEL (cont'd)

What's this tape you're talking about?

STONER TEEN

The one that kills you if you watch it. The one that kills you in a week.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

STONER TEEN (cont'd)
 (sarcastic)
 You guys are tragic.

Exasperated, he leaves the group. Rachel takes his chair, sits at their level. They regard her, wary.

RACHEL
 Katie watch it?

No replies.

RACHEL (cont'd)
 She was acting sorta strange last week, wasn't she.

GOTH GIRL
 She was freaked.

RACHEL
 What's on the tape?

The teens trade another look...and finally:

ASIAN GIRL
 Someone told me it starts with an eclipse. Like a ring around the moon or something. Then there's all kinda stuff you're not supposed to watch. And then this old woman comes on and she sees you. She sees you right through the screen and says you'll die in seven days. And when the tape ends, your phone rings. Someone knows who you are and knows you watched it. And seven days later...

Rachel smiles a little. But no one's smiling back.

RACHEL
 And Katie told you she saw this?

ASIAN GIRL
 Not Katie. I heard it from her...she was dating this guy Josh. He went to Revere. It was kind of a secret.

RACHEL
 Where's he? Is he here?

The teens trade another look.

(CONTINUED)

BOOKISH GIRL

He's dead.

And before Rachel can react, they've livened up--

SKEPTIC TEEN

Yeah, but Josh killed himself.

ASIAN GIRL

Sure, that's what they say.

SKEPTIC TEEN

And maybe Katie did too -- she coulda O.D.'d on purpose -- they both coulda planned it.

GOTH GIRL

What, the same night?

SKEPTIC TEEN

Whaddya think a plan is?

They're arguing now, as Rachel tries to intervene...

RACHEL

Wait, whoa, slow down. What do you mean, the same night?

GOTH GIRL

I mean they both died on the same night. Josh and Katie.

RACHEL

How did Josh die?

BOOKISH GIRL

Jumped off this building--

SKEPTIC TEEN

They don't know that he jumped.

BOOKISH GIRL

Oh, yeah, like he fell. What was he doing up there?

As Rachel looks at the kids...

INT. VIDEO STORE - NIGHT

As Rachel drops a CARE BEAR video and a pile of candy on the counter. The lanky, tattooed CLERK, 24, with a scatter of piercings looks at her.

(CONTINUED)

CLERK

No babysitter, huh?

She looks at him and the clerk smiles, starts to ring it all up. Rachel watches the guy a moment, then casually asks...

RACHEL

I heard these kids talking about a videotape.

CLERK

Uh-huh.

RACHEL

Not a normal one...

CLERK

Which one was it? One makes you go blind or the one makes you pregnant when you watch it?

RACHEL

The one that kills you.

CLERK

(nods)

The Seven Day Death Sentence. Two thumbs way up on that one. I get asked about it all the time.

ON AIDAN

As he walks the kid section past tapes for "Sesame Street," "The Barney Movie" and "Blues Clues" we hear...

RACHEL (O.S.)

As if you'd rent out a movie that'd kill your customers.

CLERK (O.S.)

Are you kidding? We wouldn't be able to keep it in the store.

He comes to the end of the row and stops as we see Rachel picking up her purchases.

CLERK (cont'd)

There's a million rumors. You know about tapes that make you do this or that.

(CONTINUED)

RACHEL

Why do you think people spread rumors
about these fake tapes?

CLERK

(shrugs)

I don't know. Maybe because real
movies suck.

26

EXT. BOSTON ROWHOUSE - NIGHT

26

A SCREAMING MOTORCYCLE speeds by...

27

INT. AIDAN'S ROOM - NIGHT

27

As Rachel stands in the mirror watching as Aidan brushes his
teeth. He rinses.

RACHEL

You get the back?

AIDAN

I got everywhere.

She follows him into the bedroom, helps him into bed.

RACHEL

Should we read something?

AIDAN

I'm kinda tired.

RACHEL

Okay.

(kisses him)

Sweet dreams.

She moves to the door.

AIDAN

Do you dream after you die?

She pauses in the doorway.

RACHEL

I don't know. Good question.

AIDAN

Maybe that's all you do.

RACHEL

Maybe.

(CONTINUED)

AIDAN

Maybe that's what heaven is: one big long dream.

RACHEL

Be nice, wouldn't it?

He lies back. She checks her watch...

RACHEL (cont'd)

Okay, Mister

(kisses him)

I got some homework to do.

She turns to go...

AIDAN

We don't have enough time.

She looks at him.

RACHEL

Look, Aidan, I know I've been working a lot, but I promise I'll make it up--

AIDAN

I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about time before we die.

RACHEL

(beat)

You have lots of time.

AIDAN

So you know when I'm gonna die?

RACHEL

No. No one does. But I know you don't have to worry about it.

AIDAN

Katie knew.

Boom. Rachel looks at him.

AIDAN (cont'd)

She knew when she was gonna die. She told me.

RACHEL

(beat)

Katie told you she was going to die?

(CONTINUED)

AIDAN

(nods)

She told me she didn't have enough time.

Rachel stands there, stunned. Aidan looks at her, then turns and rolls over.

AIDAN (cont'd)

Good-night, Rachel.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Rachel's got some newspaper back issues on a table. She spreads out the Saturday, May 12th Metro section.

She finds an article labeled "Back Bay Teen Dies in High-Rise Fall." She scans it...Josh Turandot, senior at Revere High, about 10 p.m., fatal head injury, ruled suicide."

An article on the opposite page then catches her eye. "One-Car Accident Kills Two -- Police Suspect Crash Intentional." She scans this one...Scott Conroy and Stacy Nguyen, seniors at Revere High. Vehicle veered off roadway...fatal head injuries...forced highway closure at 10 p.m."

RACHEL

Four of them.

She goes back and looks at the second article... we focus on the "FORCED HIGHWAY CLOSURE AT 10 P.M..."

RACHEL (cont'd)

At ten o'clock.

INT. NEWSROOM - DAY

Boston Globe. Metro desk. Bustling. Rachel's at her messy desk, with the "teen death" articles, on the phone--

RACHEL

Time of death, Wade, that's all I want to know. The name's Katie Embry -- pull the report, read the time. That's okay-- I'll hold.

She sits there a moment. A RED PENCIL drops onto the desk in front of her and she looks up at A HEAVYSET MAN with a pair of bifocals resting on his forehead.

MAN

"Punctilious Prick?"

(CONTINUED)

She smiles at Harvey, her editor.

RACHEL
Nice alliteration, huh?

HARVEY
You're fired.

RACHEL
No, I'm not.

HARVEY
Yes. You are.

RACHEL
Of course, I'm not. I'm cooking too good a story.

HARVEY
Really. What?

RACHEL
Four kids died on the same night.

HARVEY
(beat)
And?

RACHEL
Whatta you mean "and?" This is huge.
This is drugs. This is sex-- all
the stuff you like, Harvey.

He looks back at her a moment.

HARVEY
You are so fired.

RACHEL
(into the phone)
Wade-- yeah, I'm here...

She shoos the editor away who shakes his head and walks off.

RACHEL (cont'd)
What's the time of death?

She tenses, getting her answer. On a notepad, beneath "D.O.A.
10 P.M: Josh, Scott, Stacy"...she now writes..."KATIE."

As the front door opens and we see Rachel's brother-in-law, dressed in a dark suit.

RACHEL

Hi, Dave.

DAVE

(cheerful)

Hi. Come on in.

He widens the door and moves away.

31

INT. RUTH'S HOUSE - SAME

31

As Dave sits down in a chair by the window, his briefcase unopened on the floor beside him. He stares at his own reflection in the dark glass.

RACHEL

Is Ruth home?

DAVE

Upstairs.

INT. KATIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

32

As Rachel comes into the room and turns on the light. She pokes around the desk. Moves to the TV. Crouches down and opens A DRAWER OF VIDEOTAPES. Teen sex comedies, cartoons, concert videos. Nothing amiss.

Rachel shuts the drawer, foiled. She surveys the room, stares blankly into the black screen of the TV.

She moves to a wall calendar marked with silver pen. Some hearts are drawn on the weekend of May 4th. A tear-receipt is taped below, from a drug store's photo shop. She takes the receipt when--

RUTH

Rachel?

She turns and sees her sister in the doorway.

RUTH (cont'd)

I didn't know you were here.

RACHEL

Dave let me in.

(CONTINUED)

Ruth nods, casts an uncomfortable glance at Rachel.

RACHEL (cont'd)
He's gone back to work?

RUTH
No. He gets up at five, shaves,
puts on his suit. And then he sits
in the chair all day.

Rachel nods as Ruth takes a hesitant step into the room.

RUTH (cont'd)
I guess I should cart all this stuff
away.

Rachel turns away from her sister, looks at the calendar.

RACHEL
Did you know Katie had a boyfriend
at another school?

RUTH
(beat)
No.

RACHEL
He killed himself last week. On the
same night as Katie.

Ruth doesn't say anything.

RACHEL (cont'd)
Two other kids from Josh's school
also died. On the same night.

RUTH
What are you saying?

RACHEL
I don't know, Ruth. Could she have
been into something you didn't know
about?

RUTH
Like what?

Rachel doesn't answer.

(CONTINUED)

RUTH (cont'd)

You don't think I haven't heard people talking? About drugs and whatnot? But you and I both know that's not Katie.

RACHEL

No. It wasn't.
(then)
That was you and me.
(then)
Mostly me.

RUTH

Katie would have told me. She told me everything.

RACHEL

She didn't tell you about her boyfriend.

Ruth looks at Rachel a moment, her eyes growing cold.

RUTH

I was involved with my child.

Boom. This gets Rachel's attention.

RUTH (cont'd)

I saw my child every day. I knew her. I talked to her. About everything.

RACHEL

Ruth, I'm not--

RUTH

I SAW HER!

Rachel stops. Ruth turns to the closet, her voice small...

RUTH (cont'd)

She was right here...

She then slides open the closet--

TO REVEAL KATIE'S CORPSE

huddled in the corner, hands raised and mouth open -- frozen in rictus -- and her face bizarrely disfigured as if BLURRED, features SWERVED like from some paralytic attack!

(CONTINUED)

ON FULL SCENE

Rachel watches Ruth starting to tremble -- facing the empty closet. Whatever Ruth's seeing isn't really there.

RACHEL

Oh Ruthie... I'm sorry

Rachel steps to embrace her sister. Ruth shakes.

RUTH

Her face--

She pushes away from Rachel.

RUTH (cont'd)

It wasn't *drugs*...

RACHEL

All right...

RUTH

Something HAPPENED to her. Someone did something to her...

RACHEL

I believe you.

Rachel reaches out and pulls her sister back into her arms.

RUTH (O.S.)

Oh, God...her face...

EXT. SHOPPING PLAZA - DAY

On a sidewalk, Rachel opens an envelope of "Next-Day" developed photos. She flips through them...

RUTH (V.O.)

She had the sweetest face...

A shot of two high-schoolers (JOSH and SCOTT) by a car packed for a road trip. A shot of Katie hugging another girl (STACY) at a Massachusetts highway rest stop.

A shot of Katie and Josh vamping before a sign that reads "Shelter Mountain Inn & Resort."

Rachel regards this photo for a moment, then moves on...

To several nighttime shots of Katie & Josh, Stacy & Scott inside a rustic-looking hotel room.

(CONTINUED)

Making faces at the camera. A close-up of Katie in Josh's arms, both with Ecstasy on their tongues.

Rachel smiles sadly, then pulls the last picture...

A daylight shot of all four smiling teens standing before a cabin, with "12" above its door. Their faces are BLURRED in the photo, however. And only their faces. All four.

Rachel runs a finger across the smiling blurs...

A33

EXT. BOSTON CITY OUTSKIRTS - DAY

A33

Rachel's Camry cruises a highway. Leaving town.

34

EXT. MASSACHUSETTS HIGHWAY - DAY

34

Into the western part of the state, green oaks flanking the roadway with verdant canopy. Low mountains ahead...

35

EXT. SHELTER MOUNTAIN INN - DAY

35

Rachel's Camry pulls past the entry-sign seen in one of Katie's photos. The sign notes "Horseback Riding, Hiking, Swimming & Jacuzzi. Open Year-Round." Green oaks and red Japanese maples. A lake beyond.

EXT. FULL-SCREEN PHOTO OF FOUR TEENS

36

With the blurred faces, standing before Cabin #12. As the photo is lowered--

TO REVEAL CABIN #12

A rustic A-frame on a forested hillside. Other cabins are on the grounds, all secluded, most nearer the lake.

Rachel watches as a MAID exits, locking up, wheeling a towel-cart up a paved path.

37

EXT. BACK OF CABIN

37

Wooden walls, with wide windows overlooking the hillside. A Japanese maple near the window; the lake far beyond.

A cabin window here is ajar, with a screen protecting it. Rachel looks around. No one else in view. She gets fingers under the screen...and gives a tug.

Rachel climbs in. There's a living area, kitchenette, and loft bedroom. Wooden floors, thin rugs, a vase filled with decorative marbles. A TV and VCR before a couch.

Rachel kneels by the VCR. No tape inside. She scans tables and a bookshelf and sits on the couch. Points the remote at the TV and clicks on--

--as STATIC BLARES! Rachel swiftly lowers the volume, flipping channels. Static. More static. More static--

A38 --and then a public access religious show. A38

B38 Next, Jeopardy. B38

C38 Next, a Nature show on whales. Reception's fuzzy. C38

38 Rachel picks up a GUEST JOURNAL on the table. The laminated cover reads "Shelter Mountain. Inn, Est. 1980" and has history info. 38

She flips through handwritten pages, guest "thank yous" to the Inn for a wonderful vacation, anniversary, etc. She finds a final page -- in teen handwriting and silver pen...

RACHEL

"I had a lovely vacation with my fat wife who I'm cheating on and who I'll divorce in a year before I get butt cancer and die. Anyone who writes in this is a sentimental loser. Oops, I guess that means I am too..."

She shakes her head, tosses the book on the coffee table.

RACHEL (cont'd)

Nice.

39 INT. INN OFFICE - DUSK 39

A woodsy reception desk fronts a back room. A 40-ish MAN in flannel shuffles A DECK OF CARDS as Rachel enters.

RACHEL

Hi.

He fans the deck on the counter.

INNKEEPER

Pick a card. Any card. Go ahead.

(CONTINUED)

She takes a card, looks at it. QUEEN OF SPADES. He holds out the deck, turns his head.

INNKEEPER (cont'd)

Now put it back. Don't let me see it.

She inserts the card into the deck. He shuffles it with a flourish, winks at her, shuffles it again. Then turns over the top card. A THREE OF HEARTS.

INNKEEPER (cont'd)

That your card?

RACHEL

No.

INNKEEPER

Damn.

He shuffles again, looks at her.

RACHEL

I was wondering if you'd remember someone. From over week ago.

INNKEEPER

Was there a problem?

He holds up an ACE CLUBS. She shakes her head.

RACHEL

It's my niece. She... she sorta ran out on her parents. Her boyfriend, another couple, I think they stayed here a night or so--

Rachel pulls her photos of the four teens.

INNKEEPER

They were in 12.

He looks at Rachel, shuffles the cards.

INNKEEPER (cont'd)

They didn't pay.

RACHEL

Oh?

(CONTINUED)

INNKEEPER

They had a number of complaints.
About the TV, mainly. The reception's
never good here--

RACHEL

I imagine the mountains, it isn't.

INNKEEPER

Exactly. That's we have tape players
in the rooms, for videos.

He points behind Rachel, to a low bookshelf by the entry
door. It's full of videotapes.

RACHEL

Quite a selection.

INNKEEPER

Yeah, I'm a bit of a buff.

RACHEL

Uh-huh...

INNKEEPER

Anyway, they didn't pay. Kids like
that, sometimes don't.

Rachel's still staring at the shelf...where every tape has a
proper label but one. A black tape in a white sleeve. With
an etching on the side...of a bordered circle. A "ring."

INNKEEPER (cont'd)

Miss?

RACHEL

You know, I'm a little tired. Maybe
I'll take a nap before I drive back.

Rachel slides a credit card to the man.

RACHEL (cont'd)

I'll take Cabin twelve.

He nods, takes her credit card into the back room. Rachel
backs to the video bookshelf. She snatches up the "ring"
tape. Pockets it when...

INNKEEPER

Hey--

She spins around. Caught. He holds up a SEVEN OF SPADES.

(CONTINUED)

INNKEEPER (cont'd)

This is your card, right?

RACHEL

(smiles)

That's it.

INT. CABIN #12 - DUSK

A BLACK TV SCREEN fills frame. Silent and stoic.

Rachel sits on the couch, regarding the tape in her hands. Plain black tape, plain white sleeve.

Just the etched "ring" on its spine to suggest it's something other than blank.

Shadows lengthen in the room. Rachel glances to the window. The sun has almost set. Last vestiges of light FLARE through the branches of the maple outside.

She stares out for a long moment.

Then pulls the tape from its sleeve.

She kneels at the TV and inserts it in the VCR. She turns on the TV: STATIC fills the screen.

She glances to the window, just as the sun dips from view. The branch-shadows behind her fade.

Rachel looks back to the snowy screen...and hits "Play." The screen goes black.

A low hum from the VCR as the tape turns.

The screen stays black.

Then WOBBLES, as if losing vertical and horizontal hold. V 40
A streak of lost pixels rolls sideways--

And then re-balances. Black screen.

Swiftly, another WOBBLE. This time, a hiccup of SOUND: like crashing WAVES. A beat of silent blackness -- and then a swerving, scrolling image -- an ECLIPSE -- a black orb covering a white moon, casting a bright "ring"--

--which wavers as pixels slide and JAG, as if trying to "tune in" the image--

(CONTINUED)

ON FULL SCREEN

As it goes black.

Silence.

And with a BUZZING SEAR, the "ring" image SLASHES back.
Buzz. Wobble. Hiss. Image locks -- on steady pictures:

A RED WOODEN LADDER leans against a rustic wall. A strange
LOW MOAN on the audio track. Undulating...

Then a TERRIFYING FAST-MOTION SHUDDER: something spasms
under black plastic. Jarring nails-on-chalkboard SOUNDS--

FULL-SCREEN STATIC. The static rolls and swells...as if
liquid. A FLY feels its way across a screen-corner in
SILHOUETTE.

Suddenly, the BLACK SPASMING--

Then a DARK ANIMAL EYE stares through a keyhole--

More SPASMS, too fast to identify the source--

A VIDEO WOBBLE shakes across frame, a lightning-sear of
stuttered pixels before IMAGE RESETS--

A BRIGHT WHITE HOSPITAL ROOM. A single chair in room's
center. The MOAN resumes...

...and continues under a shot of OBSCURE SHAPES, lying on a
sloping nighttime beach. Surf washes, moving them slightly--

--as a FLASH OF LIGHT reveals the shapes to be beached
CARCASSES OF UNKNOWN ANIMALS--

--then suddenly pixels slide and jag with a FLASH CUT of the
eclipse -- the moan track disappears as--

BLACKNESS. As COMB TEETH rip through, streaking LIGHT--

--OVEREXPOSING a gaping MOUTH with a thin, hairy UMBILICAL
emerging from within.

The freakish SPASMING again--

A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN IN AN OVAL MIRROR, IN A WHITE GOWN. She
calmly brushes her hair. The undulating MOAN is there.

(CONTINUED)

JUMP CUT: The MIRROR MOVES. Switches position to the wall's other end, reflecting the woman, now in the distance, walking away into shadow--

--then JUMPS BACK. The seated woman (as before) half-glances over her shoulder. Smiles into the mirror like she's smiling directly at the viewer.

A SUDDEN JOLT: SCRAPING METAL as GRIDS and DOTS appear. An EYECHART with letters turned backwards.

FLASH CUT: DROPLETS OF WATER trickle toward center-frame, congealing into a PUDDLE.

FLASH CUT: The SPED-UP SPASMS behind black plastic.

A lone tree in a forest is ON FIRE. BOLD, RED FLAMES. A surrealist-touch to the image, the foliage translucent. Distorted MOANING constant...

FLASHCUT: Roiling, foamy WHITE WATER, turning slowly BLOOD RED.

FLASHCUT: the keyhole EYE.

FLASHCUT: The FAST-MOTION SPASMS, now BATTERING the frame, causing the image itself to bounce and shake.

And as the IMAGE LOSES HOLD, slipping with SEARS of STATIC, with the UNDULATING MOANS and SHRILL BARKS AND SCRAPES building to a crescendo--

--and an IMAGE of a BRIGHT WHITE MOON, high in a pitch black sky. (The sound of DISTANT WAVES and a faint, scratchy KEENING accompanies this image -- the same whispers heard beyond the door before Katie's death.)

A black orb slowly SLIDES ACROSS it -- as ANGLE closes in. And as it fully ECLIPSES it -- a RING OF LIGHT shines a "halo" outline--

--the image loses hold, jarring and skidding and then--

--becoming an image of a STONE MOUND in a wooded clearing. The whisper-keening continues for three seconds...

...until the screen jags to WHITE NOISE. Tape's over.

She stares at the screen, breathless.

(CONTINUED)

The room's grown totally dark. She swallows, takes a deep breath and reaches to shut off the TV.

The screen goes black -- with a blurred reflection of Rachel, and a FIGURE IN WHITE far behind her, RECEDING into darkness--

Rachel spins! But there's no one there.

Just a shadowy room. She settles, shutting her eyes...

AS THE PHONE RINGS

Rachel jumps, goes dead pale.

It TRILLS once. Twice. Three times.

Rachel stands shakily. She steps to the phone...and lifts it from the cradle. Puts to her ear...

...and hears the SOUNDS of distant waves, a faint and raspy high-pitched WHISPER-KEENING, and then...

DISTORTED VOICE (O.S.)
Sevvveeeennnnn dayyyzzzz...

She slams down the phone.

1

EXT. CABIN #12 - NIGHT

41

Rachel darts outside, spinning for signs of someone -- anyone -- watching her. But the night's still

She's breathing hard. Her eyes are searching.

She's all alone.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

42

RAIN STREAKS A WINDOWSILL

42

Dark clouds outside; a downpour. ANGLE reveals...

...a sandwich on a counter. Aidan places lunch meat, cheese and pickles, folds and wraps it in plastic. Adds it to a well-ordered lunch box, beside a juice box, fruit and snack chips. A doorbell RINGS.

AIDAN
(calls off)
I'm going to school!

(CONTINUED)

He gets no response.

INT. RACHEL'S BEDROOM - DAY

The front door shuts O.S.

A disheveled desk, file cabinets, papers. An unmade bed -- a digital camera amidst news scraps of the four teen deaths. A phone nearby.

Rachel's on the bed, half-dressed and sleepless.

She holds the "ring" videotape, fixated.

EXT. CITY SIDEWALK - DAY

A YOUNG MOTHER walks three KIDS under an umbrella. Aidan follows with his own umbrella, but slows and falls behind, tightening a backpack strap.

He gets it right, resumes walking to catch up...and almost walks into a pair of ADULT LEGS.

He peers up, to see a MAN (late 20's) standing there, also under an umbrella. They regard one another for a moment.

Aidan walks around him and on.

A title graphic appears -- "DAY ONE."

INT. RACHEL'S HOUSE - DAY

Rachel, in an "Emerson College" shirt, opens her door to reveal the same man. NOAH CLAY, handsome, rumped...tired.

RACHEL

Thank you. I really needed to--

He grunts, steps right past her.

Rachel takes a beat, resets herself. Follows.

In the kitchen, Noah's searching the cupboards--

RACHEL (cont'd)

Look, I know you're not exactly a morning person, although it might interest you to know that the rest of the world sleeps at night and works during the--

(right away)

What are you doing?

(CONTINUED)

He finds a plastic jar of instant coffee with a few teaspoons left. He opens it, puts it under the hot water faucet for two seconds...and then gulps it down from the jar.

He shuts his eyes. Then opens them with a winning smile:

NOAH

Hi.

She shakes her head.

RACHEL

I wanna show you something.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

CLOSE ON THE PHOTO of the four teens with blurred faces.

RACHEL (O.S.)

What do you think?

Noah's studying it. Rachel sits in a chair opposite.

NOAH

I could do it with a distortion filter, maybe some Vaseline on the lens, but what I'd probably do is just disturb it some during printing.

(then)

What's it to do with the tape?

RACHEL

Take my picture.

She nods to a digital camera on the coffee table. Suspicious, Noah picks it up. Aims it at her.

NOAH

Well look at me, at least.

Rachel keeps her eyes downcast. Noah BUZZES a shot. He regards the "capture" in the viewfinder. Frowns.

The digital image shows Rachel's face horribly BLURRED.

NOAH (cont'd)

This the same camera?

RACHEL

No. Scan the rest.

(CONTINUED)

Noah hits "scan" on the camera. The viewfinder scrolls the last pictures taken: all self-taken shots of Rachel in her bedroom mirror. Face BLURRED or half-blurred in all--

--except two last pictures of sleeping Aidan, tucked in his bed. His features are normal.

NOAH

So it's a hardware problem.

(off her look)

What? If a digital's blurring images, it's a hardware problem. Or else someone's messed with it.

She takes the camera from him and takes his picture. Then shows it to him. HIS FACE IS NORMAL.

He looks at her.

NOAH (cont'd)

You said this was about a tape.

She hesitates...then removes the "ring" tape from her purse. Shows it to him, keeping it held close.

NOAH (cont'd)

Rachel. It's all right.

Noah holds out his hand for it. She doesn't move. He offers a firm but sympathetic look.

NOAH (cont'd)

Let me see it.

INT. DEN - MOMENTS LATER

The cassette with the etched "ring" disappears into a VCR. Its clock reads 8:10 AM. The TV screen goes black.

Noah's put it in; Rachel stands. On screen, the first WOBBLING of STATIC...the lunar "ring" struggling to TUNE IN...

NOAH

The hell is that?

RACHEL

(without looking)

It's an eclipse.

He watches. As the images start, she walks away.

EXT. BACK PATIO - DAY

48

She retreats to her patch of backyard; South Boston rowhouses all around. She leans on a railing, waiting.

Her gaze falls on the homes behind hers.

A48/ V A48 In one kitchen window, a YOUNG MOTHER brings a LITTLE GIRL breakfast, watching TV cartoons. A48/ V
B48/ V B48 In another house, a MAN watches TV, on a rowing machine. B48/ V
C48/ V C48 In a third, a MAID's vacuuming, TV on. And so on. C48/ V
Everybody everywhere watching television.

48

48

NOAH (O.S.)

Roll credits.

Rachel spins, startled.

NOAH (cont'd)

Very student film. I'm sure it's scarier at night.

(off her look)

What?

She looks back into the apartment, expectant. Then looks troubled...and steps past him without a word.

49

INT. RACHEL'S HOUSE

49

Noah follows her back into the den, to find her staring at... her phone. Several seconds pass.

RACHEL

It's supposed to ring.

She keeps waiting. Noah waits, then loses interest and heads to the kitchen. Rachel still eyes the phone.

NOAH

You're unlisted, remember?

RACHEL

It'll ring.

Her gaze snaps from phone to TV and back again. She picks up the phone, hears a dial tone. A perplexed frown.

(CONTINUED)

Ehren

Noah grabs a fruit bowl apple and takes a bite. He studies her, pained. Sees Aidan's drawings on the counter...

NOAH

So... you been working a lot?

RACHEL

I'm not *tired*, Noah.

NOAH

Okay.

RACHEL

That tape didn't scare you?

NOAH

It's strange, sure. So someone shot it for a prank, start a nasty rumor about it. What, it's a tape--

RACHEL

Four people are dead, Noah. Four people who watched it.

She drops to the VCR, ejects tape. Stares at it, perplexed. Noah shakes his head, edging away...

NOAH

Look, I gotta pick up a couple cameras from my guy downtown, then I'm s'posed to prep this thing I may or may not do next month. It's Rwanda and I really don't wanna go back so soon after--

RACHEL

Noah--

She takes a step to him.

RACHEL (cont'd)

Would you say that I'm gullible?

NOAH

No.

RACHEL

Easily rattled?

NOAH

Definitely not.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

NOAH (cont'd)

A little high strung maybe... And...
 (touches her sweatshirt)
 Not much of a dresser--

She looks him in the eye, holds up the tape between them.

RACHEL

Who made it? Where'd it come from?

They look at each other. He finally sighs, smiles:

NOAH

Make me a copy. I'll see what I can do.

RACHEL

Thank you.

She kisses him, on the cheek. Which is good enough for him. For now.

50 INT. NEWSROOM - DAY 50

Rachel marches through, clipboard and two tapes in hand. She exits to a hall, where there's a closet-sized door marked "AUDIO/VIDEO RESEARCH ROOM, STAFF ONLY."

51 INT. MEDIA ROOM - DAY 51

A blank cassette enters a machine. Rachel's alone at a cramped edit bay, facing twin monitors.

She presses record on the dub deck. Play on the source deck.

The first images struggle to "tune in"; the harsh, erratic audio. Disturbed, she kills the volume. She sees the "ring" briefly, then the Red Ladder--

--and then notices the COUNTER NUMBERS. The source deck's numbers move erratically, forward and back. She looks to the record deck: its numbers are doing the same thing. Speed up, slow, zero out, then advance, then reverse--

Rachel stops source and hits "Pause" on the dub deck. The image of the Watery Static With the Fly freezes on-monitor.

She shuttles it forward and back. The fly walks back and forth on-screen, but the NUMBERS move in random correlation.

(CONTINUED)

Rachel stares, perplexed. The fly on the static looks so real, as if landed there, that she reaches a hand to touch it...and strokes nothing but video glass...

INT. WAREHOUSE ELEVATOR - DAY

Rachel rides an antique freight-elevator toward a warehouse loft. Metallic CLATTER, shadows spill...

...as a title graphic appears -- "DAY TWO".

INT. NOAH'S LOFT

Noah's staring at something off-screen. With a frown.

NOAH

You sure this is the copy?

REVEAL FULL SPACE

A photographer's studio. Prints of strife in international hot spots on the walls. Noah kneels at a messy entertainment center, regarding his VCR's counter. It's moving AT RANDOM.

RACHEL

Yeah, why?

Noah ejects tape. It is in fact labeled "COPY."

NOAH

Were the numbers messed up like this on the original?

RACHEL

Same problem got copied, I guess.

He looks at her levelly.

NOAH

That "problem" is with your control track. Which isn't copied -- it's created by the recording VCR. Unless the control track's right, the tape won't play. You can't see picture.

RACHEL

So why do we see picture?

Noah puts it back in, hits "Play." The numbers stay screwy. But the tape images play out as before...

(CONTINUED)

RACHEL (cont'd)

I mean, if there's no control track--

NOAH

On either tape--

RACHEL

That means--

NOAH

These images weren't recorded.

(then)

At all.

INT. LOFT - LATER

A TEA KETTLE WHISTLES shrilly. Rachel pours a cup and rejoins Noah by the TV. He's got an oscilloscope hooked into the VCR now. Sleeves rolled up...

NOAH

Where'd you say you found this?
Some hotel?

RACHEL

Shelter Mountain Inn, it's off 81.
One of their guests left it.

NOAH

Well, whoever put it together, it
was someone very technical..

He's going SLO-MO through the tape, fiddling with the oscilloscope. Rachel watches him, admiring a little...

RACHEL

I knew I came to the right place.

NOAH

Yeah, like j-school, right? Let
fucking Noah research your stories
for you.

RACHEL

Fucking Noah didn't mind at the time.

Noah regards her, lets it go. The tape reaches the Woman in the Mirror. White dress and long, black hair.

NOAH

Take a look.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

NOAH (cont'd)

You should see the camera here, in reflection. The angle's straight on. But you don't--

On screen, the mirror switches position, reflecting the white dress and hair from behind, receding into darkness--

RACHEL

What's that?

NOAH

Looks like she's walking away, whoever she is. Then she's back--

RACHEL

No, I mean up there. At the top.

At top-screen, there's a SKEWED STRIP running the length of the screen. Distorting two dozen scan lines--

NOAH

That's just the tracking. I can fix that.

He adjusts a knob. The wrong way at first -- the strip WIDENS, showing more wall above the mirror, and COMPRESSING the bottom of the frame. Noah reverses; it disappears--

RACHEL

Wait, whoa, go back. There was something there--

NOAH

It's the edge of the picture, it's just the tracking. Watch, that's as far as it'll go--

Noah hits slo-mo reverse. The image goes from the Mirror to the Beached Carcasses. Noah pegs the tracking, and now sees the bottom COMPRESS, allowing a nighttime HORIZON LINE to appear at top-frame -- above the sloping beach--

RACHEL

There's more picture.

Noah freezes image. Clearly the beach's horizon is visible where it wasn't before. They trade a mystified look...

RACHEL (cont'd)

It's on the tape...and it's off the screen.

(CONTINUED)

Suddenly, the front door OPENS: a pretty Bohemian co-ed, BETH, 22, interrupts them, headphones and backpack--

BETH (O.S.)

Noah, I picked up the cameras; they're in good shape. You see the reprints I did of your Philippines stuff? They came out kinda--

She rounds into view, sees him with Rachel. Stops short.

BETH (cont'd)

Working?

NOAH

(rises, edges away)

Hi. This is a friend -- Rachel Keller, she writes for the Globe. Rachel, this is Beth, my...assistant.

BETH

I prefer partner-in-crime.

NOAH

She's a, uh, journalism student...at Emerson, actually.

BETH

Hey, I'll stay out of your way, I'm not even here--

Beth saunters past, plants a kiss on Noah's cheek. Rachel shoots Noah a look. He pretends not to see--

NOAH

Rachel's researching a story. It's this video hoax, sorta interesting.

(remembers)

Hey, you've worked with video. Take a look at this thing with the tracking--

RACHEL

Y'know, I'm late, I really should go--

She reaches swiftly to hit "Eject" and takes the "COPY" tape.

NOAH

Hey wait, why are you--

RACHEL

I gotta go.

(CONTINUED)

She stuffs the tape in her purse and heads for the door without a word. Noah looks confused. Beth gives him a "don't blame me" shrug, walks the other way.

INT. WAREHOUSE HALL - DAY

Rachel stalks out, heading for the freight elevator. A moment later, Noah pursues, catching up--

NOAH

Rachel, what's with you? You're taking the tape.

RACHEL

I don't want her to see it.

NOAH

Whoa, you don't want her to see it? What about me seeing it? You had no problem showing it to me--

RACHEL

I did have a problem!

She hits the button. The elevator rumbles below.

NOAH

This is about her, isn't it? You're all bugged about Beth.

RACHEL

Fuck her, Noah. I'm all bugged about you.

He looks at her.

RACHEL (cont'd)

You said the tape was interesting. Then she walks in and suddenly it's not.

NOAH

I made you mad. I hate when I do that.

RACHEL

I came to you for help and now you're blowing me off.

The elevator arrives. She gets on.

(CONTINUED)

NOAH

I'm sorry. But I'm not gonna get
all worked up over some high school
rumor--

RACHEL

Or for me, right?

He stops the doors from closing, holds out his hand.

NOAH

Let me keep the copy, I won't show
it to her--

RACHEL

That's all right.

NOAH

Why are you being this way?

RACHEL

Because you're right. It's just a
prank. I mean, it's supposed to
scare you, right?

NOAH

Right.

RACHEL

It's just pictures and sound.

NOAH

That's all it is.

RACHEL

Sorry to bother you.

And as the doors close, he stares at his own reflection in
the polished steel.

EXT. STREET - DAY

As Rachel comes out of the building, strides swiftly away
from the door...

VOICE

Watch out, Miss--

She looks up and stops cold as she sees...

(CONTINUED)

A RED LADDER

Identical to the one on the ring tape. Leaning up against a building. She slowly looks up at A PAINTER standing on the ladder. He smiles down at her.

PAINTER

Bad luck.

She then slowly walks AROUND the ladder. She goes a few paces, stops and looks back at it, a haunted stare on her face now.

INT. MENTAL HOSPITAL - DAY

An institutional corridor. ORDERLIES escort PATIENTS to/from rooms. Vague MOANS; an anonymous SHRIEK. Rachel walks along the corridor.

A u-shaped CURTAIN ON WHEELS is pushed up the hallway. We see FEET SHUFFLING UNDERNEATH it. A NURSE leads the hidden patient up the hallway.

NURSE

Just a little further, Becca.

As they pass a room with THE wall mounted TV ON, the curtain parts slightly and we see a wild EYE, stringy hair hanging down in front of it. The eye sees the TV and widens--

--but the nurse quickly pulls the curtain back.

NURSE (cont'd)

Almost there...

The nurse rolls the curtained frame along, keeping the patient shielded from the televisions in the ward...

RACHEL (V.O.)

I need your help, Becca...

INT. VISITOR ROOM - DAY

As Becca, Katie's friend from the opening, now looking haggard and worn emerges from behind the curtain and sits down across a table from Rachel and an onlooking YOUNG DOCTOR. She stares into space, totally remote.

...as a title graphic appears -- "DAY THREE".

(CONTINUED)

RACHEL

Do you remember anything about that night with Katie?

(beat)

Do you remember...how she died?

Becca remains expressionless.

YOUNG DOCTOR

It's not you. She won't talk to anybody. Hasn't said a word since they brought her in.

RACHEL

Did you see her die, Becca?

We hear THE TELEVISION TURNED ON OS and Becca's head swivels in that direction. A MALE NURSE stands there with a patient in a wheelchair...

DOCTOR

Nurse!

The Nurse looks over, sees Becca.

MALE NURSE

Oh-- sorry--

She quickly shuts off the set, starts leading the patient in the wheelchair off.

MALE NURSE (cont'd)

I think we'll go to the other day room...

Rachel sees Becca staring at the now silent set.

RACHEL

I know...that you saw something...and it scared you. Whatever you say you saw...I'll believe you.

She offers a hand, stretching it out across the table. The Doctor ahems, but Rachel extends -- to touch Becca's.

RACHEL (cont'd)

How did she die, Becca? I want to know.

At her touch, Becca's eyes seem to focus...and find Rachel's.

(CONTINUED)

BECCA
 (a dry whisper)
 And you will.

Rachel tenses. The Doctor perks up, in sudden surprise. He stays silent, though, as Rachel presses on--

RACHEL
 I will, what do you mean I will--

BECCA
 She'll show you.

RACHEL
 (scared now)
 Who...who'll show me...who...

But Becca just grasps her hand, as if reassuring...until she pries it away, forcing the thumb underneath the palm...and spreading Rachel's four fingers as far as they'll go, as if studying them like entrails on the table--

--Rachel can't pull her hand away, as Becca's eyes roll back into her head--

BECCA
 Four days.

And as Rachel's heart catches in her throat...

INT. PRO EDIT FACILITY - NIGHT

STATIC BLARES on a TV. PATCH CABLES get jacked in. An OSCILLOSCOPE glows. The "ring" tape enters a PRO EDIT DECK.

EDIT TECH (O.S.)
 Yeah, your home VCR's, they'll give you a tracking window but they won't let you stretch it. No point, really--

Reveal a tense Rachel at a console in a post-house editing bay. A YOUNG TECHIE shows her the ropes...

...as a title graphic appears -- "DAY FOUR".

EDIT TECH (cont'd)
 --unless you're talking restoration. Archives'll bring in cruddy old tapes sometimes -- tracks are totally shot, servos can't line 'em up.
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

EDIT TECH (cont'd)

The big box here's a warhorse --
totally analog, she'll read to every
edge of your ribbon--

He slides a chair beside, sits at the console with her.

EDIT TECH (O.S.) (cont'd)

Just don't force her or she'll get
pissy with you. This home movies or
something? What are we looking for,
anyway?

He hits play. Rachel hits stop.

RACHEL

I'd really rather watch it alone.
(tries a smile)
Really.

INT. EDIT SUITE - NIGHT - LATER

A printed frame BUZZES out a VIDEO PRINTER: the Woman in
the Mirror. Rachel stares at her on-screen--

--then hits slo-mo rewind. As she does, she nudges the "SERVO
TRACKING" dial. The machine WHINES a bit in protest. The
top of the image SKEWS slightly, fuzzing--

--but as she dials further, the skew descends more into frame,
while the lower portion compresses to give it space--

RACHEL

Come on, show me, come on...

--as the Beached Carcasses now appear, playing slo-mo
backwards -- the horizon line visible, the rocky slope, the
dark structure -- lighting up for a moment --

--and as it lights up the carcasses, staring intently,
Rachel's able to recognize--

RACHEL (cont'd)

Horses...

They go dark again. The machine WHINES as she turns the
dial further...revealing more of the structure...a distant
building with a DARK TOWER, set against the sky...

...and as Rachel forces the dial as far as it'll go...

A BEAM OF LIGHT FILLS TOP-FRAME

(CONTINUED)

Extending from the tower, arcing away to now silhouette its lantern-top clearly--

RACHEL (cont'd)
...lighthouse...?

Rachel reacts, then remembers the printer. Slams "Print" as--
--the image STROBES, the WHINE GOES PIERCING -- then loudly CHUNKS. Screen goes black. She looks to the printer -- humming, but no printout. She hits "Play." Nothing happens.

RACHEL (cont'd)
Shit-- come back--

She shuttles forward, then back. Tries "Play", then the "Servo" dial -- and now the machine JERKS back to life. The "fly" image pops up ON MONITOR. The liquid-static, with the insect poking around top corner.

Rachel lets it play, watching the fly walk its circuit. But something about it makes her frown.

She freezes tape.

The fly holds, encased in static. But so lifelike...that Rachel can't help but reach her hand again to reassure herself...and as she strokes the glass...

SHE PINCHES A BLACK FLY

between two fingers, on her side of the screen. It BUZZES at her touch. She lifts it closer...

...and notes that on the monitor is the screen of liquid-static. The "fly" in the image is gone.

The fly BUZZES insistently, one wing held trapped.

She stares at the frozen static -- and no fly -- on TV. Then slowly looks to the video printer...

A PRINTOUT of the "lighthouse" frame sits in the tray after all. And as it's VIOLENTLY TORN from view...

CUT TO:

EXT. BOSTON STREET - NIGHT

A SUBWAY TRAIN RUMBLES as Noah emerges from the T station carrying a bag of groceries and starts walking for home.

(CONTINUED)

He passes AN ELECTRONICS STORE where A dreadlocked HOMELESS MAN stands in front of the window. The man rattles a paper cup full of change.

HOMELESS MAN

Spare some change?

Noah pauses, shifts the bag in his arms and reaches into his pocket. The homeless guy peers into the bag...

HOMELESS MAN (cont'd)

That a *Hungry Man Dinner*?

Noah looks at him, sighs, reaches into the bag and gives it to the guy who immediately tries to tear it open.

HOMELESS MAN (cont'd)

God Bless you.

Noah starts to walk on, then freezes. He takes a step back and looks in the window. On display are a dozen new-model camcorders hooked up to TVs. One camera is hooked up to display a real-time shot of the sidewalk and passersby.

Noah is on-screen, the HOMELESS MAN standing right beside him. Except that Noah's FACE IS BLURRED.

The other TV's display other channels.

And now one by one, they WOBBLE with JAGS of STATIC -- all switching to the camcorder shot of Noah's DISTORTED FACE.

And now the homeless man looks up from the frozen dinner at all of the screens.

The Homeless Man turns and sees them: though Noah's image is blurred, his image is perfectly fine. He looks at Noah.

HOMELESS MAN (cont'd)

Who are you?

A STACK OF BOOKS HITS a table, "Lighthouses of the Eastern Seaboard," "Maritime America, Vol. 1," "Registry of Historic Places, etc. An INTERN leaves them for--

--Rachel, who's scouring others, flipping pages of a coffee-table book of historic lighthouses. Her "printout" frame of the nighttime tower sits next to her--

(CONTINUED)

--as she stops at a daytime shot of a white lighthouse. Its tower the same shape. A similar building beside it. She puts her "printout" alongside it. It's close.

The caption: "Vinalhaven Island, Maine. Built 1842."

INT. COMPUTER ROOM - LATER

A search engine labeled "PrimarySource" on-screen, as Rachel types "Vinalhaven Island" into a query field.

With a BEEP, replies appear -- "12,048 Articles Found" -- mainly headlines on storm forecasts and fishing reports.

Rachel muses. Stares at her printout of the lighthouse frame. Then adds "horses" to her "Vinalhaven" query field.

The screen BEEPS as an unseen reply arrives...

RACHEL

Oh my God...

INT. ARCHIVAL STORAGE - NIGHT

ROW UPON ROW of bound, stored copies of regional newspapers. A climate-controlled library. The books all labeled "1978"-- for "Portland Press Herald," "Lewiston Sun Journal," etc.

--as a book THUDS OPEN to a newsprint page: a crime-scene type photo of DEAD HORSES on a rocky beach. Washed-up carcasses, cops and fishermen standing by. "Mysterious Sickness Strikes Morgan Ranch Horses," is the headline.

Another book THUDS OPEN: two more photos, more horse carcasses at another remote beach location. Close-ups. "Equine Madness at Morgan Ranch."

Then a third book -- BAM! "Horses Recovering after Breeder's Suicide" With it is a picture of ANNA and VICTOR MORGAN, flanking a horse, unsmiling.

Anna Morgan is the Woman in the Mirror.

Rachel reacts, then reads the photo's caption: "Anna Morgan, with husband Victor, prior to her drowning."

RACHEL

Anna Morgan...

Rachel starts scribbling, copying fragments of the article: "...suicide...drowned in Atlantic...severe depression... psychiatric care...University of Maine at Orono..."

(CONTINUED)

Still scribbling, she looks to her writing hand...only to see it's no longer making notes on a notepad. It's writing on the printout of the Woman in the Mirror....

Her hand is drawing over Anna Morgan's face. As if covering it with long, black hair...

Rachel drops the pen.

EXT. RACHEL'S TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

As Noah rings the bell. We hear...

AIDAN (O.S.)
Who is it?

NOAH
Noah.

The door opens and little Aidan stands there facing Noah.

AIDAN
(beat)
She's not here.

NOAH
Where is she?

AIDAN
Work.

Noah thinks a moment, then...

NOAH
Can I come in?

The kid widens the door. Noah sees the BABYSITTER sitting on the couch, her back to us, watching television.

AIDAN
This is my mom's friend, Noah.

Noah reacts to that description as the babysitter turns, a teenage girl, smiles.

NOAH
Hi. I uh... left something here the other day.

BABYSITTER
Okay.

(CONTINUED)

He looks at the pile of video cassettes by the television. The tape isn't there. He looks off towards the bedroom...

NOAH

Uh, would it be alright if I checked the uh, other room?

The babysitter smiles at him, giving him a look.

BABYSITTER

Go ahead.

INT. BEDROOM - SAME

As Noah comes in, looks at the TV, checks the VCR. No sign of it here. He hears Aidan laugh at something in the other room and looks off... his expression almost sad.

It's then that he notices Katie's PHOTOS, the ones Rachel found in Katie's room, on the dresser.

He takes down the envelope, looks at the shots of the kids all standing out in front of the cabin, sees the sign for Shelter Mountain as we ~~new~~...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SHELTER MOUNTAIN - NIGHT

As Noah's headlights now play across cabin #12. Noah gets out of the car and walks to the door and tries it. It's locked.

He looks to where we see the neon OFFICE sign flickering and walks to it.

INT. OFFICE - SAME

As Noah comes inside and rings the bell. And waits.

NOAH

Hello?

No answer. He grabs A FLASHLIGHT from the counter and heads back outside.

EXT. OFFICE - SAME

As Noah steps back outside, listens to the silence. The place appears deserted. He looks out at the MOONLIT LAKE. A lone CANOE drifts twenty feet off the dock.

As Noah runs down to the dock. He notices something, shines the flashlight on BLOODY FOOTPRINTS that lead to the end. Noah starts walking over them...

At the end of the dock A ROPE is lashed to a piling. It trails into the water, attaches to the drifting canoe. He shines his light on the canoe, A DARK SHAPE INSIDE. Noah then sees PLAYING CARDS FLOATING IN THE WATER.

Noah reaches for the rope and starts reining it in. Pulling the boat closer... back to the dock... another foot and we see the INNKEEPER lying in the boat face down.

Noah drops to his stomach on the dock, reaches out and grabs the man by the shirt and ROLLS HIM OVER, shines the light so that we see A FEATURELESS DISTORTION that was once a face...

As Noah lets go and recoils, we then...

CUT TO:

71 RACHEL'S TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT 71

As Rachel comes in, sets her stuff down, moves to the couch and shakes the teenage BABYSITTER awake.

A71 Some cable movie plays on the television. A71

71 71

BABYSITTER

Oh-- hi...

RACHEL

Hi.

The babysitter gathers her things as Rachel takes some cash from her purse.

RACHEL (cont'd)

Everything okay?

BABYSITTER

He was an angel. I went to tell him it was bedtime, he was already under the covers. He read me a bedtime story.

Rachel smiles as she walks the girl to the door.

(CONTINUED)

BABYSITTER (cont'd)

He learned the word "conundrum."

RACHEL

Really?

BABYSITTER

Yeah, and he drew my picture.

RACHEL

Huh.

BABYSITTER

Call me anytime.

RACHEL

Thank you. Good-night.

BABYSITTER

'Night.

72

INT. AIDAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

72

Aidan's lying sprawled across the bed when Rachel comes in to check on him. She straightens him out, pulls the covers up and kisses him on the forehead.

She turns to go, stops when she sees A CHAIR knocked over by the window. She rights the chair. Notices the drawings all over the floor in the moonlight.

She picks one up. They're all of a woman sitting in front of a television. But they're not the babysitter. They look a lot like Anna Morgan.

Rachel looks at her son who squirms back to where he was, sighing in his sleep.

73

INT. RACHEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

73

Rachel lies there asleep. We hear A GIRL WHIMPERING OS and she opens her eyes. She sits up. The whimpering turns into the WHISPERING we heard before and now Rachel quickly gets out of bed...

RACHEL

Aidan--

74

INT. AIDAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

74

As Rachel moves to the doorway. The WHISPERING STOPS.

(CONTINUED)

RACHEL-

Aidan?

His bed is empty. She turns to go when she notices now...

The chair sits center, facing away from us, in a puddle of water. A dark-haired FIGURE in a white gown sits there.

Rachel steps for the chair, trembling. The whisper-keening continues...and as Rachel reaches it...

HAND GRABS HER WRIST

a female hand with bloody, missing fingernails, latching like a claw onto Rachel's arm, as suddenly LIGHT FLOODS THE ROOM--

SMASH CUT TO:

75

INT. RACHEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

75

Rachel wakes up with a start. She's in bed, but still in her clothes, the papers she'd been reading all around her. A clock shows 2 A.M. She moves to rub her face with her hands, and freezes.

She looks at her WRIST. It's ringed with a RED MARK. Like someone had grabbed her... in her sleep.

..and now, she hears what sounds like WHISPER-KEENING...

Chilled, she turns toward the sound..in the living room. She quickly gets out of bed.

76

INT. HALLWAY - SAME

76

As she sees the translucent doors to the den are closed...with a DULL GLOW behind them--

And with five tense steps she's there--

--to thrust them apart--

A76

AND FIND AIDAN AT THE TV

A76

--watching the videotape's final image of the STONE MOUND with its sliding metal cover--

RACHEL

NO!!!

(CONTINUED)

She falls beside him, whisking him into her arms as the tape goes to STATIC. She presses him to her, destroyed--

RACHEL (cont'd)

Why. Why, baby, why...

AIDAN

I couldn't sleep.

Rachel struggles with tears, shaking hard--

AIDAN (cont'd)

Who is she, Mom?

--and then lunges to reach the VCR -- ejecting the "COPY" tape and hurling it across the room. It lands -- BAM! -- beneath a corner credenza.

Aidan's scared by this. Rachel sees it, tries to settle--

As the phone RINGS like a gunshot.

Rachel screams. She wraps Aidan in her arms again. The phone keeps RINGING.

AIDAN (cont'd)

(terrified)

Mom...?

Rachel staggers to her feet, finding resolve...then races to the phone, snatches it up in defiance--

RACHEL

LEAVE HIM ALONE!

77

INT. NOAH'S DARKROOM - NIGHT

77

Noah on the phone, his features eerie in the red safe-light.

NOAH

Rachel?!

A76/ 77

INTERCUTTING THE TWO OF THEM:

A76/ 77

Rachel's stunned silent.

RACHEL

Noah... it's you...

(CONTINUED)

NOAH

I'm sorry I called so late.. but I
just wanted to tell you that I believe
you--

RACHEL

(flat)
You do, huh.

NOAH

Yeah...

He pulls a dripping 8x10 from the stop bath -- an image of his own face, horribly blurred -- and hangs it up with the several dozen he's already developed. All of them blurred the same way.

NOAH (cont'd)

I do.
(then)
Rachel? You there?

RACHEL

He watched the tape...

NOAH

What? Who?

RACHEL

Our son.

Off Noah's reaction...

CUT TO:

78 EXT. A BLURRED HOUSE - DAY 78

Seen through a windshield, streaked by rain...

As a title graphic appears -- "DAY FIVE."

79 INT. NOAH'S CAR 79

A door shuts and Rachel hurries toward Ruth's house, leaving Noah in the car, at the wheel...and Aidan in the passenger seat, idly sketching a house.

Through the windshield, Ruth lets Rachel in. Rain continues to fall. Noah and Aidan sit in silence.

Several seconds pass. Finally:

(CONTINUED)

AIDAN

You take my picture.

Noah looks at him. Aidan stares out at the rain.

AIDAN (cont'd)

I've seen you. When I'm in the yard
at school. When I'm out with Mom.
You're there.

Noah considers the kid a moment, then...

NOAH

Do you wish I was around more?

AIDAN

No.

NOAH

Oh.

AIDAN

Do you want to be around more?

Noah thinks for a moment.

NOAH

Rachel and I were

AIDAN

--young. Yeah, mom's told me that
story.

NOAH

Oh.

(then)

Thing is, I don't think I'd make a
good father. Maybe because my own
was such a... disappointment.

They sit there a moment, then...

NOAH (cont'd)

Thing is, I don't want to let someone
else do it either. Be your father.

Aidan keeps drawing the house.

AIDAN

It's a conundrum.

(CONTINUED)

NOAH
 (beat, smiles)
 Yeah. It is.

Aidan keeps drawing his house. Considers. Then starts a figure next to it.

INT. KATIE'S BEDROOM - SAME

Rachel's at a window, watching Aidan and Noah horsing around in the car below.

She turns her attention to Katie's desk. Picking up the spiral notebook she'd knocked over on her first visit here. With the cover-models' faces scrawled over with "hair."

It means something to Rachel now.

She opens the notebook. School assignments and classroom notes. She flips toward the book's end--

--and stops at a page with RED LADDERS drawn in the margins. She turns a page. More notes, but FLIES drawn buzzing on top of them. The next page's notes are framed in a ROOM, with a video camera facing a chair.

Rachel keeps turning: a DEAD HORSE IN A LAKE is drawn where the school notes abruptly stop, along with "Why is this in my head?" The next page has no notes at all: simply the "MIRROR-MIRROR" written all over the page.

The next page is a full-page sketch of a BURNING TREE, with the words "Fuck you" slashed across it. The next page is simply a RING, circled over and over so hard that the paper's torn through.

The following page is blank. Like the rest of the book.

RUTH (O.S.)
 I don't think he should sleep in here.

Rachel turns to see Ruth in the doorway. She slips the notebook behind her back. Nods.

RUTH (cont'd)
 He might like the den. There's a TV.

RACHEL
 Do me a favor. Unplug it.

The car door opens; Aidan's still working on his drawing--

RACHEL
Time to go, Mister.

AIDAN
I'm not finished.

Rachel looks at his drawing -- beside the house, he's put a man and a woman, holding hands with a child. The man's fully colored-in, the woman halfway, the kid so far featureless. But the parents resemble Rachel and Noah.

AIDAN (O.S.) (cont'd)
Noah said to make one for you.

Touched, surprised...she meets Noah's eyes.

ANGLE FLYING over the coast. A thin ribbon of highway... where Noah's Mustang RACES northward.

RACHEL (O.S.)
They were horse breeders -- Anna and Victor Morgan. There were problems with their horses, she was depressed, she was seeing doctors...

NOAH (O.S.)
And then killed herself. If she killed herself--

RACHEL (O.S.)
...her hospital was U of Maine, at Orono. On the tape there's a hospital room. At my house, I saw a hospital room--

NOAH (O.S.)
So we do both--

RACHEL (O.S.)
We don't have time. You visit the hospital, I'll visit the island. The images on the tape, they're leading us somewhere. We have to follow them.

Noah drives; Rachel has Katie's spiral notebook in hand, showing Katie's sketches of the images on the tape:

RACHEL

The ladder, the fly, the room...Katie saw them all too...

NOAH

So how's that help us any?

Rachel stares at the last picture in Katie's book...

RACHEL

I think before you die, you see the ring.

EXT. HARBOR DOCK - DAY

RAIN falls. WORKERS direct a few cars onto a boat. A sign reads "Vinalhaven Island Ferry." The Mustang drives up...

...as a title graphic appears -- "DAY SIX".

Noah keeps the engine idling, expecting Rachel to hustle out. She doesn't. She's staring at the "ring" tape, in hand.

NOAH

It's not your fault.

RACHEL

No one else can ever see this. Ever. If my time runs out--

NOAH

Your time won't run out--

RACHEL

--you have to destroy this. So it ends with us.

NOAH

Your time, my time, his time. It will not run out.

A boat horn SOUNDS. Rachel nods, gets out of the car--

NOAH (cont'd)

Wait, Rachel--

(CONTINUED)

--he retrieves something from the foot of her seat. It's Aidan's drawing, rolled up and taped. With "M-O-M" written on its side. Rachel takes it, fighting the guilt...

NOAH (cont'd)

What?

RACHEL

Nothing.

A rainy silence. He leans over...

NOAH

He knows you love him. He knows you always will.

She nods, getting wet, then scurries to the boat dock. Noah remains, looking after her, till she's safely on board--

--as she passes a LITTLE GIRL and her FATHER watching DOCK WORKERS drive their HORSE TRAILER onto the ferry. An auburn STALLION is locked in back, whinnying with the bumps--

LITTLE GIRL

Easy, Penny! Be nice now, Penny!

GIRL'S FATHER

Settle down there, Penny...we're going home...

--moving by, Rachel slows as she glances to the horse. It REARS in its trailer. With a worried frown...she walks on.

EXT. THE ATLANTIC - DAY

Waves CRASH as the ferry crosses the channel. The few PASSENGERS stay in their cars; Rachel alone stands on deck...

AS VINALHAVEN ISLAND

comes into view off the port side. A nine-by-five mile outcrop of land. Sparse forest, windswept meadows, some low buildings in a harbor cluster.

And at the end of a rocky peninsula...the video's LIGHTHOUSE.

She steps to the port railing, passing the parked horse trailer. She studies the lighthouse--

--and then hears the AGITATED HORSE behind her. It's stamping and turning circles in its trailer. Rachel steps toward it, her instinct to comfort--

(CONTINUED)

RACHEL

Hey there, shh, it's all right--

--and reaches a hand to stroke its nose. As she does, she meets the gaze of its BLACK ANIMAL EYE--

--and at her touch, the horse goes PANICKED! Rears up, striking its head and banging hooves at the door -- held shut by rope-knot. Its mouth starts to FROTH.

RACHEL (cont'd)

Settle down, stop, hey--

But the horse keeps rearing, bucking, spitting foam--

A85 --and BUSTS OPEN the trailer door, rope splitting! The horse stumbles out onto the hood of a car behind it, then trips its way onto deck! Rachel scampers back-- A85

--as passengers HONK horns in alarm. A SHIP'S MATE comes running from the wheelhouse--

SHIP'S MATE

Jesus Christ! Horse on deck!

The horse SPINS, froth dripping. Rachel's backed against the railing, and tries to clamber over another car--

--but her actions only spook it more. It REARS while backing up, hitting the railing, eyes locked on Rachel as it flails--

--as there's a little girl's o.s. SCREAM--

B85 AND THE HORSE FALLS OVERBOARD B85

Bucking and kicking, smacking the side and plunging into whitecaps. Rachel rushes to the side--

C85 --watching the animal SPLASH to the surface, WHINNYING -- C85 then get tugged under by the boat-driven current. Banging off the keel and sucked below.

D85 Rachel scrambles to the stern rail with other passengers, searching the water -- the roiling wake-- D85

AS THE WHITEWASH TURNS RED

--the churning whitecaps staining with BLOOD. It's the same White-Red Water image from the video.

LITTLE GIRL (O.S.)

Daddy! Daddy, NO!

(CONTINUED)

--as the Girl and her Father tumble in horror from the trailer's cab. The carcass surfaces. A HORN blares.

SHIP'S MATE

Full turn, bring her around! Drop
the starboard boat! Ready ropes!

Rachel steps back, trembling. She scans the others' faces. But no one seems to see she's even there...

86

EXT. VINALHAVEN HARBOR - DAY

86

Cars file off the docked ferry, into a small fishing village. At the ramp, a FERRY WORKER relays the tale to LOBSTERMEN:

FERRY WORKER (O.S.)

Fell over? The thing goddamn threw
itself over. I swear to you! Right
over the side! I ain't seen anything
like that since...

He trails off, seeing Rachel disembark, staring at him...

Rachel turns away, glances back to see the sheet-covered horse-carcass on deck. Workers surround it. The teary Little Girl clutches her kneeling Father's hand.

But the child's hateful eyes are on Rachel...

87

EXT. CITY CAMPUS - DAY

87

Noah's Mustang speeds toward brick campus-like buildings, past a sign reading "University of Maine at Orono -- Psychiatric Clinic, Inpatient/Outpatient Facility."

88

INT. HOSPITAL RECEPTION - DAY

88

A white-coated female GRAD STUDENT works the reception desk

NOAH (O.S.)

I need to see the records of a patient
named Anna Morgan.

The girl and the orderly turn -- to see Noah at the desk, slightly out of breath.

GRAD STUDENT

I'm sorry, sir...we're a mental health
facility. Our records are private--

(CONTINUED)

NOAH

She's been dead twenty-four years.
She won't mind.

GRAD STUDENT

I'm sorry. It's impossible, even if
you were a relative--

NOAH

Look, I've seen them before. I've
been up there--

The girl and orderly trade a smug, knowing look.

ORDERLY

The records rooms are downstairs,
guy.

Noah makes a show of being found out.

NOAH

You win.

89

INT. BASEMENT REFUSE ROOM DAY

89

A CROWBAR forces open a metal door from an outside stairwell.
Noah slips in -- beside dumpsters and trash chutes. Some
flies buzz; he waves them away.

90

INT. BASEMENT CORRIDOR

90

An ORDERLY wheels a laundry cart from an elevator. As he
passes, Noah slips out, stalks the echoey hallway--

--checking doors as he goes, but no labels on them. Just
"BT-19." "BT-18." "BT-17." Pipes line the ceiling,
footsteps echo. Noah speeds up, counting down the doors--

--and then stops as he passes "BT-10." Turns back.

There's a FLY buzzing, flitting around the top left corner
of the door. Walking a somehow-familiar pattern.

And off Noah's stare...

91

INT. "DEAD" RECORDS ROOM

91

The CROWBAR forces the door in. A dank, disordered storage
room. Some busted medical equipment in a corner, but mostly
cardboard file-boxes, stacked haphazardly -- scrawled with
dates as far back as the 1930's. There are hundreds of them.

(CONTINUED)

Noah steps in, knocks into a box of discarded STICKY ELECTRODES and white wires. A fly BUZZES on inside...

NOAH

You in here, Anna?

EXT. RURAL ROAD - DAY

A mailbox reads "MORGAN." Long-faded is the former label: "Morgan Horse Farm, Ltd."

Rachel faces a gravel drive in fenced grasslands, well outside town. There's a large brown two-story house at the center of the acreage. A small barn beyond.

And in the distance, the island's lighthouse.

EXT. MORGAN HOUSE - DAY

Rachel raps an iron knocker. No answer. Again. Nothing. Rachel then hears something being HAMMERED...

EXT. BACK OF HOUSE

Rachel rounds past a PICKUP TRUCK to see a fenced corral by the barns. A gentleman rancher, VICTOR MORGAN, 63 -- gray-haired handsome but weary -- is repairing a section of fence.

RACHEL

Mr. Morgan?

The man turns, surprised to see anyone.

RACHEL (cont'd)

I was wondering if you'd have a moment to speak with me. My name's Rachel Keller -- I'm a writer. With the--

VICTOR

You want to know about the horses.

RACHEL

Uh, well...

VICTOR

Or you're here for the night life.

Victor looks her over, smiles slightly.

RACHEL

I didn't mean to...it's just I wasn't able to find a number...to reach you--

(CONTINUED)

VICTOR

Every few years, a writer comes along, heard about what happened. What's left to write though, I don't know.

RACHEL

I was hoping you had a few minutes.

VICTOR

Well, the work never ends around here, really...but I s'pose I have a few.

INT. BACK STUDY - DAY

Part den, part workshop. Breeder's plaques and trophies. Rachel follows Victor in, as he sets his tools aside. Victor's smile is amiable.

VICTOR

So what is it you're writing, miss? 'Bout horses in general or just those that go strange?

RACHEL

I read you had to put so many down. And others...they drowned themselves. As if they sort of...went crazy.

VICTOR

Uh-huh.

RACHEL

Something scaring them, maybe.

VICTOR

Scaring? Wasn't aware that was a medical term.

He smiles, picks up a BOOT HOOK, scrapes mud from his heels. Rachel nods outside, toward the empty corrals...

RACHEL

Where are your horses now?

VICTOR

I don't breed anymore.

RACHEL

You don't?

(CONTINUED)

VICTOR

More my wife's love than mine, really.

RACHEL

She...she killed herself?

Victor seems to re-evaluate Rachel's presence. She hurries:

RACHEL (cont'd)

It must have been hard on her...the problems...with the horses...

VICTOR

Why are you asking about my wife.

He still has the boot hook in hand. She nervously edges away, and pulls even with another room's half-open door--

RACHEL

I...well, I...

WHERE THE OVAL MIRROR

from the tape hangs on the wall. Rachel stares at it, unsteady. Then back to Victor. His expression the same...

...as she pulls the "ring" tape from her purse.

RACHEL (cont'd)

Do you know what this is?

Victor's troubled by her tone. Shakes his head.

RACHEL (cont'd)

It won't make sense, what I want to say...but I want to say it. Sometimes people who are dead, they say...still try to communicate. To send messages. To us, to the people still living. And I think this tape...may be a message. From your wife.

He stands dead still...a strange look overtaking him.

RACHEL (cont'd)

Your wife is on this tape. She's there, right in that room. You see the lighthouse, the horses, your horses, her horses--

VICTOR

Is that the only one?

(CONTINUED)

A tense beat. He resets his grip on the boot hook. Rachel's eyes never leave it, thinking fast--

RACHEL

No.

Victor stares her down.

His whole figure seems to grow weary, looking to the window. He puts the hook down and starts toward her--

VICTOR

I've got a lot of work to do today.
A lot of acres out there. Minute I
think I'm done with one thing, some
other thing needs fixing--

Rachel edges away, but he simply passes her...to shut the door to the room with the mirror. Then faces her--

VICTOR (cont'd)

I don't want your tape.

RACHEL

Mr. Morgan, hear me out--

VICTOR

The problem with writers...is you
take one person's tragedy and force
the whole world to experience it.
You spread it like a sickness.

RACHEL

Mr. Morgan--

VICTOR

Tell me, Miss, what is it you think
you know?

She doesn't answer, doesn't have one.

VICTOR (cont'd)

Then leave it alone. Please.

He moves on.

Victor SHUTS the front door on Rachel.

She backs away, studying the house and surrounding ranch land.

(CONTINUED)

Windows shuttered, fenced meadows empty, the barns quiet. A WIND picks up -- sends a shiver through her. She hurries down the drive, glancing back one last time at the house--
--and stops dead in her tracks.

She stares like she's seeing it for the first time.

She rummages in her purse, finding the drawing Aidan gave her. She unrolls the crayon-work...of the house with the Mom, Dad and child standing beside it. The house is brown, two-level ranch-style, windows shuttered.

It's the Morgan house.

Rachel's mouth drops open. And not just at the house.

As she unrolls it fully, she sees Aidan finished it. The parents beside the house flank a child. But the child now wears a white dress...

And long, black hair cloaking its face...

CUT TO:

INT. RUTH'S HOUSE - BOSTON - DUSK

98

Aidan sits on the living-room floor, drawing, in front of the big-screen TV. It's off, but -- while he draws -- Aidan's eyes never leave the black screen.

RUTH (O.S.)

Aidan! It's your mom!

Aidan stops drawing. Stares at the TV.

RUTH (O.S.) (cont'd)

Aidan!

The boy nods slightly. Stands and shuffles off...as ANGLE reveals he's been drawing a RED WOODEN LADDER.

99

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

99

Ruth hands the phone to Aidan, steps away:

AIDAN

Hi Mom.

Dockside dingy, locals only. Some LOBSTERMEN and DOCKHANDS converse at the b.g. bar. Rachel's pressed to a pay phone:

RACHEL

Aidan, the house you drew for me...

AIDAN

Uh-huh.

RACHEL

Did you see it in your head -- is that why you drew it? Was it a picture in your head?

AIDAN

In my head?

RACHEL

Aidan, why did you draw that house?

AIDAN

(reluctantly)

'Cause she told me to.

Rachel goes still.

RACHEL

Who...who told you to...

AIDAN

She did.

Rachel's breath hitches. She's staring at his drawing...and the little longhaired figure...

AIDAN (cont'd)

The girl.

Rachel comes out of the pay phone alcove, slowly walks into the empty bar. A WOMAN is busy hanging new curtains over the front window. A burly MAN is behind the bar reading a newspaper and smoking a pipe. Rachel moves to the window.

RACHEL

Hi.

The woman, ruddy faced, gives her a nice smile.

(CONTINUED)

WOMAN

Hello.

RACHEL

Do you know Victor Morgan?

The woman reacts to the name. The man looks up from his newspaper.

RACHEL (cont'd)

The Morgan horse farm, Victor and Anna Morgan--

WOMAN

It's an island, dear.

RACHEL

Can you tell me... They had a child, didn't they. A girl.

MAN

They had what was coming to them.

Rachel looks at him. He looks down at the paper.

RACHEL

Can you tell me about her.

MAN

No, she can't. We don't speak of those people in here.

WOMAN

Oh, stop it, Roland, that was twenty years ago.

MAN

It may be, but that girl ruined the haul! Ruined my life!

WOMAN

Oh, your life is ruined, is it?

MAN

I'm talking about the damn catch! She showed up, there wasn't a boat around here had a decent season.

WOMAN

Isn't her fault, if you can't bait your traps right.

(CONTINUED)

MAN

And what about the damn horses?

WOMAN

(beat)

Honey, why don't you go run on over to Stately's and pick us up some napkins and such.

He looks at his wife, then walks out from behind the bar and heads for the door.

MAN

A man gives his wife a good home, a good living, it's not enough. A woman always wants a child. A man can love her more than life, it's not enough...

He storms out into the street. The Woman looks at Rachel.

WOMAN

They tried for years to have their own child. Didn't matter what they did -- her whole life nothing. Till the year they went away.

(beat)

They came back with a little bundle, said a doctor helped 'em overseas.

The woman moves to the bar.

WOMAN (cont'd)

I suppose you mess with the natural way, you get what's coming to you.

RACHEL

And what was that?

WOMAN

Let's just say the little girl, Samara, wasn't normal.

(then)

They'd bring her to town sometimes, at first. She wouldn't talk to you, wouldn't even smile--

(then)

And then Anna went crazy--

RACHEL

What happened to the girl? Samara?

(CONTINUED)

OLD BOATBUILDER

Morgan sent her to some hospital,
have her studied or something. I
heard she's been there ever since.
That was about the time Anna killed
herself.

RACHEL

Because Morgan sent the girl away?

WOMAN

The little girl may have been wrong,
but it still was hers.

She looks Rachel in the eye.

WOMAN (cont'd)

Never underestimate a mother's love
for her child.

Rachel looks at the woman a moment. Silence. We hear THE
FERRY HORN SOUND OS. The Woman looks off.

WOMAN (cont'd)

That'd be the last ferry going out.

She looks pointedly at Rachel.

WOMAN (cont'd)

You better hurry.

EXT. DOCK - DUSK

As Rachel stands at the dock. The gate about close. She
thinks a moment, then looks off towards THE LIGHTHOUSE.
Rachel turns and slowly walks away from the boat...

CUT TO:

INT. DEAD RECORDS ROOM - DUSK

A FLASHLIGHT finds a file-box on its side, labeled "Former
Patients, Closed 1970's, #1752." Noah jerks out a rotting
cabinet -- to find a folder labeled "Morgan, Anna, Mrs."

He leafs the folder's "Attending Psychiatrist" notes, finding
"...depression...anxiety...depression..." and then a medical
history with xeroxed doctor's reports. We see FRAGMENTS of
pages: "1963 miscarriage...1965 miscarriage...1968
miscarriage..." And then, labeled 1970...a page torn out.

(CONTINUED)

Noah flips further. And then three strange RADIOGRAPHS -- brilliant and ghostly abstractions burned into X-ray emulsion paper. Among them a BURNING TREE.

A label at the x-ray's base reads "Samara Morgan."

NOAH

Samara...?

He checks the cabinet again -- finds an empty hanging folder behind Anna's. A tab for Patient History...but no pages. A tab for Birth Certificate...but no pages.

Only a scrawl on the folder's back: "SESSIONS TERMINATED 9/21/78 At Father's Request -- See Video Record #SM015." And off Noah's look...

INT. HOSPITAL STORAGE LIBRARY - DUSK

Noah walks rows of TAPES with a white-coated HOSPITAL CLERK:

NOAH

I didn't know if you're the right room, reception just said head that way. It's SM015. I'm her father...Victor Morgan...

CLERK

Well, parents can't take 'em, they can only watch 'em. There's another room...

NOAH

That's not a problem.

The clerk finds the right shelf, with the cassette case labeled #SM015. The clerk opens it up--

--to reveal there no's tape. Noah reacts.

NOAH (cont'd)

Where is it?

The clerk frowns, studies an card on the cover's back--

CLERK

You can't take 'em, you can only watch 'em...

(CONTINUED)

NOAH

Well, why isn't...who's the last person who watched it? Does it say that? Does it say when?

(off his slow nod)

Okay, when? Who was it?

The clerk shows him the card, eyeing him strangely:

CLERK

It was you.

EXT. MORGAN HOUSE - NIGHT

The Vinalhaven Island lighthouse ARCS its beacon in the distant darkness. A beat-up CAR stops at the drive. Rachel emerges, waving thanks at the LOCAL driver...

...who drives on, as Rachel is left facing the Morgan house. With a determined look.

Suddenly HEADLIGHTS round the side of it. A beat-up pickup rounds the back, a MAN at the wheel. Rachel ducks behind a tree, waits for it to pass; we see VICTOR MORGAN in profile.

And seizing the opportunity, she hurries for the house...

EXT. THE SEA - OFF MAINE COAST - SAME

WAVES CRASH as the ferryboat crosses the channel. Noah's aboard, trying his cell phone to no avail...

NOAH

Rachel...

INT. MORGAN HOUSE - FRONT ENTRY - NIGHT

Darkness and silence. The door opens...and Rachel slips in. Surveys the shadows. Heads swiftly for the main hall...

INT. SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

The room with the Oval Mirror.

Rachel stands in the study doorway, re-confronting it with a chill as she remembers--

FLASHCUT - THE VIDEOTAPE

Anna Morgan brushing her hair and the mirror switching position -- to reflect what looks like her figure in the distant shadows, walking away--

(CONTINUED)

That image HOLDS: that we may recognize it now as a LITTLE GIRL -- backing away, but facing forwards -- her long black hair cloaking her face.

108

IN THE SITTING ROOM

108

Rachel now notices a double-doored CLOSET within the room. The doors are open. There's a low electronic HUM.

A TELEVISION and VCR sit atop their cardboard boxes, as if recently unpacked. Boxes of books fill the closet.

The lighthouse beacon ARCS through a window, lighting up the room for an instant -- as Rachel approaches.

The book-boxes are filled with titles like: "The Truth of Telekinesis" and "Collected Studies of Mentalism." Rachel kneels at the TV...and now hears the LOW HUM. The TV's on.

She touches the VCR's eject button--

--and a tape labeled "#SM015, U.M.O. 9/78" emerges. Rachel hesitates. Then re-inserts it.

And presses "Play."

8

AS A HEAD OF RAGGED BLACK HAIR

A108

fills the TV screen. Rachel jumps

Image DE-AND-RE-FOCUSES, abruptly ZOOMS OUT. A LITTLE GIRL, 8, is in a chair, half-turned away, stringy black hair covering her face. She wears a white dress, in the white room from the "ring" tape. A pair of ELECTRODE WIRES trail from beneath her hair, to an o.s. machine.

The tape quality is poor, early VHS washed-out color. A desk sits in foreground...with the strange X-rays Noah found lying atop it. Beside a doctor's shoulder...

DOCTOR (O.S.)

How did you make these pictures,
Samara?

The girl stays half-cowered, slow. Likely drugged:

DOCTOR (O.S.) (cont'd)

Will you tell me how you made these
pictures?

(beat)

Can you control when you make these
pictures?

(CONTINUED)

Samara shakes her head.

DOCTOR (O.S.) (cont'd)
Some doctors think that there are people...if they think really hard about something, like a picture, sometimes they can make other people see it too...

108/ A108 The lighthouse BEACON arcs through the room's window, as Rachel raptly watches the strange child. 108/ A108

DOCTOR (O.S.) (cont'd)
Your parents brought you to me because they want you to stop. They think you're making them...see things. All day long, they say, like you're screaming at them. Your mommy says it's why she's sick...

Samara shakes her head.

DOCTOR (O.S.) (cont'd)
But you know what, Samara? I don't want to make you stop. I think you have a talent...and I'd rather listen to you, okay? Is that okay? If someone listens to you?

Rachel's entranced by the discussion. The lighthouse BEACON sweeps to illuminate the room again.

DOCTOR (O.S.) (cont'd)
Sometimes when we feel alone, or when we're scared of something, we don't know how to say it. So we try to communicate in other ways. Children, especially. And sometimes grownups, they just don't know how to listen...

Samara shudders slightly. Still turned away.

DOCTOR (O.S.) (cont'd)
Are you scared of something, Samara?

A tense silence.

DOCTOR (O.S.) (cont'd)
What are you scared of?

(CONTINUED)

AS VICTOR MORGAN

is revealed in the doorway behind Rachel -- as the lighthouse beacon SHINES in again. He's barefoot, in his barn jacket, with pliers and a coil of wire. Stares, silent.

The beam passes, plunging him into darkness. Rachel is oblivious, still fixated on the TV screen.

DOCTOR (O.S.) (cont'd)
Samara...you can tell me...

When the beacon SWEEPS PAST again, Victor is gone.

DOCTOR (O.S.) (cont'd)
I'm listening...

There's a stair CREAK. Rachel spins, sees nothing. She shuts off the TV, returning full-darkness to the room.

Somewhere in the house, a series of CREAKS.

109

INT. STUDY

109

Rachel rushes in. Darkness. She darts to the back window: MORGAN'S PICK UP TRUCK HAS RETURNED.

Rachel backs up..

110

INT. FRONT FOYER/LIVING ROOM

110

WET FOOTPRINTS lead a trail toward the stairs. Rachel follows them in -- clutching a walking stick for a weapon.

The footprints -- and the stairs -- ascend into darkness.

With weapon in hand...she takes the first step up...

111

INT. MORGAN HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALL

111

More shapeless WET FOOTPRINTS. Rachel tracks them, staff gripped, breath held. There's a METAL JINGLE from a doorway ahead. The jingle suddenly stops--

And Rachel stops. Silence. She takes another step--

--and Victor Morgan steps out. Rachel gasps. He holds a METAL BIT and BRIDLE, vaguely threatening. An empty stare.

Rachel's ready to run...but summons resolve...

(CONTINUED)

RACHEL

Where is she -- where's your child?

Victor stares, motionless.

RACHEL (cont'd)

What happened to your child--

VICTOR

Stop calling her a child.

A stronger tone. Rachel's voice grows shaky--

RACHEL

They say you sent her away. You never sent her anywhere, did you...

VICTOR

When you can't have a child, it's for a reason.

Victor's stare remains. Water pools around his wet feet.

RACHEL

She had some talent, and it scared you...

VICTOR

And you.

RACHEL

(pleading now)

She's hurting people. She's hurting people because she's been hurt. She's hurting me, my son, it has to stop--

VICTOR

She'll never stop.
(remote)
She never sleeps.

RACHEL

Where is she...please--

VICTOR

Stronger. She's always been getting stronger...

RACHEL

Mr. Morgan, please help me--

(CONTINUED)

VICTOR

And she's sent you to show me...that
it's no use keeping secrets anymore.

Victor steps out of the hall. Rachel pursues--

INT. BEDROOM

--into a rustic bedroom, with extension cords crisscrossing
the floor, converging at an open bathroom door. Victor's
nowhere to be seen, but SPLASHES sound--

INT. BATHROOM

Rachel races to the doorway and recoils--

It's a veritable junk-shop, with three TV's and two VCR's on
sink, toilet and floor, copper wires spilling out of them
and trailing across the floor to meet wrapped around--

--the METAL BIT in Victor's hand, kneeling in the bathtub as
he throws the bridle over his shoulders and puts the bit--

VICTOR

She was never a child.

--in his mouth and reaches for a nearby POWER STRIP to which
the electronics are all plugged in--

RACHEL

WAIT, NO!

He hits the power. A SURGE of electricity BLOWS OUT the TV
picture tubes and snaps his body rigid. His face CATCHES
FIRE as he drops sideways in the bathtub--

--and Rachel SCREAMS and bolts back--

INT. BEDROOM

She's shaking, staggering backward as--

A SHADOW BURSTS INTO THE ROOM

--and she spins, screaming -- to nearly collide with--

NOAH

RACHEL!

She's speechless. He grabs her, then darts to the bathroom,
reacts at the horrific sight. Spins back to her--

(CONTINUED)

NOAH (cont'd)

Are you hurt?! Did he hurt you?!

He forces her to turn her back on the carnage--

NOAH (cont'd)

Rachel, talk! Talk to me!

RACHEL

(with a gasp)

They...they had a child...

NOAH

I know.

And off her desperate look...

RACHEL

I think he killed her.

115

INT. MORGAN HOUSE - SERIES OF SHOTS - NIGHT

115

BANG! As a door is FORCED OPEN. Noah's searching rooms...switching on lights, opening closets...

INT. SITTING ROOM

116

Rachel stands at the Mirror, where Anna did long ago. Staring into it, distant, while Noah dumps books, tearing through the last of the closet boxes...

RACHEL

We have to know what happened...she wants us to know what happened...

NOAH

We don't know what she wants--

RACHEL

We have to know what happened...

Noah spills the last of the books, giving up -- his eyes now on Rachel, worried for her. He then turns to the window. A silent moment...as the lighthouse beam sweeps:

NOAH

I thought Morgan raised horses.

RACHEL

Not anymore.

Noah frowns, still staring out:

(CONTINUED)

NOAH

Then what's in the barn?

EXT. SMALL BARN - MOMENTS LATER

BASH! A SLEDGEHAMMER batters apart the hasp holding the lock-and-chain. It splits from the wood, falling away--

--as Rachel and Noah swing the doors outward, stepping into the eerie MOONLIT space, their gaze now traveling upward--

REVEAL INT. BARN

The space long abandoned, no stalls, no horses. Only a hayloft high above. Where black RAIN TARPS cover bulky furniture. No ladders or ropes within reach.

NOAH

Rachel...

They turn in unison...to see the RED WOODEN LADDER from the video behind them, beside the doors.

INT. HAYLOFT - MOMENTS LATER

BANG! The ladder hits the edge. Noah and Rachel ascend to survey the dusty space -- and start pulling tarps...

...revealing a child's bed. A dresser. A desk. A rocking-horse. A chest of stuffed animals. On the loft's back wall, a faded MURAL -- of a meadow scene: horses, a lake, and a huge red tree. As they realize...

RACHEL

He kept her here...

(incredulous)

Her mother was going crazy. Morgan blamed the child. So he kept her here. Alone.

Noah pulls aside a corner tarp. Stops still.

NOAH

Not alone.

He's revealed a 70's-era TV, antenna poking up. Rachel approaches it, with fascination...

RACHEL

What if she couldn't control it?
Making pictures? Sending pictures?

(CONTINUED)

NOAH

Hurting people?

RACHEL

Who says she meant to?

NOAH

Well, she means to now.

RACHEL

What if it's the only way she knew
to communicate.

NOAH

Pictures. I've seen enough pictures.
Why doesn't she pick up the phone
again, start making some calls.
Instead of making a tape.

Rachel blinks, like something just registered.

RACHEL

The phone.

NOAH

Yeah, the phone. You watched the
tape, you said the phone rang.

RACHEL

It only rang for me.

NOAH

What?

RACHEL

You and Aidan, it didn't ring. Just
me. At the cabin -- in the mountains,
Shelter Mountain...oh my god...

Noah doesn't get it. But Rachel's staring at the faded mural.
The horses and the lake and the big RED TREE...

RACHEL (cont'd)

I've seen this tree.

(in astonishment)

I've seen it burning...

CUT TO:

EXT. SHELTER MOUNTAIN - NIGHT-TO-DAWN - TIME LAPSE 120

DARKNESS. Out of the black, silhouettes form. Branches and leaves, back-lit by grays and pinks. A tree in a forest, waking to the day. And as the SUN rises in time lapse beyond--
--the leaves of the RED JAPANESE MAPLE behind Cabin #12 start to GLOW, translucent fiery shades -- like a tree on fire...

121 EXT. OTHER WOODS - SERIES OF SHOTS 121

Other forest MAPLES, some in clusters, some alone, all react the same way. The sun rises higher, BLAZE-GLOWS now fade--
--and suddenly the TIME LAPSE speeds up -- to full daytime--
--as Noah's Mustang ZOOMS PAST.

...as a title graphic appears -- "DAY SEVEN".

122 EXT. SHELTER MOUNTAIN - DAY 122

ANGLE SOARING OVERHEAD, tracking the car and then overtaking, flying ahead to the lake site...where the tape was found.

RACHEL (V.O.)

It was ranch land before there were cabins. Community acreage, for breeders to come run their horses...

123 EXT. SHELTER MOUNTAIN INN - DAY 123

The Mustang kicks up dust as it SWERVES past the entry sign, with a posted addendum: "Closed Until Further Notice. Please Call for Reservations -- The Management."

RACHEL (V.O.)

The cabins have only been there for fifteen years...

124 INT. CABIN #12 - DAY 124

Noah holds the GUEST JOURNAL, reading the printed history of the ranch on its front. Outside the window, the JAPANESE MAPLE sways with a breeze, its leaves a deep, vibrant red.

(CONTINUED)

RACHEL STARES AT IT WITH AWE:

RACHEL

The sun came right through the leaves,
lit them up like it was on fire,
right at sunset...

(realizes, pales)

Right when I watched the tape.

NOAH

You don't have until sunset, you
have forever, you hear me?

RACHEL

Katie and her friends, they died at
ten that night, all of them. They
must have watched it at ten...

NOAH

You're not dying at sunset.

He stares her down until she nods. A reluctant one.

NOAH (cont'd)

So then where do we start? You're
saying she's here. She's dead and
she's here? What the hell -- you
here, Samara? You here sending
messages? Making phone calls? Making
videos? This your hideout now?
This your home? This your happy
little freak show home?

He proceeds to take out his frustrations--

RACHEL

Noah, stop...Noah, wait...

--suddenly ripping out the phone line--

NOAH

This the only number you know?!
When's show time, huh?! Whaddya
want us to see?! What's on TV
tonight?!

--and settling on the television. With a sudden rage, he
SHOVES the stand over. The TV topples and Noah SMASHES a
foot right through the picture glass--

RACHEL

NOAH!

(CONTINUED)

--then KICKS it into a side table, upsetting the decorative-marble-filled vase, scattering MARBLES across the floor. They fly to all corners...but the ones that trickle across the area rug all roll weirdly to the same position...

...like there's a slight slope to the floor, on either side of the rug. A dozen marbles CONVERGE...right where the TV stand used to be.

Noah slows his rage, watching. Rachel sees too.

The collected marbles are framed by the stand's indentations in the rug. Frowning, Noah snatches the rug away--

TO REVEAL A DISCOLORED RING

a circular depression in the floorboards -- as if they've been TUGGED INWARD from below -- suffering from dampness, rot and fungus. Rachel touches her hand to the discolored circle. Her hand comes away wet...and off their looks...

125 EXT. CABIN - DAY 125

Glass SHATTERS as a fire axe (beside a hose) is snatched up.

INT. CABIN #12 126

The AXE SMASHES through the floorboards. Noah wields it wildly. Boards break apart, tumbling into a crouch-high crawl space under the structure--

--and with a couple more AXE STROKES, a hole is broken. Dust filters up and clears...to reveal the cabin's frayed ELECTRICAL WIRES crossing beneath, SPARKING a little--

--and further, beneath those--

ROUND STONE MOUND

with a circular metal cover. An abandoned water well.

Off Rachel and Noah's astounded looks...

127 INT. SUBSTRUCTURE - MOMENTS LATER 127

They struggle together, heaving the metal cover from the well. It pulls up, then turns -- like a child-proofed cap -- and allows Rachel and Noah to SHOVE it free--

(CONTINUED)

AS A THOUSAND BUZZING FLIES

--stream out! They recoil, shielding faces as the INSECT SWARM scatters to the winds. A rank smell follows--

--as they stare into a small, dark abyss. Rough stone walls dropping to blackness.

NOAH

What if what she wants...is for
someone to find her.

Rachel lifts a battery-lantern. It casts light for about twenty feet -- only blackness beyond.

RACHEL

Drop something.

Noah finds a pebble, lets it fall. A distant SPLASH.

NOAH

She's dead. Right? She has to
be...you couldn't survive down
there...not this long...

RACHEL

How long until sunset?

NOAH

(suddenly unsure)
She's dead, right...?

RACHEL

Everything we've done has led us
here. All she's showed us -- it's
for a reason--

NOAH

I don't know, Rachel--

RACHEL

If all she wants is us dead, I'm not
waiting till sunset. She's a big
girl now. She can kill me herself.

Rachel climbs atop the well, like she's prepared to drop herself in. Noah grabs her arm.

NOAH

Not today.

INT./EXT. WELL - LATER

128

Noah's lowered into the well, clutching the firehose. He SHINES the lantern, dropping into the black.

129 In the sub-structure, Rachel strains to pay out hose. 129
It slides around two support beams for leverage.

128 128

NOAH (O.S.)

More. More.

He drops lower, scraping down the stone--

--and his lantern LIGHTS UP black strands of hair stuck to the wall. Dark stains in the stone. And a GLINT of something enamel, like two pieces of shell--

NOAH (cont'd)

Steady me!

His descent stops. He pulls one "shell" out of its chink in the stone. It's an intact human fingernail.

Noah swallows, looks below him.

NOAH (cont'd)

I can see the water.

129 Up above, Rachel strains, paying out more hose. She's 129
dirt-streaked and sweating--

NOAH (O.S.)

All right! Tie me off, I can't touch bottom! I can't see anything but it's freezing, Jesus--

Rachel struggles to wrap the hose around the nearest beam and hold the slack-level by forming a knot.

RACHEL

Noah, what do you see? Noah?!

128 In the well, Noah treads water until he feels the hose 128
pull firm. He turns in a circle, shining light--

--to see the stone is ETCHED with scratches. And long-dried BLOODSTAINS. Noah shivers, regards the dark water--

NOAH

Send it!

(CONTINUED)

--as a BUCKET rigged to a rope SPLASHES DOWN beside him.

130/ 131

INT./EXT. WELL - BEGIN MONTAGE

130/ 131

Rachel HAULS UP the bailing-rope, spilling the bucket onto the earth of the sub-structure. Daylight shines through latticework at the crawl space's far end.

In the well, Noah FILLS the bucket again, struggling not to swallow the rank water himself.

Rachel SPILLS out more, the earth around her now mud.

The daylight dims as the sun drops lower.

Bucket-load after bucket-load gets spilt. Rachel's moving sluggishly now, hands and knees wet with sludge.

Noah's ten feet below the former waterline. The stone still etched with scratches and stains.

The sun dips behind the Japanese maple tree and its magenta leaves start to BRIGHTEN and GLOW.

Noah sends another bucket higher, his lantern DIMMING...

Rachel's exhausted, struggling to tip the same bucket over the side. She's lost the strength to lift...and it SLIPS from her hands as she passes out, slumping aside--

--sending the full bucket SMASHING down beside Noah's head. The SPLASH douses him.

NOAH

DAMMIT, RACHEL!

(silence)

Rachel!?

Suddenly scared, he grabs the firehose and starts climbing.

132

INT. SUBSTRUCTURE - END MONTAGE

132

Rachel lies in the mud, totally spent.

Noah struggles over the side and cradles her--

NOAH

Stay with me, here...we can't stop--

RACHEL

Heavy...why is water so heavy...

(CONTINUED)

NOAH

I know. We can't stop, though. We can't stop searching--

RACHEL

Will you take care of him, Noah...

He stops still. There's fear in her eyes. He looks to the lattice and the reddening glow outside.

RACHEL (cont'd)

Without me...

Noah holds her in his arms, resolute:

NOAH

I know the water's heavy. But I know you have more strength. Because I know you. Now, I can lift them if you're strong enough to fill them. Are you strong enough to fill them?

(no response)

I'll take care of him. You know I will.

Rachel nods, an inner relief. She summons strength and struggles on hands and knees to the well's edge.

RACHEL

Take me down...

INT./EXT. WELL - MOMENTS LATER

An exhausted Rachel DESCENDS by firehose. The lantern still bobs on the water. She dangles down...down...down...

...and stops with torso beneath the murky surface. Where she now spies the etchings on the wall. The three RINGS.

RACHEL

(sotto, reverent)

I'm here, Samara...I'm listening...

NOAH

Rachel!

She takes the trash can, dunks it. It's swiftly hauled up. Rachel turns in a circle, as if studying her future tomb.

INT. SUBSTRUCTURE

134

Noah stumbles, SPLASHING the water across the lattice. He stops still, bathed in REDDISH LIGHT.

The sun is near the horizon, lighting up the Japanese maple like a blood-red fire.

He spins back, hurling the pail back to her--

NOAH

Search the water! Search the water!

--and as she dunks it again, hauling it desperately up.

135

INT. WELL

135

Rachel shivers, hands beneath the surface. Feeling around the submerged walls of the well.

RACHEL

Search the water...

136

INT. SUBSTRUCTURE

136

Noah DUMPS another pail, sloshing the ground. His footing gives way and he hits his back, sliding forward--

--to SLAM into the latticework. He has a clear view of the sun's RED ORB as it touches the horizon. And dips below.

The entire sky seems to dim an ominous red-gray...

NOAH

SEARCH THE WATER NOW!

137

INT. WELL

137

Rachel reaches blindly in the watery blackness. And then shivers. She raises her hands...to reveal they clutch a sodden mass of BLACK MATTED HAIR.

As a STONE SCRAPING NOISE snaps her attention skyward--

--to see the METAL COVER is sliding back over the well. Under its own power. The circle of dim light is becoming a crescent...as if the cover's silhouette is an eclipse...

138

INT. CABIN #12

138

The smashed TV hisses with faint STATIC. The picture tube circuits SPARK, as if trying to turn back on...

Noah watches the sun disappear, spinning as he hears the STONE SCRAPING--

--to see the cover SCRAPING back over the well on its own!

NOAH

RACHEL!

He scrambles back for it -- but whatever's forcing it is stronger. Noah struggles in vain as it SLIDES SHUT with a resounding ECHO--

140

INT. WELL

140

NOAH (O.S.)

RACHEL!!!

She's locked inside, all alone. Her lantern FLICKERS, losing power. Flickers again. Darkness coming.

As from somewhere below her, the WHISPER-KEENING begins...

Rachel shuts her eyes, the water up to her shoulders--

RACHEL

(an infinite sadness)

Please don't take my son--

AS A HAND FROM A WHITE DRESS

SPLASHES UP from beneath and CLUTCHES her left wrist! With bloody gaps where nails should be--

Rachel's eyes fly open, struggling with the grip--

--feeling STRONG WHITE LIGHT from above--

--and she looks up to see the cover gone, the well opening bathed in silhouette by WHITE LIGHT--

A140

AS ANGLE RACES UP THE WELL

A140

--toward the light, into the light and--

141

EXT. WELL - TWENTY-FOUR YEARS AGO - DAY

141

--BURSTING OUT on a forested landscape. Cabin #12 is gone and so are all the others as angle SPINS--

(CONTINUED)

--to the Japanese maple tree, full of bold, red color. Beyond is the lake, and a ranch's STABLES with horses roaming the waterfront's meadow.

A barefoot girl in a white dress and long black tangled hair sits beneath the tree. Her hair covers her face. It's Samara, as she looked in the hospital tape.

As ANGLE approaches from behind...

ANNA MORGAN (O.S.)
Such a pretty day, Samara...

The girl doesn't turn around...

ANNA MORGAN (O.S.) (cont'd)
Such a pretty place...and such a
pretty, pretty day--

AS SUDDENLY A SHEET OF BLACK PLASTIC

ENVELOPS her. She struggles, impressions of her arms and face stretching the material--

--as MOTION SPEEDS UP to match the "Shuddering Figure" image from the videotape--

AS POV SHIFTS ERRATICALLY

--jumping between the girl and Anna Morgan, back and forth--

--as panicked Anna STUMBLE-DRAGS her to the well, scanning for witnesses, tugging the plastic to stifle her CRIES. She snatches a rock and BASHES Samara's skull, over and over--

ANNA MORGAN (cont'd)
I'm sorry, I'm so sorry, Mommy's
sorry, Mommy's sorry--

--and then dumps her body over the side, hanging onto an edge of the plastic so it unfurls--

--sending the girl in the white dress PLUMMETING--

ANNA MORGAN (O.S.) (cont'd)
All I ever wanted was you...

--as ANGLE TUMBLES DOWN the hole, RICOCHETING off the walls, SPLASHING into water, and surfacing to see upward--

(CONTINUED)

--where Anna's weeping silhouette stares down, framed by a circle of intensely white light--

--which wanes into a crescent as the metal cover SCRAPES closed, like a moon passing before the sun.

It's the "eclipse" from the videotape.

As the cover fully blocks the light, a small gap remains. A halo effect...a glowing "ring" of light--

--and there's a child's ECHOING SCREAM--

--as something else covers the well and the "ring" light goes out forever.

INT. WELL - RETURN TO PRESENT DAY

The ECHO still sounds as Rachel stares up into darkness.

Her lantern flickers dimly, breaking the reverie. She looks down to her wrist--

--and there's no hand grasping it. She's mystified, shivering, as the water starts to RIPPLE before her, now wider, now sonorous, disturbed from deep below--

AS A MASS OF BLACK HAIR

floats to the surface beside her...and breaks it...

AS SAMARA RISES

from the depths. Her dripping black hair totally covering her face, in the soaked white dress from so long ago.

Rachel stares reverently, putting her hands to the girl's head like death itself awaits...and as she slowly parts the hair aside, it SLIDES completely off of--

A CORPSE'S SKULL

The skeletal head of a long-dead little girl.

Rachel regards the corpse with sadness. She's alone with it, in darkness and silence.

And she brings it to her in an embrace. She rests Samara's head on her shoulders, and shuts her own eyes.

RACHEL

I'm so sorry...

(CONTINUED)

A moment of total stillness.

NOAH

RACHEL! Rachel, talk to me!

Rachel strangely looks up--

144/ 145

INT. WELL/INT. SUBSTRUCTURE

144/ 145

--to see Noah's silhouette. The cover is off the well, to show dim light above. Her lantern has gone out.

NOAH

The sun's set! It's past sunset, do you hear me? IT'S PAST SUNSET!

(silence)

Rachel, ARE YOU THERE?!

Rachel regards the corpse in her arms, like she's waking from a nightmare. She reaches for the lantern--

RACHEL

(reverently)

We're here...

--and flicks it ALIGHT. Noah reacts with impossible relief--

--and then sees the skeleton that she cradles in her arms. For a long, still moment... Rachel and Noah's eyes meet.

DISSOLVE TO:

146

EXT. SHELTER MOUNTAIN INN - NIGHT

146

Rachel and Noah sit at the lake, wrapped in blankets. POLICE in b.g. A DETECTIVE leaves them, closing his notebook.

They stare out at the water.

RACHEL

Her own mother. She was that afraid...of her own child.

NOAH

She couldn't live with what she'd done. And the old man kept it all a secret...

RACHEL

She was just a child...

(CONTINUED)

Noah takes her hand. They watch as medical examiners load a BAG OF REMAINS in a coroner's vehicle. Reflecting:

NOAH

Imagine being down there. In the darkness, in the water. All alone. Imagine what that would be like...
(shakes his head)
How long could you survive?

RACHEL

Seven days.

He looks at her, surprised. Her eyes are resolute. As if somewhere deep in her heart, she knows...

RACHEL (cont'd)

You could survive for seven days.

CUT TO:

147 INT. RUTH'S HOUSE - DEN - NIGHT 147

Dark, late. Aidan lies sleeping as an opening door spills a shaft of light. Then ARMS lift him off the sofa bed -- in his pajamas. The boy doesn't wake.

Rachel looks on...as Noah carries their son from the room.

148 INT. MUSTANG - NIGHT 148

ANGLE close on Aidan's face, sleeping in the back seat. Passing lights throw shadows on his sleeping face. He stirs momentarily, opens his eyes...

...and sees two HANDS HOLDING, in the space between the front seats. Resting in the silence.

Aidan smiles dreamily. His eyes fall shut again. He sleeps.

149 INT. AIDAN'S BEDROOM 149

Where he's tucked into bed by Rachel -- with a kiss on his forehead -- his drawings on the walls around him.

150 EXT. RACHEL'S HOUSE 150

She emerges to rejoin Noah, who sits on the hood of his car. Both of them look wrecked. A silent moment.

(CONTINUED)

NOAH

Call me sometime, would you?
Whenever. Just for no reason, even,
I want you to call.

(beat)

Unless you're renting a movie.

Rachel smiles tiredly.

NOAH (cont'd)

Call me tomorrow, okay?

Rachel nods.

NOAH (cont'd)

And the day after that--

RACHEL

I miss you.

Noah steps closer and kisses her forehead. Holds there.

NOAH

I miss you too.

INT. AIDAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

151

Rachel climbs into bed beside sleeping Aidan, tucking her legs and wrapping arms around him. Holding him tightly and shutting her eyes...never to let go.

Beside them, taped to the wall, is Aidan's school drawing of Katie. Lying in a white dress, eyes shut, on a raised bed of flowers. Some birds in the air, bringing more flora to her final resting place.

The girl in the drawing wears a smile. At peace.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

152

INT. AIDAN'S BEDROOM - MORNING

152

Sunlight streams in a window. Rachel and Aidan still lie asleep. Some traffic NOISE outside opens Aidan's eyes. He rubs them...then sees his mother in bed beside him.

Aidan looks puzzled, as Rachel shifts, turns over and wakes.

AIDAN

Hi Mom.

(CONTINUED)

RACHEL

Hi, A-Bear.

AIDAN

Don't you have to go to work?

Rachel props herself seated, so that she holds her son embraced from behind, like it's story time:

RACHEL

I want you to promise me something. If there's ever anything you're feeling, that you think I won't want to hear, or won't understand...I want you to tell me. Because I'll always want to listen. Always.

Aidan looks at her, then considers:

AIDAN

Is she dead, Mom?

Rachel nods.

AIDAN (cont'd)

Did she know she was gonna die? Like Katie?

RACHEL

For a long time, she was all alone. And it made her sad. And it made her angry. But it's all right now. She's not alone anymore. We know about her now...and now other people know--

AIDAN

(suddenly tense)
She's not alone?

RACHEL

No...Aidan, what's wrong--

AIDAN

Why's she not alone--

RACHEL

Because we helped her--

AIDAN

Help her, why'd we help her?--

(CONTINUED)

RACHEL -

Aidan, what, it's all right--

He's worried now, eyes wide. She pulls him close--

RACHEL (cont'd)

I'm with you, I'm here -- you're safe! She's all right now, she's sleeping -- like Katie, in your drawing -- see! She's sleeping!

--then holds him out in front of her, so he can see it--

AIDAN

But Mom...

--as a TRICKLE OF BLOOD slips from Aidan's nose. Rachel is horror-struck. And in the silence...

AIDAN (cont'd)

Samara doesn't sleep.

CUT TO:

53

INT. NOAH'S LOFT - DAY

153

A Polaroid camera sits on a desk. Noah pads over, dressed but barefoot. Sits with a cup of coffee to a stack of mail and hits his answering machine.

BETH'S VOICE

(on answering machine)

Hey, it's me. Listen, I was talking to Burkett down at Vinyl Factory, he told me Thievery Corporation's playing a secret gig tomorrow at the Bank. He says he knows where we can score tickets if your night's still free. I'll be in around 8:30 tomorrow and--

Noah stops the message. Shakes his head, looks at the clock: 8:10 am. An unpleasant thought appears to run through his mind...as he looks at the Polaroid camera.

Then forgets it, picking up his coffee cup instead...not noticing it's left a WET RING on the papers beneath...

AS THERE'S A POP OF STATIC

from the unseen side of the room. A steady HISS.

Noah frowns. Rises and steps around some shelves to see--

(CONTINUED)

HIS TELEVISION IS ON

tuned to WHITE NOISE. Noah walks over, turns it off at the set. It fizzles black again.

Noah walks back toward his desk, wary now--

AND IT POPS ON AGAIN

The static HISS louder now. Noah spins, alarmed. And suddenly his phone RINGS. He spins back--

--and then settles. Sets his jaw, suspicious.

154 INT. RACHEL'S HOUSE - SAME 154

Rachel's on her cell, pressing a tissue to Aidan's nose--

RACHEL

Pick up the phone, Noah, pick up the phone...

155 INT. NOAH'S LOFT 155

Noah ignores the RINGING phone for the moment, storming back to his TV. Shutting it off for the second time.

He then marches for his desk to grab the phone--

AND THE TV POPS ON AGAIN

--but this time not to static.

V 40 This time, it's the "eclipse" image from the videotape. V 40
The tape's final image follows: the stone mound. It's
the well. With the familiar sound of WHISPER-KEENING...

155 Noah stops in his tracks. Turns. 155

156 EXT. RACHEL'S HOUSE 156

Rachel scampers down her steps, wriggling into a coat, her phone still at her ear:

RACHEL

Where are you, Noah...

157 INT. NOAH'S LOFT 157

Noah is stock-still, forty feet from the television. His phone's still RINGING.

On TV, the well's metal cover starts to SLIDE OFF. The image is not "ending" this time. It's continuing... V 39

157 Noah's eyes widen. 157

158 EXT. BOSTON STREET 158

Rachel's running now, reaching the end of her block--

--where she can see to the brick industrial buildings near the harbor, with Noah's among them.

RACHEL
PICK UP THE GODDAMN PHONE!

159 INT. NOAH'S LOFT 159

V 159 On TV, two PALE HANDS grasp the top of the well...pulling into view a bony FIGURE in a white dress, her long black tangled hair obscuring her face. V 159

It's Samara.

She crawls awkwardly out of the well, down the stone and onto the ground. She STUTTER-CRAWLS, like a spider moving forward-in-reverse. A human form, but inhuman movements...

Noah's rooted to the spot. 159

V 159 Samara's crawling forward. Steadily toward "camera" -- toward the source of the locked-off image. V 159

The WHISPER-KEENING's getting louder.

Samara closes in, filling the frame on TV. Her nail-less claws feel around frame as if exploring the "camera"--

159 AS WATER STARTS TRICKLING 159

from SEAMS in the television. Steady drips come from cracks between panels, between image-glass and plastic housing--

AND WATER RISES UNDERFOOT

BURBLING up from between the floorboards of Noah's loft. TRICKLING up to SURROUND his bare feet...

AS SAMARA CRAWLS OUT OF THE TELEVISION

Literally pulling herself from the picture-glass, grappling INTO REALITY, spider-crawling onto Noah's floor.

(CONTINUED)

Noah takes a catatonic step back. His phone still ringing.

Samara CRAWLS toward him, stuttering in inhuman movements, her soaked dress and hair dragging--

--as Noah retreats now, pushing a chair in her path, then a whole shelf of equipment. Samara CRAWLS over it, staggering toward a balance on two-feet--

--as he's backed to the desk with the ringing phone. Shaking with absolute horror as Samara RISES to her full height, dress and hair DRIPPING, the KEENING no longer a whisper, but a SHRILL SCREAM--

NOAH

No...no--

AS THE FILM ITSELF WOBLES

--a STUTTER-SHIMMY like our very projector has lost hold--

--as with SUDDEN, IMPOSSIBLE JUMP-CUTS -- she covers the distance to him in a savage instant and BLACKS OUT FRAME.

160

INT. WAREHOUSE ELEVATOR - SAME

160

Rachel's in the freight elevator, listening to her ringing and ringing cell -- and as she reaches Noah's floor--

--the ringing stops.

Rachel stills. Then throws open the elevator gates.

The door to Noah's loft waits at the end of the hall.

There's WATER running under it. A spreading watery pool. Water drips from the keyhole, trickles from top-frame.

The WHISPER-KEENING, low again, is behind the door.

Rachel stands still, breathless.

And starts for the door.

She picks up speed, dropping the phone, running now, racing now...and reaching it, splashing water, throwing open the door to see--

161

INT. NOAH'S LOFT

161

Stillness. A film of water underfoot as if pipes have burst. Furniture upturned.

(CONTINUED)

And a television tuned to STATIC.

There's an oversized chair facing it. There's a figure seated. A man's figure. Bare, wet feet.

Rachel trembles toward the chair. She reaches it and turns it to face her. We don't see what she sees.

We only see her despair...as the tears start to come...

CUT TO:

162

INT. WAREHOUSE ENTRY - DAY

162

The freight elevator CLICK-CLANGS the dark shaft. Rachel rides in shadow, weeping freely, falling apart...

RACHEL

What did I do...what did I do...

She reaches ground. Slides open the entry gate -- as a FIGURE's unlocking the outside door. On instinct, Rachel slips into a recessed part of the hall--

--and stays hidden as Beth sashays in, headphones on. Strides to the elevator, shuts the gate, and heads up.

In the shadows, Rachel guiltily waits till the click-clangs recede. Then runs for daylight.

163

EXT. BOSTON STREET - DAY

163

Rachel's a sprinting wreck...

164

INT. RACHEL'S HOUSE - DAY

164

Aidan's drawing at a table as she blows back inside--

AIDAN

Mom, what's the--

RACHEL

STAY IN YOUR ROOM AND LOCK THE DOOR!

Her tone terrifies him -- he retreats.

Rachel searches the room wildly -- gaze settling on the hearth. She grabs her purse, pulls the "ring" tape from it -- and falls to her knees.

She clutches it before her, with a hissing whisper...

(CONTINUED)

RACHEL (cont'd)
 We heard you! We listened!
 (broken)
 Wasn't that enough...

The tape rests silent in her hands...

RACHEL (cont'd)
 What do you WANT!

...and now the fury comes. BASH! Rachel BATTERS it against the stone. Again. The casing CRACKS.

Rachel cries out, BLUDGEONING it until the plastic splits into shards. She RIPS OUT the tape ribbon, unspooling in handfuls, yanking free every last inch--

--and stuffing it into the hearth: a pile of looping black plastic. She turns a dial and gas jets IGNITE. Her faux fireplace blazes and the video-spaghetti catches FIRE.

The light flickers on a mantle photo of smiling Aidan.

RACHEL (cont'd)
 Why not me...

Her shaking slows, all the fight now out of her.

RACHEL (cont'd)
 What did I do that he didn't...

She turns away from the fire, slumps seated. Notes the broken casing before her. The etched "ring."

Slowly, so slowly, her head turns. To the credenza in the corner. Where another tape gathers dust beneath. The tape she threw there...labeled "COPY."

It's the tape she made. The copy she brought into the world.

She stares.

For a long, chill moment.

And finally the fight returns to her eyes.

CUT TO BLACK.

AS A BLINDING SHAFT OF LIGHT

Opens a horizontal DOOR in the blackness.

(CONTINUED)

A black MONOLITH slides inside, blocking out the light.

With mechanical WHIRS, its surface flips open. PRONGS swings toward and rise -- pulling a shiny RIBBON free. The ribbon unspools and the monolith locks home. It slinks around rollers and guides, wedges snug against capstans and magnetic heads. A steady, pulsing hum fills the world.

INT. NEWSROOM MEDIA BAY - DAY

CLOSE ON a woman's hand guiding a little boy's to feed a BLANK TAPE into a VCR.

CLOSE ON the woman's hand helping the boy's hand to press a red button emblazoned with square-and-arrow.

As a RED SUN labeled "Record" blazes to life.

EXT. SOUTH BOSTON STREET - NIGHT

A VIDEOTAPE in a black sleeve is carried in a boy's hand. It's Aidan, his back to us. He turns and enters a store.

INT. VIDEO VAULT - DAY

The Video Hipster (whom Rachel talked to earlier) hears the door's bell TINKLE, but he's shelving way in back:

VIDEO HIPSTER

Hey, we're closing up!

AT THE FRONT COUNTER

Aidan says nothing, at a counter slot for "Tape Return." There's no one near. He stares at his tape: a black sleeve and a white label -- with a child's sketch of a ring...

...and then sets it standing upright on the counter.

IN THE BACK

VIDEO HIPSTER (cont'd)

I said, we're closing up!

The door's bell TINKLES again. The Hipster frowns.

EXT. BOSTON STREET - NIGHT

Rachel's in her car, staring straight ahead, as Aidan climbs in the passenger side. His eyes are worried. He nods.

(CONTINUED)

Rachel pulls him tight and kisses his hair. Tries a smile. With a heavy, guilty stare...she faces forward...

RACHEL

You and me.

...and drives away.

INT. VIDEO VAULT - SAME

The "ring" tape sits atop the counter, in foreground. The Hipster walks past to lock the front door. As he does, ANGLE moves around the tape...to see a Post-It stuck to one side.

The note reads "AFTER YOU WATCH THIS, PLEASE MAKE A COPY AND SHOW IT TO SOMEONE ELSE. IT'S IMPORTANT. PLEASE."

The Hipster returns, leaning over the counter for a backpack...and now sees the tape. He picks it up, reads it.

VIDEO HIPSTER

Huh.

A silent beat. And then

--with a scoff, he crumples up the Post-It. Leaves it there as trash...as he throws the tape in his pack.

ANGLE holds on the paper-crumple as the Hipster swings on the pack and moves o.s. The store's LIGHTS turn off one by one. A back door is heard opening. And then SLAMS shut.

The paper-crumple is left in darkness.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. VIDEO VAULT - NEXT DAY

CLOSE ON THE VIDEO

The new "ring" tape sits on a shelf. The little sketch-lines on its label fleck outward, suggesting radiance...

TEEN'S VOICE (V.O.)

So have you heard about the video
that kills you when you watch it...?

AS ANGLE WIDENS

to REVEAL the tapes beside it, and soon the whole shelf, labeled "Employee Picks"...

(CONTINUED)

ANOTHER TEEN (V.O.)

I heard about it back in Boston. I heard as soon as it ends, your phone rings, and then one week later...

FIRST TEEN (V.O.)

...it starts with this eclipse and then this woman stares right at you... sees you right through the screen...

...and now the whole section...

THIRD TEEN (V.O.)

...and then this tree's on fire, right, and there's blood everywhere...

SECOND TEEN (V.O.)

...and dying, they're all dying, all these people are dying...

THIRD TEEN

...I'll bring it, you gotta see it, it's the strangest freakin' thing...

...and now the whole store, full of CUSTOMERS perusing the thousands of videos...all waiting to be watched...

FIRST TEEN (V.O.)

...and then right then your phone rings, and seven days later...

FOURTH TEEN (V.O.)

...because she knows who you are...

FIFTH TEEN (V.O.)

...and she knows where to find you...

FIRST TEEN (V.O.)

...and she wants you to watch it...

SECOND TEEN (V.O.)

...and she wants you to watch it...

THIRD TEEN (V.O.)

...and she wants you to watch it...

As the VOICE-OVERS overlap into a CACOPHONY of "she wants you to watch it", infinite versions, over and over and over, until it seems the whole world is sharing her story--

(CONTINUED)

--as with a WOBBLE of STATIC we--

CUT TO BLACK.

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