

MERCILESS

BLACK SCREEN

A MAN'S VOICE emerges from the darkness. Soothing. Cultured.

MAN'S VOICE (DR. MASON)
Relax, Jennifer. Tell me what you
see.

FADE IN:

WATER.

Steam rises from the placid surface.

The location and water body classification are unknown.

JENNIFER (V.O.)
Water.

DR. MASON
Where are you, Jennifer?

JENNIFER (V.O.)
I'm not sure.

THEN, an object appears just beneath the water's surface.
Ascends fast.

JENNIFER (V.O.)
Wait... there's something else.

A PERSON'S FOOT brakes the water's surface. Toe nails are
manicured. French-tipped. Undeniably female.

Her BIG TOE gently caresses the spout of a chrome faucet.

White porcelain encloses the water making the location
obvious.

DR. MASON (V.O.)
What is it, Jennifer?

JENNIFER (V.O.)
A person.

DR. MASON (V.O.)
Do you recognize the person?

A SHAPELY SILHOUETTE appears just beneath the water's
surface.

Legs. Breast. And then to the face of JENNIFER ROMAN, mid to
late twenties. Breathtakingly beautiful.

Head rested on folded towel. Eyes closed.

Jennifer gives into the relaxing atmosphere.

JENNIFER (V.O.)

Yes.

DR. MASON (V.O.)

Who is it, Jennifer?

JENNIFER (V.O.)

It's me.

THEN...

The water ascends steadily -- creeping along the white porcelain border until it is consumed --

-- the water moves along Jennifer's neck, then her chin until her entire face is completely submerged.

DR. MASON (V.O.)

What's happening?

(off her silence)

Jennifer? Jennifer are you still with me?

JENNIFER'S POV, BENEATH THE WATER

Darkness.

THEN...

Looking up from beneath a layer of water.

BACK TO SCENE

Jennifer's eyes widen in realization.

She instinctively moves her head for the surface. It bounces off as if hitting against a solid surface.

Jennifer tries to break the surface with her hand. Doesn't break. Doesn't Penetrate. Like a wall.

JENNIFER (V.O.)

I'm trying to get out. I can't. I can't break free!

Jennifer PANICS.

Her mouth opens miming a scream.

A profusion of air bubbles escape her mouth, but there is no sound.

JENNIFER (V.O.)
It's like the water's imprisoning
me.

Jennifer's hands glide along the solid surface feeling for a possible escape -- there isn't one.

She beats her fist against the solidified surface, silently SCREAMING.

THEN...

Jennifer stops instantaneously. Her eyes fix on something beyond the solidified surface.

DR. MASON (V.O.)
What is it? What's happening?

JENNIFER (V.O.)
I stop struggling. I see something.

DR. MASON (V.O.)
What do you see?
(off her silence)
Jennifer?
(getting worried)
Jennifer?

A look of utter fear flushes Jennifer's face.

As tension builds on what has caused Jennifer to react in such a way --

Everything goes BLACK.

DR. MASON (V.O.)
When I snap my fingers, you'll be
safe and sound back in my office.

Fingers SNAP!

FADE IN:

INT. DR. MASON'S OFFICE - DAY

A PAIR OF CLOSED EYE LIDS open to reveal a pair of mesmerizing eyes.

They belong to Jennifer Roman lying in a patient long chair. Pantsuit. Heels.

JENNIFER'S POV -

An office desk. Organized. Beyond it is a brown leather chair. Framed pictures are positioned along the length of the desk. They face the chair away from view.

Potted plants hang from the windows.

Various degrees hang neatly along the earth-colored walls.

JENNIFER

Doc?

DR. MASON

I'm right here, Jennifer.

Sitting in a leather chair -- hands folded, legs crossed -- is DR. MASON, early to mid thirties, clinical.

Jennifer sees him. Smiles relieved. A welcomed sight.

DR. MASON

What did you see?

JENNIFER

I couldn't make out what it was. Maybe if you put me back under.

DR. MASON

I think that was enough for one session.

JENNIFER

(sitting up)

What do you think it means?

DR. MASON

It could be the pressures of your job are overwhelming you.

JENNIFER

I honestly don't think my job has anything to do with what was happening.

DR. MASON

(insisting)

Maybe it's time for you to step down.

JENNIFER

Is that your professional option, Doc? I thought your psychological assessment was supposed to be unbiased?

DR. MASON

The board's nervous about you working with children. And quite frankly, so am I.

JENNIFER

Nervous? I've been working there for the past three years. And in that time I've had zero complaints and zero incidents involving children. I'm the first one there and the last one to leave.

DR. MASON

No one's questioning your dedication. It's your psychological stability that we're looking at. And it's highly unstable right now. You had dreams about a person's head being crushed. Another was about bloodied footprints and sledgehammers. I have seventeen more pages similar to that, and each one is as detailed and graphic as the last. I also been reading Dr. Michaels' notes while you were at Landsdowning. Quite frankly, I'm not even sure how you were hired.

JENNIFER

I can't believe this. Why don't you call Rodney Stoll? He'll back me up.

DR. MASON

I wouldn't put too much stock in Rodney Stoll.

JENNIFER

What does that mean?

DR. MASON

Who do you think is on the hot seat because of all this? They believe he's compromised by his loyalty to you.

(MORE)

DR. MASON (cont'd)
And it is that loyalty which led to his lackadaisical background and psychological assessment of you, and brought the board smack-dab in the middle of this fiasco. They trusted Rodney's judgment and has come to believe that they were wrong in doing so. That's why they've elected me to conduct this psychological evaluation of you. And based off my assessment they will decide whether or not to keep you. And until I believe your psychologically competent, my recommendation for your removal will stand.

JENNIFER
You're doing this out of spite?

DR. MASON
I'm doing this because you're a liability to those children; even if you fail to recognize it. I'm going to hand your psych evaluation over to board, and they'll make their decision.

JENNIFER
(holding back tears)
Can I leave now?

DR. MASON
You should here from them in about two weeks.

Jennifer pushes up from the long chair. Grabs her jacket on her way out the door.

EXT. RURAL ROAD - LATER

Miles of road sandwiched by arches of uninterrupted farmland. The absence of civilization adds to the sense of isolation. A silver Durango -- the lone vehicle on this isolated road.

INT. JENNIFER'S DURANGO (DRIVING)

Jennifer is behind the wheel. Sunglasses. No music, just silence.

EXT. ABANDONED COUNTRY HOUSE - LATER

A condemned two story structure neighbored by a weather-corroded shed.

A dilapidated fence partially secures an unattractive yard.

A "NO TRESPASSING" sign is partially hidden beneath wildly sprouting weeds.

Faded numbers painted on the side of a mailbox. Barely visible. 1708?

Jennifer's Durango pulls to a stop near the dilapidated fence.

She steps out. Removes her sunglasses. Focuses on the house.

Smiles nostalgically.

SUDDENLY, the exterior of the house begins to reconstruct as if time itself was rewinding -- forming into almost a completely different house.

The dirt-patched lawn takes a freshly-cut, manicured look.

The clear sky is replaced by overcast clouds. Snow drifts.

A layer of accumulation appears over the surrounding structures.

YOUNG JENNIFER puts the finishing touches on a well-structured three-tier snowman.

JOHN (FATHER) and ANTHONY (BROTHER, 8) joins in.

Young Jennifer glances over at Anthony. Gives him a look.

Anthony peers around the snowman to check on John. He is still concentrating on his side of the snowman.

Anthony gives Young Jennifer the signal.

Young Jennifer kneels down. Gathers snow into a ball.

John finishes up his portion of the snow man.

Stands. Inspects his handy-work. Not too shabby.

THEN... WHAM! Right in the face.

Wasn't expecting that. John wipes snow from his face. Looks in the direction of his two children. Game on.

Recognizing the look, Young Jennifer and Anthony takes off.

John gives chase.

As they commence in their personal snowball fight war--

-- everything slowly dissipates.

BACK TO PRESENT

Tears race along Jennifer's cheeks.

She looks in the direction of the house, more importantly the upper floor window.

INT. ABANDONED COUNTRY HOUSE, BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

SUBJECTIVE POV -

looking down at Jennifer.

EXT. ABANDONED COUNTRY HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The curtain drifts back into place.

Jennifer continues looking up at the window. Enters her vehicle.

Drives off.

HOLD ON the HOUSE.

As time transitions from DAY to NIGHT.

Rain falls from the dark sky in long, drenching sheets.

Smoke ascends from beneath the hood of a Volkswagen Rabbit. It slows to a stop on the side of the road.

RACHEL (O.S.)
(sighs exasperated)
Great.

INT. VOLKSWAGEN RABBIT - CONTINUOUS

RACHEL TATE (early twenties) sighs frustrated. Tries to turn over the ignition.

The engine GURGLES, then dies.

RACHEL

Fuck!

An elaborate RING TONE emanates from the cell phone positioned on the passenger's seat.

Rachel reaches for it. Reads the incoming call info. Answers.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Girl. You won't believe what just happened --

LISA (V.O.)

(from the phone)

Where have you been? I've been blowing your sink ass up all day.

RACHEL

That's what I'm trying to explain to you if you'll listen. I was on my way there. I was cutting through Millhaven, then all of a sudden, my Rabbit died.

LISA (V.O.)

(from the phone)

Mr. Maynard's expecting this report in the morning. No extensions. No excuses.

RACHEL

I'm not making any excuses, alright? I wanna pass his class more than anyone.

INT. RACHEL'S DORM ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Somewhere beneath this disheveled mess of scattered typed papers and opened text books is a computer desk.

The title of one book is clearly visible: "Dissecting Human Psychology."

Manicured and polished FINGERS professionally stroke COMPUTER KEYS in rapid succession.

LISA (O.S.)
Do you?

RACHEL (V.O.)
(from the phone)
What's that suppose to mean?

The FINGERS stop abruptly.

LISA (same age) takes her hand from the keyboard and tucks the hair, dangling over her face, behind her ear.

She has a cell phone cradled on her shoulder as she talks.

LISA
It means that you just don't seem
all that committed.

INT. RACHEL'S VOLKSWAGEN - CONTINUOUS

RACHEL
(into the phone)
Look, I have time for your shit.
I'll just deal with this myself.

Rachel ends the call. Tosses the phone. Irritated.

She searches the area through the windows of her car. Focuses on something beyond the window.

RACHEL'S POV -

Through the torrential downpour, a house is barely visible.

BACK TO SCENE

Rachel smiles finding salvation.

Opens the door. Leaves.

EXT. ABANDONED COUNTRY HOUSE - LATER

Rachel races up the driveway to the house.

Makes it to the porch. Shakes off the rain.

RACHEL
Somebody be home. Somebody be home.
Somebody be home.

Moment of true. KNOCKS.

Waits. But there's no answer.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Shit.

Rachel steps down from the porch.

Looks up at the upper floor windows. No lights. No signs that anyone has lived here in a while.

The curtain SWAYS.

Jennifer brushes it off. Makes another play for the door.

But, the front door CREAKS open.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
(apprehensively)
Hello?

No answer.

She doesn't want to go. But what choice does she have?

Rachel inches onto the porch.

INT. ABANDONED COUNTRY HOUSE, FOYER - CONTINUOUS

The door inches open, CREAKING on rusty hinges.

Rachel pokes in her head.

RACHEL
Hello?

She enters fully.

Rachel studies the strange surroundings as she enter into

LIVING ROOM

Years of dust has settled over the fabric covering the long forgotten furnishings.

FLOORBOARDS CREAK from above. The unsettling sound grabs Rachel's attention.

RACHEL
(calling out)
Hello?

Rachel follows the creaking sound to a flight of stairs.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
(from the foot of the
steps)
Hello?

No answer.

Rachel looks up the flight of stairs into the dark uncertainty.

Turns back to the opened door.

It doesn't take long for her to come up with a decision.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
(low, but audible)
Fuck this.

Rachel heads for the door.

But it SWINGS SHUT!

She tries the knob. It doesn't budge.

But that doesn't stop her from trying harder.

A HUMANOID FIGURE forms within the darkness behind her.

Its features are indistinguishable due to the lack of sufficient light.

Something heavy strains the weaken floorboards from behind.

Rachel's body seizes hearing... the CREAKING.

She turns to --

A humanoid figure standing in the distance. From its height and size there's no doubt that it is a child -- a LITTLE GIRL.

The Little Girl stands within a patch of darkness so only the outline of her body is visible.

Even in darkness, it's clear that both of the child's hands are hidden behind her back.

CHILD

(little girl's voice)

Did you come here to play with me?
It's been such a long time since
I've played a decent game.

RACHEL

My car broke down. I just need a
jump or something... not sure
which. Is your mommy or daddy home?

CHILD

They're dead... just like you.

And that's when Rachel sees it -- a SLEDGEHAMMER -- the object she had been concealing behind her back.

The Little Girl effortlessly lifts the hammer -- which is just a big as she is -- and charges her.

Rachel does what anyone would do in this situation -- run!

For the stairs!

UPSTAIRS

Rachel scurries around the bannister and into --

MASTER BEDROOM

Discarded furnishings are covered in dust-covered fabrics. A queen-sized mattress is positioned at the center of the room.

It's stained by mysterious fluids.

Rachel looks for a place to hide. Somewhere. Anywhere.

She turns, greeted by --

-- the HEAD to a SLEDGEHAMMER. Bearing down on her with tremendous speed.

Rachel avoids the hammer, but loses her footing.

Falls back to the window.

EXT. ABANDONED COUNTRY HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Rachel's body EXPLODES from the window.

Drops into a pool of mud.

Glass shards rain down from above.

Rachel shields herself.

Rachel looks up to the broken window. Relief.

Then the pain hits her. She reaches for her ankle. Must've twisted on the sick landing.

Through pain she's still able to smile. Happy to be alive.

Her smile quickly melts into alarm as --

The front door CREAKS open!

Rachel scrambles to her feet. Has to put weight on her ankle.

Loses her footing.

SPLASH! She collapses into a muddy puddle.

Muddy water drips from her face and hair.

She reaches for her ankle. Grimaces from the pain.

THUMP! THUMP! The Blood-curdling sound of weighted metal slapping against the wooden stairs.

Rachel musters enough strength to look back at --

-- The Little Girl continuing her methodical pursuit.

Rachel looks ahead.

Her vehicle is barely visible through the onslaught of rain.

A PAIR OF FEET

Sinks into the muddy ground as it advances.

The Mallet to a sledgehammer is dragged along the mud in its wake.

RACHEL

Teeth gritted. Eyes focused. She digs her fingers deep into the mud fighting for every inch.

She's able to get to her feet. Limp/runs across the yard.

Rachel looks over her shoulder.

The Figure is closing in.

Rachel wills herself to run harder.

Doesn't see the fence.

She trips over. Falls HARD.

INT. RACHEL'S VOLKSWAGEN - CONTINUOUS

On the opposite side of this rolled-up passenger window, the stalking Figure approaches methodically.

A struggling Rachel pulls herself up, eclipsing the Figure.

Blood spills from her mouth. Her face, twisted in a grimace.

A moment goes by and Rachel's bloodied head BURSTS through the window.

It dangles there lifelessly.

There's a rather large hole at the back of her skull.

Bone fragments jut through mangled, bloodied flesh and hair.

INT. ROOM - NIGHT

VINYL spins on an ANTIQUE RECORD PLAYER. CLASSICAL MUSIC.

A BLANK WALL. A PERSON'S HAND levels a NAIL to it.

Then a HAMMER drives the nail home.

An OVATION OF CHEERS AND CLAPPING intensifies over the hammering and classical music until it completely overtakes them both.

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT - DAY (EARLIER)

The majority of the department are within this room. They clap and cheer as DETECTIVE NATHAN PATRICK, in civilian clothes, enters.

He's tall, well into his fifties. He looks like a man who has experienced more than his share over the years, but hasn't lost his sense of humor.

He smiles, humbled by the show of love.

RILEY
Look, he's blushing.

There's some scattered laughter. OFFICER CHRIS RILEY (30's) overdoes it.

RILEY (CONT'D)
We wanted to get you a stripper,
but your sister was too expensive.

Everyone laughs.

CAPTAIN SELENA PEREZ (forties) splits the crowd, quiets everyone down. Pantsuit. Very professional.

CAPTAIN PEREZ
Seriously Pat, thanks for all the
years of service. For the last
twenty years you've been our
friend, our mentor...

RILEY
A big pain in the ass.

There's laughter. Even Captain Perez snickers.

She quiets the crowd, attempts to get serious.

CAPTAIN PEREZ
We're really gonna miss you around
here, Pat. No bullshit.

Two officers emerges from the crowd carrying a sheet cake with lit candles.

Designed in icing is a Naked Woman, with exaggerated features, straddling a Naked Man who closely resembles Patrick.

Written alongside it in blue icing: "Thanks for the ride. Happy Retirement."

They present it to Patrick. He blows out the candles.

Everyone CLAPS. After a moment, CHANTS intensifies from the crowd.

CROWD

Speech. Speech. Speech.

Like a maestro, he quiets the crowd with a raised hand.

PATRICK

Thanks Cap for the warm words. Most of which I know you didn't mean.

He continues once the sparse laughter subsides.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

You do this job day in and day out, and it becomes apart you - if you want it to or not. This job has given me a lot, including all of you, but it also has taken more than I was willing to give.

(beat)

Some would say that I should've walked away years ago... maybe I should have, but I don't regret a single moment. You are my family and I'll miss you all deeply... except you Riley.

The laughter breaks the sentimental mood.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Thank you.

Everyone CLAPS.

INT. ROOM (PRESENT)

The ovation carries over, then calmly subsides restoring the elegant music.

A FRAMED PLAQUE commemorating his years of service is hung perfectly on the wall.

PULLING BACK from the plaque reveals that the entire wall is decorated with various awards of valor and service in the line of duty.

Patrick stands before the wall with his back facing out.

There's a bottle of non-alcohol wine positioned near a half-filled wine glass.

Patrick grabs the glass of wine resting on a nearby table.

Takes a sip.

LIVING ROOM

Patrick enters with the glass of wine.

There's a KNOCK emanating from the door.

Patrick goes to the door. Opens it.

Captain Perez stands on the other side.

PATRICK

Didn't expect to see you.

She eyes the glass in his hand.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

(re-assuring)

Non-alcohol. Would you like come in?

CAPTAIN PEREZ

This isn't a social visit. I need a favor from you.

PATRICK

What's wrong?

CAPTAIN PEREZ

There's been a homicide.

PATRICK

Where?

CAPTAIN PEREZ

John's old home.

PATRICK

(walking back inside)

No. Not again. You saw first hand what that case did to me.

CAPTAIN PEREZ
(following him in)
And your familiarity with this
makes you invaluable.

PATRICK
I can't, Selena. I can't go through
that again.

CAPTAIN PEREZ
Pat, I wouldn't be here if I didn't
need you.

PATRICK
(soften)
I'm retired, remember?

CAPTAIN PEREZ
I was hoping you'd make an
exception... for me?

Patrick considers.

EXT. ABANDONED COUNTRY HOUSE - LATER

Rain pours from the sky.

Law enforcement and emergency vehicles converge around the
house.

K-9 units patrol the area searching for clues.

Huddled under various umbrellas, News Reporters jockey for
position.

They crane their necks over the Police restraining them.

A Buick pulls to a stop alongside other vehicles.

Patrick leaves from his car. Takes in the fiasco.

PATRICK
(looking up at the house)
Dear God, not again.

Patrick approaches the police tape. He is met by Riley who
waits on the other side.

PATRICK (CONT'D)
What's the situation?

RILEY
Vic was found dangling from the
passenger window of her vehicle.

A UNIFORM OFFICER holds the police tape enough for Patrick to
slip under.

PATRICK
Any ID on the vic?

RILEY
Rachel Tate. Twenty-two. Has a
Millhaven U. ID in her wallet.

PATRICK
Rachel Tate.

RILEY
You knew her?

PATRICK
The daughter of a family friend.

Riley leads Patrick to --

RACHEL'S VOLKSWAGEN

Patrick opens the driver's door. Lowers his head.

PATRICK (CONT'D)
(as he stands)
Anyone notify her mother?

RILEY
Not yet.

PATRICK
I'll handle it.

Patrick closes the door.

INT. ST. JUDE'S ORPHANAGE, CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Closed doors from the children's rooms flank the long,
stretch hall. Scythes of pale blue seeps in from blinded
windows create odd shadows.

A door opens in the distance.

Evan leaves the room in children's pajamas and walks down the
corridor.

INT. ST. JUDE'S ORPHANAGE, BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

Darkness.

Though there is subtle light creeping in from mysterious openings, there isn't enough to maintain one's bearings.

There is muffled talking emanating from somewhere in the basement.

Moving closer, Evan's voice is clearly audible.

EVAN

You can't go around hurting people.

(beat)

Where are you going?

Evan stands behind a column staring at his reflection in a standing mirror.

He turns to Rodney who emerges from around the column.

RODNEY

Evan? Who were you talking too?

Evan looks at Rodney caught -- uncertain of what to do or say.

INT. DR. MASON'S OFFICE - LATER

Dr. Mason is at his desk writing into an opened file. He lowers his pen.

Removes his glasses and gently massages the his strained eyes.

He closes the file.

CLOSE ON FILE -

PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION - JENNIFER ROMAN

BACK TO SCENE

As Dr. Mason places the file into an accordion briefcase.

Gathers his things on his way out.

EXT. LANDSDOWING MENTAL INSTITUTION, PARKING AREA

Well lit. A black Mercedes is the only vehicle within this area.

Dr. Mason removes his keys and deactivates his alarm as he approaches the car.

He motions to open the door, pauses sensing something off.

Dr. Mason looks about, carefully. The wind gathers.

Loose debris scatters across the ground. Nearby bushes rustle.

Sensing something in the shadowy area of the parking area, he stiffens.

Dr. Mason quickly works his key into the car's door lock. Opens it and slides in.

He switches on his headlights shining it in the direction of the spot where he was looking.

The headlights illuminates an outdoor trash can. He exhales a sigh of relief. Turns over the ignition.

EXT. LANDSDOWING MENTAL INSTITUTION - NIGHT

The metal gate slides open. Dr. Mason's Mercedes passes through and continues along the winding road.

EXT./INT. ROAD/DR. MASON'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

DR. MASON'S CAR

Dr. Mason removes a CD from the overhead CD holder and slides it into the player.

He is suddenly serenaded with soothing instrumental.

POV THROUGH WINDSHIELD

Headlight beams frame a Little Girl standing in the middle of the road. Ten maybe eleven. Dark-hair. Pastel-colored pajama set. Bare feet.

The light also affords a view of what's she's holding -- a SLEDGEHAMMER raised overhead.

Dr. Mason slams on the brakes, just as the Little Girl --
-- BURIES the MALLET into the hood of the car.

ROAD

The hood craters under the immense force, propelling the vehicle several feet into the air.

It crashes onto the asphalt flipping end over end, until it comes to a stop, resting on its roof.

DR. MASON'S MERCEDES

The bloody mess known as Dr. Mason claws himself halfway through the broken window.

Collapses from the effort.

And that's when he hears it -- GLASS SHARDS crunching under the weight of SMALL BARE FEET.

SMALL BLOODIED FOOTPRINTS are left in its wake.

Trailing behind is the MALLET to the SLEDGEHAMMER being dragged across the asphalt. The friction creates SPARKS.

His eyes meet --

-- SMALL BARE FEET. Blood covers the bottom of her feet.

When he looks up, he's met with the SLEDGEHAMMER, craters his face.

EXT. LOCAL PUB - LATER

A hot-spot for local residents and passers-by. Sounds from a pool game can be heard from inside.

INT. LOCAL PUB

Late-afternoon crowd. Standing room only. Cigarette smoke gives the interior a murky look.

The hundreds of conversations compete with the game being projected from the overhead television, and the sound of pool balls colliding emanating from the rear.

SAMANTHA CLAIRE, bartender, expertly mixes drinks.

Newly forty, Claire has managed to retain some of the vitality from her thirties. Her hair has yet to gray, and her body is still holding up.

Slides a glass over to a PATRON.

He slides across a tip.

Patrick squeezes in between two PATRONS. Signals for Claire.

Claire smiles seeing him. A welcomed sight.

The noise level is so high that Claire and Patrick has to yell when they speak.

CLAIRE

Patrick? Your sponsor's gonna freak
if he saw you in here.

Claire registers the somberness in his demeanor.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

PATRICK

I need you to come with me.

Claire nods understanding. Waves over another Bartender.
Unties her apron.

INT. MORGUE - LATER

The CORONER leads Claire and Patrick to Rachel's dead body laying on a metal slab.

Claire stares at the body, unblinking. Tears spill from her eyes and roll along her cheeks.

CLAIRE

(finally)
How did this happen?

PATRICK

She was found outside of John's old
house.

Claire tenderly cups Rachel's hand, then calmly releases it.
She turns and leaves.

Patrick follows after her.

INT. OUTSIDE OF THE MORGUE - CONTINUOUS

Claire walks out. Determined. Focused.

Patrick is a step behind.

PATRICK
I've seen that look before.

Claire doesn't acknowledge Patrick's question. Keeps walking.

PATRICK (CONT'D)
Claire, you don't even know if she
had anything to do with it.
(off her non response)
Claire?

Continues walking. Doesn't break stride. Leaves through the
double doors.

Patrick watches after Claire until the double doors close on
him, severing eye contact.

EXT. ST. JUDE'S ORPHANAGE - DAY

WOODEN SIGN aged and weathered. The paint within the words of
Saint Jude's Orphanage has faded.

Positioned adjacent from the sign is a long stretch road
leading to the Orphanage in the distance.

Jennifer's Durango speeds past the sign on route to the
Orphanage.

INT. ST. JUDE'S ORPHANAGE, RODNEY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

RODNEY, a physically-imposing man of thirty, is behind a desk
cramped with files.

Jennifer stands alongside the empty chair positioned before
his desk.

RODNEY
How the psych evaluation go?

Jennifer places a piece of paper on his desk.

RODNEY
What's this?

Rodney picks it up and reads it.

RODNEY (CONT'D)
A letter of resignation?

JENNIFER
I already know what their decision
will be. I don't want to prolong
this.

RODNEY
You don't know for sure.

JENNIFER
Let's not fool ourselves. They were
never on board with this from day
one.

RODNEY
Maybe if I bring them down here.
Let them see how these kids respond
to you. How you respond to them.
You have gift.

JENNIFER
I don't think they care enough to
come down here.

RODNEY
Why don't you go back to Dr.
Michaels? He's familiar with your
case and the board tends to listen
when he speaks. If you get okay
from him, they may consider
bringing you back.

JENNIFER
Thanks, but, I'm just through
mentally. Look, I gotta go.

Jennifer heads for the door.

RODNEY
Let me walk you out.

JENNIFER
That's not necessary.

RODNEY

I insist.

Jennifer gives in. Allows Rodney to join her.

INT. ST. JUDE'S ORPHANAGE, CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Jennifer and Rodney head for the main entrance.

RODNEY

So, are you going to say good-bye
to the kids?

JENNIFER

I don't think I can handle that.

RODNEY

I'll give you a good reference.

JENNIFER

Thanks.

RODNEY

I'm doing something for you. Could
you do something for me?

JENNIFER

What?

RODNEY

I want to show you

JENNIFER

Show me what?

RODNEY

It'll only take a minute.

JENNIFER

Rodney, I...

Jennifer hesitantly follows Rodney's lead.

INT. ST. JUDE'S ORPHANAGE, BOY'S DIVISION - LATER

A group of BOYS chase after each other.

They cut in front of a group of boys converged around a
television.

ON TELEVISION: a generic cartoon of American Folk Legend, John Henry. He drills steel spikes into the ground with a sledgehammer.

The television watchers scream their protest.

EVAN is off on his own island far away from the disruption in the distance. He sits at a circular table writing.

He is watched closely by RODNEY from the door.

Jennifer joins him.

JENNIFER
Okay, what are we looking at?

RODNEY
Evan.

Jennifer follows Rodney's stare into the room.

JENNIFER'S POV -

Focused on Evan sitting at the table lost in his own world.

And for a second, Evan actually resembles Anthony, her brother.

RODNEY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
You listening to me?

BACK TO SCENE -

Jennifer's train of thought is broken.

JENNIFER
I'm sorry, what?

RODNEY
I was telling you about Evan. I think I lost you there for a moment.

JENNIFER
I'm sorry, I was somewhere else for a second. So, what's his deal?

RODNEY
He arrived here the other day. Makes a point to keep his distance himself from everyone.

JENNIFER

Has anyone attempted to evaluate him? Determine the cause of this behavior?

RODNEY

Well, from what I was told, his mother kept him locked in the closet for weeks at a time. CPS scooped him up. The mother explained that her husband left for another woman. She claims she kept him in the closet to keep him from leaving.

JENNIFER

Poor kid.

RODNEY

There is something else.

JENNIFER

What?

RODNEY

I found him in the basement last night having a real heart to heart with himself. Really freaked me out.

JENNIFER

What was he talking about?

RODNEY

Didn't say.

JENNIFER

Has anyone actually sat down with him? Talk to him one on one?

RODNEY

I actually thought you could help me out, old times sake?

JENNIFER

I can't get involved.

RODNEY

I understand. See you around.

Jennifer nods. Starts to walk away. She looks back at Evan. There's no way she could walk away from a child in need.

Jennifer walks past Rodney and crosses over to the table where Evan writes.

JENNIFER
Is this seat taken?

Evan shakes his head; never stops writing.

JENNIFER
Feel like some company? It looks like you could use it.

Evan doesn't answer, just continues to write.

Jennifer sits in the chair opposite Evan. She watches Evan for a moment, then focuses on the paper.

JENNIFER
What's that you're writing?

Evan doesn't answer, just continues to write.

JENNIFER
Is it a story?

Evan shakes his head; never stops writing.

JENNIFER
Is it a letter?

Evan nods; but doesn't look up.

Feeling a dent in the barrier surrounding Evan, Jennifer continues.

JENNIFER
I bet its to someone special?

EVAN
(matter-of-factly)
My friend.

JENNIFER
Is this friend a girl?

Evan smiles, but doesn't reply.

JENNIFER
Is she cute?

Evan nods. A smile forms as he continues to write.

JENNIFER
Do you like her?

Evan nods.

JENNIFER
Does she like you?

Evan shrugs.

JENNIFER
You know, when I write a letter, I like it when someone reads over it... you know, to check for spelling, grammar, things like that. The last thing you want is to give a girl a letter and have her not understand it because of all the errors.

Evan finally raises his eyes to Jennifer. He looks at her contemplating the offer.

After a moment, he slides the letter over to her.

Jennifer reads the letter with her eyes. Her eyes leave the paper and focuses on Evan who looks back at her.

JENNIFER
(lowering the paper)
Evan, do you and your friend talk a lot?

Evan nods.

JENNIFER
She tells you things?

EVAN
Sometimes.

JENNIFER
What kind of things?

EVAN
Secrets.

Jennifer leans in closer, very interested.

JENNIFER
What kind of secrets?

Evan doesn't respond. Gestures for the paper instead.

Jennifer hands Evan the letter. He places it back on the table and continues to write.

JENNIFER
She ever tell you her name?

Evan nods.

JENNIFER
What is it?

EVAN
She told me not to tell.

JENNIFER
What's the big secret?

Evan shrugs.

JENNIFER
You met her here?

EVAN
(nods)
On the playground.

JENNIFER
Look, if there's anything you want to tell me or talk about... I'll be here.

Evan doesn't bother looking up. Concentrates on his letter.

Jennifer watches him for a long moment, then leaves the table.

INT. CORRIDOR, OUTSIDE OF ROOM - LATER

Jennifer joins Rodney in the corridor.

RODNEY
How'd it go?

JENNIFER
I think you should schedule a couple of one on one sessions. Help him open up.

RODNEY
Sure thing.

Jennifer drifts off seeing something down the hall.

HER POV - CROWDED CORRIDOR

As CHILDREN move back and forth across the corridor, TWO BURLY ORDERLIES moves through the moving crowd like a pair of apparitions.

One has a strait-jacket clutched in his massive hand.

They both seem to be walking directly toward her.

Just as they close in her her... they DISSIPATE!

RODNEY (CONT'D)

What's up?

Jennifer faces Rodney, dismissing what she believed she saw.

JENNIFER

No. I'm fine. Just keep him under close observation.

RODNEY

Sure thing.

Jennifer turns to Evan, watches him for a moment.

JENNIFER

Could you notify me if anything changes?

RODNEY

(smiling)
No problem.

JENNIFER

Thanks.

Jennifer looks into the room once more, then she's gone.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT

Jennifer pushes a small grocery cart down the aisle. Picks up a package.

Reads the nutrition label on the back. Scoffs at the nutritional content and places it back on the shelf.

She moves to the next item. Pauses sensing something. Doesn't make it obvious.

Moving on to the next item --

JENNIFER

I'm not going to wilt, Pat. You don't have to keep checking on me.

Patrick walks alongside her.

PATRICK

How'd you know it was me?

JENNIFER

You're the only person I know who wears Aqua velva.

PATRICK

I made a promise.

JENNIFER

Well, I'm officially relinquishing you from your duty.

(beat)

I heard you retired. Sorry I missed your party.

PATRICK

It's okay. I'm surprised you have time to shop with your schedule.

JENNIFER

Well, I don't have to worry about that anymore.

(off his quizzical look)

I resigned.

PATRICK

Should I ask why?

JENNIFER

Free country.

PATRICK

Okay... Why?

JENNIFER

Short version. I was a liability to the children.

(off Patrick's look)

His words, not mine.

PATRICK

I don't think I want to know.

JENNIFER

Believe me, you don't.

PATRICK

Well, you'll bounce back --

JENNIFER

Pat, any other time I would mind hearing the ol' "you'll bounce back" speech, but right now... not the time.

PATRICK

Fair enough.

(beat)

Can I talk to you for a second?

JENNIFER

I thought that was what we were doing?

PATRICK

It's about something a little serious.

Jennifer gives him her attention.

PATRICK

There was a incident near your family's old house last night.

JENNIFER

What kind of incident?

PATRICK

A murder.

JENNIFER

Anyone I know?

PATRICK

Rachel.

JENNIFER

(sighs)

Shit. How's Claire holding up?

PATRICK

Not too well. She seems to think you had something to do with it.

JENNIFER

Why me?

PATRICK

The incident involving your family will be forever etched into everyone's mind, not just Claire. Besides, that, they never made an arrest. That leaves a lot of folks uneasy.

JENNIFER

Hey, I never asked for some nut job to kill my mother.

PATRICK

(calming her down)

Jennifer you don't have to explain anything to me. I know first hand what you've been through. Personally, I think she's losing it. Look, if Claire bothers you, give me a call. I'll handle it.

JENNIFER

Thanks.

PATRICK

I better be going. Take care, Jennifer.

As Patrick starts off --

JENNIFER

Wait, I just remembered something. I saw somebody in the window earlier yesterday.

PATRICK

You went by there?

JENNIFER

Yeah, after my psych appointment.

PATRICK

What time was that?

JENNIFER

(matter-of-factly)

Pat, I didn't kill anybody.

PATRICK

Okay, did you get a good look?

JENNIFER

Not really.

(beat)

You think the person I saw in the window could've had something to do with it?

PATRICK

I'll check into it.

Jennifer and Patrick hug.

PATRICK

Keep in touch?

JENNIFER

(playfully)

Don't count on it.

Patrick kiss her on the cheek. Walks away.

Jennifer continues shopping.

EXT. SHOPPING PLAZA - MOMENTS LATER

A chain of small, family-owned retail stores can be seen in the distance.

Jennifer leaves from the store with grocery bags.

She stops at her vehicle. Places the grocery bags on the ground. Reaches into her purse for her keys.

Just as she inserts the key into the lock --

The lamps within the PARKING LOT flicker, then dies. As does the light from the surrounding stores encircling her.

Jennifer's key misses the lock. Hits the door instead.

It CLATTERS hitting the ground.

JENNIFER

You've gotta be kidding me.

Jennifer expels a sigh. Motions to retrieve her keys.

She straightens hearing something in the distance.

Jennifer listens into the air.

A PAIR OF CHILD-LIKE FEET

move along the asphalt at a deliberate pace, then leaves frame.

The HEAD to a sledgehammer being pulled along the asphalt in its wake.

As the sound intensifies, it becomes more descent. Metal scraping against asphalt.

The sound motivates Jennifer to find her keys. She sweeps the ground frantically.

The sound draws closer.

Jennifer continues to search. Desperate to find those keys. Her life depends on it!

The sound is ear-splitting. It can't be no more than two yards away.

Jennifer stops moving.

She tries her best to blend in with the surrounding darkness.

An UNSEEN PERSON towers directly over her.

The vibrance from a controlled beam of light washes over Jennifer's panicked face.

Jennifer SCREAMS.

PATRICK

Whoa. Whoa. Easy. It's me.

He shines the beam of light into his face.

Jennifer slaps his chest with her hand.

JENNIFER

Scared the shit outta me. Shit-head.

PATRICK

The lights went out. Thought you could use some assistance.

JENNIFER

Thanks.

Jennifer looks onto the dark ground for something.

Patrick shines the light in the direction of the ground revealing her keys.

She snatches the keys from the ground. Opens the door to her vehicle, slides in.

Patrick closes the door for her.

PATRICK
Try to be more careful.

And he's off.

JENNIFER'S DURANGO

Jennifer watches Detective Patrick off.

Her eyes wander to the overhead mirror.

She nearly jumps out of her skin seeing something in its reflection.

Catches herself, then reaches into the back seat.

Jennifer pulls out a PLUSH TEDDY BEAR.

She holds it firmly, water secretes from its body.

She stares at the toy for a long moment, then looks around.

INT. JENNIFER'S HOUSE, FOYER - LATER

Jennifer enters. Slips from her jacket. Gathers the mail that has accumulated near the door.

She sifts through each envelope as she enters into

LIVING ROOM

She's startled by Claire waiting on the sofa.

JENNIFER
Claire?

Jennifer flips on the light.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
How the fuck did you get in my house?

CLAIRE

You think you got people fooled,
switching your ass and batting your
eyes like some whore.

JENNIFER

You have five seconds before to get
the fuck out of here, and four are
up.

CLAIRE

(standing)

You may have convinced Pat and
Rodney that you're this fucking
perfect angel, but you haven't got
me. I know what you are...
murderer.

JENNIFER

I don't have to listen to this
shit.

Jennifer moves for the phone.

Claire rushes over to Jennifer -- places her hand over
Jennifer's, stopping her.

CLAIRE

If I find out that you had
something to do with my little
girl's murder, I'm going to what I
should've done all those years ago.

Claire releases her grasp, and calmly walks out.

Jennifer removes her hand from the phone. Sighs exasperated.

INT. CLAIRE'S HOME, LIVING ROOM - LATER

Claire's slouched in her recliner well into a drunken binge.

In one hand, she nurses a glass of liquor. In the other, a
framed picture.

INSERT - FRAMED PICTURE

Of Claire and Rachel during happier times.

BACK TO SCENE - CLAIRE

drowns the liquor in one gulp.

A KNOCK emanates from the door.

Claire's eyes leaves the picture, acknowledges the door, but she doesn't budge.

RODNEY (O.S.)

Claire?!

Rodney rushes in. He regards the alcohol in hand and her drunken state.

RODNEY

Didn't you hear the door?

CLAIRE

(downing the drink; matter-of-factly)

I heard.

RODNEY

(moving for the sofa)

I thought something was wrong.

CLAIRE

Nope.

Claire pushes up from the recliner. Heads for the mini-bar.

RODNEY

(sitting)

Are you sure about that? I heard what happened to Rachel.

CLAIRE

I haven't been more certain about anything in my life. Jack?

RODNEY

No thanks. You should try laying off that stuff yourself.

CLAIRE

(pouring a drink)

We're not married anymore, and you're sure as hell not my father.

Rodney joins her at the bar.

RODNEY

I'm just concerned.

CLAIRE

Don't be. I'm a big girl.

RODNEY

I don't want you to hurt yourself.

CLAIRE

You came over here to check on me,
right? I'm fine, now leave.

RODNEY

There's no need to act this way.

CLAIRE

You still here?

RODNEY

I always stuck by you, even after
the infidelity. If you need me,
call me. You know the number.

Rodney leaves.

Claire raises her glass, downs the drink.

INT. JENNIFER'S HOUSE, BEDROOM - LATER

Jennifer leaves from the ADJOINING BATHROOM -- tank top,
pajama bottoms -- slips into bed.

She points the remote at the television. A news telecast
switches on.

ON TELEVISION: A FEMALE REPORTER stands on the road huddled
underneath an umbrella.

Emergency vehicles are positioned in the background. Police
flares guide vehicles as they crawl by.

FEMALE REPORTER

-- Police identified the driver as
renown psychiatrist, Dr. Paul
Mason. Found dead near his
overturned vehicle. People has no
leads at this time --

The screen abruptly turns BLACK.

BACK TO SCENE

Jennifer lowers the remote. She stares off, detached.

The phone RINGS. Jennifer reaches over to answer it.

JENNIFER

(into the phone)

Hello? (pause) Hey Rodney. (pause)
Yeah, I saw. (pause) I don't know
how to feel about it. Look, let me
hit you back. (pause) Alright.

Jennifer hangs up the phone. She turns off the light, and lies back in bed.

EXT. ABANDONED COUNTRY HOUSE - LATER

Rain pours from the skies in long drenching sheets. Lighting arcs punctuate the ominous mood.

Patrick's Buick is parked in the driveway.

Patrick stares out at the house from her car, distracted by something in the distance.

A WOMAN in a blood-smeared sun dress walks across from the rear of the house and enters the shed.

Detective Patrick leaves his car, follows.

INT. SHED - CONTINUOUS

The door opens with Patrick standing on the other side.

A steady stream of light reveal various tools and equipment cluttering homemade shelves.

Patrick focuses the light on the various equipment. She pauses seeing something of interest.

A BLOOD-STAINED SLEDGEHAMMER rests in a corner.

Patrick kneels before the sledgehammer. Concentrates the light on its long, wooden handle.

Words are expertly carved into it: "To John from his loving family."

PATRICK

Son of a bitch.

He slides into a pair of examination gloves. Picks up the hammer.

That's when the door to the shed CREAKS open. It's being forcibly open and closed by the storm.

Patrick's light frames the entrance for a long moment.

INT. ABANDONED HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

POV FROM THE OPENED SLIT OF THE BOARDED WINDOW

Patrick runs back to her car using her jacket to guard against the rain. Sledgehammer in hand.

INT. PATRICK'S BUICK - CONTINUOUS

Patrick places the sledgehammer in the rear seat. Removes the gloves.

Takes out her keys, inserts them into the ignition.

He glances into the overhead mirror. A glimpse of something metal appears quickly from the backseat.

He instinctively ducks, nearly struck by the head to a SLEDGEHAMMER. Which shatters the window to the driver's side door.

Patrick quickly slides over to the passenger seat, and pushes the door open.

He drops to the muddy ground, stopping before --

A PAIR OF SMALL FEET buried beneath an inch of mud. Alongside the feet is the head of a sledgehammer.

Patrick's eyes focuses on the familiar engraving etched on the wooden handle of the weapon: "To John from his loving family."

His eyes searches for the identity of the perpetrator. But it's hidden within the natural darkness.

PATRICK

Who are you?

LITTLE GIRL

The last thing you're ever gonna see.

The perpetrator tightens its grip around the handle. Lifts the sledgehammer into the air.

The BLURP from a police siren.

An intense light shines on Detective Patrick as he raises her head from the ground.

OFFICER
Are you okay?

An exhausted Detective Patrick responds by collapsing into the mud.

EXT. ABANDONED COUNTRY HOUSE - LATER

Patrick is sitting on a gurney in the back of an ambulance being tended to by EMT personnel.

Captain Perez appears at the foot of the ambulance watching him.

CAPTAIN PEREZ
Mind telling what're doing out here?

PATRICK
Following up on a lead.
(wincing in pain; to the EMT)
Could you watch it?

CAPTAIN PEREZ
And you got your ass kicked in the process.

PATRICK
I didn't get my ass kicked. I was attacked. There's a difference.

CAPTAIN PEREZ
Did you see the perp?

PATRICK
A little girl.

CAPTAIN PEREZ
A little girl?

PATRICK
With a sledgehammer.

CAPTAIN PEREZ
A little girl with a sledgehammer?
Do you even know how much a sledgehammer weighs?

PATRICK

It was a little girl. Around eight or ten. She tried to kill me.

CAPTAIN PEREZ

Maybe it wasn't such a good idea bringing you back.

PATRICK

Don't do this to me. Let me finish the job you brought me in to do.

Captain Perez considers Patrick for a moment.

CAPTAIN PEREZ

Don't let me regret this, Pat.

Patrick smiles, even tries to kiss it.

CAPTAIN PEREZ (CONT'D)

Don't push it.

Captain Perez walks away.

Patrick climbs from the ambulance. Faces the Abandoned House.

A lightning arc punctuates the ominous setting.

OVER THE BLACK:

DR. MICHAELS (V.O.)

Let's begin, shall we?

FADE IN:

INT. INSTITUTION, INTERVIEW ROOM (DREAM SEQUENCE)

Young Jennifer sits in a chair behind a metal table. Bound by a strait jacket.

Her appearance has changed significantly from the precocious child from earlier -- she's walking a very tight rope between coherent and incoherent.

She stares off at DR. VINCENT MICHAELS (50's) graying hair. White doctor's jacket over a dark Cardigan sweater.

DR. MICHAELS

I wanna try something different for this session. It's called hypnotherapy. Do you know what that is?

(MORE)

DR. MICHAELS (cont'd)
 (off her indifferent look)
 It's a treatment technique that
 uses intense relaxation,
 concentration and focused attention
 to allow exploration of thoughts,
 feelings and memories that might be
 locked in your conscious mind.

YOUNG JENNIFER
 Read that from a dictionary, Doc?

DR. MICHAELS
 Is that you Jennifer, or Melissa?

YOUNG JENNIFER
 (subjectively)
 I'll be whoever you want me to be.

Dr. Michaels doesn't give in to her. He lifts his hand,
 extending his finger. He speaks directly to her.

DR. MICHAELS
 Now, Jennifer, I want you to
 concentrate on my finger. Clear
 your mind and relax. Relax. Hear
 the sound of my voice.

Young Jennifer is locked on his finger. Her eyes grow heavy,
 then closes.

Everything turns DARK.

DR. MICHAELS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 I want you to think back to the
 night you were in your parents
 bedroom.

Various IMAGES roll in like a runaway stampede. It all
 happens too fast to adequately process.

THEN -

Young Jennifer's eyes snap open. Wild. Crazed.

Young Jennifer explodes from her restraints. Locks her
 fingers around Dr. Michael's neck, and squeezes.

DR. MICHAELS (CONT'D)
 (panic time)
 Oh God. Help!

Young Jennifer has Dr. Michaels pinned on the table -- hand
 to throat.

His struggles are futile against her overpowering strength.

The door opens, abruptly.

The Orderlies pour into the room. They grab Young Jennifer trying desperately to pry her hands from Dr. Michaels' throat.

A third Orderlie enters with a syringe. He jams the needle into her neck.

Young Jennifer's grip loosens.

Orderlie #1 pulls Dr. Michaels from the table, balancing him in his arms.

Dr. Michaels massages his neck, desperately sucking in air.

Young Jennifer collapses to the ground, unconscious.

INT. JENNIFER'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jennifer snaps up from bed covered in sweat. She slams her fist into the bed, frustrated.

EXT. LANDSDOWING MENTAL INSTITUTION - LATER

The rain has eased up a bit, but it's still very wet out.

Jennifer's Durango pulls to a stop near the security checkpoint.

The SECURITY GUARD approaches the vehicle. "JERALD" is visible from his name tag.

JERALD

Can I help you with something?

Jennifer speaks to Jerald through the lowered window. There's an certain attitude in her demeanor and in her tone. It's like there's a chip on her shoulder.

JENNIFER

Dr. Michaels?

JERALD

You have an appointment?

JENNIFER

Is he there or not?

JERALD

It's simple: no appointment, no pass.

Jennifer looks at the gate, then to Jerald. The gears within his mind spins.

JENNIFER

Thanks.

JERALD

(good riddance)
You're welcome.

Jerald watches Jennifer's Durango reverse from the gate.

His eyes suddenly widen seeing the same Durango now charging the gate!

He side-steps out of the way as vehicle PLOWS through the iron bars.

Jerald speaks urgently into his portable.

INT. DR. MICHAEL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Dr. Michaels' behind his desk buried in an opened folder.

Jennifer burst into his office.

Dr. Michaels lowers the file, startled.

DR. MICHAELS

What's the meaning of this?!

JENNIFER

We need to talk, Doc.

Jerald leads a group of SECURITY GUARDS into the office. Their weapons are drawn.

Dr. Michaels gestures for the Guards to lower their weapons.

DR. MICHAELS

(to Jerald)

Everything's fine.

(as the Guards leave)

Jennifer Roman? Somehow I knew our paths would cross again.

(gestures for her to take the seat before his desk)

Please.

(MORE)

DR. MICHAELS (cont'd)
(as Jennifer eases into
the seat)
What do I owe the pleasure?

JENNIFER
I'm sick of the fucking dreams. I
don't know why it's happening. I
don't give a shit, why. I just want
them to stop.

DR. MICHAELS
I understand. It's very unfortunate
that you're having these issues. I
can schedule you in on...
(refers to his calendar)
... October 2nd, it's on a Monday.

JENNIFER
You don't understand, I want my
dreams to stop, now. Right now. No
appointment. No bullshit.

DR. MICHAELS
That's not possible.

JENNIFER
Why?

DR. MICHAELS
For one thing, I'm terribly busy as
you can see. There's simply nothing
I can do right now.

JENNIFER
(sighs)
Well, can you tell me why was here?
Why was I in a strait-jacket?

DR. MICHAELS
What you're having aren't dreams,
they're fragments from your past.

JENNIFER
Why was I here?

DR. MICHAELS
Because you were highly traumatize
by the systematic death of your
entire family -- each one happening
before your very eyes. It wasn't
until much later that I diagnosed
you with Dissociative identity
disorder.

JENNIFER

You mean to tell me that I'm schizo? That's not possible.

Dr. Michaels pulls out a file and slides it to her.

Jennifer opens the file. Reads with her eyes.

DR. MICHAELS

She calls herself "Melissa". Cold. Malevolent. Highly volatile. She's very protective of you. She becomes agitated when it appears that you're being threatened.

JENNIFER

Like a guard dog?

DR. MICHAELS

Something like that. My intentions was to suppress that identity. It was a rocky couple of months, but I was successful, or so I thought.

JENNIFER

(placing the file on the table)

So, what happens now?

DR. MICHAELS

We begin different treatments. The sooner the better. The last thing we want is for that "Melissa" personality to resurface.

JENNIFER

What happens if she does?

DR. MICHAELS

I don't want to find out, and I don't think you would want to either.

Jennifer's phone RINGS. Interrupts the proceedings.

She checks her phone. Rodney's name is display in the caller ID screen.

Jennifer answers.

JENNIFER

Rodney. I'm kind of in the middle of something right now.

INT. ST. JUDE'S ORPHANAGE, CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Rodney stands near a door leading into the boy's rest room. He has his ear to his cell phone.

RODNEY

I have a problem with Evan... He's locked himself in the bathroom and won't come out.

INTERCUT - JENNIFER AND RODNEY ON THE PHONE

JENNIFER

Why?

RODNEY

Don't know. Won't talk to me. I was hoping he'll talk to you.

JENNIFER

Give him fifteen minutes.

END INTERCUT

DR. MICHAELS OFFICE

Jennifer hangs up. Faces Dr. Michaels.

JENNIFER

Could we schedule something for tomorrow?

DR. MICHAELS

Off the top of my head, Friday would be more feasible.

JENNIFER

(standing)
Anytime Friday?

DR. MICHAELS

Uh, I have a ten o'clock. Anytime after twelve.

JENNIFER

I'll be here.

Jennifer rushes out.

INT. ST. JUDE ORPHANAGE, CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Rodney leads Jennifer to a closed bathroom door.

JENNIFER
How long has he been inside?

RODNEY
Half hour give or take.

JENNIFER
(knocking on the door)
Evan? It's me, Jennifer. Are you
alright?

There's no response.

Jennifer knocks again.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)
Evan are you still there? If you
are give me a knock.

At first, there's no response. Then, there's a soft knock.

JENNIFER
Good. That's good. Uh, Evan, are
you hurt? If you are, knock.

Nothing. Jennifer pauses to think, then:

JENNIFER
Are you hiding from someone?

There's a soft knock.

JENNIFER
Who are you hiding from? Is it your
friend?

There's another soft knock.

JENNIFER
Evan, it'll be a lot easier if you
would open the door. I promise,
it'd just be me and you.

The lock unlatches, then the door opens.

Jennifer looks at Rodney, then enters...

BATHROOM

Where Evan stands staring at Jennifer as she enters.

JENNIFER
Why are you hiding from her, Evan?

EVAN
She's mad at me.

JENNIFER
Why?

EVAN
She said that she's going to do something bad again. And I told her I would tell.

JENNIFER
Again?

EVAN
The other night, she told me that she would hurt people. Last night, she said she will do it again. She told me if I told, we couldn't be friends anymore.

JENNIFER
You did the right thing.
(beat)
Did she tell you who she would hurt?

Evan shakes his head, no.

JENNIFER
Evan, who is she?

EVAN
Melissa. She said her name is Melissa.

Jennifer pauses hearing the name. Evan regards her reaction.

EVAN
Have you seen her, too?

JENNIFER
No.

Evan starts to turn away. Jennifer stops him, forcing him to face her.

JENNIFER
What's wrong?

EVAN
I don't have anyone to be my
friend, now.

JENNIFER
I can be your friend.

EVAN
You're too old.

JENNIFER
Excuse me? I would like you to know
that I'm very immature for my age.

Evan breaks a smile.

JENNIFER
Could we at least try to be
friends?

Evan shrugs. Jennifer crosses over to him, kneels so that she's on the same level.

JENNIFER
I won't let anything happen to you.
Okay?

EVAN
Okay.

INT. ST. JUDE ORPHANAGE, CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Jennifer and Evan leaves the bathroom. Rodney smiles relieved seeing them.

JENNIFER
Why don't you go into the play
room? I'll be there in a moment.

EVAN
They might tease me.

JENNIFER
(reassuring him)
Not on my watch.

Evan smiles, then walks off. He stops abruptly, turns to her.

EVAN
You can be my friend.

JENNIFER
I'm not too old?

He playfully "shhh's" her as if not wanting to expose their secret.

Jennifer mimes locking her lips and throwing away the key.

Evan and Jennifer share a smile. She watches him walk down the corridor.

RODNEY
How do you do that?

JENNIFER
What?

RODNEY
Make them respond to you like that?

JENNIFER
They try to communicate all the time. Just hafta listen.

Jennifer pats Rodney on the shoulder, then walks in the opposite direction.

RODNEY
Jen?

Jennifer stops and faces him.

RODNEY
You know what happened to Rachel?
(off her nod)
Have you spoken to Claire?

JENNIFER
She visited me the other night.

RODNEY
How did she seem to you?

JENNIFER
Hurt. Confused. Unstable. I guess I could understand, her daughter just died.

RODNEY

I worry about her every now again.
I just hope she doesn't try to hurt
herself... or anyone else for that
matter.

JENNIFER

She just needs time to heal. She'll
be fine.

RODNEY

Maybe your right. Hey, thanks again
for stopping through.

JENNIFER

Speaking of which, maybe I
shouldn't be doing that anymore. I
mean, I don't technically work here
anymore.

RODNEY

(matter-of-factly)
Well, I never sent in your
resignation. And I don't think Paul
Mason got chance to deliver your
paperwork.

JENNIFER

What are you saying?

RODNEY

As far as I'm concerned, you still
work here.

JENNIFER

(smiles)
Thank you.

Jennifer gives him a hug, then starts off.

INT. RODNEY'S OFFICE - LATER

Rodney enters. Notices Claire sitting behind his desk. Closes
the door.

CLAIRE

Getting kind of cozy with the hired
help.

RODNEY

What are you doing here?

CLAIRE

To apologize for the other evening.
I shouldn't have come at you like
that.

RODNEY

Under the circumstances, I
understand.

CLAIRE

One thing I don't get: Why is she
here? I mean, don't get me wrong,
she is beautiful, but what other
qualifications does she have?

RODNEY

Have you seen her around these
children?

CLAIRE

Haven't had the pleasure.

RODNEY

Maybe you should before you decide
to open your mouth.

(opens the door)

Are we done?

CLAIRE

Yeah, we're done.

Claire pushes up from the seat, circles around the desk. She
stops before Rodney.

CLAIRE

Watch out, she's a killer.

And Claire shows herself out.

EXT. ABANDONED COUNTRY HOUSE - LATER

Jennifer's Durango parks near the house. She leaves the
vehicle and heads for the front door.

INT. ABANDONED COUNTRY HOUSE, FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Jennifer enters walking from the FOYER, and into

LIVING ROOM

The interior is bathed in the late afternoon shadows.

It's not totally dark, scythes of light filters in through the slats of the bordered windows.

Jennifer regards this scenery for a second. Takes it all in.

THEN...

The room begins to reconstruct as if time itself was rewinding, bringing us to --

LIVING ROOM (FLASHBACK)

Young Jennifer is at the window fixated on something.

EXT. COUNTRY HOUSE

John, bare chest and dirt-smearred jeans, works on the wooden fence. He drives a block of wood into the ground with his sledgehammer.

He pauses distracted by a car pulling up.

He removes a rag from his back pocket. Clears the sweat from his brow.

His eyes meet the vehicle approaching. It pulls to a stop before him.

John approaches the opened passenger side window and looks in.

JOHN

I told you never around my house.

He backs from the vehicle as it pulls off.

John turns back to the house.

One of the curtains on the lower floor sways.

INT. COUNTRY HOUSE, LIVING ROOM (FLASHBACK)

As Young Jennifer walks from the window, she walks through Jennifer (FROM THE PRESENT) reverting everything back to its present state.

Something on the fireplace catches her attention. A framed picture.

The glass is covered in a layer of dust.

Jennifer holds the picture in her hand. She clears the dust concealing the photograph beneath.

The photograph isn't seen, only the deeply troubled expression it evokes from Jennifer.

CLOSE ON FRAMED PICTURE

From the reflection in the glass, a SMALL FIGURE moves in the distance at amazing speed.

BACK TO SCENE - JENNIFER

She straightens hearing a PERSON CRYING. The picture slips from her hand.

Time stretches to a crawl as the framed picture descends to the ground.

As the picture makes its descent, the photograph from beyond the glass becomes visible: John and Young Jennifer only. She's sitting on his lap. All smiles. Very happy.

Until, the glass protecting the picture SHATTERS on impact with the floor.

The BROKEN GLASS once again obscures the picture.

She turns to where the KITCHEN would be. But it's not the Kitchen.

The room strangely resembles a FUNERAL HOME.

It's divided into two sections, split by a narrow aisle leading to an opened casket.

Every seat is packed. Everyone is dressed in black and very sober.

Anna stands before the casket. Tears build as she stares at her dead husband lying peacefully inside.

She breaks down.

Claire joins her at the casket, consoles her.

Young Jennifer stares at the casket lost in an euphoric trance.

Anthony watches his sister for a moment. He turns away not liking what he sees.

The floor CREAKS from the floor above disrupting the FLASHBACK.

The room is reverted back into a KITCHEN.

Adult Jennifer enters into the --

FOYER

Where she moves for the base of the stairs and looks up.

JENNIFER

Hello?

Silence.

After a moment, she ascends the stairs.

SECOND FLOOR

As Jennifer moves for the CHILD'S BEDROOM, the entire environment begins to reconstruct as if time itself was rewinding.

Jennifer enters the newly constructed

BATHROOM

Young Jennifer is at the sink. She places the bloodied blade of a flat-head screwdriver under the running faucet water.

She glances up into the bathroom's mirror.

Anthony is seen in its reflection. He watches curiously from the opened door.

ANTHONY

Whatcha doing?

YOUNG JENNIFER

The same thing you should be doing... minding your business.

Young Jennifer fervidly cleans the bloodied blade with her hands.

ANTHONY
(re: the flathead)
That's dad's. What are you doing
with that?

He notices the bloody water, backs away horrified.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)
What did you do?

Young Jennifer turns off the water. Her eyes meets her brother's reflection.

YOUNG JENNIFER
Your Daddy was bad.

Something within his sister's eyes freaks him out, he motions to leave.

Young Jennifer quickly stops him.

Anthony tries to pull away. Young Jennifer grabs his arms, tightly.

ANTHONY
(tears building)
Let me go.

YOUNG JENNIFER
This stays with us. We can't let
anyone know.

ANTHONY
Who are you?

YOUNG JENNIFER
I'm Melissa --

ANTHONY
You're crazy.

Anthony starts to walk away. Stops hearing --

YOUNG JENNIFER
I know all about you. All your
dirty little secrets.

Anthony faces her. Young Jennifer's entire demeanor changes. "Melissa" takes over.

YOUNG JENNIFER/MELISSA
 Remember when I caught you playing
 with matches and you almost burned
 down the sofa?
 (off his nod)
 You told me not to tell, and I
 didn't. I need you to do the same
 for me.

There's no response from Anthony. "Melissa" shakes him to get his attention.

MELISSA
 Promise.

ANTHONY
 (reluctantly)
 Promise.

"Melissa" forces a smile. She releases Anthony, then walks away.

Suddenly, the room reverts back to it's original state. There's a soft WHISPER emanating from another room.

BACK TO SCENE

Jennifer leaves this room and enters

HALL

Where she arrives at the

MASTER BEDROOM (FLASHBACK)

The room reconstructs turning back the clock. Everything changes.

ANNA sits on the bed the edge of the bed staring at a framed picture. Tears roll down her cheek.

ANTHONY (OS)
 You okay, Mommy?

Anna quickly clears her face. She tries desperately to put on an natural air.

ANNA
 (facing him)
 I'll be fine, Honey.

Anthony watches from the door. He clutches the arm of a dangling teddy bear, tightly.

Something's off and Anna knows it.

ANNA (CONT'D)
What's wrong?

ANTHONY
It's Melissa.

Anna waves him over. He crosses over to her, faces her.

ANNA
What about her?

ANTHONY
She did something bad.

ANNA
What did she do?

Anthony falls silent. Anna takes hold of Anthony's chin and turns his face so he's looking straight at her.

ANNA
What did she do?

As Jennifer watches the scene, she hears something from behind.

She looks over her shoulder to see --

-- Young Jennifer staring into the room through the bars of the railing.

She scowls, watching.

A LIGHT shines from another room and spills into the hall.

Jennifer follows the light into

BATHROOM (FLASHBACK)

Anthony's in the tub. He pulls his teddy bear from the water. Water gushes from the waterlogged toy.

Anna enters. Approaches the tub.

ANNA

Honey, I told you Mr. Smokey can't play with you while you're taking your bath.

ANTHONY

Mr. Smokey really wanted to come in and I was lonely.

Anna smiles as she takes the soaked bear from him.

ANNA

Well, for you to continue playing with Mr. Smokey, he has to dry off. I'll be right back.

Anna leaves with Mr. Smokey.

Anthony plays in the water. He's having more fun than a child should be allowed.

He loses control of his body. It slides under the water and he falls back.

His head snaps up from the water. He coughs up water, while trying to suck in air.

His eyes meet "Melissa" looming over him. She stares at him in a way that causes him to shudder.

MELISSA

Snitches belongs in ditches.

She grabs his shoulders and pushes him back into the water.

BASEMENT

Anna places Mr. Smokey into the dryer. Starts the machine, then leaves the room.

TUB, UNDERWATER

"Melissa's" face is distorted by the violently moving water as she pins Anthony down. Suddenly, the water flattens out.

"Melissa" is now visible. She stares down into the water for a moment.

Satisfied with the result, she walks away.

BATHROOM

Anna walks in from the hall.

ANNA

Well, I'm pleased to report that
Mr. Smokey will make a full
recovery --

She pauses seeing Anthony's body hugging the surface of the water.

Anna SCREAMS.

Jennifer is lost in the FLASHBACK.

The HEAD to a SLEDGEHAMMER appears from out of nowhere disrupting the image.

For a split second, a glimpse of the person wielding the hammer is revealed.

A SMALL FIGURE. Undeniably FEMALE.

Jennifer is able to dodge the lunging weapon, missing her by inches.

She stumbles back into the railing of the bannister. Her body weight overwhelms the weakened, dry-rotten wood.

Jennifer falls back toward the flight of stairs.

Her body breaks through the rotten wood of the stairs, and into

BASEMENT

Where Jennifer's body drops from above and lands with a sickening THUD. She sees something coming at her fast, shields her face.

Piles of rotten wood and debris shower down on her.

Jennifer is blanketed under a pile of rotten wood and other debris from the stairs.

Everything goes dark.

INT. SECURITY BOOTH - LATER

Jerald flips through a Sports magazine in between watching a panel of video surveillance monitors.

On the various screens are different areas of the institution compound from the perspective of mounted surveillance cameras.

Satisfied with what he sees, he reverts back to the mag.

SOMEONE moves past the booth.

Jerald spins in his rotating chair catching a glimpse.

Lowers the magazine. Goes to investigate.

Jerald pokes his head from his booth. Sweeps the area.

Satisfied, he starts back inside. But stops. Sees something on the ground.

Has to kneel to get a better look. SMALL, BLOODIED FOOTPRINTS.

They lead toward the institution.

Jerald stands. Pushes a button on his portable.

JERALD
(into his portable)
We may have a situation.

INT. ADJOINING BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

The interior of Dr. Michaels' office can be seen through the opened door.

A toilet FLUSHES.

Dr. Michaels stands before the sink. Runs the water.

He turns off the water, and looks at his reflection in the mirror.

There's a DARK BLOTCH at the center of the mirror. Rubs it with his finger. It doesn't smudge. Doesn't wipe off.

He wets his finger with his tongue. Tries again. The BLOTCH is still there. That's weird.

He rubs harder. Still nothing.

DR. MICHAELS
What is that?

He rubs again, putting a little muscle in it. Determine to rid the mirror of its blemish.

But he has to stop as the once small blotch spreads wider. It continues to grow until the entire mirror's consumed.

Curiosity compels him to touch the mirror. But he pulls back seeing something within the darkness:

A PAIR OF PIERCING RED EYES.

Dr. Michaels backpedals from the mirror as it SHATTERS with a FIGURE hurling itself at him.

As the SMALL BODY clears the mirror, the glass immediately reforms.

Dr. Michaels' body SLAMS into the far wall; collapses to the floor in a heap.

Red liquid drops on his forehead from above.

MELISSA (O.S.)
No one here to save this time.

Dr. Michaels, barely conscious, raises his eyes to --

-- The SLEDGEHAMMER HEAD bearing down on his skull.

Dr. Michaels SCREAMS, shielding himself from his impending fate.

His screams are drown by the sound of metal against bone.

His skull splatters like a watermelon.

INT. DR. MICHAELS' OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Jerald knocks on the door as he opens it.

JERALD
Dr. Michaels?

He walks in fully. Turns in the direction of the adjoining bathroom.

JERALD
Holy Mary mother of God.

What Jerald sees --

The grisly aftermath of Dr. Michaels.

Dr. Michaels sprawl across the floor. Blood halos his crushed skull.

INT. CLAIRE'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - LATER

Claire studies a collection of framed photographs in between swigs from a long-neck bottle of beer.

CLAIRE
Why did they have to take you away
from me?

She glides her fingers longingly over the glass encasing the photo of herself and Rachel.

The reflection of a "Melissa" can be seen from the picture's glass.

She watches Claire, intently.

Claire regards the reflection. Quickly turns to --

-- an empty room.

INT. HOSPITAL, JENNIFER'S ROOM - NIGHT

Jennifer's eyes snap open abruptly.

She lies in bed with an intravenous tube running to an IV unit. An untouched tray of food is positioned before her from an adjustable stand.

Jennifer's eyes fixate on a dark corner. SOMETHING materialize within the darkness, taking the form of a SMALL CHILD.

She hangs in the dark recesses, avoiding the light.

Jennifer lowers the respirator mouthpiece to talk.

JENNIFER
(weakly)
Hello?

Suddenly, a soft, innocent child's voice is heard from the darkness.

CHILD

Jennifer. It's been such a long time hasn't it?

JENNIFER

Do I know you?

CHILD

I don't expect you to remember me. I guess I can think Dr. Michaels for that. He stripped so many years from us. But, I'll take care of that.

Jennifer labors to sit up in an attempt to make out whoever it is hidden in the shadows.

JENNIFER

What do you want?

CHILD

To finish the masterpiece that we began so many years ago. What can I say, I'm a perfectionist.

JENNIFER

Melissa?

"Melissa" is revealed momentarily as she passes from the light, then, just as quickly, is once again consumed by darkness.

CHILD/MELISSA

Out of all the names that I have, that's my least favorite.

Jennifer reaches for the side bed panel where a set of emergency call buttons are located.

MELISSA

Don't even bother. I'll be long gone before they step through the door.

Jennifer's hand seizes near the button.

"Melissa" appears hovering between the patches of light and perpetual darkness.

MELISSA

Let's see... Anthony couldn't keep
a secret and neither could Evan.
He's been bad hasn't he? Very, very
bad...

The voice trails off. "Melissa" is gone.

JENNIFER

Melissa? Melissa?!
(then, in realization)
Oh God, Evan!

INT. HOSPITAL, NURSE'S STATION

Two NURSES are at the desk gossiping. Their conversation is
disrupted by EMERGENCY BEEPING emanating from one of the
rooms.

They share a panicked look, then makes a mad dash for --

JENNIFER'S ROOM

Where they stop at the door's threshold staring quizzically
at an empty bed.

INT. ST. JUDE'S ORPHANAGE, BOY'S DIVISION - LATER

The sleeping quarters. Numerous twin-size beds are flanked on
opposite sides of the room.

Light cuts through the darkness from the curtained windows.

The knob to the main door of the room, turns slowly.

The door CREAKS open, pushing light into the darkness.

The SHADOW OF A SMALL FIGURE emerges pushing the door open
fully.

A PAIR OF CHILD-LIKE FEET inch into the room.

She pulls something with her. A loud scrapping is heard
from...

... The HEAD to a SLEDGEHAMMER. It scars the floor as it is
dragged along.

EXT. ST. JUDE'S ORPHANAGE - NIGHT

The taxi pulls to an abrupt stop near the entrance.

Jennifer leaves from the car hurriedly and runs into the building.

INT. ST. JUDE'S ORPHANAGE, BOY'S DIVISION - CONTINUOUS

The silhouette of Melissa inches methodically, passing one bed after the other.

INT. ST. JUDE ORPHANAGE, CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Jennifer races up a flight of stairs. She makes it to the floor landing where a closed door has "SECOND FLOOR" positioned across the door.

She quickly opens the door.

BOY'S DIVISION SLEEPING QUARTERS

Melissa arrives at the foot of the bed. She grips the handle to the sledgehammer with both hands.

Heaves it from the floor, and in one continuous motion, bears it down onto the bed!

The SLEDGEHAMMER HEAD slouches in the sheets.

Melissa's decayed hand reaches for the sheet, overturns it. Pillows lined up to resemble a person.

Melissa kneels, looking under the bed.

Evan's eyes widen staring at --

-- MELISSA staring in Evan's direction.

MELISSA
(soft, innocent voice)
Snitches belongs in ditches.

She reaches for him.

CORRIDOR

Jennifer races desperately for the door to...

BOY'S DIVISION SLEEPING QUARTERS

Where she runs over to Evan's bed. Finding nothing but pillows, she kneels under the bed.

Jennifer backpedals from the bed in horror. She suppresses a scream with a hand to her mouth.

Jennifer turns away crying profusely.

INT. JENNIFER'S CAR (DRIVING) - LATER

Jennifer tries to concentrate on the road, but she's still visibly shaken.

She glances into the overhead mirror. A SMALL FIGURE shrouded in natural darkness sits in the backseat.

Jennifer SCREAMS.

Brakes to a complete stop.

Jennifer looks over her shoulder and into the backseat. It's now empty.

She turns around in her seat.

SUDDENLY -

Jennifer finds herself in a different car.

The road before her fades, converting into that of a person's driveway.

A familiar-looking neat, two-story country house could be identified through the front windshield.

Jennifer is no longer in the driver's seat. JOHN replaces her. Seated in the passenger's seat is Claire.

John stares straight ahead. Claire stares at him, waiting for him to say something.

JOHN

(after a moment)

We can't continue seeing each other.

CLAIRE

She doesn't know.

JOHN
(matter-of-factly)
I know.

Claire inches over to him, sliding her hand over his thigh.

CLAIRE
Maybe we can find some other way --

John shoves her hand away.

JOHN
I love my wife.

CLAIRE
Is that what you tell yourself
while you're fucking me?

Claire's words cut deep. John falls silent.

CLAIRE
Face it John, you can't live
without me in your life.

Claire moves in close for a kiss. John pulls away repulsed.

JOHN
It's over.

Claire is lost in John's eyes. She doesn't like what she sees.

CLAIRE
I guess now is more than a better
time to tell this.

JOHN
Tell me what?

CLAIRE
I'm pregnant.

John stares at her in disbelief. It takes a moment for him to register this blockbuster news.

CLAIRE
Say something.

JOHN
Get out.

CLAIRE
John.

JOHN

Leave.

Claire stares at John waiting for him to reconsider. John leans over and forcibly opens the door.

JOHN

Leave!

EXT. ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Claire leaves the car defeated, she slams the door in her wake.

She watches as John's car speeds off.

INT. JOHN'S CAR - CONTINUOUS (MOVING)

John tries to concentrate on the road, but he's still reeling from the bombshell.

His eyes drift to the overhead mirror. His eyes widen seeing something in its reflection.

Jennifer sits in the backseat.

JOHN

Jennifer?

There's a pain in her eyes. Not one of hurt, but of betrayal.

JENNIFER/MELISSA

Why did you have to hurt our family?

Her question silences John.

He glances back into the overhead.

There's something in Jennifer's hands. It appears metallic.

From out of nowhere, the flat blade of the screwdriver penetrates through the front of John's neck, and is violently snatched out.

Blood explodes from the wound, splatters over the windshield.

John slumps over the steering wheel, clutching his throat.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD

John's car careens from the road coming to an abrupt stop.

INT. CAR (PARKED)

Blood drips from John's slumped over body. A door in the rear is heard opening and closing.

SUDDENLY -

The interior also changes reverting back to interior of JENNIFER'S DURANGO.

But, the red stays, washing over Jennifer as she breaks down.

She looks up, focusing on the bright red neon sign hanging from the window of a nearby storefront.

"SYLVIA'S READING".

EXT. SYLVIA'S READING - LATER

Jennifer stops at the door.

JENNIFER
(laughs to herself)
What am I doing.

Just as she turns to leave, the door opens.

SYLVIA (late-forties) short-cropped, graying hair stands in the door.

SYLVIA
It's not like I have all day.

Jennifer looks around.

SYLVIA
Gimme a Break is on.

Sylvia walks inside, leaving the door ajar.

Jennifer hesitantly enters.

INT. SYLVIA'S READING - LATER

Jennifer closes the door in her wake.

She walks into --

-- a quaint, yet lived-in area.

SYLVIA
Make yourself comfortable.

Jennifer has a seat on the sofa.

A re-run episode of "Gimme a Break" plays on an old-fashioned, floor model television.

JENNIFER
Look, I don't normally do stuff like this.

SYLVIA (O.S.)
That's what they all say.

Sylvia enters with a tray of welcome snacks: a plate of chocolate cookies and two glasses of milk.

She places the tray on the wooden coffee table, then eases into the chair positioned across from Jennifer.

SYLVIA
Okay, let's get started while there's a commercial.

Sylvia extends both hands, opened palm up.

Gestures for Jennifer to place her palm in hers.

Jennifer slides up in the chair, places her palm over Sylvia's.

SYLVIA
("reading" Jennifer's palm)
Let's see...

Sylvia frowns, then flips over Jennifer's hands.

SYLVIA
Ah, there we go.

Sylvia frowns once more, then releases Jennifer's hands.

JENNIFER
What? What did you see?

SYLVIA
A hang-nail. You're badly in need
of a manicure.

JENNIFER
I don't have time for this
bullshit.

Jennifer stands to leave. She stops hearing:

SYLVIA
"Melissa" isn't who you think she
is. She's much more dangerous.

JENNIFER
Who is she?

SYLVIA
I know what she isn't, a deranged
personality.

JENNIFER
What is she, then?

SYLVIA
What do you think she is?

JENNIFER
I don't know, an evil spirit?

SYLVIA
I wouldn't necessarily call her
evil. A little misguided, but evil.

JENNIFER
What does she want with me?

SYLVIA
How should I know, she's your
protector?

JENNIFER
What is she protecting me from?

SYLVIA
All those who she deems are a
threat to you. You really should be
carefully what you ask for.

JENNIFER
I didn't ask for this.

SYLVIA

Are you certain about that? I'm sure all your childhood memories aren't fond ones.

Everything around Jennifer SHIFTS as if REWINDING.

INT. JENNIFER'S BEDROOM (FLASHBACK)

Young Jennifer lies asleep in bed. Hinges CREAK as a door opens.

SOMEONE climbs in her bed.

Young Jennifer moves slightly feeling the other's presence. She opens her eyes.

And that's when she hears it. A familiar VOICE.

JOHN

(soothing)

Don't worry, Honey. It's me.

INT. SYLVIA'S READING (PRESENT)

Jennifer pushes up from the sofa, pissed.

JENNIFER

That's bullshit. He never touched me.

SYLVIA

Who are you trying to convince?

Jennifer settles down; unable to deny the truth.

SYLVIA

You were scared. Alone. No friends. No one to talk to.

JENNIFER

(remembering)

I prayed to God to send me someone who wouldn't hurt me. Someone to protect me. The next day, I saw this little girl standing in my backyard. She looked just like me. Same clothes. Same hair. Same eyes. I would tell her my deepest secrets, and she would listen. She never judged me, or hated me.

(MORE)

JENNIFER (cont'd)

She understood me. She gave me what I needed at that time... a friend. I felt so safe whenever she was around. No one ever made me feel that way. She was my friend... my best friend.

(laughs off the tears)

This is crazy. I can't believe I'm actually talking about her. She was my imaginary friend. A figment of my imagination.

SYLVIA

A friend that you prayed for.

JENNIFER

To God. I prayed to God.

SYLVIA

My dear, God isn't the only being that listens to prayers.

Jennifer allows the weight of Sylvia words to sink in.

SYLVIA

Melissa isn't apart of our world, so she isn't bound by the rules that govern them. When you conjured her, you gave her the power to do as she damn well pleases.

JENNIFER

How do I stop her?

SYLVIA

Call the Ghostbusters. I don't know. My job is merely to "see" and point you in the right direction.

JENNIFER

Alright, what direction should I go?

Sylvia points to the wall mirror.

Jennifer stands before it; regards her reflection.

SYLVIA

She uses you as a conduit to enter into our world. You hold the key, Jennifer. She knows this, but she isn't aware that you know. As long as she believes you don't, you have the advantage.

Jennifer turns to Sylvia with renewed hope.

EXT./INT. RODNEY'S CAR - LATER

Stops at a red light.

Rodney glances over at a corner PAWN SHOP.

Claire walks out to her car.

EXT. ANOTHER STREET - CONTINUOUS

Claire places something in her car, motions to get in, then reconsiders seeing Rodney pulling up alongside her car.

CLAIRE

Hey.

Rodney leaves from his car, studies her for a moment.

RODNEY

What're you doing?

CLAIRE

Why so interested?

RODNEY

Because you have a box of shells,
and you smell ninety proof.

CLAIRE

I don't have to explain myself to
you.

She motions to enter her car.

Rodney holds open the door.

RODNEY

(stern)

What're you doing?

CLAIRE

What I should've done thirteen
years ago.

Claire enters her car, quickly. Drives off.

Rodney watches her car shrink into the distance, concerned.

His phone RINGS. Rodney answers.

RODNEY
Hello? I'm on my way.

Rodney runs back to his vehicle.

INT. CLAIRE'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER (DRIVING)

Claire reaches for her phone. Pushes a button. A number dials.

INT. JENNIFER'S DURANGO - CONTINUOUS (DRIVING)

Jennifer reacts to her RINGING PHONE. Answers it.

JENNIFER
(into the phone)
Claire?

INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION - JENNIFER AND CLAIRE ON THE PHONE

CLAIRE
We need to talk. Meet me at John's house.

JENNIFER
What about?

CLAIRE
The past.

END INTERCUT

Claire disconnects the call.

INT. JENNIFER'S DURANGO - CONTINUOUS (DRIVING)

Jennifer lowers the phone, confounded by the conversation.

INT. ST. JUDE'S ORPHANAGE, BOY'S DIVISION - CONTINUOUS

Patrick kneels, pulling back the white sheet covering Evans body.

Seeing enough, he replaces the sheet.

INT. ST. JUDE'S ORPHANAGE, CORRIDOR

Patrick walks out. Has to take a breather.

RODNEY (O.S.)

Pat?

Two Officers prevents Rodney from advancing.

PATRICK

(to the Officers)

It's okay.

RODNEY

What happened, Pat?

Pat escorts Rodney into the boys bedroom area where Evan's body lies.

Pat kneels to pull back the sheet.

Rodney turns away, horrified.

PATRICK

Is he one of yours?

Rodney leans against the wall. It's the only thing keeping him upright.

RODNEY

Yeah.

PATRICK

I'm sorry.

Patrick consoles him.

RODNEY

Who would do something like this to a child?

PATRICK

I don't know, but I rest until I find the bastard. I promise you that.

Patrick leaves.

INT. ABANDONED HOUSE, FOYER - LATER

Jennifer is soaked from the rain. She's startled by a sound emanating from upstairs.

JENNIFER
(moving for the staircase)
Claire?

Stares at it for a moment, thrown. Surprisingly, the staircase is intact.

Jennifer cautiously ascends the stairs.

EXT. ABANDONED HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Another car parks behind Jennifer's. Claire is seen in the driver's seat.

INT. CLAIRE'S CAR (PARKED)

Claire stares off at the house. She reaches for the pint of Jack lying absently in the passenger seat. Twist off the top and takes a swig.

She leans over to the glove compartment, pulls from it a SNUB-NOSE REVOLVER.

She checks the chambers. Smiles satisfied.

With a flick of the wrist, she snaps it back in place.

INT. ABANDONED HOUSE, UPSTAIRS

Jennifer stops before the MASTER BEDROOM.

THEN -

Everything begins to shift as if time was rewinding. Bringing us to --

MASTER BEDROOM (FLASHBACK)

It's dark out. Anna lies in bed asleep. She stirs, sits up.

She walks wearily to the door, partially opening it. She stops instinctively seeing --

Young Jennifer ascending the stairs.

Anna turns to the digital clock. It reads: 3:00 A.M.

Anna opens the door further and pokes her head out. She watches Young Jennifer enter her room, closing her door in her wake.

Anna opens the door wide and inches for the bedroom.

INT. JENNIFER'S BEDROOM

Young Jennifer is knelt at a wall. Near her is a slab of wood. She places something in the wall, then motions for the slab of wood.

She stops, sensing another's presence. Looks over her shoulder at --

-- her bedroom door, which is now partially opened.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM

The door CREAKS open.

Anna's in bed. Her eyes are closed suggesting that she's asleep. A shadow looms over her sleeping face.

Anna's eyes snap open. They widen in horror seeing --

-- Young Jennifer with a sledgehammer in hand, elevated over head.

Before Anna is able to scream, Young Jennifer bears down with the hammer.

THEN -

Anna snaps up from bed, SCREAMING. She's covered in sweat, breathing heavily.

She looks around, searching. The room's empty, except for her.

Anna quickly leaves bed.

INT. JENNIFER'S BEDROOM

Anna opens the door partially, pokes her head in. Young Jennifer is fast asleep in bed.

Anna continues into the room, inching for the wall in which Young Jennifer was seen before earlier.

She kneels down, examining it.

There's a flat-head screwdriver on the adjoining night stand.

She grabs it and studies it as if looking for something off.

Not finding anything, her attention turns to the wall.

She starts working the corners, loosening the wood.

Anna moves to the other end. She's almost there.

YOUNG JENNIFER (OS)

Mommy?

Anna's body jolts from the voice.

She quickly lowers the screwdriver, turns to --

-- Young Jennifer, who's watching her curiously.

Anna tries desperately to put on a natural air.

ANNA

Yes, Dear?

YOUNG JENNIFER

What are you doing?

ANNA

I thought I dropped something in your room.

YOUNG JENNIFER

Did you find it?

ANNA

Yes. Yes I did, Sweetie. Go back to sleep.

Young Jennifer closes her eyes.

Anna expels a sigh of relief.

She stands, leaning to give her daughter a kiss. Leaves the room.

Young Jennifer's eyes open slowly, staring at the closing door.

There's something off about Young Jennifer that's apparent in her eyes -- they appear calculating and dangerous, as if something was clawing its way from beneath, desperately trying to get out.

The IMAGE slowly dissipates as Claire (from the PRESENT) enters from the corridor, disrupting it.

CLAIRE

Jennifer. I'm glad you came.

JENNIFER

You got me here. What do you want?

CLAIRE

To exorcise some demons.

Claire pulls out a SNUB-NOSE REVOLVER.

JENNIFER

(seeing the gun)

What are you doing, Claire?

CLAIRE

I want to believe that what happened with you in this house was a misunderstanding. I want to believe that you had nothing to do with my daughter dying the way she did last night. I want to believe that you are cured.

(raising the gun to Jennifer's head)

I want to believe that I'm wrong about you.

JENNIFER

You are.

CLAIRE

That's the thing... I don't think I am. This will end. Right here, right now.

JENNIFER

(backing away)

Claire you've been drinking. You're not thinking clearly.

CLAIRE

Oh, my eyes are wide open. I didn't see it before, but everything's crystal clear now. It was you. It's always been you.

Jennifer loses her footing, falls on her ass.

She looks over her shoulder at the wall where a piece of wood is missing.

SUDDENLY -

The room begins to reconstruct as if rewinding. Returning everything back to --

JENNIFER'S BEDROOM (FLASHBACK)

Where Anna stops before the wall. She snatches the flat-head screwdriver from the night stand and kneels before the wall.

Anna works the wood with the blade of the tool, quickly. After a moment, she is able to pry away the wood revealing a rectangular compartment.

Anna looks inside.

Reaches in, grabs something.

Anna breaks down as her eyes fixates on what she has in her hand -- ANTHONY'S TEDDY BEAR.

ANNA

(in realization)

Oh God.

Anna's body seizes hearing the sound of approaching footsteps. She presses her back against the wall near the door.

It opens wide providing cover.

Young Jennifer crosses to the wall near her bed.

Her eyes fall on the exposed rectangular compartment. Her heart beats faster.

Her eyes meet the flat-head screwdriver, then to the fragment of wood lying haphazardly near it.

Young Jennifer panics, hurries over to the compartment and kneels before it.

She looks inside. Not finding what she's looking for, she searches around frantically.

ANNA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Looking for something?

Young Jennifer's startled by the voice. She stands, faces her mother emerging from behind the door.

YOUNG JENNIFER
Mommy?

Anna pulls out Anthony's teddy bear.

ANNA
Was this what you were looking for?

There's no response from Young Jennifer.

Anna storms over to the child, kneels before her so that she's at her eye level.

ANNA
Answer me!

Young Jennifer eyes fixate on the stuffed toy, then to her mother.

ANNA
Why did you have this? What did you do?

YOUNG JENNIFER
Anthony was bad, Mommy.

Anna shakes her head in disbelief. Tries to fight back emotion. Can't.

ANNA
Anthony told me that you hurt somebody. Is that true?

Young Jennifer can only stare. Reading the look on the small child's face --

ANNA
Who did you hurt?

Young Jennifer can't bare the sight of her mother, tries to look away.

Anna takes hold of Young Jennifer's chin, forces her to look at her.

ANNA
Who did you hurt?

She doesn't respond.

ANNA
(out of anger)
Who!

YOUNG JENNIFER
(after a moment)
Daddy.

ANNA
What did you do, Jennifer?

And just like that, her demeanor changes. And "Melissa" takes over.

MELISSA
Stuck a screwdriver through his
fucking throat. Kinda poetic, don't
you think? Seeing though he was
screwing me.

Anna searches Young Jennifer's eyes. There's something in her eyes that seems dangerous.

ANNA
Who are you?

MELISSA
Your daughter.

ANNA
(matter-of-factly)
You're not my daughter. Who are
you?!

The jig is up. "Melissa" finally reveals herself.

MELISSA
I have many names.

ANNA
Where's my baby?!

There's no reply.

Riding on pure emotion, Anna slaps "Melissa."

The momentum from the slap knocks "Melissa" on her ass.

A cruel smile forms on "Melissa's" bloodied lips.

ANNA
Give me my child back!

MELISSA
Not a chance.

ANNA
(fighting her emotions)
You can't have her.

MELISSA
(matter-of-factly)
I already got her.

"Melissa" pushes up from the floor. Using her momentum, she shoves Anna.

Anna stumbles off-balance, losing her footing.

She SLAMS her head into the corner of the night stand, then drops to the floor.

A blood pool begins to frame her skull.

"Melissa" straightens. Her eyes lock on Anna's lifeless body in a euphoric gaze.

THEN, her demeanor softens, and Young Jennifer returns.

She SCREAMS seeing her mother's dead body.

She drops to her knees, positioning her mother's head on her lap as she cries.

Claire (from the PRESENT) disrupts the image reverting everything back to the PRESENT.

She has the revolver dead-locked on Jennifer.

JENNIFER
(low, but audible)
She killed her?

Jennifer's rambling causes Claire to stop.

CLAIRE
What?

Jennifer's teary eyes meets Claire's.

JENNIFER

Melissa. She took away everything
we both loved. And it's my fault. I
brought her here.

They turn in the direction of the closet door as it CREAKS
open.

Melissa leaves from the closet pulling a sledgehammer. The
dragging metal head creates deep scars in the wooden floor.

She approaches Jennifer and Claire.

EXT. COUNTRY HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A patrol car pulls to a stop near the dilapidated fence. The
Uniformed Officer stares out at the house. His eyes fixate on
the two vehicles.

He gets on his radio.

UNIFORMED OFFICER

Base, I have activity at the ol'
Roman place. I'm going to take a
look around. Over.

He opens the door. Leaves the car.

INT. COUNTRY HOUSE, MELISSA'S ROOM

Claire levels her weapon on the advancing target. She fires.

The bullet moves through Melissa as if she was an apparition,
and strikes the far wall.

Claire fires again and again. Her bullets pock the far wall.

Melissa continues to advance.

Melissa grabs the handle tightly and is in the motion of
lifting the hammer, when -

JENNIFER

No!

Melissa stops involuntarily.

She looks pass Claire to Jennifer.

MELISSA
(incredulous)
What are you doing?! She ruined
your family.

JENNIFER
No. You ruined my family.

MELISSA
I was there when no one else was. I
went to bat for you. I protected
you. No one hurt you with me
around.

JENNIFER
I don't need you to fight for
anymore.

MELISSA
You never had the heart to finish
anything you start.

JENNIFER
I didn't start this... you did.

CLAIRE
And I'm going to finish it.

Claire redirects her weapon from Melissa to Jennifer.

She smiles at the reaction from Melissa.

CLAIRE
(matter-of-factly)
If you die, she dies.

JENNIFER
I'm not gonna let you just kill me
Claire.

CLAIRE
Doesn't look like you have much
choice.

Claire's finger inches back on the trigger.

Jennifer reacts.

She charges Claire, seizes her arm.

Wild gunfire pock the far wall.

Jennifer overpowers Claire forcing her to lose her footing.

Both women fall to the floor in a heap.

The SNUB-NOSE slides across the floor stopping near the far wall.

The two women struggle to gain position.

EXT. COUNTRY HOUSE

The Uniformed Officer reacts to the gunshots. Gets on his portable.

UNIFORMED OFFICER

Base, I have possible gunfire at the Mason house. Requesting back-up.

INT. COUNTRY HOUSE, MELISSA'S ROOM

Claire kicks Jennifer in the chest. Knocking her back.

Jennifer's body SLAMS against the wall, drops to the floor.

Claire scrambles across the floor, reaching for the gun.

She's just inches away from the weapon, when...

Melissa towers over her. Both hands holding the sledgehammer over head.

Just as Melissa bears down with her weapon, she hesitates, hearing:

JENNIFER

Melissa, stop!

Jennifer's voice freezes Melissa.

Giving Claire the opportunity to make a desperate dive for the gun.

She snatches it up, and spins in Jennifer's direction.

MELISSA

No!

Time slows to a crawl as Melissa continues her motion with the sledgehammer.

Claire pulls the trigger.

The BULLET discharges from the barrel.

The mallet to the hammer is just inches from Claire's head when --

The BULLET STRIKES Jennifer.

Melissa SCREAMS.

The HAMMER slips from Melissa's grasp and falls to the floor near Claire's head.

Jennifer is thrown back across the room, breaking through the bordered window.

Claire looks up at Melissa as she evaporates into nothingness.

The only thing remaining is the sledgehammer.

Claire moves to the broken out window, and stares out.

Jennifer's sprawled across the lawn.

Her face is covered in BLOOD.

Claire leaves from the window, satisfied.

EXT. COUNTRY HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Patrick's sedan pulls alongside other police cruisers. A Police Helicopter circle overhead concentrating its light on the house.

Claire, in handcuffs, is being escorted from the house by two Uniformed Officers.

Patrick stops them.

PATRICK
What happened?

ARRESTING OFFICER
Uh, we found her inside with an
unregistered hand gun.

Patrick notices Jennifer's vehicle.

PATRICK
(to Claire)
Where is she?

Claire simply smiles. An OFFICER runs from around the house.

OFFICER
(out of breath)
Sir... we got a body out back.
Looks like she's been shot.

Patrick stares at Claire accusingly.

PATRICK
What did you do?

CLAIRE
I ended it.

The Officers escort her to their cruiser.

Patrick watches as the Officers carefully place her into the backseat, then closes the door.

From the back window, Claire stares off at Patrick.

He turns away.

EXT. COUNTRY HOUSE, BACK AREA - CONTINUOUS

The Officer leads Patrick to Jennifer. She's sprawled across the lawn either unconscious or dead.

EMT's are working on her.

PATRICK
Is she alright?

EMT
Her vitals are weak, but she's
still alive.
(to his partner)
We better move her.

Patrick kneels, holds Jennifer's hand tenderly.

PATRICK
It's gonna be okay, kid.

JENNIFER -

Blood consumes the majority of her face. Her eyes are closed. There's no movement from her.

Suddenly, the environment changes. The Blood covering her face, slowly fades.

Water surrounds her on all sides.

We're now back in tub from the opening sequence.

Again, Jennifer motions for the surface... can't break it.

She struggles and struggles until, she stops.

The look of utter fear flushes her face.

We now see what Jennifer's imprisoned reflection saw all along -- Melissa.

Melissa stands there for a moment regarding Jennifer; who's now imprisoned within the "mirror".

MELISSA

Don't worry, I'll take care of everything.

As Jennifer SCREAMS from her imprisonment --

INT. HOSPITAL, PATIENT'S ROOM - DAY

Jennifer's muffled SCREAMS are still heard, even as her physical body lies soundly in a comatose sleep.

A white sheet covers her body. A white bandage envelopes the crown of her head.

Patrick stands outside the door with a FEMALE DOCTOR. She speaks to him candidly.

DOCTOR

The bullet grazed her head, but didn't do any lasting damage. That fall didn't help matters though.

PATRICK

How long will she be out of it?

DOCTOR

There's no way of knowing. Could be days, weeks, or even months. I hate to say this, but there's a chance she may never regain consciousness.

Patrick looks into Jennifer's room. He walks in and approaches her bed.

He grips her hand, tenderly.

PATRICK

You don't have to worry about anything anymore. It's over.

He gives a soft "good-bye" kiss on her forehead, then walks away.

INT. PATRICK'S HOME, LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Patrick sits in his recliner. Takes a sip from a glass of non-alcohol wine.

There's a KNOCK at the door.

Patrick leaves his recliner.

FOYER

Patrick opens the door to Captain Perez in street clothes.

CAPTAIN PEREZ

I wanted to thank you for coming back. I know it end the way you wanted, but thanks anyway.

PATRICK

Anytime.

Captain Perez leans in and kisses him, passionately. As she pulls away, Patrick looks at her taken aback.

CAPTAIN PEREZ

I've waited a long time to do that. See you around, Pat.

And she's off.

Patrick looks after her, smitten.

Closes the door.

INT. FEMALE DETENTION CENTER, INMATE'S CELL - NIGHT

Not much can be seen because of the darkness. Except for a section of the cell where light shines in from the corridor.

An INMATE, dressed in a tacky-colored jumpsuit, sits on the cot humming a song to herself.

The light reveals the inmate to be -- CLAIRE.

There is a disturbing sound emanating in the distance that competes with the humming.

It starts off faint, indistinguishable. But intensifies, becoming almost unbearable.

Claire's humming trails off as she straightens to hear the sound.

Something at the door has attracted Claire's attention.

From behind the cell door, Melissa's looking in.

CLAIRE
Please God no.

Melissa moves through the door like an APPARITION.

When Melissa enters the cell through the door, she materializes back into her physical form.

CLAIRE backpedals herself into a corner.

Her mouth opens miming a SCREAM, but nothing comes out.

Melissa grips the handle tightly.

Claire shields her face with her hands.

She defensively guards herself from...

...the HEAD to a SLEDGEHAMMER.

As it lunges down on her at full speed.

THE END