

INSOMNIAC

an original screenplay by

David M Troop

FADE IN:

OPENING TITLE SEQUENCE

Titles fade in and out over black.

BURROWS (V.O.)
Insomniac, you're on the air.

WOMAN (V.O.)
Hey, Dave, my husband's snoring again.
I tried those nose strips, but they
don't work.

BURROWS (V.O.)
Have you tried earplugs? No,
seriously, have your husband checked
for sleep apnea.
(beat)
Insomniac, you're on the air.

MAN #1 (V.O.)
Dave, you catch the Eagles game?

BURROWS (V.O.)
Unfortunately.
(beat)
Insomniac, you're on the air.

CALLER (V.O.)
Hello, Dave. Maybe you can help me.
I can't sleep. My mind is constantly
racing. I can't clear my head.
It's like I'm having this nightmare,
but I'm awake. It sounds crazy --

BURROWS (V.O.)
No, actually, it sounds like my first
marriage. This is what I do. Go
out and take a walk. Sometimes the
night air helps me relax.

CALLER (V.O.)
Thanks, Dave.

BURROWS (V.O.)
Insomniac, you're on the air.

MAN #2
Hey, Dave, first time, long time.

BURROWS (V.O.)
Thanks, man.

MAN #2 (V.O.)

I'm calling about the lady with the husband who snores. You're right, he should get checked out. I have sleep apnea. It could be dangerous.

BURROWS (V.O.)

Yeah, I totally agree. Thanks, man.
(beat)
Insomniac, you're on the air.

MAN #1 (V.O.)

I just called about the Eagles game.

BURROWS (V.O.)

Sorry, guy, I'm from New York. I'm a Giants fan.

MAN #1 (V.O.)

What are you doin' in Philly?

BURROWS (V.O.)

Good question.

INT. RADIO STATION STUDIO - NIGHT

SUPER - Two weeks later

The room is dimly lit. A fluorescent ceiling light flickers, the computer screens illuminate the console, the Philadelphia skyline glows outside a large window.

DAVE BURROWS, host of Insomniac, 40s, with bags under his eyes, sits at the console in his computer chair. He sips from his Insomniac coffee mug, skims some of his newspaper, as he waits for the commercial to finish.

STEVE, the producer of Insomniac, 30s, stands behind the glass and cues Burrows.

An **ON THE AIR** sign lights up.

Burrows adjusts his headset and leans into the microphone.

BURROWS

It's midnight. People are sleeping.
All warm and fuzzy in their soft
beds. Not us. We're wide awake.
Staring at the alarm clock. Waiting.
It's going to be another long night.
(beat)

This is Insomniac. I'm Dave Burrows.
I'm here to listen. You might as
well call. What else are you going
to do? Sleep?

Burrows presses a button on the console.

BURROWS
Insomniac, you're on the air.

Burrows listens as THE CALLER speaks in a calm, monotone voice - almost hypnotic.

CALLER (V.O.)
Hello, Dave. I called about two weeks ago. You probably don't remember. I just wanted you to know that I followed your advice. I couldn't sleep, so I took a walk over by the college tonight.

BURROWS
I'm glad it helped.

Burrows reaches for the console to disconnect the call.

CALLER (V.O.)
Something happened while I was out walking. I thought you might want to hear about it.

Burrows settles in for the story.

BURROWS
Sure, why not?

CALLER (V.O.)
There was this girl just leaving her class. She looked young - almost too young to be in college. We talked for a few minutes. I could tell she was afraid, so I offered to escort her home.

BURROWS
You can't be too careful. There's a lot of creeps in this city.

CALLER (V.O.)
That's exactly what I told her.

BURROWS
So, you walked her home.

Burrows sits back and listens.

Sudden, almost subliminal, images are INTERCUT during the Caller's monologue.

SERIES OF SHOTS

YOUNG WOMAN unlocks her apartment door.

Young Woman peels off her sweater.

Young Woman curls up on the couch with a cup of coffee.

CLOSE UP of Young Woman's toe ring.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

CALLER (V.O.)

She only lived a few blocks away. When we got to her apartment, she invited me in for some coffee. We sat and talked. I can't even remember what we talked about. She sat across from me on the sofa. She took off her sweater. Slowly. She had on a tight T-shirt. Really thin. I couldn't stop staring at her breasts. She saw me watching her, but she didn't say anything.

(beat)

Do you like toe rings, Dave?

BURROWS

I used to. Until I took up jogging. They really killed my feet.

CALLER (V.O.)

You're a funny guy, Dave.

BURROWS

I'm assuming there's a point to this story, right?

CALLER (V.O.)

Sorry. The only reason I mentioned it was because I noticed she had one on when I tied her foot to the bed.

Burrows sits up in his chair. He exchanges glances with Steve from across the room.

CALLER (V.O.)

It was shaped like a butterfly. I thought it was sexy.

Burrows leans in.

BURROWS
I remember you, now.

CALLER (V.O.)
I didn't get to thank you. I'm
enjoying my little walks at night.

BURROWS
Are you still having the nightmares?

INT. APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

The Caller, a dark figure in a hooded sweatshirt, walks through the apartment, as he talks on his cell phone.

CALLER
It's funny you should ask. I'm having
one right now. But, they're not the
same as before. They're stronger.
More vivid. It's hard to explain.
I'm not watching the nightmare,
anymore. I'm a living, willing
participant in a dream I can't
control. The longer I stay awake,
the more the nightmare becomes
reality. I can't even say for certain
if this conversation is actually
taking place. It's like being trapped
inside my own mind. But, thanks to
you, I found a way out. I can finally
sleep again.

BURROWS (V.O.)
Listen, um - I'm sorry, I forgot
your name.

The Caller walks into the --

BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The Caller sits on the edge of the bed, flips through a stack of cds on the bedside table. He wears latex gloves, one covers a tattoo on his wrist.

CALLER
I can't believe the garbage these
kids listen to.

BURROWS (V.O.)
Where are you? Is she there? Put
her on the phone.

The Caller glances over at the Young Woman's foot which is tied to the bed post with a ripped sheet.

CALLER

I'm sorry, Dave. She's unable to come to the phone right now.

INT. RADIO STATION STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Burrows waits and listens. Steve motions for Burrows to disconnect the call, but Burrows shakes his head.

CALLER (V.O.)

So, anyway, the reason I called was to thank you personally for your help. I've been racking my brain trying to find a suitable way to thank you. I was considering sending you a fruit basket, but that's not a proper gift for one guy to give another guy. And, I thought, what if Dave is allergic to strawberries?

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The Caller places a cd in the stereo.

CALLER

Then it finally dawned on me. I shouldn't be keeping this all to myself. That's just being selfish on my part. So, I decided to make you a partner. Fifty-fifty. Well, it's more like seventy-thirty. I am doing all the leg work.

INT. RADIO STATION STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

BURROWS

I have no idea what the hell you're talking about.

CALLER (V.O.)

Dave, just sit back, relax, and enjoy.

Music BLASTS over Burrows' headset. Heavy breathing.

BURROWS

Okay, that's enough. Listen, at first, I thought this was funny, but now you're going too far.

The noises fill the studio. Heavy breathing. A bedpost slams against the wall. Music blares. Muffled screams.

Burrows becomes entranced by the perverse symphony.
Rapid fire images are INTERCUT with Burrows listening.

SERIES OF SHOTS

Young Woman's foot tied to the bed.
A stereo sits on the floor next to the bed.
The bedpost slams repeatedly against the wall.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

Burrows snaps back to reality.

BURROWS

All right. That's enough.

Burrows reaches for the console as the noises stop dead.
Burrows sits still and listens in silence.

CALLER (V.O.)

Are you still there, Dave? I hope
you enjoyed it. Well, not as much
as I did, of course.

BURROWS

Listen, I'll admit I appreciate a
good prank call. God knows, I've
done some some sick ones in my time.
But, you just crossed the line, pal.

CALLER (V.O.)

You don't believe me? Do you think
I'm joking, Dave? Do you think I'm
some high school kid with acne jerking
off in my parents' basement? You
think I have nothing better to do
with my life than call you in the
middle of the night and tell you
some sick, perverted story just to
get off? Is that what you think?

Burrows pauses and contemplates his answer.

BURROWS

Yes. That's exactly what I think.

CALLER (V.O.)

I don't know what to say, Dave. I
am really disappointed. I thought
you would appreciate that. I tried
to do something nice to repay you,
and this is what I get?

BURROWS

Buddy, I have no idea what the hell you're trying to say, but this conversation is over.

Burrows reaches to disconnect the call.

CALLER (V.O.)

You really have no idea, do you? Two weeks ago, I was at the end of my rope. You told me to take a walk, get some air, clear my head - so I did. I met this girl out walking her dog. I couldn't control myself. The next thing I know, I'm waking up in my bed. My sheets are bloody. I have no idea what happened. But, then I realize that I am awake. Awake. And I feel the best I've ever felt in my life.

A click, then silence.

Burrows sits and stares at the speakers. Steve taps on the glass to get his attention. Burrows realizes he is live and leans into the microphone.

BURROWS

(shaken)

This is Insomniac. We'll be right back.

Burrows pushes a button on the console. He slowly removes his headset and sits back in his chair.

STEVE (V.O.)

What the hell was that? What do we do? Do we call the cops?

BURROWS

(into mic)

And tell them what? We just talked to some nut job? We get calls like this all the time.

STEVE (V.O.)

Not like this.

BURROWS

(into mic)

Okay, Steve, call nine one one. What are you gonna say? We don't know anything.

INT. RADIO STATION STUDIO - MORNING

Through the large window, Burrows sees the sun rise behind the Philadelphia skyline. He looks like he has been through a war. He leans into the microphone one last time.

BURROWS

The sun rises again. People wake up. Rested. Alarm clocks go off all around the city. Kids go to school. People go to work. A brand new day. Not for us. We're still awake. Our eyelids are heavy, but we can't shut them. We lie in our beds and stare at the ceiling. We can hear the noises around us. The sounds of people living normal lives. But, we can't do that. Our lives are anything but normal. We can only sit and wait for the sun to set again. Until then, I'm Dave Burrows. This is Insomniac.

The ON THE AIR sign shuts off.

STEVE (V.O.)

We're out.

Burrows peels off his headset and sits back in his chair - exhausted.

Steve enters the studio and pulls up another chair.

STEVE

Why don't you go home. You look like crap. I can finish up here.

BURROWS

I can't get that call out of my head.

STEVE

Don't worry about it. Like you said, it was probably a prank.

BURROWS

And what if it wasn't. What if it was real? What if two innocent girls are dead because I talked some psycho into killing them?

STEVE

Go home. Get some sleep. If I hear anything, I'll call you.

INT. MEN'S ROOM - DAY

Burrows washes his face at the sink, pats it dry with some towels. He stares at his reflection in the mirror. Sniffs. Tosses the towels in the trash.

INT. HALLWAY - MORNING

Burrows stands deep in thought, waits for the elevator. DING. The doors slide open and Burrows enters. The doors slide shut.

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Burrows rides the elevator to the lobby. His eyes full of anguish and remorse.

DING. The elevator arrives. The doors slide open. Burrows stands still. The elevator doors slide shut.

DETECTIVE HARRIS, 50, suit and overcoat, catches the elevator doors before they close.

HARRIS

David Burrows?

Burrows blinks himself awake.

BURROWS

Yeah.

HARRIS

I'm Detective Harris from the Philadelphia PD. I'm inspecting a homicide which occurred early this morning around Temple University.

Harris flips his identification at Burrows who barely nods.

HARRIS

I'd like to ask you a few questions. Would you mind if we went to your studio?

BURROWS

Yeah, it's upstairs. Fifth floor.

Harris enters the elevator. He reaches for the buttons, exposes a tattoo on his wrist.

HARRIS

I have to confess something. I'm
kind of a fan.

BURROWS

You like the show?

HARRIS

Yeah. You're a funny guy, Dave.

The elevator doors shut.

FADE OUT