THE DEAD ZONE

"Netherworld"

CAST

JOHNNY SMITH       VERA SMITH
SARAH BANNERMAN     DR. SHARON WEIZAK
WALT BANNERMAN      ELAINE MacGOWAN
BRUCE LEWIS         DEPUTY ROSCOE
EUGENE PURDY        KEN
JOHNNY BANNERMAN    MARCO
MIRANDA SMITH       SUPERVISOR
                     DEPUTY’S VOICE
                     Paging Operator’s Voice
### THE DEAD ZONE

"NETHERWORLD"

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Begin with a familiar beep-beep sound a truck makes when it backs up...

FADE IN:

1 EXT. MAINE LANDSCAPE - MORNING (STOCK)

Extraordinary beauty shots. A perfect New England day. Peaceful and calm in the crisp morning air. The beep-beep sound continues.

2 INT. JOHNNY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Close on Johnny in bed... shades drawn but light sneaking in the window... the beep-beep continues but it's coming now from an alarm clock by the bedstand... Johnny's eyes open and he reaches over and hits the button that turns the alarm beeping off.

We hear someone moving around in the kitchen downstairs, refrigerator opening and closing, a pan clanking on the stove... Johnny reacts curiously to the sounds, comes up on one elbow...

SARAH'S VOICE
(downstairs)
Breakfast's ready!

JOHNNY
(reacts, to himself)
Sarah?

What kind of surprise is this?

ANGLE

He sits up - wearing a T-shirt and pajama bottoms and reaches out toward the nightstand where he would normally find his cane... it isn't there...

JOHNNY
(murmering to himself)
Where's my cane?

(CONTINUED)
He discovers and picks up a photo of himself and Sarah in a heart shaped frame on the nightstand... reacts curiously and then looks around --

P.O.V. - THE BEDROOM

which has a definite female touch to the decor... with frilly, ribbony accessories and artwork that no single guy would ever be caught dead with in his room... and if that's not enough, there's a clear suggestion in the bed
that someone slept next to him last night... and a negligee is hanging from the hook on the bathroom door...

RESUME JOHNNY

as he reacts to the room... he pushes himself to his feet and takes a tentative step as he looks around the room for the cane... then realizing --

JOHNNY
  (to himself, how can this be?)
  No pain...

He takes hesitant but pain-free steps across the room, toward a bathrobe hanging on a hook...

ANGLE - THE DOOR

where little Johnny walks into view, rubbing his sleepy eyes... he pauses a moment at the door and looks in...

LITTLE JOHNNY
  (yawning)
  Morning, Dad.

And moves past to go downstairs. On Johnny's stunned reaction...

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER
INT. SMITH HOUSE - MAIN FLOOR - MORNING

Johnny is wearing the bathrobe as he comes down the stairs... his eyes confused... moves toward the kitchen... hearing Sarah and little Johnny in mid-conversation...

LITTLE JOHNNY (O.S.)
Mom, I just woke up...

SARAH (O.S.)
This is when your brain is fresh. 'Compare'.

LITTLE JOHNNY (O.S.)
(sighs)
Don't remember.

SARAH (O.S.)
C-o-m-p-a-r-e. I thought you studied these with your father.

LITTLE JOHNNY (O.S.)
I did.

Johnny enters...

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

to see the most typical domestic scene imaginable... Sarah at the stove cooking pancakes... she has a school list of spelling words by the stove...

SARAH
'Repair"...

LITTLE JOHNNY
I forget.

SARAH
(seeing Johnny enter)
Your son is not cooperating.

JOHNNY
I don't understand...

SARAH
R-e-p-a-i-r... repeat it...

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

LITTLE JOHNNY  
(mumbling, rushed,  
disinterested)  
R-e-p-a-i-r...

JOHNNY  
What... what are you doing here...?

SARAH  
(gives him a look)  
Studying for the spelling test.  
Which was supposed to be done  
last night?

LITTLE JOHNNY  
Why do we need to learn to spell  
when we have Spellcheck?

He moves to her at the stove...

JOHNNY  
Sarah... what is going on?  
(off her confused  
look, sotto)  
When did you tell him?

SARAH  
Tell who?

JOHNNY  
Johnny.

SARAH  
Tell him what?

JOHNNY  
He knows. About me.

SARAH  
What about you?

JOHNNY  
That I'm his... you... he called  
me 'dad'.

A beat. Sarah smiles quizzically at him, not understanding  
what he's getting at.

SARAH  
What do you want him to call you?

She moves away from him to bring two plates of pancakes  
to the table... Johnny stands there like a boxer taking  
an eight count.

(CONTINUED)
MIRANDA
I'm hungry.

He turns to see a darling three year old girl with tired eyes entering, carrying a Teddy bear...

SARAH
There's a sleepy-head...

And Johnny doesn't know how to react to this latest revelation... another child. She moves to him and reaches up to be picked up like it's the most natural thing in the world. But of course it's not at all natural to Johnny who hesitates a beat then after a quick glance toward Sarah, bends over and picks up the little girl.

JOHNNY
Hello.

She smiles at him.

MIRANDA
Hi Daddy.

SARAH
(a joke)
Daddy doesn't want to be called 'daddy' this morning.

MIRANDA
Why not?

SARAH
He was just about to tell us.

All eyes to Johnny for the punchline of his strange joke... a beat as Johnny looks into the smiling eyes of the three-year-old in his arms...

JOHNNY
Daddy...

(beat)
...is just fooling around.

And it's said with internal confusion raging and puzzled eyes but at the same time that line represents his turn away from trying to get answers. Things are unreal. It's absurd, he knows. And he can't explain it. So he's going along until he can. As that process takes place in his mind for a beat or two, Johnny is just standing there holding a child and doesn't quite know what to do with her...

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (3)

SARAH
(nodding to the table)
Her pancake's getting cold.

JOHNNY
Oh... right.

He moves to the table... and there's a little dance as she holds on to his neck as he tries to lower her into the chair but she won't let go...

MIRANDA
In your lap, silly, like always.

JOHNNY
Lap. Right.

Johnny sits in the chair and Miranda transitions into his lap, begins to eat. Sarah brings the spelling list over.

SARAH
Spelling words. Test him. Drink your milk.

JOHNNY
Right.

He reaches for the glass of milk.

SARAH
Not you. Her. Since when do you drink milk anyway? It makes you constipated.

Johnny reacts to the casual wifely intimacy of that... Sarah wants the spelling test to continue, picks out the next word to get them going...

SARAH (CONT'D)
'Share'.

LITTLE JOHNNY
Don't know.

Sarah gives Johnny a look, get involved... Johnny reacts, tries his best...

JOHNNY
Answer your mother.

LITTLE JOHNNY
S-h-a-r-e.

Sarah nods her approval to Johnny...

(CONTINUED)
NEW ANGLE

There's a knock at the kitchen door... Walt sticks his head in...

   WALT
   Morning.

   SARAH
   Hey, Walt.

   WALT
   Hey, Sarah.

   JOHNNY
   (dubious)
   Hey, Walt.

   SARAH
   Can I make you a pancake?

   WALT
   Naw, I stopped by the bakery for my morning cruller. I'll take a cup of coffee though.
   (to Johnny)
   You're not ready.

   JOHNNY
   (now what?)
   No. I'm not.

   WALT
   You still want to go?

   JOHNNY
   To...

   WALT
   The Mall. I wanted to walk you through the security arrangements...

   SARAH
   The art fair's tomorrow, that's right...

   WALT
   We're gonna have kids from every high school in the county coming in...

(CONTINUED)
JOHNNY
And I need to check security...?

WALT
You said you wanted to go by before your County Commission meeting...

JOHNNY
County Commission. I have a meeting with the County Commission.

WALT
At ten, isn't it?

JOHNNY
In that case, I'd better change...

SARAH
You haven't eaten anything.

Rising uncertainly... placing Miranda on the chair...

JOHNNY
Not... hungry. I don't seem to be quite... myself... this morning.

He looks at the little girl...

JOHNNY
(evenly, self-aware of the absurd humor in this situation)
A pleasure to make your acquaintance.

She smiles at him. He exits.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Dazed, Johnny enters... and all this is quite fast: the first thing he does is slap his face several times with both hands; nothing changes in the room...

He gets back into bed, rolls over and closes his eyes and then reopens them... and gets out of bed... still nothing's changed.

He shakes his head... unable to believe any of this... he quickly moves to a phone and dials a number. After a couple of rings, a sleepy voice answers...

BRUCE'S VOICE (PHONE)
Hello?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JOHNNY
Bruce, it's me.

BRUCE'S VOICE (PHONE)
Who is this?

JOHNNY
Me. Johnny.

BRUCE'S VOICE (PHONE)
Johnny who?

JOHNNY
(a blur of words)
Johnny, dammit. Coma Johnny.
Johnny with the visions? Serial-killer-Mom-alive-in-Saigon-Johnny?
Hockey-player-with-the-heart-condition-Johnny? Except... my God... I haven't had one, not one vision all morning...
(hang up click)
Hello?

Johnny reacts to the dead phone and...

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING - CLOSE ON A SHOWER HANDLE

that says "cold". Johnny's hand turns it on... the water comes on and we hear his shriek as the frigid water hits skin...

ANGLE - JOHNNY

jumps out of the shower... shivering naked in the middle of the room... whereupon Sarah walks into the bathroom as wives will do, finds a hairbrush... Johnny reacts to this casual traffic around his nudity... she gives Johnny a curious look...

SARAH
What are you doing?
(she touches him)
You're ice cold.

JOHNNY
Nothing like a cold shower to start the day.

Sarah goes up on tip-toes to give him a quick affectionate kiss...

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

SARAH
Well, we'll have to see about warming you up later on, won't we?

Off her inviting smile, as she exits with the hairbrush:

JOHNNY
(to Sarah)
Is that how we got that other little kid who's running around here?

Again, it's said in deliberate humor, with self-awareness of his own situation as we...

CUT TO:

EXT. MAINE RURAL HIGHWAY - DAY
Walt's patrol car moving down the road.

INT. WALT'S PATROL CAR - DAY - MOVING - AFTERNOON
Walt driving, Johnny beside him.

JOHNNY
So, Walt. How long has it been now since I started this... county commission thing...?

WALT
Going on two years already, isn't it?

JOHNNY
Amazing.
(beat)
...how time flies. And... would you say I'm doing a good job so far?

WALT
I'd like to see more support for my budget.

JOHNNY
Your budget. That's right, the commission oversees your department. You work for me...

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

WALT
(curious at his point)
Well, in a manner of speaking but...

JOHNNY
(overlapping)
I could fire you, give you the old heave-ho, chase you right out of the county...
(off Walt's reaction)
Not that I ever would.

WALT
Or could... since I'm an elected official too.

JOHNNY
That darn democracy thing again.

WALT
Okay, fine, there are probably a few things I could cut out of the budget...
(shakes his head)
You don't have to play hardball, Commissioner...

JOHNNY
(dry)
Work with me, Walt.

INT. OLD TOWN MALL - DAY

As they enter. We push in on Johnny... he studies the mall and his expression grows concerned: there's something about this mall that bothers him and he doesn't understand why... in the background, we hear the beep-beep of a truck backing up...

WIDE ANGLE - JOHNNY
dwarfed by the looming structure... giving it an ominous quality...
CONTINUED:

RESUME WALT AND JOHNNY

Walt noticing Johnny's concern...

WALT
Something wrong?

JOHNNY
No. I don't know.

WALT
Let me show you what we've got planned for tomorrow... it's going to be fine...

He leads the way...

NEW ANGLE

Johnny and Walt move deeper inside... Johnny feels a headache coming on...

WALT
This is where we'll be putting the display booths... every school has been assigned a number... which will line up with numbers we've put on the floor... see? (pointing to stenciled numbers)
All over here. They're responsible for setting up their own booths... but we'll have people here to assist if necessary. The only access to the courtyard will be from the east and west entrances... There's some minor construction over here on the south wing...

Johnny's head is throbbing now...

ANGLE
to include construction workers replacing old water lines...

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

WALT (CONT'D)
We're working with the contractor
to keep the noise at a minimum
and they'll be putting in a plywood
fence all along here to keep the
kids from wandering over there...
shouldn't be any problem...

Johnny doubles over with pain... Walt sees...

WALT
Hey... what...?

JOHNNY
I'm sorry... I have... splitting
headache...

WALT
We should get you to a doctor.

JOHNNY
I'm sure... I'll be... augh...

Walt leads him away...

INT. OLD TOWN MALL - DAY

The same angle as before... Johnny dwarfed by the
structure... his head still pounding as they move to Walt's
car...

CLOSER - JOHNNY

He pauses, glances back at the troubling mall... and as
he gets in the car...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE
ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM - DAY

An attractive doctor in her thirties, SHARON WEIZAK, shines a penlight in Johnny's eyes...

WEIZAK
Anything like this ever happened before? Any history of migraines?

JOHNNY
Not exactly.

(beat)
I... had a head injury once.

WEIZAK
When was that?

JOHNNY
Almost seven years ago. It should be in my file...

WEIZAK
You were treated here?

She opens the file...

WEIZAK
(reading)
Hockey injury, hockey injury, hockey injury... no wonder you get headaches...

JOHNNY
Nothing about a car accident?

WEIZAK
(nothing there)
Are you sure it was this hospital?

JOHNNY
I'm not sure of anything this morning.

ELAINE, Johnny's nurse in the pilot enters, bringing some X-rays of his head which she hands to the doctor who puts them up on a backlight display to study them... she doesn't
seem to recognize Johnny which is remarkable since he saved her daughter's life. Johnny reacts. Finally, to get Elaine's attention --

JOHNNY
How are you, Elaine...

ELAINE
Fine, thank-you.

Cordial, but Elaine has no idea who he is. She exits.

JOHNNY
Elaine, she... has a daughter, doesn't she...?

WEIZAK
(still looking at the x-rays)
Her little girl died in a fire. Terrible tragedy.

Johnny reacts, realizing the consequences of this new life.

WEIZAK
The x-rays look perfectly normal.

Off Johnny's reaction...

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

Walt is waiting as Weizak comes out with Johnny.

WEIZAK
If it comes back, take two ibuprofen. Call me if you need something stronger.

She smiles and moves away.

WALT
Doesn't sound too serious.

JOHNNY
Yeah, she says my brain is actually better than it was yesterday.

WALT
You should have eaten something this morning. That's probably all it is.

(CONTINUED)
Johnny acknowledges. His eyes narrow as he sees --

P.O.V. - A CANE

A cane exactly like the one he's been using - leaning against an empty waiting chair outside the room - as though he put it there before going in.

RESUME JOHNNY

JOHNNY

What... is this doing here?

Whereupon a near-by hospital attendant (who had left the cane there while picking up some supplies at a nurse's station) picks it up and moves off with it.

WALT

(off Johnny's question)

It's a hospital, John. They have canes.

Johnny nods but the image dwells in his mind. As they begin to move toward the exit, they approach --

A MAN BEING PUSHED IN A WHEELCHAIR

by an attendant. As they get closer, Johnny sees his faced is scarred with terrible burns. As they pass, he looks straight into Johnny's eyes. Johnny feels a chill run up his back.

NEW ANGLE

As they exit, Johnny almost bumps into Bruce as he's entering... their eyes meet...

BRUCE

Sorry. Go ahead.

Bruce smiles and lets Johnny by and then moves off without a hint of recognition... Johnny pauses, turns back and watches him go down the hallway. On Johnny's troubled expression...

EXT. BANGOR MUNICIPAL SQUARE - DAY

As Johnny gets out of the patrol car...
WALT
Will you be coming by the art
festival in the morning?

JOHNNY
(preoccupied)
If I'm still here.

WALT
Going out of town for the weekend?

JOHNNY
No, no, I'll probably see you there.

Walt acknowledges and waves good-bye, pulls away.

NEW ANGLE
Johnny turns and looks to take in the setting... after a
beat --

JOHNNY
(to himself)
I have no idea what I'm doing
here. Or where I'm going.

He stops a pair of elderly passer-bys...

JOHNNY
Excuse me, do you know me?
Commissioner Johnny Smith. Would
you happen to know where my offices
are?

On their puzzled reaction...

JOHNNY (CONT'D)
It's just a little survey; we're
trying to raise public awareness
of county government performance...

INT. COUNTY COMMISSION OFFICES - DAY
Johnny enters uncertainly into a small bullpen of
activity... at a desk, a young man in his twenties (MARCO)
looks over and sees him arrive...

MARCO
Finally.

Marco is gay but it's no source of humor here.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

He's a young man overwhelmed and in a rush...

MARCO
Where have you been...

Johnny looks curiously at this fellow he's never seen before...

JOHNNY
I had to stop by the hospital.

MARCO
Well, it's already been a crazy morning...

JOHNNY
(dry)
I might have guessed...

MARCO
...The super moved up the meeting fifteen minutes, I've put all the documents you asked for on your desk and your mother's been waiting for you since nine...

JOHNNY
What?

MARCO
She's in your office.

JOHNNY
My... mother's alive?

MARCO
(reacts, huh?)
She was moving pretty well when I checked in on her...

Johnny turns to the nearest office door and starts to go in...

MARCO
No. In your office.

Johnny turns around and considers other office doors... walks deliberately down the center of the room until he sees --

HIS POV - VERA SMITH
in his office, looking out the window...

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

JOHNNY
Mom?

She turns and he enters...

INT. OFFICE - DAY

VERA
I know I should have called first...

JOHNNY
You look... I can't believe it... you look...

He hugs her with more emotion that she would ever expect...

VERA
Good morning to you too.

JOHNNY
You've done something with your hair, haven't you?

VERA
What are you talking about? I've had the same hair style for years...

Glowing in the wonder of seeing her again --

JOHNNY
It looks good. You look good, ma.

She reacts to his unusual attention but has a suffering mother agenda that she wants to get to...

VERA
I don't know why. I didn't sleep all night. I want you to call it off.

(off his unknowing look)
Please don't play coy with me. I know all about the party.

JOHNNY
Party?

VERA
My surprise party. I weaseled it out of my grandson.
CONTINUED:

JOHNNY
Ah, the surprise party; yes, well you know how I love surprises...

VERA
It's nobody's business how old I am.

He looks at her a beat with great affection --

JOHNNY
Yes it is. It's mine.

VERA
When you get to my age...

JOHNNY
...it's something to celebrate. And we're going to whether you like it or not.

He kisses her on the cheek.

JOHNNY
Because we love you.

VERA
You're in a strange mood today...

Marco sticks his head in...

MARCO
Sorry, Mrs. Purdy but they're waiting for Johnny...

JOHNNY
Mrs. Purdy? Jeez, ma, you didn't marry the guy...

VERA
I beg your pardon?

JOHNNY
I mean... I'm still trying to get used to the idea that you and, and Reverend Purdy...

VERA
After five years? Please. And if you insist on going through with this party, I don't want you and Gene at each other's throats like last year...

(CONTINUED)
16 CONTINUED: (2)

MARCO
(intimately to Vera)
I find it all very oedipal, don't you?
(to Johnny)
Did you have time to look over the papers?

The answer is no and Marco picks up the file and puts it in Johnny's hand...

MARCO
Then I guess you'll just have to wing it.

17 INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Johnny enters uncertainly... seven people, the commissioners, waiting for him... he's never seen any of them before... the SUPERVISOR is mid-forties, heavy-set, strong face.

JOHNNY
Sorry I'm late.

SUPERVISOR
We all have mothers, John.

Johnny moves to an open chair in front of a series of windows to the square outside... sits...

SUPERVISOR (CONT'D)
I do have another meeting behind this one so we should jump right into business... I think it's fair to say we were all very impressed with the memo you generated yesterday, John... would you care to elaborate...

All eyes turn to him... a long beat as Johnny considers an answer... finally --

JOHNNY
I think the memo speaks for itself.

The bluff didn't quite work... people still wait for him to continue.

JOHNNY
But... I'd... like to hear other thoughts on the subject.

(CONTINUED)
Turning to the closest person in the room... a man in his 30s we'll call KEN...

JOHNNY (CONT'D)
What do you think,...
(coughs to cover the name he doesn't know)

Outside, the sound of fire engines... sirens...

KEN
Well, the federal guidelines are clearly designed to raise test scores. The first question is whether the district's schools are prepared to meet these new challenges...

As Ken's speech continues, Johnny's attention is drawn to the windows where louder and louder sirens can be heard...

P.O.V. - OUT THE WINDOW

Fire trucks, police cars, ambulances... no one else in the room seems to be paying the least attention... the speeches fade behind the dominating sirens...

KEN (O.S., CONT'D)
But Johnny's right -- if we focus strictly on test scores, our kids won't be getting a well-rounded education; Johnny's point on page two, paragraph 'b' about protecting music and art and electives is critical in my opinion...

CLOSE ON JOHNNY

troubled by the fire engines... the sirens grow even louder...

SUPERVISOR (O.S.)
I tend to agree with you, Ken, but the guidelines clearly prioritize...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BANGOR MUNICIPAL SQUARE - DAY

As Ken and Johnny walk out of the County Commission office (CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

building...

KEN
I think we've got them thinking in the right direction, at least...

But Johnny's mind is far away... and Ken notices... Johnny looks weary...

KEN
You all right, John?

JOHNNY
I just can't seem to... wake up today.

KEN
When was the last time you had a real vacation?

JOHNNY
I took a long nap recently.

KEN
You should get away with the family.

Johnny nods, mind elsewhere.

KEN
I'm serious. Connie and I found a great tennis resort... they have a whole program for the kids...

JOHNNY
(interrupting)
Listen, you mind if we put off lunch for today? I just think I'll go home.

KEN
Sure, sure, no problem.
(beat, seriously)
John, there isn't much time left. Pretty soon, this'll all be over.

And there's a dichotomy to that line that Johnny picks up on.

JOHNNY
What... what do you mean?
K**N**

You know what I mean.

Johnny lets out a deep breath, not understanding how this Ken person could know but obviously he does but before he can ask him to explain, Ken continues --

**KEN**

The kids grow up before you realize it. And off they go into their own lives. We have to spend time with them now... while we still can.

Johnny reacts. It was just part of Ken's encouragement to take a vacation... or was it?

**KEN**

I'll see you later. Feel better.

Ken walks away. Johnny thinks about what he said. Nearby, we hear the beep-beep sound of a truck backing up on the street somewhere...

**ANGLE - A BICYCLIST**

rides by... Johnny glances at him, reacts as he sees the rider's face is scarred with horrible burns...

**CUT TO:**

**19 OMITTED**

**20 EXT. SMITH HOUSE - DAY - ESTABLISHING**

**21 INT. SMITH HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY - CLOSE ON PHOTOS IN A SCRAPBOOK - SHORT MONTAGE**

Johnny and Sarah's wedding day photos, the births of Little Johnny and Miranda, Vera with the kids, wonderful moments in the life of a family... the montage ends as we find --

**ANGLE - JOHNNY**

sitting on the bed, looking at the pictures in the scrapbook... he flips to the next page... and his heart aches with each new snapshot... obviously he's lived a remarkably happy life... and he can't trust a second of

*(CONTINUED)*
CONTINUED:

it...

SARAH

enters from the hall... she jumps, startled...

SARAH
Oh! You scared me. You're home early.

(moves to the bed)

What are you doing?

JOHNNY
Checking out our life.

He flips a page as she sits beside him... the pictures show little Johnny's first birthday party... but it's more important to be with Johnny and Sarah than to see close-ups of photos.

JOHNNY
One candle on the cake. Look at his face there.

(another pic)

I seem to be in pain in this one.

SARAH
That was just after the pony bit you.

JOHNNY
Ah.

He flips.

SARAH
His first Halloween.

JOHNNY
You were the hottest vampire on the block.

It's too painful and too ludicrous for Johnny to continue... and she notices...

SARAH
What's wrong?

Off her look, Johnny searches for the words... finally --

JOHNNY
I'm afraid, Sarah.

(CONTINUED)
21 CONTINUED: (2)

SARAH
Afraid?

JOHNNY
That this won't last.

SARAH
What's that supposed to mean...?

JOHNNY
I know how this sounds but...
I... I have another life, Sarah.

Her smile fades.

SARAH
You're having an affair.

JOHNNY
No, no... the only one I'm having an affair with... is... you.

Sarah smiles but happy with the news, cuddles up closer...

SARAH
In that case, you got nothing to worry about, kiddo, cause I'm not going anywhere.

JOHNNY
I think... I'm imagining all this, Sarah. You, the kids, every damned photo in this book. My real life... it, it isn't anywhere near this good.

SARAH
This is one of those Gail Sheehy things, isn't it.

JOHNNY
Gail Sheehy things?

SARAH
From the book. Everybody goes through feelings like these.

JOHNNY
I don't think so...

SARAH
Johnny, you've earned everything you have. You deserve to be happy.

(CONTINUED)
JOHNNY
You don't understand. I'm trying
to tell you... This... isn't...
real.

She studies him, takes his hand... and places it gently
on her shirt over her heart...

SARAH
I'm real, Johnny. I'm here.
With you. Right now. Feel my
heart. It's really beating,
Johnny. Can you feel it?

JOHNNY
(beat)
Yeah. I can feel it.

She looks in his eyes with love and intimacy...

SARAH
I don't know what 'other life'
you think you should be living.
But let it go. It was a nightmare.
And it's over.

She moves into him and kisses him...

SARAH
All over.

He studies her with all the passion and love he's always
felt for her... and moves into her and we --

DISSOLVE TO:

21A MINUTES LATER - A FEW SHOTS

of their passion evolving into making love... and on the
last one, in a particular moment of rapture, we hear more
fire engines in the far distance....

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO
FADE IN:

INT. SMITH HOUSE - NIGHT

A party in full swing...

LITTLE JOHNNY

by a buffet table... Johnny moves over...

JOHNNY
Leave a few chips for the rest of us.

LITTLE JOHNNY
I like a good chip.

Johnny munches one.

JOHNNY
So, how was the spelling test?

LITTLE JOHNNY
Easy.

JOHNNY
How easy?

LITTLE JOHNNY
(casual)
A hundred percent.

JOHNNY
A hundred percent. Wow. I get it - you're one of those sneaky smart guys.
(leaning, sotto)
You don't want to let on how smart you really are. Just like... just like your father used to be when he was your age.

Little Johnny glows in his father's praise...

WALT AND SARAH

Walt holding a drink, regarding a woman across the room...

SARAH
So, just go talk to her.
CONTINUED:

WALT
I don't do small talk very well.

SARAH
This is small talk.

WALT
This is different. I know you.

SARAH
How are you going to find your soul mate if you won't talk to any one, Walt?

WALT
'Soul mate' - what the heck's that?

SARAH
The person you're meant to spend your life with.

WALT
You believe in that stuff?

Her eyes catch Johnny's across the room, their eyes exchange an intimate, even post-coital smile.

SARAH
Yeah. I really do.

WALT
I'd just settle for a good woman...

She smiles encouragingly to Walt, pats his arm...

SARAH
You'll find her.

And moves away toward Johnny. Alone, he watches her go, he finishes his thought to himself.

WALT
Unfortunately all the ones I know are taken.

WITH JOHNNY

as Sarah arrives...

SARAH
Can't we find some girl for Walt?
JOHNNY
Is he coming on to you?

SARAH
(he's harmless)
Oh, you know Walt...

JOHNNY
Because I can take him... he has
the upper body but I'm quicker...

SARAH
Behave yourself.

She kisses him...

SARAH
Great party.

She moves on... but after she's gone, Johnny looks across
the room and feels sorry for Walt as he sees --

HIS POV - WALT
ill-at-ease, getting shot down by the woman across the
room, standing alone now trying his best to appear at
ease as he drinks his coke and looking horribly ill-at-
ease... and then... COMING INTO FOCUS just behind Walt -
Elaine, the nurse from the hospital, the one who lost a
child. It's curious that she's at the party since she
didn't seem to know him that morning.

JOHNNY
reacts to her...

PURDY
(warm, friendly)
I think we really surprised your
mom this year.

As Johnny turns to see REVEREND PURDY standing there,
he's not in the mood to deal with him but there is no
escape...

JOHNNY
(lying)
Yeah, yeah, we sure did.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (3)

HIS POV - ELAINE

glances over his way, smiles casually as though she does know him, walks out of view...

RESUME JOHNNY

as his face shows concern and confusion. Purdy notices.

PURDY

You seem... troubled tonight, Johnny.

Johnny looks at him, laughs uncomfortably, embarrassed at being caught with his feelings showing.

PURDY

Anything I can do to help?

Johnny would normally dismiss the offer but tonight it seems appropriate. He's deeply conflicted...

JOHNNY

You believe in miracles, don't you, Reverend?

PURDY

I'd better or I need to find another line of work.

(beat)

Do you?

JOHNNY

(mostly to himself)

The question of the hour.

The forlorn Walt joins them... just so he won't be standing by himself any longer. Johnny looks straight at him as he continues to Purdy...

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

Imagine if a man could choose his own destiny, re-invent himself at will. Make himself happy. And damn the consequences to anyone who happens to be hurt as a result.

Purdy doesn't know what he's driving at but goes with the flow...
PURDY
In that case, could he ever truly 'make himself happy'?

Johnny considers the question... looks over and sees...

ANGLE - VERA
holding Miranda in her arms, dancing with her to the music...

JOHNNY
I don't know, Reverend.  
(beat)
I honestly don't know.

Finding Bruce through the crowd in the shot... leaning against a wall, looking straight at...

JOHNNY
who reacts...

WALT
You want a miracle?  How about one for the Red Sox this year?

PURDY
(ignoring Walt)
Johnny, maybe if I understood the context of what you...

But Johnny isn't hearing him, he's seeing --

CLOSER POV - BRUCE
holding out his hands in a motion that says, "Ready?"

JOHNNY
moves away from Purdy and Walt...

JOHNNY
Excuse me.

WALT
(to Purdy)
So, you follow sports?

Purdy reacts and...
MOVING WITH JOHNNY

through the crowd... but...

HIS POV

is blocked by faces... and by the time he gets to the other side of the room, there is no Bruce...

MOVING WITH JOHNNY

as he looks for him... moving toward the kitchen... grabs a near-by waiter...

JOHNNY

Excuse me, did you see a guy with dreadlocks who was standing over...

But as the waiter turns...

HIS FACE

is scarred with burns...

JOHNNY

recoils.... and bumps into Marco and his significant other spilling a drink... but as he turns to apologize...

BOTH MEN'S FACES

are burned...

JOHNNY

gasps, backs off... as --

CROWD

Happy Birthday to you...

ANGLE - A CAKE IS BEING CARRIED IN BY SARAH

Vera tolerates the celebration... but...
JOHNNY

sees another person with a burned face... and another... and another...

CROWD
Happy Birthday to you... Happy Birthday, dear Vera...

JOHNNY'S POV - MORE BURNED FACES...

MOVING WITH JOHNNY

as he's surrounded by horrific images...

JOHNNY
Stop!

Reactions. They stop singing. Smiles fade. They stare at Johnny.

ANGLE - ON SARAH

still holding the cake with the lit candles as she looks with concern at Johnny... the wall behind her bursts into flames!

RESUME JOHNNY

as a wall beside him bursts into flames...

JOHNNY
My God.

WIDER

fire all around them...

JOHNNY
We've got to get out of here. Can't you see? Why are you just standing there?

But no one moves... in fact, it's as though they were frozen in time... only the flames and Johnny are animated...

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (7)

CLOSER

He tries to grab Sarah but his hand passes through her arm...

JOHNNY

Noooo...

He falls to his knees in despair... and looks up as...

HIS POV

in an extraordinary shot, the entire reality burns away leaving him in --

BLACK

Just that. Nothingness. Except sound. His heart beating. His breath. A cartoon on a television:

CARTOON (O.S.)
The wheel of fortune turns, round and round it goes, where it stops no one knows.

It is the very same cartoon we heard in the pilot before Johnny woke up...

JOHNNY (V.O.)
What's going on? Where am I? Can anybody hear me?

ELAINE'S VOICE
Ready for our sponge bath, Mr. Smith?

PAGING OPERATOR'S VOICE
(loudspeaker in hall)
Dr. Tran, please report to the hospital admissions office...

And still darkness...

JOHNNY (V.O.)
No, no, this can't be... I can't be here... this can't be real...

And still darkness...

(CONTINUED)
ELAINE'S VOICE
He’s having erratic movements this morning, Doctor...

JOHNNY (V.O.)
Let me out of here... I’m awake...
I can hear you...

A penlight in his eyes penetrates the darkness... his breath is short, anxious...

WEIZAK'S VOICE
It’s probably a temporal lobe seizure... unfortunately after an extended period of time in a coma, these kind of seizures occur more often... how long has he been here now?

ELAINE'S VOICE
Almost seven years.

JOHNNY (V.O.)
Help me! Please God! Help me!

WEIZAK'S VOICE
Increase his valium to ten milligrams... that should put him into a deeper state of consciousness and alleviate the tremors...

JOHNNY (V.O.)
No... no... no...

JOHNNY'S FACE - CLOSE - ANGLE RECALLING THE AWAKENING SHOT IN THE PILOT
His eyes open. His hand reaches across his body in shock but instead of the nurse’s arm, it’s Bruce’s arm he grabs and he’s not in a hospital bed... he’s on the floor of the courtyard of...

INT. OLD TOWN MALL - DAY
where he got the headache on Walt's tour...

JOHNNY (croaking voice)
Wrong. Something's wrong.
CONTINUED:

BRUCE
You fainted, John. You scared us half to death.

Johnny looks up, his head is pounding. (Note: there is no cane in this sequence.)

JOHNNY
What am I doing here? Where am I...

BRUCE
The Old Town Mall. We were gonna get you some cross-trainer shoes...

He staggers to his feet... head throbbing...

JOHNNY
I was living with Sarah... you didn't know me... now I'm back here...

He looks around at the mall which somehow still seems ominous...

JOHNNY
I don't know what's real...

BRUCE
Trust me, John. This is real.

Johnny looks at him...

JOHNNY
That's what Sarah said...

A horrible notion begins to grow in his mind... panic growing...

JOHNNY
I was in the hospital... in the coma... maybe I'm still in the coma... maybe none of this is real...

BRUCE
Johnny, slow, deep breaths...

JOHNNY
(overlapping)
What if I'm still in the hospital?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

BRUCE
You're not in the hospital but you're going to be in ten minutes. Let's get you to the car...

He leads him off the courtyard...

EXT. P-T CRUISER - DAY - MOVING TOWARD THE HOSPITAL

INT. BRUCE'S CAR - DAY - MOVING

Johnny's anxiety is very high, can't shake the headache... and Bruce is concerned about him. Mid-conversation --

JOHNNY
(grasping at the memory)
Sarah and I... We were looking at photographs. Johnny's first birthday party. A pony bit me...
(beat)
...and that wasn't real either.

BRUCE
John, you've been out of the coma for months. You remember the torture I put you through to get you walking again, don't you...?

JOHNNY
I... I... could have imagined it... I could be imagining you right now...

BRUCE
(gives up, sighs)
Then imagine me with Tyra Banks on a date tonight, okay? I've always wanted to meet her.

INT. HOSPITAL SECOND FLOOR CORRIDOR - DAY

Weizak is looking at a chart at a nurse's station... she looks up as Johnny charges out of an elevator followed by Bruce...

BRUCE
(to Weizak)
I need some help here.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

MOVING WITH JOHNNY

as Weizak catches up to him... takes him by the arm... and there’s a little struggle here in the hallway as they try to calm him down...

WEIZAK
What's the problem?

JOHNNY
I just need to see for myself...

WEIZAK
See what?

JOHNNY
That I'm not in that bed... in that room... in a coma...

WEIZAK
Of course, you're not in a coma. You're right here talking to me.

JOHNNY
I never saw you before today... and it wasn't even in this life...

WEIZAK
(to Bruce)
Is he on any medications?

Bruce shakes his head, no. To a nurse who has rushed over --

WEIZAK
Five milligrams of valium.

Johnny reaches the door to his old room... it's closed...

JOHNNY
I just need to see...

He pulls free of them... and pushes the door open to the room...

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Close on Johnny as he enters (alone)... reacts with horror...

JOHNNY
Nooooo....

(Continued)
CONTINUED:

Swish pan to find --

**JOHNNY IN BED**

*just as we saw him in the pilot... still in the coma... his fears have apparently been justified - none of this is real...*

**THE CONSCIOUS JOHNNY**

moves to his own bedside... breathing hard, heart pounding... looks down at himself....

**JOHNNY**

Wake up. Wake up, dammit!

He reaches down and shakes himself...

**JOHNNY**

Wake up!

**HIGH OVERHEAD SHOT OF JOHNNY IN LIMBO**

lying on his back... quick move down to his face... as he opens his eyes... and sits up into the next scene back at --

**INT. OLD TOWN MALL - DAY**

*And now, for the reader's benefit, this really is reality... although Johnny doesn't know that yet.*

Johnny sits up and finds himself in the courtyard of the mall again... He looks around at the mall which now is crowded with high school students setting up their display booths... a sign says "Penobscot Youth Art Fair"... a handful of people are looking at him, concerned... Bruce is beside him...

**BRUCE**

Are you okay?

**JOHNNY**

(looks at Bruce)

What happened?

**BRUCE**

We were checking out the art festival when you got a terrible headache... and then you fainted...

The art festival resonates with Johnny though he's not
sure why yet. His head still pounds...

JOHNNY
The art festival. Something about the art festival...

BRUCE
You've been on the floor out cold for almost thirty seconds...

HIS POV
There are people there he recognizes - people from the other life... the man with the burned face in the wheelchair, the bike rider, the waiter, other burned faces from the party (none of them are burned here), plus members of the county commission, the supervisor... this time the cane is beside him...

JOHNNY
As he feels the pain in his leg, reaches for his cane to get up, one man we recognize as Marco moves over to help Bruce get him up...

MARCO
Here, let me give you a hand...

And as Marco takes his arm... on his touch --

RAMP TO JOHNNY'S FACE
as a horrifying vision begins...

JOHNNY'S VISION - SLOW MOTION - A FIERY EXPLOSION fills the courtyard...

JOHNNY - REAL TIME
reacts... to the explosion, head jerking back...

JOHNNY'S VISION - SLOW MOTION
The concussion blows people away... terrible devastation...
34 JOHNNY - REAL TIME

as he hold his pounding head...

JOHNNY
Too much... too much... can't...
can't...

Sags, losing consciousness... Bruce holds him...

35 JOHNNY'S VISION - SLOW MOTION

People scream, booths on fire, terrible loss of life...

36 JOHNNY - REAL TIME

He loses consciousness...

37 EXT. MAINE LANDSCAPE - MORNING (STOCK)

Again, still, peaceful and beautiful. A stark relief to what we've just had to endure.

38 INT. SMITH BEDROOM - MORNING - ON JOHNNY

as he shoots up startled to a sitting position in bed...
back in the alternate reality... Sarah sleeping beside him... he's sweating, heart-pounding...

JOHNNY
Something terrible is going to happen.

Sarah wakes up...

JOHNNY
There isn't much time.

He gets out of bed. As she reacts...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE
FADE IN:

INT. BEDROOM - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Johnny is hurriedly getting dressed.

SARAH
An accident at the mall...?

JOHNNY
An accident, a bomb... I don't know...

SARAH
Johnny, you had a bad dream... it wasn't real...

JOHNNY
Sarah, it was so real, so overwhelming that my mind couldn't begin to handle it. That's why my mind is a jumble. Right at this very minute, I'm... I'm lying unconscious on the concrete floor at the Old Town Mall...

SARAH
You need to talk to somebody. Ken told me about a therapist...

JOHNNY
Ken isn't real. I don't know Ken.

SARAH
Ken and Connie are our best friends. They were here for dinner Saturday night. I made a pot roast... you made your famous Chocolate Surprise for desert...

JOHNNY
(shake his head, trying to focus)
People are going to die...

Continuing to urgently challenge him...

SARAH
Afterwards we played scrabble and watched that horrible Adam Sandler movie you and Ken rented... *

She follows him out of the bedroom...
He rushes down, Sarah right behind him...

JOHNNY
Call Walt. Tell him to send every man he's got to the mall.

At the bottom of the stairs, the kids, still in pajamas move out of the living room where we can hear the sound of Sponge Bob (or something comparable) on the TV...
Miranda holds her teddy bear...

LITTLE JOHNNY
Where you going, Dad?

MIRANDA
Can I come?

And they stop Johnny in his tracks... and Miranda reaches up for him to pick her up... it's heartbreaking for Johnny because he knows they may never exist for him like this again. He picks up Miranda...

JOHNNY
No, baby. Daddy can't take you with him.

MIRANDA
Why not?

JOHNNY
I wish I could.

He hugs the little girl and rocks her in his arms.

JOHNNY
(repeating in a whisper)
I wish I could.

(CONTINUED)
SARAH
Are you sure this isn't real, Johnny? Are you positive?

Johnny puts Miranda down and studies his son sadly, smiles at him... he wants so much to believe... but...

JOHNNY
I have to go.

A tear runs down Sarah's cheek...

SARAH
I love you, Johnny.

A last look between them and he's out.

OMITTED

INT. OLD TOWN MALL - DAY

As Johnny rushes in... there's no sign of emergency crews... the art fair is setting up and everything appears normal... Johnny can't believe it...

JOHNNY
(to himself)
Where are they? Why aren't they here?

And now Walt sees him, moves over...

JOHNNY
Where are the others? Didn't she tell you?

WALT
She told me you were upset... and asked me to come over and...

JOHNNY
No... no... no... we need search teams, dogs that sniff out explosives, and put out a fire alarm too... we may need help from other counties...

(CONTINUED)
He rushes ahead... feels his headache coming on again... Walt follows...

WALT
John, I went through all the preparations with you yesterday... it's going to be fine...

JOHNNY
It's not going to be fine...

ROSCOE, the deputy who's doing security and helping people set up their booths comes over to find out what's going on...

JOHNNY
Humor me, Walt. Help me. For reasons I can't explain, I have information that there's going to be a terrible disaster here. Are you really willing to take the chance that I'm wrong?

Roscoe reacts and looks to Walt...

JOHNNY
Look, dammit, if I'm a county commissioner... I can give an order to... to protect public safety here...

WALT
(sighs, shakes his head)
Just... move people off the courtyard for a few minutes while we look around.

Roscoe moves away. Walt moves with Johnny, tight jaw, unconvinced...

WALT
What exactly are we looking for?

JOHNNY
Somewhere in this mall... there's a clue, a threat, an accident waiting to happen... I just have to find it... and take it back...

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

WALT
Back where?

JOHNNY
We need help, Walt.

Walt sighs and gets on his walkie-talkie...

WALT
(to the walkie)
This is the Sheriff. I want to conduct another security sweep of the area... report anything suspicious.

DEPUTY VOICE
(on walkie)
Ten-four.

In the background...

ROSCOE
People, we need to evacuate this area for a few minutes... sorry for the inconvenience... could I have everyone take the north escalator down to the street please...

The art students and teachers react curiously but follow orders... Johnny and Walt begin to move around the courtyard looking for some clue to the disaster Johnny knows is going to happen...

NEW ANGLE

as a sound draws Johnny's attention... the beep-beep sound that has haunted him from the beginning of this nightmare... the sound of a truck backing up. He reacts to the sound... and it draws him toward --

OMITTED
THE CONSTRUCTION AREA - CONTINUOUS

workers in hard hats are busy... a welder is at work... a forklift truck is on site as well... the sound of beep-beep-beep is coming from it as it backs up...

JOHNNY'S EYES

are drawn to the...

FIERY WELDER'S TORCH

sparks flying from the metal it's welding... the sparks sprinkling away to the floor as...

THE FORKLIFT

backs up and accidentally hits one of a bank of large propane tanks strapped to a steel post, rupturing the...

PROPANE TANK

the welded seam splitting open, hear and see the gas belch out...

JOHNNY

reacts as he sees the ruptured tank...

   JOHNNY

   Don't...

But...

THE GAS

ignites from the spark... and explodes like the shooting wall of flame Johnny saw before... it wipes his view and the screen...

LITERALLY CATAPULTING JOHNNY BACK TO --
CLOSE ON JOHNNY LYING ON THE GROUND

as his eyes open, back in reality... he takes a short, sharp breath... looks up to see --

BRUCE AND MARCO AND OTHER FAMILIAR FACES
looking down...

BRUCE
You passed out again. We have to get you to a doctor.

JOHNNY
No... nobody touch me...
CONTINUED:

WIDER

as he gets up and he's back at the Old Town mall courtyard which is undamaged... his head is pounding... but he staggers past people who get out of his way toward --

THE CONSTRUCTION SITE

where the same scene we saw before is taking place... the forklift is beeping, backing up... it's too late and too noisy to reach the driver but he can get to --

THE WELDER

at work with his torch...

JOHNNY

battles the pain in his head to move forward to the welder... who looks up at the civilian stumbling toward him...

JOHNNY

Turn it off. Turn it off! Now!

The welder turns off the torch safely and looks over with curiosity at Johnny. A moment later --

THE FORKLIFT

hits the propane tank, rupturing the seal... workers quickly react to...

THE PROPANE TANK

and move in to seal it.

THE WELDER

takes off the mask and we see his face for the first time -- it's Ken. His face shows the shock at the discovery...

KEN

Mister, that could have been serious. Don't know how you saw it coming. But thanks.

(CONTINUED)
JOHNNY
nods, takes a deep breath of relief... his headache finally gone. Bruce moves quickly over... and of course, he has no idea what almost just happened but he knows enough about Johnny to realize that he just prevented a disaster...

BRUCE
How bad was it gonna be?

JOHNNY
Bad.

BRUCE
You gonna be okay or you want to me to run you by the hospital?

Johnny gives him an even, exhausted look...

JOHNNY
Think I'll skip the hospital this time around.

As he moves away, on Bruce's curious reaction...

INT. SMITH HOUSE KITCHEN - NIGHT

As Johnny enters... alone as always... using his cane as he must... he takes a few beats to look around the quiet, oh, so empty house... takes a deep breath... The phone rings... he moves to answer it...

JOHNNY
Hello?

(INTERCUT):

INT. BANNERMAN HOUSE - NIGHT - CLOSE ON SARAH

SARAH
Hi.

JOHNNY
Hi, Sarah.

SARAH
I'm making a pot roast. Can I set a place at the table for you?

Johnny takes a long beat.

(CONTINUED)
JOHNNY
Not tonight, huh?

SARAH
Oh come on. I hate to think of you and Mrs. Swanson alone over there every night.

JOHNNY
Actually, I've had a headache all day.

SARAH
I'm sorry...

JOHNNY
No, it's, it's okay now. But I think I'll just turn in early tonight.

SARAH
Maybe tomorrow night.

JOHNNY
Maybe.
(reflective beat)
I might even make my famous Chocolate Surprise' for desert.

SARAH
What's your famous 'Chocolate Surprise'?

JOHNNY
(joke's on me)
I have no idea. That's what makes it so... surprising.

Sarah smiles. That Johnny, he has such a funny sense of humor.

SARAH
I'll talk to you tomorrow. Sleep well.

JOHNNY
Thanks.

SARAH
Pleasant dreams, Johnny.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR

THE END