THE DEAD ZONE

"MISBEGOTTEN"

Production #2006

Story by
Elizabeth Keyishian
Aug 12/02

Teleplay by
Andy Dettman
Sep 25/02

Revised Teleplay by
Michael Taylor
Nov 01/02

Directed by
Nick Marck

Copyright © 2002 Lions Gate Television. All rights reserved. No portion of this script may be performed, published, sold or distributed by any means, or quoted or published in any medium, including on any web site, without prior written consent. Disposal of this script copy does not alter any of the restrictions set forth above.
THE DEAD ZONE

"MISBEGOTTEN"

CAST

JOHNNY SMITH

PENNY BARTON, mid 20’s

SARAH BANNERMAN

ANITA, early 30’s

WALT BANNERMAN

MADDY POWERS, 20 *

BRUCE LEWIS

MIKE KENNEDY

REV. GENE PURDY

DEPUTY ROSCOE

JOHNNY BANNERMAN

CHERYL CONNOR, 39 *

DANIEL CONNOR, 47 *

NON-SPEAKING

TINA CONNOR, 12 *

2 HOME SECURITY TECHNICIANS

NICHOLAS CONNOR, 12 *

SHERIFF’S DEPUTIES

HOTEL MANGER (MR. SPICUZZA)

(incl. “Rudy” & “Alice”)

FAITH HERITAGE STAFFERS

NEW HAMPSHIRE STATE POLICE OFFICERS

ANIMALS

* PENNY’S CATS

*
THE DEAD ZONE

“MISBEGOTTEN”

SETS

INTERIORS                      EXTERIORS
SmitH House
   Kitchen
   Living Room

Bannerman House
   Foyer

Faith Heritage Alliance
   Purdy’s Office
   Mailroom/Sorting Room/
   Mail Storage Room
   Hallway

Sheriff’s Office

Bruce’s Apartment

Motel
   Reception
   Anita/Maddy’s Room

Farmhouse
   Utility Shed
   Hallway
   Kitchen
   Living Room
   Master Bedroom
   Playroom
   Basement
   Den
   Bathroom


*        VEHICLES

Johnny’s Jeep

Old Chevy

2 Sheriff’s Dept. Cruisers
THE DEAD ZONE
"MISBEGOTTEN"

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 INT. JOHNNY'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

JOHNNY has a visitor, PENNY BARTON. She's mid-20s, definitely attractive and completely at home as she shuttles around Johnny's kitchen, fixing a meal. The table in the b.g. is set for two, candles burning. A classic song plays on the stereo.

PENNY
I'm so glad we're finally able to do this, you know? I can't tell you how long I've been wanting to cook for you.

(looks around)
Frying pan... big one?

JOHNNY
Oh, uh... down there.

Johnny points to a cabinet, looking on from a seat at the counter. He's oddly dressed considering the occasion: pajamas, hair mussed. Penny doesn't seem to mind. She finds the pan, puts it on the heat, tosses in a slab of butter...

PENNY
Your house is amazing. I've been sort of picturing it in my mind, but it's even nicer than I expected. Comfy, you know?

She goes to a GROCERY BAG on the counter, reaches in, then STOPS, hesitant to reveal what's inside.

PENNY
Okay. I don't know if you're a seafood guy, but you have to trust me on this.

(takes out a bag of shrimp)
You'll love it, I promise. It's sort of my specialty. Olive oil?

JOHNNY
(points to cabinet)
Uh, in there... Next one over.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

She finds it, starts measuring... Stops, smiles, honest...

PENNY
All right, confession... I've been practicing this recipe all week. Probably made it six times.
(barks a laugh)
If my cats never see another shrimp again, they'll be happy.

JOHNNY
So you've got cats.

PENNY
Yeah.

JOHNNY
A whole bunch, I bet.

PENNY
(smiles, touched)
I do. How'd you know?

Johnny shrugs, waves it away with a smile. The shrimp hit the frying pan with a sudden SIZZLE.

PENNY
Okay, the key is, three minutes a side. Any more, they go rubbery.

She sips her wine, eyes Johnny, smiling, so happy to be here. Then her hand finds a LARGE KNIFE in the knife block. Shing! Johnny's eyes go wide.

PENNY
Geez, look at you. A little jumpy tonight or what?

As she starts slicing a lemon, a NOISE comes from the hall, the DOOR OPENING.

DEPUTY'S VOICE
Mr. Smith?

JOHNNY
In here!

PENNY
(confused, pouting)
Johnny, I thought it was just gonna be us tonight.

TWO DEPUTIES enter. One sees the knife, goes for his gun. Johnny raises a hand --
CONTINUED: (2)

JOHNNY
It's all right. She's pretty much harmless... I think.

Penny sets the knife aside, hurt.

PENNY
Johnny, what's going on?

DEPUTY
C'mon, sweetie. Time to go.

JOHNNY
She said she rowed a boat across the lake...

DEPUTY
(to Penny)
You scaled that rock wall out back?

He shakes his head in disbelief. She smiles, shrugs...

PENNY
I knew he'd like me if he got to know me.

As she's cuffed and led out, she calls back to Johnny --

PENNY
Remember, three minutes a side. Anymore and they're rubber.

Off Johnny...

FADE OUT.

SUPER: A WEEK LATER

BRUCE (V.O.)
You have a public profile now, man. People are out there, aware of you, watching you, thinking about you...

FADE IN:

TIGHT ON A POWER SCREWDRIVER

Whirrrrr. It spins a screw into the face of a shiny new HOME SECURITY PANEL. WIDEN to reveal we're...
2  CONTINUED:

INT. JOHNNY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

PURDY and BRUCE look on as a pair of SECURITY TECHS work on Johnny's system. Holes in the plaster, ladders, bundles of Cat 5 cable suggest a major upgrade in progress. Johnny looks on ruefully... unhappy that his life's been disrupted...

BRUCE (CONT'D)
I know you don't like to think about it but you've got to now. Before someone decides to shoot you to impress Jodi Foster. People do these things.

JOHNNY
(shakes his head)
Why don't we just dig a moat while we're at it, fill it with sharks?

BRUCE
Hey, don't knock it. It worked for Rob Roy.

JOHNNY
Rob Roy.

BRUCE
Scottish dude. Kilts and castles.

JOHNNY
Every new lock on the door doesn't just lock the crazies out... it locks me in, Bruce... I feel isolated enough as it is... I used to have a life once...

Purdy enters with a contractor... holding a set of plans... moves to Johnny... hands him the plans...

PURDY
Safe room. Reinforced walls, steel door, separate communication system... Impenetrable.

JOHNNY
No.

PURDY
All the best homes have them nowadays. Nothing to be embarrassed about.

(CONTINUED)
JOHNNY

I'm not embarrassed. I'm speechless. Thanks anyway.

Purdy accepts the verdict, moves off with the contractor...

PURDY
(to contractor)
Can we talk about the buffer zone around the perimeter... are you sure 200 feet is enough...?

He's gone. Johnny shakes his head...

JOHNNY
I gotta get out of here. I have a lunch date with Dana...

Moving with them toward the front door...

BRUCE
How's that going?

JOHNNY
(sighs, tension)
I don't know. Didn't call her for awhile, then called and canceled once...

BRUCE
So, you're screwing up.

JOHNNY
(knows very well that's true, dry)
You could say that.
(beat)
And of course, she thinks it's because of me and Sarah.

BRUCE
There is no 'you and Sarah'. Gotta get beyond that, man. It was a one night mistake...

JOHNNY
...that changed everything.

BRUCE
That's how we learn, my brother. Except with your powers you should learn from your mistakes before you ever make them.

(CONTINUED)
They move past a workman testing a new alarm sensor at the front door... it blasts a shrieking alert... startling Johnny and Bruce as they exit...

**BRUCE**

How about a moat with koi instead of sharks? Man-eating koi...

They're out.

**INT. JOHNNY'S CAR - DAY**

Johnny drives, piloting the Jeep down a tree-lined stretch of country road, no other cars in sight. He's lost in thought, the Dana/Sarah dilemma heavy on his mind. Suddenly, Johnny SEES SOMETHING, snaps from his trance...

**JOHNNY'S P.O.V. - UP AHEAD**

An ACCIDENT -- an old Chevy, veered from the road, nose against a tree. Steam rises from the hood. A single passenger, slumped behind the wheel. Johnny brakes hard, pulls off the road...

**EXT. ROADSIDE - DAY**

Johnny hops from the Jeep, approaches the Chevy. And we may notice California plates, some industrial band bumper stickers, but Johnny's eyes are on the driver: a very attractive woman in her early thirties, ANITA... she seems dazed and disoriented...

**JOHNNY**

Are you hurt?

Anita has to think about it for a second.

**ANITA**

I... I don't think so. God, I don't know what happened. I only looked down for a second...

**JOHNNY**

(pulling his phone)

I'm gonna call for help.

**ANITA**

No. I-I think I'm all right...

She starts to get out. As Johnny grabs the door handle...
FLASH - JOHNNY'S POV PANS FROM ANITA BEHIND THE WHEEL OF THE SLOWLY MOVING CHEVY... TO PENNY STANDING IN FRONT, DIRECTING HER TOWARD A GENTLE COLLISION WITH THE TREE

RESUME

THUNK! The door slams, snapping Johnny out of the vision. As he reacts, confused, WE SEE Penny suddenly appear behind him. Before he knows what's happening, she slaps a rag over his face. Chloroform...

Johnny struggles but --

SUBJECTIVE POV

His world is already spinning. The last thing he sees is a third woman, MADDY, 20, moving in, documenting the scene with a VIDEO CAMERA. What on God's earth is going on? Then DARKNESS overtakes him.

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER
ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. BRUCE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Bruce on the phone...

BRUCE
He left to meet you an hour ago. You try his cell?

EXT. UPSCALE RESTAURANT - DAY

Dana on her cell as she waits for her car at a valet stand.

DANA
About twenty times. Do you have any idea where he could be?

BRUCE'S VOICE (PHONE)
Sorry. I really don't.

A sudden suspicion shadows Dana's eyes.

DANA
Sarah didn't call him, did she?

BRUCE'S VOICE (PHONE)
Dana, if Johnny had a date with you, he wouldn't...

DANA
If he checks in, ask him to give me a call. That is, if it isn't too much trouble.

She clicks off, thinks for a beat. Then grabs her bag and goes.

INT./EXT. BANNERMAN HOUSE - FOYER - DAY - LATER

The doorbell RINGS. Footsteps, then SARAH appears. Upbeat, smiling, she opens the door. The smile fades...

SARAH
Walt's not here.

DANA
(evenly)
I know. I'm looking for Johnny.

Sarah's eyes narrow. A beat.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

DANA
Is he here?

SARAH
No.

DANA
(beat, evenly)
Mind if I look for myself?

Sarah laughs incredulously.

SARAH
You've got a helluva lot of nerve.

DANA
(dry)
My secret of success.

SARAH
Excuse me, I'm very busy.

Closing the door in her face... Dana sticks her foot in the door... the door jams against it...

DANA
Ow.

SARAH
Well, get your foot out of the...

Dana pushes the door open and enters...

10A   INT. BANNERMAN HOUSE - FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Dana's trying to move past Sarah, peering into the house.

SARAH
Hey!

DANA
Call a cop.

Sarah grabs Dana's arm hard, spinning her around.

SARAH
What is your problem?

Dana is looking at the problem -- Sarah... her cell phone rings...

(CONTINUED)
10A CONTINUED:

DANA
Time.
(as in 'time out')

SARAH
'Time'? What is this - the playground?
10Acontinued: (2)

DANA
This might be him.
(answering)
Dana Bright.

11intercut: ext. roadside - day

Two police cruisers parked near Johnny's jeep. Deputy Roscoe hunts for clues in the background while Walt talks on his phone.

WALT
Dana, you seen Johnny?

DANA
No, but that seems to be the question of the day... I was just asking your wife the same thing...

Walt's a little thrown by this.

WALT
You're with Sarah now?

DANA
We were just sitting down to tea.

WALT
Has she heard from him?

DANA
(holding the phone so both can hear)
He wants to know if you've heard from him.

SARAH
No. Walt, what's going on?

WALT
I'm out on Cypress Hill Road. One of my guys found Johnny's car on the shoulder...

Both women react with equal concern...

SARAH
He had an accident?

WALT
No. The car's fine. Engine runs, it's got gas...

(more)
11 CONTINUED:

WALT (CONT'D)
(looking around)
There's just no sign of Johnny.

In the b.g., Roscoe spies something on the ground.

ROSCOE
Walt... over here.

But Roscoe's waving for Walt to join him.

WALT
Look, I gotta go. I'll call you
if I find out anything...
(pause, then)
I'll call both of you.

12 INT. BANNERMAN HOUSE - DANA AND SARAH

look at each other... a long beat...

SARAH
I'm not sitting around here and
waiting for a call...

She moves out and Dana follows...

13 WITH WALT AND ROSCOE

ROSCOE
Check out these tracks.

He points out TWO RUTS gouged an inch or so deep in the
dirt, running parallel, roughly eight inches apart.

WALT
Heel marks...?

ROSCOE
(nods)
Looks like someone was dragged.
(following their path)
They start there, come around
here, then boom, they stop.

Walt crouches to examine some TIRE MARKS where the heel
ruts end. Then he turns to eye a tree with a broken branch
and some missing bark (where the nose of the girls' car
was previously jammed).

(CONTINUED)
13 CONTINUED:

He stands, eyes narrowing, and we sense his cop's mind putting the pieces together.

14 EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY - ESTABLISHING

A old rambling structure that juts starkly from the surrounding weedy fields like something out of a Wyeth painting. An aged Realtor's sign on a rusty post creaks in the wind. 'No sale' for many years, apparently.

CLOSER ANGLE

The windows shuttered and boarded, adding to the sense of abandonment. Camera finds the girls' car parked by a utility shed.

15 INT. SHED - DAY - CLOSE ANGLE

An electrical cable runs from a cobwebby breaker box to a portable GENERATOR. Anita leans into frame, punches the start button, and the machine HUMS to life.

16 INT. FARMHOUSE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Dusty wall sconces flicker to life.

17 INT. OTHER ROOMS - VARIOUS ANGLES

Including a playroom and a living room as more lights flicker on. Just enough to illuminate, but the place remains shadowy and spooky, a dusty time capsule of old furniture and knickknacks, faint rays of daylight slanting in through gaps in the boarded windows.

18 INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Penny unpacks grocery bags as an overhead fluorescent fixture buzzes to life.

19 INT. FARMHOUSE - STUDY - CONTINUOUS

PANNING ACROSS several dusty STUFFED AND MOUNTED GAME ANIMALS, coming to rest on an eight-point BUCK'S HEAD mounted above an EMPTY GUN RACK, the animal's lips bared in a grim rictus.

MADDY works at an old desk, where she's hooked a LAPTOP to a SATELLITE PHONE and a big FLAT PANEL MONITOR. She's deftly editing a raw, fast-

(CONTINUED)
paced video sequence of the kidnapping: Johnny being drugged, dragged to the back of the Chevy and dumped in the trunk. Industrial rock music seeps from her HEADPHONES. She smiles as she admires her work.

MADDY
Oliver Stone is a pussy.

Anita comes up behind her, starts massaging her shoulders.

ANITA
How's it going?

Maddy slips off her headphones, smiles up at Anita...

MADDY
If the rest of it rocks this hard, we're in business. Da movie business, baby.

Anita meanwhile begins massaging more seductively.

MADDY
(re: massage)
Don't...

ANITA
(playing innocent)
Don't what...?

MADDY
Tease.

ANITA
Who says I'm teasing?

MADDY
It's always a tease with you.

Anita's hurt, awkwardly withdraws her hands.

ANITA
Sorry I bothered you.

Maddy regrets hurting her feelings...

MADDY
Nita, look I... I didn't mean to...

ANITA
That's okay. We have work to do.

She pats Maddy on the shoulder tentatively... Maddy takes
the hand and squeezes it intimately, smiles an apology at the older and yet somehow more vulnerable woman.

As they enter the master bedroom, let's take a moment to talk a little about these three women - all of them are quite attractive in their own way but all quite different personalities. Anita, the oldest, is intense in a Sigourney Weaver 'Alien' sort of way, quite dedicated to solving the mystery at hand... Penny, the middle one is soft and affectionate and needy... Maddy is a bundle of auteur creative energy with youthful enthusiasm and ambition... as Penny enters...

In the background, the women enter. Maddy lifts a pro-quality digital video camera off a tripod, and begins filming... swooping in with 'steady cam' shots when the spirit moves her. (And she may be wearing a light-weight STEADICAM rig.)
CONTINUED:

PENNY
Good morning, Sleeping Beauty.
We thought you'd never wake up.

A chilling comment in this context.

MADDY
His eyes are still glassy. You
used too much chloroform.

PENNY
I used exactly what it said to
use on the website.

Johnny's eyes stare and blink... a kidnapping website?,
he's thinking... is nothing sacred in this world?

JOHNNY'S BLURRY POV

PENNY
(distorted)
He's going to be okay, isn't he?

Anita crouches in front of Johnny, peers into his eyes.

ANITA
Mr. Smith, nod if you can
understand me.

RESUME

Johnny can't nod from his bonds.

MADDY
I don't think he can nod.

ANITA
Okay, blink if you can understand
me.

He blinks.

ANITA
Good.

PENNY
Johnny, this is not how I wanted
it to be; if we'd had the chance
to talk the other night...
MADDY
She did that entirely on her own.
If we had known...

PENNY
I was hoping, once we got to know each other, you might agree to do this for us because I know that's the kind of man you are... always reaching out to people with a helping hand. That's why I...
I...
(adore)
...respect you so much, Johnny.
(Johnny stares at her)
Oh and thank-you for not pressing charges. That was sweet of you.

ANITA
Mr. Smith, rest assured we are not professional kidnappers.

Johnny just stares at them... which is all he can do.

ANITA
Had your representatives responded adequately to Maddy's formal proposal, none of this would have been necessary... but all she got back was a form letter...

MADDY
From the Faith Heritage Alliance.
"Thanks you for your interest in Johnny Smith. Have a great future and God bless."

ANITA
So here we are.

Johnny blinks.

WIDER ANGLE

ANITA (CONT'D)
As you can see, Maddy is a filmmaker. My name is Anita, well, we don't need last names here... and I'm a, what would you call me...
MADDY
Technical consultant...
historian...

ANITA
I've had an interest in this house and others like it for some time... we're from L.A....

PENNY
And I'm the local Smithophile and caterer.
(beat, smiles)
We met in a chatroom. Isn't that amazing?

ANITA
We're just across the state line in New Hampshire. In an abandoned farmhouse. Twenty years ago, tonight, some terrible murders occurred here.

PENNY
They say it's haunted.

MADDY
We thought if we put you together... the psychic and the abandoned farmhouse and the camera... there'd be sparks... instant chemistry.

PENNY
Like "Blair Witch"...

MADDY
"Blair Witch" was crap! Commercialism masquerading as verite. What we're doing is real.

PENNY
You're sweating... it must be hot inside the duct-tape... good thing I stopped by picnic headquarters and picked up some supplies... including, ta-dah...
(she pulls out a wipey)
Wipeys!

But as she rips open the pack and dabs his forehead with the wipey... RAMP TO HIS FACE...
A JOHNNY FLASH — A BLOODY SICKLE SWINGS DOWN

RESUME JOHNNY REACTING AS SHE DABS HIS FACE

A JOHNNY FLASH — JOHNNY IS CUT BY THE BLADE... HANDS AND FACE ARE BLOODY...

RESUME JOHNNY CLOSER — EYES WIDE WITH FEAR

A JOHNNY FLASH — HE FALLS NEXT TO MADDY ON THE FLOOR WHOSE NECK IS CUT WITH A DEEP GASH, HER EYES OPEN IN DEATH

RESUME JOHNNY

as he grunts his alarm...

PENNY
Yes, darling, I know, but I'm going to take good care of you... and this will give us a little time to get to know one another...

And as Johnny reacts...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE
ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Walt addressing Roscoe and his other DEPUTIES, along with Sarah, Dana and Bruce. Mid-scene as he answers a question.

WALT

We don't know for sure that this is an abduction, but we're gonna treat it as one to be safe. Roscoe, we need to be ready if the kidnappers call. Take Rudy and Alice, get set up on the phones at Reverend Purdy's office, Johnny's house and here as well, just to cover our bases...

BRUCE

What about the girl who broke into Johnny's house last week...?

WALT

First call I made was to the Sheriff up in Braxton. They're trying to locate her now.

(to Dana)

I want an embargo on this story for 48 hours... I don't want every looney tune coming out of the woodwork...

DANA

(shrugs)

He's been missing for less than a day... no paper would run with it yet...

WALT

Good. Bruce and I are going to retrace Johnny's movements over the last 24 hours. Rest of you, you've got your assignments, so get to it.

As people move into action...

SARAH

What's my assignment...?

WALT

Sarah...

(continues)
SARAH
Don't tell me to go home.

WALT
This is police business...

SARAH
You're taking Bruce along on police business...

WALT
Bruce and Johnny have been together during the last twenty-four hours... he's a... a... material witness...

SARAH
And he's not the sheriff's wife.

WALT
That too.

DANA
She can come with me...

WALT
No she can't.

He said that a little too quickly and realizes it as soon as the words come out. Off Sarah's glare --

WALT (CONT'D)
(to Dana)
Where are you going?

DANA
Faith Heritage mailroom. Fan mail might yield a clue...

WALT
Good idea.
(to Sarah, giving permission)
You can go with her.
(off Sarah's look that says I don't need your permission)
...if... that works for you. Honey.

Sarah doesn't give him a reply, exits with Dana...
INT. FARMHOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY - VIDEOCAM POV

on Johnny gagged full screen close-up...

MADDY (O.S.)
Cross your heart and hope to die?

Johnny blinks.

ANITA (O.S.)
We're miles away from civilization. He can scream all he wants.

MADDY (O.S.)
Okay, go ahead, I'm rolling sound.

Anita's hand comes in and rips the tape off his mouth... it hurts...

MADDY (O.S.)
How do you feel, Johnny?

JOHNNY
We have to get out of here.

MADDY (O.S.)
Great opening line.

JOHNNY
No, I'm serious. It isn't safe here.

MADDY (O.S.)
If it were safe here, we wouldn't have a movie.

JOHNNY
Listen to me. I saw a sickle. There was blood everywhere.

ANITA (O.S.)
A sickle. Like this one?

She shows him a dated photograph of a sickle. We don't need to see it.

JOHNNY
Yes... but what I saw wasn't in the past...

ANITA (O.S.)
This was the kind of sickle used in the murders, Mr. Smith... they never recovered the actual murder weapon...

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JOHNNY
No, the sickle I saw... someone was attacking us with it... in the future, the near future... people were dying...

PENNY (O.S.)
(arriving)
Hot toll house cookies everyone.

The plate enters frame... Penny's hand holds one out for Johnny to bite...

JOHNNY
(shaking off the cookie)
Penny, you know me better than they do. Tell them they have to believe me...

PENNY (O.S.)
About what?

ANITA (O.S.)
He said he had a vision that we're all going to be killed by ghosts...

JOHNNY
I didn't say ghosts, I...

PENNY (O.S.)
What if he did see something?

ANITA (O.S.)
Come on, we expected this -- he's trying to scare us into letting him go.

MADDY (O.S.)
Nice try, Johnny.

JOHNNY
Will you please listen to me...

PENNY (O.S.)
Eat now... I used real chocolate chips... the bittersweet chocolate...

Off Johnny's frustration...
29 EX. FAITH HERITAGE ALLIANCE - ESTABLISHING - DAY

30 INT. FAITH HERITAGE ALLIANCE HALLWAY - DAY

Sarah and Dana walk with Purdy...

PURDY
It's our job, our part of the bargain, to screen his mail, identify individuals who might pose a threat...

(beat)
But it's been an even greater challenge than I anticipated...

Purdy opens a door, they enter --

31 INT. FAITH HERITAGE SORTING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Two staffers are busy opening, reading and sorting mail.

DANA
You've gotta be kidding.

SARAH
This is all for Johnny?

PURDY
They're not all kooks. Most are just requests for autographs or "thank-you"s from people he's inspired.

Sarah's drawn to a side table - small plastic sorting bins, each with an object or knickknack of some kind...

SARAH
And these?

PURDY
We get some people who are hoping for a "reading." They send these things in, wanting Johnny Smith to touch them --

He tips a couple of bins for them to see...

PURDY
A baseball, a necklace...

(pulls out and holds up a bra)

(CONTINUED)
SARAH
(re: bra, to Dana, a
dig, yes, but more
benign than before)
Yours?

DANA
(takes it in stride)
I don't need to mail him mine.
(re: the mail, to
Purdy)
How many weeks does this represent?

The staffers laugh.

DANA
What's so funny?

Purdy
This is just today's delivery.
We get six of these a week.

During which, he's crossed toward a set of double doors. As he now gestures to the women to follow...
Purdy throws the doors open to reveal a storage room... rows and rows of shelves, boxes and boxes... all of it, mail for Johnny Smith...

Purdy
Where do you want to start?

Off the women's reactions...

JOHNNY
Look, whether you believe me or not, this is just a bad idea... you don't want to go to prison, do you?

Maddy (O.S.)
No one's going to prison.

JOHNNY
The last time I checked, kidnapping was still a felony...
ANITA
Can we stop wasting time...

Anita holds a large file of historical material...
ANITA
This house has a story to tell
and you're here to tell it. The
sooner you do, the sooner you get
out of here.

Johnny understands it's the only thing he can do in this
situation... is there an opportunity to escape here...?

JOHNNY
I... I need to touch things... I
can't very well do it while I'm...

ANITA
Use your feet...
(to Penny)
Push him...

Maddy starts the camera rolling again as Penny begins to
push Johnny...

ANGLE - VIDEO POV - JOHNNY, PENNY PUSHING, SMILING AT THE
CAMERA

MADDY (O.S.)
Penny, stop looking at the camera.

PENNY
Sorrr--ryyyyy... it's not like
I've ever done this before, you
know...?

The shot pans down to Johnny's shoes sticking out from
under the tape... as they touch the bed... the leg of the
nightstand...

ANITA
Well...?

RESUME FILM

JOHNNY
I'm sorry... I'm not...

But as Penny moves him to a closet door... as his toes
touch... RAMP TO HIS FACE... a radio is playing "A Fire I
Can't Put Out" by George Strait... the room is
transformed... by a VISION:
INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAY (TWENTY YEARS AGO)

CHERYL CONNOR, 39, is slipping on a plain farm-type dress... she has a weathered but proud look... dark hair in a bun, simple...

MRS. CONNOR
I thought I'd buy a roast...

DANIEL CONNOR, 47, bushy moustache, silver hair, walks in from the bathroom, buttoning his checkered shirt, a genuine farmer who works with his hands... Johnny is standing there observing the most routine of conversations...

MR. CONNOR
I can pick one up on the way back from town.

MRS. CONNOR
If you want, I'll bake a pie. There were nice peaches yesterday...

JOHNNY
A man and wife... the radio is playing an old country song...

He turns to ---

REVEALING ANITA

who is standing there in a split reality (lighting on her is different) with her file... her eyes narrow... (the other women are not visible)...

ANITA
He has a moustache... Silver hair...?

JOHNNY
Yes.

MR. CONNOR
You want to invite the Petersons?

MRS. CONNOR
He drinks too much. And he gets mean when he's drunk.

ANITA
She has dark hair... probably tied in a bun...

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JOHNNY

Yes. In a bun.

She walks incongruously into this vision, shows him a photograph... the moment he looks, the Connors FREEZE in mid-action...

ANITA

Daniel and Cheryl Connor.

INSERT - THE PHOTOGRAPH

a B&W shot of the same couple lying dead at the base of a stairwell, their clothes slashed and bloodstained... quick, more of an impression than a good look...

JOHNNY REACTS TO THE HORRID PHOTO

A GIRL'S VOICE

(sing-song)
"Big house, little house, back house, barn..."

JOHNNY

Someone's singing. A girl. In a near-by room.

Johnny follows the sound of the voice, moving past the frozen Connors...

INT. FARMHOUSE - PLAYROOM - DAY - PAST - VISION

A twelve-year-old girl (TINA) is swinging a jump rope... as Johnny walks in... a beat later, Anita follows...

ANITA

This was a playroom for the children...

JOHNNY

She's jumping rope...

TINA

Big house, little house, back house, barn...

TINA & JOHNNY (CONT'D)

Big house, little house, back house, barn...

(CONTINUED)
ANITA
Long red hair...?

JOHNNY
Halfway down her back.

Anita shows him another picture... as soon as he sees it, Tina FREEZES in mid-jump...

ANITA
Not after she was killed.

INSERT - B&W PHOTO OF TINA VIRTUALLY SCALPED LYING ON THE FLOOR - BARELY A LOOK - JUST AN IMPRESSION...

ANITA
Tina Connor. They never found her hair.

JOHNNY REACTS
looks away... then notices --

ANGLE - ANOTHER KID IN THE ROOM

that he hadn't noticed before... a boy this time, twelve... he's over in the corner... reading... and he's the sort of kid you might not notice, just beginning to fill out, gawky, pimply, glasses... he's frozen too...

JOHNNY
There's a boy here too. Reading.

ANITA
Nicholas. He hid in a basement crawlspace during the killings. They didn't find him for three days. He couldn't speak for a year afterwards. He's spent most of his life in and out of mental institutions. No one's heard from him in two years... I've tried everything to find him...
And as Johnny turns back to look at the frozen boy, there's a --

FLASH

and we pull out to find Johnny is still bound to his chair - though he's been wheeled into the playroom while we've been in the vision... Anita holding the photograph for him to see... further revealing Penny and Maddy... the kids are gone and it's present day again...

MADDY
Great stuff! I have to recharge the batteries. Johnny, if you'll give me the details, I'll dramatize the visions with actors later on. Wonderful work everyone. We'll break for dinner.

She moves out... Johnny is tired....

JOHNNY
I've done everything you've asked...

ANITA
Except tell us who did it, Mr. Smith... and that's why we're here -- to identify The Reaper...

JOHNNY
The Reaper.

ANITA
That's what they called the drifter who killed them all.

PENNY
Light pasta salad for dinner.

Exits.

JOHNNY
Please. I wasn't kidding before. We can't stay here.
ANITA
(sighs)
You are persistent, aren't you.

She starts to leave...

JOHNNY
(angry but controlled)
Obviously, so are you... to do something as crazy as this...

Anita shrugs, but she tries to explain, in her own way.

ANITA
I'm just trying to solve a mystery.
A cold-blooded killer walked away from here scott free and may still be alive for all we know. It's important to me that we find him.

JOHNNY
Why?

ANITA
Did you know you can buy famous murderer action figures on the net, Mr. Smith? Bundy, Manson, Gacey in his clown outfit. They're all in jail or dead. Which is why they don't frighten us any more, why they can be toys. I'd like to add The Reaper to my collection someday soon. Very soon with your help.

Then she leaves him alone. A beat, then Johnny starts to struggle with his bonds...

36A EXT. FARMHOUSE - DUSK

Pushing toward a basement window...

37 INT. FARMHOUSE BASEMENT - DUSK

So dark we barely can see... but something is moving in the shadows... or someone... moving to a plank on the wall... whoever it is is using some kind of tool to pull the plank away... it creaks a bit... and the entity pauses to make sure the sound isn't too loud... then gently opens a hole in the wall...

The entity reaches in and a pulls out a box... and opens (CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

it, pulling out long red hair, stained with ancient dried blood. And on that disturbing image, we...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO
ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. FAITH HERITAGE MAIL ROOM - NIGHT

Dana and Sarah sorting through mail... Sarah pausing on one...

SARAH
Whups, think I've got another one...

DANA
Penny Barton?

SARAH
(acknowledges)
Same handwriting as the others.
Same return address.

She opens it... nods...

SARAH
'Johnny, if you touch this letter, you'll be touching me...' Russell Crowe doesn't get letters like these.

DANA
Sure he does.

SARAH
That makes thirteen letters in three months from this Barton woman.

She refolds it and puts it on a stack of maybe a dozen others that she's set aside from the bigger pile...

DANA
I've still got you by two... with my pile from... Mrs. Hazel Glim of Butte, Montana who thinks Johnny's a sign from the Lord that the world is coming to an end...

Sarah nods wearily. We sense this seemingly futile search has forged a fragile truce between the two.

SARAH
All these people... complete strangers... and every one of them convinced that they know Johnny...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

SARAH (CONT'D)

(beat)
Intimately.

They continue sorting mail.

DANA
They should talk to us. We'd
tell him the skinny on the guy...
how he wears the same clothes for
two days in a row sometimes...

SARAH
Oh, I hate when he does that.
And... and... sings off key with
the radio in the car...

DANA
And when he eats, he talks with...

SARAH & DANA
...his mouth full... uh huh, uh
huh...

DANA
And snores.

Sarah avoids that one... with a 'does he, really?' look.
More sentiment:

SARAH
He's good at finding lost car
keys though.

DANA
Yeah. And he doesn't watch a lot
of sports on TV because he knows
who's gonna win, poor guy.

SARAH
(sighs)
You think he's okay?

DANA
What we need is a psychic to find
our psychic.
(finding mail)
Hey, I think I've got one for
you. Penny redux. She's only
one behind Hazel.

SARAH
Let me see that...

(CONTINUED)
This letter is not the same girlish stationery of the other Penny letters but instead bears the LOGO of the Travelodge motel chain (no return address, though). Sarah checks the postmark.

SARAH
This one was just sent a few days ago... wonder what she was doing at a motel in Bangor...

And off their curious looks...

INT. FAITH HERITAGE - PURDY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

As Purdy enters with in-house counsel MIKE KENNEDY. An artist's rendering of the new Faith Heritage Theology Building is on an easel.

KENNEDY
Somehow they tracked down our IP address, breached the firewall, and shot their videostream down our T3 line.

PURDY
How much are they asking for?

KENNEDY
Actually, they want to pay us.

(off Purdy's reaction)

Just promise me you'll watch the whole thing before you say no.

Kennedy has already pressed a button on the computer and an animated PRESENTATION PACKAGE unfolds on the screen.

ON THE MONITOR

ANIMATED MADDY strolls onto the screen -- smiles and waves...

ANIMATED MADDY
Sorry I can't join you in person today, Reverend... but I'm on location on production of my new movie coming soon to a multiplex near you. Here's a sneak preview.

A remote control appears in animated Maddy's hand and she aims it at camera. VIDEO FOOTAGE fills the screen. First, Johnny's abduction. Then in his chair. Reactions.

(CONTINUED)
Purdy
My God, Johnny... have you called the Sheriff...

Kennedy
(acknowledges)
The deputies are downstairs...

The footage continues as:

Animated Maddy (V.O.)
Johnny's fine... there's nothing to worry about... he will be released shortly if you follow these instructions. Attached to this file is a seven minute trailer for our film that we'd like you to run on the Faith Heritage Network tonight at ten. We have already advised potential distributors of this broadcast schedule.

The animated Maddy reappears.

Animated Maddy (CONT'D)
In return, we're prepared to give Faith Heritage Charities five percent of the adjusted gross profits should distribution be secured as a result of your telecast. It's only reasonable... and we are reasonable people, Reverend... for Johnny's sake, I hope you are too. See you on the tube...

The animation ends. Purdy is outraged, outraged.

Purdy
They may think they're going to soothe their conscience or evade prison with this blood money, but I can assure you...

Kennedy shrugs, hands Purdy a document...

Purdy
What's this?

Kennedy
They sent over the gross receipts for a movie called The Blair Witch Project.

(CONTINUED)
39 CONTINUED: (2)

PURDY
The only thing I care about is
getting Johnny back unharmed.
(what is that anyway)
Blair Witch?

KENNEDY
150 million, domestic. Hundred
million, foreign. Eight-five
million, Video, DVD, cable and
pay-per-view. Five percent would
come to the neighborhood of
seventeen million.

Purdy sits, dazed at the numbers...

KENNEDY
I know how disappointed you've
been with the fund raising efforts
for the new Theology Building...

Purdy looks at him... looks at his lovely plans for the
Theology Building... almost has to laugh at the ridiculous
suggestion... almost laughs but not quite...

40 INT. FARMHOUSE - PLAYROOM - NIGHT

Johnny is practicing using his toes to slowly move the
chair... it's difficult but not impossible... it's hard
to see how this might help but it's the human spirit of
survival driving him on. He brushes up against a small
dressing table with a mirror and...

41 INT. PLAYROOM - DAY - PAST - VISION

STARTING ECU on long red hair being brushed out. The
hair crackles with static as the brush passes along. The
hair is luxurious, the brush's passage electric, charged.
It feels almost sensuous... we should feel this too.

PULLING BACK to find Nicholas standing behind his sister,
TINA, as he brushes her hair, while Tina eyes her
reflection in the mirror. The brush hits a knot.

TINA
Ouch. Nicholas, be careful.

Nicholas keeps brushing... he glances at the mirror, sees
his own pimply reflection, then looks away unhappily...
back at his sister's hair.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Someone KNOCKS at the door. As both children turn...

RESUME - PRESENT

As Johnny looks up to see Penny knocking. She enters with a tray of food.

PENNY
Ready for some dinner?

JOHNNY
I'm not hungry.

PENNY
You have to eat.

JOHNNY
No really, the toll house cookies were really filling.

She puts the tray down on a child's round table... and sits in a child sized chair opposite Johnny.

PENNY
You're angry with me.

JOHNNY
No, I'm not angry.

PENNY
Promise?

JOHNNY
(a plan forming)
Penny, I like you. I'd really like to get to know you better.

PENNY
Well, I'm a leap year baby... I like to knit sweaters for everyone in my family... I'm the knitter... the rest of the family is in the canning industry... our house always smells like fresh tuna...

JOHNNY
(interrupting)
I mean I'd like to spend more time with you... away from here...

She studies him with some skepticism... wants to believe him... she stands and moves to him and looks him in the eyes with intimacy...
PENNY
Patty Hearst.

JOHNNY
What?

PENNY
The website told me how the victim begins to identify with the abductors.

JOHNNY
It's not that. I really do... feel close to you...

PENNY
Really...?

She shyly sits on his taped lap... tries to snuggle in but it's a difficult chore... Johnny tries not to show his fear of this crazy person... stays with his plan to turn her into an ally...

PENNY
Oh, Johnny... if I could only believe that.

JOHNNY
Penny, I need your help to get out of here.

PENNY
(torn)
I'm sorry, Johnny... I can't...

JOHNNY
You care about me, don't you?

PENNY
That's not fair. You know I do.

JOHNNY
Then help me.

PENNY
I'll never see you again. They'll lock me up this time.

JOHNNY
I won't let them. You and me... we'll be together...

She stares at him, wanting so much to believe him... she overcomes her shyness and does what she's dreamed of doing -
she kisses him...

PENNY
Relax your lips.

JOHNNY
Penny...

PENNY
I can't get my tongue in... I want to taste you... I want you to taste me...

She kisses him more deeply... he doesn't ever close his eyes...

PENNY
It doesn't matter.

JOHNNY
Doesn't matter?

PENNY
If it is the Patty Hearst thing.

And as she kisses him again and he's helpless...

INT. MOTEL RECEPTION - NIGHT

A young MOTEL MANAGER (SPICUZZA) is checking his computer, talking to Dana and Sarah...

MANAGER
I'm sorry, as I told you on the phone, no Barton has been registered here recently...

Dana slides a photograph of Penny across the counter...

DANA
Maybe you've seen her?

The manager glances at the photo... recognizes her...

MANAGER
Yes! She sang in our karaoke bar a few nights ago. "Summer Wind" I think it was.

That seems like a dead end.
DANA
(dry)
Singing... karaoke.

SARAH
Might be a little premature to call Walt in on this.

MANAGER
I think she was here visiting some friends.
   (checking the computer)
Two young women from Los Angeles.
They're still checked in but I haven't seen them around for the last couple of days.

Dana and Sarah exchange a hopeful look...
INT. PLAYROOM - AS BEFORE

Penny is unbuttoning her blouse...

JOHNNY
What... what are you doing?

And as she eases out of her blouse... starts on her skirt.

PENNY
Do you believe in destiny, Johnny?
Because I do. I believe it's brought us together... brought us together on this night.

And her skirt hits the floor, leaving her in just her bra * and slip, Johnny staring at her in disbelief... *

PENNY
I'm ovulating.
(then)
My temperature's up. I just did a test while the pasta was cooking...

She straddles Johnny's lap...

JOHNNY
You've got to be kidding.

PENNY
I want to have your baby, Johnny.

Push in close as she starts to kiss his neck... RAMP TO HIS FACE...

FLASH - THREE CATS TWINE AROUND PENNY'S LEGS... AS WE TILT UP TO REVEAL HER SITTING AND KNITTING, HUGELY PREGNANT...

RESUME - JOHNNY CLOSE-UP

as he reacts with horror...

PENNY
Johnny, Johnny, Johnny. This is all I've ever wanted.
CONTINUED:

JOHNNY
Penny, we can't do this...

PENNY
(devlishly, whispering
in his ear)
Oh yes we can...!

Off his curious fearful eyes...

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

As the manager opens the door for them, stands there, watching them... Sarah and Dana start looking through the debris... and immediately react as they find the room is filled with photos and artwork for Maddy's film. A STORYBOARD shows a few frames of Johnny's kidnapping, pretty close to the way it actually went down. Location survey photographs of the farmhouse from several angles... it is marked in typical production style: Connor Farm.

DANA
The Connor farm... a family was murdered there twenty years ago... just over the state line...

Sarah is already dialing her mobile phone...

SARAH
Walt...?

And before we hear Walt's answer...

INT. PLAYROOM - NIGHT - CLOSE ON A SERRATED STEAK KNIFE

sawing its way through the tape toward his groin...

PENNY

on her knees doing the sawing...

PENNY
If it's a boy, we'll name him Johnny...
{Johnny reacts}
And if it's a girl... we'll still name her...
{with a triumphant upward slash}
...Johnny.
CONTINUED:

JOHNNY
Penny... not here... not like this...

PENNY
(driven, intense)
Yes. Exactly like this.

And as she stands and reaches behind her to unsnap her bra... she suddenly realizes they're not alone... turns to see --

ANGLE - MADDY

with the camera in the shadows... in the passion of the moment, they didn't see her sneak in...

PENNY
What are you doing?!

VIDEOCAM POV - PENNY

covers herself...

MADDY (O.S.)
Keep going. I'm not even here...

PENNY
Go away. This is a special moment between me and Johnny...

MADDY (O.S.)
Don't look at the camera...

Suddenly Penny charges over, grabs at the camera...

MADDY (O.S.)
Hey. Let go!

As the camera view jerks all over, a chilling SCREAM from the other room ends it and we...

CUT TO:

MADDY AND PENNY - ON FILM

exchange a look, turn and run out, Penny grabbing her clothes as she leaves... leaving Johnny stuck there, fearing for his life. But at least now he's got some leverage to move his legs. As he starts struggling to work his ankles free...
as Maddy and Penny (whose blouse has gone back on en route) rush in to find Anita staring at what looks like a big RED QUESTION MARK that's scrawled on the wall...

    PENNY
    A question mark...?

Maddy shoots it with her camera...

    MADDY
    That's no question mark.

    ANITA
    It's a sickle.

Off their reactions --

    FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE
ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. FARMHOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

CLOSE ON THE WHEELS of Johnny's chair as they roll slowly over the worn floorboards.

JOHNNY'S shoes, now freed from the duct tape, push the chair along. Slowly, cautiously.

CLOSE ON JOHNNY'S FACE as he hears the women's arguing voices coming from the doorway to the master bedroom that's looming up...

   PENNY (O.S.)
   Who put it there?

   ANITA (O.S.)
   (accusing)
   Maddy?

   MADDY (O.S.)
   Why would I?

   ANITA (O.S.)
   To make your movie more exciting maybe?

   MADDY (O.S.)
   I swear... it wasn't me...

As Johnny reaches the door, he reacts as --

A VISION - MR. CONNOR AND NICHOLAS

walk out of the bedroom in a split reality... both holding hunting rifles... the father is stern-faced... the boy is unhappy... they may have just had an argument... but it's quick, they pass by Johnny and are gone from view...

JOHNNY

reacts curiously... sneaks a peek in the room, the women are out of eye-line, though he can see the sickle on the wall...

   ANITA (O.S.)
   Somebody's either lying...

   PENNY (O.S.)
   Or there's somebody else in this house.

(CONTINUED)
He pushes himself quickly past the door... propels himself farther along. He rounds a corner... and finds himself at the top of a flight of stairs, a landing halfway down. Shit. No way he's getting out this way, not tied to the chair anyway. Suddenly --

ANITA
What are you doing out here?

She grabs his chair and as she does -- RAMP TO HIS FACE -

HIS POV - VISION - ANOTHER ANGLE - NICHOLAS CHARGING TOWARD HIM WITH A SICKLE - VERY QUICK SHOT

and so shocking that he leans back out of Anita's grip...

THE CHAIR WHEELS

slip over the top step as the chair slips off the landing...

JOHNNY'S CHAIR LANDS ON ITS BACK, SKIDS LIKE A SLED... AND WITH EACH IMPACT AGAINST THE STAIRS...

ANGLE AT BOTTOM: OOF! JOHNNY LANDS HARD ON THE LANDING, MORE OF THE TAPE TEARING, FREEING ONE ARM, WHICH FALLS TO THE SIDE... FINDING THE THREE MURDERED CONNORS LYING BESIDE HIM IN A SPLIT REALITY SHOT... AND NOW HE LOOKS UP TO SEE YOUNG NICHOLAS COMING SLOWLY DOWN THE STAIRS. HELD LOOSELY AT HIS SIDE, A BLOODY SICKLE...

JOHNNY - CLOSE UP

SAME POV - BUT IN THE PRESENT - ANITA
coming down the stairs with the other two women following close behind (Penny hurriedly putting her clothes on)...

PENNY
Johnny, are you okay...?

VIDEO POV COMING DOWN STAIRS
moving toward Johnny on the floor...
CONTINUED:

MADDY (O.S.)
(muttering)
I can't believe I didn't get this on film...

JOHNNY
(weak)
Nicholas... Nicholas did it.

ANITA
What?

JOHNNY
There was no drifter. It was Nicholas. He killed them.

ANITA
His own family? That's ridiculous. Nicholas was just a young boy.

Penny is helping him turn himself right side up... The chair is broken. No sense trying to put Johnny back in it, so Penny just tears at the remaining tape, freeing him... his legs are stiff and the circulation is weak after sitting for so long... it's hard to walk...

RESUME FILM

JOHNNY
I saw the sickle in his hands...

ANITA
He's lying - he just wants to get out of here...

PENNY
He's not the only one...

Johnny grabs her by the hand...

JOHNNY
Come on...

They move to the front door... as Johnny tries to open it... he sees a padlock has been attached to the door... touches it...

FLASH - YOUNG NICHOLAS USES A KEY TO LOCK AN INNER PADLOCK, THEN POCKETS IT
RESUME JOHNNY - VIDEO POV - PUSH IN TO HIM AS HE REALIZES

JOHNNY
Nicholas is here. He's in the house.

ANITA
Don't you see what he's doing --
(camera swishes to show her)
He's trying to scare you.

JOHNNY
(to Penny)
Is there another exit?

MADDY (O.S.)
There's a back door... but it's boarded up.

PENNY
For godsakes, turn off the camera already... what about the windows?

Johnny limps to one, throws open the sash, pries at the boards.

ANITA
I... I have the psychiatric reports right here... "Subject suffering a complete infantile regression consistent with severe emotional trauma." Maybe there is someone else in this house... but it's not Nicholas.

RESUME FILM

The boards don't budge.

JOHNNY
These boards are an inch thick... and the nails've been in there for years.

ANITA
Listen to me!

She grabs Johnny's arm, TOUCHING HIM FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE SHOW and initiating a startling VISION as --
ANITA MORPHS INTO YOUNG NICHOLAS, HIS HAND STILL ON JOHNNY'S ARM...

YOUNG NICHOLAS
(speaking Anita's words in his own voice)
Nicholas isn't a killer; he's a victim. Whatever he saw or heard, it completely terrified him... it almost paralyzed him...

Johnny looks down at the boy's hand on his arm, then the vision ends as...

ANITA follows his look and a horrified realization blooms on her face. And as she JERKS her hand away and RUNS OFF up the stairs...

MADDY (O.S.)
Anita...?

She starts to go after her, but Johnny blocks her.

JOHNNY
Let her go.

As both women turn to Johnny, wondering what the hell just happened...

INT. FARMHOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Anita has locked herself in, paces, like an animal...

ANITA
He's lying, he's lying, he's lying, he's lying, he's lying, he's lying, he's lying...

She's coming unglued. Suddenly she stops, stares in the mirror.

ANITA
I-It was a stranger... A drifter...

Her voice drops a register, clearly the voice of a MAN...

ANITA
You didn't kill them. You couldn't have. It wasn't you!
Anita, hereafter NICHOLAS/ANITA, struggles to find reality. She stands at the sink, hands GRIPPING the sides of the mirror, softly, banging her head against the glass...

NICHOLAS/ANITA
What did you do? What did you do?

The banging grows more violent. The mirror is bound to break.

Suddenly Nicholas/ANITA STOPS, realizing that the mirror, the whole MEDICINE CABINET, IS LOOSE.

She tugs the cabinet, pulling it from the wall and opening a 12" x 20" hole. Unsure, driven by a faint memory, she reaches inside... and pulls out the blood-encrusted SICKLE, HORRIFIED but THRILLED at the discovery. She holds the sickle, running her fingers over the encrusted blood, the still sharp edge. Even after twenty years, the metal retains enough polish to offer a rough reflection...

As Anita sees her face reflected... then she spins the handle... and sees young Nicholas reflected on the blade's other side. Another spin: Anita; another spin: Nicholas.

rolling down a parkway... bubble lights flashing, sirens wailing... a sign says Welcome to New Hampshire... New Hampshire State police cars are waiting for them and join the caravan...

Maddy and Penny reacting to what Johnny's just told them.

PENNY
Johnny, they're a couple. Maddy would know if... if she weren't a, if she were a...
(turning)
You'd know, right, Maddy?

Maddy goes suddenly pale.
CONTINUED:

MADDY
Ohmigod... I'm so stupid...

She numbly sets the camera on a tripod.

MADDY
We never messed around that much... and when we did... she never wanted to...

A beat as Johnny realizes what he must do, then...

JOHNNY
Get in the den.

He herds them toward it...

JOHNNY
Lock the door. Stay in there until I come back or help comes.

Before he shuts the door, he sees his CANE leaning against a wall and grabs it. Then he heads toward the stairs...

INT. DEN - CONTINUOUS

Both women are terribly worried as Penny locks the door. Behind them on the TV monitor which is on, Purdy's image fades in... Maddy reacts as she sees it, runs over... Purdy looks uncomfortable as he addresses the camera from his desk... (before the sound comes up, he's saying good evening and introducing himself as Reverand Gene Purdy of the Faith Heritage Alliance.) As Maddy turns up the sound...

PURDY (TV)
"Journey to Bethlehelm" will be delayed tonight so we may bring you... a special presentation of sorts... And I might caution you that it's not for children or the faint of heart...

MADDY
(overlapping)
Ohmigod! They're playing it!
FOLLOWING JOHNNY

Moving up the stairs now recalling Martin Balsam in Psycho...

JOHNNY
Anita... you said this house had a story to tell. Do you want to hear it?

No answer. He moves cautiously toward the bathroom... the door is cracked open... he pushes it... Anita's not inside... but he can see the hole in the wall where the medicine cabinet used to be... his eyes narrow... he moves on through the extremely dark hallway...

JOHNNY (CONT'D)
It's about a boy... a troubled boy who couldn't deal with the things he was feeling... so he lashed out... violently... at his own family.

He moves through the dark house... opening doors defensively... heading back toward the stairs...

JOHNNY (CONT'D)
He couldn't live with what he did... so he buried it... in himself... and eventually became a completely different person.

At the top of the stairs, he turns back to look down the hallway. And in that moment, shooting over his shoulder, we see a figure flash by the base of the stairs. Johnny turns again, sensing the motion but missing it. As he starts back down the stairs...

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JOHNNY (CONT'D)
But some part of him must've wanted
the truth to come out...

(beat)
That's why you brought us back
here, isn't it? To tell yourself
the truth... and get the help you
must know you need...

At the base of the stairs, he enters the kitchen... as a
shadow moves into frame behind him... a hand with the
sickle visible in silhouette... Johnny senses it just
before it swings... there's a blur of a slashing sickle...
And Johnny reels back, his shirt ripped by the blade...
he runs out of the kitchen.. the face of Nicholas/Anita
moves past camera, sickle raised for another slashing
attack.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

TIGHT ON the video camera, unmanned, propped on the tripod,
recording... as Johnny stumbles in...

VIDEOCAM POV
As Nicholas/Anita follows, Johnny using his cane to block
some more crazed slashes, ducking others, as furniture is
SLICED, lamps are SMASHED... and this all happens very
fast:

RESUME FILM - FOLLOWING THE SICKLE
As it swings again, Johnny springs at her and they go
down to the floor but she/he's deceptively strong... and
has the brief advantage, raises the sickle up high for a
final blow...

CLOSE ANGLE - NICHOLAS/ANITA'S HANDS GRIPPING THE SICKLE'S
HANDLE SWING DOWN...

...and are CAUGHT by Johnny's hands, just in time... as
camera now travels down the curving blade to find the
point suspended just over one of Johnny's eyes.

NICHOLAS/ANITA
puts all her strength and weight behind the blade, trying
to force it into Johnny's skull, and Johnny resists. But
she has a frenzied strength and he's battered and
weakening...

Suddenly, he rolls, manages to pin her wrists... her wig
CONTINUED:

falls off, revealing a balding male pattern head... Johnny pulls the sickle from her hand. He holds her down, breathing hard. Sirens arriving outside.

JOHNNY
It's over, Nicholas. It's over.

And just as suddenly, the strength and madness ebbs out of her, and she begins to sob... like a child...

SMASH! The door busts in and Walt, his deputies and New Hampshire State police pour inside... Walt stopping as he and Johnny exchange relieved looks...

TIME CUT TO:

INT. FARMHOUSE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A short time later. The women are being led out in cuffs...

MADDY
(to cops)
That camera and all videotapes are my property. My entertainment attorney is in L.A.... his card is in my back pocket...

WALT
I don't think an 'entertainment' attorney is exactly what you need right now...

Penny moves by escorted by a state trooper...

PENNY
You really would have, you know...
(off Johnny's look)
Liked me... when you got to know me.

JOHNNY
Take care of yourself, Penny.

PENNY
(as she's moved away)
Write me?

For Johnny's benefit...

DANA
What in the world does she see in him?

(Continued)
CONTINUED:

SARAH
Got me.

DANA
Come on. I'll give you a ride home.

The two women smile at Johnny, go off together...

JOHNNY
(to Bruce)
When did those two start...
(buddying up)

BRUCE
I think when they saw the autographed bras and panties you've been getting...

JOHNNY
That reminds me. I've got to talk to Purdy about form letters.

As Johnny prepares to go, camera swings to show the video camera on the tripod, its red recording light still blinking.

VIDEOCAM POV

Of the group leaving. Then Johnny looks back.

JOHNNY
One second.

He approaches, reaches toward the viewfinder, and the screen goes BLACK...

END OF ACT FOUR

THE END

Well, almost... because after all the credits run and the logos do too... we fade in on a marquee on a city street... it says FARMHOUSE, A MADDY POWERS FILM... A line wraps around the corner for the next show.
And now this really is...

THE END