

THE MOTHMAN PROPHECIES

screenplay by

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Based upon the book

"The Mothman Prophecies"

by John A. Keel

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Author's Note

The following screenplay is based upon the events described in John A. Keel's "The Mothman Prophecies," a true story of the unexplained, now considered a classic in the annals of UFOlogy and the paranormal.

While the names have been changed and the time frame updated and condensed for narrative clarity, the events described in this screenplay did occur and were documented-- not just by John Keel, but also in numerous newspapers and journals across the country. Indeed, the kind of phenomena that plagued Point Pleasant, West Virginia from November 1966 until December 1967 have been observed for centuries, and still occur today in cities and towns all over the world.

No conclusive explanation for these events has ever been found.

If there is a universal mind,
must it be sane?

--Charles Fort

THE MOTHMAN PROPHECIES

FADE IN ON: WASHINGTON, D.C. A crisp, cold November night. We go...

INT. CHECKER'S BAR & GRILL -- NIGHT

A sports bar and hang-out for White House staffers and Capitol Hill lackeys. Standing at the crowded bar is...

MIKE SELWYN, (44), a red-headed senate aide, and JOHN KLEIN, (33), an up-and-coming reporter for the Washington Post; intelligent, with East Coast good-looks.

SELWYN

...He put the "lame" in lame duck, John. The president's been pushing this bogus Crime Bill for two terms.
(off Redskins game on TV)
Come on, Purcell, move the ball!

JOHN

So it's finally gonna pass, so what's the story?

SELWYN

The story is Speaker Allen. Gonna take a big doodoo all over the President's birthday cake.

A huge GROAN from the crowd; the Redskins are slipping.

JOHN

(off TV)
Better get out your money...

SELWYN

Think about it. Allen's sixty-five years old. Last week he told Ted Koppel his next house is going to be white. What's he got to lose?

John downs his beer, one eye still on the game...

JOHN

So he screams the bill's not tough enough, grabs the evening news, and reminds America he's still a player.

SELWYN

Boom. He goes into the primaries next spring a front runner...

Another GROAN. Game over. Redskins down by two. Selwyn pulls out his wallet and hands over a twenty.

JOHN

That's the problem with you Democrats.
You always bet the home team.

SELWYN

Loyalty used to be a virtue.
(moves to go)
And make sure you spell my name right:
A-N-O-N-Y-M-O-U-S S-O-U-R-C-E.

INT. WASHINGTON POST -- BULL PEN -- MIDNIGHT

John pounds away at his computer as ED FLEISCHMAN, (29), rolls out of his cubicle and shouts across the room:

ED

Okay: "The Balkans Peace Council is
comprised of ten members" or "is
composed of ten members"?

JOHN

Twelve members.

ED

Oh. Right. Thanks.

Ed rolls out of sight as John finishes, grabs his coat and heads past Ed's cubicle:

JOHN

"Composed."

As John walks on, Ed rolls back out:

ED

What?

INT. NATIONAL DESK -- LATER

Editor CYRUS BILLS, (65), a scarecrow with a cigarette, scrolls through John's piece on the computer. He hands a message slip to John, his eyes never leaving the screen.

CYRUS

Adam Petrovich at CNN called for you.
It got switched in here by mistake.

JOHN

(casual)
Oh. Thanks.

CYRUS

Do me a favor. Talk to me before you make any decisions, okay?

John smiles. This is the closest thing to a warm moment he and Cyrus have ever had.

JOHN

Deal.

CYRUS

Oh, and the Redskins tanked. Cough up.

That's more like it. John takes out Selwyn's twenty and drops it on Cyrus's desk.

INT. JOHN AND MARY KLEIN'S APARTMENT -- MORNING

Law books, newspapers, plants and prints. The post-marriage, pre-kids look. MARY KLEIN, (31), the prettiest red-headed lawyer you've ever seen, strides out of the bedroom to find...

JOHN still in his robe. The phone in one hand and today's Washington Post in the other.

JOHN

(into phone)

Yeah, I know he's in a meeting, Selma. Take a message, okay? You got a pen?

MARY

John, it's 8:30. Get dressed. She's going to meet us at the house at nine.

John nods, holds up a hand: "Gimme a second, here..."

JOHN

(into phone)

Okay, "Dear Cyrus... Enjoyed our talk last night... Now please stop fucking..."

MARY

And somehow your robe just doesn't say "down payment."

JOHN

(into phone)

I don't care if you're embarrassed, just write it. "Stop fucking with my leads..."

Mary rolls her eyes and heads back into the bedroom.

JOHN
 (into phone)
 "Love, John Klein." Oh, and "P.S.--I
 called Adam Petrovich, so break open
 your wallet." Got it? Thanks, Selma.

He hangs up, looks up at the empty room:

JOHN
 Unbelievable.

INT. COLONIAL-STYLE HOUSE - MCLEAN, VIRGINIA -- DAY

The REAL ESTATE LADY reels off info about the house as
 John and Mary hang back in the empty, sun-bathed kitchen.

Mary grabs John, excited as a little girl at Christmas.

MARY
 Oh my God, do you love it, John? I
 think I love it.

JOHN
 (smiles)
 I think you do too...

She hits him; he laughs.

JOHN
 It is pretty great.

She hugs him--all forgiven. He kisses her. Passionately.

JOHN
 Come, let's go, right here.

MARY
 Stop it.

He slides his hands into her blouse. She shrieks with
 laughter as the Real Estate Lady returns.

REAL ESTATE LADY
 Would you like to see upstairs...?

They separate quickly, embarrassed.

MARY
 Yes. Please.

INT. ED FLEISHMAN'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

John and Ed make salad in the kitchen while Mary and
 CAROL, Ed's girlfriend, sit in the living room.

MARY
 ...and the kitchen is giant--it opens
 out onto an enclosed porch...

CAROL
 (smiling, excited)
 Oh, I hate you.

IN THE KITCHEN: Shredding lettuce and chopping carrots...

ED
 So what are you saying--CNN?

JOHN
 I don't know. I'm just saying he
 called. I've got a meeting.

ED
 What? You're lying. A fucking
 meeting? You're in.

JOHN
 It's a meeting, Ed.

ED
 No wonder you're looking at houses.
 (shakes his head)
 A meeting. I hate you.

EXT. STREET -- NIGHT

Icy wind whips leaves and trash around their feet as John
 and Mary walk to their car. Winter is finally tipping
 her hand, and it's gonna be a doozy...

MARY
 So--can I call my parents?

JOHN
 Why don't we at least wait until we're
 sure we can do this?

They get to the car. John tosses Mary the keys and flops
 into the passenger seat. Mary climbs behind the wheel.

IN THE SILENCE OF THE CAR, she turns to him...

MARY
 Okay. We can wait. But you know what
 I kept thinking when we were looking
 at the house today?

JOHN
 It's better than your sister's.

MARY
Stop it! Besides that... I kept
thinking it felt like a dream come true.

John looks at her. She's serious. He leans over and
kisses her.

JOHN
Call your folks.

INT. CAR -- NIGHT

Mary drives; John leans back in the passenger seat, eyes
closed, drunk as a lord and happy as can be.

Mary turns onto their block. Suddenly, in the headlights:
A DARK FIGURE LOOMS UP--right in front of the car.

Mary SCREAMS, slams the brakes. The car JOLTS to a stop.
Mary's face hits the steering wheel. John flies forward--
the seatbelt yanks him back.

JOHN
Jesus!

He looks at Mary: she's slumped over the wheel, unconscious.
He touches her gently, afraid to move her...

JOHN
Mary?

No response. He pulls out his cell phone, dials 911,
hands shaking, and climbs out of the car into...

THE STREET: He goes to the front of the car, dreading
what he might find. But nothing's there. He checks
under the car. Nothing. He scans the street. It's
strangely empty.

So what the hell just happened? The operator comes on:

JOHN
(into phone)
Yes, there's, uh, been an accident...

INT. HOSPITAL -- NIGHT

Mary lies on an examination table while DR. DEBORAH
MCELHONE bandages her nose.

DR. MCELHONE
We'll do a CAT-SCAN, make sure there's
no swelling or bleeding, and we can get
you something for pain, just in case.

MARY
Thank you.

Dr.McElhone leaves. John takes Mary's hand...

JOHN
You doing okay?

MARY
Yeah, I'm okay...

But she's not. She stares off, pre-occupied, remote. Finally, she looks at him:

MARY
You didn't see it, did you.

JOHN
See what?

Mary holds his gaze for a beat, then looks away.

MARY
Nothing.

John's hand tightens on hers. Something is very wrong here.

INT. HOSPITAL -- LATER

John dozes in a chair. Dr.McElhone places a hand on his shoulder; he snaps awake.

DR.MCELHONE
Mr.Klein? We need to talk...

LATER: THROUGH THE WINDOW OF DR.MCELHONE'S OFFICE...

We see John and Mary sitting at Dr.McElhone's desk, as she talks to them. After a long moment we see John slowly put his arm around his wife.

INT. HOSPITAL -- WAITING ROOM -- NIGHT

John sees Mary's parents, WOODROW and RUTH DUNNING, rush in. Ruth is already crying.

RUTH
Where is she?

JOHN
She just went in for radiation treatment. It takes about an hour.

WOODROW
Radiation?

John's voice is shaky, everything is happening too fast. Maybe if he just keeps talking he might not fall apart.

JOHN

They said they have to try to shrink it down right now as much as possible. She's supposed to have surgery Friday. Another doctor is coming in from Baltimore, a neurosurgeon, he's supposed to be really great.

RUTH

Oh my poor baby...

Ruth sinks into a chair; Woodrow turns to John, trying to get control of the situation.

WOODROW

Okay. So they're doing surgery. So it's operable, right?

JOHN

Um, yeah. I guess.

WOODROW

Good. That's good...

The hope in Woodrow's eyes cuts right through John. Suddenly, tears roll down John's face. Woodrow awkwardly puts an arm around John.

WOODROW

Come on... It's going to be fine... She's going to be just fine...

INT. RECOVERY ROOM -- SEVERAL DAYS LATER -- MORNING

Mary's hair is gone and her head is bandaged from surgery, but she's awake and alert. John sits with her, a yellow pad in his hand.

MARY

...And I want to get Gary a little snow-suit for the trip--Jane and Doug are taking him up to Vermont. I think he's almost twenty pounds now, so make sure to check the size...

JOHN

Okay, okay... That's everyone.

MARY

Are you sure you can do all this? Have the stores wrap everything for you, okay?

JOHN
Would you stop? I can handle this.

There's a long silence. Then:

MARY
John... I'm sorry.

JOHN
About what?

MARY
About all this. I feel like I ruined everything.

John looks at her; she's talking about a lot more than just Christmas. He takes her hand and smiles.

JOHN
You haven't ruined a damn thing.

HOSPITAL ROOM -- LATER THAT NIGHT

John steps in; Mary is asleep. He goes to her, kisses her softly and turns to leave.

But something on the bedside table catches his eye...

He picks up the yellow pad with the Christmas list on it. At the bottom, Mary has drawn a strange doodle: a man, but with huge insect-eyes and giant wings in his back.

INT. JOHN AND MARY'S APARTMENT -- BEDROOM -- NIGHT

John lies alone in bed, stares at the ceiling, thinking...

INT. GARAGE

John flips on the light and looks at their car. He pads across the cold cement and crouches by the front bumper.

He notices something. Nothing huge, but he completely missed it the night of the accident...

The center of the bumper is scorched black.

INT. CHECKER'S BAR & GRILL -- NIGHT

It's late; the place is empty. John and Ed work on scotch. John's face is gray with lack of sleep.

JOHN
It's called a Glioblastoma Multiforma. Temporal lobe tumor. Very aggressive.

ED
Jesus Christ...

JOHN
According to Dr. Patel it's very rare.
Strikes one in 600,000. You've got a
better chance catching the plague.

ED
Is there anything they can do?

JOHN
They did surgery, but they couldn't get
it all. She starts chemo tomorrow...

He stares into the middle-distance.

JOHN
Three days ago we were house-hunting.
Last week I was up all night worried
that I'd bounced the cable check.
It's like one day the universe can
just point at you and say, "Ah, there
you are. The happy couple. I've been
looking for you."

ED
Look, John, if there's anything I can
do, man--I mean anything...

John just shakes his head:

JOHN
I keep trying to figure out why. Like if
I could just find a reason, I might be
okay. Because if this is just happening,
for no reason... Ed, I've never been
this scared. I never knew it was possible
to be this scared. I try to think what
it must be like for her, but... Then I
try to imagine living the rest of my life
without her, and I can't breathe.

Ed looks at his friend. For the first time in his life,
John looks fragile, truly lost.

INT. HOSPITAL -- NEUROSURGERY OFFICE -- DAY

DR. RAJ PATEL, (39), an East Indian neurosurgeon, talks
with John, who hangs on his every word.

DR. PATEL
We are having some success with the
chemotherapy. As long as she remains
strong, we can continue daily cycles.

JOHN

That's a good sign, right?

DR. PATEL

John, we need to be very clear on something. Your wife may get better for a time. We may even be able to arrange for her to go home for a few hours on Christmas Day...

JOHN

That would be great, she would love that.

Dr. Patel sees the hope in John's eyes; he proceeds gently:

DR. PATEL

However, I need you to realize that patients in her condition do not make full recoveries.

JOHN

But you said she's responding to treatment.

DR. PATEL

Yes, for now. But it would be irresponsible of me to make you see hope where there is none...

John flinches. Tries to respond. Can't.

DR. PATEL

There is a counselling group for surviving spouses that meets right here in the hospital. If you'd like, I can help you get in touch with them.

INT. RUTH AND WOODROW'S HOUSE -- KITCHEN - DUSK

Ruth moves through the kitchen like a tornado, preparing food, while Woodrow makes a drink. John sits staring at the kitchen table, quietly withdrawn.

RUTH

Now please Woodrow, when they get here tomorrow, explain to everyone not to mention the bandages or ask a lot of questions, that's the last thing she needs right now.

WOODROW

If you ask me, this is crazy. No way should we be filling this house with a bunch of people, and getting her all worked up when--

RUTH

Excuse me, but she told me, she said she wants it to be just like normal. If things get to be too much, we can always bring her upstairs for a while.

JOHN

We don't even know if she's coming home.

Ruth stops like she's been slapped.

RUTH

What do you mean? You said that--

JOHN

I said they might let her come home, they haven't made that decision yet.

Ruth throws down her mixing spoon, splattering tomato across the stove.

RUTH

Well this is just great. I'm trying to plan Christmas for my daughter, and do things the way she wants them and now I find out--

WOODROW

Now Ruth, I'm sure that they'll--

Ruth cuts him off, screaming, suddenly crazy with rage:

RUTH

What?! What are you "sure of"?! I'm not sure of a single goddamn thing except that this is probably the last... The last Christmas we...

WOODROW

Don't say that!

A sob chokes Ruth; she dissolves, wracked with tears. Woodrow just stands there. Suddenly, the PHONE RINGS...

INT. HOSPITAL -- WAITING ROOM -- NIGHT

Dr. McElhone meets John; he's on the edge of panic...

JOHN

What happened?

DR. MCELHONE

Mary is in surgery. Just after six o'clock she had a seizure--

JOHN

A seizure?

DR. MCELHONE

--which sometimes can happen with cerebral edema. They've relieved some of the pressure, but even after she's out of surgery, it's more than likely she'll be in a coma.

JOHN

(losing it)

Oh God, oh no...

DR. MCELHONE

Mr. Klein, Mary's going to need you to be strong right now, okay? She still needs you. You have to talk to her, even if she can't talk back. That will help, okay? Can you do that?

John calms, focusing on her words, his assignment.

JOHN

Yeah. Okay. I can do that.

INT. MARY'S ROOM -- NIGHT

John sits in the dark room; Mary is unconscious. The monitor lights cast a sick, green glow across them. He holds her hand, talks to her quietly.

JOHN

...Your Dad put the tree up. We were going to wait to decorate it until you got home, but your Mom said you'd like it better seeing it all put together...

He looks at her laying in bed, and suddenly it all feels hopeless. He picks up her hand, kisses her fingers.

JOHN

Please don't go, Mary. I feel like I need to talk to you so bad about this terrible problem I have. But the problem is you, and now I don't have anyone to talk to. I'm trying to be strong, but... I'll make you a deal. I'll stay here with you as long as you need me. But that means you have to stay here, too. Because I still need you.

John lays his head down on her.

EXT. HOSPITAL -- LATER THAT NIGHT

A SQUARE OF WARM YELLOW LIGHT glows in the night--it's the window to the waiting area. From outside, WE SEE:

Ruth and Woodrow look up as John staggers into view, hands on his face, his entire self somehow diminished...

And they know.

Ruth stands, lets out a silent wail of grief; she goes to John and holds him. Woodrow stands, watching them, unable to comprehend what has happened.

And as snow falls in the cold, dark night we...

FADE TO BLACK.

ONE YEAR LATER.

FADE UP ON:

A SQUARE OF BLUE LIGHT IN THE CENTER OF THE SCREEN.

It's a TV monitor. On it, John Klein addresses Tim Russert on "Meet the Press":

JOHN

...I think what we saw this year was an apathetic electorate. Interest in the campaign was low and voter turnout was the worst in forty years.

TIM RUSSERT

Couldn't that just be a sign of voter satisfaction? People didn't feel the need for big changes.

JOHN

I don't think so, Tim. I think people were--and are--very unsatisfied with their situation. And what made them so complacent is that they didn't see any viable options for improvement. Rather than endorse the status quo, they decided they'd rather just stay home and be left alone.

CLICK. The picture collapses, dwindling to a small blue dot on the screen.

A beat of nothing. Then:

INT. WASHINGTON POST -- BULL PEN -- DAY

Another cold December day. John strides in and we get a good look at him...

Healthy, fit--but older. That confident sparkle is gone from his eyes. He wears the past year like it was five.

Ed catches him as he passes his desk:

ED

Hey--I told her to watch.

JOHN

Who?

ED

Carol's friend, Gwen. She's gonna be there tonight.

JOHN

Oh, hey, look, I don't think I'm gonna be able to make it.

ED

Are you kidding me? She's gorgeous. Come on, you can't keep blowing this off.

JOHN

I'm not blowing it off, I'm interviewing the Governor, I've gotta be in Alexandria at six.

Ed slaps his forehead and hands John a pink message slip:

ED

Almost forgot. Garrett Knox called. The interview got bumped to Monday.

John eyes the message slip, stuck.

JOHN

Ed, I don't know...

ED

Look: she's not Mary, not by a mile. But you know what? No one ever will be. You can't hold that against them.

JOHN

I can't?

Ed looks at John; he's only half-joking.

ED

You can't sit home every night for the rest of your life either.

John considers; he doesn't really want to, but...

JOHN

Alright. I'll be there.

ED

Yes! And believe me, this will take, like, no effort. TV is the ultimate foreplay.

INT. MARRAKESH RESTAURANT -- NIGHT

Turkish dining. Pillows on the floor and belly dancers. Ed's idea of a classy place, John's idea of hell.

With them: Carol and GWEN, (33), pretty, friendly, sophisticated.

They all eat hot, marinated chicken with their hands:

JOHN

I gotta tell you, Ed, I spent three weeks in Turkey--it was not like this.

ED

Well, it should've been.

CAROL

Wait 'til he starts dancing.

GWEN

(to John)

When were you there?

JOHN

'88. Covering the earthquake.

GWEN

I just missed you. I was there in '89. Peace Corps.

John looks at her, intrigued.

JOHN

Istanbul?

GWEN

Just coming and going. We were stationed in the hills.

A belly dancer rotates toward them, beckons Ed to join her. Ed downs his Ouzo and struggles to his feet:

ED

My whole life has been leading to this moment.

Ed dances off, but John and Gwen haven't even noticed.

GWEN

It was this tiny village--you can't even believe there are still places on earth like it. These families raise mountain goats--well, the men do--and then the women use the hair to make the most beautiful blankets...

John smiles, his eyes taking on a distant look.

JOHN

Ambarat.

GWEN

Yes! Have you been there?

JOHN

It's one of my three secret places.

Gwen looks at him, charmed, waiting for him to explain.

JOHN

Places I know I could go and be happy the rest of my life if I ever had to leave Washington for good.

CAROL

So--where are the other two?

JOHN

They're secret! I'll tell you this: the second one is very cold and you have to speak Portuguese.

GWEN

And the third?

JOHN

I haven't found it yet.

EXT. MARRAKESH RESTAURANT -- NIGHT

John and Gwen wait for the valet to bring their cars.

JOHN

Well. It was nice meeting you.

GWEN
Tierra del Fuego.

JOHN
What?

GWEN
Your second place. Am I right?

John looks at her: dark hair and eyes, smooth white skin, warm smile. Beautiful, smart, charming, funny...

GWEN
If you can stand another cup of coffee... I'm just a few blocks away.

...Available. This woman is flawless. So why does John feel absolutely nothing?

JOHN
That sounds great. But...

John's voice trails off as glances into the street...

JOHN'S POV: A Yellow Cab waiting at a red light. In the backseat, a woman with fiery Red hair.

GWEN (V.O.)
John?

As the light changes to green, the woman turns slightly...

John's face goes slack. It was just a quick glance, but it looked like...

JOHN
(to himself)
Mary...

It couldn't be. John blinks. Looks again. But lights reflect off the cab window as it pulls away. Soon the cab disappears into traffic; John stares numbly after it.

GWEN (V.O.)
Are you okay?

Gwen's voice comes to him as if through a tunnel. John glances at her like he's never seen her before.

JOHN
Yeah, I'm fine, I just--
(beat)
Look, I've got an early morning, so...

An awkward silence. The Valet arrives with Gwen's car.

GWEN

Okay. Anyway, I really liked talking to you. Call me, okay?

John nods absently. Gwen looks at him, worried; but his thoughts are miles away. She gets into her car.

John just stares into the distance as Gwen drives off.

We can see the painful truth on John's face: after a year, he's not getting better. He's getting worse.

INT. JOHN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM -- NIGHT

John flips on the light. He stares at the bed...
Tidy. Big. Empty.

He grabs his suitcase and starts packing.

INT. JOHN'S BEDROOM -- LATER

He sits on his bed listening to Ed's answering machine.

JOHN

(into phone)

Hey, Ed. You were right. Gwen was very nice. If you talk to her, tell her I'm sorry, I just... Anyway, it's about 12:30. I can't sleep so I think I'm gonna head out. I'll give you a call tomorrow from Alexandria. Bye.

INT. RUSTY LANTERN TAVERN - VIRGINIA COUNTRYSIDE -- NIGHT

Honky-tonk music bleats from a neon jukebox. John drains his beer and sets the bottle next to its three mates.

BARTENDER

Last call.

John declines; he tosses down a twenty and walks out.

EXT. RUSTY LANTERN TAVERN -- NIGHT

Pouring rain. Terrific. A little unsteady, John dashes to his car, fumbles with the keys and hops in.

INT. JOHN'S CAR -- HIGHWAY -- NIGHT

Rain drenches the windshield. John peers out at the road, struggling to stay on the road. Suddenly...

BLINK: Red lights flash across the dashboard. The car stalls. He tries to restart it.

JOHN
Come on, come on, come on...

The car drifts to the side of the road and comes to a stop. John keeps trying the engine. No luck.

JOHN
You gotta be kidding me.

He hits the steering wheel. Takes out his cellular phone. Tries it. "No Service." Great.

He thinks for a second. No choice. He pulls on his long black rain slicker and steps out...

INTO THE STORM: He sees a farmhouse a quarter mile up the road. Runs for it.

EXT. FARMHOUSE -- NIGHT

John pounds onto the porch. The house is dark. No use putting it off: He knocks on the door. Waits. Waits...

A short, stocky MAN opens the door. John smiles:

JOHN
Hi. My car broke down just up the road. May I use your phone?

The Man stares at him, transfixed.

MAN
It's him.

This response makes no sense to John until a WOMAN steps into view from the shadows behind the door; she peers nervously at John as the Man raises a gun:

MAN
I've been waiting for you, you son of a bitch.

The Man grabs John and drags him inside the house.

INT. GORDON SMALLWOOD'S HOUSE - BATHROOM -- NIGHT

The Man, GORDON SMALLWOOD, (36), holds his gun on...

JOHN, who stands fully dressed in the Smallwood's mildewy, pink shower stall, his raincoat dripping onto his shoes.

JOHN
Look, I don't--

GORDON

Shut up.

John shuts up. The Woman--Gordon's wife DENISE SMALLWOOD, (28)--calls out from the living room:

DENISE (O.S.)

Honey, Sergeant Parker's here.

John straightens slightly as Denise walks in with...

SGT. CONNIE PARKER, (32)--short, blond, with keen blue eyes and an honest face. She calmly assesses the scene:

CONNIE

Okay Gordy, why don't you put away the gun and you and your friend join us in the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- LATER

Goodwill furniture dressed up with lace. They sit around a cluttered coffee table. John is clearly pissed, but he's keeping his mouth shut for the time being.

GORDON

This is the third night in a row he's come around.

John calmly hands his wallet to Connie:

JOHN

Look, my name is John Klein and I--

Connie glances at his ID, then holds up a hand:

CONNIE

Let's let Gordy finish, Mr.Klein.

Gordon speaks with a disturbing edge of fear in his voice:

GORDON

Two nights ago, at 2:30, there's this bang on the door. I get up, and here's this guy, says he wants to use the phone. But there's something creepy about him, right? So I tell him to get lost. No big deal. But last night, at 2:30 on the dot, guess who's back?

CONNIE

You're sure it was Mr.Klein here?

Gordon stares straight into John's eyes:

GORDON
Absolutely positive.

JOHN
(shakes his head)
This is crazy.

GORDON
So tonight I figured maybe the dumb
bastard--

DENISE
Gordon!

GORDON
--might come back again, and sure
enough, here he is!

John turns to Sgt. Parker, taking pains to demonstrate
that he is the sanest person in the room.

JOHN
Officer, there must be some mistake.
I'm a reporter for the Washington
Post. I live up in D.C. I've never
been here before in my life.

CONNIE
Where's your car, Mr. Klein?

JOHN
About a hundred yards up the road.

CONNIE
(stands up)
Okay. You come with me. I'll have
your car towed to the garage.

John follows Connie to the door, not sure whether to be
relieved or worried. Connie turns to Gordon:

CONNIE
We'll run a check on him. Anyone else
comes by, forget the gun, okay? Just
call me.

And then, in spite of the odd circumstances, John watches
as Connie, Gordon and Denise do a distinctly small-town
thing: They all say a friendly goodnight to each other.

INT. PATROL CAR -- DAWN

John sits next to Connie in the front seat.

JOHN
Wow. Pretty weird, huh?

CONNIE
You're saying you haven't been
stalking the Smallwoods?

John looks at her--is she kidding?

JOHN
Wait a second, you don't really believe--

CONNIE
Relax. I recognize you.
(smiles)
"Meet the Press."

JOHN
You saw that?

CONNIE
We're not all bumpkins.

Connie turns onto...

MAIN STREET -- SUNRISE

John gazes out the window at small-town America: charming
houses, friendly stores, and all of it reassuringly normal.

CONNIE
Where can I drop you: motel or coffee shop?

JOHN
I'm not under arrest?

CONNIE
Well, you didn't steal anything, you
didn't hurt anyone, there's no
breaking and entering...

JOHN
You had trouble with them before?

CONNIE
Gordy and Denise? Naw. They're good
people, but... Things have been a
little weird around here lately.

She pulls over in front of Valia's Coffee Shop.

JOHN
Tell me about it.
(getting out)
Where am I, anyway?

CONNIE
Welcome to Point Pleasant.

INT. VALIA'S COFFEE SHOP -- DAWN

John scans his Triple-A Road Map, running his finger south along Interstate 95 between D.C. and Alexandria.

VALIA refills his coffee.

JOHN
Thanks. Say--I can't seem to find Point Pleasant here on the map.

She takes a quick glance, then jabs her finger down on the map a full inch-and-a-half to the left of John's.

VALIA
That's 'cause you're in the wrong state, honey.

John looks down. There it is, plain as day: Point Pleasant, West Virginia.

EXT. MAIN STREET -- PAY PHONE - MORNING

John shouts into the phone over a bad connection:

JOHN
...Look--even if I was doing eighty the whole way it would have taken six hours to get here...

INTERCUT WITH ED FLEISCHMAN AT HOME:

ED
What time did you leave the Rusty Lantern?

JOHN
I... I'm not sure.

ED
Does the Rusty Lantern have a jukebox and pool table and a big neon Coors sign?

JOHN
Okay, but I wasn't that wasted. Besides, my gas tank doesn't even get four hundred miles. It's one thing to zone out while you're driving, but stop for gas too?

ED
John, I'm sure there's a logical explanation for all of this.

JOHN

Yeah, me too. I just wish someone could tell me what the hell it is.

INT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION -- ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA -- DAY

LATER THAT DAY: John sits on the veranda with GOV. RUSS MCCALLUM, (65), steel-haired and stern.

As McCallum holds forth, we MOVE IN on John: He listens and nods, but his eyes betray him--his mind is far away.

Four hundred miles to be exact.

INT. OTTO'S CAR REPAIR -- POINT PLEASANT - DUSK

Otto slams the hood on John's car:

OTTO

She's running fine, Mr. Klein, I can't find a damn thing wrong with her.

JOHN

How much do I owe you?

OTTO

Nothing. I said I couldn't find anything wrong.

This town just keeps getting weirder and weirder...

INT. JOHN'S CAR - HIGHWAY -- SUNSET

John passes a sign: "Thanks for Visiting Point Pleasant! Come Back Soon!" He mutters to himself:

JOHN

Thanks, I just did.

He passes Gordon Smallwood's place. He sees Gordon sitting on the front porch. Suddenly, a thought hits him. He slams the brakes and pulls a U-turn.

EXT. GORDON SMALLWOOD'S HOUSE

Gordon watches as John pulls into the driveway:

GORDON

You're a little early, aren't you?

John smiles; he climbs out and leans against the car.

JOHN

I'd like to apologize. I'm afraid I might have been a little rude last night.

Gordon shrugs it off. John studies him for a beat:

JOHN

You're sure it was me who came by those last two nights, huh?

GORDON

Look, mister, Sgt. Parker says you check out, and that's good enough for me. I'm perfectly willing to let it go. But I don't drink and I don't lie and as far as I know, I'm not crazy, so if you're here to accuse me of--

JOHN

No, not at all. I'll admit last night I thought you were crazy, but now I'm afraid maybe we both are...

Gordon eyes him suspiciously...

JOHN

Here's the thing: I don't know how I ended up here last night. I didn't even know I was in West Virginia until this morning. Somehow, between two and two-thirty last night I travelled four hundred miles, ended up on that road, and I have no memory of it whatsoever.

GORDON

You shittin' me?

JOHN

I wish I was. Anyway, if you're up for it, I thought maybe we could try a little experiment. What do you say we both stay here tonight...

(grins)

...and see if I show up again.

INT. GORDON SMALLWOOD'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

The clock on the wall says 2:28. John holds his camera. Gordon holds his gun.

JOHN

So. Two-thirty exactly, huh?

GORDON

On the dot. All three nights.

Denise, in her bathrobe, comes in from the kitchen and sets down a fresh plate of cookies. John takes one:

JOHN
These are great.

DENISE
(smiles shyly)
Thank you.

2:29. Gordon gets up and turns out the light. He looks out the front window. Sits back down. Awkward silence.

DENISE
I make 'em with honey, not sugar.

JOHN
Really? Well... They're very good.

Silence. Then: the clock strikes 2:30. The three of them sit, frozen in the darkness. They wait. And wait.

No one moves. No one breathes.

No car sounds. No one on the porch. No knocking. They keep waiting. For one solid minute. Nothing.

Finally, the clock announces: 2:31. There's a palpable release in tension.

Then they all look at each other, suddenly feeling faintly ridiculous.

EXT. FRONT PORCH -- LATER

Gordon follows John out the door.

GORDON
Well. Guess this means we're crazy.

JOHN
Maybe not. Either way, I'm sorry I wasted so much of your time. If there's some way I can make it up to you...

Gordon waves him off. John gets into his car:

JOHN
Well, good night.
(hands him his card)
If you see me again, let me know.

John pulls out and drives off into the night.

INT. KLEIN'S MOTEL ROOM, POINT PLEASANT -- MORNING

John is in bed and on the phone, still in his boxer shorts, thick with sleep.

JOHN
 (into phone)
 ...I led with the campaign finance
 stuff because that's what the governor
 is known best for, Cy...

There's a THUMP against the motel room door. John opens
 it; a Charleston Register is on the floor. He picks it up.

Something catches his eye.

JOHN
 (into phone)
 I'm gonna have to call you back, Cy.

As he hangs up we FOLLOW JOHN'S GAZE to the newspaper:
 The BANNER HEADLINE: "UFO'S OVER POINT PLEASANT?"

INT. POLICE STATION -- MORNING

Connie gazes at the same headline. She slams down the
 paper, revealing John sitting at her desk.

CONNIE
 God-damnit!

JOHN
 Just what exactly is going on in this
 town, sergeant?...

Connie collapses back in her chair. She looks at John,
 trying to make up her mind: should she trust this guy?

JOHN
 I've had a few weird moments of my own
 since we last talked. If there's other
 people in town feeling as confused as I
 am right now, I'd sure like to know.
 My flight doesn't leave until noon.
 Besides, mystery loves company.

There's something in his voice or his face or maybe
 both... She pulls out a stack of reports:

CONNIE
 Okay. In the last two weeks sixteen
 different people have come in here and
 reported seeing things. Weird lights,
 ghosts, you... And I'm not talking
 about the town speed-freak, these are
 honest, hard-working, church-going
 folks. Most of them seemed downright
 embarrassed to even be here...

She flips through the reports, smiles cynically:

CONNIE

Seeing a UFO is one thing. It's almost a status symbol nowadays. But what do you do when someone walks in and tells you this showed up in their backyard?

She tosses a sketch across the desk. John picks it up.

And almost passes out. It's a picture of a man, with huge bug-eyes and giant wings in his back.

FLASHCUT TO:

JOHN'S MEMORY: Mary's hospital room, almost a year ago. John holds a yellow pad, looking at an identical sketch.

BACK AT THE POLICE STATION: John's face is white. Connie's smile vanishes as she comes around the desk to him.

CONNIE

Are you okay?

John shakes his head, struggles out of his daze.

JOHN

Who saw this?

CONNIE

A couple of people.

JOHN

I want to meet them. I need to talk to them. Can you help me?

Connie looks into his eyes. He's dead serious.

CONNIE

Lemme make some calls.

EXT. LUCY GRIFFIN'S HOUSE -- DAY

John waits in the patrol car while...

ON THE PORCH: Connie talks to LUCY GRIFFIN, (38), a tough, chubby woman with bright red cheeks. After a moment, Connie looks back at John and nods.

INT. LUCY GRIFFIN'S KITCHEN

John and Connie sit around the kitchen table with Lucy and her son NAT GRIFFIN, (17), a good kid wearing an Offspring T-shirt doing his best to grow a goatee.

NAT

It's been going on about a month, every Wednesday night at the poison plant.

John looks a question at Connie: "Poison plant?"

CONNIE

The hills around the Alanco chemical factory.

(back at Nat)

It's a make-out spot.

NAT

(smiles)

Used to be. Now we just watch the lights.

JOHN

What lights?

NAT

I don't know, man, just these weird lights zipping around in the sky.

JOHN

What do you think they are?

Nat just shrugs; his mom cuts in, pouring coffee:

LUCY

We've been getting strange phone calls, too. All hours. The first one was just a loud beeping noise. Now it's mostly groaning, howling sounds-- and once, it was a man talking really fast in some foreign language. Maybe Swedish or something like that.

JOHN

Have you had the line checked?

LUCY

(nods)

I even had our number changed. But before I got a chance to give it out to anyone the calls started again.

Connie takes out the bird-man sketch:

CONNIE

Lucy, would you mind telling Mr. Klein about when you saw this?

EXT. BACKYARD

They all stand near the blue pine tree that towers over the yard and house:

LUCY

It was right here. There was only a foot or so between its head and that branch so that makes it, what, eight feet tall? I was doing dishes and I just happened to look out the kitchen window. At first, all I could see were these two red eyes. I guess it saw me too, 'cause all of a sudden these giant wings just flared out and it took off.

JOHN

(to Nat)

Did you see it too?...

Nat shakes his head no. John runs his fingers along the tree bark--a large section is scorched black.

JOHN

Mrs.Griffin, I don't mean to pry, but... Have you had any headaches or blackouts or anything like that recently?

LUCY

(smiles)

You think maybe I have a brain tumor?

John's jaw almost hits the ground. Connie explains:

CONNIE

Lucy's a radiologist out at St. Joseph's Hospital.

LUCY

No symptoms yet, Mr.Klein. But it was sweet of you to ask.

INT. FIRE STATION 51 -- DAY

FIRE CHIEF JOSH JESSUP, (55), a stout bulldog of a man sits with John and Connie in the shade of the station while, in the driveway, his men scrub the fire truck.

JOSH

...I didn't see any birdman, but I saw something. About a week ago my TV starts acting up. The signal cuts in and out, and pretty soon it just snows over. So I'm about to go up and check the aerial, right?...

He looks at Connie, then John, reluctant to continue:

JOSH

Well, I know how this sounds, but... All of a sudden, the snow starts changing. The dots sort of move around and bunch together and start spelling words.

JOHN

What words?

JOSH

"Alerted" and "Cold."

John glances at Connie: is she buying this? But Connie stares at Josh, listening intently.

JOSH

Anyway, the snow sort of fades out and suddenly I'm getting the Playboy Channel.

JOHN

The Playboy Channel?

JOSH

I figure. Bunch a good looking folks walking around naked.

JOHN

Did you call the cable company?

JOSH

Hell no. They might fix it.

Josh laughs at his own joke, but John can barely manage a smile...

INT. PATROL CAR -- DAY

John stares out the window: low blue hills roll out in all directions, lit by brilliant winter sunlight.

JOHN

How long have you lived here?

CONNIE

My whole life. Grew up just over the those hills.

JOHN

A farm?

CONNIE

Shucks no. A real live house. Indoor plumbing and everything.

JOHN

Sorry.

CONNIE

We even had shoes for church and schoolin' and such.

JOHN

(laughs)

Alright, alright.

Connie glances over: this is the first time he's smiled since they met. He looks five years younger--a whole different person.

CONNIE

So--do you think Lucy and Josh really saw anything?

John struggles with the question, arguing with himself.

JOHN

Who knows? Their stories are interesting, but... Maybe that's all they are. Stories.

A SUDDEN FLASH OF PURPLE LIGHT strobos around the car, like a silent bolt of lightening.

CONNIE

Jesus!

John cranes his head, looking out the window...

THE SKY IS CLEAR: Couldn't have been lightening. Then his eyes lock on something off the road...

JOHN'S POV: A FAINT PURPLE GLOW emanates from deep within the woods...

JOHN

Hey, slow down. Pull over.

EXT. HIGHWAY

Connie brings the cruiser to a stop. She follows John's gaze and sees the rapidly fading glow of light.

CONNIE

What the hell is that?

They exchange a glance--then both get out and start into the woods...

EXT. WOODS

They trudge through the muddy undergrowth toward the diminishing light, finally reaching a clearing.

John examines trees and plants for burn marks, but finds nothing. It's Connie who makes the discovery:

CONNIE

Look at this...

John goes to her ; she's crouched down examining A SET OF HUMAN FOOTPRINTS in the muddy ground. They start in the center of the muddy field...

John follows Connie's gaze along the path of footprints. They continue for five paces, and then vanish as mysteriously as they began...

INT. WASHINGTON POST -- BULL PEN - DAY

Ed Fleischman is on the phone with John:

ED

Where the hell are you? Cy is beginning to look a little feral.

INTERCUT WITH JOHN IN HIS MOTEL ROOM--he sets up his computer while talking to Ed:

JOHN

Yeah, well, some things have come up. What's the number of our clipping service?

Ed flips through his Rolodex:

ED

It's 555-8895.

(beat)

You okay? You don't sound so good.

JOHN

I'm fine, Ed. I'll call you.

John hangs up and dials the clipping service; does his best to sound completely professional:

JOHN

(into phone)

Yeah, this is John Klein at the Post. I'm going to need everything you can find concerning... unexplained events in West Virginia. Weird lights, sightings, things like that. Okay? Thanks.

John hangs up. He opens his day-runner and removes...

A WEATHERED OLD POLAROID: John and Mary, on the beach in Hawaii. Their honeymoon. Both young, both smiling; blessedly ignorant of the future and happy for all time in that one split-second of life.

John places the picture in the mirror frame over the desk where he can always see it.

EXT. CONNIE PARKER'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

John stands on the front porch in the light of a single bulb, holding a brown paper bag. He rings the doorbell.

A YOUNG RED-HEADED BOY opens the door. It's KEVIN PARKER, (7), Connie's son. He looks at John then turns and shouts into the house:

KEVIN

Mom, it's that guy.

We hear Connie shout back from the kitchen:

CONNIE (V.O.)

Well introduce yourself and invite him in.

Kevin sticks out his hand:

KEVIN

I'm Kevin Parker.

JOHN

(shakes his hand)

Glad to meet you Kevin. John Klein.

INT. CONNIE PARKER'S HOUSE - KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Connie tosses a handful of dry spaghetti into a pot of boiling water as John and Kevin enter. She sees the brown bag in John's hand:

CONNIE

I told you, you didn't have to bring anything.

JOHN

Well, it's not much.

He pulls out a six-pack of Heineken.

CONNIE

Wow. Foreign. You have to drive in to Charleston for it?

John laughs; Kevin takes the six-pack to the fridge:

KEVIN
Can I have one?

CONNIE
You certainly may not. Why don't you set
the table, we're almost ready to eat.

As Kevin sets the table, John turns to Connie:

JOHN
Need help?

Connie nods to a head of lettuce and three tomatoes:

CONNIE
Knock yourself out.

JOHN
(rolling up his sleeves)
It was nice of you to invite me over.

CONNIE
Valia's is okay for breakfast and
lunch, but you show up for dinner and
she'll think you're coming on to her.

John gets to work and we CUT TO:

DINNER TABLE -- LATER

John, Connie and Kevin plow through spaghetti with meat
sauce, salad and garlic bread.

CONNIE
...he lives up near Pittsburgh, does
some contracting. Kevin sees him a
couple times a year.

JOHN
(to Kevin)
Must be tough.

KEVIN
It's okay.

Connie does her best to make this next sound nonchalant:

CONNIE
And you? Probably dating some
congresswoman.

JOHN

Not exactly.
 (a deep breath, then:)
 I was married. My wife died about a
 year ago.

CONNIE

Oh, I'm so sorry.

KEVIN

(solemn)
 How did she die?

CONNIE

Kevin!

JOHN

She got really sick, Kevin. It was
 pretty unexpected.

CONNIE

(to Kevin)
 You look like you're done; why don't
 you take your plate to the sink.

KEVIN

Can I play Nintendo?

CONNIE

If you keep it low.

John watches Connie smile at her son as he takes off for
 the living room. Admiration registers in his eyes.

JOHN

He's a good kid.

She smiles, deflects the compliment:

CONNIE

Come back when he's sixteen.

John pours the last of the beer--half into her glass,
 half into his. The mood shifts a little.

JOHN

Look, I want to thank you for helping me
 out today. You put yourself on the line
 for me. I appreciate it.

CONNIE

I'm not going to end up reading about
 all this in the Washington Post, am I?

John looks up; she's smiling, but she's also dead serious.

JOHN
 No. Believe me.
 (laughs to himself)
 This isn't the kind of story they
 usually cover.

CONNIE
 Good.

JOHN
 I'll tell you something: this is a lot
 more interesting than campaign finance
 reform...

They smile at each other. A beat of silence. Then:

JOHN
 Say, do you have a video camera?

She gives him a curious look: is this some kinky come on?

CONNIE
 Yeah. Why?

JOHN
 It's Wednesday night. I thought maybe
 we could drive out to the poison
 plant, check out the lights.
 (smiles)
 All the kids are doing it.

EXT. HILLTOP CLEARING -- NIGHT

John, Connie and Kevin park at the summit of the hills
 that overlook the vast acreage of the Alanco chemical
 plant. John gets out of the car, surprised to see...

A CROWD OF PEOPLE: Kids, teenagers, senior citizens; a
 cross-section of Point Pleasant residents all milling
 about amiably. John, Connie and Kevin wander among them.

CONNIE
 Looks like half the town's up here.

It's a surreal scene, like a midnight picnic: there's
 food, beer and boom-boxes playing everything from
 classical to rap. But there are no fires and no lights.

VOICE (O.S.)
 Hey, look who's here...

John turns to the VOICE. In the dark, it takes him a
 minute to recognize Lucy Griffin. She hands John, Connie
 and Kevin Styrofoam cups of hot chocolate:

LUCY
 (shivering excitedly)
 Getting cold. In a week or so we'll
 have to start watching from our cars.

JOHN
 Is it like this every week?

LUCY
 It's my first time, but Nat said this
 is the biggest crowd so far.

Suddenly, a ripple of excitement rolls through the crowd.
 Nat Griffin points to the sky, just above the horizon:

NAT
 Look, there they are!

The music stops; the crowd quiets down. John looks up at:
 RED AND BLUE PINPOINTS OF LIGHT tracking slowly across
 the sky. Big deal. It could be an airplane...

Then the lights dart straight up, spinning around each
 other. They hover briefly; then they come down, arcing
 back and forth, tumbling through the sky.

John watches spellbound as the lights separate and
 converge, lift and fall, describing intricate yet
 baffling maneuvers. It's an awesome, eerie sight.

JOHN
 My God.

John's eyes shift down to...

THE RIVER: The red and blue lights reflect off the water.
 But for a moment, it almost seems as if the lights are
 coming from the water--and shining into the sky.

The effect is dizzying, disorienting.

John unconsciously takes Connie's hand. They stare at
 the lights like kids at a magic show as...

THE LIGHTS flare, then collapse in on each other and streak
 down toward the river, disappearing at the horizon where the
 water meets the sky.

John turns to Connie, still holding her hand. The crowd
 around them slowly rumbles back to life, but the two of
 them just stare into each other's eyes.

If you could rewind your life to find the moment a
 relationship begins, this would be that moment.

Suddenly, a hand lands on John's shoulder. It's Gordon Smallwood--and he looks scared:

GORDON

Mr.Klein--I gotta talk to you.

INT. ROSCOE'S ROADHOUSE -- NIGHT

John and Gordon drink at a back table.

GORDON

About an hour after you left last night I woke up with the worst headache I've ever had in my life. I went to the bathroom to get some aspirin, and suddenly I hear this voice coming out of the sink: "Do not be afraid. Ninety-nine will die. Denver Nine." I even wrote it down...

Gordon pulls a wrinkled piece of paper from his shirt pocket and fiddles with it nervously...

GORDON

Well, it turns out the voice isn't coming from the sink--it's coming from inside my head. It keeps saying the same thing, over and over, for an hour. Then it stops. But that's not the worst part...

Gordon stops, not sure he can bring himself to continue.

GORDON

Just before the voice started, when I was in the bathroom, I think I saw something. I don't really remember. But this morning when I woke up, I looked at the paper where I wrote down the words, and this was on it.

He hands the crumpled piece of paper to John who slowly flattens it out on the table. Beneath the words "Do not be afraid. Ninety-nine will die. Denver Nine" is a sketch:

A man with huge eyes and wings.

INT. CAT-SCAN LAB - ST.JOSEPH'S HOSPITAL -- DAY

John and Denise Smallwood grimly watch through an observation window as Gordon undergoes a CAT-SCAN.

DENISE

I hope he's not too scared. Gordon hates hospitals.

John mulls a few bad memories of his own.

JOHN
I don't blame him.

LATER -- DR.WILLIAMS' OFFICE

DR.WILLIAMS sits with John, Gordon and Denise:

DR.WILLIAMS
The CAT-SCAN is clean; there's no sign
of any physical problem.

DENISE
Thank God.

GORDON
You're sure?

DR.WILLIAMS
What you probably had is a first class
migraine. I can write you a prescription.

JOHN
Dr.Williams, there are other symptoms...

Gordon shoots him a warning glance, but John presses on:

JOHN
He heard voices. There were visual
hallucinations. Those symptoms are both
associated with Glioblastoma Multiforma.

John looks at Gordon; Gordon is furious.

DR.WILLIAMS
They are also associated with migraines.
There is nothing here to suggest something
as exotic as Glioblastoma Multiforma. If
you'd like, I can refer you to a
neurologist for further testing, but--

GORDON
No. Thank you, Doctor. Come on.

Gordon grabs Denise and they leave. John follows them out.

EXT. SILVER BRIDGE -- DAY

FROM HIGH ABOVE: Gordon's pick-up truck streaks across
the 700 FOOT STEEL BRIDGE that spans the Ohio River
connecting Point Pleasant with Gallipolis, Ohio.

GORDON (V.O.)
You think I'm crazy...

INT. GORDON'S PICK-UP -- DAY

Gordon, Denise and John sit jammed together up front.
Glen Campbell sings about "Country Roads" on the radio.

JOHN

Come on Gordon, you know I don't think
you're crazy.

DENISE

Hey--it was good news, right? You're
not sick. That's good.

More silence. So much for cheering-up Gordon. John
gazes down at the velvety blue Ohio River rolling past
beneath them. A NEWS UPDATE comes on the radio:

RADIO NEWSMAN (V.O.)

...in breaking news, AirWest flight
number 9 out of Denver has crashed...

Gordon slams the truck to a stop mid-span on the bridge.

RADIO NEWSMAN (V.O.)

There is no confirmation, but all
ninety-nine passengers and crew
members are believed dead.

Gordon bolts from the truck. He stumbles to the rail and
vomits. Denise rushes after him.

John just sits, frozen in shock.

INT. GORDON SMALLWOOD'S HOUSE -- DAY

John drinks hot tea in the kitchen. Denise tip-toes out
of the bedroom and quietly shuts the door behind her:

DENISE

He's finally asleep...

Denise sits with John, stares into her tea mug:

DENISE

He didn't tell me about the voices
last night. Just the headache.
That's why he was so mad. He didn't
want me to know.

(beat)

What's happening to him?

JOHN

I don't know, but whatever it is, it's
not just happening to him--it's the
whole town.

DENISE

John, do me a favor: please don't tell anyone about this. I'm afraid if word got out that Gordon was... you know, "hearing things"...

John nods, but his mind is already ahead of her.

JOHN

Maybe it's time we started getting some of this stuff "on the record."

INT. JOSH JESSUP'S HOUSE -- AFTERNOON

Josh watches as John hooks a VCR to his television.

JOHN

Next time the naked people show up on your TV, start up that VCR, okay? I want to see it.

Josh laughs, amused at John's enthusiasm:

JOSH

Okay. But you know, if you want 'em that bad, you can rent tapes like that.

John walks across the room and adjusts CONNIE'S VIDEO CAMERA on a tripod so it's focused directly on the TV.

JOHN

But first--start up the camera. We need to see you put the tape in, and see what it is your taping. Call out the date and time so we hear you talking while we see the TV images...

Finally, John hands Josh a Polaroid camera:

JOHN

Once you've got that stuff rolling, get some shots of the screen.

JOSH

Keep it--I've got my own camera.

JOHN

Use the Polaroid. You'll get a clearer picture and it's almost impossible to fake.

JOSH

(shakes his head)
You don't kid around, do you son?

John just smiles...

INT. KLEIN'S MOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT

John is on the phone. In his hands, he holds a book:
"Things Unseen" by Albert Leek.

JOHN
(into phone)
May I speak to Albert Leek please.

LEEK (V.O.)
(over phone)
This is Leek.

JOHN
(into phone)
My name is John Klein and I'm working
on a pretty strange story. I thought
you might be able to shed some light.

Silence on the line. John presses on:

JOHN
(into phone)
I've been reading your book "Things
Unseen." I'm especially interested in
your theories about UFO contactees and
the entities you call...
(flips through book)
... "ultra-terrestrials."

Another long silence. Then:

LEEK (V.O.)
(over phone)
I don't really work in those areas
anymore, Mr. Klein.

JOHN
(into phone)
Why not?

LEEK (V.O.)
(over phone)
The research didn't prove viable.
(beat)
I wish you the best of luck.

Leek hangs up leaving John eating dial tone.

INT. JOHN'S CAR -- NIGHT

John cruises slowly, coming to a stop in front of...

EXT. CONNIE PARKER'S HOUSE

He looks at the house. The lights are on. He sits in the car, nervous, feeling like a teenager.

EXT. CONNIE PARKER'S HOUSE - PORCH -- NIGHT

John rings the bell. Connie opens the door, a little surprised to find John standing there.

CONNIE

Hi.

JOHN

Hi. I know it's late, I hope I'm not bothering you.

They talk over each other:

CONNIE

Oh, no, I was just--

JOHN

I just wanted to--

They both stop; laugh, embarrassed.

CONNIE

Go ahead.

JOHN

Oh. Well. It's just, uh, I loaned your video camera to Josh Jessup.

(beat)

And I thought you should know that.

CONNIE

That's fine.

(beat)

Would you like to come in?

JOHN

Oh. Um, okay.

INT. CONNIE PARKER'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

John and Connie sit on the couch drinking coffee. Kevin, on the floor, puts Mortal Kombat into his Nintendo set-up.

JOHN

Denise is pretty worried about him, and I don't blame her. You hear a voice, that's one thing. But this was like a message, a prediction...

Connie is chilled by the story...

CONNIE

Tomorrow I'll drive out and check on them, make sure they're doing okay.

KEVIN

(to John)

You wanna play me? Bet I can beat you.

JOHN

I'll bet you can. You'll probably think I'm a big geek, but...

(stage whisper)

I've never played Mortal Kombat.

Kevin stares at John like he just said he grew up in a prison camp.

CONNIE

(to John)

I know it's not exactly the same thing, but I had a dream last night that felt like that.

JOHN

What happened?

Connie's face darkens; just thinking about it scares her.

CONNIE

Well, it was weird... I was in water, like the ocean or something, and floating all around me in the water were Christmas presents...

John listens intently as we...

SMASHCUT TO:

JOHN'S POV OF CONNIE'S NIGHTMARE: Brightly wrapped gifts bob at eye-level against a steel gray sky...

CONNIE (V.O.)

And somehow I knew I was dying...

BACK TO SCENE: Connie continues...

CONNIE

Then I heard this loud voice--it was like someone shouting in my ear: "Wake up, Number 37!" And I woke up.

(shivers)

What do you suppose that means?

"Number 37"?

John shakes his head slowly:

JOHN
Honestly? I have absolutely no idea.

She snorts out a weak laugh. John smiles. He barely notices Kevin standing at his knee.

KEVIN
If you want, I could teach you.

John looks at Kevin, confused--then realizes he's talking about the video game.

JOHN
(to Connie)
Pray for me.

Connie smiles as John joins Kevin on the floor in front of the TV...

WE STAY ON CONNIE: She watches them play, getting along like John's been around forever.

A lot of strange things have turned up in Point Pleasant recently. On Connie's face, we can see that not all of them are bad...

EXT. HIGHWAY - POINT PLEASANT -- NEXT MORNING

A beautiful day, cold and clear. John drives up to...

EXT. GORDON SMALLWOOD'S HOUSE

The front yard is swarming with local TV reporters and townspeople...

John parks behind the WPPL TV NEWS van and presses through the crowd up onto Gordon's porch and into...

INT. GORDON SMALLWOOD'S HOUSE -- DAY

Where LESLIE ST. CLAIR, (32), the local news anchor is about to begin a live interview with Gordon.

LESLIE
(to John)
Excuse me, sir, but you can't be in here right now--

Denise Smallwood rushes up to John. She's in a panic:

DENISE
Thank God you're here. You've got to talk to Gordon--

JOHN
Denise, what's going on?

LESLIE
If you'll just wait outside, sir--

John ignores Leslie completely; moves straight to Gordon:

JOHN
Who called all these people?

GORDON
I did.

John drags Gordon out of the living room and into...

THE HALLWAY: Gordon is bursting with excitement:

GORDON
Turns out I'm not crazy after all.
And this time I've got proof.

JOHN
Of what?

GORDON
The voice. The guy who told me about
the plane crash? I met him.

John is stunned--but completely hooked:

JOHN
You met him?

GORDON
Yeah. Last night, just about midnight.
I was driving down Route 67...

John listens intently as we...

FLASHCUT TO:

JOHN'S POV OF GORDON'S STORY...

ROUTE 67 -- NIGHT

Gordon drives his pick-up truck along the narrow two-lane highway.

GORDON (V.O.)
I'm driving along when all of a sudden
this bright flash of light--like
purple lightening.

A familiar flash of PURPLE LIGHT illuminates the night.

BACK TO SCENE: John's eyes widen with recognition...

JOHN

Is Route 67 the road that runs by
Connie's old house? Where she grew
up?

GORDON

Yeah. Just past there...

FLASHCUT TO:

JOHN'S POV OF GORDON'S STORY...

Gordon pulls off the road and peers into the woods. An
eerie purple light glows in the woods...

GORDON (V.O.)

I figured maybe someone's generator
blew or something...

A FIGURE emerges from the dim purple haze...

GORDON (V.O.)

And suddenly I see this... guy. He's
coming out of the woods right at me...

The vague form takes on the general characteristics of a
MAN--and he appears to be wearing a long black coat.

GORDON (V.O.)

He looked human, but there was just
something wrong about him.

BACK TO SCENE: John is confused.

JOHN

What do you mean "wrong"?

GORDON

You know when someone has a glass eye,
and you're looking at them and you
know something doesn't quite fit, but
you can't put your finger on it?

JOHN

What part didn't fit?

GORDON

All of them. It's like the pieces were
right, but they just didn't go together...

FLASHCUT TO:

JOHN'S POV OF GORDON'S STORY...

THE MAN approaches Gordon's truck, grinning, limping, arms crossed, hands tucked tightly under his armpits.

GORDON (V.O.)
I just sat there, kind of frozen...

The Man walks on to the highway and around to Gordon's open window. Gordon stares at him, terrified.

GORDON (V.O.)
That's when I heard the voice. The same one I heard two nights ago. Kind of flat and high-pitched. He said--

As the Man's mouth moves, it's Gordon's VOICE we hear:

GORDON (V.O.)
"Do not be afraid. I come from a place much less powerful than yours. My name is Indrid Cold."

BACK TO SCENE: John looks at Gordon, incredulous.

JOHN
"Indrid Cold?"

GORDON
I'm gonna make that up? He looks over toward the river and says, "What is that bright place?" Well, he's looking right at Point Pleasant. So I start explaining that to him, and all along I'm thinking--I'm must be asleep. I must be dreaming. But then I see a car coming up the road...

FLASHCUT TO:

JOHN'S POV OF GORDON'S STORY...

Gordon glances at the headlights in his rearview mirror.

GORDON (V.O.)
And as the car goes past, mud splashes up all over the side of my truck...

A WHITE STATION WAGON roars past and a fine brown spray splatters the highway side of Gordon's truck...

BACK TO SCENE: Gordon's face takes on a solemn cast...

GORDON

The mud is still on my truck--except for the spot where the guy was standing.

John searches Gordon's face for a sign--could this possibly be for real?

JOHN

You realize how all this sounds?

Gordon gives him a "be patient" gesture.

GORDON

So after I explain to him about Point Pleasant, he leans in to me and says...

FLASHCUT TO:

JOHN'S POV OF GORDON'S STORY...

Again, Mr.Cold's mouth moves as Gordon provides the VOICE:

GORDON (V.O.)

"In a town this size in a country called Equator, 300 will die in an earthquake. You may report my visit to your friends. I will come forward in three days and confirm our meeting. I will see you in time."

(beat)

And that was it.

Mr.Cold abruptly turns and shambles away, disappearing back into the woods...

BACK TO SCENE: Gordon smiles triumphantly and holds up a copy of the morning newspaper:

GORDON

There was an earthquake just after midnight last night--in Ecuador. Three-hundred-and-twenty-three people died.

John looks at Gordon with sympathy and skepticism.

JOHN

Did you tell anyone before hand?...

Silence from Gordon. John shakes his head.

JOHN

I don't know, Gordy. Maybe it happened just like you say it did. But, come on, did you have to call a goddamn press conference?

Gordon leans past John and calls out to a MIDDLE AGED COUPLE sitting on his couch: BRIAN and SANDY LITCHFIELD.

GORDON

Brian, come here a second and tell my friend here what you saw last night.

BRIAN, (55), the picture of honest sincerity, speaks up:

BRIAN

We were driving down Route 67 right around midnight. We did see Mr. Smallwood in his truck parked on the side of the road. And he was talking to a man in a long black coat.

GORDON

(triumphant)

They were the ones who got the mud on my car.

(beat)

Mr. Cold is coming back. This Saturday night at midnight. He told me.

Gordon seems possessed of complete self-assurance. And this scares John most of all.

Suddenly, Leslie St. Clair is upon them:

LESLIE

Mr. Smallwood, we really need to begin.

Gordon smiles calmly and follows Leslie into his living room and the harsh glare of the TV lights.

Denise appears at John's side. They watch the interview with dismay:

DENISE

I'm losing him, John. I don't know how or why, but he's not Gordon anymore.

John turns to her, but she's already gone...

EXT. GORDON SMALLWOOD'S HOUSE -- DAY

The crowds have left. John and Gordon sit on the porch.

JOHN

Did she say when she was coming back?

Gordon squints across the highway into the distant woods.

GORDON

Few days maybe. She said she'd call.

JOHN
I'm sorry, man.

GORDON
I really screwed up, didn't I?

John shrugs. They sit together for a moment. A flock of Canadian geese fly by, heading south. John turns to Gordon:

JOHN
"Indrid Cold," huh?

Gordon snorts out a hopeless laugh and shakes his head.

GORDON
Ain't that a pisser?

The moment passes. The two men watch as the geese fly away, growing smaller and smaller in the cold gray December sky.

INT. KLEIN'S MOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT

The tiny motel room has been transformed into...

JOHN'S INVESTIGATION HEADQUARTERS: A computer and fax machine crowd the small desk. Newspapers, books and faxes are stacked everywhere.

Maps cover the walls, studded with colored tacks: Red ones for odd light events, blue ones for giant bird-creature sightings, etc. In the middle of the chaos:

JOHN AND CONNIE sit on the bed, sharing a pizza and a bottle of Merlot, watching TV.

CONNIE
So this is the Playboy Channel?

ON TV: A weak, grainy, black-and-white image of what looks like a normal street with normal people walking around--except they're all naked.

JOHN
No way. The style's all wrong.
There's no editing, no music...

Just people milling about naked. John pops the tape out.

JOHN
Now--ready for Lucy's latest phone call?

John goes to his cassette player and hits "play." On the tape we hear LUCY'S VOICE as she answers her phone:

LUCY (V.O.)
 (on tape)
 Hello?...

On the other end of the line we hear an ungodly racket:
 an inhuman moan followed by a mechanical shriek...

LUCY (V.O.)
 ...oh, please, stop it...

ON THE TAPE we hear her slam down the phone. John clicks
 off the tape machine. Connie shakes her head in wonder:

CONNIE
 This is definitely the weirdest date
 I've ever been on.

John gives her a curious smile:

JOHN
 Is this a date?

CONNIE
 Cut me some slack. It's after eleven
 on a weeknight and I'm in a motel room
 watching naked movies. I'm calling it
 a date.

John laughs. An awkward silence. He suddenly leans in
 close and gently kisses her. She kisses him back.

They pull back; gaze at each other with a mixture of
 fascination and relief.

JOHN
 Now it's a date.

They kiss again. And again. Their kissing builds in
 intensity and urgency. The feelings that have been
 building between them are suddenly pouring out...

Connie speaks breathlessly, trying not to break the
 moment:

CONNIE
 Should I call the baby-sitter?

John keeps moving, kissing her neck, thinking.

JOHN
 Um. Yeah, maybe you should...

She reaches for the phone when--

IT RINGS. Terrific. They reluctantly separate and John answers the phone. It's Gordon, and he sounds stressed:

GORDON (V.O.)
(on phone)
John, thank God you're there.

JOHN
(into phone)
What's up Gordon?

GORDON (V.O.)
(over phone)
Look, I know I sounded a little bit crazy today, but things have been getting weird out here.

JOHN
(into phone)
Don't worry about it, man.

GORDON (V.O.)
(over phone)
The thing is... He's here.

JOHN
(into phone)
Who is?

GORDON (V.O.)
(over phone)
Mr.Cold. He's here. Right now.

John rolls away from Connie and sits on the edge of the bed. The mood in the room has completely shifted:

JOHN
(into phone)
Can I talk to him?

GORDON (V.O.)
(over phone)
Sure. Hang on.

John quickly attaches his tape recorder--an expensive digital device--to his phone.

Then he turns to Connie and covers the mouthpiece:

JOHN
Get over to Gordon's quick, he says
Mr.Cold is there.

Connie doesn't ask questions, she just heads for the door John tosses her his camera--she catches it and takes off.

As John turns on his tape recorder, a thin, monotone VOICE--supposedly that of INDRID COLD--comes on the line:

VOICE (V.O.)
(on phone)
Hello John Klein.

John tries to collect his thoughts. He's used to phone interviews, but this is something else.

JOHN
(into phone)
To whom am I speaking?

VOICE (V.O.)
(over phone)
My name is Indrid Cold.

JOHN
(into phone)
Uh, yes, Gordon mentioned you. He seems to think you can predict the future.

COLD (V.O.)
(over phone)
I have made myself known to Gordon Smallwood.

JOHN
(into phone)
No offense Mr.Cold, but how can I be sure you're not Gordon Smallwood...?

Silence on the line. Hmm. Maybe he's on to something.

JOHN
(into phone)
Where was my father born?

COLD (V.O.)
(over phone)
Racine, Wisconsin.

Impressive. But not impossible.

JOHN
(into phone)
What color shirt am I wearing?

COLD (V.O.)
(over phone)
Red.

Correct. Hmm. John looks around the room. The curtains are open. He pulls them shut.

JOHN
 (into phone)
 What's written on it?

Cold replies in a quick, guttural burst:

COLD (V.O.)
 (over phone)
 Kokokolah.

In the mirror we can see the familiar trademark script running across John's chest: "Coca-Cola."

John looks around the room: Hidden cameras? An elaborate trick? He shuts off all the lights. Then plunges his hand into his overnight bag.

JOHN
 (into phone)
 What am I holding in my hand?

COLD (V.O.)
 (over phone)
 Cream stick.

John pulls his hand from his bag: he holds a small tube of Chapstick. Suddenly, an explanation occurs.

JOHN
 (into phone, smiling)
 Mr.Cold--are you reading my mind?

COLD (V.O.)
 (over phone)
 I am outside time. I am in all space.

Okaaaay.... John grabs a random book from the stack near his bed, but doesn't open it. The real test:

JOHN
 (into phone)
 What's the third line on page...
 ninety-nine?

COLD (V.O.)
 (over phone, instantly)
 --ordinary artifacts such as peeled
 potatoes and foreign newspapers--

John opens the book. Flips to page 99. Third line down:
 "...ordinary artifacts such as peeled potatoes and
 foreign newspapers..."

Son of a bitch.

EXT. GORDON SMALLWOOD'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Connie pulls into the driveway. The house is dark. She gets out of her car and approaches on foot.

She peers into the front windows. Can't see a thing. She goes to the front door and knocks. Nothing. Knocks again. Nothing. Finally, a light goes on inside and...

GORDON SMALLWOOD opens the door. He's in boxer shorts, hair-mussed, fresh from bed. He squints out at Connie:

GORDON
What's up, Connie? Everything okay?

CONNIE
Did you just call John?

GORDON
(shakes his head)
I've been asleep since nine.

INT. KLEIN'S MOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT

John is still on the phone with Indrid Cold. His mood has shifted from skepticism to genuine curiosity:

JOHN
(into phone)
You seem to know a lot, Mr. Cold. Can you tell me something?
(closes his eyes)
Where is Mary Klein right now?

A long silence on the line. Then:

COLD (V.O.)
(over phone)
Mary Klein is not Mary Klein. That segment of the One who was Mary Klein is not yet in ascendancy. Mary Klein is not yet part of the aggregate consciousness.

John grips the phone, his hand slick with sweat. He can not think of a single thing to say.

INT. BELL SOUND LABS - CHARLESTON -- DAY

John sits in the SOUND LAB surrounded by some of the most sophisticated sound analysis equipment in America. He listens to a tape of last night's phone call along with:

SONNY BERGER, (45), a sound engineer--good-natured, bearded and at least 300 pounds.

As Mr.Cold's VOICE comes on, Sonny points to the Voice Frequency Gauge:

SONNY

See? It's sticking up here around 1950 cycles per second. The lowest it gets is maybe, 1930 or so...

Then John's VOICE comes on the tape.

SONNY

Your's is way down here in normal vocal range: anywhere from 1000 to 1200 cycles per second.

JOHN

So this guy's vocal range is higher than mine?

SONNY

(laughs)
You're bullshitting me, right? How'd you do it?

JOHN

Do what?

SONNY

Create the voice. It's a good mimic, but come on, 1900 cycles per second? Groundhogs don't go that high.

JOHN

So what the hell is it?

As the tape plays, Sonny isolates Mr.Cold's VOICE and does a computer search for matches... Nothing.

SONNY

As near as I can figure, it's some sort of electrical impulse. But whatever it is, it isn't coming out of human vocal chords.

INT. VALIA'S COFFEE SHOP -- DAY

The sunset glows through the windows. John and Gordon share a booth. John stares at Gordon, incredulous:

JOHN

He took you to his planet?

GORDON

It's not a planet, it's more like a... place. We were there for a couple hours.

John listens, fiddling with his cassette tape nervously.

JOHN

Did he happen to say anything about...
getting in touch with me?

GORDON

(confused)
No, why would he?...

John shrugs it off.

GORDON

I tell you, I've never been so scared
in my whole life. But if it's true, I
mean if all of this is somehow really
happening...

(confidential)

It could mean we never die.

JOHN

What are you talking about?

GORDON

(suddenly excited)

This place he took me, it's like what
they teach you about in Sunday school.
Heaven--or the Garden of Eden. I get
the feeling it might be the next stage,
you know? Everyone is happy. There's
no war, no poverty, no ignorance.

(low)

They don't even wear clothes.

This stops John in his tracks. He takes a moment to
gather his thoughts.

JOHN

I've got an idea, but before I tell
you what it is, I want you to know I
don't think you're crazy. Okay?

GORDON

Okay.

JOHN

I've heard about a program--kind of a
study--at Duke University. It's
called the Encounter Research Survey.
They work with people who have had
strange experiences. And apparently
they try to determine whether these
events are occurring... outwardly or
inwardly. You see what I mean?

GORDON
Sure. And since I'm imagining all
this, you think I should get tested.

JOHN
No...

A deep breath; he takes the plunge:

JOHN
I think ~~we~~ should get tested.

INT. INTERVIEW CUBICLES - DUKE UNIVERSITY -- DAY

IN SEPARATE ROOMS: We ALTERNATE between John and Gordon
as each is interviewed by a different LAB TECHNICIAN.

LAB TECH #1
As a child were you prone to seizures?

GORDON
No.

LAB TECH #2
Were you often left at home alone?

JOHN
No.

LAB TECH #1
Did you have a guardian angel or
secret friend?

GORDON
No.

LAB TECH #1
Did you ever experience episodes of
spontaneous paralyzation?

JOHN
No.

LAB TECH #2
Do you sometimes have trouble discerning
dreams from actual memories?...

Gordon stares into the middle distance; he slowly nods.

LAB TECH #2
Mr.Smallwood?

Gordon looks up, as if waking from a dream, as we go...

INT. ELECTROENCEPHALOGRAPH LAB -- LATER

John lies on a table, small electric patches taped to his face and skull. An EEG printout scrolls out beside him.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM -- LATER

John watches through the window as Gordon undergoes a similar test. Beside him is DR. LEE OKSTER, (37)-- friendly, and way too good looking to be in a lab coat:

Dr. Okster shows John his EEG printout.

OKSTER

Alright, this line here? It measures activity in the temporal lobe, the visual and perceptual center of the brain. Disorders in this area have been linked to both alien encounters and near-death experiences.

JOHN

Disorders like a brain tumor?

OKSTER

Maybe. But neither you nor Mr. Smallwood seem to have any temporal lobe abnormalities.

JOHN

So what does that leave?

OKSTER

Well, we have found that this area of the brain is highly sensitive to electromagnetic impulses...

INT. LABORATORY RESEARCH CENTER -- LATER

John and Gordon follow Dr. Okster into the room:

A MAP OF THE UNITED STATES hangs from the wall. Large sections are blocked out in various shades of red.

OKSTER

This map details the country's major fault lines. Most fault lines emit higher than normal amounts of electromagnetic energy...

Okster flips down a transparent yellow layover--most of the red spots on the map turn orange.

OKSTER

The yellow areas represent ten thousand UFO sightings reported since 1947. You can see how closely they correspond...

John zeroes in on West Virginia. The entire state is orange.

OKSTER

One theory is that certain people are more sensitive than others to these EM waves, and it stimulates their temporal lobes causing vivid hallucinations.

Gordon squints skeptically:

GORDON

What kind of hallucinations?

OKSTER

Bright lights, voices, feelings of terror, distortions of time and even sightings of humanoid creatures.

JOHN

Wait a second, how can you measure something like that? I mean, these sightings don't exactly take place in a scientifically controlled environment.

OKSTER

We do the next best thing. We've subjected contactees to low levels of EM waves directed at the temporal lobe. Many have reported almost exact repeats of their UFO encounters.

Gordon looks freaked--he doesn't know what to think.

GORDON

So all these sightings--you're saying they're just hallucinations?

OKSTER

Not necessarily. Some researchers believe that temporal lobe stimulation allows for a greater range of visual perception. A couple years ago a man in Toronto was in a car accident, went clear through the windshield, suffered massive temporal lobe trauma. But when he recovered, he reported being able to actually see radio waves.

(to Gordon)

Maybe these aren't hallucinations at all. Maybe these are things that really are there--most of us just can't see them.

INT. KLEIN'S MOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT

John brushes his teeth as WE ALTERNATE between John and Ed at the WASHINGTON POST BULLPEN.

JOHN
Ed, it's John.

ED
Hm, the voice is vaguely familiar,
but... "John" you say?

JOHN
Alright, alright.

ED
Alright nothing. I've left you, like,
a gazillion messages. The interns are
circling your desk like buzzards.

John spits, rinses, then goes to work combing his hair.

JOHN
Tell 'em to back off. I'm actually
working on something down here, might
turn into a hell of a feature article.

ED
Oh, a feature article. That will
thrill Cyrus to no end.

JOHN
Listen, I'm heading up to New York
tomorrow, but I've got a stop-over in
D.C. on the way back. How 'bout we
meet at Dulles, I'll bounce some of
this off you.

ED
Do us all a favor--at least put in an
appearance. Seriously man, people are
starting to worry.

JOHN
No time. Just meet me. I gotta go.

ED
Nine o'clock in West Virginia?
There's nowhere to go.

JOHN
I got a date.

INT. CONNIE PARKER'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

It's late. A cold wind howls outside...

Connie and John are curled up on the couch. They hold each other, both staring into the warm, golden glow of the fireplace. John absently plays with a curl of her hair.

CONNIE

What time's your flight?

JOHN

Eight a.m.

CONNIE

I wish I could go with you. I've always wanted to go to New York.

JOHN

You've never been there?

CONNIE

Dare I admit this? I've never been further north than Columbus.

JOHN

Oh, we'll have to change that. You and Kevin? You'd love New York.

CONNIE

How do you know?

JOHN

Because I love it. I'd love showing it to you. Get Kevin to a Knicks game, get you to some Broadway shows.

(smiles picturing it)

There's this little jazz club I could take you. Seats forty people, tops. You have to go in through an alley--

She turns her head, looks up at him, dead serious:

CONNIE

Wait a second. Stop. Are we really doing this?

JOHN

Doing what?

CONNIE

Talking about the future.

He knows exactly what she's asking. And he takes a minute to make sure he means his answer.

JOHN

Yeah. I think maybe we are.

She searches his face; she wants to believe him, but...
John leans down and kisses her. One serious kiss.

JOHN

We definitely are.

Good enough. She turns back to the fire, happy tears in
her eyes, and snuggles closer to him.

CONNIE

Okay. Now--tell me about this club...

FADE TO:

CONNIE'S LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

The fire has died. John and Connie are asleep on the
couch. Suddenly...

A SCREAM comes from down the hall--Kevin's Room. John and
Connie both wake up. We HEAR Kevin crying. Connie takes
off down the hall like a shot--John follows.

INT. KEVIN'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Kevin sits in bed, crying loudly. Connie rushes to his
bed, holds him...

CONNIE

What's wrong, baby?

Kevin chokes out his words through sobs:

KEVIN

There was this man... He came out of
the woods and was chasing me... He
was screaming so loud I couldn't
hear... No matter where I ran, I
couldn't get away...

Kevin clutches his Mom, crying too hard to continue.
Connie rocks him gently, strokes his head...

CONNIE

You're okay, Kevin...

John and Connie's eyes meet--they're both worried about
Kevin and what all this must be doing to him...

JOHN

I'll cancel my flight; postpone for a
few days, stick around here.

Connie wants to say yes so badly... But she refuses to give in to the fear. She steels herself:

CONNIE

No. You go. We'll be fine.

John already knows her well enough not to argue.

FADE TO:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY -- DAY

A sky high view of the world's second strangest city...

ON WEST 83RD STREET: John stands in a doorway across from the brownstone Criterion Apartments. He sees...

A MAN emerge from the apartment building: stocky, red face and crew-cut hair. Looks like a retired drill sergeant.

John glances at the author photo on the book he holds, "Things Unseen." Sure enough, it's the same guy: ALBERT LEEK. John dodges across the street and stops him.

JOHN

Mr. Leek...

Leek stops in his tracks, alarmed. John holds up one of the Bird-Man sketches:

JOHN

Do you know what this is?

Leek's eyes flick from the sketch to John's face:

LEEK

Who the hell are you?

JOHN

John Klein. I called you. I need to know about the ultra-terrestrials.

Leek stares at him, considers--then pushes quickly past:

LEEK

I'm sorry but I'm already late.

John follows after him down the crowded street.

JOHN

It's important. For all I know, it's a matter of life or death...

Leek keeps walking, trying to ignore the crazy man chasing him, but people are beginning to stare.

JOHN

Over a dozen people have seen this
bird-guy--have you ever seen him?
(shouting over street noise)
I need your help, Mr. Leek.

Leek finally stops and turns--John almost runs into him.

LEEK

Where are they seeing him?

JOHN

(out of breath)
Point Pleasant, West Virginia...

He stares at John, making up his mind: should he bother?

JOHN

My flight back isn't until tonight.
Until then I'm prepared to make a
nuisance of myself.

LEEK

You a reporter?

JOHN

Washington Post. How'd you know?

LEEK

'Cause you're a pain in the ass...

Leek grabs the bird-man picture from John and gazes at it.
He looks like he's staring at his own obituary.

LEEK

(quiet, to himself)
Mothman.

John's eyes go wide: *Mothman?*

JOHN

(a statement)
You can help me, can't you?

LEEK

No. I can't...

But John isn't budging. Leek makes up his mind:

LEEK

Follow me.

INT. METROPOLIS BOOK SHOP -- DAY

John follows Leek into the giant, dusty old bookstore. Shelves tower overhead; stacks of books line the floor; aisles roll out in all directions, disappearing into murky darkness.

You could probably find a first edition of the Bible here if you had enough time to dig.

LEEK
(to young clerk)
Where's your occult section?

CLERK
New Age/Metaphysical?

LEEK
Whatever.

CLERK
Aisle K.

ON AISLE K: John watches Leek scan the titles, his head tilted to the side...

LEEK
Jacobson--moron. Keppelman--way off
base, UFO cultist. Ah, here we are...

Leek plucks a book off the shelves:

LEEK
One of my Nobel Prize-losing works.

Leek flips through the book and stops on A PEN-AND-INK DRAWING OF A GIANT MAN WITH WINGS. It looks like something out of Greek mythology. John shudders.

JOHN
Mothman?

LEEK
That's what the Ukrainians called him.
Rough translation, of course. There
were a hundred sightings in Chernobyl
the year the nuclear plant went down.

JOHN
Jesus.

LEEK
And now they're seeing him in West Virginia?

JOHN

That's not all they're seeing.

Leek turns to A GRAINY PHOTOGRAPH OF A UFO. The kind we've all seen: blurry, poorly framed, but somehow disturbing.

LEEK

Galveston, 1969, just before the hurricane. They had everything: Mothman, UFOs, Bigfoot-- two kids even saw the Blessed Virgin Mary.

JOHN

You talk like they're all connected.

LEEK

They seem to be. If you see one, start looking for its friends, they're usually not too far behind.

JOHN

Have you seen them?

LEEK

(shrugs)

Seeing isn't necessarily believing. There's never been a single shred of evidence that any of these things exist materially; not for more than a short time, anyway. There's never been any Bigfoot bodies or crashed UFO's.

JOHN

What about Roswell?

LEEK

Come on. You work in Washington. Is that braintrust capable of keeping that kind of secret?

John rubs his eyes, frustrated:

JOHN

So you're saying these things don't exist?

LEEK

Let's just say I don't think our visitors are from outer space. What people are seeing, and have been seeing ever since human beings walked the planet, is probably some sort of natural earth-based phenomenon we just don't have the tools to understand yet.

JOHN

"Ultra-terrestrials."

LEEK

For lack of a better term. Energy forms that exist on other dimensional planes that somehow have the ability to break through from time to time.

JOHN

But how is that possible?

Leek grabs another of his books and pages through it.

LEEK

Think about it. There's all kinds of things that exist all around us that we never see, right? Microwaves, infra-red waves...

Leek stops on a page with a GRAPH OF THE ELECTROMAGNETIC SPECTRUM.

LEEK

We can't see them because they exist in light frequencies outside our perceptual range. You've got your high frequency cosmic waves on one end all the way down to your low frequency radio waves on the other.

JOHN

Physics was never my best subject.

LEEK

Mine either, now shut up and listen...

Leek takes out a pen and starts writing in his book, darkening in a narrow band in the center of the spectrum:

LEEK

This line represents the small portion of all visible light that humans can perceive with the naked eye...

He draws a little Mothman picture up on the cosmic wave end of the spectrum.

LEEK

Now. Some people have theorized--and I'm talking about leading physicists--that high up on the electromagnetic spectrum there may be intelligent energy that can manifest into existence on our plane.

John is at the end of his rope, his head spinning...

JOHN

(desperate)

So what are you saying? This Mothman guy causes these things? I mean, is it a warning, or a prediction, or what?

LEEK

The Chinese believe that to see a giant bird is to see the shadow of your own death stretching toward you.

JOHN

Jesus Christ.

LEEK

You gotta realize, people have been futzing with these questions forever. If other energies are out there, there's probably more than one kind. And they probably don't all share the same agenda.

JOHN

Some might be trying to help...

LEEK

And some might just be fucking with us. Why do you think the Indians called their spirit guides Tricksters?

JOHN

But if these energy forms are so much more advanced than us, why don't they just come right out and say what's on their minds?

LEEK

You're more advanced than a cockroach-- ever try explaining yourself to one?

He's got a point. John shakes his head, his mind reeling.

JOHN

So what am I supposed to do?

Leek's face darkens, as if clouded by a bad memory. He speaks with grim determination:

LEEK

Nothing. I quit investigating this shit twenty-five years ago. The only reason I'm talking to you at all is to keep you from making the same mistakes I made.

JOHN

What mistakes?

LEEK

I spent years looking for answers and I discovered something astounding: there aren't any.

JOHN

That's not exactly what I flew 800 miles to hear.

Leek stares at John with regret. This guy is a lost cause.

LEEK

Then how about this: drop the whole thing. Go back home to your wife and kids and forget you ever heard the name Point Pleasant. You're fooling with things that human beings simply aren't equipped to deal with. Take it from me-- stories like these do not have happy endings.

JOHN

Why? What happened to you?

Leek just gives him a grim smile:

LEEK

When you look into the abyss, it does look back into you. That's not just a clever little saying, it's true. And the harder you look, the harder it looks back.

That scares John more than anything he's heard so far.

JOHN

Any other advice?

LEEK

(dead serious)
Yeah. Get the hell out of Dodge while you still can.

INT. DULLES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT -- DAY

John and Ed sit in the Passenger Lounge, each working a beer. Typical airport chaos surges all around them.

JOHN

...Electromagnetic waves, brain tumors, car accidents--any of these things can cause a breach in normal temporal lobe perception.

ED

What in the hell are you taking about?

JOHN
West Virginia is covered with
subterranean fault lines--

ED
Which would explain all the massive
earthquakes they have.

JOHN
They're inactive, okay? But still--if
they emit electro-magnetic waves, it
could explain why people there tend to
see things. And what they're seeing
might be things that exist on different
planes of the electromagnetic spectrum.
At least that's my theory so far.

ED
A great journalist once told me that
hard facts are what theories want to
be when they grow up.

JOHN
I believe I said "if" they grow up.

ED
This doesn't sound like you, John.
This is the kind of stuff we used to
rip on when it came over the wire.

JOHN
I guess it's different when it happens
to you.

Ed takes a long, assessing look at his friend.

ED
Do me a favor. Call Cyrus today. Tell
him you've got the flu and that as soon
as you can travel, you'll be back on the
job. Make up any excuse you want--I'll
back you up. I just want to be sure you
still have a job up here once you're done
doing whatever it is you're doing down
there. Deal?

JOHN
(smiles)
Deal.

EXT. ROUTE 67 -- NIGHT

John wanders among the hundreds who have gathered along
Route 67 for the announced return of Indrid Cold. A
definite pall hangs over the event...

John sees the townspeople milling about nervously, not speaking to each other. A feeling of dread pervades the crowd, a sense that something wicked this way comes...

A familiar face looms up at him--Lucy Griffin:

JOHN

Nice to see you, Lucy. Have things quieted down at home?

LUCY

(grim)

Not a bit. In fact, it's getting worse.

Suddenly, A BRIGHT LIGHT flares behind them. John spins--

But it's just GORDON SMALLWOOD engulfed in the MINTY WHITE GLARE OF TV CAMERA LIGHTS.

They watch Gordon answer a Reporter's questions with his typical sincerity...

LUCY

(low, to John)

Did you hear they fired him from the chemical plant?

JOHN

Gordon worked at the chemical plant?

Lucy nods absently as they continue watching. Suddenly, Connie appears at John's side:

CONNIE

Can you believe all this?...

She looks around shaking her head; a stern mixture of fear and sadness on her face.

CONNIE

Fifteen more people reported seeing the bird-guy today. Fifteen. And three of them were cops. I hate this, John. I absolutely goddamn hate this.

JOHN

How's Kevin?

CONNIE

He's at the neighbor's now. Refuses to go anywhere near his room. Hasn't eaten all day. In fact he spent most of the morning throwing up. The doctor says there's nothing wrong, but...

Her voice trails off. John can see the past days have finally taken their toll on her. John takes her hand:

JOHN

Come on. Let's take a walk.

EXT. THE SILVER BRIDGE -- NIGHT

John and Connie walk along the narrow footpath. They can still hear the crowd on Route 67 less than a mile back.

CONNIE

I used to walk up here when I was kid. We're right between West Virginia and Ohio. So technically, I figure we're not in either one...

The view from here is undeniably spectacular. But John is lost in thoughts of his own...

CONNIE

You mind telling me what's wrong?

JOHN

I've spent all day trying to figure out a couple of things. And the problem is, I think I did.

CONNIE

Okay...

JOHN

I think Indrid Cold is real.

Connie stops, looks him in the face: he's not joking. She forces herself to reserve judgment. They keep walking.

CONNIE

What else did you figure out?

JOHN

That he wants me to know he's real. Otherwise, why contact me at all?

CONNIE

John...

JOHN

No, no--think about it. He used Gordon to introduce us. If I had picked up the phone and there was just some weird voice going, "Hello, I'm Indrid Cold" I wouldn't have bought it for a second. But he was smart--he made it seem like it was happening through Gordon.

CONNIE

If this Cold guy is so smart, how come he didn't know you'd send me to Gordon's house and figure out the whole scam?

JOHN

(excited)

He did. He knew that sooner or later I'd discover Gordon never placed the call. By taking Gordon out of the equation after the fact, Cold knew it would prove that Gordon didn't set the whole thing up. Then I'd know Mr. Cold exists independently. It's really kind of brilliant.

They stop mid-span and gaze down at the river below.

CONNIE

John, can I ask you a question? Why is all this so important to you? I know it's weird and all, but come on, you could be interviewing the President right now.

JOHN

I've interviewed him, he's not that interesting...

John looks at her, but she's not laughing. She wants a real answer. John isn't sure he's up to giving her one.

A cold wind blows. The old metal bridge creaks, swaying gently beneath their feet.

JOHN

My wife Mary died last year on Christmas Eve. She had a brain tumor. We didn't know, but there was a car accident one night and they gave her an X-ray and found it. The night we had the accident she saw something, and she drew a picture of it. It was a giant bird-man with wings and red eyes.

CONNIE

Oh my God.

JOHN

I'd pretty much forgotten that part of things until the day I came to your office and saw the sketch...

John turns to her and looks into her eyes:

JOHN

Whatever is happening here, I think it has something to do with me. I think I was brought here. For a reason.

They stand together, quietly mulling this over. Then Connie whispers:

CONNIE

John. Look...

John follows her gaze down to the water. He doesn't see anything. Then he does.

One hundred and fifty feet below them the water is glowing.

Pin-points of faint light sprout up all over the river as if it's being lit from below by dozens of distant stars.

It is terrifying and beautiful at the same time. They stare, speechless. Connie grabs hold of John's arm.

Suddenly this place has lost all it's charm.

CONNIE

Let's go.

They head back toward Point Pleasant, the river still shining beneath them...

EXT. ROUTE 67 -- 11:57 P.M.

Three minutes and counting. John stands with Gordon:

JOHN

Well? Are you getting any...?

He points to his head. Gordon shakes his head no. He's beginning to look worried.

Then from behind them, a familiar VOICE:

VOICE (O.S.)

I hope I'm not too late...

Gordon turns--it's Denise; his face lights up at her smile.

DENISE

I'm sorry, Gordy. I shouldn't have left.

He pulls her in and hugs her, his eyes shining with emotion.

GORDON

Will you wait with me?

DENISE
Of course I will.

John watches the two of them step away, holding hands.
He checks his watch. 11:58 p.m. He looks into the sky,
then into the woods; closes his eyes and mutters quietly:

JOHN
Please... Please... Come.

And on John's face we...

FADE TO BLACK:

QUICK FADE UP AS:

John opens his eyes. He looks down at his watch: 12:58 a.m.
He looks around. Everyone is gone. The party's over.

He walks over to Gordon and Denise, the only two left.

JOHN
Maybe he got a flat.

No one laughs. The wooden expression on Gordon's face
makes his pain all the more apparent. He's beyond
humiliated. He's destroyed.

DENISE
Come on, sweetie. Let's go home.

She leads Gordon to their car; he moves like an old man.
She helps him in and closes his door. John goes to the
window:

JOHN
So this stuff doesn't go like clockwork.
No one knows that better than us, right?
It doesn't mean anything...

Gordon just sits, staring straight ahead.

JOHN
Call me tomorrow, okay? Promise me.

Gordon slowly looks at John, as if he's just realizing
he's there. A small nod. Good enough.

John steps back and watches as they drive off for home.

INT. KLEIN'S MOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT

John turns over in bed, then wakes with a start. There's
a strange SOUND coming from outside.

He recognizes it. It's faint, but unmistakable: the MOANING, SHRIEKING NOISE from Lucy Griffin's phone.

John climbs out of bed. He goes to the window and draws back the curtains...

A BRIGHT ORANGE MOON glows on the horizon. Silhouetted against it: a leafless tree, bending in the wind.

But still that sound. Getting louder and louder...

The tree turns toward John. Glowing red eyes shine at him. How could he have missed it? It's not a tree at all.

It's Mothman. SNAP!--giant wings flare from the creature's back--and suddenly John knows he is seeing the shadow of his own death stretching toward him.

Mothman crouches, jumps and flies straight at him! Its hideous, veined face CRASHES THROUGH THE WINDOW, and John SCREAMS--

SMASHCUT TO:

INT. KLEIN'S MOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT

THE PHONE RINGS: And John bolts up in bed, covered in sweat, gasping from the nightmare...

John catches his breath and looks at the clock: 4:00 a.m. exactly. The PHONE RINGS again. He picks it up:

JOHN
(into phone)
Hello?

GORDON (V.O.)
(over phone)
John? It's Gordon. It's really me
this time.

Gordon's VOICE is distant and staticky...

JOHN
(into phone)
Where are you, I can barely--

GORDON (V.O.)
(over phone, excited)
Jeez, I can't believe I got through...
Listen, John: he was right. Mr. Cold
was right about everything.

John strains to hear; he shouts into the bad connection:

JOHN
 (into phone)
 Right about what?

GORDON (V.O.)
 (over phone)
 It's beautiful, John. I want you to know that. It truly is. You've got nothing to worry about.

JOHN
 (into phone)
 What's beautiful, Gordon? What are you talking about?

Gordon's VOICE grows fainter.

GORDON (V.O.)
 (over phone)
 I gotta go. Goodbye, John. Thanks for everything. I'll see you in time.

A huge flare of static and then silence. No dial tone, no click... Just silence.

INT. FRONT DESK - MOTEL -- NIGHT

John runs to the desk in his robe. The NIGHT CLERK, (55) an owl-faced man, reads a newspaper.

JOHN
 Did a call come through for room 124 in the last few minutes?

The Clerk checks the electronic switchboard:

CLERK
 Nope. No calls since 9:40 last night.

EXT. GORDON SMALLWOOD'S HOUSE -- DAWN

The sun is rising as John parks in the Smallwood's driveway just behind two POLICE CARS and the CORONER'S VAN. John jumps out of his car and runs toward...

THE BARN: A covered body is carried out. John goes to Connie who has her arm around a sobbing Denise Smallwood.

JOHN
 Connie?

Connie struggles; she's been crying.

CONNIE

Denise was asleep when she heard the shot.
Gordon wasn't in bed. She came out here
and found him in back with his shotgun.

John glances toward the driveway as the Coroner's Men
load Gordon's body into the van. John kneels by Denise:

JOHN

I'm so sorry, Denise.
(to Connie)
Do you know what time it happened?

Connie wipes her eyes and checks her notebook:

CONNIE

We logged the call at 3:36 a.m.

John flinches, like he's just been struck.

CONNIE

I can't stand this, John. I feel like
everyone in town is losing their mind.

John knows exactly what she means...

EXT. POINT PLEASANT - TOWN SQUARE -- DAY

A subdued crowd watches Josh Jessup and the other firemen
prepare for the lighting of the town Christmas Tree.

A freezing, dark gray sky reflects the mood of the crowd.
They look like they're gathered for a public execution.

John stands with Kevin, who looks more somber than usual:

KEVIN

Is my mom going to die?

John squats down in front of Kevin:

JOHN

Of course not. Why?

Kevin's face clouds over with worry and fear:

KEVIN

Well, I keep thinking about that dream
I had. And then Mr. Smallwood, he...

John looks Kevin right in the eye:

JOHN

Nothing is going to happen to your mom,
okay?

Kevin looks at him; he wants to believe it, but...

JOHN

I mean it Kevin. I promise. I'm going to make sure of it.

Good enough. Kevin hugs John with the complete reassurance that only a seven year-old can truly feel...

Then he reaches into his pocket, removes his Mortal Kombat game cartridge and hands it to John:

KEVIN

Here. So you can practice.

John takes the cartridge reluctantly.

JOHN

But this is your favorite...

KEVIN

It's okay. I asked Santa for Version Four.

John smiles and puts the game in his pocket:

JOHN

Thank you, Kevin. That's very generous.
(conspiratorial)
Very dumb, too, 'cause next time we play I'm gonna kick your ass.

Kevin smiles. John stands up as Connie appears at his side.

CONNIE

I guess everyone knows. Reverend Scott said something at 7:00 services. Turns out Denise doesn't even want a funeral.

BLINK! The Christmas Tree LIGHTS UP with a warm glow. Mitten-covered hands clap; the Crowd cheers weakly.

Josh Jessup steps back to admire his work:

JOSH

Just goes to show: when you promise grown men free beer, there's nothing they can't do...

He glances at John:

JOSH

Say, I meant to call you back yesterday but it slipped my mind. As far as I know, there's never been any accidents at the Alanco plant.

JOHN
What are you talking about?

JOSH
Jesus, you're worse than I am. Don't
you remember leaving me that message?

INT. JOSH JESSUP'S HOUSE -- DAY

The two men stand over Josh's answering machine as it
plays a message. It sounds exactly like JOHN'S VOICE.

ANSWERING MACHINE VOICE (V.O.)
This is John Klein. Have there been any
tragedies near the chemical plant? Thank
you in advance. Goodbye Mr. Jessup.

Josh hits "stop." John is almost speechless.

JOHN
I never made that call. It sounds
like me, but come on, "tragedies"?
"Thank you in advance"? I don't talk
like that. No one does.

JOSH
It came in around noon. You sure you
didn't call and forget?

John thinks: yesterday at noon? Then he remembers:

JOHN
I was at the sound lab. Josh, can I
borrow that tape?

INT. BELL SOUND LABS - CHARLESTON -- DAY

Once again, John and Sonny Berger analyze a tape.

SONNY
Well, it sure sounds like you.

John looks at the Voice Frequency Gauge: It's well within
human range--about 1100 cycles per minute.

JOHN
There's no way this could be an
electrical impulse like the last one?

SONNY
Doubtful. Watch...

Sonny isolates John VOICE saying the word "Mister" on
yesterday's tape and on Josh's tape. He runs them on
adjacent monitors: the gauges respond identically.

SONNY

This is what we call a voiceprint.
The best computer mimic in the world
can't get more than a 75% match.
These two are at 99.7% If I had to,
I'd swear in a court of law that both
of these voices are yours.

INT. POLICE STATION - POINT PLEASANT -- DUSK

It's just getting dark as John steps through the glass
front doors, his mind still reeling from the events at
the sound lab.

He sees Connie at her desk. But before he can say a
word, she jumps up:

CONNIE

Do you know that woman?

JOHN

What woman?

CONNIE

The one that just walked past you as
you came in...

A Woman did in fact pass John on his way in. He and
Connie go to the glass doors; they look around the
street, but no one is anywhere to be seen.

CONNIE

That is so weird. She had long red-
hair and green eyes. Real pretty.
And she was asking about you...

FLASHCUT TO:

JOHN'S MEMORY POV: The beach. Hawaii. Mary laughs, her
red hair and green eyes shining in the sun...

FLASHCUT TO:

POLICE STATION: John listens as Connie continues...

CONNIE

All these weird questions: What are
you writing about? Do I think you
believe in UFOs? What do I think your
reaction would be if I asked you to
stop investigating things--even if I
said it was for your own good?

JOHN

What did you say?

CONNIE
I asked for some I.D.

JOHN
Did she give you any?

CONNIE
No. She just said, "Tell John I'm
sorry for ruining everything." And
then she got up and walked out.

John sinks into a chair. It as if his body is collapsing
in on itself. He stares at the ground, his face white.

Connie goes to him:

CONNIE
Are you okay?

JOHN
No.

John is shaking; he inhales sharply through his nose.

CONNIE
I don't like this. I'm calling a
paramedic.

JOHN
No. Don't. I'll be fine. It's just
that some very weird things are
beginning to happen.

CONNIE
Beginning to happen?

JOHN
People have been getting phone calls
from me that I'm not making. I think
it might be Mr.Cold imitating me but
I'm not sure.

CONNIE
Wait a second... Did you call me
about an hour ago?

JOHN
(eyes wide)
No. What did I say?

CONNIE
Oh boy. You asked me if there had
ever been any accidents on the Ohio
River. And then you hung up.

John sits there, his mind bending into pretzels.

JOHN

We've got to come up with a system so you'll know it's really me if I call.

CONNIE

What are you talking about?

JOHN

They know what we're thinking! They know everything...

Connie is speechless; but her look says it all: "Not you too?" John tries to calm down.

JOHN

Mr. Cold told me things that no one in the world knows and the only way he could do it was by reading my mind. If we come up with a code-word, he'll know it. It's gotta be something else.

John sits and thinks: how do you out-smart an omniscient ultra-terrestrial?

CONNIE

(grim)

I don't like what's happening to you.

John babbles, lost in thought:

JOHN

I'll be fine. They're just trying to tell me something. So I've got to keep a clear head and try to understand...

(beat)

You ever talk to a cockroach?

Now Connie is really worried. Suddenly John smiles:

JOHN

Wait a second. I've got it: I'll make you laugh. If I call you, I'll make you laugh somehow. That's something I don't think they can do.

CONNIE

To be honest John, that's something you haven't really been able to do.

John gives her a look. She smiles. And in that moment, the world is a sane place again. She takes his hand.

CONNIE
Please John--tell me you're okay...

She gazes into his eyes. John looks somehow lost.

CONNIE
Are you okay?

JOHN
I hope so.

INT. MOTEL - FRONT DESK -- NIGHT

John approaches the Clerk:

JOHN
Any calls to room 124 today?

The Clerk checks the electronic switchboard:

CLERK
No sir.

INT. KLEIN'S MOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT

John enters. The PHONE RINGS. He looks at the answering machine: the number '9' flashes insistently.

John slowly approaches the phone and picks it up...

AN EAR-SHATTERING BEEP--he slams the receiver down.

John hits the "playback" on his answering machine. It rewinds and plays: More BEEPING... Odd electronic MUSIC... A strange, high-pitched rhythmic MURMUR...

What the hell does all this mean?

The PHONE RINGS. He hesitates, then picks it up. It's the high-pitched VOICE of a CHILD.

VOICE (V.O.)
(over phone)
Are you John Klein?

JOHN
(into phone)
Yes.

VOICE (V.O.)
(over phone)
Mr.Klein...

And now the VOICE slows down and deepens, ages decades throughout the course of a single sentence:

VOICE (V.O.)
 (over phone)
 Will...you...please...stop...
 thinking...about...us?

John slams down the phone. He's shaking now, in a full sweat. But now he has an idea...

He removes the tape from the answering machine and inserts it into his DIGITAL RECORDER.

He cues the tape to the HIGH-PITCHED RHYTHMIC MURMUR message, then plays it through three or four times, slowing it down more and more each time.

Eventually the sounds stretch out and the MURMUR becomes the familiar VOICE of Indrid Cold:

COLD (V.O.)
 Great tragedy on the Ohio River.
 Great tragedy on the Ohio River.
 Great tragedy--

The PHONE RINGS. John lets it ring, waiting for the machine to pick up--then realizes he's removed the tape. Damn. He really doesn't want to answer the phone...

But he has to.

He reaches for it, his hand literally shaking.
 He picks it up.

It's the CHILD'S VOICE again:

VOICE (V.O.)
 Are you John Klein?

He slams down the phone.

INT. MOTEL - FRONT DESK -- NIGHT

John staggers to the desk, his body rigged with fear.

JOHN
 I have to leave for awhile. I'm not sure when I'll be back, but until I am could you please make sure no one goes into my room? Not the maid--not anyone.

The Clerk looks at John and doesn't like what he sees:

CLERK
 Are you okay, Mr.Klein?

JOHN
 (nods)
 I just need to get away from here.

And with that, John leaves.

INT. JOHN'S CAR -- NIGHT

John drives like a bat out of hell, gripping the wheel tightly. He passes a sign: "Welcome to Kentucky."

JOHN'S CAR -- LATER

Still forging ahead aimlessly into the night. John fights exhaustion and paranoia. Another sign whizzes past: "You are leaving Kentucky -- Welcome to Indiana."

EXT. TRAVEL LODGE - CLARION, INDIANA -- NIGHT

Three hours and 269 miles away from Point Pleasant. John pulls into the motel driveway and parks.

He climbs out of his car, stiff and sore, unable to drive another foot. He wanders exhausted into...

INT. TRAVEL LODGE LOBBY -- SAME

John approaches the YOUNG WOMAN at the counter.

JOHN
 I just need...whatever you've got.

WOMAN
 No problem.

He hands her his credit card:

JOHN
 Where the hell am I anyway?

WOMAN
 The Travel Lodge.
 (beat)
 In Clarion?

John stares at her, waiting for more...

WOMAN
 Indiana.

John nods absently, his eyes closing. The Woman goes to run his credit card--then freezes. She looks up at him:

WOMAN
 You're John Klein?

John's eyes snap open. The Woman laughs, incredulous:

WOMAN

Oh my God...

She pulls out a thick stack of pink message slips.

WOMAN

These messages have been coming for you for the past two days.

This can't be happening. John takes the stack of messages, hands trembling...

They all say the same thing: "Call Me. Urgent. Mary Klein"

EXT. PHONE BOOTH -- TRAVEL LODGE PARKING LOT -- NIGHT

John grips the receiver, hovering on the edge of panic. The phone RINGS--and is finally answered by Albert Leek:

LEEK (V.O.)

(over phone)

Hello?

JOHN

(on phone, voice shaky)

It's John Klein. I didn't know who else to call.

John suddenly breaks down crying:

WE NOW ALTERNATE between John and...

INT. LEEK'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Leek sits up in bed; his apartment shrouded in darkness.

LEEK

You see what I mean about the abyss?

JOHN

I think I might be losing my mind. I can't take it anymore. I want out.

LEEK

You really want out? There's only one way to do it: turn away. Dump all the books, burn all the notes. Get rid of it all. Stop looking for strange lights, stop looking for answers. Most of all, stop thinking about it. Take up stamp collecting or chasing girls or both. Don't wait until morning. Do it now.

John tries hard to gather his courage. Finally:

JOHN

What happened to you? Why did you stop investigating?

A long silence. Then:

LEEK

I spent nine years of my life at the Juniper Hill Psychiatric Facility. My wife divorced me. My kids stopped speaking to me. You see, I was convinced that I was receiving messages from "outside intelligences."

JOHN

But you really weren't, were you?

LEEK

Do I really need to tell you, John? I had tapes of their voices. But so what? In the end, it all came down to one simple question: which was more important-- having proof? Or having a life?

John tries hard to pull himself together.

JOHN

I'm scared.

LEEK

Good. When you stop being scared-- then it's time to worry. Trust me, John. I never knew true peace until the day I pitched my notes into a bonfire. Watching that shit go up in smoke--best feeling I ever had. I knew I was free.

JOHN

But... didn't you want to know?

LEEK

Know what?

JOHN

The answers to... all this.

LEEK

"Our lives are not the sum total of all we know, but the sum total of all we do not know."

JOHN
Who said that?

LEEK
I did. Not bad for an Irish kid from
the Bronx...

John suddenly finds himself laughing through his tears, a small miracle in itself.

LEEK
We're all going to find out the answers--eventually. Most of us sooner than we'd like. Until then, John, hang on tight to the one's you love and try to enjoy the ride.

INT. KLEIN'S MOTEL ROOM -- NIGHT

It's still dark out. John enters like he's walking into a snake pit. He quickly knocks the phone off the hook before it has a chance to ring. He looks around the room...

Mothman drawings. Photos of red and blue lights. Maps, charts, books--it looks like a lunatic's office.

John opens a box of 40-gallon trash bags. He shakes one open and slowly begins stuffing it.

He starts with the photos. Next go the note cards. Then the maps and charts. He begins moving faster and faster.

He furiously jams faxes and articles into the bag. He rips drawings off the wall and tears them up.

Riding the momentum, picking up steam, he storms through the room, dismantling his headquarters with glee.

Suddenly, a POLAROID PICTURE falls from the wall onto the desk in front of him. He freezes--then relaxes: it's the one of him and Mary in Hawaii. He smiles.

Finally, it seems like he might be okay. He stares at this island of normalcy in a room packed with weirdness.

Then his smile dies and his eyes fill with growing dread. AS WE MOVE AROUND BEHIND HIM we see why:

JOHN'S POV -- THE POLAROID: In the upper corner, above John's shoulder, we see something in the sky that has never been in the picture before...

A tiny, bird-like figure with two red, glowing eyes.

John sinks to the floor, gripping the picture, unable to stop looking into the abyss.

FADE OUT:

FADE UP ON...

THE SAME SHOT: Dawn. The sunlight is the only thing that has changed.

The PHONE RINGS. It's Cyrus Bills from the Post:

CYRUS

(on phone machine)

John, this is Cyrus. Ed told me he saw you yesterday. He's worried. So am I. We need to talk. Please call me the instant you get this message.

Cyrus hangs up. John hasn't moved. After a moment he reaches over and hits a button on the machine.

ANSWERING MACHINE VOICE (V.O.)

Your messages have now been erased.

BAM! The morning newspaper delivery. John slowly goes to the door, opens it and looks at the BANNER HEADLINE:

VIRGINIA GOVERNOR MCCALLUM TO TOUR CHEMICAL PLANT TODAY.

INT. CONNIE PARKER'S HOUSE -- MORNING

John follows Connie around as she gets ready for work.

JOHN

Don't you see? It's all coming full circle. It all fits. This is why I was brought here.

CONNIE

John, I can't just call in sick because you have a bad feeling about today.

JOHN

Think about it: the weird lights in the sky show up over the chemical plant. Gordon worked at the chemical plant. Both you and Josh got calls from me--which weren't from me--where I talked about something bad happening at the chemical plant. Then I got a call from Mr. Cold talking about a tragedy on the Ohio River, and guess what's on the Ohio River?

CONNIE
The chemical plant.

JOHN
And today Governor McCallum is going to be there. I was on my way to interview him last week when I ended up here in the first place. All the pieces fit--it explains everything!

Connie stops getting ready and turns to him:

CONNIE
What about Lucy Griffin's phone calls? Or the naked people on Josh's TV? How does all that fit in?

JOHN
I don't know exactly. It must all be part of the warning...
(recovering)
How many sightings of Mothman have you logged down at the station?

CONNIE
"Mothman"?

JOHN
The bird-guy. Albert Leek said that people saw him in Chernobyl before the place exploded. Apparently when you see him, you're seeing a vision of your own death.

Suddenly we see a flicker of fear on Connie's face:

CONNIE
What?

JOHN
Mary saw him the night we found out about her tumor. Gordon saw him behind his barn three days before he killed himself. How many people in town have seen him?

CONNIE
(distracted)
I don't know... Thirty, forty...

JOHN
Jesus Christ...
(a horrible thought)
Have you?

CONNIE

(beat)

No.

John looks in her eyes and gets a very different answer:

JOHN

You have. God-damnit! Come on--we have to leave town now. I've already booked rooms at the Charleston Hyatt.

Connie turns to him, angry and scared:

CONNIE

No! John... I can't live my life that way. I can't make decisions based on things I don't know anything about.

JOHN

(pleading)

Then at least get yourself re-assigned off the security detail. I don't want you anywhere near that place today.

Connie sees the intensity on John's face; it's terrifying.

CONNIE

What if nothing happens?

John looks at her strangely--this never occurred to him.

JOHN

What?

CONNIE

What if there's no "great tragedy" today? What will you do?

JOHN

I... don't know, I haven't thought that far, that's not the point--

CONNIE

Yeah, I think it is the point. Gordon thought something was going to happen, too. And when it didn't he--

John grabs her, enraged:

JOHN

Fuck Gordon! That wasn't my fault. I tried to help him, but he wouldn't listen to me! I'm not going to let the same thing happen to you!

Connie stares at him. The look on her face makes John take his hands off her just as Kevin walks in.

KEVIN
What's wrong? Why are you fighting?

CONNIE
(still staring at John)
Get in the car, Kevin. I'll be out in a minute.

Kevin obeys. As soon as he's gone, Connie turns, grabs her gun and purse, doesn't even look at John:

CONNIE
You need to leave. If you want to talk about this later, my shift ends at six.

John storms out, slamming the screen door behind him.

INT. GOVERNOR MCCALLUM'S HOTEL SUITE -- DAY

John sits across from the Governor, his Chief-of-Staff GARRETT KNOX, and two assistants.

MCCALLUM
You want me to cancel the tour?

JOHN
(nods)
And request that they shut down for a safety inspection. You could save a lot of lives.

MCCALLUM
Just where is your information coming from, Mr. Klein?

JOHN
A person I know--who for obvious reasons doesn't want their name disclosed--often has "psychic episodes"...

McCallum stares at him, waiting for the punchline.

JOHN
Look, I know how all this sounds. I wouldn't even be wasting your time if it weren't for the fact that many of this person's past predictions have come true, including the plane crash in Denver last week and the earthquake in Ecuador.

McCallum and Knox exchange concerned glances.

KNOX

What exactly does this person think is going to happen?

JOHN

A great tragedy. Probably an explosion.

MCCALLUM

And this is supposed to happen while I'm there?

JOHN

Yes sir.

MCCALLUM

(to Knox)

There's been a safety check, right?

Knox nods. McCallum considers a moment then turns to John:

MCCALLUM

Thank you for the warning John, but I'll be straight with you: I'm going to do the tour. Unless something else comes in to back up what you've told us, then obviously...

The Governor stands. His people stand. The meeting is clearly over. John remains sitting.

JOHN

You're making a huge mistake.

McCallum stands there, his smile frozen on his face:

MCCALLUM

Excuse me?

JOHN

Did you know that both Robert and John Kennedy were warned of their assassinations just hours before they occurred?

Embarrassed silence. McCallum doesn't know what to say.

MCCALLUM

Well. I didn't know that.

JOHN

Abraham Lincoln witnessed the circumstances of his own murder in a dream. He described it in a private journal. You can read the entry at the National Archives.

The mood in the room is excruciating. McCallum keeps giving John the opportunity to leave gracefully, but he won't. Knox steps into the breach:

KNOX

I'm sorry Mr. Klein, but the Governor is running a little late, so...

JOHN

Hundreds of people could die. I'm not just talking about you; there's your staff, employees, security...

MCCALLUM

I appreciate your concern, John--

John stands and makes a final dramatic plea:

JOHN

That's not good enough. Cancel your tour. Insist that the plant be shut down immediately. You'll be a hero.

(beat)

Please Governor. Something terrible is going to happen. I know it.

McCallum has had enough.

MCCALLUM

Goodbye, Mr. Klein.

Another moment of tense silence: will this guy ever take the hint and go?

John realizes he's cashed his last credibility chip. Without another word, he turns for the door and leaves.

McCallum watches, then makes up his mind about something. He turns to Knox with a look of grim regret on his face:

MCCALLUM

Get Cyrus Bills on the phone for me.

INT. LOBBY BAR -- CHARLESTON HYATT -- 12:30 P.M.

John enters and sits at the bar. A basketball game plays on the TV above the bar.

JOHN

(to Bartender)

Scotch, no ice. You mind turning on the news?

The Bartender looks up at the game then back at John. He reluctantly turns the channel.

LOBBY BAR -- LATER

And a few scotches down. ON TV, the local newscast features a report on cat adoptions.

BARTENDER

Hey, can I at least check the score?

John pushes his empty glass at the bartender.

JOHN

No. And do me again.

LOBBY BAR -- 5:00 P.M.

It's dark now. The bar is filling up. John is drunk. He stares at the TV as the Evening News comes on.

JOHN

(to the bartender)

Turn it up...

The Bartender glares at John. John smiles politely and hands him twenty:

JOHN

You've been very kind. I plan to write a glowing letter to Mr. Hyatt as soon as I'm sober. Now would you please turn up the goddamn volume?

The Bartender takes the twenty and turns up the volume.

NEWS ANCHOR

(on TV)

Our top story tonight takes us to Point Pleasant where Virginia Governor Robert McCallum joined Governor Harris and representatives from the state's Environmental Regulatory Panel to tour the Alanco Petrochemical Plant. Tory Pherris is on location in Point Pleasant. Tory?

The NEWS BROADCAST goes live to Tory Pherris:

TORY

(on TV)

In what he called a "successful review of Alanco's recent emissions reduction overhaul," Governor McCallum gave high marks to the petrochemical plant, and he is expected to call for similar renovations at several Virginia plants. His tour began today at...

JOHN has already stopped listening. His attention is riveted to the visual of THE CHEMICAL PLANT ON TV in the background: No sign of explosion, mayhem or death.

Time to face facts: He was wrong. Nothing happened. He doesn't know whether to be relieved or disappointed.

JOHN
Son of a bitch.

A BELLHOP suddenly appears at John's side:

BELLHOP
Excuse me, Mr. Klein?

JOHN
Yeah?

BELLHOP
You have a phone call from a...
(checks the note)
"Mr.Cold"?

All the BAR SOUNDS FADE OUT as...

WE WATCH FROM ACROSS THE LOBBY: John slowly rises from the bar stool and walks to the small PHONE CUBICLE.

He enters, closes the door, and THROUGH THE SMALL GLASS WINDOW we see him pick up the receiver and listen...

INT. JOHN'S ROOM -- HYATT HOTEL -- NIGHT

John's luggage is on the bed; as he packs the last of his things there's a KNOCK at the door. He opens it.

It's Connie. She walks in, sees the bags:

CONNIE
You're leaving. Back to Washington?

JOHN
Yup.

CONNIE
You don't have to go, John.

JOHN
Yeah. I do.

CONNIE
If it's about today... No one is going to blame you for trying to save people. You've got nothing to apologize for.

JOHN

I know.

Connie notices something odd about John: he doesn't seem upset at all. In fact he looks more confident than ever.

CONNIE

So why are you leaving?

JOHN

Mr. Cold called again. He explained some things to me. I misunderstood the signs, but he assured me the great tragedy is coming. He told me to go back to my apartment in Georgetown. I'll be contacted on Friday at noon.

Connie can't believe what she's hearing. She watches as John moves about the room with robot-like intensity.

CONNIE

Do you have any idea what's happened to you, John? What you've allowed to happen?

JOHN

I didn't allow anything. That's the curse of the modern world, Connie: no matter where you go, there's always a telephone nearby.

CONNIE

(desperate)

Then don't leave. For God's sake, stop following his orders!

JOHN

I know you won't be able to understand this, but I can't.

Connie stands in front of him, talking as slow and deliberate as a hostage negotiator.

CONNIE

Please John. Don't do this.

John doesn't even look at her as he steps around her, grabs his bags and leaves.

On the SOUND of a CHOIR singing "SILENT NIGHT" we...

FADE TO:

INT. JOHN'S APARTMENT - WASHINGTON, D.C. -- NIGHT

John staggers in and drops his bags. He flops onto his bed fully dressed, not even removing his overcoat...

EXT. POINT PLEASANT TOWN SQUARE -- DAY

Snow falls on the glowing Christmas Tree...

INT. POINT PLEASANT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AUDITORIUM -- DAY

We now SEE the SINGING CHOIR--a group of SCHOOL CHILDREN on stage. Right in front, Kevin Parker.

IN THE AUDIENCE: Connie listens, smiling and crying...

EXT. FIRE STATION 51 - POINT PLEASANT -- DAY

Josh Jessup and the other firemen use the truck ladders to place Christmas lights along the station house roof...

EXT. LUCY GRIFFIN'S HOUSE - BACKYARD -- SUNSET

Lucy and Nat Griffin build a giant snowman beneath the blue pine tree where Mothman appeared just weeks ago...

INT. JOHN'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

John--still in his clothes and overcoat from yesterday--sits in complete darkness, staring at his phone...

INT. CONNIE PARKERS' HOUSE -- DAY

Connie and Kevin decorate their Christmas tree. Connie stops to gaze out the window; a gentle snow is falling...

INT. JOHN'S APARTMENT - WASHINGTON, D.C. -- NIGHT

John stares out the window of his apartment. Snow falls here, too; but here it falls hard and wet and gray...

INT. POINT PLEASANT CHURCH -- NIGHT

Denise Smallwood sits alone in the cavernous space; candlelight flickers against the walls. She bows her head in prayer, tears streaming down her cheeks...

EXT. ALANCO CHEMICAL PLANT/HILLS -- NIGHT

Just a few cars are parked here on this cold, crystal-clear night. Connie Parker sits in her cruiser staring out at the horizon over the chemical plant.

THE RED AND BLUE LIGHTS dance, twist and tumble through the sky; beautiful, mysterious and ominous as ever...

And as our CHOIR brings their song to its final, poignant notes we...

FADE TO:

INT. JOHN'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Where we see John curled asleep on the cold dark living room floor...

FADE OUT.

FADE UP ON:

INT. JOHN'S APARTMENT -- DAY

John looks like hell: he hasn't shaved or changed clothes in three days. He gazes at the clock.

It's 11:55. Five minutes until "the call." He clutches the Polaroid--the cylinder still clearly visible in the sky--and waits.

THE PHONE RINGS. John pounces:

JOHN
(into phone)
Hello?

CONNIE (V.O.)
(over phone)
Hi. It's me.

JOHN
(into phone)
Connie?

CONNIE (V.O.)
Yeah. Just thought we could chat for, say, ten or fifteen minutes...
(beat)
You're not laughing.

JOHN
(into phone)
I'm sorry, Connie. Can I call you back?

CONNIE (V.O.)
(over phone)
No, you can't. I booked you a flight.

JOHN
(into phone)
What?

CONNIE (V.O.)

(over phone)

It leaves Dulles for Columbus, Ohio in thirty minutes. I tried to get one to Charleston, but they're booked solid. If you leave right now, you'll just make it...

Despite everything, John is actually touched.

CONNIE (V.O.)

It's Christmas Eve, John. I miss you. Kevin does, too.

JOHN

(into phone)

I can't.

CONNIE (V.O.)

(over phone)

The hell you can't.

John's voice is choked with emotion:

JOHN

(into phone)

Connie... When Mary got sick... I kept wishing there was something I could do to stop it. Anything. But there wasn't. It was like there was this train coming straight for me and I could see it but no matter what I did I couldn't get out of its way...

(beat)

Maybe this time it'll be different. If Mr. Cold is right and something terrible is going to happen--

CONNIE (V.O.)

(over phone)

Something terrible has already happened, John. To you.

(beat)

Planes are going to crash. Earthquakes are going to happen. People you know and love are going to die, and no matter what that fucking alien tells you, there's nothing you can do about it. You can't save the world, John. All you can do is try to survive it.

Tears run down John's face. He forces out the words:

JOHN
 (into phone)
 It's a year to the day. He told me
 she was going to call. He said Mary
 was going to call with the message.

A long beat of silence.

CONNIE (V.O.)
 (over phone, gently)
 He's lying, John. Whoever calls might
 sound like her, but it's not going to be
 her. I don't know what happens after we
 die, but I'll bet wherever Mary is now,
 she's nowhere near Indrid Cold.

John cries openly now, emotion and fear shaking him.

JOHN
 (into phone)
 But what if it is her?
 (almost a whisper)
 I never even got to say goodbye.

CONNIE (V.O.)
 (over phone, gently)
 She's dead, John.

A long silence as this reality finally sinks in for John--
 maybe for the first time ever.

CONNIE (V.O.)
 The only question now is how you want
 to remember her.

John looks at the crumpled Polaroid. Just the three of
 them: John, Mary--and Mothman.

JOHN
 (into phone)
 I miss her so much...

CONNIE (V.O.)
 (over phone)
 I know you do. You can miss her here
 just as easily as there. Maybe more
 easily, cause you're all alone there,
 and that's no way to be.

Another silence. Then:

JOHN
 (into phone)
 I miss you, too.

CONNIE (V.O.)
 (over phone, kindly)
 Do whatever you have to do. I'll understand. But down here, we have dinner at six and do presents at eight. We'll be waiting for you.

And with that, Connie hangs up. John slowly sets down the phone. It's 11:58.

He looks at his bags, still packed, lying in the entry hall where he dumped them three days ago. Sticking out of one is the Mortal Kombat cartridge Kevin gave him.

John looks back at the phone. The future... Or the past? He moves for the phone--then reaches past it and grabs...

THE WALL CORD. He holds it, gathers his courage... And though it might be the most painful thing he's ever done, he takes a deep breath, stands up...

And yanks the phone cord out of the wall!

Done. He pants a bit from the emotional effort. Maybe it wasn't so hard after all.

He opens the blinds. Light fills his apartment. He looks around. For the first time in days--maybe for the first time in over a year--John Klein feels truly free.

His eyes land on the bags in the entry hall. John goes to them, grabs them up and heads for the door.

THE PHONE RINGS.

John freezes. He turns and looks at the phone. The frayed wall cord lies coiled like a snake on the floor.

THE PHONE RINGS.

He looks at the clock. It's 12:00 exactly.

THE PHONE RINGS.

John turns away. He grips the doorknob, turns it and opens the door.

THE PHONE RINGS.

John steps out into the hall. And closes the door behind him on the empty apartment--and the past--as...

THE PHONE RINGS, AND RINGS, AND RINGS...

EXT. DULLES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT -- DAY

A CAB pulls up--John bolts out and dashes into...

INT. DULLES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - TICKET DESK

John runs up to the attractive TICKET CLERK.

JOHN

Is there a ticket reserved for John Klein? The 12:30 flight to Columbus?

She checks the computer.

TICKET CLERK

Flight 401. You better hurry, they're already boarding.

John smiles. He whips out his credit card...

INT. GATE 7A -- MINUTES LATER

John runs up just as the walkway door is being closed.

JOHN

Wait, wait, wait!

The Attendant smiles and lets him through.

INT. FLIGHT 401 -- DAY

John is the last person to take his seat as the plane begins its taxi to the runway.

He sits back and smiles, relieved. He made it.

INT. FLIGHT 401 -- MID-FLIGHT

John tries to concentrate on the in-flight magazine, but he's too keyed-up, too excited about spending Christmas with people he cares about, instead of alone.

He looks out the window. Nothing but murk outside. He looks down, tries to make out lights or landmarks.

IN THE THICK DARKNESS he senses something just outside his window. He peers at it--what the hell...?

PLANTS. Some sort of wavy, green vegetation, swaying back and forth. And fish. The plane is...under water?

John looks back...

INTO THE CABIN: It's filled with brackish, green water. Schools of fish dart among the drowned, bloated bodies of the passengers still strapped in their seats.

He opens his mouth to scream, but icy water pours into his mouth and fills his lungs...

INT. FLIGHT 401 -- DAY

John snaps awake, covered in sweat as the PILOT'S VOICE comes over the INTERCOM:

PILOT (V.O.)
(over intercom)
We are beginning our descent to Columbus Airport where the local time is 2:48 p.m. The weather is cloudy and the temperature is 41 degrees.

John glances around the cabin as passengers pack away their books and newspapers. Not a fish in sight.

EXT. COLUMBUS AIRPORT - RUNWAY -- DAY

Flight 401 touches ground and bumps down the runway.

INT. COLUMBUS AIRPORT - RENTAL CAR DESKS -- DAY

CROWDS OF PEOPLE clamor for their cars. John hurries through, searching--finds an empty counter.

JOHN
Do you have any cars? I'll take anything.

The short, balding RENTAL AGENT laughs at the never-ending folly of mankind.

RENTAL AGENT
Sir, it's three o'clock Christmas Eve. Why do you think there's no one at this counter? We're closing up.

JOHN
But--don't you--?

RENTAL AGENT
Not a single one.

JOHN
Could you please at least check?

The Rental Agent sighs, annoyed. But it is Christmas Eve. He checks the computer. There. Just as he said. Not a single--

BEEP. He frowns. Picks up his phone:

RENTAL AGENT

(into phone)

Jamie? Rick. I'm showing a 2-door red Ford Escort in slot 39. What's up?

He listens, then slowly hangs up, puzzled. John smiles.

JOHN

I'll take it.

INT. RED FORD ESCORT - HIGHWAY 35 -- DAY

John peers past the icy, dry snow blasting across the windshield. He fights to keep the car on the road, inching along at 45 M.P.H. The radio report is grim:

RADIO NEWSMAN (V.O.)

(on radio)

... national weather service is calling for increased snow through tonight and into tomorrow along the Ohio River Valley. Ten to twelve inches is expected before...

John sees a MILEAGE SIGN loom up out of the snowy haze: "Point Pleasant, W.Va. -- 71 miles." He checks the clock: 4:20 p.m. John eases the car up to 50 M.P.H....

EXT. HIGHWAY -- LATER

Snow falls in gray flurries as John's car makes its way across the final mile of Gallipolis, Ohio and approaches the Ohio River and the 700 foot span of...

THE SILVER BRIDGE leading into Point Pleasant.

INT. FORD ESCORT

John stops at the last red light before the bridge. He looks at the clock: 5:55 p.m. He may be late for dinner, but not by much...

He happily drums on the steering wheel. "Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas" floats from the radio.

John waits...

EXT. SILVER BRIDGE -- DUSK

Traffic is backed-up in both directions. Cars loaded with people--on their way home, on their way to parties, on their way to the mall for some last minute shopping.

INT. POLICE CRUISER

Connie sits in her cruiser, mid-span. She impatiently drums her fingers on the steering wheel. People in other cars stare at her--after all, she is a cop.

This is getting ridiculous... She gets out of her car.

EXT. SILVER BRIDGE

Connie stands on tip-toes, looking down the long line of cars to see what the hold up is. Far ahead, down at the Point Pleasant end of the bridge, she sees...

A SIGNAL LIGHT: It's red--and shows no sign of changing. Connie turns and gazes back down at...

THE OHIO END OF THE BRIDGE: Another red light. Connie barely registers the Ford Escort waiting there...

INT. FORD ESCORT

John is getting antsy. What's with the light? A burst of static fogs the radio. He shuts it off, annoyed.

And in the sudden silence, he hears it. A SOUND. A faint sound. A familiar sound...

EXT. SILVER BRIDGE

Connie stands in the cold wind--and hears the sound, too. A low MOAN that rises to an eerie SHRIEK.

She looks around--where the hell is that sound coming from?

IN OTHER CARS: The bizarre sound echoes...

Lucy Griffin and her son Nat hear it.
Denise Smallwood hears it.

And a dozen other people we recognize from town--
they all hear the ominous sounds...

INT. FORD ESCORT

John climbs out of his car and onto...

EXT. HIGHWAY

The sound is unmistakable now, and getting louder. Moaning, howling, shrieking... That's when John realizes:

It's the sound from Lucy Griffin's phone calls.

And it seems to be coming from the bridge itself.

JOHN
Oh my God...

The familiar VOICE of Indrid Cold whispers from his CAR RADIO:

COLD (V.O.)
Great tragedy on the Ohio River...

John's head snaps up, drawn by the oddly familiar sight of RED AND BLUE LIGHTS in the sky.

A Police Car. On the bridge. Connie.

And in one blindingly clear instant, all the pieces of the puzzle fall into place.

He dashes across the intersection and runs...

ONTO THE BRIDGE: He pounds on the hoods of the cars stacked up behind the red light.

JOHN
Go! Go! Get off the bridge!

IN THE CARS: People are scared and confused. First the weird noises, now this crazy man telling them to run the red light? What the hell is going on?

Most don't bother sticking around to find out. Slowly but surely the cars begin moving off the bridge...

As the cold wind blows and snow blasts all around him, John moves along the row of cars ordering people off the bridge until he reaches...

BRIAN LITCHFIELD'S STATION WAGON: Remember him? He and his wife saw Gordon Smallwood talking to Indrid Cold on Route 67 that strange night just one week ago...

John pounds on Brian's window:

JOHN
Hurry up! Go!

INT. BRIAN'S STATION WAGON

But Brian ignores John--he's got bigger problems... He stares up at the wires and cables above the bridge.

BRIAN'S POV: Shrouded in mist and snow, Brian thinks he sees something perched on a support tower. It looks kind of like a giant bird...

EXT. BRIAN'S STATION WAGON

John looks back--Brian is blocking all the other cars.
Screw it--he yanks the car door open.

BRIAN
(screaming)
What the hell is that thing?!

John follows his terrified gaze up to...

THE SUPPORT TOWER: Nothing is there.

JOHN
What thing? What are you--

He glances back at Brian and falls silent: Brian's face
is a picture of abject horror...

BRIAN'S POV: In the swirling snow he sees something.
Something alive--with wings and two glowing red eyes...

Is it Mothman? Just when the image seems to firm up, a
blast of snow obscures it. The shadowy figure seems to
tilt its head back and we hear a HOWLING SHRIEK...

ON THE BRIDGE: Everyone hears this, the loudest SHRIEK
yet. Brian wheezes silently, his mind stepping over the
threshold into complete insanity...

John looks around wildly, but cannot see what Brian
sees...

BRIAN'S POV: The creature turns and fixes his red-eyed
glare on Brian. Through the blizzard Brian can just
barely see the creature flare its giant wings with a
metallic SNAP and take flight--directly toward him!

ON THE BRIDGE: John hears the SNAP. He looks up at the
exact spot where Brian sees the creature. And this time
he does see something...

A FORMLESS GRAY MASS streaking toward him from the fog.

It coalesces before John's eyes, revealing itself as...

A SEVERED GUY-WIRE: The thick cable whip-saws like a bolt
of lightning just inches in front of John's face and
smashes through...

BRIAN LITCHFIELD'S WINDSHIELD: Where it slices through
his neck, instantly beheading him.

ON THE BRIDGE: John backs away from the car in breathless horror. A giant gust of wind blows. The ground sways sickly beneath his feet...

The bridge is about to collapse.

AT THE TOP OF THE BRIDGE: The swaying is worse. Connie is thrown to the pavement--and right before her eyes she can see the asphalt cracking beneath her...

She scrambles to her feet and runs from car to car:

CONNIE

Move! Move! Get off the bridge!

INSIDE THE CARS: People are desperate to comply. Problem is, they're in the middle of the traffic jam and couldn't go anywhere even if they wanted to.

AT JOHN'S END OF THE BRIDGE: He can see Connie a hundred yards, away at the top of the bridge:

JOHN

CONNIE!

But his voice is lost in the freezing wind...

AT THE TOP OF THE BRIDGE: MORE CABLES SNAP! They slither and twist around the cars like giant metal eels, pulverizing everything in their path!

THE PAVEMENT DROPS TEN FEET--and JARS to a stop. This bridge ain't gonna make it.

IN THE CARS: People panic. They ram the cars ahead of them in a frantic effort to get the hell off the bridge.

ON THE BRIDGE: Traffic finally begins to move. As the logjam breaks, Connie jumps...

INTO HER CRUISER: She grabs up the radio to call for help, looking up just as...

A CABLE SNAKES STRAIGHT AT HER!

Connie hurls herself to the floor of the cruiser as the cable SHATTERS the windshield!

ON THE FLOOR: Connie shakes off broken glass, screaming into the radio:

CONNIE

All units! Unit 64 at the Silver
Bridge! Immediate assistance required!

AT JOHN'S END OF THE BRIDGE: He frantically directs traffic around Brian's stopped car. More and more cars make their way off the bridge...

But as John looks back, he realizes it's futile--there's just too many cars, too many people, and not enough time.

And in the middle of it all--Connie--too far away to stand a chance.

It's happening. The great tragedy is happening. And for the second time in John's life there's not a goddamn thing he can do to stop it...

But he has to try. While everyone is moving off the bridge, John starts running further on, heading straight for the top--and Connie!

The pavement buckles. John stumbles. The distance between them seems to stretch, and the harder John runs the slower he goes...

A final agonized SHRIEK rises into the sky!

John skids to a stop as inches in front of his feet...

THE SILVER BRIDGE COLLAPSES!

John watches in horror as nine-hundred tons of steel and concrete plunge into the river directly in front of him!

It's an awesome, terrifying sight.

And in the middle of it all...

CONNIE'S CRUISER: It tumbles through space, the RED AND BLUE LIGHTS unmistakably mimicking the bizarre sky lights the town has seen for over a month.

John watches in wordless terror as...

The Mothman Prophecies come true.

BENEATH JOHN'S FEET: The shattered asphalt crumbles. John slips, falls--then grabs a piece of broken railing. He clings to it desperately, looking down just as...

Connie's Cruiser SLAMS into the surface of the water.

John looks up. Safety is just inches away...

But one-hundred feet below him Connie is sinking to the bottom of the river. What should he do?

John lets go.

Drops through silent, cold, black space...

And SPLASHES into the freezing river.

INT. CONNIE'S CRUISER

Connie lies unconscious on the floor of the car as it fills with water, sinking...

UNDER THE WATER: John frantically searches for Connie. He sees...

LUCY GRIFFIN'S CAR glide silently to the river bottom...

INT. LUCY GRIFFIN'S CAR

Lucy sees Nat belted into his seat, unconscious. She reaches over, unbelts him, then grabs his head and forces her last breath of air into his lungs.

Nat coughs, begins to awaken.

Lucy, working on pure adrenaline, leans past him, shoves open his door and pushes him out of the car. He thrashes in the water, when out of the darkness--

HANDS GRAB HIM: John's hands. He grips Nat and heads for the surface.

Her son safe, Lucy moves to follow. But she glances up to see a DARK SHAPE descend from above...

A GIANT METAL SUPPORT BEAM slices through the water. It crushes Lucy's car--and everything inside.

THE SURFACE: John and Nat break through, gasping. It takes a moment before John notices the surreal scene around them...

BRIGHTLY WRAPPED CHRISTMAS PRESENTS: They bob in the water at eye-level against a steel gray sky...

Connie's VOICE echoes in his mind:

CONNIE (V.O.)

And somehow I knew I was dying.

John's mind reels with terror:

JOHN

(to Nat)

Can you make it to shore?

Nat nods weakly and swims off as John ducks back down...

UNDER THE WATER: John opens his eyes, scans the murky water for any sign of Connie. Then he sees it...

FAR BELOW: The distant glare of RED AND BLUE LIGHTS.

He darts down through the water to...

CONNIE'S CRUISER: John slithers through the broken windshield. But Connie isn't there. Then he sees her on the floor, her body still.

He grabs her, wraps his arms around her, then maneuvers them both out through the windshield.

UNDER THE WATER: John scissors his legs, clawing at the water, swimming straight up, desperately moving toward...

THE SURFACE: John and Connie emerge into the cold air. John holds Connie's head up above the water and we...

PULL BACK ABOVE THEM TO SEE: PIN-POINTS OF LIGHT surrounding them on the river. Just like what they saw that night from high above on the bridge.

But now it is clear the lights weren't stars: they were headlights shining up from the bottom of the river...

FADE TO:

EXT. OHIO RIVER -- LATER

Dozens of firemen and rescue workers tend to the injured as CARS and BODIES are pulled from the river.

ON THE RIVER BANKS: The Coroner's Men tend to the dead, lining them up in body bags along the river's edge...

FURTHER DOWN: Denise Smallwood holds a sobbing Nat Griffin...

AND STILL FURTHER DOWN: John Klein works to revive Connie Parker, alternating CPR and mouth-to-mouth.

Suddenly Connie coughs. Gasps. Returns to life.

John moves into her field of view. Connie stares up into his face as if she's dreaming.

CONNIE

You're here.

JOHN

I left D.C. just after you called.

He looks into her eyes. She seems confused.

JOHN
You did call me today, didn't you?

Connie smiles up at him.

CONNIE
You bet your ass I did.

A SQUAD CAR pulls up; Kevin leaps out and runs to Connie.

KEVIN
Mom!

He crashes into her, hugs her fiercely.

KEVIN
I... I was afraid that...

He bursts into tears. Connie holds him, calms him.

CONNIE
No such luck, pal. You're stuck with me.

John watches mother and son hold each other, overwhelmed with relief that the incredibly fine line between miracle and disaster in their lives didn't get crossed.

Connie looks out across the devastated landscape; nothing in her hometown will ever be the same again.

CONNIE
Guess I was right, John. You can't save the world.

She reaches out a hand. John takes it. Then he puts an arm around both her and Kevin.

JOHN
Maybe it wasn't about saving the world.
Maybe it was just about saving you.

Josh Jessup trudges up to them; he looks exhausted.

JOHN
How bad is it?

JOSH
Bad. Though I suppose it could have been worse. They just pulled out the last body. That makes thirty-six.

JOHN
Jesus...

Connie's face goes white--but for a very different reason. John sees this:

JOHN
What's wrong?

CONNIE
(almost to herself)
Wake up Number 37...

A chill of recognition runs through John...

CONNIE
I was supposed to die...

JOHN
Connie...

CONNIE
(suddenly agitated)
Oh my God. Is that what it meant?
That I was supposed to die, but
somehow you...?

John stops her:

JOHN
I don't know. I don't know...
(beat)
You're here. You made it. That's the
only thing that counts.

Connie looks at him: could that ever be enough of answer?

CONNIE
But John, what if--

JOHN
(gently)
"Our lives are not the sum total of
all we know, but the sum total of all
we do not know."

CONNIE
Who said that?

JOHN
A very wise man.
(smiles)
When we get to New York, I'll
introduce you to him.

John holds Connie and Kevin close to him, knowing that all answers will come, eventually...

But for now, the only answers that count are sitting with him--alive--on Christmas Eve, on the banks of the Ohio River just outside Point Pleasant, West Virginia.

AS WE PULL BACK HIGH ABOVE THEM...

The night closes in, shrouding most signs of the disaster. And if you squint your eyes, the drowned headlights and emergency flashers look just like distant stars...

BEGIN ON SCREEN CRAWL:

Thirty-six people died in the collapse of the Silver Bridge. The final cause was blamed on overdue maintenance and metal fatigue. A contributing factor was the malfunctioning of the stoplights at either end, the cause of which was never determined.

Mothman was never seen in Point Pleasant again.

However, sightings of giant bird-like creatures continue to be reported throughout the world.

The most recent include Rome, Mexico City, Baghdad and Los Angeles.

FADE OUT

THE END

"To reach the end of knowing,
is to reach the start of living."

--Tibetan Book of the Dead